

We want Christ's power to be made perfect through us weak moms. So we will boast all the more gladly of our weaknesses, so that the power of Christ may rest upon us. —Gloria Furman

Spurgeon's Catechism
Compiled by Charles Haddon Spurgeon
[1834 -1892]

"Heir of the Puritans" (*Presented here as originally published – this does not constitute a full endorsement of the Riverside Baptist Church*)

4.Q. What is God?

A. God is Spirit (Jn. 4:24), infinite (Job 11:7), eternal (Ps. 90:2; 1 Tim. 1:17), and unchangeable (Jas. 1:17) in his being (Exod. 3:14), wisdom, power (Ps. 147:5), holiness (Rev. 4:8), justice, goodness and truth (Exod. 34:6-7).

5.Q. Are there more Gods than one?

A. There is but one only (Deut. 6:4), the living and true God (Jer. 10:10).

6.Q. How many persons are there in the Godhead?

A. There are three persons in the Godhead, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, and these three are one God, the same in essence, equal in power and glory (1 Jn. 5:7; Matt. 28:19).

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Sunday Morning Bible Study -- 10:00 AM

Sunday Morning Worship -- 11:00 AM

Prayer and Bible Study Wednesday Evening 6:30 PM

WCWV 92.9 FM – 8:00 AM Sunday Morning

THE RIVERSIDE BAPTIST REPORT

THE RIVERSIDE BAPTIST CHURCH

“The Pillar and ground of the Truth” -- 1 Timothy 3:15

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OVERRULING PROVIDENCE

After two days was the feast of the passover, and of unleavened bread: and the chief priests and the scribes sought how they might take him by craft, and put him to death. But they said, Not on the feast day, lest there be an uproar of the people. (Mark 14:1-2)

After having recently read John Flavel's classic work, *The Mystery of Providence*, I was somewhat awakened to my own casual acceptance of the events in my life. How easily we sigh and think, "It is what it is," or some other cliché wherein we give no thought to a divine appointment of all that comes to pass. I have difficulty believing that God gives such attention to the details of my life when so much is happening on a much larger scale. Then my attention is arrested by such thoughts as are expressed in passages such as, *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. (Romans 8:28)*. There is no such thing as luck, either good or bad, in the design of God. And furthermore, all that occurs is designed to accomplish the plan and purpose of God in redemption. The 1828 Webster's Dictionary defines providence in this way: "Providence in theology, the care and superintendence which God exercises over His creatures. He that acknowledges a creation and denies a providence, involves himself in a palpable contradiction; for the same power which caused a thing to exist is necessary to continue its existence." We are assured that God is able and does make all things serve the purpose of Glorifying Himself in exalting Christ and saving a people for His name, and in so doing He makes even the wickedness of men to

accomplish His will.

To this point in the Gospel accounts, we have seen Christ as our Prophet and Teacher with some indications as to what is to come to pass. Now we are brought to the time in the account in which He will fulfill His office as our suffering High Priest. All that He had begun to do and to teach would be of no value if the work of redemption was not carried out, and that required His ultimate suffering. Thus, we are made to marvel as we watch the plan of God unfold in the hand of mortal enemies through the betrayal of a familiar friend. In the same sense (but of far greater consequence) as God brought the Children of Israel out of Egypt so, with a mighty hand, against the power of the archenemy, would He bring Christ to glorious victory.

It is always a matter that cheers the heart to see our God as He brings to naught the work of His enemies. We have been made aware throughout of the hatred the religious elite had for Christ Jesus. They had attempted to kill Him on various occasions but were providentially hindered from doing so. The time was now approaching however, and they were intensifying their efforts. He would be given into their hands but on His timetable. We are reminded again of the words of the Psalmist: *Why do the heathen rage, and the people imagine a vain thing? The kings of the earth set*

themselves, and the rulers take counsel together, against the LORD, and against his anointed, saying, Let us break their bands asunder, and cast away their cords from us. He that sitteth in the heavens shall laugh: the Lord shall have them in derision. (Psalms 2:1-4).

The concern expressed by the priests and scribes was hypocritical to say the least. They had no confidence in the God they claimed to serve else they would have believed that he could dispatch his own enemy. Powerless religion seeks to destroy its enemies because of fear. They were torn between a fear of the people and the Roman Empire. They expressed concern that the murder of Jesus should not occur on the feast day. They had no idea of the true significance of the Passover. They had rather reduced their consideration to the issue of memorials and traditions. They were bound to an empty system of rituals.

The design of God was that the crucifixion of our Lord should coincide with Passover. Thus, we read that He was “delivered up by the determinant counsel and foreknowledge of God.” They would have had Him quietly murdered without a spectacle. God would have Him lifted up for all to see. Indeed, it was necessary in that He would “draw all men unto Him.” And “they would look on Him whom they had pierced. The depravity of men reached its height of expression in the crucifixion of Christ. They filled up the measure of their fathers.

In verses 3 through 9 of this chapter we have the account of the woman with the alabaster box of ointment and the woman’s anointing of Christ. It is here that the true character of Judas is revealed, and the event seemed to provoke

him to move more urgently to the betrayal. The love of money in Judas prevailed in such a way as to serve the purpose of God in meeting the appointed time. Matthew says that Judas asked, “what will you give me?” In John it was written of him, *This he said, not that he cared for the poor; but because he was a thief, and had the bag, and bare what was put therein. (John 12:6).* In Luke’s account we read that “then Satan entered into Judas.” Again, in Luke we read, *And they were glad, and covenanted to give him money. And he promised, and sought opportunity to betray him unto them in the absence of the multitude. (Luke 22:5-6).*

So, we witness the devices of the man who had witnessed so much but gave way to who he truly was. J. C. Ryle described what happened to Judas as the total eclipse of a man’s soul. So much could be said of the actions of Judas despite the witness of all he had seen in Christ. But for all his designs in betraying our Lord, and for all the designs of the priests and the scribes, all was made to serve the purpose of God so that all came to pass. It was that which was determined from all eternity, in the exact manner as it occurred, at the precise moment before determined by Him. It was that the darkest hour, under the direst of circumstances, should see the mighty Hand of God prevail in bringing about this “so great salvation.”

As we witness the orchestration of all the events ordered from eternity to accomplish the precise design of our Holy God in securing our salvation, may we be assured that all that has been or ever shall be in our miserable lives has been so directed as to be to His glory and our good. *bhs*

Grace is not simply leniency when we have sinned. Grace is the enabling gift of God not to sin. Grace is power, not just pardon. —John Piper

We must receive from God, before we can give to others, for we have nothing of our own with which to feed men’s hunger or quench their thirst. —J.R. Miller

THE PROPHETS

The record of the lives of the prophets reads like a history of martyrs. Their history sounds like a casualty report from the Third Division in World War II. The life expectancy of a prophet was that of a marine lieutenant in combat. When it is said of Jesus that “He was despised and rejected by men, a man of sorrows, and familiar with suffering” (Isa. 53:3), it is clear that He stood in a long line of men whom God had appointed to such suffering. The prophet’s curse was solitude; his home was often a cave. The desert was his traditional meeting place with God. Nakedness was sometimes his wardrobe, a wooden stock his necktie. His songs were composed with tears. Such a man was Isaiah ben Amoz. In the panoply of Old Testament heroes, Isaiah stands out in stellar relief. He was a prophet of prophets, a leader of leaders. He is called a “major prophet” because of the vast size of the written material that bears his name. As a prophet, Isaiah was unusual. Most prophets were of humble origins: peasants, shepherds, farmers. Isaiah was of the nobility. He was a recognized statesman, having access to the royal court of his day. He consorted with princes and kings. God used him to speak to several monarchs of Judah, including Uzziah, Jotham, Ahaz, and Hezekiah. What set a prophet of Israel apart from all other men was the sacred auspices of his call. His call was not from men. He could not apply for the job. He had to be selected—chosen directly and immediately by God. And the call was sovereign; it could not be refused. (Jeremiah tried to refuse his call but was abruptly reminded by God that He had consecrated Jeremiah from his mother’s womb. When, after a term in this office, Jeremiah sought to resign, God refused to accept his resignation.) The job of prophet was for life. There was no quitting or retiring with pension.

—R. C. Sproul, *The Holiness of God*

When perfect power meets perfect compassion, we are free to fall into the arms of the Lord in quiet trust. He is powerful, and thus able to deliver us; he is loving, and thus wants to. This is the best of all possible worlds. This is a God who can be counted on unflinchingly. And we know for certain that this is who God is—both omnipotent and omni-compassionate—because of the incarnation. In Jesus we see God the Son triumphing over sin and death and hell with utter triumph and power, yet equally we see matchless love pouring out of heaven’s heart. Are you in distress? Are you overwhelmed? Marinate your heart in the power and love of the Savior. —Dane Ortlund, *In The Lord I Take Refuge*

God being a God of infinite goodness must, by the necessity of His nature, will for each of His creatures the fullest measure of happiness consistent with its capacities and with the happiness of all other creatures. Furthermore, being omniscient and omnipotent, God has the wisdom and power to achieve whatever He wills. The redemption that He wrought for us through the incarnation, death, and resurrection of His only-begotten Son guarantees eternal blessedness to all who through faith become beneficiaries of that redemption. —A. W. Tozer