

Does God Act Without Miracles?

Intro: Last week, we began our study of “God’s Providence”. In that sermon, I affirmed my belief that God continues to work in the world. The *way he works* is the topic of our study this morning.

1. Review

- A. We discussed some ideas opposing God’s present-day-activity.
- B. We defined what we mean when we use the word “providence”.
- C. General and Special Providence
- D. We concluded by pointing out that God does not cause everything.

2. God’s Use of Miracles

- A. Definition of Miracle - “A deed in an order which is impossible with the forces ordinarily working in that order” (Faulkner). It is God’s intervention into the world that transcends the natural order.
- B. Words used in scripture to describe these events
 - 1. Wonder – Astonishing act in the eye of the one seeing it happen.
 - 2. Powers – The energy expended to perform such a wonder.
 - 3. Sign – A sign of God’s presence which confirms the message of the speaker.
- C. Jesus, and another select few, performed these types of deeds.

3. Comparing Miracles and Providence

- A. Mary’s Conception and Hannah’s conception of the future prophet, Samuel.
- B. God’s saving Israel from Assyria and providentially getting the king of Assyria to leave the area. Isaiah 37
- C. Jesus calming the sea and Elijah’s praying for rain.

4. God is presented as working behind the scenes in the activities of life with folks unaware it’s happening.

- A. Joseph and his brethren used to preserve the Hebrew nation. Genesis 45
- B. Cyrus used to deliver Judah from Babylonian captivity. 2 Chron. 36:22-23; Isaiah 45:5
- C. God’s use of Esther to again save the people of Israel . Esther 4:14
- D. Onesimus’ meeting Paul (?). Philemon 10

Conclusion: God has never completely controlled anyone’s life. His commitment to man’s *free will* makes this involvement against his nature as revealed in scripture. But at times he has intervened to see that his plan for man was fully implemented. Most times, both now and in the past, he does it without our even knowing it is happening. That’s God’s providence.