

**Act 17:24** God that made the world and all things therein, seeing that he is Lord of heaven and earth, dwelleth not in temples made with hands;

**Act 17:25** Neither is worshipped with men's hands, as though he needed any thing, seeing he giveth to all life, and breath, and all things;

**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:

## RECAP

The Bible teaches that God is good to all.

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

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.

And because of this, God also is able to provide food for all of His living creatures, even in the fallen state of this world.

**Psa 136:25** Who giveth food to all flesh: for his mercy *endureth* for ever. All the creatures of the earth depend on God

I have used the analogy in the past that man is a bit like a person who has been granted to live in a mansion by a rich relative. There is no rental fee, even food is provided. The only requirement is to look after the house and not ruin it. But man disobeyed God, broke His commandments and we now have a broken home. And even though He offers His help, man has sought to keep Him out, we even killed His Son whom He sent to save us from our own recklessness and depravity. But He patiently knocks and remains available to anyone who will receive Him.

**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:

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! In my last sermon, I shared a conversation I had with my lecturer at Uni who was a Physics professor. His idea of a God, was the type who made the universe and just pulled back and observed without interference.

My feeling about the matter was having just been saved by Jesus Christ and experiencing the love that God had for me, I was much happier that He DID involve Himself with creation and His love for me caused Him desire a relationship with me for which He demonstrated the type of love that I could aspire to. I ended last week's sermon by asking....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.

We will now look at another type of provision or providence which flows from God apart from seeking to provide the food and conditions essential for all life, and that is the special providence granted to His own children, for those who seek Him and who put their trust in Him.

**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:**

**These are the ones who have found Him and who rejoice at the thought He is not far from them.**

**Let's look at some of these now:**

**1. The child of God is before His presence at all times.**

**Psa 139:1** To the chief Musician, A Psalm of David. **O LORD, thou hast searched me, and known me.**

**Psa 139:2** **Thou knowest my downsitting and mine uprising, thou understandest my thought afar off.**

**Psa 139:3** **Thou compassest my path and my lying down, and art acquainted *with* all my ways.**

**Psa 139:4** **For *there is* not a word in my tongue, *but*, lo, O LORD, thou knowest it altogether.**

**Psa 139:5** **Thou hast beset me behind and before, and laid thine hand upon me.**

**Psa 139:6** ***Such* knowledge *is* too wonderful for me; it is high, I cannot *attain* unto it.**

**Psa 139:7** **Whither shall I go from thy spirit? or whither shall I flee from thy presence?**

**Psa 139:8** **If I ascend up into heaven, thou *art* there: if I make my bed in hell, behold, thou *art there*.**

**Psa 139:9** ***If* I take the wings of the morning, *and* dwell in the uttermost parts of the sea;**

**Psa 139:10** **Even there shall thy hand lead me, and thy right hand shall hold me.**

While Acts 17:27 teaches that God is not far from anyone who may want to find Him but may not know Him personally, these verses teach that the Lord is exceptionally close to those who belong to Him.

The comforting thoughts expressed by King David here are the ideas that God knows us personally, He takes an interest in our plans and our whereabouts. He cares about our thoughts and fears, He surrounds us around with his presence no matter where we may find ourselves and that even though we may find ourselves in the worst possible place, He is always there with us, leading us and holding us.

One of the struggles that I see Christians have these days is the fear that God has abandoned them or is angry at them when they find themselves surrounded by difficult circumstances. Whether they are experiencing conflict, persecution, job difficulties, failures and so on, they struggle trying to reconcile how God still loves them during this time.

Through all the struggles that David had experienced in his own life, being persecuted and betrayed by his own family and his own fall into sin, he came to believe and to write by inspiration of the Holy Spirit that:

**Psa 139:8 If I ascend up into heaven, thou *art* there: if I make my bed in hell, behold, thou *art there*.**

**Psa 139:9 *If I take the wings of the morning, and dwell in the uttermost parts of the sea;***

**Psa 139:10 *Even there shall thy hand lead me, and thy right hand shall hold me.***

We can have that same faith as well, if we would simply choose to believe God's Word and not our own feelings or the whispers of our enemy. God is not only with us, through thick and thin, in good times and in bad, but he has pledged Himself to also protect us when we are under attack.

## **2. He keeps them and guards their lives.**

**Psa 91:1 He that dwelleth in the secret place of the most High shall abide under the shadow of the Almighty.**

**Psa 91:2 I will say of the LORD, *He is my refuge and my fortress: my God; in him will I trust.***

**Psa 91:3 Surely he shall deliver thee from the snare of the fowler, *and from the noisome pestilence.***

**Psa 91:4 He shall cover thee with his feathers, and under his wings shalt thou trust: his truth *shall be thy shield and buckler.***

**According to this psalm, there is a secret dwelling place inhabited by those who trust in the Lord as their refuge and fortress, who trust in Him. That secret dwelling place is in Him, under His shadow, covered by His wings.**

God becomes the protector of those who have put their trust in Him, and He delivers them from the snare of the fowler ( this is a picture of the devil) who sets traps for people to ensnare them and in some cases he is able to ensnare the children of God. Why? The answer is found at the end of vs 4.

**Psa 91:4 He shall cover thee with his feathers, and under his wings shalt thou trust: his truth *shall be thy shield and buckler.***

The reason that the devil has so many Christians trapped and NOT free to live for the Lord, can often come down to one simple truth, His truth is NOT their shield or buckler.

Why? Because they have not believed it. The enemy has realised that if he can undermine their trust in it by confusing people about its trustworthiness and faithfulness, then they will lose faith in it and then will not depend on it during difficult times. This is the state of the church today... a church that has almost completely thrown away the Word of God and has put its trust in the Words of Men.

If you don't believe the word of God then you cannot grow in Him, you will not achieve victory over sin, you will be leaning on the wisdom of the world and the word of God cannot shield you from the attacks of the devil.

Example: A new car service manuals. Believing only certain parts of that manual will guarantee that something will go wrong with your car in a short while. The same is true for thee Bible. Believing only certain parts that might suit you or be easier will also guarantees that you will break down in one area or another while the enemy and this world wear you down and attack various areas of your life. But trusting in the words of our saviour keeps us safe from harm.

**Psa 121:5** The LORD *is* thy keeper: the LORD *is* thy shade upon thy right hand.

**Psa 121:6** The sun shall not smite thee by day, nor the moon by night.

**Psa 121:7** The LORD shall preserve thee from all evil: he shall preserve thy soul.

**Psa 121:8** The LORD shall preserve thy going out and thy coming in from this time forth, and even for evermore.

As part of this promise of preservation, God is able to use good and bad to benefit His children and glorify Himself.

**Rom 8:28** And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to *his* purpose.

The amazing thing about the Lord's provision for us is the ability of God to foresee what will happen. God is able to make every situation benefit us even if we mess up, but we will not always like the lesson it brings. Obedience and trust in thee Lord will offer opportunities for us to overcome evil and grow in our confidence in the Lord's love and strength.

**Isa 54:17** No weapon that is formed against thee shall prosper; and every tongue *that* shall rise against thee in judgment thou shalt condemn. This *is* the heritage of the servants of the LORD, and their righteousness *is* of me, saith the LORD.

If you are a child of God, then the promise here is that there is no weapon that is formed against that shall prosper or be successful. These weapons are formed by our adversary the devil, who seeks our destruction. The beauty in this verse is the guarantee that despite the very best efforts that the devil might have to destroy you, he never will. Every accusation he may bring against will ultimately fail because our righteousness does not come from our own efforts or holiness but if from the Lord. Thus God's protection of us flows from His own righteousness.

**Psa 37:28** For the LORD loveth judgment, and forsaketh not his saints; they are preserved for ever: but the seed of the wicked shall be cut off.

**Psa 40:11** Withhold not thou thy tender mercies from me, O LORD: let thy lovingkindness and thy truth continually preserve me.

This is why we believe in the preservation of the saints, we believe in the eternal security of the believer. Nothing that Satan (the accuser of the brethren) concocts will cause us to be lost. Even our failures are an opportunity for us to learn, become stronger and trust in Gods words more and more.

## **THE PROVIDENCE OF THE WORD OF GOD**

God does indeed concern Himself with the provision of food and environment that all his creatures may live and thrive but there is another type of food that he provides specifically for His children. That food is the word of God.

**How did God provide us the Word of God?**

**2Ti 3:16** All scripture *is* given by inspiration of God, and *is* profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness:

The words of the Bible were given to us by inspiration of God. This inspiration is a direct result of the involvement of the creator with those He chose to write His words down. 2 Peter describes this inspiration in a more specific way.

**2Pe 1:20 Knowing this first, that no prophecy of the scripture is of any private interpretation.**

**2Pe 1:21 For the prophecy came not in old time by the will of man: but holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost.**

It was never a matter of people's personal opinions, or interpretation of the truth, but all scripture was given to us because holy men spoke the words that God wanted them to say and write down as they were moved by the Holy ghost. The very words they spoke were recorded and we have them in our language today in the Authorized Version of the Bible called the King James Bible.

**The Provision of the Word of God is to feed us spiritually.**

**1Pe 2:2 As newborn babes, desire the sincere milk of the word, that ye may grow thereby:**

Just as physical food is necessary for physical life and growth, so is spiritual food. It is through the word of God that we are first born again to new life and it is through the word of God that we grow to spiritual maturity.

**2Ti 3:16 All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness:**

**2Ti 3:17 That the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works.**

So the scriptures that we can hold in our hands are able to perfect us to all good works. We simply have to approach them with an unwavering position of trust, then effort to read them, learn them and seek to apply them faithfully. This is the formula for spiritual success. God has providentially preserved His word throughout these past 3500 years. They are not only preserved for us here but have been recorded in heaven for all time.

**Psa 119:89 LAMED. For ever, O LORD, thy word is settled in heaven.**

If you wanted a direct promise that the Lord would preserve His words from when they were written for you today, it is found in Psalm 12.

**Psa 12:6-7 The words of the LORD are pure words: as silver tried in a furnace of earth, purified seven times. Thou shalt keep them, O LORD, thou shalt preserve them from this generation for ever.**

## **HOW THE NEW TESTAMENT CAME TO US**

The NT was written in Greek. At that time, the most expressive language ever devised. At the time of Jesus, all the world spoke Greek. It was the official language of the world, even though the Romans had conquered most of the world. It was much like English is the world's most common language today. This was because Alexander the great had conquered the world before the Romans arrived and the Greek language had spread to become the most commonly used language (especially for written communications).

The Roman Empire, the most powerful and expansive empire the world had ever seen, had brought stability and peace to most of the known world. Because of the Roman's ability to build roads, aqueducts, tunnels and enforce laws through the strength of its military, much of the world had become peaceful with no more civil wars, accessible and safe to travel (by road and by land). This was such a significant time that it was given a name to describe it "Pax Romana," which literally means "Roman peace,". It refers to the time period from 27 B.C to 180 C.E. in the Roman Empire.

It was 'by coincidence' the time when Jesus would come into the world, the bible was written and the letters and the scriptures were delivered by road and sea (through the trading between countries around the Mediterranean) to all parts of the world.

This was also the time where crucifixion was a system of execution that the Roman government used to execute criminals in a way where they also became an example of what would happen to others thinking of breaking the law and rebelling. Thus fulfilling the scriptures **Psa 22:16 For dogs have compassed me: the assembly of the wicked have inclosed me: they pierced my hands and my feet.**

The Jews at this time were dwelling in Israel and the temple along with the sacrifices and priesthood were present. This is significant because Jesus was the God of the OT who was entering His own place.

The Jews previously had been dispersed throughout the world and were still living in all parts of the world. Thus there were synagogues all over the known world which could provide launching points for the gospel to the Jews first then the Gentiles.

There were multiple copies of the scriptures in many place and because of the previous dispersion of the Jews, the concept of scribes became a common thing. This was important when the New Testament was to be written and faithfully copied. Thus we see the conditions being almost fine tuned to be suitable for the introduction of this portion of the Bible we call the New Testament. This is God's providence.

**In a similar way, the conditions of the world when the King James Bible was written seem to have been miraculously brought about.**

By the time King James took the throne in England, who united the rule for both England and Scotland for the first time, Britain was on course to become the world's largest empire, even greater than Rome. Queen Elizabeth's reign (before James) had seen great expansion overseas, she herself was a gifted scholar able to speak Latin, Greek, French, and Spanish. James also was a scholar who was well versed in theology. The renaissance had sparked a new scientific thinking, while the literacy and art were becoming widespread among the people with great poets including William Shakespeare, Edmund Spenser, Christopher Marlowe and Sir Walter Raleigh.

England had adopted a moderate religious policy, allowing freedom without persecution, though Protestantism was made the official religion. The kingdom also had begun providing a support network for the needy, while Britain had begun to colonise north America during her reign.

It was also during this time that English had become one of the most sophisticated languages in the world, more than Greek. And with the growth of the British empire for the next 300 years, the English

language was destined to become the world's more widespread language (God didn't know that of course!). By 1922, the British Empire held sway over 458million people (1/4 of the world's population) and around 25% of the world's total land area!

By the time that King James commissioned the King James Bible in 1604, faithful and godly men like William Tyndale, Myles Coverdale, and John Wycliffe had laid much of the groundwork that would lead to the first edition of the King James Bible in 1611. Universities had been established in England, Cambridge and Oxford from where we get our systems from today. Tyndale himself was a graduate from Cambridge with a desire to get the Bible into the hands of the common man and died for it.

The King James version remains one of the greatest landmarks in the English tongue. It has affected our language, brought revivals, made available for the common man and played a unique role in the historical development of America and missionaries sent forth into the world for the past 400 years.

The bible that you hold in your hands is the perfect result of the providence of God. God had the exact time and place and some 60 of the world's greatest scholars from the world's most prestigious universities that actually believed in its truth together, to bring a new translation into this world, knowing full well that future history of the British Empire. God would use this translation to bring His word into the world and bring the faith once delivered to the saints, into the new World.

It should come as no surprise to us that it is now the most attacked translation in the world, and with every new translation that comes out, the purity of the Bible is watered down more and more. No other translation can compare to the KJV, in its history, detail, and significance.

My challenge to you today is, will you trust it? Will you believe it? If you choose to believe it then will you treasure it and learn it so that you might grow and be every bit the child of God you can be?

For all of the things that God has provided you His Presence, Protection and His Precious Word. If you are a child of God, you have everything that you need to live a victorious and blessed life. But you need to have faith. Faith that He is with you and will never leave nor forsake you, faith in His protective power, wisdom and grace that can get you through every situation and bring you home and faith in His promises to you. Those we read in the bible, through which our faith can actually increase.

For faith cometh by hearing and hearing by the word of God. Have you exercised that faith? Faith in Christ to first save you and faith in Christ to preserve you. Time to stand and begin to exercise!