

## **Providence: Has God Abandoned The World?**

Intro: From the time of Creation (Genesis 1:1; Hebrews 11:6), the Bible presents God as the God of history who intervenes into the activities of man. In Exodus 3:14, Israel is reminded that God not only “was”, but also is “now”. In a speech recorded in Acts 17, Paul says our very existence depends on the God who created us all. Today, we begin a look at “Providence” in an effort to understand how God works in this present time.

1. Some reasons are offered for God’s non-involvement in the world.
  - A. Some believe in God the creator, but now believe he just “watches”.
  - B. Some say all the evil in the world means God is out of the picture.
  - C. Some say all the natural disasters indicate God is nowhere to be found.
  - D. Some say God was once very interactive (miracles etc.) but the fulfillment of his plan of salvation in Christ concluded that involvement.
  
2. Understanding By Definition
  - A. Consider how we often hear and use the term.
  - B. Comes from *provide* (meaning to see before)
  - C. Used in English NT in Acts 24:2 speaking of a man, not of God.
  - D. Similar word meaning “take thought” is used in Rom. 12:17 & 2 Cor. 8:21.
  - E. God’s ongoing providence for the world is expressed Hebrews 1:3
  
3. Two Types of Providence
  - A. General
    1. In the natural world – Psm. 104:14; 135:5-7; Acts 14:17
    2. In the animal world – Psm. 104:21-29; Matt. 6:26; 10:29
    3. In the general affairs of men – Job 12:23; Daniel 2:21; Matt. 5:45
  - B. Special
    1. Help for those who seek to obey His will – 2 Cor. 9:8
    2. Consider also Psm. 37:23; Prov. 3:6; Matt. 6:33; Rom. 8:28
    3. “Chastisement” in Hebrews 12:3-11
  
4. Not All Happens as a Result of Special Providence
  - A. Accidents and coincidences happen – Ecclesiastes 9:11
  - B. Some things are Satan’s business – 1 Peter 5:8-9
  - C. Sometimes we are victim of someone else’s evil. Rom. 8:35-39
  - D. Be careful in your assumptions of God’s actions.

Conclusion: The providence of God does not relieve us of responsibility. Nor does it relieve us of the more specific responsibility to make wise judgments. But it does relieve us of anxiety in our service to God. See Matthew 6:30. God’s providence can draw us closer to him. But the decision to allow such drawing is up to us. Rest assured that God has not abandoned the world he created.