



World Christian Fellowship

www.wcflondon.com
wcflondon@gmail.com

Divine Providence

Ruth 1:1-5, *Now it came to pass, in the days when the judges ruled, that there was a famine in the land. And a certain man of Bethlehem, Judah, went to dwell in the country of Moab, he and his wife and his two sons. ²The name of the man was Elimelech, the name of his wife was Naomi, and the names of his two sons were Mahlon and Chilion—Ephrathites of Bethlehem, Judah. And they went to the country of Moab and remained there. ³Then Elimelech, Naomi's husband, died; and she was left, and her two sons. ⁴Now they took wives of the women of Moab: the name of the one was Orpah, and the name of the other Ruth. And they dwelt there about ten years. ⁵Then both Mahlon and Chilion also died; so the woman survived her two sons and her husband.*

Have you ever wondered if God cares for you?

During times of great loss or spiritual dryness, it can be difficult to see God's hand in our lives.

Maybe you know God cares in the big scheme of things, but you wonder if he tends to or guides our steps on a more day-to-day basis.

Merriam Webster's dictionary defines it as such:

"God conceived as the power sustaining and guiding human destiny."

Divine providence deals with God's plan in the earth and God's plan in your life.

On a personal level, we see that it has to do with fulfilment of your destiny. God has a specific plan or destiny for your life and he works and orders things in your life to bring that destiny to fruition.

We also see that within the word providence is the word provide.

When God moves you along, He supplies provision to help you reach the destination He has planned for you.

To understand it fully, God has a specific purpose for your life, and you trust Him to bring to pass what He has purposed for you.

All throughout the pages of Scripture you see evidence of God providing for his people. However, the ways he provides today may be different. For example, instead of having manna and quail rain down from heaven, he may provide you with a job that allows you to support your family.

Regardless of the type of society you live in, God will provide. If you live in an agricultural or farming society, he can send rain. If you live in an ocean society, he can send fish. If you live in a capitalist society, he can provide jobs and opportunities.

When Mary, a virgin (**Isaiah 7:14**), gave birth to Jesus, such was affected by means of miraculous power.

Matthew 1:18-25; Luke 1:30-37.

On the other hand, when Hannah of Old Testament prayed for a son, the Lord heard her prayer and answered it.

He did so, however, providentially.

Hannah conceived only after her husband “knew her” — a biblical euphemism for sexual union. Ultimately, Samuel was born.

1 Samuel 1:19-20, *Then they rose early in the morning and worshiped before the Lord, and returned and came to their house at Ramah. And Elkanah knew Hannah his wife, and the Lord remembered her. ²⁰So it came to pass in the process of*

time that Hannah conceived and bore a son, and called his name Samuel, saying, "Because I have asked for him from the Lord."

It doesn't matter the circumstances; God will provide for his people.

Is God in Control of EVERYthing?

There are two laws at work simultaneously in the earth:

God's divine providence and
the reality of man's free will.

Even though God is sovereign, and His purpose will be established in the earth, He has never taken away man's free will to choose.

Consider what God told **Noah** after the flood:

Genesis 8:21-22, *And the Lord smelled a soothing aroma. Then the Lord said in His heart, "I will never again curse the ground for man's sake, although the imagination of man's heart is evil from his youth; nor will I again destroy every living thing as I have done. ²²"While the earth remains, Seedtime and harvest, Cold and heat, Winter and summer, And day and night Shall not cease."*

The evil condition of man's heart does not negate God's control over the earth.

The evidence of evil in our society gives greater weight to the power of God's divine providence because it often requires overcoming many of the realities and hurtful experiences we have in life.

The reality of evil deeds does not weaken God's providence, it actually strengthens it.

That's what makes the story of Joseph so wonderful, that in spite of all the bad things that happened to him, God's plan and destiny was still reached and accomplished in his life.

Even the most arduous of circumstances can't stop the fulfilment of God's destiny for your life.

ESTHER.

One of the great examples of this is the Book of Esther.

It is the only Book that does not mention the name of God. However, we see His imprint throughout, working and overriding behind the scenes to bless and deliver His people.

Unbelievers would call it luck but believers know it is God working all things together to fulfil His loving purpose for our lives.

In Esther God does not just work in spectacular ways, but more often supernaturally in and through all the ordinary events of life.

Chapter 1 introduces King Ahasuerus or Xerxes (**485BC**)

The Persian King, unstable, dangerous, with a hot temper.

Once he lost 300 ships in a storm, so he grabbed a strap, went to seashore and beat the sea 300 times to punish it!

His queen Vashti (thinking she was safe) refused to turn up at one of his feasts for him to show her off - so he was angry!

His advisors said he should cut her off from being Queen or else her bad example will spread and wives will stop obeying their husbands. So it was done.

PROVIDENCE: God was ready to use Vashti's fall for Esther's rise.

Chapter 2

After these things, when the wrath of King Ahasuerus subsided, he remembered Vashti, what she had done, and

what had been decreed against her. Then the king's servants who attended him said: *'Let beautiful young virgins be sought for the king. and let the king appoint officers in all the provinces of his kingdom, that they may gather all the beautiful young virgins to Shushan the citadel, into the women's quarters, under the custody of Hegai the king's eunuch, custodian of the women. And let beauty preparations be given them. Then let the young woman who pleases the king be queen instead of Vashti.'* This thing pleased the king, and he did so' (**Esther 2:1-4**).

Xerxes was beginning to feel guilt and regret about Vashti, and those around knew he was fixing to blame his servants and advisors, so they tried to turn his attention with a plan - A BEAUTY CONTEST!

PROVIDENCE: God used their scheming to save their skins for His higher purpose!

How else could a humble Jewish orphan-girl become Queen over the largest empire?

Coincidence or Providence?

MORDECAI (a Jew in Court) and ESTHER whom he had raised are now introduced:

'Mordecai had brought up Hadassah, that is, Esther (her Persian name, 'star'), his uncle's daughter, for she had neither father nor mother.

The young woman was lovely (in form) and beautiful (of face). When her father and mother died, Mordecai took her as his own daughter' (Esther 2:7).

The Jews were still scattered in exile (only some had returned to Jerusalem). God had seen ahead and raised up Mordecai, a man of faith, wisdom, and destiny, placing him in the court.

Esther's beauty was not just outward but inward.

She is marked by her humility, obedience, wisdom and sacrificial love for her people. She was entered for the beauty contest which began with one year of cosmetics! (**Esther 2:8-16**).

Esther wins the competition.

In obedience to Mordecai, she kept her Jewish identity secret, maintaining humility even after becoming Queen. This proves to be important.

PROVIDENCE: Mordecai overhears and foils a plot against the King's life.

He let Esther tell the King to strengthen her position and the whole story 'was written in the Book of the Chronicles in the presence of the king' (**Esther 2:21-23**). This incident proves vital to later events.

Chapter 3,

Introduces the enemy. wicked Haman (an Amelakites, the worst enemies of Israel). He is promoted to 2nd after the King so that all bowed to him except Mordecai.

When asked 'why?'

He told them that he was a Jew and would only bow to God. So, they told Haman who became angry and planned to kill all the Jews in the Kingdom!

PROVIDENCE: God controlled the lots for they gave Israel maximum time. Had they fallen much earlier it would have meant disaster.

Coincidence or Providence?

Purim, the 12th month feast of Israel celebrating their deliverance is named after Pur showing that Israel saw the hand of God in the outcome of the lots.

Haman manipulated the king to make a decree to destroy the Jews. He misled him by talking of a rebellious group of people but did not name them.

The King trusted him so just rubber-stamped it. He was helped by Haman's offer to pay for it himself, which gave the decree more credibility in his sight.

He knew the King wisely expected anyone with a bright idea to be ready to do this.

Chapter 4.

Mordecai gets word to Esther, who points out that to approach the king uninvited means death unless he holds out the golden sceptre.

She had not been called for 30 days. He reminded her that as a Jew she would die too and that silence was not an option.

Esther 4:14, *'For if you remain completely silent at this time, will relief and deliverance will arise for the Jews from another place? and you and your father's house will perish. Yet who knows whether you have come to the kingdom for such a time as this?'*

He recognises the Hand of Providence upon her rise to power, was for this crisis.

Esther called a 3-day fast showing her faith-dependence on God to turn the heart of the king (whose mood was unstable) and to bring deliverance.

Then she would put her life on the line by going to the king 'and if I perish, I perish!'.

Chapter 5

Esther's Intercession.

On the 3rd day we see these prayers answered. She put on her royal robes and stood in sight of the king. When he saw her, she found favour in his sight, and he held out to Esther the golden sceptre and she went near.

He offered to give her anything she wanted!

It seemed the perfect time to ask but in prayer Esther got God's plan and timing.

Instead, she invited the king and Haman to a banquet that day
So at the banquet the king again asked what she wanted.

Esther then invited them to another banquet the next day. Her obedience in the timing of this was essential for other providential events had to happen first.

First overconfident Haman plans to kill Mordecai and so has some gallows made overnight.

Chapter 6

Mordecai delivered and exalted.

Then the King has a sleepless night and so has a book read to him telling how Mordecai had saved his life (PROVIDENCE!) King had not rewarded him.

Now here comes a great example of how God overrules things for our good and against His enemies!

Haman had just entered the court early-morning to get the king's permission to hang Mordecai on the gallows that he had built. God now turns this around.

The king asked him, **'What shall be done for the man whom the king delights to honour?'**

Haman thought 'he must mean me' so suggests: 'let a royal robe be brought which the king has worn, and a horse on which the king has ridden, which has a royal crest placed on its head. Then let this robe and horse be delivered to the hand of one of the king's most noble princes, that he may array the man whom the king delights to honour. Then parade him on horseback through the city square and proclaim before him: 'Thus shall it be done to the man whom the king delights to honour!'

Then the king tells Haman to do this all for Mordecai! Afterward Haman hurried to his house mourning.

Even Haman's wife sees the hand of God in this and predicts his doom!

Chapter 7

The Banquet.

Now the stage is set.

At the 2nd Banquet, the king again asks Esther for her petition. She shocked the king by asking for her life and her people's life for they were set to be destroyed. Her hidden Jewishness is what Haman did not reckon on!

When the King asked who was responsible, she said, 'The adversary and enemy is this wicked Haman!'

So, Haman was terrified before the king and queen'. The king, angry at Haman for misleading him, went into the garden to think.

Haman begged Esther for his life, but when the king returned, Haman had tripped and fallen upon Esther lying on her couch!

This was too much and gave the king a convenient charge (of assault) for Haman. Haman's face was covered as he was taken to his execution upon the very gallows he had made for Mordecai.

Chapters 8-10, a Counter-Decree was made, enabling the Jews to fight and defeat their enemies, and Purim was established to honour God who had saved them. For God through PROVIDENCE turns what is planned

for evil to good, returning evil on the initiator.
God is always overruling events for His people.

If not for a sleepless night, Mordecai would have been killed but instead he was honoured, and Haman was killed.

Matthew 2:

Jesus was Mary and Joseph fled to Egypt from the hands of King Herod.

Magi started their journey 2 years back to Jerusalem.