**The Providence of God in The Lives of**

**Abraham, Esther, and Joseph**

**Purpose in Human Experience**

Unbelievers contend that 1) human life is a chance occurrence brought about through an evolutionary process; 2) all human acts occur because of physical antecedents acting on the nervous system; and 3) all events take place because of chance or planned acts of human will. The Bible view of purpose and providence is quite different. The Bible teaches that 1) human life has a reason for its existence and opportunities. 2) God works in the lives of His children to preserve and propagate His kingdom. 3) In the past, God has intervened in human affairs through miracles. 4) In most cases, God has operated through natural events and normal human experience. 5) Through God’s influence, good people are made better, and strong people stronger.

The story of God’s providence begins very early in the Old Testament. God worked in the lives of individuals who were far from sinless, using imperfect people to show His glory and carry out His will on earth. In fact it can be said that “History is His Story” because God is involved in all of human history. The stories of Abraham, Esther, and Joseph are especially inspiring examples of God’s Providence in the lives of His people.

**God’s providence in the life of Abraham**

God saw something in Abraham that was special and made several promises to him. 1) “I will make of thee a great nation” (Gen. 12:2); 2) “Unto thy seed will I give this land” (Gen. 12:7); 3) “In thee shall all the families of the earth be blessed” (Gen. 12:3). Several conditions in Abraham’s life seemed to make it unlikely that God’s providence would be worked out. Abraham was both childless and aged, so how could his descendants and all the families of the earth possibly be

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**The Principle of Universal Harmony**

**The principle stated**

Overruling providence operates on the benevolent principle that all things work together for good. When this principle is accepted, several facts become clear. 1) There is purpose in all things. 2) The overall purpose in all things is good. 3) God’s intended purpose works in our lives to the extent that we conform to His will.

**The Working of the Principle**

Seemingly unfortunate circumstances may actually be beneficial. Poverty may lead to piety, while wealth may take one away from God. Ordinary people are often quite Godly, whereas worldly honors often lead to immoral life and separation from God. Furthermore, personal experiences may be overruled by God’s providence. It is possible to gain strength from sorrow and patience from adversity.

**Practical lessons drawn from the principle**

Those who understand the principle will 1) view their circumstances more positively; 2) actively seek to profit from God’s providence; and 3) eagerly anticipate the day when they can look back upon a life of trust in God’s providence and see that God has done all things well.

\*Adapted from *The Pulpit Commentary*

Romans 8:28 contains four principles or laws by which God exercises His divine providence: 1) The Law of Operation, 2) The Law of Cooperation, 3) The Law of Compensation, and 4) The Law of Limitation.\*

**The Law of Operation—“All Things Work…”**

God busily works in His physical world to regulate and uphold all things by His providential care. *The Law of Operation* works in the

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