

# WHAT DO THE LIVES OF CALEB AND JOSHUA TEACH ABOUT THE PROVIDENCE OF GOD?

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There is no greater theme in many ways than the theme that deals with the providence of God. It is a subject as wide as the Bible, as deep as the earth, and as high as heaven. If we thoroughly understood it we probably would not appreciate it. So many of the ways of providence are “past finding out.” Yet, if we believe the word of God and trust in His great power, we believe that providence is a great Bible truth. What is providence? Webster defines it thusly: “Divine guidance or care, exercising foresight, guiding through prevention.” Now if we believe anything, we believe that God does guide us, that He does care for us, and that He can, without our understanding why or how, reach out and prevent the happening of certain things. Before we attempt to examine providence in the lives of two of the great Bible characters, Caleb and Joshua, let us elaborate somewhat upon some of the great Bible truth with which providence is associated.

## PROVIDENCE AND CARE

If God did not care for His own children, there would be no need for His providence. But He does care. We do not understand the depth of that divine care, but He cares so much He arranged the world and everything in it for man's happiness and well-being. Peter told fellow Christians in his day to cast their cares upon him, “**for he careth for you**” (1 Pet. 5:7). In loneliness and discouragement, David felt one time that God did not care; in fact, he felt that “**no man cared for my soul**” (Psa. 142:4). But David was wrong. Someone did care. God cared. And there were those about David that cared. Our Father shows His care by taking care of the birds (Mat. 6:26). “**They sow not, neither do they reap, yet your heavenly Father feedeth them.**” Then Jesus concludes that we are “**much better than they.**” He has His ways of caring for these little feathered creatures, and to me His care equates with His providence in taking care of them when they can't take care of themselves. The Hebrew writer says that the Father “**careth for oxen**” (1 Cor. 9:9). And this has to be but an illustration of His providence in the lives of lowlier creatures. Will He not, therefore, care for us? The old lady in London may have presumed upon God's providence but I like what she said anyway, and I do not advocate presuming upon His providence. She said, upon refusing to move out of her top room with bombs bursting all around, “I say my prayers every night and then I go to sleep. There's no need for us both to stay awake.” Sure, there's an element of foolishness in her statement, but without necessarily going that far I am sure we could all use a bit of her confidence. It is a certain fact that care cannot be separated from providence.

## PROVIDENCE AND FAITH

There are some things that we cannot explain, yet we believe in them. Providence is such a thing. Faith must be underneath everything we do. It is truly the foundation (Heb. 11:1). Without it **“it is impossible to please God”** (v. 6). This faith **“comes by hearing and hearing by the word of God”** (Rom. 10:17). But the word in just so many words does not tell us what providence is. It demonstrates it and illustrates it and from these we have to get our definitions of what providence is. “But, explain it” people continue to cry. I answer like this. See what you think of it: The apostle Paul says that God “has ways past finding out” (Rom. 11:33). If Paul could not fully explain God’s providence, how can I? Or any other mortal creature? Paul admitted he could not explain it, but he certainly believed in it, for divine intervention had come to his aid time and time again. Providence does not nullify the word of God. It may in its own way open up opportunities, even prolong one’s life, but it is still the gospel and gospel only that saves the lost sinner (Rom. 1:16).

## PROVIDENCE AND LOVE

God cares for the birds and the beasts because He loves them. He made them and they are His. Should He be less attentive to creatures made after His image and given a rational status that no other creature possesses?

Of course not. The heart of Jesus was often touched by the misfortunes of those who followed Him. For this reason, it was said that **“He went about doing good”** (Acts 10:38) He once compared His providential love for His children to the care the mother hen has for her chicks (Mat. 22:37). This familiar illustration to those of us who were brought up in the day when the chickens had the run of the yard makes a lot of sense. In this unique manner Jesus was teaching on the oversight and providential care of His heavenly Father. If God did not love us so much, He would not care what happens to us. But He cares—“oh yes, He cares!”

## PROVIDENCE AND PRAYER

Does a service ever pass by in which the help of God is not invoked upon those who are sick, in trouble, in deep sorrows brought on by the losses of loved ones? It would be a rare service indeed if these were not mentioned by way of petition to the Father. People go on vacations and ask for our prayers for their safety. And we pray for them. Our loved ones are away in different branches of the service of our country. We never let a day go by without reminding the Father of our concern and our dependence upon him for their safety. In short, we ask Him to take care of them if it be His will. We must always pray according to His will and in His name (John 14:13, 14). “Well, just how does God go about protecting our loved ones and friends?” That I cannot answer. Perhaps it’s a part of his **“ways past finding out.”** Is prayer miraculous? No. We are dealing with a God who can harness all nature if He so commands for the benefit of His people. For lack of a better word, I call this providence. “Well, why does it seem to work for some and not for others, and maybe not even for us at all times?” I do not know. But I shall keep on believing and asking.

## PROVIDENCE AND ACCEPTANCE

We can drive ourselves into complete despair if we try to solve the secret ways of God—if we try to answer all the unanswered, and even unanswerable questions. We must not forget that **“the secret things belong unto God”** (Deu. 29:29). There are so many times in life when we just have to accept things that we do not understand. “Why did this happen to me? to mine?” I do not know. It seems like this lesson is filled with “don’t knows.” Again, it seems that here is where faith and full confidence in God’s love and direction come in—come when we stand oftentimes in an alley that seems to have no way out. But there is a way and God will lead us through it. If His providence does not seem to work in some particular instance in our lives, then we must accept without bitterness whatever He wills in our lives. Faith will, and must, accept when reason rebels. Paul had to live with a **“thorn in the flesh,”** and we have our thorns. Sometimes they can be plucked out and at other times they remain and we have to make the best of them. Now with these things in mind, which I believe to be well worth our consideration when we study the matter of providence, let us pay our attention for the rest of our lesson to God’s providence in the lives of two of the Bible’s greatest characters.

### GOD’S PROVIDENCE IN THE LIFE OF CALEB

The history of Caleb is set forth in the books of Numbers, Joshua, Judges, 1 Samuel, and a few mentions in 1 Chronicles. He was of the tribe of Judah (Num. 13:6). Spies from each of the tribes were to spy out the land, learn what kind of land it was, whether the people were weak or strong. Their maneuvers were very much like they would be today in modern warfare. They had to know the enemy. Even with the providence of the Almighty, Joshua and Caleb knew they would have to do everything in their power to successfully take the land. And after doing what they could with the Lord’s help, the Lord would then step in and do what they could not do. They searched out the secrets of the land, went to the South, went by Hebron, checked on the fruits and things growing, and brought back grapes, pomegranates, and figs (Num. 13:23). The spies were gone for forty days, found many good things, but had this to report upon their return:

**The land floweth with milk and honey but the people are stronger than we...and we saw giants of the sons of Anak, and we were in our own sight as grasshoppers** (vs. 27, 31, 33).

In Caleb’s response to their fright and excuses, he said: **“Let us go up at once and possess it: for we are well able to overcome it”** (v. 30). In what was Caleb trusting? In his own strength? No! In the strength of a frightened people? No! He was trusting in the strength of Jehovah God, who stood by them to fight for them. Call this what you may. I call it the providence of the Lord. God told them to do it, and He was a God who cared, who loved, and who promised them success. Their complete trust in Him, after being encouraged by their leaders, clearly demonstrated the providence of the Almighty. Were all the people convinced? Oh no! Not by a long shot! The people cried that night and murmured against Moses

and Aaron (Num. 14:1, 2). God had said that He would give them the land of Canaan but they would have to **“search it out.”** God will not, and has never gone the entire way for man, He made him so he could act—obey or disobey. This is the free agency of man, one of God’s greatest gifts to him. Otherwise man would have been no more than a robot. The spies carrying the cluster of grapes on a staff between two men show the care they took to not bruise them. They wanted Moses and others to see the beauty of the land as evidenced in the beautiful, uncrushed grapes. Yet the people were not willing, even with the Lord’s help, to go forward and take the land. How much like those faithless people we are today! **“I will never leave thee nor forsake thee”** doesn’t mean too much to the average ones among us now. We are journeying toward the eternal Promised Land, Heaven, with assurance that God will see us all the way through on our journey. Yet we halt so often in unbelief like other ancients (1 Kin. 18:21). And our halting is evidence that we do not fully believe that God is able to bring us through to a successful conclusion. Our faith in His providence just isn’t there.

Adam Clark, in his great commentaries, suggests that throughout the ages of history there have been, from time to time, men of very great stature. He mentions two brothers he knew personally who were “upward of seven feet.” And one in the same neighborhood who was eight feet, six inches. Now that last one was a tall one! The seven-footers, according to today’s basketball players, weren’t so tall. Plenty of today’s athletes, especially in the sport mentioned are in the neighborhood of seven feet and some two or three inches over that height. It is believed by authorities that Goliath was over nine feet tall. So there were giants around in those days and the spies returned from the land saying that they were afraid to go up on account of them. The people were afraid to go. And the spies discouraged their going by saying **“The land is good, but…”** This sounds like some of us in this present day, far removed from the land of Canaan. “Oh, we admit it is a good work, but…” And if we can’t “but” others to death, we’ll “but” ourselves to death. How often our Lord must sadly say, “Oh, ye of little faith” as He did to His disciples just about in the middle of where we now live and where the people of Caleb’s day lived back then (Mat. 6:30). The difference between Caleb and the people in that day was a difference of believing in a God who would give them victory—believing in a God who cared, who loved them, and in not believing in Him. I say it was a matter of believing in His divine guidance, His providence and not believing in it.

In chapter 14, the people cried and murmured against God and Moses and Aaron. I am sure that all preachers have had someone murmur in every place they have ever been. I have, though I was fortunate through the years I worked locally. But have the entire congregation murmur? No man could long stand up under that, yet that’s exactly what God’s leaders had back in those days in their long trek toward the promised land. The people even said, **“Would God that we had died in the land of Egypt”** (14:2). Then they wanted to return to Egypt. So soon it seems they had forgotten that everything wasn’t just right under Pharaoh. They

even wanted a “new” captain. Sounds like some churches that want to change preachers every time the work doesn’t go exactly right according to them. The people were told again that the land was a good land and, **“if the Lord delight in us He will bring us into this land.”** And so He did—providence, protection and care all the way. God threatened to utterly destroy the people, and they did deserve it, but Moses interceded, saying that if God did not give the people at least their posterity, the land, the heathen nations round about would laugh and say that God had begun something that even He could not finish (14:16). But Caleb had **“...another spirit with him, and hath followed me fully, him will I bring into the land whereinto he went; and His seed shall possess it”** (14:24). Where Caleb could not see he walked by faith, trusting in God all the way. Call this what you will; I call it providence. In the first chapter of Deuteronomy, Moses rehearses what befell Israel on their way to Canaan. As thousands of the people traveled, they were to hear the voices of the judges, who were to judge without respect of persons. God knew well that troubles and strife would come as they journeyed through “that great and terrible wilderness” (v. 19). The Lord was giving them the land, yet they had to **“go up and possess it.”** Man has never been completely passive in his salvation. He has always had to do works, and in the New Testament they are called **“righteous works”** (Acts 10:34, 35). Moses reminds them how God had said they should not be afraid of the giants they encountered along the way. The Lord would fight for them. But their troubles came when they **“did not believe the Lord”** (v. 32). Here Caleb’s name is mentioned again, because **“he wholly followed the Lord.”** Caleb’s children, Joshua, and the “younger generation” would be allowed to go into the land. Much history passes by and the people struggle to get into the land that God promised them. It becomes the responsibility of Joshua to make certain divisions. Caleb makes what may seem like a strange request. He asked for the place God had spoken of, the land of the Anakims along with their fenced and walled cities: **“If so be the Lord will be with me, then I shall be able to drive them out”** (Jos. 14:12). Then Joshua blessed him and gave him Hebron for an inheritance. Caleb had said, **“Now therefore give me this mountain whereof the Lord spake in that day.”** He received Hebron according to his request. He had been a living demonstration of the providence of God and his unshakable faith in it that God would follow through to the fulfillment of all His promises. Forty-five years have passed since they started out, many things have happened. Most of the old ones have died, Caleb has had wives and children, and his life is beginning to end in the recordings of 1 Chronicles, chapter one. The greatest epitaph that can be written over his name is: HE BELIEVED IN GOD. HE TRUSTED HIM WITHOUT WAVERING. HE NEVER DOUBTED THE DIVINE GUIDANCE OF HIS FATHER—HIS DIVINE PROVIDENCE.

### **GOD’S PROVIDENCE IN THE LIFE OF JOSHUA**

The lives and works of Caleb and Joshua run parallel throughout these journeyings toward the promised land. They possibly could be discussed together,

but my assignment for this article specifically stated that they should be discussed separately. So I am proceeding to do my best to follow the instructions. Naturally, there will be a bit of lapping over here and there. Joshua was the son of Nun, of the tribe of Ephraim (1 Chr. 7:27). He was on the scene of action from about 1530 to 1420 B.C. He was one of the twelve sent out to explore the land and one of two who came back with a good report. We have already learned who the other one was. Shortly before his death, Moses gave him authority over the people (Num. 29:18). Moses had been with him enough to know that he trusted God and would do only what God commanded. He would follow divine orders without questions. This shows how strongly Joshua believed in the providence of God. "If Jehovah God says do it, I will do it." A man remarked, "It will be a good day tomorrow if it does not rain." Another replied, "It will be a good day whether it rains or not." Why can't we all have this submissive attitude when it comes to the Lord's doings? The name "Joshua" means "Savior," or, "whose help is Jehovah." In Exodus 24:13 he is called Moses' minister, and in Exodus 33:11 he is referred to as Moses' friend. It seems that Joshua was always close by Moses and ready to serve when the need arose. He went with Moses to the Mount when Moses received the commandments, and when Moses came down Joshua told him, "**there is a noise of war in the camp**" (Exo. 32:17). Involved in the confusion while Moses was gone, was the making of a golden calf for the people to worship. Moses saw it, was filled with anger, cast the "tables of testimony" down and broke them. They had to be rewritten, and God threatened to destroy the people. Moses pled for them and the Lord changed His mind. Things came to a head when Moses demanded that the people take a stand for or against the Lord: "**Who is on the Lord's side? let him come unto me**" (32:26).

A line was drawn between truth and idolatrous worship. A line must be drawn between what is right and what is wrong today. Truth cannot be compromised with error, for when this happens truth always loses. In all these ups and downs, Joshua stood faithfully by the side of Moses. He truly was "**his minister,**" and "**his friend.**" "**And the Lord spake to Moses face to face, as a man speaketh unto his friend...and his servant Joshua, a young man, departed not out of the tabernacle**" (Exo. 33:11). How is it that when we seem so alone, feeling like the whole world around us has forsaken us, that a friend seems to always show up? No, it is not a miracle. But what about divine providence? It just might be that! Truly providence was busy in the lives of Moses and Joshua as it was in the life of Caleb.

So many times God stepped in just when Joshua needed His divine help and assurance. It sounds like Paul who commented like this a few thousand years later: "**And we know that all things work together for good, to them that love God, to them that are called according to His purpose**" (Rom. 8:28). Joshua was called along with Moses and Caleb for a purpose. He obeyed, and God's protective power followed him—overshadowed him—God's providence. We do not know how God works things out for us, but we know He can and will if such things are according to His will. Regardless of how needed and capable a man may be, he

finally comes to the end of the way—he finishes his work. This has always been true of great men, and it was very true of Moses, possibly the greatest leader the ancient people had. Moses died, but the work did not stop. God said to Joshua, **“Go over into Jordan, thou, and all this people, unto the land which I do give to them, even to the children of Israel”** (Jos. 1:2). God told Joshua to **“be strong and of good courage,”** and that **“no man can stand before thee.”** With activity like this, Jehovah God had to be with him in a special way, call it providence.

I had a dear friend in Oklahoma. Our friendship started when I baptized him, his wife, and through the years that followed numbers of his family. He went off to war—the second World War and then the Korean conflict. He was not a bragging type. He would occasionally open up and tell me some of the horrors of those conflicts. In Germany, he had a jeep literally cut in half. He and his men were spared when this awful barrage of firepower struck them. In Korea, he and his men fought from behind a wall of humans, enemies’ bodies, sometimes six feet high. He came through. He was able to get back into faithful service, became one of my best friends and one of the best elders I ever knew. More than once I saw him stand firm when liberalism threatened the church where he served so many years. A miracle? No. Providence? He would have said, yes. And I am prone to say, yes. Understand it? No. Believe it? Yes.

How many times in the life of Joshua did he stand with his men under most fearful conditions? Only God knows. How many fell all around him? Again, only God knows. But Joshua came through. It was God’s will—His divine guidance. **“For the Lord God is with thee whithersoever thou goest”** (Jos. 1:9). Joshua was told that his loved ones would stay on **“this side of the Jordan”** while he with his men went to possess the land which had been promised them. He didn’t stay behind at a safe distance; no, he went “right up to the front” with his men. God truly was with him!

In Joshua 2, we have the interesting story of Joshua sending the two spies to view Jericho, to learn the enemy strength. They lodged with a harlot named Rahab. Word gets to the king that they are there and he orders Rahab to bring them forth. Were they “providentially spared?” It does seem so. Rahab said to those searching for the men, **“Whither the men went out I wot not, pursue after them quickly...”** After the king’s men were gone, she made a covenant with Joshua’s men, that she and her household might be spared when the invasion came about. Why did Rahab do all these things? **“For I know the Lord hath given you the land...”** (2:9). She seems to believe in Jehovah God strongly enough that she is listed with the “faithful” many centuries later in Hebrews 11:31. As the result of this remarkable true story we learn of the scarlet thread and what it signified: **“When we come into the land, thou shalt bind this line of scarlet thread in the window which thou didst let us down by...”** (2:18-21). She was promised that she and her family would be spared, but only if they complied with the conditions stipulated. She accepted these conditions by saying, **“So be it.”** Thus, when she obeyed strictly the commands of Joshua, she and her household were spared.

Strange way to spare and save a household? Yes, but many times in those days God did move in strange ways.

After the report of the spies, Israel gets ready to move at the sign of the Lord. The priests and Levites bear the holy ark of the covenant and the people follow at some distance behind it. In fact, they were to follow about three thousand cubits behind it. When you think that a cubit was about eighteen inches, it becomes a sobering thought that the people were not allowed to get any closer to it. Do you wonder why this was so? The ark was their pilot and was a pledge of the Divine presence. Had the people crowded upon it as they were prone to do, the ark would not have been conspicuous at all times. It seems now that the priests alone are bearing the ark. Early commentators say it was probably uncovered so everyone could see it, not covered with its curtains as it always was when the Levites carried it. After all, it was the high priest who went into the Holy of Holies once per year and offered sacrifices for himself and the people (Heb. 9:7). Twelve stones are put up in the Jordan where the priest's feet rested, **“and they are there unto this day”** (4:9). About forty thousand passed over and they feared Joshua as they had feared Moses. The people were instructed to teach their children later on the significance of the twelve stones. They were a memorial to remind them of this great crossing, how God providentially guided them all the way. The waters of the Jordan were parted, the people passed through; then after the priests that bore the ark passed through, the waters came back together. By then, the men who had been circumcised prior to the start of the journey had died. They had been journeying forty years. Now, before they go farther, the ones that were born along the way had to be circumcised (4:4-8). The place was called Gilgal. Here they kept the Passover on the fourteenth day, at even in the plains of Jericho. From this day on, they ate of the land of Canaan and the “heavenly” bread (manna) was eaten no more (5:12). We talk about the providence of God—what about the wondrous manner in which manna came down from heaven to sustain the children? And be sure Joshua had his portion from day to day. So did Moses and Caleb (Exo. 16:35). For forty years, they ate this bread. And a bit was preserved in the Mercy Seat in the Holy of Holies as a memorial of their long journey.

The manner in which Jericho was given to Joshua shows the divine care of the Father. No other military man in the annals of all time ever had a charge like the one given to the children. God said, **“I have given you Jericho”** (6:2). But there were acts that had to be performed. They were to march around the city one time each day for six days, and on the seventh day march around it seven times. The priests were still carrying the ark. After the marching on the seventh day, the priests were to give forth a blast on the ram's horn, and then, upon the sound of the trumpets, all the people were to shout, but not until Joshua gave the command. The city was accursed and only Rahab the harlot was to live. On the given signal, all the people shouted, and the wall fell down flat and God's army rushed in and destroyed everything save the harlot and her family.

In the chapters that follow, to the end of the story, as far as Joshua was concerned, we read of the conquering of Ai (chapter 7), but not before Israel suffered a defeat. The children wondered why and were told by Jehovah that **“Israel hath sinned.”** The command to not take any spoils had been violated and Achan was found guilty of taking a Babylonish garment and some gold and silver. He and all his household were put to death because they had dishonored God and the army of Joshua. What a stern lesson for us today—for those who think they can play fast and loose with anything God says and get by with it!

The Lord’s people continue to take the land, defeating the Hittites, Amorites, the Canaanites, Perizzites, and the Jebusites. These nations tried to deceive Joshua saying, **“We be come from a far country”** (9:6). When their deception was found out some were destroyed, and it seems that some were spared because of their frank confessions and promises of restitution.

Gibeon was an example of a great city that made peace with Joshua. Five strong kings united but they could not stand before the Israelites. They warred a long time but Joshua took all the lands that God had promised the people. The rest of the history of Joshua deals with final conquests of all the promised land, the divisions of the land and Joshua’s total obedience to Jehovah until his time to die came. Yet, he was strong until the last (14:11). Caleb was given Hebron when Joshua was eighty-five years old. He had asked for this particular part of the possessed land, **“Now give me this mountain.”** He had conquered with Moses under the providence of God and now he wants Hebron. Just so, in other ways we as Christians have mountains to conquer and God will help us conquer them.

Time forbids a discussion of the rest of the book but it goes on as we have learned up to now—conquering, conquering, and settling after the long, long trek from Egypt. Joshua calls the people together and gives them his farewell speech (chapter 23). He recapitulates with warnings and promises. He tells them that all God did to the evil nations He did for His people, that they were to continue to be **“very courageous, to keep and to do all that is written in the book of the law of Moses...to cleave unto the Lord,”** and that with the Lord **“one man can chase a thousand”**; he warns that they must continue to be on guard and not take their conquests for granted lest they lose all. He assured them that the great God would be with them, and His providence would be with them like it had been with the people since the day they left Egypt.

The twenty-fourth chapter is a masterpiece and should be a grand finish to Joshua’s leadership of the people. Now the sad time comes as “all good things must end.” And despite their battles and struggles they had enjoyed many good things. They had truly seen the marvelous PROVIDENCE of God— had seen **“his ways that are past finding out”** by human investigations.

Joshua was one hundred, ten years old when he died. **“And they buried him in the border of his inheritance in Timnathserah which is in mount Ephraim on the north side of the hill of Gaash”** (24:29, 30).

## A FEW CLOSING THOUGHTS ON PROVIDENCE

I confess that I have had easier assignments, but possibly none that I have personally enjoyed studying more. Yet I, like others, have had to work largely in the realm of “uncertainty.” Certain of God’s providence, but uncertain many times as to *how* it works. How does God answer our prayers—for the sick, for ourselves, for our loved ones? We do not know everything about prayer. “Lord, our loved ones are making a long journey by land, by sea, or by air. Please protect them and bring them back to us if it be Thy will.” We pray like this every time we assemble, and we pray this way when we are alone. How does God do it? We don’t have all the answers. We know He can harness all nature to answer prayers if it be His will. So we keep on praying. “Why does he answer some prayers for others and not for us?” Well, maybe He does answer ours by saying “not now.” His providence may work for some in one way, for others in other ways. God’s providence does not contradict His word—never! What we sometimes call providence, may not be providence at all. Many things can be attributed to divine providence when it is not so. A woman said to us:

Our son was coming down the mountain from Big Bear last night in his Volkswagen Bug. He lost control and it rolled several times. It was a total wreck. Our son walked away without a scratch! It was just the providence of the Lord!

How did she know? There were parents standing there right then who lost a son in a car accident. Do you know what they were thinking? Of course you do. We all say, good for her, good for her son! But was it providence? Who knows? Remember providence is not to be equated with miracles. Miracles fall in another completely different category, and for specific purposes in the apostolic days.

Do we believe in Divine Providence? Of course. The God of the sparrows, and who takes care of them, cares for us and takes care of us in His own way. We must remember that “His ways” are not always “our ways.” Things work together for good if we love the Lord, and are called according to his purpose (Rom. 8:28). How? That’s God’s business. Providence does not set aside positive divine law. The alien sinner must hear, believe, and obey the gospel (John 6:44, 45; Rom. 10:17; Heb. 5:8, 9; Acts 2:38; etc.). The believer must pursue steadfastly—must be unmovable and unshaken in the truth (I Cor. 15:58, 59).

Why do we often think that providence takes hold only when something goes wrong? In the old days, a man rushed into a general store and exclaimed:

You know that narrow road up yonder on the side of the mountain? I was on that narrow curve and my horse was frightened. He dashed off the road and almost went over the cliff. The wagon was broken up, but we were not hurt. It was just God’s providence!

An old doctor listened and said:

You know I go up that mountain and around that sharp curve all hours of the day and night, summer and winter. I have never had my horse get

scared, break up the wagon against that big boulder you mentioned, and I have been doing this for many years.

From this we glean a valuable lesson: God's providence can work, when it works, under all conditions—certainly under good conditions. Maybe His providence had protected the old doctor from harm all those years.

Once, when Martin Luther felt despondent, he heard a bird singing an evening song. When the little feathered creature had finished, it tucked its head under its wing to go to sleep. Luther reflected:

This tiny bird has had its supper and is now ready to go to sleep. It does not worry about tomorrow—where it will go, what it will do, or what it will eat, or where it will spend tomorrow night.

Then he added, “Like David. It abides under the shadow of the Almighty. It just sits there and lets God care.”

With some explanations and proper applications, maybe this is a good definition of Divine Providence. Maybe it was this kind of trust and faith that guided Caleb and Joshua throughout those long years that were not easy. They never quit trusting and God never quit directing.~

*Deceased*