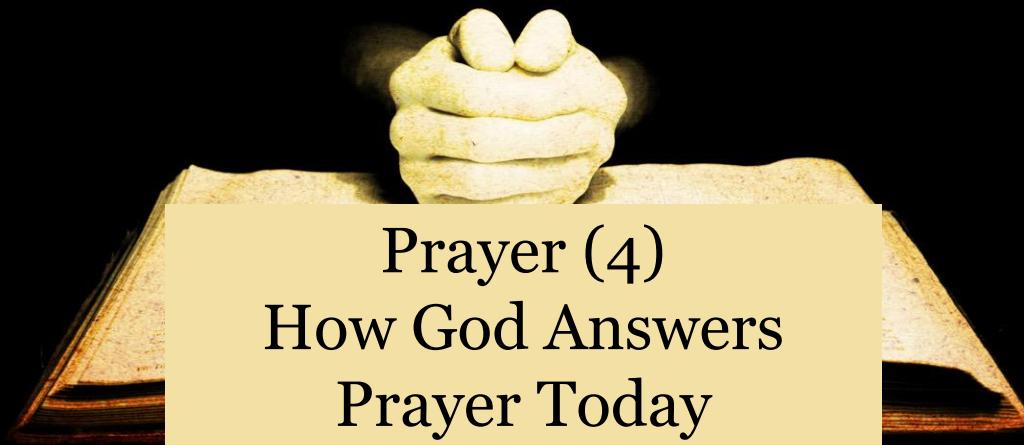


Communicating with God

A study of prayer and Bible study



Prayer (4)
How God Answers
Prayer Today

A study of prayer!

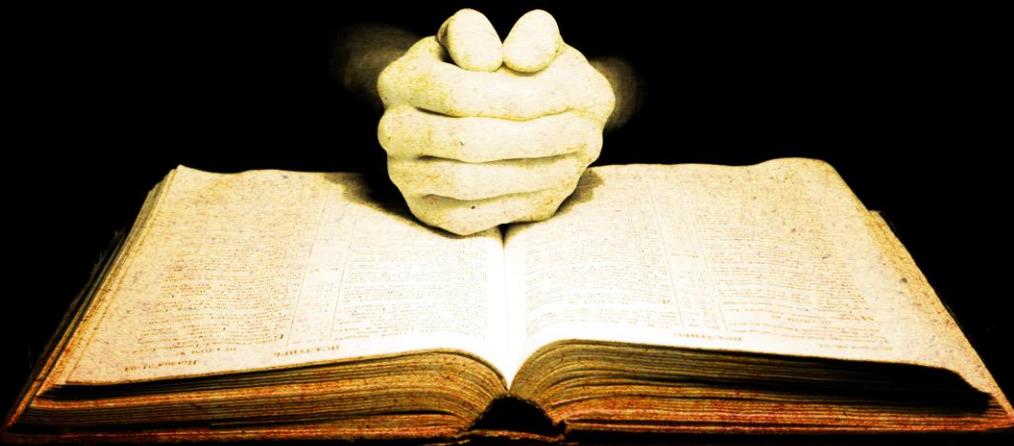


- As we continue our examination of God's part in prayer, we have addressed:
 - Access to God (through Jesus)
 - God is Able...
- Today...

Prayer (2)

How God Answers Today

Communicating with God:
A study of Prayer & Bible Study
Our 2024 Theme



How God Answers Prayer Today

- There are 2 different directions to this question
- What are the ways God answers prayers
(another lesson)
- Since God is able to answer, How does He work today in answering our prayers?
- The answer is found in the word
PROVIDENCE



What is providence?

- God can work in 2 ways
- Miraculously – an act of God that suspends or overrides natural laws. Something IMPOSSIBLE naturally.
It may involve an action itself, or the timing or other elements involved in the act (e.g., healing instantly, turning water to wine, etc.)
- Providence is God working **WITHIN** natural laws. Using these laws to accomplish His will



What is providence?

- We are no longer under the age of miracles
- **If asked, “Do you believe in miracles?” I would answer, Yes!** The Bible is filled with miraculous events that actually happened
- In times past, God accomplished His will miraculously – establishing a way of salvation, His church and His word.
- **BUT, are miracles still occurring today?** No! Consider the following:



What is providence?

- Are miracles still occurring today?
- **It is not the fact that God cannot perform miracles should He chose to do so!**
God is all powerful, sovereign, etc.



What is providence?

- **Scriptures teach the age of miracles is completed.**
- Miracles were primarily designed for God to verify His word.

Moses – **Exodus 7:1-2, 11:3, 14:31**

Elijah – **1 Kings 18:39-40**

Jesus – **Matthew 9:6**

- **Hebrews 2:1-4**



What is providence?

- **Scriptures teach the age of miracles is completed.**
- The Bible teaches a time would come when miracles would cease – **1 Corinthians 13:8-12**
“That which is perfect” is God’s completed word
– **James 1:25**
- Because we do not have apostolic succession – **cf. Acts 8:14-15, 18**



What is providence?

- **Scriptures teach the age of miracles is completed.**
- The absence of genuine Biblical type miracles stands as evidence. We don't see Biblical miracles today!
So-called “miracles” today are for a different purpose
- Since we have God's completed word, we do not need them today



What is providence?

- **Scriptures teach the age of miracles is completed.**
- NOTE: Just because we do not see miracles today does NOT mean God cannot work.
- When He works providentially, it is equally powerful and His will



What is providence?

- **God working providentially!**
- The word “providence” involves foresight that leads to action that accomplishes an intended purpose
- **Acts 24:2** (KJV, NASB), is the only NT usage of the word. NOT a reference to God working.
NOTE: NKJV uses the word “foresight”



What is providence?

- **God working providentially!**
- The very existence of the world shows God working providentially
 - **Acts 14:17** – rain
 - **Matthew 6:30** – grass and flowers
 - **Job 38:41** – food for ravens
 - **Psalm 66:7** – ruling over nations
 - **Matthew 10:29** – smallest details



What is providence?

- **God working providentially!**
 - The very existence of the world shows God working providentially
 - Cf. **John 2:1-10** – Jesus turns water to wine (a miracle – timing, transforming substance, etc.).
 - We can glean wine naturally – with water, grapes, sun, time, etc.
- God provided these naturally!



What is providence?

- **God working providentially!**
- Many scriptures call for God's providence
 - **Matthew 6:25-33** – food and clothing
 - **1 Corinthians 10:13** – temptation, the way of escape (**cf. 2 Peter 2:9**)
 - **2 Corinthians 9:8-11** – make all grace abound
 - **Hebrews 12:5-8** – whom He loves, He chastens



What is providence?

- **God working providentially!**
- Esther, an example of God's providence
 - Of interest, the book of Esther never mentions the name of God, yet you cannot read it without seeing His hand at work.
 - **Esther 4:13-14** – “who knows... for such a time as this?”
 - Numerous events unfolded that resulted in the delivery of the Jews from destruction.
 - Each one had to develop, often in a particular order for the end result.



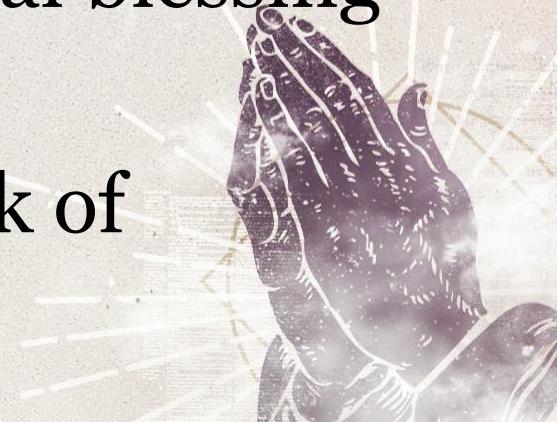
Providence and our prayers

- **God CAN answer our prayers providentially!**
- Consider passages calling for us to pray
 - **1 Peter 3:12** – His ears open to the prayers of the righteous
 - **James 5:16** – the effective, fervent prayer
 - **1 John 5:14-15** – He hears
 - **Philippians 4:6,7** – pray, peace of God



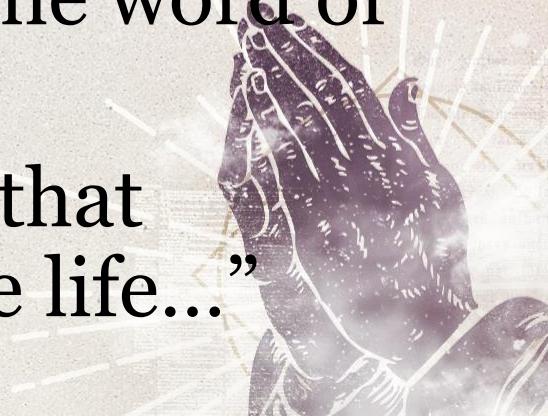
Providence and our prayers

- **God CAN answer our prayers providentially!**
- **Romans 8:28**, “All things work together for good...”
- **Ephesians 1:3ff** – every spiritual blessing
- **Hebrews 7:25** – salvation
- **James 1:5** – lacking wisdom, ask of God...in faith



Providence and our prayers

- **God CAN answer our prayers providentially!**
- **James 4:13-17**, “If the Lord wills...
- **Matthew 6:11** – our daily bread
- **2 Thessalonians 3:1-2** – that the word of the Lord run swiftly
- **1 Timothy 2:1-2** – for leaders, “that we may lead a quiet and peaceable life...”



Providence and our prayers

- **God CAN answer our prayers providentially!**
- If needed, can God cause circumstances to develop so that our prayers can be answered?
- If someone is genuinely searching, will they find someone to teach them?



Providence and our prayers – Observations:

- **God's potential providential care does NOT alleviate our responsibility**
- > Jas. 1:5 – pray for wisdom – study
(2 Timothy 2:15)
- > Matt. 6:13 – for daily bread – work
(2 Thessalonians 3:10, Eph. 4:28)



Providence and our prayers – Observations:

- **God's potential providential care does NOT alleviate our responsibility**
- > **Colossian 4:3** – for open doors
- > **James 5:13-14** – for the sick – do not neglect to follow doctor's advice, etc.
- > **1 John 1:7-9** - Forgiveness - walking in the light



Providence and our prayers – Observations:

- **Do not lose heart!**

Luke 18:1 – don't give up, when your prayers are not answered as you want!

- **Is it really God working?**

Philemon (perhaps...),

Esther 4:14, “Who knows...?

God is NOT always “hands on”.

He does not micromanage our lives.



Providence and our prayers – Observations:

- **In everything give thanks -**
1 Thessalonians 5:18 – give Him the credit and glory, regardless
- **Do not tempt God**
Matthew 4:5-7,
Don't expect a miracle!!
Don't expect to be exempted!



God can and still does work
even today!



Do you trust Him as you pray?





Let us pray!