



"If a fellow isn't thankful for what he's got, he isn't likely to be thankful for what he's going to get."

—Frank A. Clark

**07-Feb-20**

## **Divine Providence (Part One)**

God's providence is a subject that few people, even in God's church, have a full grasp on. Most look on it too narrowly. *Providence* is defined as "the protective care of [God](#) or of nature as a spiritual power." It behooves us to investigate the breadth of God's providential care of His saints.

In [John 5:17](#), Jesus makes an interesting comment about His Father: "My Father has been working until now, and I have been working." The implication is that the Father and the Son never stop working. Digging into Scripture will give us a better understanding of His work ethic and what He accomplishes in our behalf.

We will begin with [Psalm 121:1-8](#), which covers multiple aspects of God's providence:

I will lift up my eyes to the hills—from whence comes my help?  
My help comes from the LORD, who made heaven and earth. He will not allow your foot to be moved; He who keeps you will not slumber. Behold, He who keeps Israel shall neither slumber nor sleep. The LORD is your keeper; the LORD is your shade at your right

hand. The sun shall not strike you by day, nor the moon by night. The LORD shall preserve you from all evil; He shall preserve your soul. The LORD shall preserve your going out and your coming in from this time forth, and even forevermore.

Also, the well-known Psalm 23 is a near-perfect expression of God's protective care. These two psalms cover a lot of ground, making it clear that God is intimately concerned and involved in each individual's life. And not just those in His church. [Matthew 5:45](#) shows that God also provides for the rest of [the world](#): "for He makes His sun rise on the evil and on the good, and sends rain on the just and on the unjust." Notice also His comment in [Matthew 6:26](#): "Look at the birds of the air, for they neither sow nor reap nor gather into barns; yet your heavenly Father feeds them. Are you not of more value than they?" Judging from these verses, our Father has everything covered from the celestial bodies to good and evil men and to the beasts of the field—even the fields themselves!

We should consider specific acts of providence, for instance, God's protection of His people. [II Chronicles 16:9](#) instructs us: "For the eyes of the LORD run to and fro throughout the whole earth, to show Himself strong on behalf of those whose heart is loyal to Him." How can there be any security more reliable than this? However, we should note the caveat here: All promises of help and protection are reserved for those whose [faith](#) and trust are sincerely focused on the Almighty God. Notice some similar passages:

- [Psalm 34:7](#): The angel of the LORD encamps all around those who fear Him, and delivers them.
- [Psalm 91:1-2](#): He who dwells in the secret place of the Most High shall abide under the shadow of the Almighty. I will say of the LORD, "He is my refuge and my fortress; my God, in Him I will trust."

In today's world, that secret place for true [Christians](#) is the Body of Christ, the church. It is a place of safety in which the elect are "hidden with Christ in God" ([Colossians 3:3](#)). Those chosen people, who are loyal to Him and fear Him, dwell in the most secure refuge in all the universe.

God also supplies plentifully in times of need. In [Deuteronomy 2:7](#), [Moses](#) describes His treatment of Israel in the wilderness: "For the LORD your God has blessed you in all the work of your hand. He knows your trudging through this great wilderness. These forty years the LORD your God has been with you; you have lacked nothing." He provided them with *everything*!

What did He provide? For starters, He gave them godly leadership through Moses, Aaron, Joshua, and Caleb. He shielded them from the pursuing Egyptian army, shaded them from the blazing desert sun with a cloud, and lit up the desert by night with a fire. He supplied them with food, water, firewood; clothing that never wore out; and good health to endure the trek in the desert.

He provided bountifully for Elijah in time of famine ([I Kings 17:6](#)) and again when he sojourned in the wilderness ([I Kings 19:5-8](#)). In the latter incident, the prophet "went in the strength of that food forty days and forty nights." Surely, God could have provided food and water every day just as He did for Elijah in time of famine, but He demonstrates that He can preserve health and life even in their absence.

For the army of the three kings, a story found in II Kings 3, God provided water to the host's parched soldiers. And not just a little water—He filled an entire valley with it (see verses 17, 20; see also [II Kings 4:1-7](#); [Matthew 14:19-20](#); [Luke 6:38](#); [Philippians 4:19](#) for other examples of God's abundant giving). In these examples, God was not a tightwad but gave food, water, and whatever was needed to the full.

One area of divine providence that is often overlooked is God's meticulous preparation for the needs of His saints. He not only provides overflowing blessings ([Psalm 23:5](#)) but also gives abundant treasures of [goodness](#). Consider [Psalm 31:19](#): "Oh, how great is Your goodness, which You have laid up for those who fear You, which You have prepared for those who trust in You in the presence of the sons of men!" (see also [Psalm 68:10](#); [Jonah 4:6](#) ).

In fact, He prepares a spiritual feast for them! In the Parable of the Wedding Feast ([Matthew 22:1-14](#)) and the Parable of the Great Supper ([Luke 14:15-24](#)).

), Jesus describes a king (or "a man") who prepares a meal for those he calls to attend. Both [parables](#) highlight two facts in this light: The supper is an abundant feast, and everything is ready for them to partake of it (see [Matthew 22:4](#); [Luke 14:16-17](#)). We can interpret these symbols to indicate the marvelous spiritual food that God has prepared over the millennia to give His elect to help them "grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior [Jesus Christ](#)" ([II Peter 3:18](#)).

[Isaiah 25:6](#) expands this aspect of God's providence out to "all people" who will one day be in His Kingdom: "And in this mountain the LORD of hosts will make for all people a feast of choice pieces, a feast of wines on the lees, of fat things full of marrow, of well-refined wines on the lees." God does not skimp when it comes to feeding His people good things, especially those good spiritual things that will grow and enhance their godly character.

There is a great deal more to this subject, which we will see in Part Two.

- Mike Fuhrer

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## **From the Archives: Featured Sermon**

### **[The Providence of God \(Part One\)](#)**

by John W. Ritenbaugh

Providence is the protective care of God, yet the providence of God also touches on the pains and sufferings of persecution. To the elect whom God foreknew, all things- pleasant or unpleasant- happen for ultimate good (Romans 8:28). Tragic things, calamities, trials, anxiety, evil, and curses happen to Christians too, as well as blessings, in order to become fashioned and molded into the glory of God's image. As Christ learned from the things He suffered (Hebrews 5:8), we must also develop patience, refrain from murmuring, and realize that "time and chance" no longer apply to those whom God has called. Whatever it takes to bring God's purpose to pass, we need to develop the humility, obedience, and faith to accept.

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## **From the Archives: Featured Article**

### **[God Our Provider](#)**

by Charles Whitaker

The story of building the Tabernacle serves as an encouraging example for us today as we collaborate with God in building His church. God will provide what we need to finish the job to His specifications!

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