



"[Christians] arrange things so that we can get on well enough without divine aid, while at the same time ostensibly seeking it. We boast in the Lord but watch carefully that we never get caught depending on Him."

—A.W. Tozer

14-Feb-20

Divine Providence (Part Two)

In Part One, we stuck a toe into the waters of divine providence and found that the subject is far deeper than we may have imagined it to be. God's care for us goes well beyond fulfilling our basic physical needs like food, water, clothing, and shelter. In fact, He is far more interested in providing our spiritual needs, as it is those things that aid us in our walk toward being His sons and daughters in His Kingdom (see [Matthew 6:25-33](#)).

A glorious inheritance awaits us if we endure to the end ([Matthew 24:13](#)). Jesus relates the goal of Christians in the Parable of the Sheep and the Goats: "Then the King will say to those on His right hand, 'Come, you blessed of My Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world'" ([Matthew 25:34](#)).

[John 14:2-3](#) adds some detail about this Kingdom, mentioning—as in [Matthew 25:34](#)—the preparatory work the resurrected [Jesus Christ](#) is doing to make sure that we will both be there and fill a high position, working by His side: "In My Father's house are many mansions; if it were not so, I

would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and receive you to Myself; that where I am, there you may be also."

In [Hebrews 11:16](#), the author of Hebrews comes at the subject from a slightly different perspective: "But now they [the faithful] desire a better, that is, a heavenly country. Therefore [God](#) is not ashamed to be called their God, for He has prepared a city for them." He calls our inheritance "a heavenly country" and "a city." In [Revelation 21:1-2](#), this city is called "New Jerusalem" (described in verses 9-21), "prepared as a bride adorned for her husband."

The most important feature is that the Father will be there (verse 3), and He will freely give His victorious children all things (verse 7). Jesus says something similar in [Matthew 19:29](#), "And everyone who has left houses or brothers or sisters or father or mother or wife or children or lands, for My name's sake, shall receive a hundredfold, and inherit eternal life."

These verses suggest that, when our Savior said that His Father has been at work ([John 5:17](#)), it was a bit of an understatement! He is continually working to provide us with what we need to attain this fantastic future. We also realize that His prodigious amount of work is not for everyone's benefit but strictly for the faithful flock.

The apostle John writes in [I John 2:4-6](#):

He who says, "I know Him," and does not keep His commandments, is a liar, and the truth is not in him. But whoever keeps His word, truly the [love](#) of God is perfected in him. By this we know that we are in Him. He who says he abides in Him ought himself also to walk just as He walked.

[Revelation 21:8](#) says much the same as verse 4: "But the cowardly, unbelieving, abominable, murderers, sexually immoral, sorcerers, idolaters, and [all liars](#) shall have their part in the lake which burns with fire and brimstone, which is the [second death](#)." Those who wish to partake of the amazing life of God in His Kingdom must abide by His rules now and forever. The apostle Paul agrees in [I Corinthians 15:50](#): "Now this I say,

brethren, that flesh and blood cannot inherit the [kingdom of God](#); nor does corruption inherit incorruption." There will be no corruption of [sin](#) in the New Heavens and New Earth, which is why we must be putting it to death in our lives.

The inheritance God has [waiting](#) for us is far beyond our current understanding or even our imagination. The prophet Isaiah writes, "For since the beginning of [the world](#) men have not heard nor perceived by the ear, nor has the eye seen any God besides You, who acts for the one who waits for Him" ([Isaiah 64:4](#)). We are probably more familiar with Paul's quotation of this in [I Corinthians 2:9](#): "But as it is written: 'Eye has not seen, nor ear heard, nor have entered into the heart of man the things which God has prepared for those who love Him.'" We just cannot fathom what the wonderful World Tomorrow will be like.

However, it is up to us to remain worthy of all this providence offered by God and grow in character. Paul exhorts us in [Philippians 2:12](#), "Therefore, my beloved, as you have always obeyed, not as in my presence only, but now much more in my absence, work out your own salvation with fear and trembling." We need to keep ourselves spiritually refreshed through prayer, Bible study, fasting, meditation, and good works focused on the brethren (see [Ephesians 2:10](#)).

God is not slack in His work ethic or His promises, and He expects the same from us. Paul tells Timothy, "Be diligent to present yourself approved to God, a worker who does not need to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth" ([II Timothy 2:15](#)). Jesus instructs His disciples, "Take heed, watch and pray; for you do not know when the time is" ([Mark 13:33](#)).

We should know by now what our job is: "[W]hat does the LORD your God require of you, but to fear the LORD your God, to walk in all His ways and to love Him, to serve the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul" ([Deuteronomy 10:12](#)). The prophet Micah pens something similar: "He has shown you, O man, what is good; and what does the LORD require of you but to do justly, to love mercy, and to walk humbly with your God?" ([Micah 6:8](#)). And perhaps the most succinct of all is Jesus' command in [John 6:29](#): "This is the work of God, that you believe in Him whom He sent."

Paul sums up our Christian walk for us in [1 Corinthians 15:58](#): "Therefore, my beloved brethren, be steadfast, immovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, knowing that your labor is not in vain in the Lord." We know that God promises to reward even the smallest of labors we do for others ([Matthew 10:42](#)), but through His providence—especially His providence of *spiritual* aid—He has made it possible for us to do far more significant things in His name as we pursue [holiness](#), the pure character of our Lord.

So, knowing that we are already part of the household of God ([Ephesians 2:19](#)), we, like Jesus during His physical life, need to be about our Father's business ([Luke 2:49](#)).

- Mike Fuhrer

From the Archives: Featured Sermon

[Themes of Ruth \(Part Two\): God's Providence](#)

by Richard T. Ritenbaugh

As we count the 50 days toward Pentecost, we should reconsider the events of our lives (whether life-changing ones or those we might regard as incidental), coming to understand that they reveal God's on-going maintenance of our spiritual lives. As we study the Megilloth Ruth, we see Naomi, described as a pleasant, attractive personality, a God-fearing, common-sense individual who put others before herself. Yet, for all that, she exhibits the negative trait of bitterness as she responds to a series of experiences which she initially defines as curses. Like Moses, Elijah, and nearly all of God's called-out ones, Naomi found it difficult to see God's hand at work in the "big picture" of things. Naomi's pessimism disappeared once she perceived God's hand behind apparently 'accidental' events, including Ruth gleaning in Boaz's field, or 'circumstantial' ones, such as the attention he showered upon her. Naomi soon realized that God had meticulously orchestrated, towards the accomplishment of His own purposes, the famine, the death of her husband and sons, the loyalty of Ruth, the gleaning episodes, the marriage of Ruth to Boaz and the birth of Obed.

Naomi's blessings, the result of God's providence, were far greater than her earlier losses. Let us emulate Naomi in her awakening realization that God choreographs even horrible incidents in our lives in order to fulfill His purposes. Yielding to His purpose will give us the desire of our hearts.

From the Archives: Featured Article

[The Beatitudes, Part Four: Hungering and Thirsting After Righteousness](#)

by John W. Ritenbaugh

It is quite rare to see a person who truly hungers and thirsts after God's way, but this is the kind of desire God wants us to have. John Ritenbaugh explains what Jesus means in this fourth beatitude.

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