



*Prayer*

*&*

*Providence*

**Lesson 12 – Providence and the Individual**



# Learning to Pray from the Psalms

## Thanksgiving Psalms: God's Goodness

Psalms 46, 48, 68, 91, 99, 113, 146

- Ps 48:9 We have thought, O God, on Your lovingkindness, In the midst of Your temple. 10 According to Your name, O God, So is Your praise to the ends of the earth; Your right hand is full of righteousness.
- Ps 99:2 The LORD is great in Zion, And He is high above all the peoples. 3 Let them praise Your great and awesome name-He is holy.
- Ps 146:1 Praise the LORD! Praise the LORD, O my soul!








# Providence and the Individual – Ecclesiastes

- The book of Ecclesiastes sets forth the vanity of life when viewed from a purely earthly standpoint. However, the name of God appears 40 times and provides an alternate viewpoint. Note the following passages and how they speak to God's provisions for man: Eccl. 2:24-26; 3:1-17; 4:6; 5:1-7; 5:18-20; 6:12; 7:13-14; 8:15-9:1; 9:7-10; 11:5; 12:13-14. Also, note Prov. 3:5-6.
- Providence
  - **Eccl. 9:1 For I considered all this in my heart, so that I could declare it all: that the righteous and the wise and their works are in the hand of God...**
  - **Even though this life is fleeting and many things may seem vain viewed with the wrong perspective, God is in control. Our works are in the 'hand of God.'**



# Providence and the Individual – Ecclesiastes

- Enjoying the good provided
  - **Eccl. 2:24-26**
  - **Everything that can be enjoyed and can give true pleasure in life is provided by God in His providence**
  - **Given by Him for our enjoyment**
- God controls the times and seasons
  - **Eccl. 3:1-11**

A scenic landscape featuring a dense forest of evergreen trees on a hillside, with a calm body of water in the foreground reflecting the trees and the sky. The sky is a clear, bright blue.

*“To everything there is a season,  
A time for every purpose under heaven:  
A time to be born, And a time to die;  
A time to plant, And a time to pluck what is planted;  
A time to kill, And a time to heal;  
A time to break down, And a time to build up;  
A time to weep, And a time to laugh;  
A time to mourn, And a time to dance;  
A time to cast away stones, And a time to gather stones;  
A time to embrace, And a time to refrain from embracing;  
A time to gain, And a time to lose;  
A time to keep, And a time to throw away;  
A time to tear, And a time to sew;  
A time to keep silence, And a time to speak;  
A time to love, And a time to hate;  
A time of war, And a time of peace.*

*What profit has the worker from that in which he labors? I have seen the God-given task with which the sons of men are to be occupied. He has made everything beautiful in its time. Also He has put eternity in their hearts, except that no one can find out the work that God does from beginning to end.*



# Providence and the Individual – Ecclesiastes

- God controls the times and seasons
  - **Eccl. 3:1-11**
  - **These are set by God**
  - **Must accept things as they come to us**
  - **Acknowledge God’s providential rule and put our trust in Him, conforming our lives to His will**
  - **Eccl. 3:12-13**
  - **Seek to do good and find enjoyment in our labor; a gift from God**
- Learn the lesson of contentment and trust
  - **As the preacher considers oppression, toil and envy (4:1-5), he points out the need for contentment**
  - **Eccl. 4:6 “Better a handful with quietness Than both hands full, together with toil and grasping for the wind.”**





# Providence and the Individual – Ecclesiastes

- Selfishness is not the way of fulfillment
  - The preacher also learned that to live only for oneself is not the way of good
  - Eccl. 4:8-12
  - We need each other; we need the help and support of others
  - Selfishness is not God's way for man's good
- We know not how God works
  - Eccl. 11:4-6
  - I may not know how God works in this world ...
  - But I can believe that He is at work!
  - Life and its direction are in His hand
  - Face life with confident action, and trust in God to provide





# Providence and the Individual – Ecclesiastes

- The conclusion
  - The path that leads to the final and eternal good
  - Eccl. 12:13-14 “Let us hear the conclusion of the whole matter: fear God and keep His commandments, for this is man's all. For God will bring every work into judgment, including every secret thing, whether good or evil.”
  - “God not only controls His world and the circumstances of life now, but also at the end He will be the final judge of each man and of his eternal destiny.”  
(Hailey)
- Prov. 3:5-6:
  - Trust in the Lord with all your heart, and lean not on your own understanding; in all your ways acknowledge Him, and He shall direct your paths.”



## Providence and the Individual – Matthew 6:25ff

- Read Matthew 6:25-34. What does the word ‘anxious’ or ‘worry’ mean? (vv. 25,27,31,34). How much provision in your life does worry produce? What is the real answer for that provision? Note the Lord’s illustrations that drive this point home. Also, note that the same word is found in Lk. 10:38-42 (v. 41); what is the ‘good part’ (v. 42)?
  - **“worry” – merimnao – to be anxious about; to have care, take thought; to be unduly concerned**
- How much provision in your life does worry produce?
- What is the real answer for that provision?
  - **Looking to God to provide – food, drink, clothing, ...**
  - **Life, the truly essential thing, is more important than these**
- Seek God and the things of God



## Providence and the Individual – Matthew 6:25ff

- Martha and Mary - Lk. 10:38-42
  - The ‘good part’
  - Seeking truths from the Lord – this is what lasts
- Php. 4:6 “Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known to God”
- 1 Pet. 5:6-7 “Therefore humble yourselves under the mighty hand of God, that He may exalt you in due time, casting all your care upon Him, for He cares for you.”





## Paul's Visit to Rome – Acts 21-28

- Paul desired to go to Rome
  - To visit and encourage the saints there
  - Mentions this two different times
  - Rom. 1:9-15
  - Rom. 15:22-24
- His request in both cases is qualified by submitting to God's will in all things:
  - Rom. 1:10 "... now at last I may find a way in the will of God to come to you."
  - Rom. 15:32 "... that I may come to you with joy by the will of God, and may be refreshed together with you."

Jerusalem contribution  
>> Paul to Jerusalem



Paul almost left  
>> Asian Jews trouble



Jews plot Paul's death  
>> Nephew overhears



Paul almost killed  
>> Soldiers stop the riot

Kept in prison 2 years  
>> Festus succeeds Felix



Jews plot to kill again  
>> Paul appeals to Caesar



Sailing difficult  
>> Travel by Crete



Traveling along coast  
>> Change ships at Myra

Warned about sailing  
>> Set sail anyway



Huge storm comes  
>> Driven off course



Ship breaks up  
>> All make it ashore



Angel visits Paul  
>> Have to ground ship

Paul bitten by snake  
>> Natives think him a god



Wait 3 months for ship  
>> Gospel spread on island

Paul in Rome with generous privileges  
>> Brethren can visit, and gospel spread





## Paul's Visit to Rome – Acts 21-28

- Such events might have seemed to be against us
- Not so with Paul
  - **Php 1:12-14** “... the things which happened to me have actually turned out for the furtherance of the gospel, so that it has become evident to the whole palace guard, and to all the rest, that my chains are in Christ; and most of the brethren in the Lord, having become confident by my chains, are much more bold to speak the word without fear.”
- Paul's prayer expressed in his letter to the Roman saints was answered ... but in a most unexpected way

*“God's providence was at work in preaching the gospel through Paul; why should it not be equally at work today in fulfilling His purpose through us? Is it possible that our eyes are so closed to His providence that we fail to see it?”*

*(Hailey)*





## **Providence and the Individual – James 5:13-18**

- Prayer in suffering
  - **Endure slights and persecutions because of our faith**
- Prayer for the physically sick
  - **V. 15 – a prayer made in faith will be effective in drawing on God’s healing provisions**
- Prayer for spiritually sick
  - **“The effective, fervent prayer of a righteous man avails much.”**
- Providential illustration
  - **God’s providence worked in that case just as it will today**
  - **Will respond to our prayers through natural means and in keeping with the natural order of things**



*“When God created the earth, the vegetable and animal life, and man, He pronounced the whole, “very good.” Everything of this good world was put under law – physical or spiritual. Man was created a moral being, endowed with the power to learn, choose, and rule; he could act in obedience or disobedience to the laws. In the nature of such a creation there would be inevitable consequences which would follow obedience or disobedience. Man might act ignorantly or knowingly; the consequence would be the same. Evil came into the world as a consequence of bad or wrong choices, of which we are heirs. Suffering may be the result of the choices of others through the millennia of history or of our own choice in the present. To enjoy the full and abundant life, one must learn God’s laws – natural and spiritual – and live according to them.”*

*Homer Hailey*



*“God controls His inanimate and animate world. In His foresight and forethought He created these to the end whereby He could bring His divine and eternal purpose to its desired consummation.*

*In this creation according to purpose, God has provided for the exercise of prayer on man’s part, and for His response in answering on His part.*

*In praying for and about the physical and material things of life, we must look for the answer, not through a miracle, but through God’s natural world and the provisions He made therein.*

*Divine providence is a distinctive feature or attribute whereby the omniscience and omnipotence of the infinite God finds expression. Let us believe in it and walk by faith in it.”*

*Homer Hailey*