

The Providence of God (4)
The Inability to Discern God's Will Interpreting Acts of Providence

Let us read several verses from Matthew's Gospel as we continue our study of God's Word respecting God's providence. Here is **Matthew 4:1-4**:

Then Jesus was led up by the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted by the devil. ²And after fasting forty days and forty nights, he was hungry. ³And the tempter came and said to him, "If you are the Son of God, command these stones to become loaves of bread."

⁴But He answered, "It is written, 'Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that comes from the mouth of God.'"

Let us also read I would like us to also read **Ecclesiastes 11:1-11**:

Cast your bread upon the waters,
For you will find it after many days.
²Give a serving to seven, and also to eight,
For you do not know what evil will be on the earth.
³If the clouds are full of rain,
They empty themselves upon the earth;
And if a tree falls to the south or the north,
In the place where the tree falls, there it shall lie.
⁴He who observes the wind will not sow,
And he who regards the clouds will not reap.

⁵As you do not know what is the way of the wind,
Or how the bones grow in the womb of her who is with child,
So you do not know the works of God who makes everything.
⁶In the morning sow your seed,
And in the evening do not withhold your hand;
For you do not know which will prosper,
Either this or that,
Or whether both alike will be good.

⁷Truly the light is sweet,
And it is pleasant for the eyes to behold the sun;
⁸But if a man lives many years
And rejoices in them all,
Yet let him remember the days of darkness,
For they will be many.
All that is coming is vanity.

⁹Rejoice, O young man, in your youth,
And let your heart cheer you in the days of your youth;
Walk in the ways of your heart,
And in the sight of your eyes;
But know that for all these God will bring you into judgment.
¹⁰Therefore remove sorrow from your heart,

And put away evil from your flesh,
For childhood and youth are vanity. (Ecc 11:1 NKJ)

Today is the fourth Lord's Day in which we are considering the biblical doctrine of God's providence. We have defined providence in this way: "God's works of providence are his most holy, wise and powerful preserving and governing all His creatures, and all their actions." This is the answer to the 11th question of **The Westminster Shorter Catechism**. In our *first study* we sought to define providence, show its extent, and emphasize that the truth that God's acts of providence involves mystery in that we are unable to know fully what and why God does what He does in specific events of our lives. We were attempting to show the truthfulness of the Scripture that reads, "Oh, the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable are His judgments and His ways past finding out!" (Rom. 11:33). On our *second* Sunday addressing God's providence we sought to show how God instructs us regarding His ways through our observation and reflection upon His acts of providence *as they are interpreted for us in Holy Scripture*. We are told in 1 Corinthians 10:1-6:

For I want you to know, brothers, that our fathers were all under the cloud, and all passed through the sea,² and all were baptized into Moses in the cloud and in the sea,³ and all ate the same spiritual food,⁴ and all drank the same spiritual drink. For they drank from the spiritual Rock that followed them, and the Rock was Christ.⁵ Nevertheless, with most of them God was not pleased, for they were overthrown in the wilderness.⁶ Now these things took place as examples for us, that we might not desire evil as they did.

And then our *third* study, which was last Lord's Day, we sought to understand how God can decree evil to occur in His world and employ it in His providential dealings with people, and yet not be the chargeable author of sin or evil. God's sovereign control over all happenings in His creation includes His control of secondary causes. Sin and evil are born of Satan and fallen humanity. They are to blame, not God. Nevertheless God overrules the evil perpetrated in history to the end that He will be glorified through saving His people from their sin and condemning His enemies due to their sin.

Now today we want to address directly what we have already implied regarding God's providence. This is the spiritual reality of ***our inability to discern God's will through observing and interpreting God's acts of providence***. This is an error that is commonly committed by well-intentioned, sincere Christians. They are looking for "God's leading" for their lives by assessing what happens to them. They presume that through interpreting providence, they can determine what God would have them do in day-to-day life. It is commonly thought, but wrongly thought, that if we are open to God's "leading", that God will "speak" to us, revealing to us specifically what He would have us do. What we will attempt to show today is that this is not the way in which God "leads" His people. Rather, God directs His people solely through Scripture; God speaks to us today through the Word that He has recorded for us in the past. Here, therefore, is the proposition we would consider today:

God does not lead His people to discover His will through their interpretation of providential events that they experience, but He has purposed to lead His people through their obedience to the Holy Scriptures, which He has given to His people as the only authoritative and infallible guide to direct them in their life before Him.

In other words, this touches on one aspect of one of the important truths of Scripture that the Protestant Reformers asserted as foundational to a sound faith—*Sola Scriptura*—Scripture Alone. This was commonly understood to be *the formal principle of the Reformation*. This doctrine of Scripture is what moved the Protestants forward to determine that the people of God were to assess God's will only by the Holy Bible. This understanding of the Holy Scripture as the sole source for knowing God and how to live before Him resulted in the departure from Roman Catholicism, resulting in the Protestant Reformation that began in the 16th century.

Now again, we have thus far defined providence in this way: “God’s works of providence are His most holy, wise and powerful preserving and governing all His creatures, and all their actions.” This is the answer to the 11th question of **The Westminster Shorter Catechism**. It is an accurate, but rather brief definition. Actually it is rather incomplete in that it does not address an important issue: *What benefit is there to us in our understanding the biblical teaching of God’s providence?* It does not address this matter for us. However, we could also consider the matter of God’s providence as set forth in **The Heidelberg Catechism**, for it does address what the Westminster does not.

The Heidelberg Catechism was published in Heidelberg, Germany, in 1563, which was 83 years before The Westminster Catechism was published. Both of these excellent catechisms have been used for centuries to instruct and reinforce the people of God in the truths of the Christian faith taught in the Bible. Here are the primary statements regarding God’s providence in The Heidelberg Catechism:

Question 27: What do you mean by the providence of God?

Answer: The almighty and everywhere present power of God¹; whereby, as it were by His hand, He upholds heaven, earth, and all creatures, and so governs them² that herbs and grass, rain and drought³, fruitful and barren years, food and drink, health and sickness⁴, riches and poverty⁵, yea, all things, come not by chance, but by His fatherly hand⁶.

Question 28: What does it profit us to know that God has created, and by His providence still upholds, all things?

Answer: That we may be patient in adversity⁷; thankful in prosperity⁸; and that in all things, and with a view to the future may have good confidence in our faithful God and Father⁹, that no creature shall

¹ **Acts 17:25-28**, Neither is worshipped with men's hands, as though He needed any thing, seeing He giveth to all life, and breath, and all things; and hath made of one blood all nations of men for to dwell on all the face of the earth, and hath determined the times before appointed, and the bounds of their habitation; that they should seek the Lord, if haply they might feel after Him, and find Him, though He be not far from every one of us: for in Him we live, and move, and have our being; as certain also of your own poets have said, For we are also His offspring.

Jer. 23:23,24, [Am] I a God at hand, saith the LORD, and not a God afar off? Can any hide himself in secret places that I shall not see him? saith the LORD. Do not I fill heaven and earth? saith the LORD.

Isa. 29:15,16, Woe unto them that seek deep to hide their counsel from the LORD, and their works are in the dark, and they say, Who seeth us? and who knoweth us? Surely your turning of things upside down shall be esteemed as the potter's clay: for shall the work say of him that made it, He made me not? or shall the thing framed say of him that framed it, He had no understanding?

Ezek. 8:12, Then said he unto me, Son of man, hast thou seen what the ancients of the house of Israel do in the dark, every man in the chambers of his imagery? for they say, The LORD seeth us not; the LORD hath forsaken the earth.

² **Heb. 1:3**, Who being the brightness of His glory, and the express image of His person, and upholding all things by the word of His power, when He had by Himself purged our sins, sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high.

³ **Jer. 5:24**, Neither say they in their heart, Let us now fear the Lord our God, that giveth rain, both the former and the latter, in His season: He reserveth unto us the appointed weeks of the harvest.

Acts 14:17, Nevertheless He left not Himself without witness, in that He did good, and gave us rain from heaven, and fruitful seasons, filling our hearts with food and gladness.

⁴ **John 9:3**, Jesus answered, “Neither hath this man sinned, nor his parents: but that the works of God should be made manifest in him.”

⁵ **Prov. 22:2**, The rich and poor meet together: the Lord is the maker of them all.

⁶ **Matt. 10:29-30**, Are not two sparrows sold for a farthing? and one of them shall not fall on the ground without your Father. But the very hairs of your head are all numbered.

Prov. 16:33, The lot is cast into the lap; but the whole disposing thereof [is] of the LORD.

⁷ **Rom. 5:3**, And not only so, but we glory in tribulations also: knowing that tribulation worketh patience; and patience, experience; and experience, hope.

Jas. 1:3, Knowing [this], that the trying of your faith worketh patience.

Ps. 39:9, I was dumb, I opened not my mouth; because thou didst [it].

separate us from His love¹⁰ since all creatures are so in His hand that without His will they cannot so much as move¹¹.

It is apparent that the Heidelberg Catechism gives more information about God's providence than does the Westminster Catechism. The Heidelberg identifies in what ways the doctrine of God's providence brings benefit to Christians; the Westminster Catechism does not do so. There are three great benefits that we, God's people, may receive through our understanding of God's providential dealings with them:

- (1) That we might be patient in our difficulties;
- (2) That we might be thankful in prosperity, that is, in the "good times";
- (3) That we may have confidence of our future that our Father will preserve us due to His love for us in Christ Jesus.

This is how our observation and reflection upon God's providential dealings in our lives may help us. God teaches us through what we experience in life to be patient, thankful, and filled with hope in the future that God has promised us in Jesus Christ. These are "the lessons" of providence that God would have us take to heart.

But take note of what the catechism does not say. It does not say something like this: "Through the observation and understanding of God's acts of providence we may identify God's specific will for our lives." And yet this is what many well-intentioned Christians believe they may ascertain the will of God for their lives. And they are reinforced by "Christian" teachers that this is how they are to have a real and vital relationship with God. But God's providential ordering of events in our lives are not sufficient to reveal God's will to us. God has given us Holy Scripture. God has determined that through Scripture He may direct His people in the way they should live their lives. How He governs them individually is His business of providence, which is mysterious to us.

It is quite amazing to me how many evangelical voices are asserting that Christians are to look to other sources than the Bible in order to hear from God. This is counter to what evangelicals have affirmed since the Protestant Reformation of the 1500's. Some are more blatant in their assertions than others. **Jack Deere**, a former seminary professor at Dallas Theological Seminary, a Presbyterian minister, and the leading theologian for the Vineyard church movement, wrote this,

In order to fulfill God's highest purposes for our lives we must be able to hear his voice both in the written word and in the word freshly spoken from heaven... Satan understands the strategic importance

Job 1:21, 22, And said, Naked came I out of my mother's womb, and naked shall I return thither: the Lord gave, and the Lord hath taken away; blessed be the name of the Lord.

⁸ **1 Thes. 5:18**, In every thing give thanks: for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus concerning you.

Deut. 8:10, When thou hast eaten and art full, then thou shalt bless the Lord thy God for the good land which He hath given thee.

⁹ **Psa. 55:22**, Cast thy burden upon the LORD, and he shall sustain thee: he shall never suffer the righteous to be moved.

Rom. 5:3-6, And not only so, but we glory in tribulations also: knowing that tribulation worketh patience; and patience, experience; and experience, hope: and hope maketh not ashamed; because the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost which is given unto us. For when we were yet without strength, in due time Christ died for the ungodly.

¹⁰ **Rom. 8:38-39**, For I am persuaded, that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.

¹¹ **Job 1:12**, And the Lord said unto Satan, Behold, all that he hath is in thy power; only upon himself put not forth thine hand. So Satan went forth from the presence of the Lord.

Job 2:6, And the Lord said unto Satan, Behold, he is in thine hand; but save his life.

Prov. 21:1, The king's heart [is] in the hand of the LORD, [as] the rivers of water: he turneth it whithersoever he will.

Acts 17:25, Neither is worshipped with men's hands, as though he needed any thing, seeing he giveth to all life, and breath, and all things.

of Christians hearing God's voice so he has launched various attacks against us in this area. One of his most successful attacks has been to develop a doctrine that teaches God no longer speaks to us except through the written word. Ultimately, this doctrine is demonic even [though] Christian theologians have been used to perfect it.¹²

Understand what he has written. *This "evangelical" says that the historic Protestant doctrine concerning the sufficiency of Scripture to direct the people of God in all matters of faith and practice, in other words, Sola Scriptura, is demonic.*

There are others who are less overt in their assertions, but they are saying essentially the same thing. One very influential Southern Baptist, **Henry Blackaby** (along with Claude King) wrote a book that has sold over 250,000 copies. It is entitled *Experiencing God*. It is a very popular book that contains much helpful material, but unfortunately it advocates the Christian's need and ability to hear from God apart from the Scriptures in order to experience a vital relationship with God. Blackaby speaks of a "will of God" outside of the Scriptures that is found by properly reading day-by-day events that occur in one's life. He advocates the importance of a life of "experiencing God" that is largely based on the subjective interpretation of personal experience rather than through the authoritative and objective revelation of the Scriptures. This is a departure from historic evangelical understanding and practice.

A book that addressed this matter quite thoroughly was published in 1980. The title is *Decision Making and the Will of God* and was written by **Garry Friesen**. The subtitle of the book was "A Biblical Alternative to the Traditional View." At that time the "traditional view" of evangelicals was to employ different ways in order to assess exactly God's plan or will for their lives. The thought was this:

God has a specific plan, and a "perfect will" for your life. You must discover what this will is in order that you may walk in it, otherwise, if you "miss" God's perfect will, you will not experience all of the blessing of God that you would have experienced had you lived according to "His will."

And so the thinking was like this: "How do I know if it is God's will for me to go to college? And if so, which college?" Or this issue: "God has decreed from eternity who my future spouse will be, but how do I determine if so-and-so is God's will for me?" Or it may be viewed very narrowly and specifically like this: You wake up in the morning and you ask, "How do I determine what God wants me to do today?" The "traditional view" was that God had a perfect plan and it was your task to determine what that plan is so that you can walk in it. Do you see what their assumption was? They believed that God's providence unfolded in this way: They believe that God had "planned" from eternity a "perfect will" for every person in the world, but that it was the individual's responsibility to "discover" what that will was so that he could experience it, otherwise God's perfect plan or will would be forfeited, resulting in the Christian missing out on God's "best."

Many books and seminars were offered to assist Christians in discovering God's will for their lives. And again, what was meant by that was how you as a Christian determines what is the perfect plan that God has for your life. Friesen described what happened frequently in his chapter he entitled, "Hitting the Bull's-eye":

Bill Thompson surveyed the church auditorium from his seat on the platform. He would have preferred the more intimate setting of a classroom, but the number of registrants precluded that. As anticipated, the seminar on "How to Know God's Will for Your Life" had generated the greatest interest among the young people. And the front half of the auditorium was filled with an almost even mix of high school upperclassmen and college students...

The conference director, having already led in prayer, was completing his introduction of Bill...

"So now, without any further delays, we'll turn the rest of this session over to our speaker, Pastor Bill Thompson." There was a smattering of polite applause as the director nodded to Bill, then left the

¹² Armstrong, John, gen. ed., *The Coming Evangelical Crisis* (Chicago, Moody Press, 1996), p. 78.

platform to find a seat among the young people. Bill stepped into the pulpit, placed his notes before him, and began.

“God wants to reveal His will to you more than you want to know it. God’s ability to communicate His will is perfect. He never stutters. On the basis of God’s desire to communicate and His ability to communicate, I can say to you that you can know God’s will for your life with complete certainty”...

“That’s good to know, isn’t it?” he continued. “For in every life, there are hundreds, perhaps thousands of decisions to be made—some major, some minor. The non-Christian individual must make those decisions alone, asking each time, ‘What is my best course of action? What will bring me the greatest happiness?’ But the Christian, knowing that he has a wise and loving Heavenly Father who has a special plan for his life, asks a different question: ‘What is God’s will for me in this situation?’ Few experiences can compare with the peace that comes with knowing a decision has been made in accordance with the perfect will of God. Whether one is selecting a vocation or choosing a mate, the key to spiritual success in decisions lies not in our own feeble insights, but in knowing God’s will and doing it. As it says in Proverbs 3:5-6: ‘Trust in the Lord with all your heart, and do not lean on your own understanding. In all your ways acknowledge Him, and He will make your paths straight.’ Or as the King James Version says it, ‘He shall *direct* your paths’”...

Knowing God’s will is hardly an academic subject. Today there are many husbands and wives who are frustrated in their marriages because they did not choose the one person God wanted them to marry. There are students who are discouraged because they went to the wrong school. Some Christian men experience dissatisfaction in their jobs because they did not seek and follow God’s vocational calling for them. Christian women are unhappy in their office positions because they ran ahead of God in accepting an offer that was less than His best. The shortage of workers on the mission field and in local churches gives further evidence that many people have missed or ignored God’s call. And those who have missed that call are missing the unparalleled joy of living in the center of God’s will.”¹³

Actually this belief that God has a specific and perfect will planned for you that you have to discover in order to walk in it, is in line with the belief of paganism. This view of God’s providence, the manner in which God governs His people, is not taught in God’s Word. We have shown that it is true that God has decreed all things that come to pass in history and that His providence is His working out His decrees in history, but the idea that you and I have the responsibility to determine what His decrees are respecting our individual lives so that we might walk in them is not scriptural. That is the concern of the world. It is really the same idea of those who resort to their horoscope. “There is a way that I should take so that I will be ‘blessed’ I life, and an examination of the stars in the night sky will give me guidance to know what I should do.” It is the same effort of those who seek out a necromancer or spiritist or a tarot card reader. They desire to gain “guidance” to direct them on the “right” path. Christians will often seek “signs” or mystical impressions in order to know, supposedly, which way the Lord would have them go. And often times Christians will look to God’s acts of providence as “clues” or “keys” to unlocking God’s hidden will for one’s life. This is not how God instructs His people to know how to live before Him.

I have used the illustration several times in the past, but because it so clearly illustrates this matter and is something that we can easily retain in our thinking, I will rehearse it again.¹⁴

There once lived an old wise Chinese man who was a farmer in a small village. One day his only horse for which he was totally dependent, ran away. His neighbors came to him to console him in his loss. But to their surprise he asked the question, “How do you know it was bad?” The next day, his horse returned with two wild horses following it. When the neighbors heard this, they came to the old man to celebrate his good fortune. But the old man responded to them, “How do you know it was good?” The next day the old man’s only son attempted to break one of the horses, but instead fell off the

¹³ Garry Friesen with J. Robin Maxson, *Decision Making and the Will of God; A Biblical Alternative to the Traditional Way* (Multnomah Press, 1980), pp. 29f.

¹⁴ For anyone who might care, we last used this illustration in sermon #592, on Jun11, 2010, and used it originally in Sermon #129, back on February 18, 2001. Isn’t Word search in Microsoft wonderful?

horse and broke his leg very severely. The neighbors again gathered to offer their sympathy. But the old man asked them, "How do you know that it was bad?" And then the very next day, the warlord came through the village and took away all of the able-bodied young men. The old man's son remained with his father.

This fictional story illustrates the truth that I would hope all of us would understand and affirm: *We are incapable of discerning the will of God based on our observance and assessment of events that transpire in our lives.* Rather, since we know this is the case, *we should affirm that the Scriptures alone are the only reliable guide for us in matters of faith and practice.*

There is mystery in God's acts of providence. God's ways are past finding out. We do not know the mind of the Lord. We cannot see the end from the beginning from the end, as does God. And God does not choose to reveal His workings of providence to us. We are to trust Him and order our lives in faith as we order our lives according to His Word that He has revealed to us in the Bible. **Deuteronomy 29:29**, "*The secret things belong unto the Lord our God: but those things which are revealed belong unto us and to our children for ever, that we may do all the words of this law.*" These "secret things" are His purposes in providence. We cannot know what God is doing with certainty and precision in day-to-day events except as they are assessed by what He has revealed clearly in His Word. We can learn in general principles from His Word of the various ways He works providentially, but then if we attempt to become specific and begin to make assertions that this is God's will based on this or that occurring, we have stepped beyond our bounds. We do not have that kind of wisdom. That wisdom resides in God alone.

God's works of providence do not communicate to us what God would have us to do. We see this in the passage that we read earlier--Ecclesiastes 11:1-11. There the "wise man" (Solomon) declared that a person should order his life according to what was wise and good. He should take action according to what was best, what made sense. We read in verse 1, "Cast your bread upon the waters, for you will find it after many days." This may speak of a reference to Solomon's trade by ship of grain being transported. Verse 2 speaks of spreading about one's resources, investing in different ways because of the "uncertainty" of what might unfold in the future. "Give a serving to seven, and also to eight, for you do not know what evil will be on the earth." He indicates one should not wait for the best of circumstances, looking for "signs" when to take action, for circumstances change. As we read in verse 3:

³If the clouds are full of rain,
They empty themselves upon the earth;
And if a tree falls to the south or the north,
In the place where the tree falls, there it shall lie.

But people tend to look for "signs", for indicators of what they should do:

⁴He who observes the wind will not sow,
And he who regards the clouds will not reap.

But the issue is this; you do not know how things are going to turn out; you do not know the ways of God's providence, so do not look at events as indicators of what you are to do.

⁵As you do not know what is the way of the wind,
Or how the bones grow in the womb of her who is with child,
So you do not know the works of God who makes everything.
⁶In the morning sow your seed,
And in the evening do not withhold your hand;
For you do not know which will prosper,
Either this or that,
Or whether both alike will be good.

The writer of Ecclesiastes argued (as does all Scripture) that you cannot know how life will unfold; therefore, you should purpose to live all of life according to the law of God. One day you will answer for your life. You will be brought into judgment.

We do not know how to interpret events that unfold in our lives. In Scripture we can know what some events meant because they are interpreted for us in Scripture. But if they had not been interpreted in Scripture, we would not have been able to know anything from them. Here is what Friesen wrote about this:

The only time circumstances can be “read” is when a divine interpretation is placed upon them by supernatural revelation (i.e. when Scripture records an interpretation of an event recorded in Scripture--Lars). Apart from such revelation, circumstances may be taken to mean almost anything. Just listen to this imaginary but believable discussion concerning the “message” God was trying to convey when lightning struck a church steeple.

“God is telling us to relocate in the suburbs.”

“Oh no, I think it’s quite obvious He’s saying ‘no’ to our expansion plans.”

Maybe the Lord is telling us that there is sin holding back the work in our church.

Solomon made it clear that watching providence makes life seem futile (Ecc. 11:1-11). It often appears that God favors the wicked rich and resists the downtrodden righteous (Psa. 31). Apart from revelation concerning God’s work in history, the raw data of circumstances is mysterious to say the least.¹⁵

Consider the people of island of Malta when they attempted to interpret “circumstances” that they witnessed regarding the apostle Paul:

After we were brought safely through, we then learned that the island was called Malta. ²The native people showed us unusual kindness, for they kindled a fire and welcomed us all, because it had begun to rain and was cold. ³When Paul had gathered a bundle of sticks and put them on the fire, a viper came out because of the heat and fastened on his hand. ⁴When the native people saw the creature hanging from his hand, they said to one another, “No doubt this man is a murderer. Though he has escaped from the sea, Justice has not allowed him to live.” ⁵He, however, shook off the creature into the fire and suffered no harm. ⁶They were waiting for him to swell up or suddenly fall down dead. But when they had waited a long time and saw no misfortune come to him, they changed their minds and said that he was a god. (Acts 28:1-6)

When they first saw Paul bitten by the poisonous snake, they thought that he must have been an evil man and although he had escaped death from the shipwreck, “fate” or the “gods” would not let him escape. And so the poisonous snake bit him. However, when Paul was unaffected by the snake bite, they concluded that he must be a god.

And then we might consider our Lord Jesus when he healed a blind man as recorded in John 9. His disciples assumed that this revealed one of two possibilities, and they were not sure which one was correct. We read in John 9:1ff:

As He passed by, He saw a man blind from birth. ²And His disciples asked Him, “Rabbi, who sinned, this man or his parents, that he was born blind?”

They were wrong on both counts.

¹⁵ Ibid, p. 213.

³Jesus answered, “It was not that this man sinned, or his parents, but that the works of God might be displayed in him. ⁴We must work the works of him who sent me while it is day; night is coming, when no one can work.” (John 9:1ff)

Our Lord alone was able to reveal to them the purpose of God in His work of providence in this blind man’s life.

In Luke 13 our Lord addressed some who had speculated why certain persons were the object of a terrible unjust crime. In verse 1 we read, “

There were present at that season some who told Him about the Galileans whose blood Pilate had mingled with their sacrifices. ²And Jesus answered and said to them, “Do you suppose that these Galileans were worse sinners than all other Galileans, because they suffered such things? ³I tell you, no; but unless you repent you will all likewise perish.

No one could have justly made the judgment that any of these were being directly punished for a specific sin or failure on their part. It could happen to anyone. We ought always to be ready, therefore, to face our God in judgment.

Our Lord then introduced another incident with a similar lesson:

⁴“Or those eighteen on whom the tower in Siloam fell and killed them, do you think that they were worse sinners than all other men who dwelt in Jerusalem? ⁵I tell you, no; but unless you repent you will all likewise perish.” (Luke 13:4-5)

God has set forth Holy Scripture to guide us in the way we should live. This was simply and succinctly put forth by our Lord Jesus, when He taught His disciples, ***“It is written, ‘Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that comes from the mouth of God.’”*** We might even say that the devil would have Jesus order His life according to the interpretation of “providence.” Satan was essentially saying to Him, “Look Jesus, here You are starving, here You have stones, and certainly You have the ability to do so, therefore it must be God’s will for You to turn these stones into bread in order to meet Your need.” Our Lord responded, essentially, “No, it is not My Father’s will to act or react based on what is happening to Me at any given time, rather, God’s will is determined by Scripture alone, ***“by every word that comes from the mouth of God.”***

The sum of the matter is this: Instead asking, “How do I find the will of God?” God would have you ask, “How do I make good decisions?” God states essentially, “Make decisions as you are governed by My written Word that I have given into your hands. It is sufficient for whatever you may face in your life.”

For this is God,
Our God forever and ever;
He will be our guide
Even to death. (Psa 48:14 NKJ)