



“What is it?”

1

SCRIPTURE

- Then the LORD said to Joshua, “Today I have rolled away the reproach of **Egypt** from you.” So the place has been called **Gilgal** to this day. (Joshua 5:9 NIV)
- On the evening of the fourteenth day of the month, while camped at **Gilgal** on the plains of Jericho, the Israelites celebrated the **Passover**. (Joshua 5:10 NIV)
- The day after the Passover, that very day, they ate some of the **produce** of the land: unleavened bread and roasted grain. (Joshua 5:11 NIV)
- The **manna** stopped the day after they ate this food from the land; there was no longer any manna for the Israelites, but that year they ate of the produce of Canaan. (Joshua 5:9–12 NIV)

2

INTRODUCTION



- How many here tonight are wondering where your next meal will come from?
 - Vegetables from your garden?
 - Groceries you haul home from the store?
 - Something on the restaurant menu that looks good to you?
- Until recently, these were about the only choices most of us had, meal-wise.
- Until, that is, the advent of **meal-kit delivery** services.

3

INTRODUCTION



- Once the domain of those trying to lose weight, **gourmet meal kits** have become a hot little corner of the food industry.
- Trading under names like **Blue Apron** and **HelloFresh**, these companies offer subscribers a box of fresh ingredients each week that they can use to whip up their own gourmet meals at home.
- Open box. Follow recipe. Dig in.

4

INTRODUCTION



- Rapid delivery services like **UPS** and **FedEx** are key to the success of these enterprises.
- So is an ingenious plastic sack of frozen goo that sits inside a shiny foil “space blanket,” transforming the humble cardboard carton into a **single-use disposable cooler**.
- Once you have a subscription to one of these services, the **food cartons** show up each week like clockwork.
- You don’t have to order them — although most services do allow for some substitution options. The boxes just come.

5

BREAD FROM HEAVEN



- One day, long ago, the **Hebrews**, recently freed from slavery in Egypt and at the point of starvation in the wilderness, woke up to find bread from heaven!
- They called it **manna**, and like the Blue Apron boxes, it came on a regular basis — not once a week, but every morning! This went on for years!
- But without fail, each **daily delivery** included a fine, flaky substance that was like coriander seed, white, and the taste of it was like wafers made with honey (Exodus 16:30).

6

BREAD FROM HEAVEN



- There was no shipping box, no **freezer pack**, no **insulating liner**.
- The **manna** arrived on the ground fresh, like shimmering morning dew.
- Its shelf life was limited to **one day**, so there was no stockpiling it for the future.
- But who among them was concerned about that, when the Lord delivered a **fresh supply** each day with double rations on the day before the Sabbath?

7

BREAD FROM HEAVEN

- It’s remarkable how often the **Lord** sends us just what we need, when we need it.
- It was true for the ancient Israelites then, and it remains true for us today.
- God’s **provision** is always there to help His people on their way to the Promised Land.

8

BREAD FROM HEAVEN

- Some Bible scholars have tried, over the years, to figure out what manna was.
- There are all kinds of **theories**.
 - Some say it was the secretions of certain insects;
 - others, tree sap;
 - still others, a sort of edible fungus that sprang up during the night.
- The bottom line is, nobody really knows. To the authors of the Bible, it's a **miracle** — which is probably all we need to know.

9

GIFT OF THE ELVES



- There's a substance in J.R.R. Tolkien's fantasy trilogy, *The **Lord of the Rings***, that functions very much like biblical manna.
- Tolkien, of course — a **professor** of ancient literature at Oxford — was a deeply religious man.
- When faced with the problem of explaining what **food** the hobbits Frodo and Sam would find to eat as they crossed the land called Mordor ...
- Tolkien invented a kind of **mann**a they carried with them, a gift of the elves.

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GIFT OF THE ELVES



- It's called **lembas**, a magical bread.
- As durable as hardtack, but tastes far better.
- Lembas cakes would **keep** for many months, as long as they stayed wrapped in a certain magical leaf.
- Even a **bite or two** was enough to sustain a weary pilgrim for a whole day.

11

GIFT OF THE ELVES



- However, **Lembas** was a food for the righteous.
- Those who are evil — like the dark and twisted soul, **Gollum** — find the taste of lembas offensive.
- Gollum refused to eat the lembas cake even when faced with starvation.

12

DIVINE PROVIDENCE

- What we're talking about here tonight, in theological terms, is called "**providence**."
- It's not a word you hear so often anymore — unless you're talking about the **capital of Rhode Island**.
- In fact, the city of **Providence, Rhode Island** was given its name by **Roger Williams** and his followers who were being run out of the Massachusetts Bay Colony and into the wilderness found a place of provision.
- This was a place where not only they could serve God, but also have plenty of game in the forest and fish in the streams, which was like **manna** for them.

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DIVINE PROVIDENCE

- Has anyone ever had **times when you we felt trapped by dire circumstances**?
 - Lost your job.
 - Failed relationship.
 - Sickness, or injury.
 - Locked your keys in the car.
- But then, we find **God is close at hand, guiding our circumstances**, and we **discover** that we have what we need, after all.

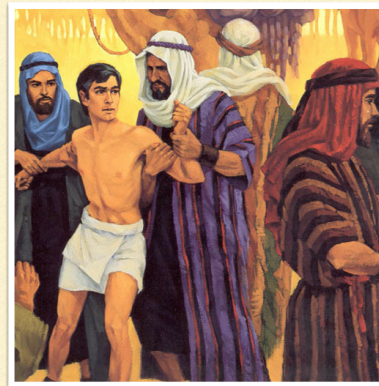
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DIVINE PROVIDENCE

- Such experiences are our **manna moments**.
- They may not always seem so at the time — but, later on, with a little distance to reflect back on the **situation**, a pattern of God's loving care emerges.
- We come to see the **providential hand of God** active in our lives in the most remarkable ways.
- When that happens, the place we once imagined to be **wilderness** turns out to be a place of blessing after all.

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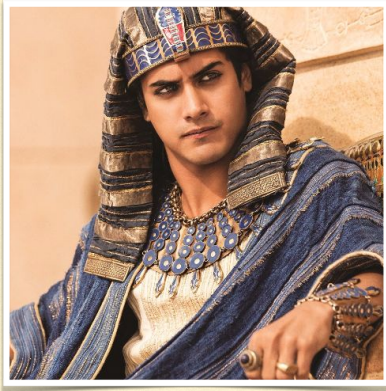
THE STORY OF JOSEPH



- There is no other story of God's **Providence** at work than what we find in the story of Joseph.
- **Sold into slavery** by his jealous brothers, Joseph finds himself in Egypt.
- While rising to the place of honor in a high ranking Egyptian's household, he is **betrayed** and ends up in prison for a crime he didn't commit.

16

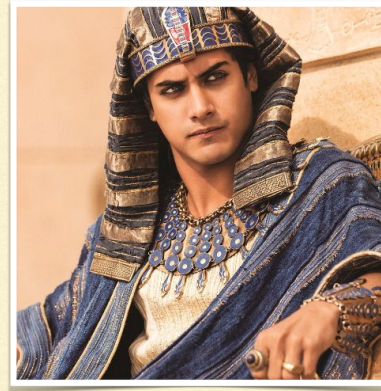
THE STORY OF JOSEPH



- Due to his **ability** to interpret dreams and overall wisdom, Joseph rose to a place of importance in Egypt—managing all of Pharaoh's affairs.
- This included the distribution of grain as both Egypt and Canaan were going through a **great famine**.
- Which by the way, brought **Joseph's brothers** to Egypt in search for food.

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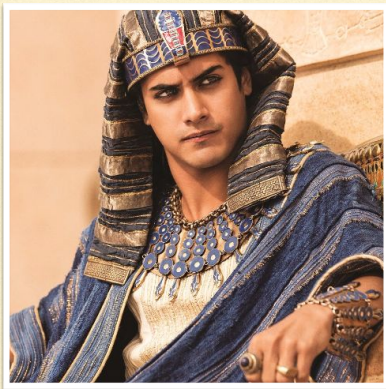
THE STORY OF JOSEPH



- When Joseph's brothers come to purchase grain the very person they meet is **Joseph**.
- Joseph recognizes them but they don't recognize him.
- Accusing them of being **spies**, he sends them back to retrieve their little brother, which they reluctantly do.
- When they return with **Benjamin**, Joseph plants a silver cup among Benjamin's baggage and then arrests him for **stealing**.

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THE STORY OF JOSEPH



- Joseph's brothers are overwhelmed with **grief** and Judah offers himself to be Joseph's slave.
- No longer able to control himself, Joseph breaks down and **weeps** so loudly that everyone in his household compound hears him.
- Then he says one of the most **profound statements** in the Bible—especially as it relates to what his brothers did to him and to God's Providence.

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As for you, you meant evil against me,
**but God meant
it for good,**
to bring it about that many people
should be kept alive, as they are today.

GENESIS 50:20

Faithful

20

GOD'S PROVIDENCE

- God knew a **famine** was coming so he raised up a son of Jacob by the name of Joseph to bring salvation to the whole earth.
- But this man was **persecuted** by his brothers and sold into slavery where in Egypt he was **treated poorly** even though he was blameless and full of integrity.
- However, because of his wisdom and unique opportunities that God provided, he gained the position of **second in command** and managed to save both Jews and Gentiles.
- In the same way, **Christ** was sent by God who now stands at the right hand of the father offering salvation to all men, both Jews and Gentiles.

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GOD'S PROVIDENCE

- **God's sovereign** will always achieves its purpose.
- With this in view, not all **setbacks** are truly setbacks.
- God may be repositioning us to get us out of **potential problems** that are threatening our long-term well-being.
- In other words, God may mess with our **comfort level** at times so that he can put us in a better position, not only for us personally but for everyone around us.

22

GOD'S PROVIDENCE

- Not to say or to imply all **problems** are ordered by the Lord.
- We live in a **sin-cursed world** where bad people do bad things and chaos in one form or the other often endangers our peace and well-being.
- Nevertheless, the Bible says, . . .
- ***In all things, God works for the good of those who love him, who have been called according to his purpose.*** (Romans 8:28 NIV)

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GOD'S PROVIDENCE

- In Romans 8:28, the Bible does not say,
 - all our **circumstances** work for our overall good, or everything that happens, happens for a good reason.
- Instead it says . . .
 - **In all things**, God works His grace—especially to those who are called of God and carrying out His will.
 - Meaning that no matter what is happening in our life **God's Divine Providence** with an appropriate form of manna will come to help and sustain us.
 - Why? **Because His eye is on the sparrow!**

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SUMMARY

- I don't know if you know this or not but **God** has a pretty good eye.
- He can see things that we can't.
- In other words, He can **anticipate** when we are going to need His grace and have it **ready** for us when we come to that point.
- In fact, the word *providence* is Latin for "to see ahead."
- This is why we do not need to babble like the pagans because our **heavenly father** already knows our needs. [See Matthew 6:7-8]

25

SUMMARY

- Therefore I tell you, do not worry about your life, what you will eat or drink; or about your body, what you will wear. Is not life more important than food, and the body more important than clothes? (Matthew 6:25 NIV)
- Look at the birds of the air; they do not sow or reap or store away in barns, and yet your heavenly Father feeds them. **Are you not much more valuable than they?** (Matthew 6:26 NIV)
- Who of you by worrying can add a single hour to his life? (Matthew 6:27 NIV)

26

SUMMARY

- But seek first his kingdom and his righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well. (Matthew 6:33 NIV)
- Therefore do not worry about tomorrow, for tomorrow will worry about itself. Each day has enough trouble of its own. (Matthew 6:34 NIV)

27

CONCLUSION

- Early in the spring of 1905, **Civilla Martin** and her husband were visiting Elmira, New York.
- There they made a deep friendship with a couple by the name of **Mr. and Mrs. Doolittle**, true saints of God.
- Mrs. Doolittle had been bedridden for almost twenty years.
- Her husband was an incurable cripple who had to propel himself to and from his business in a wheel chair.
- Despite their **afflictions**, they lived happy Christian lives, bringing inspiration and comfort to all who knew them.

28

CONCLUSION

- One day while they were visiting with the Doolittles, Mr. & Mrs Martin commented on their **bright hopefulness** and asked them for the secret of it.
 - The Martins put their **simple secret** to a poem and later Charles Gabriel put it to music where it has become a Christian classic.
 - Tonight, as we close our service, let us allow the **truths** of this hymn of God's Divine Providence minister to our soul and bring us hope that if God is for us, who or what, can be against us.
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