**General Providence and Special Providence**

The Providence of God has to do with His intervention in the world

to maintain its existence and natural order. God cares for the world in a general way (General Providence) and in a special way for his people (Special Providence). God’s providence may be proved in several ways. 1) He is able to and willing to provide; His goodness will not permit Him to desert His creation. 2) Man is absolutely dependent upon God’s providence. Man has no control over any of the laws of nature, and humans must rely on God for sustenance in this world and for salvation in the next. 3) Abundant evidence in Scripture describes God’s predictions, promises, and threats which have been accurately accomplished. As an example, consider these scriptures dealing with the birth, advent, and death of Christ (Ex. 12:46 and John 19:36; Ps. 22:18 and John 19:24; Micah. 5:2 and Matt. 2:5). The Bible, the universe, and the experience of mankind point to the providence of a wise, merciful, and benevolent God.

**General Providence**

God’s concern for all of His creation is called General Providence and is shown in several ways. 1) Evidence for this type of providence is seen in **nature**. God cares for the flowers (Matt. 6:28) and birds (Luke 12:4) and shows daily care for all human beings (Matt. 6:11). These provisions are available to all—both good and bad. Unfortunately, worldly people are not thankful for God’s providence and often do not recognize it. 2) **Weather and the seasons** are examples of God’s providence, although few worldly people recognize these natural phenomena as such. The faithful see all of nature as a gift from God and as a reminder of His providential care and faithfulness. 3) God has instituted **civil governments** to regulate human society, and 4) ordained the **home and family** to nurture security and happiness. 5) God has also given all humans a **conscience** as their source of moral righteousness.

18

7) How had Pharaoh learned that Joseph could interpret dreams?

8) How was the Butler in a position to give this information to Pharaoh?

9) How did the Butler have the opportunity to learn of Joseph’s ability to interpret dreams?

10) How did Joseph happen to be in this particular prison?

11) Why did Potiphar cast Joseph in prison?

12) How did Potiphar’s wife have the opportunity to make a false accusation against Joseph?

13) Why was Joseph was in charge of Potiphar’s household?

14) How did Joseph come to belong to Potiphar?

15) How did the Ishmaelites happen to be in possession of Joseph?

16) Why would Joseph’s own brothers want to sell him?

17) Why did the brothers hate Joseph?

18) Why did Joseph’s father have a special love for him?

19) How did Jacob happen to know and love Rachel?

20) How did Jacob happen to come to the house of Laban?

21) Why would Esau threaten to kill Jacob?

22) Why would Isaac want his blessing to go to Esau?

23) Why was Isaac partial toward Esau?

Now consider these questions about God’s Providence:

1) How many miracles occurred in this story?

2) How was God’s Providence involved in this story?

3) Was God responsible for any of the sins committed in this story?

**Lessons from the lives of Abraham, Esther, and Joseph**

1. God is the architect of the universe and the grand designer of human history.

2. God is operating at all times to bring His purposes to fruition.

3. God’s providence avails itself of human agency, involving the talents, positons, and opportunities of those through whom He works.

27