

The Providence of God in the Life of Jesus

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Preacher: Jon Hueni

- [0 : 0 0] Luke chapter 2. Pastor John has asked me to read the first 20 verses.! So Joseph also went up from the town of Nazareth in Galilee to Judea to Bethlehem, the town of David, because he belonged to the house and line of David.
- He went there to register with Mary, who was pledged to be married to him and was expecting a child. While they were there, the time came for the baby to be born, and she gave birth to her firstborn, a son.
- She wrapped him in cloths and placed him in a manger because there was no room for them in the inn. And there were shepherds living out in the fields nearby, keeping watch over their flocks at night.
- An angel of the Lord appeared to them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were terrified. But the angel said to them, Do not be afraid. I bring you good news of great joy that will be for all the people.
- Today, in the town of David, a Savior has been born to you. He is Christ the Lord. This will be a sign to you. You will find a baby wrapped in cloths and lying in a manger.
- [1 : 4 0] Suddenly, a great company of the heavenly host appeared with the angel, praising God and saying, Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace to men on whom his favor rests.
- When the angels had left them and gone into heaven, the shepherds said to one another, Let's go to Bethlehem and see this thing that has happened, which the Lord has told us about.
- So they hurried off and found Mary and Joseph and the baby who was lying in the manger. When they had seen him, they spread the word concerning what had been told them about this child.
- And all who heard it were amazed at what the shepherds said to them. But Mary treasured up all these things and pondered them in her heart. The shepherds returned, glorifying and praising God for all the things they had heard and seen, which were just as they had been told.
- Let's hear the word of God preached. For several months, we have been considering the Bible's teaching on the providence of God.
- [2 : 5 0] And we looked first at several key concepts found in different places of God's word. And then we looked at examples, real-life examples, like Job more thoroughly, the life of Joseph, and then Esther.
- We saw the definition of God's providence is that it's God upholding and controlling all his creatures and all their actions all the time.
- We saw the purpose of God's providence. It's to bring to pass all that he has planned and decreed that should happen. This is why God upholds and controls all things, to ensure that his plans are fulfilled.
- What I have planned, that will I do. So providence, then, is the reason that not one detail of his plan has ever failed.

And I thought it would be a fitting conclusion to our study today to see the providence of God in the birth of Jesus. We're confronted with some amazing providences in the birth of Jesus.

[4 : 06] His birth and the events surrounding it were planned by God from all eternity and then brought about by God's providential control over all the variables, all the actors on the stage of history.

Now, most often what we've seen in God's providence, most often his providence is so ordinary that men miss it. Sunrise, sunset, eating, drinking, sleeping, unable to sleep, forgetting, remembering, just ordinary events of life.

We saw many of them in the book of Esther. But there were also extraordinary providences. And they're not the normal way. They're not the natural way that God works.

They're rather abnormal, supranatural, and we call them miracles. And that means, by very definition, they are very rare and extraordinary.

And what we find are a multiplying of these miraculous providences of God surrounding the birth of Jesus, much as they surrounded Israel's redemption out of Egypt, which is the type of the Redeemer's work.

[5 : 35] So we come to the virgin birth of Jesus. This was an extraordinary, a miraculous providence of God.

Now, it had been God's plan from all eternity for his son to be born into this world as a human being from a mother, from a woman, that he would take on real human flesh and blood, body and soul, and that he would be born of a virgin 700 years before Jesus' birth.

The Lord announced this virgin birth through his prophet Isaiah, chapter 7, verse 14. The virgin will be with child and will give birth to a son and will call him Emmanuel.

Now, how can this happen since virgins have never given birth to sons? That was precisely Mary's question when the angel told her that was what was going to happen to her.

The angel said, you will be with child and you will give birth to a son and you're to give him the name Jesus. He will be great and will be called the son of the Most High.

[6 : 51] The Lord God will give him the throne of his father David. He will reign over the house of Jacob forever and his kingdom will never end. How will this be, Mary said, since I am a virgin?

The angel answered, the Holy Spirit will come upon you and the power of the Most High will overshadow you so that the Holy One to be born will be called the Son of God.

Joseph also needed to be told of this miraculous providence of God that God can reach into a virgin's womb and cause it to bring forth a son.

He was pledged to be married to Mary. He was betrothed to her, something far more serious than our engagements. They'd already taken vows. They had just not consummated the marriage.

But he was in mind to divorce her quietly, thinking she was unfaithful. And so the Lord appeared to him in a dream and said, Joseph, son of David, do not be afraid to take Mary home as your wife because what is conceived in her is from the Holy Spirit.

[8 : 11] She will give birth to a son and you're to give him the name Jesus because he will save his people from their sins. And then we, the readers, are told there in Matthew 1 that all this took place to fulfill what the Lord had said through the prophet.

The virgin will be with child and will give birth to a son and they will call him Emmanuel, which means God with us. We see the control of God's providence extending even to the virgin's womb.

Now, we see his control over the womb many times in scriptures, both closing up wombs and opening wombs, making barren wombs to bring forth children, which is a cause for praise in Psalm 113, that he, God, settles the barren woman in her home as a happy mother of children.

God does that. He makes old wombs and dead wombs to revive and to give birth as with Hannah and Rachel and Sarah at 90 years of age and many others.

Now, a barren womb of a married woman is one thing and a virgin womb is another thing. This had never, ever happened before since the beginning of the human race.

[9 : 47] And yet, God prepared Mary for this staggering providence that was to happen to her, not only by the angel's message, but also by the example of her cousin Elizabeth, her relative Elizabeth, the mother of John the Baptist.

You remember, the angel said to her, even Elizabeth, your relative, is going to have a child in her old age and she who is said to be barren is in her sixth month for nothing is impossible with God.

So by seeing God do the impossible in the old barren womb of Elizabeth, God prepared Mary to trust him to do the even greater impossibility in her virgin womb.

So God will work miraculous providences to fulfill his plan of salvation. That's what we see in the virgin birth. And we too are to extrapolate from this passage the fact that what is impossible with man is possible with God.

When we think of providence, what God can do we're to remove the impossibilities because what's impossible with man is possible with God.

[11 : 09] And we think of salvation and Jesus teaching that this too is impossible with men but possible with God. Possible through the child he sent.

God with us. It takes God to save sinners and make them right with God. and what's impossible with men is possible with God. Do you have things that are beyond your ability to do?

We have a God of providence who is the God of the impossible. Now if you want to know more about how Jesus was conceived in the womb of a virgin well you'll just be disappointed because God doesn't tell us does he?

It's just one of those secrets. Remember the secret things belong to the Lord our God. The revealed things belong to us. What's revealed is that he was born of a virgin. How it happened?

God has kept secret from us. And so again we're struck with the mystery of God's providence. His ways are beyond our comprehending sometimes far above our minds as the heavens are above the earth.

[12 : 21] So we see the providence this unique providence in the virgin birth. We see the unique providence of God in the lineage of Jesus. His genealogy. God had announced his plan many hundreds of years earlier that Messiah would be born of the Jews.

That is a child of Abraham. A descendant of Abraham. And as revelation continued down through history we learn that he was to be born of the line of Judah. And then of the line of David.

David. The very specific branch on this family tree is foretold. This is God's plan to bring the Messiah from David's line.

Now we've already seen the exquisite work of providence in saving the Jews from extinction in the days of Joseph and the days of Esther.

You can also read of his saving the Jews from the assassination temps of Queen Mother Athaliah who killed off all the royal seed except for one little baby.

[13 : 29] One year old baby. What a little single thread God's plan was hanging on. And yet it was a plan of God's providence that would be brought to pass.

It's the providence of God that brought this son of David into the world exactly according to plan even though there were all these threats to prevent it.

And it's the record of the Lord's providence thwarting the plans of others and fulfilling his own plans. Then there was the birthplace of Jesus in Bethlehem.

Again, it was 700 years before the birth of Jesus that God's prophet Micah announced God's plan that Messiah will be born in Bethlehem. But you Bethlehem Ephrathah though you're small among the clans of Judah out of you will come for me one who will be ruler over Israel whose origins are from of old from ancient times.

So he's to be born in Bethlehem some six seven miles from Jerusalem. But Mary and Joseph they live up in Nazareth about a hundred miles north up in Galilee a hundred mile journey that's a long distance in that day.

[14 : 52] Why would a woman about to give birth undertake a hundred mile hike over hill and vale? There's usually travel restrictions given to pregnant women that are that far along and the answer is because Caesar Augustus issued a decree that a census should be taken of the entire Roman world and everyone was required to register in his hometown.

So we must ask well why would Caesar do that? Well I assure you it was not because Caesar Augustus intentionally was timing it to coincide with Mary's ninth month.

He had other reasons for doing what he did. Reasons of his own. He knew nothing about Mary and her baby and the prophecy of Bethlehem. But God did.

And he's the God who controls all his creatures in all their actions all the time. And remember his providence reaches into the very hearts of kings.

So Proverbs 21 one says that Caesar's heart was in the hand of the Lord and he can turn it wherever he wants it to go like a water course. And he wants Messiah born in Bethlehem.

[16 : 10] So somehow God works in Caesar's thoughts and desires and will to issue a census. Maybe it was because of his own pride that he wanted to know how many people do I rule over in my empire.

Maybe it was his greed that he wanted to issue a tax and collect money from all of them. Whatever it was, God's providence had his ways of bringing Caesar Augustus freely of his own choice to pass this law that each must register in their hometown.

But then there was also the perfect timing of it all so that Mary will arrive in Bethlehem just when she's about to give birth. If Caesar waited a few more months to pass before issuing his law, it would have been too late.

Mary would still be up in Nazareth. and God's plan for the Savior would have failed. Or if Mary's baby came early, maybe along the bumpy ride to Bethlehem, God's plan would have failed.

But we've learned that timing is God's specialty in his providence. Not only bringing to pass what he plans, but exactly when he plans it.

[17 : 32] So, Joseph also went up from the town of Nazareth in Galilee to Judea to Bethlehem, the town of David, because he belonged to the house and line of David.

And he went there to register with Mary, who was pledged to be married to him and was expecting a child. While they were there, that's a time word, while they were there, the time came for the baby to be born.

She gave birth to her firstborn, a son. She wrapped him in swaddling clothes, placed him in a manger, because there was no room for them in the inn. So, God's hand of providence moves the heart of Caesar Augustus to issue a decree at just the right moment in history, so as to move Joseph and Mary down from Nazareth to Bethlehem, so that while they are there, she gives birth to the Messiah, just as it had been planned before the creation of the world.

There's another snag to God's plan if Joseph would have divorced her. Remember, he had in mind to do so quietly, thinking she had been unfaithful. He was planning to divorce her, and that's what was needed to break a betrothal in those days, a writing of divorce.

Well, if he divorced her, Joseph would have gone down to Bethlehem, but Mary wouldn't have. And so the whole plan of Messiah being born in Bethlehem would have been scrapped on the trash heap of failed plans, just like many of yours and mine.

[19 : 15] But no, this is the difference that God's providence makes in God's plans. It always fulfills what God plans. That's its purpose. So the angel appeared to Joseph in a dream to change his mind, to change his plans.

So they would take Mary home as his wife, which is what he did, but had no union with her until she gave birth to a son and then took her with him when he goes down to register in Bethlehem.

God's providence controls all the variables to move Mary to Bethlehem on the birthday of Jesus. And then there was that special star that guided the wise men to Jesus.

Jesus in Matthew 2. God's ordinary providence is exercised daily and nightly over the stars.

Isaiah 40 says, lift your eyes and look to the heavens. Who created all these? He who brings out the starry host one by one and calls them each by name because of his great power and mighty strength, not one of them is missing.

[20 : 23] every night God is displaying his work of providence as he holds, upholds the stars in their places. A providence so regular that people miss the fact that it's God's hand of providence that's holding them up there.

But here's an extraordinary providence exercised over one star, which wise men from the east saw and somehow concluded that it signaled the birth of the king of the Jews.

So they traveled far to Jerusalem to worship him. When Herod, the reigning king of the Jews, heard this, he was disturbed and all Jerusalem with him. And he called together all the Jewish chief priests and the scribes, the scholars, and he asked them where the Christ was to be born in Bethlehem.

In Judea, they said, for this is what the prophet has written. And they quote Micah chapter 5 verse 2, but you Bethlehem in the land of Judah, out of you will come a ruler who will shepherd my people Israel.

Well, Herod then met secretly with the wise men, asking them to go to Bethlehem and search carefully for the child and then come back and tell him so that he could go and worship him too.

[21 : 36] And of course, he was lying through his teeth, but the wise men did not know that. After all, is not the newborn king of the Jews worthy of having kings bow down and worship him?

That's why they had come. Why not Herod? And as they went on their way, the star that had been in the east went ahead of them until it stopped over the place where the child was.

And when they saw the star, they were overjoyed. And on coming to the house, they saw the child with his mother Mary and they bowed down and worshipped him and gave him their treasures and gifts worthy of a king.

What was this star? star that guided the wise men to Jesus? Well, there are many guesses, but again, we bump into the mystery of God's providence.

We're simply not told. It certainly was an extraordinary providence, wasn't it? As was what happened next in the story, but it was not your ordinary star that just comes out and appears in its same place, its predictable place in the night sky.

[22 : 50] No, this was a moving star and it was going somewhere specific and it was going to the light of the world who was coming into this world.

Signaling the birth of this great king and it led these wise men to Christ himself. Whatever it was, its existence and its every movement was controlled by the hand of providence to fulfill his divine plan of bringing these men to Jesus.

Many of you have testimonies as well, perhaps of more ordinary providences of how you were brought to Jesus, but this was an extraordinary providence in bringing the wise men.

And then there was the amazing providence of preserving the Messiah from King Herod's murderous plot. We've seen the earlier threats of the extinction of the Jewish race, all frustrated by God's providence so that the Jews from David's line from the Jews from David's line might come this Savior.

And now here at his very birth, another another devilish plot is hatched to murder him. But we know it can't succeed. Because.

[24 : 13] the mere birth of Jesus cannot save us. It's not enough that the Savior is born.

No, that that won't do that won't satisfy the justice of God that we have offended by our sins. No, it will take Jesus perfect life of obedience to God.

It will take his voluntary death as our substitute to save us. So we know that Herod, your plan is going to be thwarted because Jesus can't die until he's accomplished that for us.

So how did God's providence thwart Herod's intended murder of the Christ child? Well, an angel of the Lord appeared to Joseph in a dream telling him to get up at once, take the child, his mother, escape to Egypt, stay there until I tell you.

For Herod is going to search for the child, not to worship him as he told you, but to kill him. So he got up, took the child and his mother during the night, left for Egypt where he stayed until the death of Herod.

[25 : 19] And so was fulfilled what the Lord had said through the prophet, the prophet Hosea, out of Egypt I have called my son. Interesting.

He stayed in Egypt until the what? The death of Herod. So rather than Jesus dying at Herod's hands, we find Herod dying at the hand of God's providence.

And we read of God's providence bringing all this to pass according to his plan, his pre-announced plan through Hosea hundreds of years earlier, 750 years earlier.

Hosea had said of God, had said, God had said through Hosea that I must call my son out of Egypt. Just as God earlier had called his son Israel out of Egypt through Moses.

Remember the Israelites were God's son, God's firstborn son. And he said to Pharaoh, because you won't let my firstborn son go, I'm going to kill your firstborn son. They were God's son.

[26 : 27] And out of Egypt I have called my son. A reference to Israel. And just as he had called his son Israel out of Egypt, he now calls his son Jesus out of Egypt.

Proving that Egypt was no emergency plan B to God after plan A had to be scrapped because of Herod's plan to kill him. No, the all-knowing God of providence has no surprises to derail his plan so that this trip of Jesus to Egypt was part of God's plan A to save his son from death.

Just as the earlier trip of Joseph down to Egypt was part of God's plan to save the Jews from death by starvation. Thereby keeping alive the people who would bring forth the Christ child.

So here is the plot on Jesus' life. And before Herod dies, he first does all he can to try to kill Jesus.

And the scriptures say in Matthew 2, when Herod realized that he had been outwitted by the Magi, he was furious. And he gave orders to kill all the boys in Bethlehem and its vicinity who were two years old and under.

[27 : 44] In accordance with the time that he had learned from the Magi. He's not taking any chances, not just Bethlehem, but Bethlehem and the vicinity around it. And not just two years, but two and under all the way down.

We're not going to miss him. Then what was said through the prophet Jeremiah was fulfilled. A voice is heard in Ramah weeping and great mourning.

Rachel weeping for her children and refusing to be comforted because they are no more. And again, we're made to see, we're forced to see that what happened was not just chance, not just out of control events, because this too had been part of God's plan announced 600 years in advance by the prophet Jeremiah.

And now God's providence brings it to pass. The Christ child hurried out of Bethlehem before Herod's henchman arrived so that he might live and perfectly obey God's law and voluntarily lay down his life as a as an atonement for our sins.

And again. The purpose of God's providence is to bring about his plans, all of them. But you say, what about all these other families who had babies that were slaughtered?

[29 : 09] And I say again, we're confronted with the mystery of God's providence, aren't we? We simply don't understand God's ways.

They're far above our ways. And just as much as Mary and Joseph were rejoicing on their way to Egypt to have escaped the sword, back behind in Bethlehem, families were sobbing and bearing babies.

The perplexity of God meets us again. You know, Paul had things in God's providence happen to him such that he said, I'm perplexed, but not in despair.

I'm confused. But I'm not despairing. I'm not without hope. Why not, Paul? Well, because God's got it figured out. I don't understand it.

But God knows what he's doing and acts in perfect wisdom and justice and goodness. And I'll leave the perplexities with him.

[30 : 16] No doubt you too have things that perplex you. And you don't understand. And you may not. And you may have been left scratching your head or rubbing your eyes at things that perplex you.

But the God of providence has no perplexities to his ways. He understands them. He executes them perfectly. As for God, his ways are perfect.

Well, after Herod died, an angel of the Lord appeared in a dream to Joseph in Egypt and said, get up, take the child and his mother, go back to the land of Israel for those who were trying to take the child's life are dead.

So he got up, took the child and his mother and went to the land of Egypt or the land of Israel. But when he heard that Archelaus was reigning in Judea in place of his father Herod, he was afraid to go there.

Having been warned in a dream, he withdrew to the district of Galilee and he went and lived in a town called Nazareth. And so was fulfilled what was said through the prophets. He will be called a Nazarene.

[31 : 22] So they start out in Nazareth. They travel a hundred mile journey south to Bethlehem where Jesus is born while they're registering for the tax.

They're told to flee to Egypt and then they're told to come back to Israel and then to go back up to Nazareth. They've made one big circle and now they're back in Nazareth.

And here again is the hand of providence moving them around all according to plan. Our memory verse today. What was it?

Acts 17:26. It talked about God as the one who determines the times set for men and the exact places where they live. That was not just true of the nations.

It's true of individuals in those nations that make up those nations. It's true of Jesus, the Messiah, the little baby. The exact places where he should live.

[32 : 30] They were predetermined. They were determined by God's plan and then carried out by his providence that for some time he would live in Bethlehem and then in Egypt and then back in Nazareth where he was conceived.

But he wasn't bouncing around at the whims of chance. That's what we need to see. It looks that way to men. But no, it was planned. It was God's plan.

As testified by the prophets who hundreds of years earlier said that he would be called a Nazarene. He would grow up in Nazareth. Now, four times in Matthew's account we read, and so was fulfilled what was said through the prophets.

What does that say to us then? As we're studying the providence of God and we know that the aim of God's providence is to fulfill the plan of God.

And so was fulfilled what was said through the prophets. What the prophets said, prophecy is one of the ways God's revealing his plans, the plans he made from eternity. And the prophets revealed those plans and then providence fulfills them.

[33 : 44] And we have the scriptures recognizing that it's God who fulfills the plans that he makes.

What I have planned, that will I do. And so these events surrounding the birth and the preservation of the Christ child, though they involve the actions of others, they were nonetheless the works of God's providence.

It's what he did in bringing his son into the world. And these dreams in which an angel of the Lord brought Joseph a message, these were not ordinary dreams that happen all the time.

These were rare and special revelations from God for a very special and important purpose. Usually having to do these dreams would be given to men, usually having something to do with God working out his plan of salvation.

Remember the dreams of Joseph and his brothers bowing down. Those were not ordinary dreams. Those were those were revelations of God to him of what's going to happen.

[34 : 47] How I'm going to spare the Jewish people, the two dreams of the butler and the baker, the dreams of Pharaoh himself. All of this, how God is going to work to save his people from starvation.

And so now again, at the coming of the Christ child, what we see is God suddenly breaking into the normal with these unusual and extraordinary providences.

Think of him. The most unusual of all, a virgin birth. That's an extraordinary providence. An unusual star that that leads people to Jesus.

The unusual visits from the angels and then these unusual dreams in which the Lord revealed his will. Four times in the Matthew account in chapters one and two of Matthew, Joseph has these dreams with angels in them, giving him directions.

Three times in Luke's account, angels visit. First Zechariah, then the then Mary and then the shepherds. And again, these were not the ordinary ways of God's providence, the ways of God dealing with people.

[36 : 00] They were reserved for special occasions, key moments in God's history of redemption. In fact, as the Sunday school tape pointed out, there had just been 400 years of silence.

God had judged Israel. They didn't listen to God's word. So God quit speaking. He didn't send his prophets with his word. There was a famine for hearing the word of God.

The heavens were silent. And then after four centuries of silence, a voice of one calling in the desert, prepare the way for the Lord.

God sent John with a message to his people. Get ready. The Lord is at hand. He's here. His kingdom has come. Signaling.

This was an unusual providence of God. Signaling. Something unusual is happening in God's saving plan. Namely, his savior is coming. Indeed, he's here.

[37 : 00] Don't miss him. He's no ordinary child. He's no ordinary king. It's no ordinary mission to save his people from their sins.

Well, that's the big story of the Bible, isn't it? God sending the savior to make us sinners right with God through his own son.

That's a God-sized plan of salvation that he made with hundreds and thousands of links. Think of all the links, the events that have to take place for God's plan of bringing the savior into the world and to live and die and rise again to save sinners.

Hundreds of thousands of links. We saw many of them just in the little period of Joseph's life. This big, vast plan of God. It will take a big arm of providence to bring it to pass.

And that's what we see. A God who is so great that he can do whatever pleases him. In the heavens. That one star. On the earth. What he does with men.

[38 : 09] In the seas and all their depths. A God who upholds and controls it all. In order to bring to pass his plans. So for several thousands of years, God's providence had been busy preparing the world for the coming of his son.

Preserving the true religion. Preserving the Jewish race. Rescuing them. Teaching them to long for Messiah. Maintaining the line of David. Keeping his plan on track.

Putting all the pieces in place. And then. When the time had fully come. God sent his son. Born of a woman. Born under law.

To redeem those. Under law. That we might receive the full rights. Of sonship. What do we say to these things? What do we say when we see a God of providence.

Bringing that plan to pass. We say what the congregation was taught to say in Psalm 135. Where we began this whole series on God's providence.

[39 : 15] They said praise the Lord. He's so great that he does whatever pleases him. In heavens, earth, sea and all their depths. Praise the Lord. Praise the Lord. Why? Because he's great.

And he shows it by his hand of providence. Here's a God to worship. A God who fulfills his plans. Down to every detail.

And if his providence has brought about the big story. The big story of the Bible. Of bringing his Savior into the world. Bringing him to the altar of Calvary.

There to die for the salvation of sinners. Then can you not trust him for your little story?
Did he work out the hundreds of thousands of links.

With his mighty arm of providence. To bring the Savior and salvation to us. Can't we trust him for the few links in our lifetime.

[40 : 14] To be working. And fulfilling his purpose. For us. I cry out to God most high. To God who fulfills his purpose for me.

This God of the big story. Is at work by providence. In my life story. And in yours. Right down to the last breath.

And landing us in heaven. The one who began a good work in you believer. Is the one who by providence. Is going to finish that work. He's going to pick you up each time you fall.

He's going to forgive you every time you sin. He's going to lead you to repentance. And to fresh faith in Jesus. He's going to work in your heart. To make you keep following him.

All the way to your last breath. And then he's going to take you to heaven. His providence. Fulfilling his purpose. In your life. This is a God to trust in the coming year.

[41 : 13] With all the unknowns before us. A God who enables us to face each unknown tomorrow. With absolute confidence. That he is fulfilling his plan.

For me. This is a God to thank. For his merciful providences. That we've received over the past year. This is the reason you've not been consumed. This is the reason you're still being upheld.

Still worshiping God. Still following him. Still loving the Savior. Why? Because God's mighty hand of providence. Has been very busy with you.

And for you. Meeting your every sin. With his grace and power. What have we seen this morning? We've seen how God was at work for thousands of years.

To accomplish this wonder of wonders. Of bringing Jesus into the world. And now here he is. The Savior. Who was coming. Has come. Who has lived the perfect life that we haven't.

[42 : 11] And who has suffered God's punishment for sin. That we should have and would have. Suffered for all of eternity. And he's risen triumphant over sin. And death.

And hell. And he's right now. Reigning on high. Until all of his enemies are put under his feet. And he comes for us. That we might be where he is.

And behold his glory. But why all of this? Why? Why is there a plan of salvation? And why is there a hand of providence to bring it to pass?

What's moving that mighty hand of providence? Folks. It's the loving heart. Of the God of providence. For God so loved the world.

That he gave his one and only son. That's what. That's. That's what. The birth of Jesus is crying for a reason.

[43 : 09] Why? Why? Why such a stoop? Why coming after rebels? Why not just leaving us to perish? Like he did the rebellious angels.

Why come for us? Why come and die for us? Why humble yourself and take our humanity? And then be curse for us.

Taking our sin. Becoming sin for us. Taking our curse. Becoming a curse for us. Why? And the scriptures answer is.

Because I love you. I gave my son for you. We see most clearly the heart. That is moving the hand of providence.

All along throughout human history. Is a heart of love. A heart of love to man. It was his love for you brothers and sisters.

[44 : 06] It was love for you sinners. That moved his hand of providence. To move Joseph down to Egypt. To save the Jews from starving to death. All 70 of them.

He did that for love for you. It was his love for you. That caused his hand of providence. To move Esther. To become queen. Of all Persia.

So that she could save the Jews. From annihilation under Herod. Or under Haman. It was out of love for you. And all those acts.

In which God's hand of providence. Was working all the way. Up to the coming of Jesus. And to the death. And resurrection and ascension of Jesus. It was for love for you.

That he might have a savior to offer you. And he's offering him to you this morning. Have you taken him? It's this indescribable gift. It's love.

[45 : 04] Love caused thine incarnation. Love brought thee down to me. That's why he came. That's why he's here. That's why he lived the perfect life.

And died the atoning death. That he might have a savior to offer you. And he offers him to you. He's offering him to you this morning.

He's saying take my son. He's not only offering you. He's pleading with you. Beseeching you. Begging you to take his son.

And he's wooing you. And he's warning you. Come to my son. Don't make me damn you. Come instead. Why will you die when you could live?

He's wanting you to have his son. This is the God of providence. This mighty God of providence. Has this heart of overflowing love.

[46 : 02] And it spills into this world. Into that little manger. That's his gift of love. Out of no fault of its own.

Bethlehem's inn. Bethlehem's inn had no room for him. It was just teeming with people. All coming there to register. No fault to the innkeeper. But if you've not received this gift of Jesus.

You can't claim. To have no fault. God wants you to have him. God sent him. That you might have a savior to call on.

And to be saved. Jesus turns none away. That come to him. All that come. To me. I will not once.

Push you away. Then come. Come to him. What a savior. What a plan. What a providence. Providence. What a God. So.

[47 : 11] As we leave the study of God's providence. We don't leave the providence of God behind. Do we? We step right into another day of it. Another hour of it. God's upholding all things.

Controlling all things. For the good of those who love him. And who are the called according to his purpose. Are you one of those? Are you one that loves this savior and has received him?

And received his free gift of eternal life in him? Then you can know as you move into this new year. Everything is going to work for my good. All things must be worked together to serve my good.

You can know that if Christ is yours. And if Christ is not yours. I'm sorry. That's. It's not working for your good friend. It's working for your damnation. That's where you're headed.

That's where the broad road leads. It's. And again. Jesus is warning and wooing and saying, Come to me instead. Whisper right. We're privileged people to.

[48 : 15] Just to be alive today. And to be in a place where. We have sung. We have heard read. And now preached this wonderful.

True story of Jesus being sent to save sinners. And of his. Well meant offer. And willingness to save sinners.

And so we're blessed. We're blessed to have tasted and have seen that the Lord is gracious. To know that this wonderful. All powerful hand of providence is moved by love for me.

And and is going to work everything together for my good. Thank you Lord for another year of. Of life. In your hand.

And in your loving heart. We desire to see more. Trusting in the Savior. And to come to know the peace and joy that comes from.

[49 : 16] Believing on him. So. Bless your word to each one of us. Send us on our way with a greater worship of you. This great God and Savior.

Amazed at your love. Amazed at your power. Amazed that it is found out me. In Jesus name. Amen. Amen.