



- e. Note: Many other evidences could be given as concerning the preservation of the soul. However, in these notes it is only important to establish it as one of the doctrines of preservation.

#### D. Providence

1. The doctrine of God's providence
  - a. The meaning of providence
    - 1) The word is not used in the Bible in reference to God but it gives a name to a concept that runs throughout the entire word of God. It is used one time in reference to man (Acts 24:2).
    - 2) The word *providence* is taken from the verb *provide* (as is the word *prudence*).
      - a) Therefore, the basic meaning of *providence* is to look ahead and make *provision* for the future.
      - b) The word *prudence* refers to the character of one who makes it a habit to be prepared for future needs (2 Chronicles 2:12).
      - c) Scriptures that refer to the provision of God are certainly teaching the idea of providence (Genesis 22:8; 1 Samuel 16:1; Job 38:41; Psalm 65:9; Hebrews 11:40).
    - 3) Doctrinally, *providence* can be defined as God's supervision over all things in order to guide them so that they fully accomplish His perfect will.
    - 4) Practically, *providence* is God's continual guidance and care over all that He has created.
  - b. The aspects of providence
    - 1) Care – This refers to the sustaining care God gives to His creation by watching over them and providing for their needs.
    - 2) Control – This is often called government. It refers to God's control of events so that all things in the end accomplish that which is pleasing to Him and which glorifies Him.
    - 3) Cooperation – This aspect is not considered a separate aspect by most Bible teachers. It refers to the complex inner-working of the control of God with the free actions of men in order to bring about God's will. For instance, God sometimes accomplishes His will by simply allowing men to do what they want because that is what will eventually lead to the will of God.
  - c. A key verse on providence: Romans 8:28
    - 1) Romans 8:28 deals with God's providence and how that providence works with God's people.
    - 2) Romans 8:28 teaches four main precepts concerning providence:
      - a) Our **confidence** in God's providence – The "we know" shows us that our knowledge of God's providence is meant to give great comfort and confidence to the believer as he negotiates a wicked world with events that often seem to contradict God's holy purpose.



- b) The **completeness** of God’s providence – It affects “all things.”
    - i. Large and small (Zechariah 4:10)
    - ii. Good and evil (James 1:2-4)
  - c) The **complexity** of God’s providence – All things must “work together.”
    - i. In God’s great wisdom, He works it out so that both those things that are clearly moving toward His will and those things that seem to be against His will are all moving toward the perfect will of God (Psalm 76:10).
    - ii. Like the gears of an old watch: all of the gears are not moving in the same direction, but all of the gears are pushing the hands of the watch in the same forward motion.
    - iii. Illustrated by the concept of synergy: the word *synergy* was first used in pharmacology when it was noticed that certain combinations of medicines had a greater effect than the sum total of all the medicines individually. Now it refers to any condition where the dynamics of things working together causes the total effect to be greater than the sum of the parts. God works all things together with a powerful synergy.
    - iv. The example of Joseph (Genesis 50:20; Psalm 105:17-19)
  - d) The **condition** of God’s beneficial providence – Although God’s providence governs over the actions of all, the beneficial effects of His providence is only realized by His saints.
    - i. Those who love God
    - ii. Those who are the called
- d. The methods of God’s providence. Although God guides the affairs and actions of all things in His creation, He does not directly control every event of creation or every thought and action of men. He most normally uses secondary means that allow men to think and act of their own free will while accomplishing God’s will in the end. Misunderstanding God’s use of different methods in order to govern all things has been the cause of much confusion. Since God knows all things, He does not have to control every action, but only needs to keep things moving in the right direction. Here is a division of four methods of providence that will help the student understand how this works.
- 1) Preventative providence
    - a) This refers to limits on what man is able to do. These limits operate either naturally or automatically and do not require God’s immediate intervention.
    - b) The natural laws of nature (Psalm 104:6-9) and other natural limits keep man from certain actions. Man cannot (according to present understanding) exceed the speed of light. A person



who is unable to learn calculus cannot become a physicist. These natural limits guide our actions in many ways.

- c) The customs and practices of society do much to guide the actions of men. This can include parental control, government control, laws, customs, public opinion, the Word of God, conscience (Romans 2:14-15), etc.
- 2) Permissive providence
    - a) This refers to the free actions permitted by God
      - i. May be allowed because man's will directly accomplishes God's will.
      - ii. Includes even those actions that are wicked (Hosea 4:17; Romans 1:24, 28).
    - b) Even those actions that are committed in rebellion to God's will will accomplish that will (Psalm 76:10).
  - 3) Directive providence
    - a) This refers to God's subtle guidance of the ways of men so that they make the choices that accomplish the will of God.
      - i. The saints of God may seek this guidance and at times be aware of it.
      - ii. The lost will be unaware of this guidance because it happens in ways they are unaware
    - b) However, directive providence is not complete control.
      - i. By it, God gently nudges the man in the desired direction through circumstances, the use of his own prejudices, etc. Yet, the man is still making his own free choice in the matter.
      - ii. For instance, Matthew 26:24 states, "The Son of man goeth as it is written of him: but woe unto that man by whom the Son of man is betrayed! it had been good for that man if he had not been born."
        - (a) It has already been determined by God that Jesus would be betrayed.
        - (b) Yet Judas will be held fully accountable for his betrayal of the Son.
        - (c) How can this be? It is because Judas was not forced to betray the Son. Rather, he was put into a set of circumstances that God knew would bring about the free will decision of Judas to betray Jesus. God foreordained it, but Judas still betrayed Jesus of his own free will.
      - iii. Concerning the decision of the brothers of Joseph to betray him and sell him into slavery, Joseph said, "But as for you, ye thought evil against me; but God meant it unto good, to bring to pass, as it is this day, to save much people alive" (Genesis 50:20). The brothers of their own free will meant to do him harm, but God allowed it



because He was using their betrayal to set up a way to save the children of Jacob from death.

- iv. Isaiah 10:5 states, “O Assyrian, the rod of mine anger, and the staff in their hand is mine indignation.” The Assyrians destroyed the northern kingdom of Israel because of their own ambitions. But at the same time they were the rod of God being used to punish the disobedient Israelites.

- 4) Determinative providence
- a) This refers to the direct working of God to bring about an event in nature or an action by man.
  - b) This is called the immediate working of God as opposed to the mediate working of God through secondary means as in the other methods of providence.
  - c) Miracles (from the dividing of the Red Sea to the feeding of the five thousand) are acts of determinative providence.
  - d) When God blinds eyes so that men cannot understand certain things, that is determinative providence (John 12:40).
  - e) God may combine acts of determinative providence with permissive providence in order to bring about His perfect will. A good example would be the hardening of Pharaoh’s heart at the time of the ten plagues. Pharaoh was raised up to show the power of God (Exodus 9:16). This explains why the Lord hardened Pharaoh’s heart on occasion. But on other occasions, Pharaoh hardened his own heart. The two worked together. But in the end, Pharaoh was still held responsible for his actions because of his acts of free will against God.

2. The problem of free will

- a. The problem stated: How can God’s providence fully control history and man still have a free will?
  - 1) If God’s control is diminished,
    - a) Does this weaken God?
    - b) Does this mean that the future is questionable?
    - c) Does this mean prophecy is uncertain?
    - d) Is it possible that evil will win?
  - 2) If man’s free will is removed,
    - a) Is God the author of evil?
    - b) How can man be responsible for his actions?
    - c) Is there any point to evangelism?
    - d) If there any point to prayer?
- b. Three approaches to the problem:
  - 1) Man has no free will. He is fully under the control of God. Although he feels like he is making decisions, it is only an illusion. Man’s decisions are predetermined just as his circumstances are.



- 2) Man has complete free will. He can at any time decide to do anything he is physically capable of doing. As to salvation, he has the ability to accept salvation or reject it at any time.
  - 3) Man has a limited free will. He has a true ability to make decisions. However, there are certain limits on this free will because of his fallen nature. He cannot always choose to do good and he must be enabled by God to accept the gift of salvation. The Bible teaches the limited free will of man.
- c. Limited free will
- 1) As to salvation
    - a) Man's inability
      - i. The Father must draw him (John 6:44).
      - ii. The ability to come to Jesus must be given by the Father (John 6:65).
      - iii. God gives the lost repentance to the acknowledging of the truth (2 Timothy 2:25-26).
    - b) God's universal demand for faith
      - i. Whosoever believes has eternal life (John 3:16-18).
      - ii. The gospel is to be taken to every creature (Mark 16:15).
      - iii. God commands all men everywhere to repent (Acts 17:30).
      - iv. The call to come is given to all (Revelation 22:17).
    - c) God's enabling
      - i. The crucified Christ will draw all men to Him (John 12:32).
      - ii. God is not willing that any should perish but that all should come to repentance (2 Peter 3:9). Certainly, He will therefore draw all men.
    - d) Conclusion:
      - i. To be saved, a man must be drawn by God.
      - ii. God, in His love for all men, draws them to Himself.
      - iii. When drawn, a man is enabled to believe in Jesus as Saviour but he is not compelled to do so. There is no such thing as irresistible grace.
      - iv. However, it must be noted that God does not guarantee that He will draw all men at all times.
        - (a) There are times of drawing and times absent of drawing (2 Timothy 2:25-26).
        - (b) It is dangerous to reject God in the times of drawing since there is no guarantee of future times of drawing.
  - 2) As to service
    - a) The lost man
      - i. A lost man is a servant of sin and brings forth fruit unto death (Romans 6:17-21; 7:5).



- ii. A lost man cannot please God (Romans 8:8).
- iii. Without faith, it is impossible to please God (Hebrews 11:6).
- iv. Therefore, a lost man has no free will to please God.
- b) The saved man
  - i. Although the saved man now has the Spirit of God in him, his will is the same will he had when he was lost. As such, it has no power to please God in its own strength (Romans 7:15-18).
  - ii. His internal battle with the flesh leaves him powerless to do the will of God by the strength of his will (Galatians 5:17).
  - iii. However, he does have the ability to submit to the rule of God in his life (Romans 6:13, 16; 12:1).
  - iv. The surrendered Christian is then enabled by the Spirit and by his union with the Lord Jesus Christ to fulfill the will of the Lord (John 15:5; 2 Corinthians 4:7; Ephesians 1:18-20).
  - v. God therefore works in the believer “both to will and to do of his good pleasure” (Philippians 2:13).
- 3. The doctrine of miracles
  - a. Definition of miracles
    - 1) One modern definition states that a miracle is an event that runs counter to the observed processes of nature.
      - a) This goes back to Augustine who taught that miracles are not events that run counter to nature but rather events that run counter to what is known of nature.
      - b) This definition is used to ease some of the objections that those who question miracles have. It is an act of accommodation to those who would deny the Bible and should therefore be rejected.
    - 2) In the Bible, a miracle is a supernaturally caused event. That is, it is caused by something outside the natural world and normally breaks the set laws of nature.
  - b. The source of miracles
    - 1) God is the source of most miracles in the Bible
      - a) Jesus, as God the Son, performed many miracles
      - b) Most miracles are performed through the agency of some prophet or man of God
    - 2) The devil and the evil spirits can also be a source of miracles on occasion (Matthew 24:24; 2 Thessalonians 2:9; Revelation 13:14; 16:14).



- c. The aspects of miracles
  - 1) Introduction
    - a) In numerous places in the Bible, miracles are often called signs and wonders (Exodus 7:3; Nehemiah 9:10; Daniel 4:2-3; John 4:48; Acts 14:3).
    - b) In some places, a third word or description is added to signs and wonders. However, it is not always the same word.
      - i. Miracles (Acts 2:22; Hebrews 2:3-4)
      - ii. Mighty deeds (2 Corinthians 12:12)
      - iii. Power (2Thessalonians 2:9)
    - c) Ten times in the synoptic gospels, the miracles of Christ are referred to as “mighty works” (Matthew 11:20; Mark 6:2; Luke 19:37).
    - d) In the gospel of John, the miracles of Christ are often referred to as His “works” (John 5:36; 10:25, 32, 37-38; 14:10-12).
    - e) By considering these passages, we can develop four aspects of miracles by using four key words used for them: miracles, signs, wonders, and works.
  - 2) The four aspects of miracles
    - a) Miracles
      - i. Point to God
      - ii. Acknowledges the event to be an act of God
    - b) Signs
      - i. Point to the message of the miracle
      - ii. Signs confirm the prophet as God’s spokesman
        - (a) Moses (Exodus 4:4-9; 10:1-2)
        - (b) Elijah (1 Kings 18:36-39)
        - (c) Jesus (John 3:2; Acts 2:22)
      - iii. Signs confirm the message of the prophet as true
        - (a) The purpose of apostolic signs (Mark 16:17-20)
        - (b) The confirmation of the salvation that was preached (Hebrews 2:3-4).
      - iv. The special recipients of signs
        - (a) The Jewish people (1 Corinthians 1:22)
        - (b) The lost (1 Corinthians 14:22)
        - (c) However, signs are not limited to the Jews and to the lost (Romans 15:18-19)
    - c) Wonders
      - i. Point to the miracle itself showing it to be something that causes great wonder
      - ii. Wonders are mighty displays of the power of God
    - d) Works
      - i. Point to the one performing the miracle; the miracle worker. The works point to someone doing the work.
      - ii. One of the characteristics of miracles is that they are normally performed at the word or prayer of one on earth.



- (a) The word (Matthew 8:8)
- (b) Prayer (1 Kings 18:36-38; John 11:41-44)
- d. The purposes of miracles
  - 1) To glorify God (John 2:11; 11:40)
  - 2) To confirm God's messenger and message (Mark 16:19-20; Acts 2:22; Hebrews 2:3-4)
  - 3) To bring men to faith in Jesus Christ (John 20:30-31)

## E. Revelation

### 1. Introduction

#### a. Definition

- 1) Dictionary – to remove the veil
- 2) Doctrinal – the act of God by which He imparts knowledge to man which man could otherwise never know (Deuteronomy 29:29; Amos 3:7)

#### b. Divisions

- 1) Divine Revelation – all the methods by which God makes Himself and His truth known to man
  - a) General Revelation
    - i. A division of divine revelation
    - ii. Refers to those ways (circumstances, conscience, creation) by which God has revealed Himself to all men at all times (Romans 1:17-20)
    - iii. Reveals only general information
      - (a) The existence of God
      - (b) The guilt of man
      - (c) The judgment of God
      - (d) NOTE: does not reveal God's plan of salvation and is therefore not sufficient for salvation
  - b) Special Revelation
    - i. A division of divine revelation
    - ii. Refers to those ways (miracles, coming of Christ, visions, prophets, etc.) in which God has revealed Himself to special people at special times
    - iii. The only way to truly know God's truth (John 17:17)
      - (a) The identity of God
      - (b) How things began
      - (c) How things will end
      - (d) The heart of man
      - (e) The way of salvation

### 2. General revelation

#### a. Circumstances; or, Providence (Romans 1:18)

- 1) In the rise and fall of nations (Deuteronomy 32:29-43; Psalm 75:6-7; Isaiah 12-13; Jeremiah 50:9-13)





- 2) In the preservation of Israel (2 Samuel 7:12-18; Jeremiah 31:35-37)
- 3) In His goodness to all men (Psalm 145:9; Matthew 5:45; Acts 14:17)
- 4) Knowledge that there is more (John 1:9; Titus 2:11; Acts 17:27; Jeremiah 29:13)
- b. Conscience
  - 1) Something in man telling him that there is a God (Romans 1:19)
  - 2) Reveals the existence of right and wrong: convicting of sin and rewarding righteousness (Romans 2:14-15)
  - 3) In different men may be weak (1 Corinthians 8:7), defiled (Titus 1:15) or seared (1 Timothy 4:2)
  - 4) When kept pure, our conscience can be a helpful guide for living (Acts 23:1; 24:16)
- c. Creation
  - 1) The glory of God (Psalm 19:1-3)
  - 2) The eternal power (Romans 1:20)
  - 3) The Godhead (Romans 1:20; see Acts 17:29; Colossians 2:9)
3. Special revelation
  - a. Incarnation (Matthew 11:27; John 1:18; 14:9-10)
  - b. Direct communication
    - 1) Dreams (Daniel 2:28) –when asleep
    - 2) Visions (Ezekiel 1:1) –when awake
    - 3) Spoken words (Numbers 12:6-8) \*most of the Bible was spoken before it was ever written
  - c. Written Word of God (John 5:39; Romans 1:1-2; 16:25-26)

## F. Redemption

1. The plan of redemption
  - a. The eternal plan for the sacrifice of the Son
    - 1) Foreordained as the Lamb of God before the foundation of the world (1 Peter 1:19-20)
    - 2) The Lamb slain from the foundation of the world (Revelation 13:8)
    - 3) The revelation of the mystery kept secret since the world began (Romans 16:25-26; Colossians 1:25-27)
    - 4) The revelation of the mystery according to the eternal purpose which the Father purposed in Jesus Christ (Ephesians 3:8-11)
  - b. The eternal plan for salvation through the Son
    - 1) Chosen in Him before the foundation of the world (Ephesians 1:4)
    - 2) According to the purpose and grace given in Christ before the world began (Colossians 1:25-27)
    - 3) To the reception of eternal life which God promised before the world began (Titus 1:2-3)
2. The work of redemption
  - a. Jesus Christ sent to earth for the work of redemption



- 1) To give His life a ransom for many (Matthew 20:28)
- 2) To seek and to save that which was lost (Luke 19:10)
  - a) Those souls which are lost
  - b) All that was lost when Adam fell in the Garden of Eden (Romans 5:12-19; 1 Corinthians 15:21-22, 45-49)
- b. Jesus Christ delivered to be crucified according to the plan of redemption
  - 1) Betrayed according to the plan of God (Luke 22:21-22)
  - 2) Delivered by the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God (Acts 2:22-24; 4:27-28)
  - 3) Delivered according to the word of the prophets (Luke 24:44-46; Acts 3:18)
- c. Through Jesus Christ, salvation has been accomplished in all of its aspects. Here is a listing of a few of those aspects:
  - 1) Regeneration
    - a) Definition: often called the new birth, this is the act of salvation by which we are born of the Spirit into the family of God
    - b) Scriptural proof
      - i. The washing of regeneration (Titus 3:5)
      - ii. The requirement to be born again (John 3:3-7)
      - iii. The power to become the sons of God (John 1:12-13)
  - 2) Adoption
    - a) Definition: the act of God by which He adopts us into His family
    - b) Scriptural proof: Romans 8:15; Galatians 4:5-7
  - 3) Redemption
    - a) Definition: the act of God by which He bought us back from the loss caused by the fall of man.
    - b) Scriptural proof
      - i. Redeemed by the Lord Jesus Christ (Romans 3:24)
      - ii. Redeemed through the blood; which is the price of redemption (Ephesians 1:7; Colossians 1:14; 1 Peter 1:18-19; Revelation 5:9)
      - iii. Redeemed from the curse of the law (Galatians 3:13)
      - iv. Redeemed from all iniquity (Titus 2:14)
  - 4) Justification
    - a) Definition: the act of God by which He declares us legally just on the basis of the payment for sin made by Jesus Christ.
    - b) Scriptural proof
      - i. Justified by faith in Jesus Christ (Acts 13:39; Romans 3:28; 5:1; Galatians 3:24)
      - ii. Justified by the faith of Jesus Christ (Galatians 2:16)
      - iii. Justified by the blood of Christ (Romans 5:9)
      - iv. Justified by the grace of God (Romans 3:26; Titus 3:7)



- v. Justified through the resurrection of Jesus Christ (Romans 4:25)
  
- 5) Propitiation
  - a) Definition: the act of Jesus Christ by which He suffered our judgment and satisfied the wrath of God on our sin.
  - b) Scriptural proof:
    - i. Propitiation (Romans 3:25; 1 John 2:2; 4:10)
    - ii. Satisfaction for our sins (Isaiah 53:10-11)
  
- 6) Imputation
  - a) Definition: the act of God by which the righteousness of Christ is imputed to us as our sins were imputed to Christ.
  - b) Scriptural proof:
    - i. Sin not imputed (Romans 4:8; 2 Corinthians 5:19)
    - ii. Righteousness imputed (Romans 4:6)
    - iii. Imputed by faith (Romans 4:24)
  
- 7) Election
  - a) Definition: the act of God by which those who believe in Christ are chosen of God and elect in Jesus Christ.
  - b) Scriptural proof: Romans 8:33; 11:5; Colossians 3:12; 1 Thessalonians 1:4; Titus 1:1; 1 Peter 1:2.

#### G. Consummation

- 1. The completion of redemption
  - a. The redemption of the body (Romans 8:23)
  - b. The redemption of creation (Romans 8:18-22; Revelation 22:3)
- 2. The consummation of this present world
  - a. The final conflagration (2Peter 3:10-12; Revelation 20:11)
  - b. The new heavens and earth (2Peter 3:13; Revelation 21:1)
- 3. The judgments of God
  - a. The judgment seat of Christ (Romans 14:10; 2 Corinthians 5:10)
  - b. The great white throne judgment (Revelation 20:11-15)
- 4. The end of the age (1 Corinthians 15:24-28)
  - a. The kingdom delivered to God (1 Corinthians 15:24)
  - b. Death, as the last enemy, destroyed (1 Corinthians 15:25-26; Hebrews 2:14; Revelation 20:14)
  - c. All things subdued by the Son (1Corinthians 15:27; Ephesians 1:10)
  - d. Father and Son rejoined (1 Corinthians 15:28; John 17:5)

Job 26:14 – *“Lo, these are parts of his ways: but how little a portion is heard of him? but the thunder of his power who can understand?”*