MIRACLES AND THE PROVIDENCE OF GOD

Psalms 145:1-21

"Thou art the God that doest wonders: thou hast declared thy strength among the people." (Psalms 77:14)

INTRODUCTION: In the Declaration of Independence, our forefathers wrote that they believed God was leading them to establish a new nation upon this continent. They stated their belief in the providence of God. “For the support of this Declaration, with a firm reliance on the protection of Divine Providence, we mutually pledge to each other our lives, our fortunes and our sacred honor.” The hand of God can be traced throughout the history of America. We should be able to see His hand at work in our lives.

I. PROPER VIEW OF GOD

1. There are two views of life: the secular view and the Christian view.

Everyone has a worldview. A worldview is a set of beliefs used to see and interprets the world. All people have a set of principles by which they judge right and wrong, and which guides them in everyday living.

A Christian worldview is based on the infallible Word of God. The Bible is the foundation for what you believe and how you behave. You apply the truth of God's Word into your daily life. You make your decision according to the Bible. You believe in absolute truth and morals.

Only 4% of all American adults have a biblical worldview as the basis of their decision-making.

Only 9% of born-again US Christians have such a perspective on life.

Only half of the America’s Protestant pastors—51%—have a biblical worldview.

A Christian worldview believes that God of the Bible is the creator.

"The heavens are thine, the earth also is thine: as for the world and the fulness thereof, thou hast founded them." (Psalms 89:11)

He works in controlling what He has created to accomplish His purpose. Since we believe in the existence of God, we believe in miracles.

A secular world view holds to the belief that the world came into existence by random chance or by evolution. The world's view has no place for God. Since there is no God, there are no such thing as miracles.

2. God is at work in our lives every day. We may not visibly see him or verbally hear him, but He is there.

The entire Bible is an account of miracle after miracle as God cares for His creation while working to redeem and restore people for Himself. Christians have the assurance of God working in their lives.

"Being confident of this very thing, that he which hath begun a good work in you will perform it until the day of Jesus Christ." (Philippians 1:6)
"For it is God which worketh in you both to will and to do of his good pleasure." (Philippians 2:13)
We are to walk by faith. (2 Cor. 5:7) Jesus said to Thomas "blessed are they that have not seen, and yet have believed." (John 20:29)

"Whom having not seen, ye love; in whom, though now ye see him not, yet believing, ye rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory." (1 Peter 1:8)

II. PROVIDENCE OF GOD

1. In the providence of God, He is performing miracles.
God is at work by the means of His providence. The American College Dictionary gives this definition of providence: "The foreseeing and guardianship of God over His creatures...a manifestation of His divine care or direction."

The English term "providence" implies "foresight." Providence has to do with God's maintenance of the world He created. He is carrying out His divine purpose. Divine providence asserts that God is in complete control of all things.

The purpose of divine providence is to accomplish the will of God. To ensure that His purposes are fulfilled, God governs the affairs of men and works through the natural order of things to accomplish His plan.

We discover in the Bible God's work in providence as well as by supernatural miracles. Hannah is an example of God's providence. She had no children, but she prayed earnestly that God would bless her with a male child.

God answered her prayer by granting Hannah's petition. She conceived and bore a son. God used the natural laws of procreation to accomplish His will. Hannah named her son Samuel which means "Because I have asked Him of the LORD."

In the New Testament, we read of another birth which was the supernatural work of God. Mary, a virgin, was chosen of God to be the mother of Jesus, the Son of God. The Holy Spirit impregnated the womb of Mary. This truly was a miracle. In the reasoning of men, this was an impossibility for the virgin Mary to conceive and give birth to God's Son.

2. We should believe in miracles and we should expect miracles.

Today we will not witness the mighty miracles performed by Jesus or the apostles. Those amazing miracles in the Old and New Testament were signs to confirm God's messengers and message.

There are no new revelations being given today, therefore, there is no need for miracles to confirm God's messengers and message. We have in our Bible all that God intends for us.

Still, God is performing miracles today. As we look at God's creation, we see the miracle of life every day!

"For thou art great, and doest wondrous things: thou art God alone." (Psalms 86:10)

The word wondrous carries the meaning "to do extraordinary or hard or difficult things."
The greatest miracle ever is that God Himself stepped into history as a man, Jesus Christ, and He died, was buried, and rose again!

The second greatest miracle is the new birth of a sinner being changed into the image of Jesus. Jesus sent His disciples out on mission and gave them power to heal the sick and power over demons. (Luke 10:9, 17) They returned to Jesus rejoicing in their power. Jesus said unto them: "Notwithstanding in this rejoice not, that the spirits are subject unto you; but rather rejoice, because your names are written in heaven." (Luke 10:20)

III. PRESENCE OF GOD
We have God's promise that He will never leave nor forsake us. God makes Himself known to those who seek Him. "And ye shall seek me, and find me, when ye shall search for me with all your heart." (Jeremiah 29:13) The Lord delights to bless His children. He does require something from us.

1. God performs miracles but it requires faith on our part.

The Bible states that we are to walk by faith and not by sight. Faith must be exercised first before we can see the things of God.

While we have His promise of Him being with us, to experience His presence we must live by faith.

The miracles of God can be performed without the aid of man or anything else. He made the universe out of nothing. Yet, God honors faith. Many of the miracles Jesus performed required the person to believe first. For us to experience a miracle, it requires faith. God does work in accordance to our faith.

In Matthew 9:27-31, we read of the two blind men Jesus healed. Jesus first asked them: "Believe ye that I am able to do this? They said unto Him, Yea, Lord. Then touched he their eyes, saying, According to your faith be it unto you."

These two men would not have experienced their miracle of healing if they did not have faith in the Lord.

The Bible teaches us that "without faith it is impossible to please him: for he that cometh to God must believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him." (Hebrews 11:6)

Believing comes before seeing the works of God manifested.

Before Martha witnessed her brother Lazarus being raised from the dead, Jesus said unto her: "Said I not unto thee, that, if thou wouldest believe, thou shouldest see the glory of God?" (John 11:40)

There are some things that God does only in answer to believing prayer.

"Therefore I say unto you, What things soever ye desire, when ye pray, believe that ye receive them, and ye shall have them." (Mark 11:24)

Blind Bartimaeus received his sight after asking Jesus to heal him.
"Saying, What wilt thou that I shall do unto thee? And he said, Lord, that I may receive my sight. And Jesus said unto him, Receive thy sight: thy faith hath saved thee. And immediately he received his sight, and followed him, glorifying God: and all the people, when they saw it, gave praise unto God." (Luke 18:41-43)

He would have missed his miracle if he had not asked and believed the Lord.

2. **As Christians, we should expect and watch for God's activity in our lives.**

   God's power and presence is evident in our world. His power is on display every day. The heavens reveal the power of His might. Paul wrote that the "invisible things of Him from the creation of the world are clearly seen being understood by the things that are made, even his eternal power and Godhead; so that they are without excuse." (Romans 1:20)

   The Lord watches over His people like a good shepherd watches over his sheep. David expressed this truth in Psalms 23. "The LORD is my shepherd; I shall not want. He maketh me to lie down in green pastures: he leadeth me beside the still waters." (Psalms 23:1-2)

   Jesus said that "even the very hairs of your head are all numbered. Fear not therefore: ye are of more value than many sparrows." (Luke 12:7)

   "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?" (Matthew 6:26)

   Since Jesus is our Good Shepherd, we should expect and watch for His blessings in our lives. The Lord protects us and provides for us every moment of every day. If we will only look by faith, we can see His hand at work in our lives.

   We should acknowledge the **God things** that happen daily in our lives. A God thing is an answer to a prayer or an unexpected blessing. It may be a needed check received in the mail. A God thing can be good news you hear from a doctor's report. A God thing may be a promotion at work. A God thing may be God raising up a critically sick or injured family member or friend.

   God's eternal power is revealed every day in our world and in our individual lives. We are guilty of not recognizing His presence and power with us.

   Does God still do miracles today? Yes, but not like the supernatural miracles recorded in the Bible. God is working in circumstances and people to perform His miracles.

   **We are quick to explain God's blessings as good luck, coincidence, fate or chance.**

   In the Bible, we not only read of God's supernatural miracles, but we read of Him working behind the scene fulfilling His will. This is the providence of God. These works are just as much a miracle as the others. They may not be the manifestation of His power publicly, but they still are God's power at work.

   It may be in a operating room where a doctor is performing major surgery. Unseen by those in the room, the Lord is guiding the hands of the doctor. The doctor does all he can do humanly speaking. The patient is likely to die and doctor the offers little hope to the family. In a miraculous way the patient condition changes for better. The surgeon knows that someone else was at work in the patient's life.
Whether we experience God's power in a miraculous way, such as a healing, or simply through his providential guiding of a surgeon's hands, God is in control. He is working in our lives.

Paul wrote that we are to be "confident of this very thing, that he which hath begun a good work in you will perform it until the day of Jesus Christ." (Philippians 1:6)

In Ephesians 3:20 Paul wrote of God's "power that worketh in us."

In the life of a Christian, God is working to conform us into the image of Christ. God has created a moral universe in which the law of cause-and-effect is a reality. Our choices may be right or wrong, but God is working in our lives to fulfill His will. God is God alone, and there are no “accidents” in the universe.

LESSON FOR LIFE:
Are we guilty of attributing the blessings of God to luck, circumstances, good fortune, or to our wisdom, etc?

As Christians who believe in the Sovereign God of the universe, we should give God glory for all the mighty things that He does for us.

"Declare his glory among the heathen, his wonders among all people." (Psalms 96:3)

"But it is good for me to draw near to God: I have put my trust in the Lord GOD, that I may declare all thy works." (Psalms 73:28)

The testimony of king Nebuchadnezzar revealed how God can change a life. A man full of pride and arrogance was humbled before God. He came to know the Great God of Heaven and he said:

"I thought it good to shew the signs and wonders that the high God hath wrought toward me. How great are his signs! and how mighty are his wonders! his kingdom is an everlasting kingdom, and his dominion is from generation to generation." (Dan. 4:2-3)

We pray for a miracle of healing and then we fail to thank God for His blessing. Why should we expect to experience greater things from the Lord when we deny or ignore the things He has done for us?

We have been brain washed in believing science has all the answers. God has been moved from the class rooms of our schools. Now there is the effort to remove God from the public. Children never hear the truth concerning creation and the existence of God. Evolution is taught as a scientific fact today. The denial of God or the doubt of God causes people to be blind to the work of God in their lives. Ask God to make you more discerning of His presence in your life. Believe that God can and does great and mighty things. At the end of the day, take time to consider the God things He has done for you.