

The Way the World Works

Deuteronomy 7:1-26; Ephesians 1:1-23 / Psalm 135:1-21

I. The Maker Gives the World Meaning

- A. Reality finds its meaning and purpose in the mind of the Creator. Thou art worthy, O Lord, to receive glory and honour and power: for thou hast created all things, and for thy pleasure they are and were created. (Revelation 4:11)
- B. Nothing in life can be understood fully apart from its relationship to God. For of him, and through him, and to him, are all things: to whom be glory for ever. Amen. (Romans 11:36)
- C. The theological doctrine of Providence is also a scientific doctrine. The heavens declare the glory of God; and the firmament sheweth his handywork. (Psalm 19:1)
- D. All the certainties of life – like sunrises – come from the same source which drew us to Christ. Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, and cometh down from the Father of lights, with whom is no variableness, neither shadow of turning. (James 1:17)
- E. Though the purposes may not be obvious at all times, the reality and propriety of a governing plan is inescapable. Hath not the potter power over the clay, of the same lump to make one vessel unto honour, and another unto dishonour? What if God, willing to shew his wrath, and to make his power known, endured with much longsuffering the vessels of wrath fitted to destruction: And that he might make known the riches of his glory on the vessels of mercy, which he had afore prepared unto glory, (Romans 9:21-23)
- F. Both history and science argue for a benevolent Providence rather than random and capricious chaos. Declaring the end from the beginning, and from ancient times the things that are not yet done, saying, My counsel shall stand, and I will do all my pleasure: (Isaiah 46:10)

II. Providence Benefits Believers

- A. The Bible argues that Providence benefits believers though it never argues people will understand it fully in this life. Seek ye the LORD while he may be found, call ye upon him while he is near: Let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts: and let him return unto the LORD, and he will have mercy upon him; and to our God, for he will abundantly pardon. For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways, saith the LORD. For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways, and my thoughts than your thoughts. For as the rain cometh down, and the snow from heaven, and returneth not thither, but watereth the earth, and maketh it bring forth and bud, that it may give seed to the sower, and bread to the eater: So shall my word be that goeth forth out of my mouth: it shall not return unto me void, but it shall accomplish that which I please, and it shall prosper in the thing whereto I sent it. For ye shall go out with joy, and be led forth with peace: the mountains and the hills shall break forth before you into singing, and all the trees of the field shall clap their hands. Instead of the thorn shall come up the fir tree, and instead of the brier shall come up the myrtle tree: and it shall be to the LORD for a name, for an everlasting sign that shall not be cut off. (Isaiah 55:6-13)
- B. Nothing is so small that it can escape God's personal attention. Are not two sparrows sold for a farthing? and one of them shall not fall on the ground without your Father. But the very hairs of your head are all numbered. (Matthew 10:29-30)
- C. The hope of new life in Jesus is the ultimate expression of Providence. Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ: According as he hath chosen us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before him in love: Having predestinated us unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ to himself, according to the good pleasure of his will, To the praise of the glory of his grace, wherein he hath made us accepted in the beloved. In whom we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of his grace; Wherein he hath abounded toward us in all wisdom and prudence; Having made known unto us the mystery of his will, according to his good pleasure which he hath purposed in himself: That in the dispensation of the fulness of times he might gather together in one all things in Christ, both which are in heaven, and which are on earth; even in him: (Ephesians 1:3-10)
- D. Confidence in the face of adversity also has its foundation in

Providence. And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose. For whom he did foreknow, he also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of his Son, that he might be the firstborn among many brethren. Moreover whom he did predestinate, them he also called: and whom he called, them he also justified: and whom he justified, them he also glorified. (Romans 8:28-30)

- E. Few things in life are certain, but believers can rely on what God reveals. The counsel of the LORD standeth for ever, the thoughts of his heart to all generations. (Psalm 33:11)

III. Even Mysterious Providence Benefits Believers

- A. What should people think about life's shadows and tragedies? Shall a trumpet be blown in the city, and the people not be afraid? shall there be evil in a city, and the LORD hath not done it? (Amos 3:6)
- B. Do not confuse human categories with divine purposes. Now therefore be not grieved, nor angry with yourselves, that ye sold me hither: for God did send me before you to preserve life. For these two years hath the famine been in the land: and yet there are five years, in the which there shall neither be earing nor harvest. And God sent me before you to preserve you a posterity in the earth, and to save your lives by a great deliverance. So now it was not you that sent me hither, but God: and he hath made me a father to Pharaoh, and lord of all his house, and a ruler throughout all the land of Egypt. (Genesis 45:5-8)
- C. Do not judge ultimate purposes prematurely. 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)
- D. Confidently act on what you know rather than fearfully on what you do not know. The secret things belong unto the LORD our God: but those things which are revealed belong unto us and to our children for ever, that we may do all the words of this law. (Deuteronomy 29:29)