



## A Spiritual Encouragement Message

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### The Providence of God

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William J. Wolfe has called Abraham Lincoln “one of the greatest theologians of America.” He added that Lincoln’s theology was profound, “not in the technical meaning of producing a system of doctrine, certainly not as the defender of some, one denomination, but in the sense of seeing the hand of God intimately in the affairs of nations.” (Tan, Encyclopedia of 7700 illustrations)

Seeing God’s hand in the lives of individuals and nations is indeed something of great interest to us all. We desire further proof of God so as to give us that extra push in our faith. We want to know that God is still active today and that He cares deeply about us, it’s inspiring! Therefore, I have determined to discuss the matter succinctly. Given the nature of this format, we will surely miss something. If you wish to further discuss the topic, please send me a message.

Our best tool in the arsenal of understanding and insight comes from what we can know, rather than what we might think. In fact, Job was rebuked for speaking on that which he did not know, “**Who is this that darkens counsel by words without knowledge?**” (Job. 38:2). Therefore, our goal is to speak where God has spoken, and remain silent where he has not. Or, at the very least, not hold bold assertions in areas that God has remained silent.

The word providence comes directly from the Latin word *providentia*, Which, in turn stems from the Latin word *providere*, or in English, provide (Oxford Dictionary). *Providere* has a prefix: *pro*, which means “before” or “in front of”. And the root *videre*, which means “to see” (Sproul) Essentially, we are left with, “to see beforehand”. The idea of being able to see what lies ahead.

It is easily seen as looking ahead and planning. If you’ve ever sat down with a financial analyst to plan for retirement or some form of savings, life insurance, homeowner’s insurance, college for kids, etc. Then you could be said to have providentially worked in your family affairs. Of course, “Divine Providence” carries with it more than simply planning and preparing. Divine Providence deals with the ethereal, the spiritual, the Creator. Divine Providence is the Almighty Father’s wisdom in creating the earth and designing it to work for us.

Some examples of this type of providence is how God created the vegetation to grow so that we can thrive and survive. The oil in the earth that is a natural resource which continues to produce year after

year. The sun placed perfectly so that we do not overheat or freeze (save our exaggeration during summer...). Divine Providence is everything that God set in motion to work continually.

Perhaps the greatest form of Divine Providence can be seen in **Ephesians 1:4**, when Paul writes **“before the foundation of the world”** God predestined us to be with Him through Jesus Christ. He providentially worked out our salvation before we were ever created!

Of course, we might wonder if this were the only providence of God. Has God stopped working since He planned so well in the beginning? Surely, He has not...

In the life of Joseph, we see that even after all of the wickedness he endured, he boldly proclaims that what his brothers meant for evil, God meant for good (**Gen. 50:20**). Thousands of years later John the Baptist would say, **“A person cannot receive even one thing unless it is given to him from heaven” (John 3:27)**.

Furthermore, there are numerous accounts of people calling on God to relent of his course of action with great success (**Gen. 18:22-33; Ex. 32:1-14**). It would appear that beyond the early stages of providence, God has had a hand in working in people’s lives over the ages. Immediate work, sometimes in stopping a disaster from coming upon people. Even the Apostle Paul wrote to young Timothy concerning such intervention:

**“First of all, then, I urge that supplications, prayers, intercessions, and thanksgivings be made for all people, for kings and all who are in high positions, that we may lead a peaceful and quiet life, godly and dignified in every way. This is good, and it is pleasing in the sight of God our Savior, who desires all people to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth.” (1 Tim. 2:1-4)**

God is actively working in the lives of men of that I have no doubt. If it were not so, what would be the purpose in prayer? James tells us that the **“prayer of the righteous person has great success” (Jam. 5:16)**. What success would be necessary if God were not actively working?

Therefore, let me leave you with a final encouragement. We are a people of prayer. A people of love, passion, and purpose. We are holy! If we notice unrest in the nation which we reside, we must by all accounts call upon the hand of the mighty God. We are obligated to call upon his name and plead for shelter, protection, and righteous leaders. Further, we must warn the people of this great nation to repent of wicked deeds. Repent of the crimes that have placed us in this position. Likewise, we must prepare our own hearts for repentance and evaluation. We do indeed seek to live quiet and peaceful lives. Only if those quiet and peaceful lives allow us to preach the Gospel effectively. If not, we may need some divine motivation.