

“Reminders For Right Thinking” Part 1

Holiness

2 Peter 3:1-10

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February 26, 2016

Bruce: Good morning, guys. How are you today?

Men: Good morning, Bruce.

Bruce: Justin, please? (*Music.*)

Bruce: Bless the Lord, O my soul! Heavenly Father, Your perfections demand our worship. Your excellencies require our praise. Father, we come before You to sit at Your feet this day, trusting that You would bless our souls through the teaching of Your word, that we might see You behind the passages of Scripture and behold Your glory. May it be so for Jesus' sake. Amen and Amen.

I invite you to turn in the Scriptures, please, to 2 Peter chapter 3, looking at verses 1-10 in the third chapter of this passage in 2 Peter. It's what I'm calling "Reminders For Right Thinking." I'll be reading once again from the English Standard Version of the Scriptures. 2 Peter chapter 3, verses 1-10.

“This is now the second letter that I am writing to you, beloved. In both of them I am stirring up your sincere mind by way of reminder, that you should remember the predictions of the holy prophets and the commandment of the Lord and Savior through your apostles, knowing this first of all, that scoffers will come in the last days with scoffing, following their own sinful desires. They will say, ‘Where is the promise of His coming? For ever since the fathers fell asleep, all things are continuing as they were from the beginning of creation.’ For they deliberately overlook this fact, that the heavens existed long ago, and the earth was formed out of water and through water by the word of God, and that by means of these the world that then existed was deluged with water and perished. But by the same word the heavens and earth that now exist are stored up for fire, being kept until the day of judgment and destruction of the ungodly. But do not overlook this one fact, beloved, that with the Lord one day is a thousand years and a thousand years is one day. The Lord is not slow to fulfill His promise as some count slowness, but is patient toward you, not wishing that any should perish, but that all should reach repentance. But the day of the Lord will come like a thief, and then the heavens will pass away with a roar, and the heavenly bodies will be burned up and dissolved, and the earth and the works that are done on it will be exposed.” This is the word of the Lord.

Men: Thanks be to God.

Bruce: Amen and Amen. Now in recent weeks the apostle Peter has been teaching us about and predicting that there would be false teachers in the church, just as there were false prophets in the Old Testament. He then described for us the destruction of those false teachers as a result of the history lesson he gave us from the nation of Israel. Last week we looked at these false prophets and false teachers in the church age, how they were described.

And today he takes us on another journey, dealing with these false teachers. At the beginning of chapter 3 we notice that Peter is still warning us about the false teachers of chapter 2, only this time he calls them *scoffers*, not false teachers. He calls them “scoffers.” He is not as much concerned about harassing the heretics as he is interested in encouraging the faithful believers.

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Notice that three times in this chapter he starts off and calls his readers “dear friends,” or the word “beloved.” You’ll see that in verses 1, 14 and 17. He refers to them as “beloved,” a very tender expression of admonition and love for the people to whom he is writing. Peter models for us a very good concept of exposition and a very good concept of teaching, and that is this. Teach something and then remind them of it.

Look at 2 Peter chapter 1, verses 12 and 13. *“Therefore I intend always to remind you of these qualities, though you know them and are established in the truth that you have. I think it right, as long as I am in this body, to stir up your minds to remembrance.”*

There is a great principle that Peter is describing for us, and it’s this. You teach somebody some truth, and then you go back and remind them about it. Now that’s what he’s going to do in this particular passage in verses 1-10. He has talked to us about false teachers. Now he is going to remind us of the danger of false teachers. But this time he calls them “scoffers,” and there is a very specific reason why he refers to them as scoffers.

Notice what he wants to remind us of, to produce wholesome thinking. Look at verse 5 of chapter 3. *“For they deliberately overlook this fact, that the heavens existed long ago, and the earth was formed out of water through water by the word of God.”* And then he goes on to remind us, and he is basically saying that he wants to remind us of these scoffers to help us develop correct thinking.

And so what is the overwhelming danger of these false teachers? They are overlooking the Second Coming of Christ. They scoff at that.

Now there is a reason why they did that. And that’s the whole point of Peter’s admonition to us. He wants to remind us of the dangers of these false teachers so that we will begin to think more correctly about who God is and how God works in our lives.

Notice verses 3 and 4. He says that these scoffers not only mock the Second Coming of Christ,--and the reason they mock it is because they say it has been delayed. They laugh at the very idea of the Second Coming of Christ because it hasn’t happened yet. And so they are scoffing at the truth of the Second Coming because they’re saying, “Well, it hasn’t come yet after all these years. How can we trust His promise anymore?” They scoff at Christ’s return because years have passed and the Second Coming of Christ has not yet happened. And so they’re saying that because it hasn’t happened this quickly, it’s not going to happen at all.

Basically, they are saying this. All things just continue as they are. And so they scoff at God’s promise. And they conclude that God is unreliable and that He can’t be trusted because nothing has happened so far. Therefore God is not involved in our lives. They scoff at His truth and His faithfulness.

Now it’s very interesting to notice the possible tie to this denial of the Second Coming and the theory of evolution. There’s a quick tie here. Evolution says that the universe operates by itself without any outside influence. That’s what the whole doctrine of evolution says. There is no outward influence because the world operates by itself. The theory will not permit the introduction of anything or anyone from outside to interfere with the continuation of existence. In other words, there is no Incarnation.

It’s basically saying this. These scoffers were saying that because the Second Coming of Christ has not come yet, it’s obvious that God is not faithful and He can’t be trusted, because there is no outside influence of anything going on in the world. It just happens by itself. And

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that’s the whole theory of evolution. The theory of evolution says this. There is no outside influence. Once the system is started, it just operates internally by itself, because there is no external influence from anybody else. That’s the whole theory of evolution. It just takes care of itself inside. That’s exactly what these scoffers were saying about the Second Coming.

Now as we get into this, it’s very interesting to notice that part of the early church’s proclamation was the announcement of the return of Jesus, to complete the work of salvation and to punish the wicked. What I want you to do is that I want you to look at your Bibles, and I’m going to give you some verses to look up. And when you look at these verses, I want you to read them. I want to make sure that you’re finding where these passages are. Would somebody read John chapter 14, verses 1-3? Now again, this is referring to Jesus’ return to complete the work of salvation. And the scoffers were saying that because it has not occurred yet, God is unfaithful. Well, let’s take a look at some verses. Would somebody read John 14:1-3?

Participant: *“Let not your heart be troubled. Believe in God’ believe also in Me. In My Father’s house are many dwelling places. If it were not so, I would have told you. And I go to prepare a place for you. And when I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and receive you to Myself, that where I am, there you may be also.”*

Bruce: *“I will come again and receive you to Myself, that where I am, there you may be also.”* You see, the scoffers were saying, “Because it hasn’t happened yet, it’s not going to happen, and God is unfaithful. He’s not faithful. He cannot be trusted.” How about Acts chapter 1, verse 11? Does somebody have Acts chapter 1, verse 11?

“And he said, ‘Men of Galilee, why do you stand looking into heaven? This Jesus who was taken up into heaven will come in the same way as you saw Him going into heaven.’”

Bruce: There’s another reference. The message of the apostles was that Jesus will return. These scoffers were saying this. They were basically saying that they claimed that everything goes on as it has always been since the beginning of creation. Everything has just gone on the same way. Nothing has ever changed. There has been no outside influence on the existence of the creation since the creation was started. They were scoffing and they were drawing the conclusion that because nothing on the outside influences or has ever been involved, you cannot anticipate the coming of Christ. So they were scoffers who ridiculed the Second Coming of Christ.

Now I want to give you some of Peter’s defense against these scoffers. Now let me make a couple of observations which I think are very important as we look at this particular passage.

First of all, number one. *The laws of nature are God’s laws.* Their predictability springs from His faithfulness. The predictability from God’s laws in nature comes from His faithfulness. The laws of nature may be regarded as the means by which the providence of God operates. In other words, God operates within His providential care through the laws of nature. His will has determined the relation to cause and effect. And so the laws of nature are the ways in which He works out His providential care for the body of Christ.

The predictability of gravity doesn’t mean that God isn’t involved in our lives. It just reveals His faithfulness. In other words, you and I take gravity for granted. The scoffers would say that there is no outside influence because everything has always been going on the same way, and it has always been this way since creation.

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Now what we say, because we understand God’s faithfulness, is that the law of gravity demonstrates God’s faithfulness. They would say that the law of gravity does not change at all, so He can’t be faithful. That’s the difference, and that is why Peter is referring to these men as “scoffers.”

The second thing I think that is important to understand is this. *Miracles are not necessary to make the gospel more valid.* Miracles are not necessary to make the gospel more valid, or to convert sinners. Some of the teaching today says this. The gospel is not powerful enough by itself and it must be accompanied by miracles so that people will be convinced. Well, that’s not so, my friends.

That’s the same mistake these scoffers were making. They were thinking that stability means inactivity. Their position was that stability means inactivity. We see it as this. Stability means faithfulness. That’s a point of emphasis. Yes, please?

Participant: Are you talking about those inside the church or outside the church?

Bruce: Both. Primarily inside the church, but both. Most of them are inside the church, scoffing because they were a part of the nation of Israel. They were scoffing because the return of Christ hadn’t happened so far. So we just have to be careful. For us, the scoffers are those who say that miracles have to accompany the gospel, because inactivity is a sign that God is not involved. We need something more than just the proclamation of the gospel.

Let me give you an illustration of Pharaoh in the Old Testament. Who would have thought that after all the miracles that had been done before his eyes, and the miracles that he had seen in his own personal family life, that he would still perish in the disobedience to the commands of God? There were so many miracles going on in his sight, but nothing changed his heart. Miracles are not necessary to make the gospel more powerful.

Look at the nation of Israel, with all the miracles Moses brought out in the deliverance of the Jews. What little effect it had on their obedience! So miracles won’t help us proclaim the gospel any more effectively. We just have to make sure that we’re proclaiming the right Biblical gospel, that is, the holiness of God, the sinfulness of man, the Person and work of Christ, and repentance and faith.

Now notice in verse 5 what Peter says about these scoffers. He says this. They deliberately forgot. They deliberately forgot God’s involvement.

I’m told that in naval history that Lord Nelson in the Battle of Trafalgar, when he was given the command to cease fire, that he put the telescope up to his blind eye, (*laughter*), and said, “I can’t see the instructions.” (*Laughter.*) “I can’t see the order to cease fire.” And he continued the battle. Essentially, he chose not to pay any attention to it.

That’s exactly what these scoffers are doing. They deliberately forgot the fact of God’s involvement.

So remembering God’s providential control stimulates wholesome thinking. This is what Peter teaches us. And so you look at the four things we’re going to look at over the next couple of weeks. First of all, you want to remember *God’s intervention*. You want to look at what Peter says about God’s intervention.

We need to remember that. And the whole point of this particular passage, these first ten verses, men, is this. He’s going to stimulate us to wholesome thinking. We need to think correctly.

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So today, first of all, we’re going to talk about thinking correctly about God’s *intervention*. Number two, we’ll talk about *God’s time perspective*. We need to remember that God’s time perspective is different from ours. Thirdly, we need to remember *God’s patience*. And fourthly, we will take a look at *God’s promises*. Those are the four things that Peter is going to teach us in these ten verses about God’s intervention in our lives, to thwart the activity of these scoffers who are saying that stability means inactivity. We’re going to look at stability and see that it means faithfulness. That’s what we’re going to examine today.

So let’s take a look at the first of these four points. Let’s take a look at the argument from history. Remember this. God’s intervention—verses 5 and 6. Take a look at chapter 3, verses 5 and 6. There is intervention on God’s part.

“For they deliberately overlook this fact, that the heavens existed long ago, and the earth was formed out of water and through water by the word of God, and that by means of this the world that then existed was deluged with water and perished.” He’s referring to what?

Participant: The Flood.

Bruce: The Flood. There is an example of Peter saying, “Look! Here’s how God has intervened.” God is involved in our lives. Just because there is stability doesn’t mean that there is inactivity. Don’t you remember your history? Don’t you remember the Flood?

And the reason was this. They willingly overlooked the Flood, when God was intervening in the course of human history to deal with sin. And the lesson from the Flood is that sin will not go unpunished forever. God will intervene.

Now Peter is reminding us of that. Remember this. They deliberately forgot that, because they were saying this. Stability means inactivity. We’re saying that stability means faithfulness.

Take a look at Matthew chapter 24, verses 37-39. Would somebody read that—Matthew 24:37-39? Jesus uses the example of the Flood to describe His return.

Participant: *“As it was in the days of Noah, so it will be at the coming of the Son of Man. For in the days before the Flood, people were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, until the day when Noah entered the ark. And they knew nothing about what would happen until the Flood came and took them all away. That is how it will be at the coming of the Son of Man.”*

Bruce: Peter is dealing directly with the scoffing attitude of these scoffers who were saying that the Second Coming is not going to occur. He refers back to Jesus’ statement in Matthew 24 as a means of supporting that particular mindset. And remember this. They purposely chose to forget it. They purposely chose to forget God’s intervention.

So Peter is dealing with one of the most mysterious, yet one of the most comforting doctrines in all of the Scripture, and that is God’s *providence*. It’s one of the most mysterious things, yet one of the most comforting truths—God’s providence. And that means this—that the affairs of this world are not under the control of man, however much we may think they are. God’s providence means that He is intervening all the time around us.

Do we really understand how God’s providence works itself out in our lives and how God has intervened, and that it’s not like the scoffers who are saying that God is not involved? The system of creation just exists with its internal intricacies and that there is no external influence.

I want to take you through some things to help us understand God’s providence, if we may. Take a look at Jeremiah chapter 10, verse 23.

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Transcriber’s Note: Jeremiah 10:23. “I know, O LORD, that the way of man is not in himself, that it is not in man who walks to direct his steps.”

The prophet laments over the Lord’s ancient people who are about to be carried off to the captivity in Babylon. He’s lamenting over that. Nebuchadnezzar was about to carry the Jews away from their land of milk and honey to his own distant land. He was about ready to do that through Nebuchadnezzar. But Jeremiah consoled himself by this statement, remembering that whatever king Nebuchadnezzar meant to do, he was only the instrument in the hands of God for the accomplishing of God’s purpose for His people, referring to God’s providence.

Now that’s something that is very mysterious to us. But he’s basically saying this. Nebuchadnezzar was just a means by which God was accomplishing what He desired to do. That’s part of God’s providence, part of what God has intended to do. He just permits that to happen.

And then the tyrant of Babylon thought that he was working out his own will. But he was really carrying out the will of God.

Let me give you another illustration. Turn to the book of Philippians, please. Philippians chapter 1. I’ve given you this illustration before, but all of the illustrations that are the best come from the Scripture.

Let’s begin at verse 3. *“I thank my God in all my remembrance of you, always and in every prayer of mine for you all, making my prayer with joy because of the partnership in the gospel from the first day until now. And I am sure of this, that He who began a good work in you will bring it to completion at the day of Jesus Christ. It is right for me to feel this way about you because I hold you in my heart, for you are all partakers with me of grace, both in my imprisonment and in the defense and confirmation of the gospel. For God is my witness, how I yearn for you all with all the affection of Christ Jesus. And it is my prayer that your love may abound more and more, with knowledge and all discernment, so that you may approve what is excellent. So be sure and blameless till the day of Christ, with the fruit of righteousness that comes through Jesus Christ, to the glory and praise of God.”*

Now that’s just his thanksgiving and prayer for the people to whom he is writing at the church of Philippi. But notice this.

“But I want you to know, brothers, that what has happened to me has really served to advance the gospel.”

Now what has happened to him?

Participant: Imprisonment.

Bruce: He’s in prison. And he says, “I want you to know that my imprisonment is really furthering the cause of the gospel.” Well how can that be if God is not involved in this? How can that happen unless God is externally involved in this through His providence?

“So that it has become known throughout the whole imperial guard, and all the rest, that my imprisonment is for Christ.” He’s basically saying this. God’s providence has put me into this imprisonment. It has been a cause and an influence to the greater development of the gospel of Christ.

Now how does that happen? Now notice what he says in verse 12 and 13. *“It has become known throughout the whole imperial guard that they know that I have been imprisoned for Christ.”*

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Now think about that statement and let’s go to the end of the book. Go to chapter 4 and let’s look at verse 21. He concludes his letter with this. *“Greet every saint in Christ Jesus. The brothers who are with me greet you. All the saints greet you, especially those of Caesar’s household.”*

Now look at the situation. For an evangelist, this is the ideal situation. With imprisonment in the Roman culture, he had somebody chained to his right leg, chained to his left leg, chained to his right wrist and chained to his left wrist. That’s an ideal situation for an evangelist.

(Laughter.) They are a captive audience.

Participant: Amen.

Bruce: Now what do you think Paul talked about? I don’t think he talked about the hockey league. It’s rather obvious what he talked about. He talked about the Person and work of Christ and the gospel of Jesus Christ, because he says this. *“All of the Praetorian guard is with me. The brothers send their greetings.”*

Now the Praetorian guard was the imperial guard. After three years of combat, in the outer reaches of the Roman Empire, they were brought back into Caesar’s house guard. It was kind of like the Green Berets coming back to be his personal guard. They had an assignment there for three years to guard Caesar’s temple and to be his guards.

Now we know from history that this proclamation of the Christian faith occurred when these Roman soldiers were sent back down into the outer workings of the Roman Empire. And what do you think they took with them? They took the gospel of Christ with them.

You see, that’s God’s providence. That’s what Peter is saying. He’s saying that God is involved in this. Just as the scoffers were saying that inactivity means that God is not faithful, Peter is saying exactly the opposite. He’s saying this. If God is involved in providential care for His people, then God just uses things to accomplish the desire of His own will. So those are just a couple of examples to help us understand it.

But I want to take us a little deeper into an understanding of God’s providence, if we can. There are seven ways in which Christ exercises His providential care.

The affairs of the kingdom of providence are ordered and determined by Jesus Christ. Look at Ephesians chapter 1, verse 22. Would somebody read that, please? The affairs of the kingdom of God in His providence are ordered by Jesus Christ for the special advantage and everlasting good of the redeemed people of God, the church.

Participant: And God placed all things under His feet, and appointed Him to be Head over everything for the church, which is His body, the fullness of Him who fills everything in every way.”

Bruce: Now notice. Who is the subject? The subject is Christ, the object of authority is all things, and the recipient of His rule is the church. All things are given under His authority. He is the One who orchestrates all the providential care of God. So I want us to take a look at the seven ways in which Scripture teaches us that God is involved in our providential care.

First of all, this one. *He supports the world and all creatures in it by His power.* Would somebody read John chapter 5, verse 17? We’re looking at Christ supporting all the things that are going on in the world. John 5”17, please?

Participant: *“But Jesus answered them, ‘My Father is working until now, and I am working.’”*

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Bruce: What’s Jesus doing?

Participant: He’s working.

Bruce: Jesus is working! He’s working. He’s saying that the Father is working. And I’m also working. That’s where we get the idea that Jesus supports the world and all the creatures in it by His own power. How about Colossians 1:17, please?

Participant: *“And He is before all things, and in Him all things hold together.”*

Bruce: He is the Head of all things, and all things are held together by Christ and His power. Do you see that? In His providential care He supports us.

Back at the Naval Academy, we had a course in physics. We were talking about the atoms. And our instructor was teaching us about the atoms. And he was describing the neutrons and all the other things. And one of my classmates, who was our valedictorian, a brilliant young man, asked the professor this question. He said, “If the world is made up of all these atoms, what holds them together?”

And here was the response of the professor. “I never thought of that.” (*Laughter.*) The answer is that Christ holds all things together. You see, He supports everything in the world because that’s a result of His power. He supports everything we have. So the first way in which God providentially takes care of us is that He supports all things through the power of Christ.

#2. *He permits the worst of creatures in the world to be and to act as they do.* Would somebody read Job 12, verse 16? It basically says this. *“Both the deceiver and the deceived are His.”* Job 12:16.

Participant: *“In Him are strength and sound wisdom. The deceived and the deceiver are His.”*

Bruce: Can we understand this? We’re probing things, men, in God’s providence that are really mysterious to us. But it’s a great description and a great demonstration of God’s faithfulness to us, because inactivity does not mean that God is not involved. How about Acts chapter 14, verse 16?

Participant: *“In the past, He let all the nations go their way.”*

Bruce: *“In the past, He let all nations go their way.”* He permits certain things because He ordains certain things. This holy permission is but the withholding of all they really want to do. This is really what they want to do. God permits them to do what they do according to His will. But it’s just a merciful withholding of it. He really denies them the activities that they want to do for His own glory.

How about this one? *He restrains the world from the doing of those things that they want to fulfill.* He restrains the world from doing all those things they really want to do. Would somebody read Psalm 76:10, please? Now men, I’m just trying to help us understand that God really is involved in our lives. He really is intervening in our lives through His providence. Psalm 76:10.

Participant: *“Surely the wrath of man shall praise You; the remnant of wrath You will put on like a belt.*

Bruce: He lets happen just as much as shall serve His holy ends, and no more. He permits just enough which will serve His holy ends, and nothing more. That’s part of the mystery of providence—to see a person who is so intent on evil. They have the power to do it. The door is

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open to do it. Yet they are restrained. They want to do it. They have the power to do it. They have the opportunity to do it. And yet they are restrained.

Go to Genesis chapter 31, verse 24 and the life of Laban.

Transcriber’s Note: Genesis 31:24. *“But God came to Laban the Aramean in a dream by night and said to him, ‘Be careful not to say anything to Jacob, either good or bad.’”*

Bruce: God appeared to him in a dream and said, “This is what you say and this is what you don’t say.” It’s an illustration of somebody who was pursuing evil. God let him go so far. But God was involved in that, and He restrained him from doing more than what God permitted him to do.

#4. *He limits the world and its acts, assigning boundaries and the lines of liberty beyond which they cannot go.*

Participant: Amen.

Bruce: He limits the world and its acts, assigning boundaries and lines of liberty beyond which they cannot go. How about Revelation chapter 2, verse 10? Would somebody read Revelation 2:10?

Participant: *“Do not fear what you are about to suffer. Behold, the devil is about to throw some of you into prison, that you may be tested. For ten days you will have tribulation. Be faithful unto death, and I will give you the crown of life.”*

Bruce: Not forever. And this example is for what? Ten days. There’s a limit on it. You see, God limits those things of what people can do to bring about His will. They went as far as they had the power to go. But they did not have the power to go farther than they wanted to go, because God intervened. And God limited that.

For 430 years, Israel was in Egypt. And then on the very night that they were delivered, (for the time of the promise had come),--Acts chapter 7, verse 17. At the right time, they were delivered.

The next one that I would offer for your consideration is this. *He protects His people amidst the world of enemies and dangers.* Look at Isaiah chapter 31, verse 5.

Transcriber’s Note: Isaiah 31:5. *“Like birds hovering, so the LORD of hosts will protect Jerusalem. He will protect and deliver it. He will spare and rescue it.”*

Bruce: The message is saying this. The Lord preserves His own. Isaiah chapter 31, verse 5. We are preserved in Christ. That’s what Jude tells us. We are preserved in Christ just as Noah and his family were preserved in the ark. We are preserved in Christ.

The next thing that I would offer for your consideration is this. *He punishes evildoers for what they do, or intend to do, to His own people.* Look at Psalm 110, verse 2.

Transcriber’s Note: Psalm 110:2. *“The LORD sends forth from Zion Your mighty scepter. Rule in the midst of Your enemies.”*

Bruce: Christ rules even among His enemies. He rules even among His enemies.

And lastly, I would offer this one. *He rewards the service that is done to Him and to His people, for His glory.”* Would somebody read Matthew chapter 19, verse 29? Where do these rewards come from?

Participant: *“And everyone who has left houses, or brothers, or sisters, or father, or mother, or children, or lands for My name’s sake will receive a hundredfold, and will inherit eternal life.”*

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Bruce: You see, He rewards people from the treasures of His own life.

Now here are the seven words which I just went through very briefly about defining God’s providence. He supports. He permits. He restrains. He limits. He protects. He punishes. And He rewards those over whom He rules providentially on a daily basis.

Now friends, in the moments before Justin plays for us, I just want you to consider for a moment and reflect upon the overruling power of God in your life, how He has moved and intervened in your life personally. Think about God’s providence. The scoffers were saying that because God was not involved, we can’t trust His faithfulness. I’ve just given you seven reasons and seven demonstrations as to how God is involved in your life. Now just ponder that for a moment—God’s providence in your life. And consider those seven words.

Participant: Bruce, would you repeat those seven words for us? *(Laughter.)*

Bruce: The seven words are these. He supports. He permits. He restrains. He limits. He protects. He punishes. And He rewards.

Let me read a quote from John Flavel, one of my Puritan friends. Then after that, Justin, would you play for us?

Listen to this. I want you to reflect on God’s providence in your own lives, men. Think back upon that. Remember, Peter’s whole point in this is showing us God’s providence so that we will develop right thinking and have clear thinking. And one of the best ways we can develop clear thinking is to see how God has been involved in my life personally through His providential care, through those seven words.

John Flavel writes this. “God is omnipotent. And He is still working out His wise design as He did of old. In the whirlwind of human wrath, in the tempest of human sin, and even in the dark means of human ambition and tyranny, all the while displaying His sovereign will among men, even as the potter forms the vessel and the wheel according to his own will, for His glory” *(Justin plays music on the piano.)*

Men, can you anticipate the Second Coming of Christ? Absolutely we can, because of the faithfulness of God through the Person and work of Christ, who is supporting, permitting, restraining, limiting, protecting, punishing and rewarding with His providential care as He intervenes in history. And so with great, great anticipation, we can say this. “*Even so, come, Lord Jesus.*” Come, Lord Jesus!

Let’s pray. Father, help us this day just to think about Your providential care in our lives individually. The more we think about Your providential care individually, the more we’re going to have clear thinking about the situations in which we are involved, in which you cause us to live for Your glory. So during this day, Father, would You take the words that were taught today. Help us discern Your providential care in our own lives personally, so that the response will be this. Hallelujah! Praise the Lord! Thank You, Jesus, and come again in all of Your glory. And all the Brave Men said, “Amen!”