



THE FOREST HILL NEWS

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Forest Hill Church of Christ

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Barry M. Grider, Pulpit
Matthew Jones, Associate
Haston Handley, Youth
Jordan Pugh, Youth

VISIT US SOON!

Sunday:

Bible Study..... 9:30 A.M.
Morning Worship.... 10:30 A.M.
Afternoon Worship.... 1:30 P.M.

Wednesday:

Bible Study 7:00 P.M.

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God's Providence and the Problem of Evil (Part 2)

Kyle Butt, M. Div.

BIBLE EXAMPLES OF SPECIAL PROVIDENCE

Esther

The name of God is never mentioned in the book of Esther. For that reason, some have questioned its inspiration and place in the canon. A close analysis of the book, however, shows that it meets the criteria for inspiration. The fact that it does not use God's name is significant, because the events that happen in the book provide some of the clearest examples of special providence in all of Scripture.

Let us briefly summarize the story. Esther is a Jew who lives in Shushan, the capital of the Persian Empire. She is orphaned, so her cousin Mordecai raises her as if she were his. In the course of events, the Persian king Ahasuerus dismisses his wife and begins the process of looking for another. Esther is among the young women that Ahasuerus assembles at his palace. She surpasses the others in talent and beauty and becomes the new queen. Mordecai warns her not to reveal that she is a Jew. On one occasion, when Mordecai sat in the king's gate, he uncovered a plot to kill the king. Those involved were found guilty and the event was written in the history book that Ahasuerus kept.

During this time, the wicked general Haman began to advance in station and status with the king. He hated Mordecai because the Jew would not bow to him. Instead of killing Mordecai, Haman tricked the king into issuing a decree that all the Jews should be killed. Esther courageously pleaded with the king to save the Jews. Ultimately, Haman's plot was discovered, he was hanged, and the Jewish people were delivered from destruction. The most interesting aspect of the book of Esther is the underlying working of God through "natural" processes throughout the events taking place.

For instance, of all the young women in the entire kingdom that Ahasuerus could have picked, he chose the Jewess Esther. Her cousin Mordecai was in the perfect place to discover a plot against the king's life, and his deed was written down in the history book. The entry, however, went unnoticed for many days until one "fortuitous" night the king could not sleep. Due to his insomnia, he ordered that the history book be read, and it just so happened that Mordecai's discovery was the chosen text. While the king was deciding what to do to honor Mordecai, Haman entered his presence hoping to request that the king hang Mordecai. Instead, Haman was instructed to parade the Jew through the streets as one whom the king chose to honor. Haman was later hanged on the very gallows that he had built to hang Mordecai.

The number of perfectly aligned events that brought about the Jews' salvation were not coincidences. As John Walton noted, "If we truly understand Esther, it is not saying that there is no God at work, but neither is it saying that there is no circumstance. Instead, it insists that God works through the circumstance.... The only way to understand how God works is to see circumstance as one of his agents" (p. 104). One of the most familiar passages in the text is found in a statement that Mordecai made to Esther. He admonished her to have the courage to go to the king, even knowing that she might die. And he said, "who knows whether you have come to the kingdom for such a time as this?" (Esther 4:14). Notice that Mordecai's statement implies that the circumstances that led to Esther being the queen could have been arranged intentionally and purposefully for her to save the Jews.

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God's Providence (continued from page 1)

It is at this point that we need to consider an important aspect of special providence. God performed miracles in a way that, to the honest observer, left no room for doubt. Anyone who observed a miracle performed by Jesus or another empowered spokesperson from God, if the person was dealing honestly with the situation, could be sure that God's power was directly responsible for the event. When considering providence, however, God's work is often not clear until after the events take place, and even then it is difficult to put a finger on exactly how and where God was active. Mordecai's sentiment of "who knows" captures this facet of providence well. We see this idea in the New Testament as well. When Paul wrote to his friend Philemon, he mentioned that he had come in contact with one of Philemon's former slaves. This slave, Onesimus, had run away from Philemon and become a Christian during his time away. Paul was sending him back, and he wrote to Philemon, "perhaps he departed for a while for this purpose, that you may receive him forever, no longer as a slave but more than a slave, as a beloved brother" (Philemon 15-16).

Paul's use of the word "perhaps" echoes Mordecai's use of "who knows." Both writers were acknowledging that God works through natural, providential means. But they were also conceding that the circumstances under discussion could only be viewed with some uncertainty when trying to determine exactly what parts of their lives and the lives of others were related to God's activity. As May correctly wrote, "Miracles are clearly from God. Providence is always 'perhaps,' except when God in Scripture tells us He is working behind the scenes" (p. 69).

Joseph

The life and times of Joseph, son of Israel, consume the bulk of Genesis chapters 37-50. His story provides another clear example of God's providence in action. Joseph's dad favored him above his other brothers, because he was the son of Jacob's beloved wife Rachel. This favoritism led Jacob to treat him better than his brothers, which fueled their jealousy and hatred toward the young man. In addition, Joseph had dreams in which his brothers, Jacob, and Leah bowed down to him. This infuriated his siblings all the more.

On one occasion, Joseph was sent to check on his brothers as they tended their father's flocks. They conspired against him, captured him, and sold him to a band of slave traders. The traders sold him into Egypt. In Egypt, Joseph spent many years in slavery and in prison, but through a series of remarkable events, became the second most prominent man in all the land. Due to a massive famine, his brothers journeyed to Egypt to buy food. There they bowed to Joseph just as he had seen in his dreams. Eventually, Joseph revealed himself to his brothers and brought his family to live in Egypt. When his father died, his brothers feared that Joseph might seek revenge on them. They came to him, begging for his forgiveness. He calmed them and said, "[D]o not be afraid,

for am I in the place of God? But as for you, you meant evil against me; but God meant it for good, in order to bring it about as it is this day, to save many people alive" (Genesis 50:19-20).

As we read through the events of Joseph's life, we see many people who were not trying to help Joseph, nor were they attempting to obey God. His brothers sold him into slavery. Slave traders cruelly sold him into Egypt. His first master's wife lied about him. His master, Potiphar, then threw him into prison. And the chief butler forgot about him for two years before bringing his name up to Pharaoh. Obviously, the people in Joseph's life could not see the hand of God, nor were they complicit in God's plan to elevate Joseph. In addition, many of the events were unjust, wrong, and painful to Joseph. God, however, orchestrated these events in Joseph's life so that eventually they turned out "for good." This is the nature of providence.

PROVIDENCE AND HUMAN FREE WILL

A study of divine providence naturally leads to questions about human free will. If God orchestrates events to bring about desired outcomes, does He force people to act in certain ways? Does He override human free will in order to work providentially? The stories of Esther, Philemon, and Joseph provide us with the answer. God used the choices that the people in the stories freely made, and worked His providence through those choices. At no time did God in the past, or will God in the present or future, override a person's free will.

If God works His providence through the decisions that various people freely choose, that must mean He knows what they will choose. Some have argued that if God knows what a person chooses, then that person is not free to choose, since he or she is "stuck" choosing what God knows he/she will choose (see Barker, 2008, p. 127). The flaw in this argument hinges on the difference between **knowledge** and **cause**. Just because a person may have knowledge of an event does not mean that he caused the event or that the person who makes the choice is somehow constrained by this knowledge. A brief thought experiment makes this point clear. Suppose, hypothetically, you knew that a friend of yours drank coffee yesterday morning. Now suppose you could go back in time and watch him choose to drink coffee instead of milk. Did your knowledge that he would choose coffee somehow force his decision? Not at all. He could have chosen coffee because he liked the taste or wanted the caffeine. The fact that you knew what he would do does not mean he was forced to do it or that your knowledge somehow caused it. Similarly, God knows what every person will do. Using that knowledge, He can arrange events to accomplish His ends through natural circumstances.

(from apologeticspress.org)

(to be continued)

LORD'S TABLE

PRESIDE:	Greg Mangrum	Harold Mangrum
ASSIST:	Gene Kuehn	Landon Labasso
	Jordan Pugh	Cecil Sowell
	Stephen Ulrich	Jack Woods

PRAYERS

A.M. OPENING:	Keith McAlister
A.M. CLOSING:	Buster Rogers
P.M. OPENING:	Rufus Washington
P.M. CLOSING:	Jack Braddock

If you are unable to lead prayer or serve at the Lord's table, please contact Cedric Huff or Paul Connell.

RECORD, WEEK of June 26, 2016

BIBLE STUDY:	495
A.M. WORSHIP:	560
P.M. WORSHIP:	470
CONTRIBUTON:	\$15,465

OUR SICK

Abby Case is scheduled for thyroid surgery at LeBonheur Children's Hospital, Tuesday, July 5.

Morgan Stover, 10 year old nephew of Helen Sharp, diagnosed with cirrhosis of the liver. Cards may be sent to: 5785 Elbridge-Minnick Rd, Obion, TN 38240.

ILL AT HOME: Corinne Elkins.

HOMEBOUND

Bessie Berry	Albert & Ruth House
Virginia Ditto	Clarine Justice
Bertha Draughon	Ryan McCullar
Hazel Eskew	Helen Palazola
Tommy & Nell Herndon	Jerry & Betty Robbins
Anita Hopper	

OUR SYMPATHY IS EXTENDED TO:

The family of Carolyn Jones who passed was Friday. Visitation will be Tuesday, June 28, 5:00-7:00 p.m. and the funeral service will be Wednesday, June 29 at 10:00 a.m. at Forest Hill Funeral Home East on Whitten Road.

Dorothy Mosher and family in the recent passing of her sister, Mildred Bisig. The funeral will be Saturday, July 2 in Louisville, Kentucky.

REMEMBER to Check Your Box!

INFORMATION LINE: 531-8849

HEARTS & HANDS

TEAM "B" (Warren Davenport) will receive assignments the week of July 3.

TEAM "C" (Danny Braddock) will receive assignments the week of July 10.

UPCOMING EVENTS

WEDNESDAY EVENING SUMMER SERIES June 22-August 10, "New Testament Worship" in the auditorium for ages 7th grade-adult. Wednesday, July 6 "The Lord's Supper and Worship" taught by Don Walker.

FOUNDATIONS – a week of specialized training for young men and women ages 13-19. Ongoing through July 1.



KIRBY PINES Retirement Community worship service each fourth Sunday 8:00-8:45 a.m., conducted by Forest Hill. Our next service will be Sunday, July 24.

LEGACY ESTATES worship service each Sunday afternoon 3:00 p.m. conducted by Forest Hill.



Last week's solution:

And he said unto his disciples, Therefore I say unto you, Take no thought for your life, what ye shall eat; neither for the body, what ye shall put on. The life is more than meat, and the body is more than raiment. Consider the ravens: for they neither sow nor reap; which neither have storehouse nor barn; and God feedeth them: how much more are ye better than the fowls? Luke 12:22-24

CORNERSTONE

Unscramble the letters in each word below to reveal the passage of scripture.

ROF HTSI USECA EW SOLA, SNIEC EHT YDA EW RHEDA TI, OD TON SEECA OT YRPA ROF YUO, NDA OT SRIEED TTHA EY TMIHG EB LLIFED WTIH EHT WONLKGEED FO SIH LWLI NI LLA WSOMID NDA UTSRPLIIA UTSRNNIGEDDA; TTHA EY TMIHG WLKA YWTROH FO EHT ROLD UTON LLA SPNLIGEA, NBIGE UFUTRLIF NI YEVRE OOGD WROK, NDA SRNNIIGECA NI EHT WODENLKGE FO OGD;

Solution next week

NORTH SIDE GREETERS

Tony and Dianne Callahan (Front)
David and Carolyn Richardson (Side)

July 2016**SOUTH SIDE GREETERS**

(Front) Steve and Pat Allmond
(Side) Jim and Edwyna Woody

Coordinating Elder: Warren Davenport

Sun	Mon	Tues	Wed	Thurs	Fri	Sat
					1 <i>Virginia Ditto</i>	2 <i>Sarah Phillips</i>
3 <i>Abby Case Ian Huff</i>	4 <i>Kathy Brooks</i>	5	6 <i>Tish Clarke Brenda Crowe Lacey McAlister</i>	7 <i>Edwyna Woody</i>	8	9 <i>Jo Ann Ammons Keith Mosher Kari Summitt</i>
10 <i>Brenda Woods</i>	11	12	13	14 <i>Ann Caughron</i>	15 <i>Wanda Rodgers</i>	16 <i>Timothy Nichols</i>
17	18	19 <i>Shaunna Hanel</i>	20	21 <i>Ryden Bennett Kristen Horna Debbie Rogers</i>	22 <i>Tracey Adkins Bob Gitter</i>	23 <i>Javier Lara</i>
24	25	26 <i>John Connell</i>	27 <i>Evan Manning Matthew Jones</i>	28 <i>Jerry Wright</i>	29	30
31 <i>Sherry Brown</i>						

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