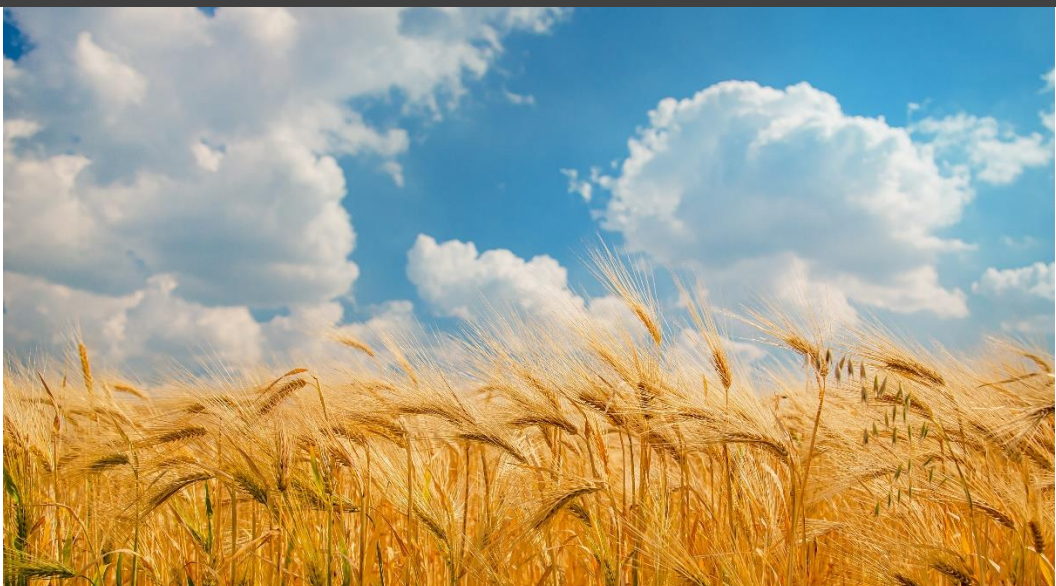


The Greatness Of God As Provider



Discovering God's Word
Bible Study Series

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Discovering God's Word Bible Study Series

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The Greatness Of God As Provider

Introduction

A. God is a great and awesome God! One of the ways His greatness can be seen is through how He provides for His creation.

B. Consider the trust Abraham had toward God as Provider in Genesis 22.

1. After God had made promises to Abraham that depended on Abraham having a son, God blessed Abraham with Isaac in his old age. Then, God tested Abraham's faith by telling him to offer Isaac as a sacrifice. Yet, Abraham went where and did what God instructed (vv. 1-3).

2. When Abraham arrived, he told those who traveled with him that he and the boy were going to worship God and they would return (v. 5). As Isaac questioned his father about what would be used for the sacrifice, Abraham told him that God would provide the lamb for the sacrifice (vv. 7-8). Then, after Abraham demonstrated his willingness to obey and God stopped the sacrifice, Abraham looked up and saw a ram caught in the thicket. He offered it as a sacrifice and named the place, "The Lord Will Provide" (vv. 12-14)!

3. Although Abraham did not know exactly how God would make everything work, he trusted God would provide – even if God had to raise Isaac from the dead (Hebrews 11:17-19)! He knew God would do whatever was necessary to keep His promises!

C. God is still the great Provider today (James 1:17). Every blessing in this life comes from Him. And, most importantly, every blessing available spiritually comes from Him.

D. Purpose: To learn how God provides physically, spiritually, and how He provides special care for His people.

1) God Provides For His Creation Physically

A. Psalm 104

1. Take a few moments to consider God's physical creation. This includes the universe (sun, moon, stars), the earth (atmosphere, positioning in the universe, tilt on its axis), the plants (sunlight, rain, carbon dioxide), animals (different climates, food, water), and people (clothing, shelter, food, water). Everywhere you look you can see God's bountiful provision for His creation *physically*. This is pictured in the psalm.

2. Notice how all the details matter to God. Everything has been perfectly designed so it can serve its God-given purpose on this earth. Although it would be impossible for mankind to design something so magnificent as this universe, God is perfectly in control and provides what is needed for it all!

- For example, God sends springs of water into the valleys so the animals can quench their thirst. He makes the grass grow so the livestock can eat and the crops so that people can eat. Even the powerful lions seek their food from God. And, He provides the proper dwelling places – such as the high hills for the goats and trees for the birds. There is nothing God has overlooked!

B. God's provision for the earth

1. It is amazing to consider all that God has taken into consideration whenever He created the earth and how He overlooked *nothing*!

- The earth has the necessary water to support life on it. The sun is the perfect size to give the necessary heat to the earth. The earth is the perfect distance from the sun and moon. The earth has the perfect magnetic field. The earth has the perfect tilt on its axis and spins at the perfect speed. Every detail is significant to understanding how God has provided for His physical creation!

2. Psalm 65:9-13.

C. God's provision for the animals

1. Consider all the animals God has created and how He perfectly provides for each one, with even the "little" details accounted for.

- Think about how each animal knows how to find the water it needs to survive, how each animal has a specific diet that can be found where it lives, and how each animal has some kind of

dwelling place. No matter how large or small the animal is, God provides for them all!

2. Psalm 147:9; Matthew 6:26.

D. God's provision for people

1. When God created mankind, He set him above all the earthly creation (Genesis 1:26-30). It only stands to reason that God would make the necessary provision for the people He created in His own image.

- Everything about the wonderful way God has created this earth functions perfectly for mankind to live on it. There is the right climate for people, sufficient water, and sufficient natural resources. Everything about the animals God has created and provided for helps to maintain an ecosystem that benefits mankind, as well as providing a source of food.

2. Psalm 145:15-16; Acts 17:28.

E. God is not the cause of pain, suffering, and death

1. A discussion of how God provides for His earthly creation often leads people to question how such a God can allow His creation to suffer in physical and emotional ways. You see, just as there should be no doubt that God does provide, there is also no doubt that pain, suffering, and death are real and that God's creation often does suffer in terrible ways!

- While we have focused on all that God does throughout this universe in a positive way to provide, what about things like famines, natural disasters, diseases, murders, abuses, wars, and other terrible things? Where is God as the great Provider then?

2. The answer is that He is still the great Provider and He hasn't gone anywhere! The fact is that pain, suffering, and death are *not* in the world because that was God's desire for His creation. Rather, such things are in the world because of sin (Genesis 3). And, even when things in this life are at their worse, we must remember two things. First, God is the one who continues to provide you with what is good about life. Second, God provides you with the only way to overcome all the pain, suffering, and death that are in the world because of sin!

2) God Provides For Mankind Spiritually

A. God has provided the sacrifice for sin

1. Genesis 1:26-27 demonstrates that mankind is not just a physical being. Rather, mankind has been created in the image of God (as a spiritual being). Therefore, whenever God provides for mankind, more than our physical needs must be considered.

2. Sin is the greatest problem mankind has ever faced or will ever face. Since mankind is a spiritual being, every person will continue to exist after physical death is experienced. Some will live eternally in the joys of Heaven and others will suffer the eternal punishment in Hell.

- Sin is the violation of God's law. It occurs when you fulfill your own desires rather than submitting to God. Sin either occurs when you do things God has told you not to do or when you fail to do the things God says you must do.

3. Sin results in separation from God (Isaiah 59:1-2). So, it is not God's fault that this separation exists. Instead, it is the consequence you earn by your sin (Romans 6:23). And, if your physical life ends when you are in sin, you will experience the eternal separation from God in the fires of Hell (Revelation 21:8).

- Please recognize that no person can solve the problem of sin by himself/herself. Sin creates such a huge separation between the sinner and God that no person can bridge the gap by himself/herself.

4. Thankfully, God provided the sacrifice necessary to save mankind from sin. His name is Jesus Christ (Romans 6:23; John 3:16; Romans 5:6-11)!

- The sacrifice of Jesus has provided all sinners with the opportunity to *not* perish in sin and experience God's wrath in Hell. This is God's mercy that offers forgiveness.
- The sacrifice of Jesus has also provided people with the opportunity to spend eternity in Heaven. This is the greatest gift God has provided for us (His grace).

B. God has provided all spiritual blessings

1. There are many spiritual blessings God has provided for people to enjoy through Jesus Christ (Ephesians 1:3-6).

2. These blessings are only provided to those who are in Christ (those who are Christians, who have been baptized into Christ – Galatians 3:27). These blessings include such things as the forgiveness of sins, adoption as children of God, salvation, peace with God, the assurance that God will hear your prayers, etc.

3. Without Jesus, you would be separated from these wonderful blessings. Yet, God (through Jesus Christ) has provided for you in these spiritual ways!

- Appreciate that these spiritual blessings help us deal with all the troubles of this life. For example, the hope we have in Christ serves as an anchor that keeps us from getting lost and drowning in the storms of this life (Hebrews 6:9). Furthermore, we can find peace and joy even through difficult circumstances, since we know that it will all work out for God's children in the end (Philippians 4:4-7)!

C. God has provided the perfect instructions

1. As you consider the wonderful opportunities God has provided all mankind to access every spiritual blessing, to not suffer eternally in Hell, and to experience eternal joy in Heaven, you also need to appreciate that God has provided you with everything you need to know to be saved.

- Without God, you would have no idea how to access the wonderful spiritual blessings and salvation He offers.

2. The gospel of Jesus Christ (the message contained in the New Testament) provides mankind with everything we need to know about living to please God and being forgiven of our sin so we can be saved (Romans 1:16)

3. God's word provides you with everything you need to believe, everything you need to change about your life, everything you need to know about making all those changes, and everything you need to equip you to live pleasing to Him (2 Timothy 3:16-17).

- Connected with this, God has also provided you with everything you need to overcome the devil and stay away from sin in the future. For example, God's word provides the example of Jesus and how He overcame the temptations of the devil (Hebrews 4:15), the promise that God will not allow you to be tempted beyond what you can endure and will provide a way out (1 Corinthians 10:13), and the promise of God providing spiritual armor to defeat Satan (Ephesians 6:10-18).

4. There is nothing you need for your spiritual life that God has not provided (2 Peter 1:3). The words God has revealed perfectly equip you to live for God and have eternal life in Heaven!

3) God's Special Care For His People

A. God provides special care for His people

1. Although God is the great Provider, recognize that God does not shield anyone from every bad thing that happens on this earth (as we have discussed). Still, there are some special ways God provides for those who are His people (those who are disciples of Jesus).

2. Consider some examples of God providing for His people in the past in a special way.

- God provided a way of salvation to Noah and his family whenever He determined to destroy the wickedness of mankind on earth through the flood (2 Peter 2:5).
- God provided deliverance to Lot and Lot's family when God punished the wicked cities of Sodom and Gomorrah they were living in (2 Peter 2:6-8).
- God provided for the Israelites during their time in the wilderness by providing manna for them to eat (Exodus 16:17-18).
- God provided for the prophet Elijah when he was told to hide in a cave by ravens bringing him food and drinking from the wadi (1 Kings 17:4-6).

3. Although these are just a few examples, Christians should take comfort in the fact that their Heavenly Father truly cares for them in a special way. There are some promises God has made concerning His provisions for His people that are simply not made concerning those who are not God's people.

B. Assurances the Christian does not have

1. There are some promises God has *not* made – even to Christians. These are important to understand so that no one becomes discouraged by such false expectations.

2. God does *not* assure the Christian He will provide for every want and desire. God does not guarantee earthly riches or an easy and comfortable earthly life. God also does not promise that all his/her earthly desires will be fulfilled. If these are your expectations, you will be greatly disappointed!

3. God does *not* assure the Christian He will provide protection from all pain, suffering, and death. Such things are in this world because of sin and everyone will experience them. Bad things will even

happen to good people. There are numerous examples in the Bible of such. If these are your expectations, you will be greatly disappointed!

C. Assurances the Christian does have

1. There are some assurances God has given to His people. Consider three ways God demonstrates His special care for those who are His people.

2. God promises to provide the necessities of life for His people. Although God generally provides for the physical necessities of His creation (even the birds and the grass), there is a promise only made to those who seek God's kingdom and righteousness first (Matthew 6:33). This promise relates to having the basic necessities of life (clothing, food, and drink; Philippians 4:19).

3. God promises that He cares for and will hear the prayers of His people. The prayers of the righteous are said to be powerful in their effect and that God hears such prayers (James 5:16; 1 Peter 3:12). Therefore, God's people can find comfort in knowing that God cares about whatever they are going through and that they can always cast their cares and anxieties on God and experience peace (1 Peter 5:7; Philippians 4:6-7).

4. God promises to provide salvation to His people. No matter what happens to you on this earth, God promises that everything will work together for the good (spiritually) for those who love and faithfully serve Him (Romans 8:28). Nothing and no one can separate you from God and the salvation He offers, though you must be faithful to Him (Romans 8:37-39; Revelation 2:10).

Conclusion

A. How great is our God who provides! There is nothing His creation needs that He has not provided!

B. Let us all properly respond to God's greatness as Provider. Those who devote themselves entirely to God should take comfort in the promises He has made to take care of them – physically and (especially) spiritually!

Study Questions

How did God provide for Abraham in Genesis 22? What does God provide for people today?

1. God Provides For His Creation Physically

What does Psalm 104 demonstrate about God's provision for His physical creation?

What does God provide for the earth?

What does God provide for animals?

What does God provide for people?

If God is the great Provider, how do you explain pain, suffering, and death?

2. God Provides For Mankind Spiritually

What has God provided in response to sin?

What spiritual blessings has God provided?

What has God provided to instruct people how they should live?

3. God's Special Care For His People

Does God provide special care for His people? Provide some examples.

What are some assurances the Christian does *not* have?

What are some assurances the Christian *does* have?

