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The Provision of God

Watch the video Ep. 5 The Holy Land by John A. Beck prior to this study.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xmvhP5KzDNQ&list=PLPOUA7GLxXIGkhikntfiT4ida1IKbSNNB&index=6&t=0s>

Opening:

1. Perhaps you pause to thank God for every meal that you receive.
2. Many of you are quite aware that we would have nothing were it not for God's gracious provision.
3. James wrote, "Every good thing given and every perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father of lights, with whom there is no variation or shifting shadow" (1:17).
4. God has given us much more than our food and there are so many things for which we need to be thankful.

Into the Text:

1. In Gen. 22 God called upon Abraham to take Isaac, the son whom he loved, and offer him as a burnt offering on Mount Moriah. When they arrived at the place Isaac observed that they had the fire and the wood, but no lamb for the burnt offering. Abraham said, "God will provide for Himself the lamb for the burnt offering my son" (Gen. 22:8). When Abraham was about to slay Isaac, "behold a ram caught in the thicket by his horns; and Abraham went and took the ram and offered him up for a burnt offering in the place of his son. Abraham called the name of that place, YHWH-jireh (pronounced: Yah-weh-yer-AY), "The Lord Will Provide"' (Gen. 22:13-14).



Artwork from the British Museum depicting ram caught in thicket.

Photo by W. Galloway

2. "Bethlehem" means "house of bread." God provides both the bread for physical life (Matt. 6:11) and the Bread of spiritual life (Jn. 6:32-35). Each time we partake of the Lord's Supper we are reminded that we are sharers together in the one bread, the true bread of life (1 Cor. 10:16). Interesting that Bethlehem, a place known for providing physical bread, is the place chosen by God for the birth of the true Bread of Life.

Lyrics

I am the Bread of life,
He who comes to Me shall not hunger,
He who believes in Me shall not thirst.
No one can come to Me
Unless the Father draw him.
And I will raise him up,
And I will raise him up,
And I will raise him up on the last day.
The bread that I will give
Is My flesh for the life of the world,
And he who eats of this bread,
He shall live for ever,
He shall live for ever.
And I will raise him up,
And I will raise him up,
And I will raise him up on the last day.
Unless you eat
Of the flesh of the Son of Man
And drink of His blood,
And drink of His blood,
You shall not have life within you.
And I will raise him up,
And I will raise him up,
And I will raise him up on the last day.
I am the Resurrection,
I am the Life,
He who believes in Me
Even if he die,
He shall live for ever.
And I will raise him up,
And I will raise him up,
And I will raise him up on the last day.
Yes, Lord, we believe
That You are the Christ,
The Son of God

Who has come
Into the world.
And I will raise him up,
And I will raise him up,
And I will raise him up on the last day.

Source: Musixmatch

Songwriters: Talbot John Michael

I Am the Bread of Life lyrics © Universal Music - Mgb Songs, Universal Music - Brentwood Benson Publ., Birdwing Music, Universal Music Mgb Songs, Universal Music Brentwood Benson Publishing

3. Mahir, the Greek Orthodox guide on the video, spoke of his history as a Bethlehemite living in the city of Bethlehem and how much this meant to him. But, as the Israel of God (Gal. 6:16), we have historical connection to Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, David and the whole history of our people Israel.

We have recently studied the book of Acts. Luke wrote his first volume, The Gospel of Luke. His second volume was the book of Acts. We are part of a third volume describing the Acts of God among us as we serve in the accomplishment of His purpose. Do you see your personal history as deeply rooted in the history of God's Acts among His people? What does this mean to you? Identity? Belonging? Value? An object of God's provision?

Are you walking in such "historical depth?"

We are the oldest and most holy church in the world (Heb. 12:22-24).

4. Mahir said, "Traditions keep us closest to our ancestors and the Bible."

What role do traditions play in keeping us close to our biblical heritage? Bible reading/study? Prayer? The Lord's Supper? Assembling together?

5. Mahir said, "If you don't have a history, you will not have a future."

The history that we have in the promises made to Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, David and our other ancestors provides for us a future. Without the provision of God there is no life! The eternal God, who is not limited by time, has provided in the past, provides now, and provides for the future.

6. John A. Beck said, "The birth of Jesus is inadequate to fix my relationship with the Father."

Paul wrote, "While we were still helpless, at the right time Christ died for the ungodly . . . God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were yet

sinners, Christ died for us . . . Having been justified by His blood, we shall be saved from the wrath of God through Him . . . We shall be saved by His life” (Rom. 5:6-10).

Thus, even though the birth of Jesus, as incredible as it is, is eclipsed by the life-giving power of His death in payment for the penalty of my sin. His birth is inadequate; His death is sufficient to fix my relationship with the Father.

Application:

1. Are you closer to the birth of Jesus or to His death? Are you more about celebrating His birth or His death?
2. Do you see yourself in this historical context that we have discussed? What does this mean to you?
3. What do you need to do in light of the birth AND death of Jesus?