

Questions

1. What is wrong with the two common alternatives that are offered in response to Derek Thomas' definition of providence?
2. What do we know from history about the likely reason why King Ahasuerus hosted such a massive feast?
3. Is there a way in which you have functionally disregarded or downplayed God's providence? What would it look like for you to live more clearly in the light of this doctrine of providence?
4. What's another biblical example of God's providence working through man's foolishness? How does the providence of God offer hope even when you have been foolish? Can you recall an instance when God brought about good even though you had sinned?
5. How does the providence of God enable you to trust His promises more fully?
6. What's an example of a time that you have looked back and saw how God's providence was at work through seemingly ordinary circumstances, perhaps in ways you didn't even recognize at the time?



The Great King

Esther 1:1-22

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As we are introduced to the book of Esther, we will encounter a strong view of the providence of God even though God is not named throughout Esther's story.

Providence

"The doctrine of providence insists that everything (yes, *everything*) that happens does so because God wills it to happen, wills it to happen *before* it happens, wills it to happen *in the way* that that it happens." Derek Thomas, *What is Providence?*, 2008

Common alternatives to this understanding of providence:

- God can see the future that He desires, but because of man's free will, God cannot ensure the future that He desires.
- God knows us so well, that He knows what any of his free creatures would do in each situation. Thus, He orchestrates the right circumstances so that we freely do that which ultimately achieves His purpose.

*After each service, if you need prayer,
someone will be available up front to pray with or for you.*

1. God's providence overrules man's "greatness."

3. God's providence enables us to trust His promises.

2. God's providence achieves His purposes even through man's foolishness.

4. God's providence works in our lives much like it did in Esther's life.