

# GOD DOES PROVIDE

**THE GOSPEL READING THIS MORNING SHOWS US THAT DESPITE THE BIRTH OF JESUS, THE WORLD WAS STILL A WORLD THAT CONTAINED ALL THE THINGS, GOOD AND BAD, THAT THE WORLD CONTAINED BEFORE JESUS' BIRTH. WE CAN IN ALL HONESTY SAY THAT OUR WORLD TODAY EXPERIENCES MANY OF THE SAME THINGS. WE COULD ASK "WHERE IS GOD FOR US?"**

**WE CAN FIND GOD IN TODAY'S READING. WE CAN IN THIS STORY OF JOSEPH SEE HOW GOD PROVIDES AND HOW WE CAN RESPOND. WE CAN FIND OTHER STORIES THROUGHOUT THE BIBLE OF GOD PROVIDING FOR HIS PEOPLE IN MANY DIFFERENT WAYS!**

YOU MAY HAVE HEARD THE SONG, JEHOVAH JIREH, THE LYRICS ARE "Jehovah Jireh **My provider** His grace is sufficient For me, for me, for me. Jehovah Jireh **My provider** His grace is sufficient For me. **My God shall supply all my needs** according to His riches in glory He will give His angels charge over me. Jehovah Jireh **cares for me**, for me, for me Jehovah Jireh **cares for me.**" MANY OF THESE WORDS ARE STRAIGHT FROM THE SCRIPTURES. **THE NAME OF GOD WAS THE NAME GIVEN BY ABRAHAM WHEN HE WAS CALLED UPON TO SACRIFICE HIS ISAAC, BUT GOD PROVIDED A RAM INSTEAD.** LATER IT WAS FOUND THAT A CLOSER MEANING OF THESE WORDS OF THE SONG, JEHOVAH JIREH, WERE GOD WOULD "BE SEEN" OR GOD WOULD "REVEAL HIMSELF".

**THE WORD PROVIDER IS MENTIONED NEARLY 200 TIMES IN THE BIBLE. MANY TIMES IT IS GOD HIMSELF TELLING US HE WILL PROVIDE FOR US.**

**DURING THE WEEKS OF ADVENT AND CHRISTMAS WE HAVE HEARD ABOUT THE PREPARATION FOR THE COMING OF JESUS, GOD PROVIDING A SAVIOR AS PROMISED.** FOR US TODAY, GOD WILL PROVIDE ,IN A NEW WAY, OUR RELATIONSHIP WITH JESUS. **WE HAVE HEARD ABOUT HAVING ENDURANCE FOR THE JOURNEY AND HOW GOD PROVIDES A PEACE DURING THAT TIME OF THE JOURNEY. WHEN WE TAKE THIS JOURNEY, WE ARE TO REJOICE AND BE JOY-FILLED, BECAUSE OF GOD AND WHAT HE IS DOING FOR US. GOD PROVIDES THAT JOY, ALL WE NEED IS TO RESPOND TO IT. JOY CAN BE FOUND IN WORSHIP AND PEOPLE THAT GOD PROVIDES FOR US ALL WHEN OUR ATTITUDE IS RIGHT.**

TO END ADVENT WE HEARD OF THE NAME OF GOD, IN THE FLESH, WAS EMMANUEL, GOD WITH US. GOD DWELT AMONG US IN THE FLESH IN THE FORM OF JESUS TO SHOW US HIS VERY NATURE AND THE LOVE HE HAD FOR US. GOD, THROUGH JESUS SHOWED US KINGDOM "THINKING". **GOD PROVIDED EXAMPLES THROUGH JESUS FOR OUR DAILY LIVING. GOD REALLY DOES PROVIDE FOR US!!!!**

LOOKING AT THIS MORNING'S **STORY OF JOSEPH WE CAN DISCOVER A GOOD EXAMPLE OF GOD PROVIDING IN MANY WAYS.** IN THE OPENING VERSES OF THE READING, GOD CAME TO JOSEPH IN A DREAM AND GAVE JOSEPH CLEAR DIRECTION FOR HIM TO TAKE MARY AND THE CHILD TO EGYPT.

THERE WERE MANY JEWS LIVING IN EGYPT, AND THERE WERE KNOWN TO BE OVER A ONE MILLION JEWS IN THE CITY OF ALEXANDRIA. **GOD PROVIDED** A COMMUNITY WHERE IT WOULD BE EASY TO FIND A JOB AND MAKE A LIVING. LATER, IN EGYPT JOSEPH HAD AN ANGEL FROM THE LORD COME IN A DREAM AND TELL HIM IT WAS SAFE TO RETURN TO ISRAEL.

NOW UPON THE FAMILY'S RETURN TO ISRAEL JOSEPH BY WORD OF MOUTH FOUND OUT THAT THE CRUELEST OF HEROD'S SONS, ARCHELAUS, NOW RULED IN JUDEA. **JOSEPH SOUGHT SAFETY, AND AN ANGEL IN A DREAM INSTRUCTED JOSEPH TO GO TO GALILEE AND SETTLE IN NAZARETH.** THIS REGION OF ISRAEL WAS RULED BY ANOTHER OF HEROD'S SONS, HEROD ANTIPAS, A MUCH KINDER RULER TO THE PEOPLE. NAZARETH WAS A SAFE PLACE TO RAISE JESUS.

WE ARE REMINDED IN LUKE, CHAPTER 2, VERSE 40 - "And the Child continued to grow and became strong, increasing in wisdom; and the grace of God was upon Him." **GOD HAD PROVIDED FOR JOSEPH AND THE FAMILY A WAY OUT OF THE CIRCUMSTANCES THAT THEY FOUND THEMSELVES IN. GOD PROVIDED HIS ANGELS** A SECOND TIME TO RELAY HIS MESSAGE TO JOSEPH. IT WAS NOT THE ONLY WAY. **GOD PROVIDED PEOPLE TO GET THE WORD TO JOSEPH OF ARCHELAUS RULING OVER JUDEA.**

NOT MANY OF US HAVE BEEN VISITED BY AN ANGEL IN A DREAM, BUT I AM SURE THAT GOD HAS PROVIDED SOMEONE OR SOME THING TO HELP US ALONG THE WAY!

**LOOK AT THE EXAMPLES OF GOD PROVIDING, FOUND IN THE OLD TESTAMENT.** ABRAHAM, DAVID AND MESHACH, SHADRACH, AND ABED-NEGO. IN THE NEW TESTAMENT PAUL, A NUMBER OF THE DISCIPLES AND OTHERS WERE PROVIDED FOR. **ALL WERE PROVIDED BY GOD A WAY TO OVERCOME THEIR CIRCUMSTANCES THEY FOUND THEMSELVES IN.**

**WHAT WAS A COMMON THREAD** OF ALL THESE EXAMPLES AND US TODAY? **THEIR FAITH IN GOD.** WHETHER IT WAS FACING A GIANT, BEING IN THE FIRE LITERALLY OR SHIPWRECKED AND IN PRISON, THEIR FAITH THAT GOD WOULD PROVIDE WAS THERE WITH THEM.

**IT IS INTERESTING TO OBSERVE THAT WHEN OUR NATION EXPERIENCES A TRAGEDY SUCH AS THE JFK ASSASSINATION, 9/11, OR TRAGIC DEATHS, PEOPLE TURN TO PRAYER AND END UP IN A CHURCH. THEY TURN TO GOD TO PROVIDE COMFORT OR JUST ASSURANCE HE REMAINS WITH US.** DEUTERONOMY 31:6 "Be strong and courageous. Do not be afraid or terrified because of them, for the LORD your God goes with you; He will never leave you nor forsake you." OR PHILIPPIANS 4:19 "But my God shall supply **all your needs** according to His riches in glory by Christ Jesus." **THERE ARE MANY SUCH PASSAGES IN THE BIBLE THAT POINT TO GOD PROVIDING FOR US IN SO MANY WAYS – PHYSICAL, EMOTIONAL, AND SPIRITUAL.**

**HERE IS A STORY OF GOD PROVIDING FOR PHYSICAL THINGS...**NANCY WAS A SINGLE MOTHER WITH YOUNG CHILDREN. HER EX-HUSBAND SENT HER ONLY A SMALL AMOUNT OF GROCERY MONEY EVERY WEEK--SO SMALL IT COULDN'T EVEN FEED 1 PERSON, MUCH LESS HER FAMILY OF 4. BUT NANCY

DECIDED TO BEGIN GIVING TO GOD FROM HER LITTLE BIT OF GROCERY MONEY AND TRUST HIM TO PROVIDE. SHORTLY AFTER, SHE GOT A JOB WITH A COOKBOOK COMPANY. THE COMPANY PAID NANCY TO GO GROCERY SHOPPING AND PREPARE MEALS SO THEY COULD TAKE PHOTOGRAPHS FOR THEIR COOKBOOKS. WHEN THEY WERE DONE TAKING PICTURES, NANCY COULD KEEP THE FOOD SHE HAD PURCHASED AND PREPARED. ISN'T THAT AN AMAZING STORY OF GOD'S GOODNESS, HIS PROVIDING? NANCY LEARNED THAT EVEN IF YOU'RE POOR, YOU STILL NEED TO LEARN TO GIVE FROM WHATEVER YOU HAVE.

**HERE IS ANOTHER EXAMPLE GOD PROVIDING EMOTIONALLY AND SPIRITUALLY...** GOOD MORNING. I AM GOD. TODAY I WILL BE HANDLING ALL OF YOUR PROBLEMS. PLEASE REMEMBER THAT I DO NOT NEED YOUR HELP. IF THE DEVIL HAPPENS TO DELIVER A SITUATION TO YOU THAT YOU CANNOT HANDLE, DO NOT ATTEMPT TO RESOLVE IT. KINDLY PUT IT IN THE SFJTD (SOMETHING FOR JESUS TO DO) BOX. IT WILL BE ADDRESSED IN MY TIME, NOT YOURS. ONCE THE MATTER IS PLACED INTO THE BOX, DO NOT HOLD ON TO IT OR REMOVE IT. HOLDING ON OR REMOVAL WILL DELAY THE RESOLUTION OF YOUR PROBLEM. IF IT IS A SITUATION THAT YOU THINK YOU ARE CAPABLE OF HANDLING, PLEASE CONSULT ME IN PRAYER TO BE SURE THAT IT IS THE PROPER RESOLUTION. BECAUSE I DO NOT SLEEP NOR DO I SLUMBER, THERE IS NO NEED FOR YOU TO LOSE ANY SLEEP. REST MY CHILD. IF YOU NEED TO CONTACT ME, I AM ONLY A PRAYER AWAY.

**OUR GOD MAY NOT PROVIDE US WAYS TO ESCAPE THE PAIN OR WAYS TO AVOID THE TREMENDOUS CHALLENGES LIFE BRINGS, BUT, ACCORDING TO TODAY'S TEXT, GOD DOES PROVIDE A WAY FOR US TO PERSEVERE THROUGH THAT PAIN OR CIRCUMSTANCE JUST AS JOSEPH DID.**

**GOD PROVIDES US WITH GUIDANCE AND DIRECTION,** OFTEN LEADING US THROUGH THE UNEXPECTED. AND GOD PROVIDES US WITH A HOPE THAT CAN LIFT OUR HEADS AND LIFT OUR SPIRITS WHEN EVERYTHING ELSE IN LIFE IS DRAGGING US DOWN.

THE STORY OF JOSEPH IS A GREAT EXAMPLE OF WAYS GOD PROVIDES FOR US. THIS IS THE FIRST DAY OF A NEW YEAR. WE HAVE COME THROUGH THE JOURNEY OF ADVENT AND CELEBRATED CHRISTMAS. **MAY THE NEW YEAR FIND US TRUSTING AND KNOWING GOD WILL PROVIDE FOR US.**

**AS JOSEPH RESPONDED TO GOD'S DIRECTION, MAY WE RESPOND, NOT ONLY FOR OURSELVES, BUT TO OTHERS AND OUR CHURCH. AMEN.**