

- Providence and the Purpose of God (Isa 44:28, John 4:24)
- His Anointed, Cyrus (Isa 44:28-45:15)

**#1. Though Thou Hast Not Known Me (Isa 45:4-5, Luke 12:6-7, John 15:5, Rom 8:28)**

- Cyrus, the Heathen King (2Chron 36:22-23, Ezra 1:1-4)

**#2. I Jehovah Do All These Things (Isa 45:6-7, Jer 31:35, John 1:4-5)**

- My Name Shall Be Great (Mal 1:11, Acts 4:24-28)

**#3. I Jehovah Have Created It (Isa 45:8)**

- Thank You, Lord (2Cor 4:3-7)

Please open your Bibles to the Prophecy of Isaiah, **Isa 44:28** (2X). We have here a marvelous prophecy concerning Cyrus. Who was Cyrus? Cyrus was a Persian king who led the combined armies of the Medes and the Persians to victory over Babylon, and thereby brought liberty to the Jews who were captives in Babylon. But this writing was about 170 years before Cyrus actually overthrew the kingdom of Babylon. When God dictated this prophecy through the pen of the prophet Isaiah it took 170 years before this prophecy was finally fulfilled. What was so special about this prophecy? It was special because it is a prime example of the Providence of God.

- **Providence and the Purpose of God** (Isa 44:28, John 4:24)

That is also the title of this sermon: **Providence**. What does this mean "Providence of God"? It means: the Lord shall provide. Providence. If I express this word in human terms I could say: "The hands of God" (2X). Be careful now. This is anthropomorphism. God does not have hands, at least not in the OT time. When the Lord Jesus described God, He said in **John 4:24**, "God *is* a Spirit: and they that worship him must worship *him* in spirit and in truth". A Spirit does not have hands. Only after the Lord Jesus was born does God have hands, because the Lord Jesus Christ is God. How is it that God is in heaven and Jesus is on earth, and yet the Bible tells us that there is only one God? The Bible tells us that God exists in three Persons: God the Father, God the Son and God the Holy Spirit. Each of these three Persons is fully God, and yet there is only One God. Jesus Christ is not another god there on the side living in the land of Palestine, because there is only One God. And thus the Lord Jesus Christ is God the Son who came to earth united with the man Christ Jesus, who was born of the Virgin Mary. And after God the Son had united with the man Christ Jesus in the womb of the Virgin Mary He was never separated from the man Christ Jesus. God the Son is fully God as much as the Father and the Holy Spirit are fully God, for "in Him dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily" You find that in **Col 2:9**.

How does "God's Eternal Purpose for This Creation" tie in with "The Providence of God"? Well, God's purpose for this creation was conceived in the mind of God before the foundation of the world. Careful now: This is anthropomorphism, because God does not have a mind. God is a Spirit, and a spirit does not have a brain like we humans do. But God's purpose, as stated in the Bible, is certainly going to come to pass, because no one can obstruct the plans of God. God's purpose was not the result of God's omniscience, which means that God did not first look down the corridors of time to see which of His creatures would repent and turn to Christ for salvation. God's purpose cannot depend on what His creatures would do for Him. No! God's purpose will come to pass because God Himself will **cause** it to come to pass. God's Providence is working out all those things which God in His Counsel before the foundation of the world has determined to do. Or to say it again in human terms: God's hands are going to finish what God already purposed to do in His mind. There is no one who can oppose what God has planned to do in the Counsel of His will. God causes all things to continue to exist, whereby

He in and through all His creatures executes His Counsel, and guides them in such a way that they must all, without exception, lead to the end He had determined for them in His Counsel. And God does that without making any of us robots. To some people the Providence of God is mixed up with God's elective program. That is not so. In fact, we are going to see in this chapter that God's Providence included Cyrus, but Cyrus remained to be an unsaved heathen king.

- **God says to His Anointed, to Cyrus** (Isa 44:28-45:15)

**Isa 44:28** “That saith of Cyrus, *He is my shepherd*, and shall perform all my pleasure: even saying to Jerusalem, Thou shalt be built; and to the temple, Thy foundation shall be laid. **45:1** ¶ Thus saith the LORD to his anointed, to Cyrus, whose right hand I have holden, to subdue nations before him; and I will loose the loins of kings, to open before him the two leaved gates; and the gates shall not be shut; **2** I will go before thee, and make the crooked places straight: I will break in pieces the gates of brass, and cut in sunder the bars of iron: **3** And I will give thee the treasures of darkness, and hidden riches of secret places, that thou mayest know that I, the LORD, which call *thee* by thy name, *am* the God of Israel. **4** For Jacob my servant's sake, and Israel mine elect, I have even called thee by thy name: I have surnamed thee, though thou hast not known me. **5** ¶ I *am* the LORD, and *there is none else, there is no God beside me*: I girded thee, though thou hast not known me: **6** That they may know from the rising of the sun, and from the west, that *there is none beside me*. I *am* the LORD, and *there is none else*. **7** I form the light, and create darkness: I make peace, and create evil: I the LORD do all these *things*. **8** Drop down, ye heavens, from above, and let the skies pour down righteousness: let the earth open, and let them bring forth salvation, and let righteousness spring up together; I the LORD have created it. **9** Woe unto him that striveth with his Maker! *Let the potsherd strive with the potsherds of the earth*. Shall the clay say to him that fashioneth it, "What makest thou"? or thy work, "He hath no hands"? **10** Woe unto him that saith unto *his father*, "What begettest thou"? or to the woman, "What hast thou brought forth"? **11** ¶ Thus saith the LORD, the Holy One of Israel, and his Maker, Ask me of things to come concerning my sons, and concerning the work of my hands command ye me. **12** I have made the earth, and created man upon it: I, *even my hands*, have stretched out the heavens, and all their host have I commanded. **13** I have raised him up in righteousness, and I will direct all his ways: he shall build my city, and he shall let go my captives, not for price nor reward, saith the LORD of hosts. **14** Thus saith the LORD, The labour of Egypt, and merchandise of Ethiopia and of the Sabeans, men of stature, shall come over unto thee, and they shall be thine: they shall come after thee; in chains they shall come over, and they shall fall down unto thee, they shall make supplication unto thee, *saying*, Surely God *is* in thee; and *there is none else, there is no God*. **15** Verily thou *art* a God that hidest thyself, O God of Israel, the Saviour.”

There are many topics of interest in these 16 verses. We do not have time to get into all of these. Let me focus on just a few verses. Look again at verses 4-5, and there God repeats these words:

**#1. Though Thou Hast Not Known Me (2X) (Isa 45:4-5, Luke 12:6-7, John 15:5, Rom 8:28)**

What does that mean? It means that Cyrus did not know the true God, and we do not read in the Bible that Cyrus ever became saved. In fact, in **Isa 46:11** Cyrus is called "A Ravenous Bird". What can we see here in Isa 45 about the Providence of God? We see that God has held the hand of Cyrus, the heathen king, so that he was able to subdue nations. But in verse 3 God gave Cyrus also "the treasures of darkness and hidden riches of secret places", which are vague references to the scrolls of the OT, so that Cyrus would be drawn by God to make the proclamation of **Isa 44:28** that the Jews could return to their homeland, and rebuild the city of Jerusalem, and rebuild the temple to the God of Israel. Then we read in **Isa 45:4-5**,

**Isa 45:4** For Jacob my servant's sake, and Israel mine elect, I have even called thee by thy name: I have surnamed thee, though thou hast not known me. **5** ¶ I am Jehovah, and *there is none else, there is no God beside me: I girded thee, though thou hast not known me:*

In other words, God says here, "For the sake of Jacob, referring to the nation of Jews held captive in Babylon, and for the sake of Israel, referring to the elect of God among this nation of Jews, God has called Cyrus by name, and God girded him with strength to be victorious in those battles that God would lead him to subdue the nations that God has given him". Then God says two times: "though thou hast not known me". God is emphasizing that Cyrus does not know God. God stresses the fact that God holds Cyrus by the hand, even though Cyrus is an unsaved man. Cyrus is upheld by the Providence of God to do those things that were beneficial "For Jacob my servant's sake, and Israel mine elect". Can you see the essentials of God's Providence here? God is NOT just ruling and reigning over His elect people and Satan ruling and reigning over all his people. God's omnipresent power preserves all things, and all people, and He rules and governs them unto his own determined end. Thus we see the two components of the Providence of God are "preservation" and "government" (2X). The element of "preservation" implies that God by His omnipresent power bears all things and causes them to exist. God must literally hold all things in His hand. The Lord Jesus said in **Luke 12:6**,

**Lu 12:6** Are not five sparrows sold for two farthings, and not one of them is forgotten before God?

**7** But even the very hairs of your head are all numbered. Fear not therefore: ye are of more value than many sparrows.

God does not say that He has counted all the hairs of our head. God says that He has numbered the hairs of our head, which means #1, #2, #3, #4, and so on. God's Providence is taking care of all the minutest details. If God would withdraw His Providence one second, we would cease to exist. The Lord Jesus said in **John 15:5**, "without Me ye can do nothing" (2X). God's Being touches the substance of all things, and through His Word He operates from moment to moment in and upon every creature according to its nature. This is how God by His Word bears and moves the sun and the moon and the stars. This is how God by His Word operates continuously upon the lily of the field so that it is arrayed

more gloriously than Solomon in all his glory. And this is how God also operates in the moral life of rational creatures, like men and angels. Only as long as God by His almighty Word bears our mind and intellect, is it able to think, and then we exercise our mind under the guidance of God to good thoughts, or under the guidance of our sinful flesh to evil thoughts. As long as God by His almighty Word sustains the will of men, can it desire or make decisions, and then we exercise our will under the guidance of God to righteous acts, or under the guidance of our sinful flesh to evil acts.

In His Providence God not only causes to exist by preserving all things, but God also governs all things. Before the creation of the world God did not have all kinds of possibilities in mind, but God had in mind only one purpose. That purpose was the final goal of all things, which God conceived in His Counsel. That goal was the new creation in which righteousness shall dwell forever, and of which Christ shall be the eternal head, in whom all things shall be united. The Providence of God governs every creature, from the beginning of history until the end of time to the end that God has in view. All things are in the hand of our heavenly Father. That is why God can say in **Rom 8:28**,

Ro 8:28 And we know that all things (2X) work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to *his* purpose.

All things also implies that all the powers of darkness work together for the realization of God's eternal purpose in Christ Jesus and to the glory of His holy name. Now, let us see how this works in:

- **Cyrus, the Heathen King (2X).** (2Chron 36:22-23, Ezra 1:1-4)

Please turn in your Bibles to the Prophecy of Second Chronicles, **2Chron 36:22** (2X). In chapter 36 God gave a summary of the destruction of Jerusalem by the Babylonians in the year 587 BC. Only a remnant of the Jews escaped the sword. They were taken captive and brought to Babylon. In the year 539 BC Babylon was overthrown by the combined forces of the Medes and the Persians under the leadership of Cyrus. Babylon was ruled over by Darius the Mede for two years. Then Cyrus returned and in the year **537 BC** Cyrus made this proclamation that we read here in **2Chron 36:22**,

**2Ch 36:22** ¶ “Now in the first year of Cyrus king of Persia, that the word of the LORD *spoken* by the mouth of Jeremiah might be accomplished, the LORD stirred up the spirit of Cyrus king of Persia, that he made a proclamation throughout all his kingdom, and *put it* also in writing, saying, **23** Thus saith Cyrus king of Persia, All the kingdoms of the earth hath the LORD God of heaven given me; and he hath charged me to build him an house in Jerusalem, which *is* in Judah. Who *is there* among you of all his people? The LORD his God *be* with him, and let him go up.”

And if you turn the page to Ezra, chapter 1:1-4, we find there a little more information of this event,

**Ezr 1:1** ¶ Now in the first year of Cyrus king of Persia, that the word of the LORD by the mouth of Jeremiah might be fulfilled, the LORD stirred up the spirit of Cyrus king of Persia, that he made a proclamation throughout all his kingdom, and *put it* also in writing, saying, **2** Thus saith Cyrus king of Persia, The LORD God of heaven hath given me all the kingdoms of the earth; and he hath charged

me to build him an house at Jerusalem, which *is* in Judah. **3** Who *is there* among you of all his people? his God be with him, and let him go up to Jerusalem, which *is* in Judah, and build the house of the LORD God of Israel, he *is* the God, which *is* in Jerusalem. **4** And whosoever remaineth in any place where he sojourneth, let the men of his place help him with silver, and with gold, and with goods, and with beasts, beside the freewill offering for the house of God that *is* in Jerusalem.

Look at that! Cyrus commands the people of his land to help the Jews with the building of the house of the LORD God of Israel in Judah, by supporting them with silver, and with gold, and with all kinds of other materials, in addition to their freewill offering for the house of God that is in Jerusalem. How did it come to pass that Cyrus made this proclamation? God says: "the LORD stirred up the spirit of Cyrus king of Persia". Therefore, we see that God in His Providence not only preserved the armies of the Medes and the Persians, but God also governed the nations in such a way that God gave Cyrus victory after victory over them, and God also governed the will of Cyrus so that he became a key person in executing the Counsel of God, even though he did not know who our God of the Bible is. Cyrus may have read some of the scrolls of the Hebrews, but Cyrus was never saved.

Likewise today there may be people who have read the Bible from cover to cover, but they do not know our God of the Bible, because they have never been saved. They have learned a few facts from the Bible, they may even have learned the concepts of heaven and hell, and of mercy and grace, but they still do not know our God as He reveals Himself on the pages of the Bible. Their knowledge consists of a series of facts, but these facts are stored in their mind as loose sand, because the God of the Bible has not "shined in their hearts the light of the knowledge of the glory of God". Many have reduced the Gospel of the Bible to a series of facts, leading up to a "do it yourself salvation". They have never discovered that the Gospel of the Bible is "the Good News of Free Grace", because God has never revealed Himself to them. Like Cyrus, they have never experienced the Love of God which is shed abroad in our hearts, to change us from the inside. But God says to us:

**#2. I Jehovah Do All These Things (2X) (Isa 45:6-7, Jer 31:35, John 1:4-5)**

Please turn again to the Prophecy of Isaiah, **Isa 45:6** (2X), and let us continue where we left off. Isaiah wrote this scroll about 170 years before Cyrus became king. In verse 3 God told Cyrus that He has called him to do a job, and that God has girded him with strength to accomplish that job. What was that job? The job is described in the treasures of darkness and the hidden riches of secret places. What could this refer to? God says: "in order that thou mayest know that I, Jehovah, which call thee by thy name, am the God of Israel". In other words, "in the treasures of darkness and in the hidden riches of secret places" you will find who I am who is calling you by your name, Cyrus.

**Isa 45:6** That they may know from the rising of the sun, and from the west, that *there is* none beside me. I *am* Jehovah, and *there is* none else. **7** I form the light, and create darkness: I make peace, and create evil: I Jehovah do all these *things*.

Here is God's government in Providence, that all the world from the East unto the West may know that there is no other god beside Me. I am the Almighty Jehovah, King of kings, and there is none else who can be called god beside Me. This is who I am: "I form the light, and create darkness". Here God indicates that He is the One who created the universe and the world in it. It was God who said: "Let there be light", and after creating the day God created the night. It was God who said in **Jer 31**,

**Jer 31:35** ¶ Thus saith the LORD, which giveth the sun for a light by day, *and* the ordinances of the moon and of the stars for a light by night, which divideth the sea when the waves thereof roar; Jehovah of hosts *is* his name:

But there is more: God is not only the Creator of everything and He preserves it for His own purposes. But God also governs everyone, and God uses the metaphors of light and darkness to symbolize children of God and children of the Devil. That is why God says in John 1:4-5,

**Joh 1:4** In Him (In Christ) was life; and the life was the light of men.

**Joh 1:5** And the light shineth in darkness; and the darkness comprehended it not.

*The Life* in Jesus Christ is the light that shines in this world of sin. Some receive it but most remain in the darkness of unbelief. God is the One who decides if this light of the Gospel shall be received, or if those in darkness will remain in darkness. God causes salvation to fall on those whom He pleases to give it to, and God hardens the hearts of those to whom He does not please to give it to. And God says at the end of **Isa 45:7**, "I Jehovah do all these *things*". This is the Almighty Omnipotent God who is described in the Bible. Do we believe this? Why would God insist on this? It is because God says:

- **My Name Shall Be Great** (Mal 1:11, Acts 4:24-28)

Put a sticker here in Isa 45 and please turn to the Acts of the Apostles, **Acts 4:24** (2X). While you look this up, let me read to you what God says in **Mal 1:11**,

**Mal 1:11** For from the rising of the sun even unto the going down of the same my name *shall be* great among the Gentiles; and in every place incense *shall be* offered unto my name, and a pure offering: for my name *shall be* great among the heathen, saith the LORD of hosts.

Why does God say: "My name *shall be* great among the Gentiles" and "My name *shall be* great among the heathen"? God is preparing the nation of Israel for the transition to the NT dispensation, where the Gentiles are going to play a greater role in the spread of the Gospel. God has preserved more Gentiles than Jews, and now by His Providence God is drawing more Gentiles than Jews to the Lord Jesus. Initially both Jews and Gentiles were in opposition to the Gospel of Christ. Initially we all were in need of salvation. Initially we all came into the world as enemies of Christ. And when the early church heard the threatenings by the enemies of Christ they prayed, in **Acts 4:24-28**,

**Ac 4:24** And when they heard that, they lifted up their voice to God with one accord, and said, Lord, thou *art* God, which hast made heaven, and earth, and the sea, and all that in them is: **25** Who by the mouth of thy servant David hast said, Why did the heathen rage, and the people imagine vain things?

**26** The kings of the earth stood up, and the rulers were gathered together against the Lord, and against his Christ. **27** For of a truth against thy holy child Jesus, whom thou hast anointed, both Herod, and Pontius Pilate, with the Gentiles, and the people of Israel, were gathered together, **28** For to do whatsoever thy hand and thy counsel determined before to be done.

Do you see that? "To do whatsoever thy hand and thy counsel determined before to be done". God's providence in governing the people of the world ended up in them doing what God in His Counsel determined before the foundation of the world to be done. God determined that the Lord Jesus Christ had to be crucified for the sins of those whom God had chosen to save. God determined this in His Counsel before the foundation of the world. From the human perspective it looks as if God executes His Counsel in spite of the wicked intentions of the powers of darkness. But that is NOT how the Word of God looks at these things. It is true that "The axe exalts itself against Him that hews therewith", but that is NOT a godly view of world history. God does not realize His Counsel in spite of something that disturbs or destroys the work of His hands, but God realizes His Counsel THROUGH the means of all the attempts of the ungodly world to frustrate His plan, as well as THROUGH all other means. God's work has never been spoiled. God rules alone, sovereignly, and absolutely. The ship of creation leaving the coast of Gen 1:1, sailing over the ocean of time, follows a straight course to the harbor the Almighty destined her to reach. There are to Him no contrary winds, for all winds are His. For this reason we may never separate the fall of Adam and Eve from the providential government of God. The fall of Adam and Eve took place according to the determinate Counsel of the Most High, in order to serve Him as a means to an end. But never was the Counsel of God frustrated.

Please turn again to the Prophecy of Isaiah, **Isa 45:8** (2X). But before we start to read Isaiah, LET ME SUMMARIZE what we have covered so far.

#1. We have seen in these examples of Isa 45 and Acts 4 how God's Providence not only governs the heart of Pharaoh by hardening his heart, and it not only governs the heart of the false prophet Balaam by hardening his heart, but God's Providence also governed the life of Cyrus, by causing him to make a proclamation that the Jews could return to their homeland, even though he remained unsaved. Likewise God's Providence is actively at work in every person in this world, in both the Elect and in the Reprobate, so that the purpose of God is accomplished in each one, "to do whatsoever Thy hand and Thy counsel determined before to be done".

#2. We have also seen how God's Providence consists of two components: Preservation and Government. God governs all things in order that He might bring to pass the purpose for which He created the universe and the world in the first place. This is the only reason why "all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are **the** called according to His purpose".

#3. We have also seen how God introduces Himself as the only One who forms the light and creates darkness, who makes peace and creates evil circumstances. This is the Almighty whom we worship,



who creates and preserves all things and all people, and who governs them. And God accomplishes His goals, not in spite of the actions of the powers of evil, but He governs through the actions of the powers of evil to bring to pass what He has determined in His Counsel.

Now we have arrived at point #3, and you know what that means: This is the Application, **Isa 45:8**, **#3. I Jehovah Have Created It (Isa 45:8)**

**Isa 45:8** Drop down, ye heavens, from above, and let the skies pour down righteousness: let the earth open, and let them bring forth salvation, and let righteousness spring up together; I Jehovah have created it.

Does this sound like a miracle is happening? Indeed, the only miracle happening in our days is this phenomenon, described here in verse 8, the miracle of salvation. In order to bring us this miracle of salvation a great number of things have to fall in place. For example, Adam and Eve had to fall into sin, plunging the entire human race into slavery to sin and slavery to Satan. All the events described in the OT had to occur for types and figures of Christ, and of the Body of Christ, and of eternal life. The Lord Jesus Christ had to come and suffer and die on a cross in AD 33, actually accomplishing what even Satan thought to be impossible. Christ had to make a full satisfaction for the guilt of all the sins of all the Elect, which was the equivalent of an eternity in Hell. In our lifetime God had to give us a regenerated soul and apply the payment that Christ made on our behalf to put away our sins.

And do you call all these events miracles? I would call this series of events not miracles, but The Providence of God. What actually is a miracle? Is there any difference between what we call a miracle and The Providence of God? NO! All the works of God are wonders, because they are as works of God, marvelous! For this reason the question whether anything is natural or supernatural is quite irrelevant and is based upon error in understanding the relation between God and the world. Whoever believes in The Providence of God as described in the Bible will understand that the distinction between the natural and the supernatural is false. We have become callous of the wonders that God does in our everyday life, and we begin to think that there are miracles where God works in a special way. But God is always at work in a special way.

But let our eyes now go to **Isa 45:8**, and see there the marvelous way in which God works out His plan of salvation. Remember when it was raining? How do we receive the rain? Do we have to accept the rain? Or do we receive rain on our head regardless whether we accept it or not? Of course you will say that we receive it freely, whether we accept it or not. God says in **Isa 45:8** that this is how we receive righteousness. We receive it freely like water from the rain. Here we see God's Providence working in the sphere of grace. We could say that this is the wonder of grace, which is that act of God whereby He raises the work of His hands through the deep way of sin and the curse, from its misery into the glory of God's everlasting Kingdom. And by His almighty hand He directs all things to that end.

That is Providence! God's Providence is motivated by His grace over His people in Jesus Christ. And when we see that, all we can say is:

- **Thank You, Lord (2X)** (2Cor 4:3-7)

Please turn in your Bibles to the NT, to the Second Epistle to the Corinthians, **2Cor 4:3** (2X). Thank You, Lord, for providing for us everything we need. Thank You, Lord, for Your Providence, which has poured the love of God in our hearts and which holds us up and gives us a will to serve You. Thank You, Lord, for the continued guidance by Your Holy Spirit into good works, such as the work of spreading forth the Gospel. Therefore we read in **2Cor 4:3-7** this song of praise to Him who so dearly loved us.

**2Co 4:3** But if our gospel be hid, it is hid to them that are lost: **4** In whom the god of this world hath blinded the minds of them which believe not, lest the light of the glorious gospel of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine unto them. **5** For we preach not ourselves, but Christ Jesus the Lord; and ourselves your servants for Jesus' sake. **6** For God, who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, hath shined in our hearts, to *give* the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ. **7** But we have this treasure in earthen vessels, that the excellency of the power may be of God, and not of us.

We too were once blinded by the god of this world, Satan. But by the grace of God, His light has shined in our hearts, and therefore we believe. God gave us the treasure of a regenerated soul, and eternal life. We have this treasure in earthen vessels. The earthen vessels refer to our earthly bodies. And the reason why God poured out this grace on earthly bodies, which were in bondage to sin, is so that it may be clear to all that we do not get the credit for believing on the Lord Jesus Christ, but all the credit must go to God. It is He who has done this miracle in our soul. Think about this now. In order for God to shine in our hearts He had to send God the Son to this earth to suffer and die on a cruel cross, because someone who is more righteous than we are had to stand in our place to pay the debt that we owe on account of our sins. How much did we owe? God says, the wages of sin is death, and the death that God had in view was not just physical death but the second death, eternal damnation in the lake of fire. To fulfill the righteousness of God as our substitute, this is what Christ had to pay, the equivalent of an eternity in Hell.

Think about it now, how great is our gratitude to God and to Christ? Do we show our gratitude in our life, and in the words we speak, and in the friends we make, and in our witness for the true Gospel? Do we know the difference between the Gospel of grace and a gospel of works? Do we know where in the Bible we find these things? We must look at our own life and see how we do in this area of living gratefully. "Thanks be unto God for His unspeakable gift".

AMEN.

Let us turn to the Lord in prayer.