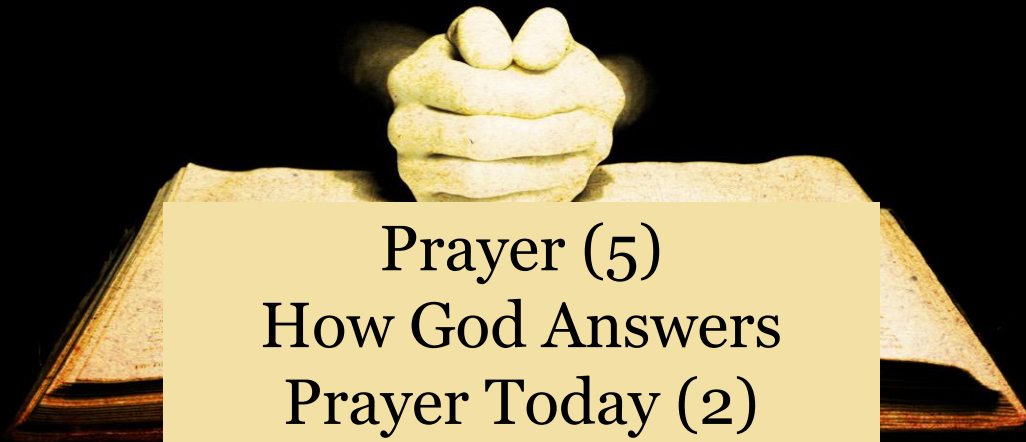


Communicating with God

A study of prayer and Bible study



Prayer (5)
How God Answers
Prayer Today (2)

A study of prayer!

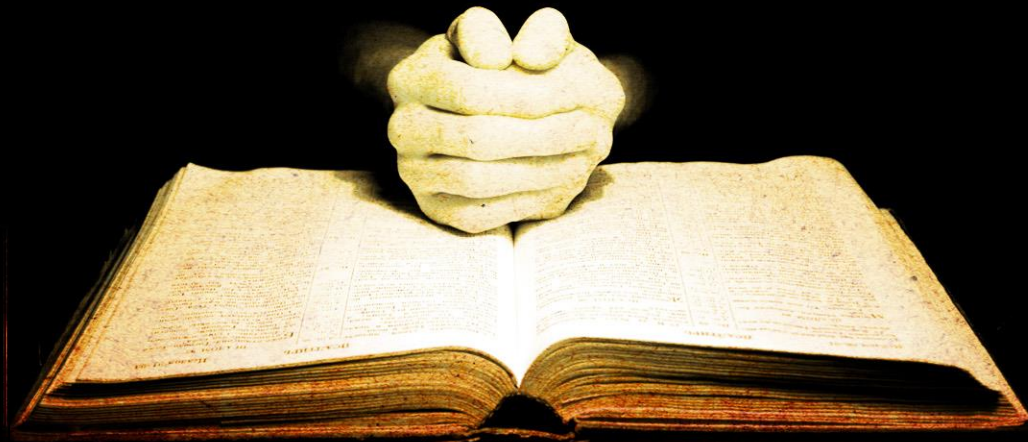


- As we continue our examination of God's part in prayer, we have addressed:
 - Access to God (through Jesus)
 - God is Able...
 - God can work providentially.

Prayer (5)

How God Answers Today – 2

God working providentially

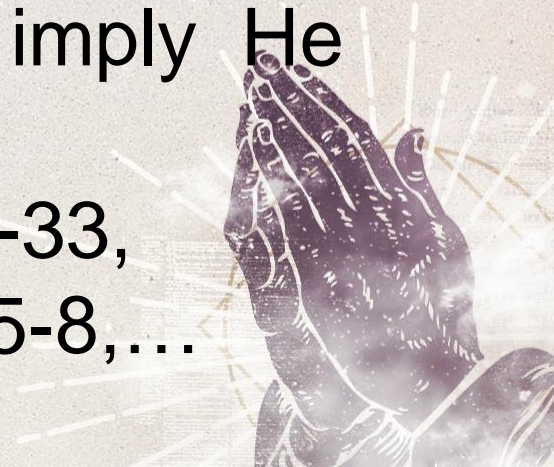


Communicating with God:
A study of Prayer & Bible Study
Our 2024 Theme



How God Answers Prayer Today

- We defined providence as God working within natural laws.
We showed how and why He does not work miraculously today
- We also referenced passages that imply He does work providentially.
1 Corinthians 10:13; Matthew 6:25-33,
2 Corinthians 9:8-11, Hebrews 12:5-8,...



What is providence?

- **Esther - God working providentially!**
- There are several Bible stories (accounts) that demonstrate God's providence – Joseph (**Genesis 50:20**) & **Philemon 15**.
- Esther is 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.



What is providence?

- **Esther - God working providentially!**
- Reading through the book (it is 10 short chapters) I found 20+ different events that unfolded in a specific sequence
 - along with a subplot that also developed



What is providence?

- **Esther - God working providentially!**
- The events occur ~479-474 BC. Ahasuerus (Xerxes I) is King of Persia ruling the empire (127 provinces).
- 1) **Esther 1:1-10** – King Ahasuerus, in the 3rd year of his reign has a great feast (6 mo.). At the conclusion he has a banquet
- 2) He decides to parade his wife, Vashti before all the nobles, but she refuses (**1:11-12**).



What is providence?

- **Esther - God working providentially!**
- 3) As a result, Vashti is removed as queen (**1:13-22**)
- 4) The king remembers her and mourns (**2:1**)
- 5) His advisor recommends a search be made for beautiful virgins throughout the empire (**2:2-6**)
- 6) We are now introduced to Mordecai, who had Esther. He was her uncle (**2:7**)



What is providence?

- **Esther - God working providentially!**
- 7) Esther was chosen as a candidate (**2:8-12**)
- 8) She does NOT reveal her Jewish heritage (**2:10**)
- 9) In time, several virgins are brought before the king (**2:13-14**). They are NOT chosen
- 10) When Esther appears, she IS chosen (**2:8-12**). She is made queen and loved.



What is providence?

- **Esther - God working providentially!**
- 11) Mordecai discovers a plot against the king and makes it known (**2:21-23**)
- 12) What he did is recorded in the chronicles of Persia (**2:23**)
- S1) Haman is the king's chief adviser (**Ch. 3**). He is prideful. He also despises the Jews and convinces the king to issue a decree to utterly destroy all Jews in the kingdom.

NOTE: All events **PRIOR** to this are preparation for this decree



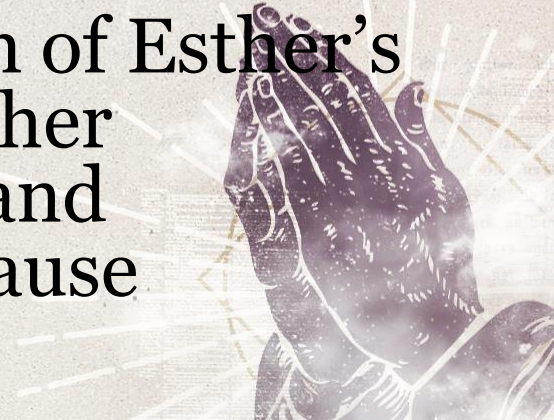
What is providence?

- **Esther - God working providentially!**
- 13) It is the 1st month (Nisan) and lots are cast for when the day of annihilation would occur. The lot falls in the 12th month, 13th day (**3:7, 13**)
- 14) The decree is documented and sent throughout the empire. Mordecai gets a copy of it and rends his garments (**4:1**). He fasts in front of Esther's residence. He delivers a copy to Esther and asks her to go before the king.
- S1) Haman is the king's chief adviser (**Ch. 3**). He is prideful. He also despises the Jews and convinces the king to issue a decree to utterly destroy all Jews in the kingdom.
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What is providence?

- **Esther - God working providentially!**
- 13) It is the 1st month (Nisan) and lots are cast for when the day of annihilation would occur. The lot falls in the 12th month, 13th day (**3:7, 13**)
- 14) The decree is documented and sent throughout the empire. Mordecai gets a copy of it and rends his garments (**4:1**). He fasts in front of Esther's residence. He delivers a copy to Esther and asks her to go before the king and plead for them. She is hesitant because of Persian law.



What is providence?

- **Esther - God working providentially!**
- **NOTE: Esther 4:13-14** – “who knows... for such a time as this?”
- 15) Esther decides to appear for the king and accept whatever fate happens, “If I perish, I perish.” (**4:15-16**). She asks the Jews to fast for 3 days. They do



What is providence?

- **Esther - God working providentially!**
- 16) Esther appears before the Ahasuerus, and he delights to see her and extends his scepter (**5:1-3**). He offers to give her whatever she wants up to half his kingdom.
- 17) Esther request an audience with the king and Haman. They come and she asks them to attend a banquet the next day (**5:4-8**)



What is providence?

- **Esther - God working providentially!**
- S2) At night, with pride Haman is headed home and sees Mordecai who refuses to bow before him. His family recommends that gallows be built and Mordecai hanged on it (**5:9-14**).
- 18) THAT night, the king cannot sleep and asks to read some of his chronicles (**6:1**)



What is providence?

- **Esther - God working providentially!**
- 19) As he read, he finds the record of Mordecai saving his life (**6:2-3**). He inquires and notes nothing had been done for Mordecai.



What is providence?

- **Esther - God working providentially!**
- S3) Haman is in the hall of the king with his request to hang Mordecai. Instead, the king asks advice about how to honor someone. Haman **THINKS** that he must be talking about him, so he advises the king to parade man. The king tells him to do that thing for Mordecai (**6:4-14**). Haman knows he is in trouble.



What is providence?

- **Esther - God working providentially!**
- 20 & S4) The next day, at Esther's banquet, she reveals her Jewish heritage and exposes the wickedness of the plot of Haman (**7:1-6**). The king is angry and steps out. Haman falls on Esther begging for mercy. He is blindfolded and carried out and hanged on the gallows he had prepared for Mordecai.



What is providence?

- **Esther - God working providentially!**
- 21) Mordecai is promoted and Esther is given Haman's possessions (**8:1-2**).
- 22) Esther again appears before the king. He extends the scepter to her again (**8:3-5**). She requests that the decree be revoked.



What is providence?

- **Esther - God working providentially!**
- 23) While not revoked, another decree drafted by Mordecai on the king's orders, permitted the Jews on the appointed day to defend themselves and take vengeance against their enemies (**8:8-17**).
- 24) As a result, not only were the Jews preserved, they were able to subdue many of their enemies. (**9:1-17**).
- **RESULT:** This would be helpful in establishing their heritage and YHWH continuing to unfold His plans.
* This might help explain Nehemiah's favor



What is providence?

- **Esther - God working providentially!**
- **NOTE:** IN all of these plans, the Jews were spared of annihilation, which **WAS** the will of God, and we do not see **ONE** supernatural event.
God's will was accomplished providentially!
- **CAN** He still work that way today?



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...”
- **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...”



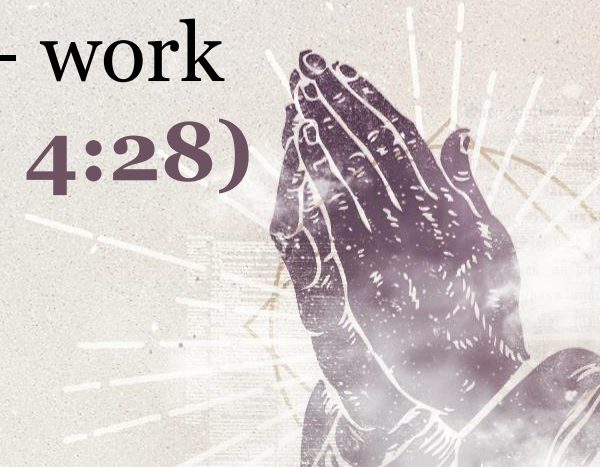
Providence and our prayers

- **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 for truth, 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!