**An overview of God’s Providence Concerning the Church**

The Church in Purpose

The Bible tells us that God had a definite purpose for the church. This purpose includes teaching, fellowship, breaking of bread, and prayer (Acts 2:42). It also involves edification (1 Thess. 5:11), love (1 Jn. 3:11), benevolence (James 1:27), and evangelization (Matt. 28:18-20).

The Church in Promise

God promised in Eden that Jesus would overcome Satan (Gen. 3:15). He established a human lineage through which the Messiah would come (Gen. 12:1-3). This lineage was continued through Isaac and others who would obey God (Gen. 22:18).

The Church in Prophecy

Many Old Testament prophecies predict the establishment of the church (Isaiah 2:1-3; Daniel 2:44). Joel predicted a great outpouring of the Holy Spirit upon God’s people (Joel 2:29). Jeremiah wrote of the New Covenant written on the heart (Jer. 31:31-33). Ezekiel spoke of a sheep fold with one Shepherd (Ezek. 34:11-23). Before He died, Christ promised, “…upon this rock I will build my Church” (Matt. 16:18).

The Church in Preparation

We can clearly see in scripture that God announced and prepared the way for the Church of Christ. The church was to be established in Jerusalem (Isa. 2:1-3) and would last forever (Dan. 2:44). John the Baptist identified Jesus as the Lamb of God (Jn. 1:29) and Jesus Himself announced that He would build His church (Matt. 16:18). The record of prophecies proves that the Church of Christ is no accident. It was in the mind of God “from the foundation of the world” (Eph. 3:10-11).

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**Angels and the Providence of God**

**The Origin of Angels**

The Bible says that angels are created beings. That means they have not always existed. They were probably created by God prior to the creation account we find in Genesis chapter one. Satan and his angels, the demons, were also created by God, but not as evil beings. By their own sin they fell into eternal condemnation. Many angels remained in heaven and continue to serve God in many ways. This lesson will discuss the origin, nature, work, and destiny of angels.

**The Dwelling Place of Angels**

Scripture consistently indicates that angels live in heaven. Though angels dwell primarily in heaven, they may have prolonged assignments on earth as God’s ministers and messengers (Matt. 4:11; Luke 22:43; Heb. 13:2).

**The Nature of Angels**

Angels are not the spirits of dead human beings.Although angels have many traits of human personality, they are invisible spirit beings. The angels in heaven are holy and immortal, but they do not possess the omniscience, omnipotence and omnipresence of God. They are the obedient servants of God.

**The Organization of Angels**

There are two basic classes of angels: 1) fallen angels (2 Pet. 2:4; Jude 6) who sinned against God and were cast out of heaven, and 2) elect angels who did not join with Satan in the rebellion (1 Tim. 5:21). Scripture suggests several ranks or orders among angels. Terms like *thrones, dominions, principalities and powers* (Col. 1:16; 2:10; 1 Pet. 3:22; Eph. 1:20-21) may refer to angelic organization. Several angelic personalities and types are mentioned in scripture.

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