

Providence Of God (Romans 8:28)

Intro: All through the history of man God has worked with and on behalf of man. Thus, it should be no surprise to know that God works today with and on behalf of man. Romans 8:28 (“²⁸ And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to *his* purpose.”) teaches us a great deal about God’s providence. Before going into a study of this, it is important for us to notice that there are 2 kinds of providence.

I. PROVIDENCE

A. General Providence

1. This is God’s care over the physical world; His care for His creation including man.
2. Mat. 5:45 “⁴⁵ That ye may be the children of your Father which is in heaven: for he maketh his sun to rise on the evil and on the good, and sendeth rain on the just and on the unjust.”

B. Special Providence

1. This is God’s exercising control over natural events in answer to the prayers of saints and for the benefit of His children.
2. Eph. 1:3 “³ Blessed *be* the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly *places* in Christ.”
3. In consideration of this special providence, let us turn our attention to Rom. 8:28 “²⁸ And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to *his* purpose.”

II. LAW OF ASSURANCE

A. “We Know”

B. How can we know

1. Knowledge comes from the evidence given to us.
2. The Old Testament gives us plenty of evidence of God’s special providence.

C. God is working for me!

1. Joseph believed that God turned all bad things into God for him.
 - a. Gen. 45:4-5, 7 “⁴ And Joseph said unto his brethren, Come near to me, I pray you. And they came near. And he said, I *am* Joseph your brother, whom ye sold into Egypt. ⁵ Now therefore be not grieved, nor angry with yourselves, that ye sold me hither: for God did send me before you to preserve life. ⁶ For these two years *hath* the famine *been* in the land: and yet *there are* five years, in the which *there shall neither be* earing nor harvest. ⁷ And God sent me before you to preserve you a posterity in the earth, and to save your lives by a great deliverance.”
 - b. Gen. 50:19-20 “¹⁹ And Joseph said unto them, Fear not: for *am* I in the place of God? ²⁰ But as for you, ye thought evil against me; *but* God meant it unto good, to bring to pass, as *it is* this day, to save much people alive.”
2. This is the type of assurance everyone is looking for today.

III. LAW OF INCLUSION

A. “That all things”

B. There is nothing that Satan can throw at us that God cannot turn into good.

C. Notice some examples:

1. Joseph being sold into slavery.
2. Persecution in the early church led to the growth of the church.
 - a. Acts 4:1-4 “¹ And as they spake unto the people, the priests, and the captain of the temple, and the Sadducees, came upon them, ² Being grieved that they taught the people, and preached through Jesus the resurrection from the dead. ³ And they laid hands on them, and put *them* in

- hold unto the next day: for it was now eventide. ⁴ Howbeit many of them which heard the word believed; and the number of the men was about five thousand.”
- b. Acts 5:41-6:1 ⁴¹ And they departed from the presence of the council, rejoicing that they were counted worthy to suffer shame for his name. ⁴² And daily in the temple, and in every house, they ceased not to teach and preach Jesus Christ. ^{6:1} And in those days, when the number of the disciples was multiplied, there arose a murmuring of the Grecians against the Hebrews, because their widows were neglected in the daily ministration.”
3. Paul in prison.
 - a. At Philippi:
 - (1) Conversion of the jailor.
 - (2) Acts 16
 - b. At Rome; Phi. 1:12-13 ¹² But I would ye should understand, brethren, that the things *which happened* unto me have fallen out rather unto the furtherance of the gospel; ¹³ So that my bonds in Christ are manifest in all the palace, and in all other *places*.”

IV. LAW OF OPERATION

A. “Work”

B. God does work.

1. Deism is false.
 - a. Deism allows for the creation of all things.
 - b. After God started things out, He does not involve himself in any way with the affairs of this world.
2. God works in 2 ways.
 - a. Miracles
 - (1) A miracle is the transcendence, setting aside, overruling or interference of the processes of nature, for the moment, by God.
 - (2) Miracles ceased when the New Testament was completed.
 - b. Providence
 - (1) In providence we are discussing the working of God through the laws of nature to accomplish His purposes.
 - (2) God has always worked this way and still does today.
 - c. In both miracles and providence, God is working.
 - (1) The difference is that in miracles God set aside natural law, while providence is God’s working through or by means of natural law.
 - (2) In providence God is manipulating the laws of nature to accomplish His divine purpose.
3. God worked in giving His only begotten Son.
 - a. John 3:16 ¹⁶ For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life.”
 - b. 1 John 4:10 ¹⁰ Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that he loved us, and sent his Son *to be* the propitiation for our sins.”
4. God continues to work for us after conversion.
 - a. Mat. 28:20 ²⁰ Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you always, *even* unto the end of the world. Amen.”
 - b. Heb. 13:5-6 ⁵ *Let your conversation be* without covetousness; *and be* content with such things as ye have: for he hath said, I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee. ⁶ So that we may boldly say, The Lord *is* my helper, and I will not fear what man shall do unto me.”
 - c. God will not allow Satan to tempt up above what we are able to bear; 1 Cor. 10:13 ¹³ There hath no temptation taken you but such as is common to man: but God *is* faithful, who

will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able; but will with the temptation also make a way to escape, that ye may be able to bear *it*.”

V. LAW OF COOPERATION

A. “Together”

B. God can bring all the bad elements together and make something good out of it.

1. Joseph.
 - a. Sold into slavery
 - b. Falsely accused by his Potiphar’s wife.
 - c. The chief butler forgetting him after he reveals his dream to him.
 - d. A coming famine in the land.
2. Esther.
 - a. A drunken feast whereby Ahasuerus (Xerxes) demands that the queen show her beauty to the drunken men and her virtuous refusal.
 - b. Vashti deposed and Esther elevated to being queen.
 - c. Mordecai learning of and revealing the evil plot to kill the Ahasuerus.
 - d. Haman’s evil plan to exterminate all the Jews and his building of the gallows for Mordecai.
 - e. A sleepless night by the Ahasuerus and having his chronicles read to him.

C. This teaches us that God is in control of all things.

1. Psa. 93:1 ^{“1} The LORD reigneth, he is clothed with majesty; the LORD is clothed with strength, *wherewith* he hath girded himself: the world also is stablished, that it cannot be moved.”
2. Eph. 1:11 ^{“11} In whom also we have obtained an inheritance, being predestinated according to the purpose of him who worketh all things after the counsel of his own will:”
3. He truly is Sovereign of the universe.

VI. LAW OF COMPENSATION

A. “For Good”

B. Christ’s crucifixion turned out to our good.

C. Physical hardships can be turned to good if we allow God to do it.

1. Persecution; Jam. 1:3-4 ^{“3} Knowing *this*, that the trying of your faith worketh patience. ⁴But let patience have *her* perfect work, that ye may be perfect and entire, wanting nothing.”
2. Tribulations; Rom. 5:3-5 ^{“3} And not only *so*, but we glory in tribulations also: knowing that tribulation worketh patience; ⁴And patience, experience; and experience, hope: ⁵And hope maketh not ashamed; because the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost which is given unto us.”
3. Even the death of a loved one can be turned to good.
4. Pauline Hatcher (published in 1991) wrote, “I feel that I have been blessed by a loving Heavenly Father in being allowed the time—because of illness and suffering—to learn much of what His Word teaches. My life, since 1943, has been a life of pain....So I have never ceased to give thanks to a wise Father who knows what is best for my trials and tribulations. I have never resented these because I have always felt that this was one way of learning patience, maturity, God’s Word, how to help others, and how to be a little bit more like Jesus.”

5. Poem: Pauline Hatcher: "Three Others"
 Sometimes in the nighttime, when filled with pain,
 When wondering if my life has been lived in vain,
 Into my mind come thought of three
 Who had greater pain, and it strengthens me.

Job did not suffer because of wrong;
 He always his Lord obeyed;
 He vanquished Satan in every test,
 But pain was the price he paid.

The apostle Paul, though beaten with stripes,
 Rejoiced that he did not wrong;
 Pain did not defeat him; he cried in triumph
 "For when I am weak, I am strong!"

The agony of Jesus upon the cross
 Put all other suffering to shame;
 Yet he willingly suffered for you and me;
 How precious is His name!

So my nights are not lonely when filled with pain,
 As I think of three others who lived not in vain;
 Chastening of God is because of His love;
 It purifies and fits us for heaven above.

- D. **2 Cor. 12:9** ⁴⁹ And he said unto me, My grace is sufficient for thee: for my strength is made perfect in weakness. Most gladly therefore will I rather glory in my infirmities, that the power of Christ may rest upon me."

VII. LAW OF LIMITATION

A. "To them that love the Lord"

B. Special providence is limited to those who love the Lord.

1. All men have general providence.
2. Only those who love the Lord receive God's special providence.
 - a. Mat. 6:33 ³³ But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you."
 - b. Mat. 7:11 ¹¹ If ye then, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children, how much more shall your Father which is in heaven give good things to them that ask him?"
 - c. Eph. 1:3 ³ Blessed *be* the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly *places* in Christ:"

VIII. LAW OF DESIGN

A. "Who are called according to His purpose"

B. God's purpose:

1. God had a purpose for man and his existence.
 - a. God created man to glorify Him.
 - (1) Ecc. 12:13-14 ¹³ Let us hear the conclusion of the whole matter: Fear God, and keep his commandments: for this *is* the whole *duty* of man. ¹⁴ For God shall bring every work into judgment, with every secret thing, whether *it be* good, or whether *it be* evil."
 - (2) Isa. 43:7 ⁷ *Even* every one that is called by my name: for I have created him for my glory, I have formed him; yea, I have made him."
 - b. God created man to worship Him.
 - (1) Acts 17:27 ²⁷ That they should seek the Lord, if haply they might feel after him, and find him, though he be not far from every one of us:"
 - (2) John 4:23-24 ²³ But the hour cometh, and now is, when the true worshippers shall worship the Father in spirit and in truth: for the Father seeketh such to worship him. ²⁴ God *is* a Spirit: and they that worship him must worship *him* in spirit and in truth."
2. God had a plan to save man.
 - a. Eph. 1:4-6 ⁴ According as he hath chosen us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before him in love: ⁵ Having predestinated us unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ to himself, according to the good pleasure of his will, ⁶ To the praise of the glory of his grace, wherein he hath made us accepted in the beloved."
 - b. 1 Pet. 1:2-4 ² Elect according to the foreknowledge of God the Father, through sanctification of the Spirit, unto obedience and sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ: Grace unto you, and peace, be multiplied. ³ Blessed *be* the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, which according to his abundant mercy hath begotten us again unto a lively hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, ⁴ To an inheritance incorruptible, and undefiled, and that fadeth not away, reserved in heaven for you,"
3. God calls us by the gospel
 - a. 2 The. 2:14 ¹⁴ Whereunto he called you by our gospel, to the obtaining of the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ."
 - b. The gospel is God's power to save man; Rom. 1:16 ¹⁶ For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth; to the Jew first, and also to the Greek."
4. That plan was that man would be saved through the death of Jesus upon the cross and the blood which He shed, and our obedience to that gospel plan.

Conclusion: Knowing that God providentially cares for the Christian is a great encouragement to the Christian and provides comfort for him. Consider the promise of God made by Solomon; Pro. 3:23-26 ²³ Then shalt thou walk in thy way safely, and thy foot shall not stumble. ²⁴ When thou liest down, thou shalt not be afraid: yea, thou shalt lie down, and thy sleep shall be sweet. ²⁵ Be not afraid of sudden fear, neither of the desolation of the wicked, when it cometh. ²⁶ For the LORD shall be thy confidence, and shall keep thy foot from being taken." Additionally the Christian realizes that God will supply all our spiritual needs; Phi. 4:19 ¹⁹ But my God shall supply all your need according to his riches in glory by Christ Jesus."