

4th & Stewart church of Christ

"...upon this rock I will build my church;
and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it."
~ Matthew 16:18



February 1, 2015

Contact Us:

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Meeting Times:

Sunday:

Bible Study9:45 AM
Worship10:40 AM
Care, Inc. Service 2:30 PM
Worship 6:00 PM

Wednesday:

Ladies Bible Class.10:00 AM
Bible Study 7:00 PM

Elders:

Gene Bannister..... Billy Chism

Deacons:

Mike Bannister..... Don Smith

James Thomas

Preacher:

Johnny McCaghren

Works We Support:

Cherokee Home for Children
Gospel Broadcast Network
Heart of Texas Bible Camp (Bangs)
House to House, Heart to Heart
Mission Printing
Rohan Jones, Africa
The Truth in Love
World Bible School

Kernels of Knowledge From our Daily Bible Reading

A Study of Divine Providence

The religious world is an environment of extremism. Some allege, for example, that if God does exist, he has no contact at all with humanity. He is a disinterested, distant deity. This philosophy is known as deism. Others, by way of contrast, assert that virtually every activity of Deity is a miracle. Miracles, they allege, are occurring in abundance everyday. Such a view is equally at variance with the facts. The Scriptures plainly indicate that supernatural signs served a unique function in the divine scheme of things, and they are not being duplicated today.

A correct view recognizes that Jehovah operates in the affairs of men, but not miraculously; rather, God works through the process we accommodatively call "providence."

Providence Defined

The English term "providence" derives from the Latin *providentia*, which signifies "foresight." Providence has to do with:

- ◆ the Creator's maintenance of the functional balance of the natural world;
- ◆ the fulfillment of the divine purpose in the regulation of international affairs; and
- ◆ God's special operation in the lives of those who seek to do his will.

Before we consider each of these areas, it is necessary that we discuss the nature of providence. Exactly what is this phenomenon?

Providence is the activity of God as accomplished **through law**. It stands in contrast to the miraculous, by which the Lord operates **independent of law**. In providence, Jehovah manipulates his own laws for the accomplishment of his ultimate purpose. God respects man's free will, and he will never overpower our freedom of choice in the use of providential activity; nevertheless, the Bible clearly affirms divine activity in the providential mode. It is a process that we simply cannot explain from our limited vantage point. We accept it because of our confidence in the credibility of the biblical record.

Perhaps the following will help illustrate the difference between the miraculous and the providential.

When Mary, a virgin (Isa. 7:14), gave birth to Jesus, such was affected by means of miraculous power (Matt. 1:18-25; Luke 1:30-37). On the other hand, when Hannah of Old Testament fame prayed for a son, the Lord heard her prayer and answered it. He did so, however, providentially; she conceived only after her husband "*knew her*" (a biblical euphemism for sexual union); ultimately Samuel was born (1 Sam. 1:19,20).

Here is another case in contrast. When the Assyrian army threatened the city of Jerusalem, God supernaturally destroyed 185,000 enemy soldiers in a single night (Isa. 37:36). Over against this, Sennacherib, the Assyrian king, was dealt with in a different fashion. Jehovah caused him to "*hear tidings*" that prompted his return to Assyria (Isa. 37:7); there, in accordance with divine prophecy, he was killed by the hands of his own sons (cf. 37:7,38). Unquestionably, providence was implemented! In each instance, Heaven was guiding certain events. In the one case, divine activity was direct, independent of means. In the other case, it was indirectly employed by the use of means.

Providence and Nature

The holy Godhead (Father, Son, and Holy Spirit) was responsible not only for the origin of the universe (Gen. 1:1ff; John 1:1-3), these divine Persons continue to regulate and sustain nature. Christ is "*upholding all things* [i.e., the entire universe] *by the word of his power*" (Heb. 1:3). Addition-

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"But Joseph said to them, 'Do not fear, for am I in the place of God? As for you, you meant evil against me, but God meant it for good, to bring it about that many people should be kept alive, as they are today. So do not fear; I will provide for you and your little ones.' Thus he comforted them and spoke kindly to them." **Genesis 22:16-18**

Let us know if you want to study the Bible to know more about Christ and His Church.

(Continued from page 1)

ally, “in him all things consist [sunesteke, stand together]” (Col. 1:17). The perfect tense form is used here in the sense of a present. Christ **keeps on holding together** the forces of the universe. Robertson noted that he “is the controlling and unifying force in nature” (1931. Word Pictures in the New Testament. Vol. 4. Nashville, TN: Broadman, 479).

God providentially maintains the seasons (Gen. 8:22), and blesses the earth with his bounty (Acts 14:17). All earth’s creatures are in the hand of the Creator (Matt. 10:29), and he cares for them (Matt. 6:26; cf. Ps. 104:21; 147:9). There are many Bible examples where Jehovah used the forces and/or the creatures of nature for the accomplishment of his will (see Gen. 22:13; Num. 11:31; 1 Kgs. 13:24ff; 17:6; 2 Kgs. 2:23,24).

God and the Nations

Since the fall of humanity God has been working a plan designed to make redemption available to fallen mankind. The plan was implemented with the death of Christ, and the subsequent establishment of his kingdom. Long before the birth of Jesus, however, God was providentially working among the nations of the world to prepare the human race for the coming of the Savior. The Lord is “ruler over the nations” (Ps. 22:28). Jehovah rules in the kingdoms of men, setting over them whomever he wills (Dan. 2:21; 4:17).

The Hebrew nation was very important in the divine plan for human salvation. Through this people the Messiah would come (Gen. 22:18). Accordingly, the Lord protected Israel (or a least a remnant) so that the promises regarding the Messianic line would be kept intact. For example, Jehovah providentially used Joseph to sustain the Hebrews as they sojourned in the land of Egypt. Joseph was sold by his jealous brethren into Egyptian slavery, but God used that situation for the preservation of the nation (see Gen. 39:2; 45:5-9). Every student should read J. W. McGarvey’s discussions of divine providence, dealing with the accounts of Joseph and Esther, as set forth in his book, Sermons (available from Gospel Light Publishing, Delight, AR).

Paul, in his epistle to the churches of Galatia, contended that God sent his Son “when the fullness of time came” (Gal. 4:4). Without a doubt the apostle here alludes to Heaven’s providential preparations among various nations, which would facilitate the arrival and success of Christ’s redemptive mission. The Hebrews, for example, prepared the antique world with its sacred Scriptures, replete with Messianic prophecies. The Roman Empire provided a peaceful environment, a highway system for the rapid spread of the gospel, etc. The Greeks contributed the most precise instrument for the conveyance of human thought ever devised, the Koine Greek language (in which the New Testament was composed). Galatians 4:4 fairly shouts of the providential activity of the Creator. An excellent discussion of this point is found in A. H. Newman’s, A Manual of Church History (1933, 20ff).

Special Providence

When we speak of “special providence,” we are thinking primarily of two things. First, there is the providential operation of God in the lives of those who earnestly are **seeking the truth**. Second, there is the divine activity that operates in the interest of **Christian people**. Let us consider each of these.

(1) God knows of those who long for the truth (see Acts 16:6-10), and promises that they who “hunger and thirst after righteousness” shall be filled (Matt. 5:6). Accordingly, the Father has the ability to work within the circumstances of human activity to bring about his desire. That being the case, it reasonably follows that God’s providence may be employed to facilitate the journey of those whose hearts are longing to find and serve their Maker.

A case in point may be found in the following narrative.

In the book of Philemon the story is told of a slave named Onesimus. He belonged to Philemon of Colossae. Onesimus ran away from his master and made his way to Rome, where he encountered the apostle Paul. Paul led Onesimus to the truth. Commenting upon this matter, the apostle sees the possibility of providence in this situation. He writes, “For perhaps he was therefore parted from you for a season, that you should have him forever; no longer as a servant, but more than a servant, a brother beloved” (Phile. 15,16).

The verb *echoristhe* (“was parted,” ASV) is a passive voice form. The passive represents the subject as being acted upon. Some scholars have noted that the passive here “may contain a conviction of the divine overruling . . . to denote the hidden action of God as an agent responsible for what is done” (1980, 314). Also, by the terms “for a season” and “forever,” some suggest the apostle shows his “conviction that the hand of God was at work in the whole situation” (Rupprecht, Arthur. 1978. The Expositor’s Bible Commentary. Frank Gaebelein, ed. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 461).

(2) The New Testament is filled with promises which affirm that God will answer the prayers of his people and work in their lives. But since Jehovah is not functioning miraculously (see 1 Cor. 13:8-10), obviously he is operating providentially. Things that may appear perfectly natural, from the human point of view, may be being directed by Jehovah!

Here is a case in point. When Paul wrote to the Christians in Rome (from Corinth, during his third missionary journey – cf. Acts 20:2; Rom. 16:23), he told these brethren that in his prayers he continually made request (a present tense form) unto God that he might some day visit them (Rom. 1:9,10). As he concluded the book, he urged the Roman saints to join him in prayer, to the end that this request be granted (Rom. 15:30-32). God will answer those prayers, but in his own providential way!

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Television

The Truth In Love (Robert Dodson)

Sunday @ 7:00am on KTAB

In Search of the Lord’s Way (Phil Sanders)

Sunday @ 7:30am on KTAB

Life In The Light (Chris McCurley)

Sunday @ 10:30am on KTAB

Radio

Preaching the Word (Michael Light)

Sunday @ 9:00am on KOXE 101.3

Internet

TheGospelRadioNetwork.org

Gospel Broadcasting Network (Gbnv.org)

God’s Plan for Redeeming Man

Hear Learn the saving message of Christ’s sacrifice (1 Cor. 1:18; Rom. 10:17).

Believe Jesus is the Son of God (John 8:24)

Confess Jesus as your Lord, Lawgiver, and King (Rom. 10:9-10; Matt. 10:32-33)

Repent of your sinful conduct (Luke 13:3,5)

Complete your initial obedience to the gospel by being **baptized** for the forgiveness of your sins (Acts 2:38; 22:16)

Live faithfully (Rev. 2:10; 2 Tim. 4:7-8)

Bible Reading Schedule

Feb. 1 Exodus 7-9

Feb. 2 Exodus 10-12

Feb. 3 Exodus 13-15

Feb. 4 Exodus 16-18

Feb. 5 Exodus 19-21

Feb. 6 Exodus 22-24

Feb. 7 Exodus 25-27

Feb. 8 Exodus 28-29

“Be diligent to present yourself approved to God, a worker who does not need to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth.”

(2 Timothy 2:15)



Richard Dawkins and Down's Syndrome

Being a Christian brings responsibilities; being an atheist brings consequences, it appears.

When a woman expressed the dilemma she felt when discovering her unborn child had Down's Syndrome, atheist Richard Dawkins who wrote among other books "The God Delusion" tweeted "Abort it and try again. It would be immoral to bring it into the world if you have a choice."

It's interesting to think that it is the crusty atheist who brings up the concept of morality. It's also interesting to see where he assigns immorality. It is immoral to bring a suffering child into the world; it's moral to take its life. This moral code is as upside down as a cave-full of bats hanging by their feet.

By the way, throngs of people stricken with Down's Syndrome and other handicaps have demonstrated the ability to live full and creative lifestyles, though this is hardly the point.

Of course, there have been many purported Christians who have made equally insensitive remarks throughout history, but it should be pointed out that these are not the views of Jesus Christ himself; they are the views of a badly misguided follower of Jesus.

Dawkins' response seems cold and indifferent because it is. And there is a reason why he responded in that heavy-handed manner. Atheism generally demeans human life to the level of evolved animals.

In contrast, Christianity places the very highest value on human beings. Christianity teaches that humans uniquely are made "*in the image of God*" (Genesis 1:26,27). There is something in us all that reflects God himself. This knowledge elevates all humans, makes racism nonsensical, and values even a person who is mentally or physically challenged.

Jesus declares that the most valuable thing on earth is not a diamond mine in South Africa, not a billionaire's Wall Street investment, but one solitary human being: "*For what will it profit a man if he gains the whole world and forfeits his soul? Or what shall a man give in return for his soul?*" (Matthew 16:26).

The irony here is that when humans submit themselves to God, it is they who are elevated. Mark this, please: the value of human life starts with the manner in which God values human life. And he demonstrated that supreme value by dying in its stead. Humanism and atheism cheapen life, dispose of life when it seems inconvenient, and offers no compassion for life in its more difficult forms.

Remember it was the Lord who said, "*Let the little children come to me and do not hinder them, for to such belong the kingdom of God*" (Matthew 19:14).

Stan Mitchell

Celebrate

"Rejoice with those who rejoice..." (Romans 12:15)

February Birthdays: Cindy McCaghren (2), Johnny McCaghren (2), Peggy Chism (3), Carol Wilcox (5), Lunday Maninger (8), Aaron Stewart (11), Patti Bannister (14), Jack Turner (22), Jonathan Fuller (28).

February Anniversaries: Billy & Peggy Chism (26).

Mistakes? Left Out? Let Johnny know...



Records

	Jan. 18, 2015	Jan. 25, 2015
Bible Class	48	46
AM Worship	62	61
PM Worship	47	36
Wednesday PM	41	43
Contribution	\$1,969	\$1,760

This Week: 2/1/15		Next Week: 2/8/15		February 2015	
Sunday AM:		Song Leader: Mike Bannister		Song Leader: Mike Bannister	
Greeters	Mileen & Ashley Kahlich	John Barnum Family		Make Announcements: Joe Dennis	
Opening Prayer	Allen Griffith	Don Smith		Prepare Communion: Peggy Moore	
Communion	James Thomas*, Don Smith John Barnum, Ken Maninger	James Fuller*, John McCaghren Hank Wheeler, Gene Bannister		Clean Building: Johnny & Cindy McCaghren	
Closing Prayer	Gene Bannister	Allen Griffith		Keep Grounds: Tom Wilcox	
Attendance Cards	Caleb Dennis	Chase Churchwell		March 2015	
Sunday PM:		Song Leader: Tom Wilcox		Song Leader: Ken Maninger	
Opening Prayer	James Fuller	Mike Bannister		Make Announcements: Ken Maninger	
Scripture Reading	Hank Wheeler	John Barnum		Prepare Communion: Don & Darlene Smith	
Communion	James Thomas	James Fuller		Clean Building: John Barnum Family	
Closing Prayer	Billy Chism	Gene Bannister		Keep Grounds: James Fuller	
Wednesday Devotionals:	February 4 Tom Wilcox	February 11 Prayer	February 18 Don Smith	February 25 Joe Dennis	

Search the Scriptures

Be like the Bereans who "received the word with all readiness of mind, and searched the scriptures daily, whether those things were so." (Acts 17:11)

Studies for the week of February 1, 2015		Sunday Class Acts 2:38ff Wednesday Class Back to the Bible: Lesson 3
<p>All Spiritual Blessings – Ephesians 1:3</p> <p>I. What Is The Difference Between Physical & Spiritual Blessings?</p> <p>A. God as our Creator has provided all necessary physical blessings.</p> <p>B. God's providential care is two-fold:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. General – God provides for saint and sinner – also animals – with physical blessings (Mt. 5:44-48; Ps. 147:9). 2. Special – God takes special care of His children with spiritual blessings (Rom. 8:31; Mt. 7:7-11; Rom. 8:28; Phil. 4:4-6,19). 3. To learn the difference between physical and spiritual blessings, study 2 Corinthians 4:16-5:2. <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. Physical blessings are temporal – they end at death. b. Spiritual blessings are eternal. <p>C. Do we belong to God or the world?</p> <p>II. Where Are All Spiritual Blessings To Be Found?</p> <p>A. Jesus said, "I will build my church" (Mt. 16:18).</p> <p>B. Upon obeying the gospel, one is added to the church by the Lord Himself (Acts 2:47).</p> <p>C. There are no spiritual blessings outside of Christ!</p> <p>III. What Are the Spiritual Blessings Discussed by the Apostle Paul in Ephesians 1:3-14; 2:16-22; 3:12?</p> <p>A. Redemption – to be bought back (1:7).</p> <p>B. Forgiveness – to be pardoned, cleansed, and held guiltless in the mind of God (1:7).</p> <p>C. Inheritance – to be made joint-heirs (1:11).</p> <p>D. Reconciliation – to be reunited in fellowship with God (2:16).</p> <p>E. Access – to be able to approach God through Christ (2:18).</p> <p>F. Citizenship – to be an enrolled citizen in the Kingdom of God (2:19).</p> <p>G. Household – to be in the family of God (2:19).</p> <p>H. Foundation – to be on solid ground, the rock of truth (2:20).</p> <p>I. Cornerstone – to be joined to Christ (2:20).</p> <p>J. Part of the temple – to be priests (2:21).</p> <p>K. Habitation – to be in a great relationship with the Godhead (2:22).</p> <p>L. Boldness – to be able to go before God with confidence (3:12).</p> <p>M. And the greatest blessings are yet to come! (Rev. 14:13).</p> <p>We cannot even begin to comprehend all the blessings we have in Christ. Since all spiritual blessings are in Christ – we must obey the gospel in order to enjoy these great blessings.</p> <p>Are you in Christ? Are you living faithful? Enjoying every spiritual blessing?</p>		<p>(Continued from page 2)</p> <p>Consider the following facts:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ After his third missionary campaign, Paul returned to Jerusalem where he was arrested for allegedly defiling the temple (Acts 21:28). In the night, the Lord told him to be cheerful. He would not die in Jerusalem; rather, the apostle would bear witness in Rome (23:11). ◆ To save his life from a Jewish mob that had vowed to murder him, Roman officials sent Paul to Caesarea by night (23:31ff). ◆ There, he was imprisoned for two years (24:27). ◆ Finally, when he concluded that he would get no justice from the authorities, exercising his right as a Roman citizen, the apostle appealed his case to Caesar (25:11). ◆ In early autumn (ca. A.D. 60), he was put on a ship bound for Rome (27:1). ◆ En route, the vessel was wrecked and all hope of being saved was abandoned (27:30). ◆ But an angel appeared to the apostle and promised: "You must stand before Caesar" (27:24). ◆ The following spring, safe and sound, Paul arrived in Rome (28:16). His prayers (and those of the Roman saints) had been answered, but through the mysterious workings of divine providence! <p>Later, writing from Rome to the brethren in Philippi, the apostle could say that the things which had happened to him "have fallen out rather unto the progress of the gospel" (Phil. 1:12). There is no doubt but that Paul saw the helpful hand of Providence in this series of events in his life (see Acts 26:22).</p> <p>Let God's people thus rejoice, and live each day with calm confidence, knowing that the Lord is near, and that Heaven's operations through providence are an abiding presence in our daily existence.</p> <p style="text-align: right;">Wayne Jackson (via www.christiancourier.com)</p>