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**Act 17:26 And hath made of one blood all nations of men for to dwell on all the face of the earth, and hath determined the times before appointed, and the bounds of their habitation;**

**Act 17:27 That they should seek the Lord, if haply they might feel after him, and find him, though he be not far from every one of us:**

INTRODUCTION:

One of the things that I find amazing about God is the way that he chooses to involve Himself with his creation. He actively participates in the support of His creatures because He desires that they would prosper. Yes, this is true even of the unsaved and the animal kingdom as well.

I once had a professor when I was 19 and had just turned to Christ, who I got into a discussion about God with. He was an atheist and while I was a new convert and excited about my new relationship with God, his response was simply that he would have a greater respect of a God who once He had created the universe, pulled away and simply observed His creation..... I suppose he pictured God like a child with a new toy who was just enthralled with watching how his new toy worked!

What I could not get through to him was the thrill that I had, as only a small and insignificant part of this grand God's creation, that He would want to know me personally. What's more, I could not express what I felt that I had now encountered him and had experienced his love for me!

This is the amazing God who has revealed Himself to us, loving, caring, forgiving, gracious and perfect in holiness.

We have been given knowledge of Him through His word and the life of Jesus who is the exact representation of God's character. God is a God who is not needful of anything, He has not only created all things but has the power to keep on giving.

He is the great provider and today we will examine the providence of God for His creation.

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These verses simply teach that we can't provide God a home because he does not need a home, He is Lord of Heaven and everything else. Nor does He need to be worshipped by the things created and made by men's hands. Instead He is the one who gives the life to everything living thing, the breath and everything else that they need to live. This is true for all of God's creation. God is the great provider not the great consumer.

## **The Bible teaches that God is good to all**

God is good to all because He is the one who gave life and gives life to all, breath to all and all things that they need to live and prosper. God indeed takes delight in His creation thriving. He wants all to live and not die and so provides for what they need.

Even after the fall, God did not stop caring for His creation. He has shown time and time again that He does not wish for the death or destruction either man nor beast.

When the Lord sent Jonah to Nineveh, and it became apparent to Jonah that God would show mercy to them, Jonah's own hatred for them caused him to wait on top of a hill hoping to see God's destruction upon that city as he had done on Sodom and Gomorrah. God caused a gourd to grow over Jonah providing him some shade as he longed for Nineveh's destruction. But then God caused the gourd to die and Jonah got very upset because it was way too hot for him!

**Jon 4:8** And it came to pass, when the sun did arise, that God prepared a vehement east wind; and the sun beat upon the head of Jonah, that he fainted, and wished in himself to die, and said, *It is better for me to die than to live.*

**Jon 4:9** And God said to Jonah, Doest thou well to be angry for the gourd? And he said, I do well to be angry, *even unto death.*

**Jon 4:10** Then said the LORD, Thou hast had pity on the gourd, for the which thou hast not laboured, neither madest it grow; which came up in a night, and perished in a night:

**Jon 4:11** And should not I spare Nineveh, that great city, wherein are more than sixscore thousand persons that cannot discern between their right hand and their left hand; and *also* much cattle?

God was concerned about the people and he cattle as well. Jonah had no concern for them, it would seem. Psalm 145: 9 tells us:

**Psa 145:9** The LORD *is* good to all: and his tender mercies *are* over all his works.

What's amazing about this verse is that even though man is in a rebellious state against God, God is good to all (good and bad) . he is merciful to those who oppose Him and has great tenderness toward all of his creation. This tells us that He values His creation highly, otherwise He may have simply abandoned it.

Not only does God reveal Himself to have this particular nature but He also desires that those who would follow Him, would also demonstrate the same. Let's look at what Jesus taught His disciples:

**Mat 5:43** Ye have heard that it hath been said, Thou shalt love thy neighbour, and hate thine enemy.

**Mat 5:44** But I say unto you, Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them which despitefully use you, and persecute you;

**Mat 5:45** That ye may be the children of your Father which is in heaven: for he maketh his sun to rise on the evil and on the good, and sendeth rain on the just and on the unjust.

**Mat 5:46** For if ye love them which love you, what reward have ye? do not even the publicans the same?

**Mat 5:47 And if ye salute your brethren only, what do ye more *than others*? do not even the publicans so?**

**Mat 5:48 Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect.**

Notice that it says to do good to those that hate you and even persecute you. Why? That we may be counted as the children of God when they see our lives. How can this be? Because God Himself is cursed, rejected, despised by the majority of man. They have rejected Him as God, rejected His laws and love and have created gods of their own to put in His place...Yet..... he does not just wipe them out.

He has every right to destroy them immediately if he wishes, but He does not. Instead He continues to give sun and rain to those who do not deserve it. This is the very definition of grace.

How do we match up to His standard? Do we show the same type of mercy and grace to those people who offend us, or do wrong to us? Can we really call ourselves His children if we refuse to act as he does? And how can we even call ourselves his children when we fail to even forgive those we call our brothers and sisters let alone those who are truly our enemies. We should strive with all of our might to behave as he does.

**Gal 6:9 And let us not be weary in well doing: for in due season we shall reap, if we faint not.**

**Gal 6:10 As we have therefore opportunity, let us do good unto all *men*, especially unto them who are of the household of faith.**

**God is the one who preserves all of creation and mankind**

**Neh 9:6 Thou, *even* thou, *art* LORD alone; thou hast made heaven, the heaven of heavens, with all their host, the earth, and all *things* that *are* therein, the seas, and all that *is* therein, and thou preservest them all; and the host of heaven worshippeth thee.**

Have you ever noticed that many of the things that we buy whether they be cars, or phones or appliances or whatever seem to by an amazing coincidence break down or fall apart just after the warranty period ends? Maybe that's coincidence. But regardless, most things in life do last a lifetime.

But God did not design he earth to fall apart or not be able to provide for the needs of the animals that would live upon it. When God makes something it lasts. But even after the fall of man and the flood, he continued to preserve the order of things for the sake of all living things.

**Gen 8:21 And the LORD smelled a sweet savour; and the LORD said in his heart, I will not again curse the ground any more for man's sake; for the imagination of man's heart *is* evil from his youth; neither will I again smite any more every thing living, as I have done.**

**Gen 8:22 While the earth remaineth, seedtime and harvest, and cold and heat, and summer and winter, and day and night shall not cease.**

God has designed the laws of nature and nature itself to continue. The special conditions of weather and water and day and night, have been designed by God to be perpetual and last forever.

**Ecc 1:4 One generation passeth away, and another generation cometh: but the earth abideth for ever.**

**Ecc 1:5 The sun also ariseth, and the sun goeth down, and hasteth to his place where he arose.**

**Ecc 1:6 The wind goeth toward the south, and turneth about unto the north; it whirleth about continually, and the wind returneth again according to his circuits.**

**Ecc 1:7 All the rivers run into the sea; yet the sea *is* not full; unto the place from whence the rivers come, thither they return again.**

In these few verses we see God's providence of the sun and the day night cycle, the circuits of wind, and the water or hydronic cycle. Now for unlearned men writing around 3000 years ago they knew a lot about the earth didn't they!

How did they know that the wind travels in circles around the earth? If you have ever seen the weather on the news you may have seen satellite picture of the cycles the wind goes. It goes from high pressure to low pressure systems the Coriolis effect determines what cycle it follows. The cycle in the northern hemisphere is the opposite direction to us in the southern hemisphere. But how did the writer of Ecclesiastes know this pattern in the wind?

Furthermore, how did he know about the cycle of rain and rivers and the balance that exists with the oceans? This is another example of the inspiration of the Bible.

But the main point here is that God has made the earth and all of its weather systems perpetual. God's power though keeps all these things going and we can rely on them because He guarantees them.

**And because of this, God also is able to provide food for all**

**Psa 136:25 Who giveth food to all flesh: for his mercy *endureth* for ever.**

When God designed this planet, he did so with an amazing intricacy that provided food for every type of animal in the world, with an abundant variety of vegetation that was enough to feed the largest of the animals and to not go without.

After the fall and flood, the loss of many types of these vegetations effected the balance that he had been created but we still see the amazing symbiotic relationship of the animal kingdom with the plant kingdom after. And though many animals became carnivorous as they adapted to their new environment, the provision of food was still in abundance and still amazing.

If God provides food for all mankind, then why someone may ask is there so much starvation and suffering in the world.

The truth is that there is more than enough food in the world to feed everyone on this planet and feed them well. Just to give you an example for what I mean. Just consider for a moment, how much it would cost in our currency to provide food on a daily basis for a person and feed them well.

I found out recently that the average cost that an aged care facility spends on providing daily food for each resident is between \$6.00 - \$10.00 per day. Now that may seem excessively small and unfair but when you buy food in bulk and choose wisely, the cost lowers right down.

Now let's take Australia as an example. The GDP (how much value is produced) for each individual who lives here - \$50,000 per annum.

To give you an example of how much it actually costs to feed an average person (when done with efficiency) is only \$3650 per year.

Now if it costs only \$10 to feed someone in Australia where things cost a lot more, it is more like half of that amount in most countries overseas. In other words, to feed the average person is only \$1825 per year. Or around the same amount of money many Australians spend on coffee during the year!

The truth is that God has provided more than enough resources to feed the entire world and NO we haven't hit any type of limit with population. The problem is that the governments of the world are spending a hole lot more on weapons, and other things that they can do without.

It is ultimately, mankind that forces people to starve and go without.

**Psa 147:7 Sing unto the LORD with thanksgiving; sing praise upon the harp unto our God:**

**Psa 147:8 Who covereth the heaven with clouds, who prepareth rain for the earth, who maketh grass to grow upon the mountains.**

**Psa 147:9 He giveth to the beast his food, *and* to the young ravens which cry.**

Jesus repeated the same thought in the New Testament

**Mat 6:25 Therefore I say unto you, Take no thought for your life, what ye shall eat, or what ye shall drink; nor yet for your body, what ye shall put on. Is not the life more than meat, and the body than raiment?**

**Mat 6:26 Behold the fowls of the air: for they sow not, neither do they reap, nor gather into barns; yet your heavenly Father feedeth them. Are ye not much better than they?**

God knows how to provide for the smallest to the largest creatures, even though they may seem insignificant to us. The thought in this passage is that we should not be overly concerned about where our next meal is coming from because he cares more for us than the birds which he also feeds.

**All the creatures of the earth depend on God**

**Psa 104:24 O LORD, how manifold are thy works! in wisdom hast thou made them all: the earth is full of thy riches.**

**Psa 104:25 *So is* this great and wide sea, wherein *are* things creeping innumerable, both small and great beasts.**

**Psa 104:26 There go the ships: *there is* that leviathan, *whom* thou hast made to play therein.**

**Psa 104:27 These wait all upon thee; that thou mayest give *them* their meat in due season.**

**Psa 104:28 *That* thou givest them they gather: thou openest thine hand, they are filled with good.**

**Psa 104:29 Thou hidest thy face, they are troubled: thou takest away their breath, they die, and return to their dust.**

**Psa 104:30 Thou sendest forth thy spirit, they are created: and thou renewest the face of the earth.**

Once gain, we see here the nature of the cycle of life and the providence of God toward all creatures, even though we cannot see them. The author here expresses wonder about how God has created so

much life and feeds them as well. He also understands the nature of death and their return to the ground and the birth of new life, sustained by God over thousands of years.

Have you ever seen God's hand in the provision of what you need in your life? Have you not understood that it is he that sustains your life?

**Psa 36:6 Thy righteousness is like the great mountains; thy judgments are a great deep: O LORD, thou preservest man and beast.**

**God provides sun, seasons and rain for harvests of food for all people.**

As part of this provision and preservation of man and beast, God has provided the earth with a miraculous weather system. The wind, the rain, the water and sun interact in an absolutely amazing way to provide the type of conditions around the world that allows for the growth of plants, the water to drink, the temperate climate and variation we need to live.

The seasons exist because of the intelligence of God, the harvest because of the seasons, even the rotation of the earth provides relief from hotter temperatures by allowing the earth to cool.

You may not have thought about this but imagine for a moment an earth where the sun never sets and the temperature was 35 degrees every day and night? How long would life last? How long would we? You can forget about having any crops or fruit in this type of atmosphere! All water would be hot, even the oceans and most life would die. Most surface water would evaporate.

When the men of Lystra wanted to worship Paul and Barnabas after Paul performed a miracle, they responded like this:

**Act 14:15 And saying, Sirs, why do ye these things? We also are men of like passions with you, and preach unto you that ye should turn from these vanities unto the living God, which made heaven, and earth, and the sea, and all things that are therein:**

**Act 14:16 Who in times past suffered all nations to walk in their own ways.**

**Act 14:17 Nevertheless he left not himself without witness, in that he did good, and gave us rain from heaven, and fruitful seasons, filling our hearts with food and gladness.**

Paul witnesses about the one true God, but then teaches that the providence of God for all was also a witness of His goodness toward mankind. God's character is altogether good and He demonstrates it each and every day, in this world because he still loves this world. What motivated He have for continuing to provide for mankind?

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Why does God provide for all, even those who hate and reject Him? Because He wants us to find Him, he wants to be found! I started with a contrast between my professor and me and this is where I will finish.

What type of God would you prefer? A god who wants to remain hidden and unknown or a personal God who wants to be known? My job as a preacher is to invite you to meet this God and to let you know that he is not willing that you would perish but that He might also provide you with eternal life.