

Supernatural Provision

Genesis 22:13,14 "...Then Abraham looked up and saw a ram caught by its horns in a thicket. So he took the ram and sacrificed it as a burnt offering in place of his son. Abraham named the place *Yahweh-Yireh* (which means 'the Lord will provide'). To this day, people still use that name as a proverb: 'On the mountain of the Lord it will be provided'."

1 Kings 17:5 "...So he did what the Lord had told him. He went to the Kerith Ravine, east of the Jordan, and stayed there. The ravens brought him bread and meat in the morning and bread and meat in the evening, and he drank from the brook."

(verses 15,16) "...She went away and did as Elijah had told her. So there was food every day for Elijah and for the woman and her family. For the jar of flour was not used up and the jug of oil did not run dry, in keeping with the word of the Lord spoken by Elijah."

These three passages reveal certain principles regarding **God's provision** in tough times. Our opening extract finds Abraham being provided with a substitute sacrifice, in place his son Isaac. In 1 Kings 17 we find Elijah being fed by ravens and a widow being sustained with oil and flour that would not cease. All of these occurrences are evidence that God can (and will) **supernaturally provide** for His people. God loves to intervene when we are in trouble or in need! There are six principles contained in these stories that are applicable to us today. So let's examine them closely with a view to receiving supernatural provision from the Lord today – "Jehovah-Yireh" our **Provider!**

First principle – Everything starts with listening to God. "Then the word of the Lord came to Elijah." In order for God to provide, we need to have two things operating. We need to listen and obey. Before you can obey, you need to be able to know exactly what God desires of you. Knowing what God desires of you involves 'listening' to God. It is having an intimate relationship with the Creator of the Universe. Interacting with your heavenly Father cannot just be a once in a while thing. It has to be ongoing, moment-by-moment. You need to have your ears tuned to the Lord. It is in this ongoing intimate relationship that God makes His will known. But once you **hear** from God, you need to **obey** Him.

Second principle – God's provision is preceded by obedience. Elijah **obeyed** God in declaring the famine. He **obeyed** God by walking in faith and following God's direction. If Elijah had not gone to the place where God had directed him, he would have missed God's provision. He could not have been fed by ravens or had the source of water that was supplied by the brook. What's more, if Elijah had not been **obedient** and followed God when the brook ran dry, then he would never have met the widow and God could never have supernaturally intervened in her situation. Notice also, the obedience demonstrated was not an action executed by Elijah on his own. The widow also **obeyed** God at the risk of starvation.

Another astounding act of **obedience** can be found in Genesis 22. "Abraham bound his son Isaac and laid him on the altar, on top of the wood. Then he reached out and took the knife to slay his son. But the angel of the Lord called out to him from heaven, 'Abraham! Abraham!' 'Here I am', he replied. 'Do not lay a hand on the boy', he said. 'Do not do anything to him. Now I know that you fear God, because you have not withheld from me your son, your only son'."

God instructed Abraham to go into the land of Moriah, which is the name of a hill in Jerusalem where Solomon subsequently built the Temple. However, Abraham must have known that he needed to hear from God during his journey, and he did. Obedience draws you to a place where you can continue to hear God's voice. There were three days and three nights between the time Abraham was told to sacrifice his son and the time he actually arrived at the place of sacrifice. Every step moving toward Mount Moriah must have been a sacrifice. Imagine what went through Abraham's mind when he took the journey. God never told him he would save his son, but Abraham went ahead as God had commanded anyway.

During this time God must have told Abraham the exact place to go. Whether this happened on the first night before he left for Moriah, or during the journey, is not made clear. However, it was after Abraham had already committed himself that he received specific direction from God. **Obedience brings direction!** The journey of three days and three nights needed three major personal requirements: **time, energy and faith.**

"Abraham saw the place from afar off." God does not reveal His destiny for us all at once but graciously allows us to see it from a distance (as we walk by faith). During these three days there is no recorded conversation between Abraham and God. God had spoken and Abraham had to move ahead in faith. When your focus is on God, your provision is always in sight. The wonderful thought is that God had prepared the provision (the ram) before Abraham left to go to Moriah. So wherever God tells you to go, He has already

prepared the necessary provision to meet your need. You'll never have a need that has not already been met by the Lord. However, you can only find the provision if you obey His instructions.

Third principle – God's provision is a distinct location. "...Then God said, 'Take your son, your only son, Isaac, whom you love, and go to the region of Moriah. Sacrifice him there as a burnt offering on one of the mountains I will tell you about'... When he had cut enough wood for the burnt offering, he set out for the place God had told him about. On the third day Abraham looked up and saw the place in the distance... When they reached the place God had told him about, Abraham built an altar there and arranged the wood on it... Abraham named the place *Yahweh-Yireh* which means the Lord will provide (Genesis 22:2-14)." Abraham wasn't told to go to just any region or any mountain. He was to travel to a place God had told him about; a place that he could recognise from a distance; a place of sacrifice. Also, Abraham started with limited knowledge. God gave him first the region, thereafter the mountain, and finally the 'exact place'.

Obedience will always lead to a God ordained **destination**. After you have 'listened' and 'obeyed', you should end up at a specific location (a place where God has told you to go). Abraham was told to go to a very definite place. It wasn't until he got there that God miraculously provided. If Abraham was just a couple of steps away from this pre-determined destination he would have missed God's provision. Note also, Abraham called Jehovah-Jireh **a place**. And it was the very place where his **obedience** had led him to. The same rule applied to Elijah, "So he did what the Lord had told him. He went to the Kerith Ravine, east of the Jordan, and stayed there." As with Abraham, Elijah was given clear and concise directions to where God wanted him to go. Had Elijah not reached his specified destination the birds would have had no one to feed! Every time you are obedient to God's voice you have the right to say 'this is a place of abundant provision' - a place where God Himself manifests as Jehovah-Jirah.

Forth Principle – God's provision comes in numerous ways. God sometimes works using the natural, and sometimes the supernatural. God is capable of providing in ways far beyond what your mind can even imagine. With Elijah God first used "natural provision". He provided by means of ravens and a stream. Yet, the time-span was limited. When that provision ran dry, God led Elijah to a place where He would provide supernaturally - in response to his obedience. It is interesting to note that when God provided for Elijah supernaturally, he did so in a way that blessed not only Elijah but others as well. The Lord's supernatural interventions are not just for the needs one individual. When God gives supernaturally, it is intended to be used beyond self-interest. His miraculous provision is always done in order to bring Himself glory and demonstrate His love to others.

It is interesting to note, that even in the midst of God's supernatural provision events occurred that we're both tragic and traumatic. The widow's only son became sick and died. Neither the widow nor Elijah understood why (in the midst of God's supernatural provision) such suffering was allowed. The widow thought that God must be upset because of some sin she had committed. However, Elijah's response was to cry out genuinely to God as to why and plead for the child's life to be returned. Consequently, God did restore the child's life. But it was something beyond their understanding. God had intervened for His glory. God's love, His word and His provision can never return empty, even in circumstances we do not understand. There will be times after exercising obedience, even when we've received divine intervention that matters may go beyond human understanding. But God is always at work, and He will do it any way He chooses. When it comes to provision you cannot put God in a box. He will find a way to provide for your need that is totally astounding!

Fifth principle – God is the source of abundant life. Ultimately, God restoring the child's life really demonstrates that God is the source of life itself. Yes, He provided the oil and flour for God is the source of all blessings. In the Bible, oil has frequently been used in connection to the Holy Spirit and bread in connection to the word of God. We are led and fed by the Holy Spirit and by the Word of God. Therefore, in our relationship with God, both these elements sustain us every day. When walking in genuine response to God's love and reflecting that love to others, the Holy Spirit and God's Word will never run dry. They are fuel for living and interacting with God. God brings us new life. And however God chooses to provide in our lives (and for whatever period of time), we must remember that God is the source of all life – "zoe". Jesus said that He has come to give us life, and to give us a life that is super-abundant! If you do not believe that God is your **source** you'll never have your needs met. And this awareness can only begin if you believe that He is the 'source of life'.

Sixth principle – God's provision matches each individuals need. Scripture is filled with God providing at an equivalent to what the need is at that moment in time. God's provision is never over and above what is needed, but rather exactly what is needed, when it's needed. In the stories we've just examined, God's provision was in line with what they needed in that specific situation. The same was true for Israel in the wilderness. God gave them what they needed, when they need it! Too often people expect God to provide in ways over and above their actual needs. The view is that obedience brings prosperity. Yet, biblically the

example is that **obedience** results in supernatural **provision**. And like the gifts of the Holy Spirit - it is as He wills! I believe, God's provision is given freely during tough times, but He can also give blessings 'over and above'.

However, when God blesses He does so to bring glory to Himself. More often than not, what we expect is blessing in return for following God's call. But the blessings will come as God sees fit (according to His purposes), and in what ever measure He determines for that specific moment and situation. Often our response is to demand blessings to meet our identified needs and desires, rather than looking to what best serves God's will and purpose in our lives and the lives of those around us.

So in looking at those six principles, the basic foundation is that God **provides** in such a way that serves His will and purpose. We do not always understand or see what is going in the spirit at that moment in time. Therefore, we can easily get wrapped up in "self" and even expect what is beyond God's intentions. So remember, He works in ways that we do not always understand. When God gets involved supernaturally, it is for His greater purpose with scope beyond the interests of one individual. Everything starts and stops with God. It is so important to stay in the moment and continue to be in intimate relationship with God, **obeying** and following His lead.

God will provide. What we need to do is respond in obedience and keep focused on God - above our own wants and needs. It is a walk of faith in circumstances where we don't always see a way out. It is an attitude that will compel us to give our last meal. It is an attitude even of receiving 'sacrificial giving' from others. Asking a widow to give all that she has left would be difficult to walk in obedience to, yet both Elijah and the widow obeyed. And God miraculously provided at their time of need. Yet, in their obedience suffering still occurred. But God turned death into life. And He continues to do so in our day-to-day lives. God is the same yesterday, today and forever!