



EXODUS

GOD'S PROVISION

Before Life Group

Read Exodus 15-17

The saga with the Egyptians, for all intents and purposes, was over for the Israelites. The army that had chased them had perished into the mighty waves of the Red Sea that God had parted for the Israelites to cross safely and rescinded when the Egyptians pursued the people under God's care. They were well on their way to the Promised Land that God had set apart for His people. The journey, though, would not necessarily be easy. Along the way, the people would need to lean into the faith that had got them to this moment to see them through to the next.

As the people were leaving, they did not have the full time to pack everything and prepare every ounce of food they would need along the way. Sure, they were not without food as they had brought their livestock which would serve as a source of meat, dairy, and other means of provision, but they were faced with the immediate thoughts that they would run out of food and water. So, in their fear and grumbling, they lost sight of what God was doing and cried as though they were defeated and dying. It was not a mere complaining, but rather an abandonment of the faith. They attacked Moses verbally, once again, since he was serving as God's prophet and the one that had brought them into this mess to begin with. He was the one who brought them out of Egypt into the desert and it was the desert where they would all collectively die as a people.

They clamored for Egypt where at least they could die with their physical bellies full. Death to them was inevitable so why not die in the comfort of physical and earthly pleasure. Physical comfort was not God's objective, though, rather spiritual fulfillment. God sought to fill their spiritual hunger and thirst instead of the physical. God would provide for His people, but He would do so as He always did. His provision would serve as a sign and symbol that God is Sovereign and He alone provides salvation and redemption.

Thus, Moses was given the words to give the Israelites and the instructions on collecting the manna from the earth and water from the stone. Manna would be provided for them as a kind of bread and water would spring forth from a stone that Moses struck with the rod that parted the sea. The people were to take only what they needed for that day and nothing more. To hoard the food would demonstrate a lack of faith that God would provide. Every step the people took would be taken in reliance on God's provision.

While many have sought to explain these phenomenon in terms of scientific explanations, these explanations must be viewed through a divine lens. It was not for a couple of people, or a hundred people, or thousands of people that manna rained from heaven, it was hundreds of thousands. This was the entire nation of Israel and there were enough rations to cover everyone. Furthermore, this would sustain them for forty years. While God may have used the physical, it was the spiritual that truly provided for the needs of the people. For

however much the people of Israel grumbled and rebelled against God, it was the mighty hand of God that sustained them and provided for them at each step they took.

Our Attitude During The Provision

The Israelites, though, were a fickle people. They were newly out of the Egypt, having witnessed God's hand guiding them through the desert with a pillar of fire and cloud. They had seen the miracle of God parting the sea for them to pass through safely. The plagues which ravaged the Egyptians had miraculously passed over the Israelites and though they were once slaves to an arrogant king, they were now free. All by the hand of God. It was unmistakably by God's provision and the Israelites knew it.

Yet, as the excitement of their departure from Egypt subsided, they returned to their day-to-day living (or at least to their new day-to-day in the desert). As they walked through the desert, the people began to fear that they would die due to their lack of food and water. This grumbling went beyond simple complaining but a rejection of their faith. They had seen everything God had done to preserve them as a people but rebelled against God accusing Him of dragging them out to the desert to die. Although they had seen and experienced the provision of God, they were malcontent in His sustaining grace.

We too, are a fickle people. We experience the presence of God on one day but feel as though the Lord has abandoned us entirely on the next. Our lives have put the fullness of God on display in the past, with the hand of God guiding our very step, but when the next moment of needing to trust arises, we are quick to abandon the God who has guided us every step so far. We revert to craving the lifestyle we had before our redemption, looking at it through the rose colored glasses of thinking "I was at least happy," when we know deep down that Christ redeemed us from our sin and death.

Faith is built when we can see the hand of God through our story. Our lives may only make sense when we look back on them. Often times, when we are in the middle of a difficult situation, a spiritual attack, or a worrisome event, finding God may become more difficult. But, we will clearly be able to trace His hand once we look back and see what good the Lord has done. The truth is that for whatever situation we find ourselves, God's provision is there just as it had been in the past. It may not always look like we want it to but God's promise is to never leave or forsake His people, no matter what fear or feeling we hold.

The Lord Will Provide For His Glory

Up until this point, the message from God to the Israelites was abundantly clear; their salvation and redemption would come from God and God alone. There would be no explanation for their circumstance and no credit they could take for their salvation. The same would be true for their provision. After all, it was God who was guiding them through the wilderness and the desert, and it would be God to provide for their needs.

Furthermore, these needs extended beyond the physical. Throughout the whole of the Exodus you see God very concerned that the people would immediately get discouraged and desire to return to Egypt (a truly omniscient God, indeed). Thus, as God poured out manna and water for the people, the provision was nothing short of a divine miracle. In their provision, there would be no questions as to where it came from. It came from the God who not only cared for them in Egypt, but also cared for them in the desert. It came from the God who would topple kingdoms and empires for His purposes. This God redeemed His people by His mighty hand and this God would continue to feed His people with spiritual food and drink.



We, too, are blessed to have a God who will provide for us on a regular basis. While our tendency may be to think we have done something to deserve this or we have earned it, this could not be further from the truth. No amount of “good works” or “righteous deeds” will suffice to say that God is compelled to provide for us. It is by grace and grace alone that God provides for our physical needs, our emotional needs, and, most importantly, our spiritual needs. Through the sacrifice of Jesus Christ on the cross, a thing we could not and did not earn, the path to our salvation was laid before us. This is our leading out of our former life towards the promise land that is a relationship with our Heavenly Father. This is the true blessing of our provision. God has provided for us.

Therefore, when we receive the provision of the Lord, we must remember that all the glory goes to God and God alone. In sharing the story of God providing, whether through miracle or through ordinary events, give glory to God. Things may not go exactly as we had anticipated them going and the provision of God may appear to be very different, but the hand of God upholds us at every step. During the times when we feel lonely and rejected, God is with us and has provided a companion. When we feel the burden of sin and temptation, God has provided a way out. When we feel the pressure of finances and obligations, we can rest in the Lord in faith, knowing that He has provided before and will continue to provide now.

God is faithful. More faithful than we will ever be. He is faithful even during the times we are not and His desire is to save His people. Whatever trails we may face, whatever difficulties we will endure, and whatever our circumstances bring us to, God will provide what we need. It may not always be the thing we want, but it will always be enough. With God, we have enough. He is our provider and protector and He guides us through the desert.

Discussion Questions

Read [Exodus 16:1 - 17:7](#)

1. What reason do the Israelites give for their grumbling and wanting to return to Egypt? What fear were they expressing in their desire to return to Egypt?
2. When the people brought their grumbings towards Moses, how did he respond to the people? What did he encourage the people to do? What was Moses’ role in serving the people as the Prophet of God?
3. As Moses brought the concerns of the people to the Lord, how did this display faith and trust in God?
4. Why do difficult times tend to make us forget our times where God has provided in the past? How do these moments test our resolve and display our faith?
5. How can we stand with one another during the times of difficulty and spur on each other’s faith? What role does community play in building faith?
6. When have you experienced a time when God provided a way for a need you had where you did not see a way was possible?

About the Author.

Pastor Daniel Burton lives in Ponte Vedra Beach, Florida. In May 2015, Daniel graduated from Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary with his Master of Divinity. It was here that he began to explore his passion for Theology and deeper exploration of the word of God. Daniel believes that, at its core, Theology should be fun. Check out more of his work at <http://thegospeloutpost.com>

