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What God Does

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God Offers Salvation
by Elizabeth Turner Beall

Before creation, before the foundation of the world was laid (1 Peter 1:20), before time as we know it was set in motion, God determined the what, the why, and the whom of it all. In creating Earth and mankind, God knew we would be a sinful people (the whom and the why) and knew we would need a way of salvation ([the what](#)), something He could offer every human equally, if they chose to accept that offer.

God's purpose was to create a beautiful world and fill it with people to live in and care for that world, people who would reproduce and keep the world replenished with humankind, people who would know Him as God the Creator, and would want to worship and adore Him. To the people He would give commands for living on earth together, would give providential care, comfort and strength when life was hard (Psalm 23), and would offer the gift of salvation through His grace and mercy (Ephesians 2:8-9). But they (the people) would have to accept that gift and live their lives for Him [in order to](#) earn a greater reward after their lives were completed on earth, the reward of eternal life in Heaven with God (Romans 6:23b).

For God to offer the gift of salvation, there had to be some kind of sacrifice, but it couldn't be of the created animals that would be used by people for worship early on (those of the Old Testament). That sacrifice had to be extremely special, it had to be one of them—humankind. But if the people on the earth were always sinful (Romans 3:23), how could that be? Because that human sacrifice had to be perfect, without sin, without blemish of any kind, it had to be God in human form. And so, "in the fullness of time," when the time was right (Galatians 4:4-5), God the Son gave up His place in Heaven, took on

the form of a human, and came to live on Earth as our example of human perfection (Philippians 2:508). Yes, God the Son by the earthly name of Jesus, came willingly, but also was sent by God the Father (1 John 4:10) to be the sacrifice, a substitute (a propitiation: 1 John 4:10) for our sins, the sins of every single person that has ever lived, or will ever live.

God is love and wants our love in return. By offering His grace and mercy, by our receiving that gift of grace and mercy and being obedient in baptism (Acts 2:38), and by living our lives faithfully according to His Word—the Bible, we become a part of the group that is “foreordained” (1 Peter 1:20) or “predestined” (Ephesians 1:3-10), members of His kingdom/ body/church, set apart to live for Him. God knew when He made the plan that not everyone would choose to follow Him and His Son, to become members of that special group. Jesus even said in the Sermon on the Mount that “...the gate is wide and the way is easy that leads to destruction, and those who enter by it are many. For the gate is narrow and the way is hard that leads to life, and those who find it are few.” (Matthew 7:13-14).

God is love (1 John 4:8), and that love offers us salvation, hears and answers prayers, comforts, shows providential care, peace, and many other things not mentioned in this issue, that make life here on earth easier and more pleasant to live. Let us thank God for all He does for us daily, and let us continue to keep our eyes on the goal of Heaven and strive to take as many others with us as we can.



God, The Provider of All Comfort
by: Amanda Stephanus

If there is one thing humans have in common, it is the indisputable fact

we all have gone through some trials in our lives. Whether big or small, whether physical or spiritual, everyone faces challenges in this life. Job proclaimed, “Man who is born of woman is of few days and full of trouble” (Job 14:1). James spoke of the certainty of trials and our dispositions about them (James 1:2). As the saying goes, we’re either headed into a trial or coming out of a trial. However, as Christians, we know God provides all comfort to His children (2 Corinthians 1:3-4). If we desire comfort, we will only find it in God because nothing in the world can provide comfort the way He does. God comforts us in three ways: physically, emotionally, and spiritually. God doesn’t just think about us; He provides comfort for us physically through promises (Matthew 6:24-33), providence (Matthew 5:45), and precept or command (Acts 6:1-7).

Paul was cared for by the Philippian brethren (Philippians 4:15-16). They knew Paul was in need and made sure to help provide comfort or encouragement by caring for his physical needs. God also cares for us and provides comfort through a world that sustains us. We have medicine for ailments, food on our tables, the ability to build and live in homes, etc. God has provided us with everything we need. God also provides emotional comfort. It is my opinion that one of Satan’s most significant lies is convincing us we are alone, that no one knows what we are going through, or that no one truly cares about us. In 1 Kings 19, Elijah became discouraged, thought he was all alone, and by all accounts, had become depressed. This was even coming from the heels of watching God consume the water-drenched altar with fire! When Elijah told God to take his life (1 Kings 19:4), God comforted Elijah and told him he was not alone and that there were 7,000 who had not bowed down to Baal. Just like Elijah, we are not alone or on an island. God cannot physically wrap His arms around us, but He provided a family, the church, that can.

We should bear each other’s burdens (Galatians 6:2) and be there to comfort one another during difficult times. We know God provides for our physical and emotional needs during tribulations. Still, even more importantly, He provides for us spiritually. God offers spiritual comfort through His word. By studying and meditating upon God’s word, we know He has blessed us with all spiritual blessings (Ephesians 1:3). We can find comfort knowing that we have a way to escape sin (1 Corinthians 10:13) and we have a High Priest who understands the temptations we face (Hebrews 4:15-16). We also find spiritual comfort knowing we can endure anything we face because there is a promise of a home (John 14:1-3) and rest (Revelation 14:13). Knowing that God provides comfort in all facets of life is reassuring. It helps us, but that’s not where it ends. God comforts us so we can comfort others during their trouble. We need to make sure we use the benefits of God’s comfort to help those around us and to encourage others in their time of trouble.



Does God Really Answer Prayer

By Wilburta Arrowood

How can we question God with so many examples of answered prayers in scripture? On a personal basis we grow tired waiting for God's timing, and we forget Ecclesiastes 3:1-11 which tells us there is a time appointed for everything. That tells me God is in control and I just need to be patient. Consider how long Abraham had to wait for God to bless all nations through him! It was thousands of years before Jesus came and fulfilled that promise, but God kept that promise

[1John 5:14](#) assures us "This is the confidence which we have before Him, that, if we ask anything according to His will, He hears us". When we know his word and follow it we can be assured he hears us and if it is according to his will and in his timing our answer will be yes. We need to be patient. Hebrews 6:10-12 For God is not unjust so as to forget your work and the love which you have shown toward His name, by having served and by still serving the saints. ¹¹ And we desire that each one of you demonstrate the same diligence so as to realize the full assurance of hope until the end, ¹² so that you will not be sluggish, but imitators of those who through faith and endurance inherit the promises.

God does not always answer in the way we want or expect. Romans 5:3-4 tells us, "And not only this, but we also exult in our tribulations, knowing that tribulation brings about perseverance; 4 and perseverance, proven character;

and proven character, hope;” Thus, we might not want to pray for patience too often!

Sometimes God says no to our prayers. At times that is because of our selfishness. James 4:3 “You ask and do not receive, because you ask with wrong motives, so that you may spend it on your pleasures.” At other times is it because it conflicts with God’s plan for us. God told his own son no when he prayed that “this cup pass from me.” God did not take that horrible situation from Jesus because it was necessary for him to die on that cross for us.

We need to remember, God always answers our prayers in the way best for our well-being. We may not understand at the time, but God loves us and always wants what is best for us and he hears us when we pray.



God Gives Providential Care
by Alice Simmons

The “providence of God” requires the phrase “if and when the time is right for Him (God), us, and others.” Many times we pray when we are in dire straits, when our lives are in an upheaval, or we are desperately in need. Whatever the case may be, we want a direct response, immediately! Oftentimes, we lose our patience with God when answers do not come as quickly as we would like. We forget that God knows and sees all.

We forget that our belief/faith in Him requires our trust, our confidence in all that He has promised us. The idea or thought that God didn’t answer our prayers is not the way of our Heavenly Father; He answers ALL prayers. Once our requests have been made known to God, we must be patient, watchful, and

wait on God. But we must learn to accept the answers we receive. Prayers answered as “yes” are easy, but answers of “no,” “later,” or “something better” will take patience. They will be answered in God’s perfect timing. Remember, Romans 8:28 says, “And we know that for those who love God, all things work together for good for those who are called, according to His purpose.” God WILL answer. Consider that it might take weeks, or years. Be patient.

“When the fullness of the time was come, God sent forth His Son, made of a woman, made under the law” (Galatians 4:4). God always knows the right time. In Ecclesiastes 3, Solomon reveals the timing in the cycles of life. His care will come. Galatians 6:9 tells us, “And let us not grow weary of doing good, for in due season we will reap, if we do not give up.” Never give up. Be alert for times that might, or as Paul stated, “Perhaps” be God’s providential care.



Questions for discussion and/or meditation:

1. What other things does God do for us, besides the ones presented in this issue? Give book, chapter, and verse.
2. Why was it necessary to include a human sacrifice for our sins? Why did it have to be Jesus?
3. Discuss the ways God answers our prayers.

Ideas for Application:

1. Think about how friends and family have helped comfort you before. How can you use that to now help others who need comforting.
2. What are some other examples of people being comforted in scripture?
3. Discuss some prayers that have been answered for you in ways that were better than you expected. How did it change your life?
4. What are some scriptures you go to for comfort and strength?

Prayer suggestions:

1. Consider all the prayers God has answered in a positive way for you and thank Him for those answered prayers.
2. Consider prayers that God has said, “No,” and you realize how much better for you that was. Thank God for those.
3. If there are prayers that haven’t been answered as yet, thank God for those as well, knowing He will answer them when the time is right.

Find the words in the puzzle below:

ACCEPT	COMFORT	MANKIND	PRAYERS
ANSWERED	FAITH	NEED	PROPITIATION
BELIEF	FOUNDATION	OFFERS	PROVIDENTIAL
CARE	GIVES	PERHAPS	SACRIFICE
CHOOSE	LIFE	PLAN	SALVATION

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E R Z Q E N A C C E P T S Z K
X W A F N O C O M F O R T O O
N D G O S I H C C P L A N F X
O H Z U R T S C A D S Y P N D
I A B N E A P H L R R J X E Z
T M E D Y V A O I S E V E E S
A F L A A L H O F N F G M D W
I A I T R A R S E E F I O M T
T I E I P S E E G Z O V X F E
I T F O Z Q P O L M T E L P N
P H G N M L G A Q A Z S V S S
O D W L A I T N E D I V O R P
R O I N T E C I F I R C A S Z
P Y G J P D N I K N A M O M C
R Y D E R E W S N A H S E F N

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