

Pleasant Valley  
Church of Christ

3317 Amidon  
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www.letjesusleadus.org

## Schedule of Services

### Sunday

Classes . . . . . 9:30 am  
Worship . . . . . 10:30 am  
Evening . . . . . 6:00 pm

### Wednesday

Classes . . . . . 7:30 pm

The Pleasant Valley Church of Christ is a non-denominational group of believers who are committed to following Jesus in our attitudes, our relationships, and our worship. If you want the same thing in your life, please contact us. We'd like to help.

Unless otherwise noted, all scripture quotations are from the New King James Version Bible, Thomas Nelson Publishers.

# Wings



*"But those who wait on the Lord shall renew their strength;  
they shall mount up with wings like eagles" (Isaiah 40:31)*

November 22, 2009

## The providence of God

by David King

A king has a torrid love affair with a neighbor's wife, and murders the neighbor to cover up the sin. Overcome with remorse, the king eventually makes things right with God, but the baby that is born from this illicit relationship is smitten with a serious illness. The king cries out to God for mercy for the innocent little life. Will God answer his fervent prayer? The king can say only, "Who can tell?" (2 Sam. 12:22).

To nurse a bruised ego, a corrupt government official plots to destroy all the Jews in the land. But his master the king has just married, and out of all the available women in the land, his bride happens to be a Jewess. The new queen discovers the plot and intercedes for her people. The corrupt official is hanged. Was the young woman's timely rise to royalty an act of God? Her cousin and counselor will say only, "Who knows?" (Esth. 4:14).

A slave becomes frustrated at his hopeless lot in life, and takes advantage of an opportunity to escape. He traverses hundreds of miles over land and sea to a foreign city where he hopes to find a new life. Out of the thousands of people who surround him in his new home, he happens to befriend a preacher who is well acquainted with his old master. The preacher helps him find a new life in Christ, and sends him back to his Christian master, with a plea to receive him back as a brother. Was God responsible for the remarkable chain of events that led to the happy ending of this story? The inspired preacher will say only, "Perhaps" (Philemon 15).

The Bible clearly teaches the active role of God in the affairs of men, or what we like to call "the providence of God." Every divine promise to answer prayer or provide assistance argues for it. But this does not give us a license to declare His hand in every detail of life. "As 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 all things" (Eccl. 11:5). God does indeed work in mysterious ways, and it is impossible for us to accurately read every subtle influence that He exerts in our lives. Some things that seem to be favorable signs from God may really be delusions designed to test our faith (2 Thess. 2:11-12). And some things that seem to be sorrowful may actually be blessings in disguise (such as the sufferings of Joseph, Gen. 50:20).

How can we tell the difference between a providential act of God and an ordinary act of nature uninfluenced by divine will? We can't! For that reason, we should always address the subject with a heavy dose of humility, using words like "who can tell?" or "perhaps" or "who knows?" Dogmatic claims of divine favor ("the Lord gave me a sign") smack of arrogance, and can be self-deceiving. Better to receive God's favor unknowingly, than to be lulled into a false sense of security by assumptions based on uncertain evidence.

Our duty in life is not to read God's mind, but to obey what He has revealed in His word. Let us be content with that, and trust God to do what is best regarding everything else.