

THE PROVIDENCE OF GOD UNDER THE SUN

Introduction:

1. The book of Ecclesiastes records the “wisdom” of Solomon as he sought for meaning and purpose in life without the wisdom of God.
2. It was the great experiment of his life – and serves as a powerful warning to all mankind.
3. Without God, all is vanity and vexation of spirit...

I. The Examination of Providence

- A. The word ‘providence’ appears only one time in the KJV (Acts 24:2).
 1. The Greek word is *pronoia* (προνοια) which means, “To make provision, forethought, or providential care.”
 2. Here, Tertullus used it flatteringly to refer to the provision and forethought of Felix in keeping peace in the nation.
 3. This word is used only once more in the New Testament where it is translated as “provision” (Romans 13:14).
- B. The Providence of God refers to Jehovah’s provision for His creation and especially His faithful children.
 1. General providence refers to God’s care for the Creation as a whole (cf. Gen. 8:22; Matt. 5:45; Acts 17:28; etc.).
 2. Special providence refers to God’s acting on behalf of His divine purpose and His faithful disciples (cf. Prov. 8:17; John 7:17; Acts 17:27; Matt. 6:33; etc.).
- C. God is able to work through Providence alongside His natural laws without the use of a miracle (cf. James 5:17-18).
- D. The Providence of God is a biblical worldview...
 1. Pantheism claims that everything is God.
 2. Deism claims that God has no involvement in His world.
 3. Dualism states that God shares control with another being.
 4. Indeterminism states that there is no control at all in the universe.
 5. Determinism claims a strict control that removes man’s responsibility.
 6. The doctrine of chance claims there is no rational control in the world.
 7. The doctrine of fate states there is no benevolent control in the world.

II. The Times and Seasons of Life (Ecclesiastes 3:1-15)

- A. Solomon declared that there is a season (an appointed time) and a time (a period of duration) for everything in this world.
- B. This paints a picture of the providence of God in the creation and order of the world (not determinative [cf. 7:17]).
- C. Every person will experience these occurrences in life!
- D. God has designed the world this way and informed man so he may prepare for and learn from these events.
- E. In order to succeed, man must live by wisdom – not seeking to circumvent God’s seasons and times, but submitting and surrendering to them.
- F. Everything God has made or ordained is beautiful in its time.
- G. To help man see this beauty, God has placed eternity into the hearts of all – that we might have a glimpse of His grander purpose.
- H. Psalm 73; Luke 16:19-31; 1 Corinthians 10:13; Philippians 4:11-13