

Providence Promised Provision

‘During his many appearances in summer stock in the role of Tevye in *Fiddler on the Roof*, Robert Merrill had learned to expect the unexpected. “One night on stage”, he said, “as I implored God to give me a replacement for my horse, which had lost its shoe, suddenly a small spotted dog walked onto the stage. I looked up again and added fervently, ‘Oh, God, please try again’.”

Maybe Merrill didn’t need another horse after all, or probably this dog hadn’t come by God’s design. But consider this situation. ‘Bill was sitting in his house during a torrential downpour. As the floodwaters reached the bottom of his front door, some friends came along in a rowboat and called to him to climb in. But Bill said, “No, I’m trusting in the Lord. I’ll be okay. I’m staying here”. The rain kept coming, and the floodwaters kept rising, until Bill was on the second floor, and then he was soon sitting on the roof. Along came a helicopter. The pilot dropped down a rope ladder and called to Bill to climb aboard. But Bill said, “No, I’m trusting in the Lord. I’m staying here”. The waters kept rising, and old Bill drowned. Arriving in heaven, Bill said to the Lord, “Lord, I just don’t understand it. I trusted in you, and I still ended up drowning”. And the Lord replied, “Well, Bill, I don’t understand it either. First I sent you a boat, and then I sent you a helicopter,

and you didn't take either one!"

So, what did Bill expect God to do to keep him from drowning? He must have imagined God would somehow supernaturally, miraculously, part the heavens and, like a Star Trek tractor beam, beam him out of his flooding house and set him down on a nice, safe, dry hillside nearby. Well, that would certainly be spectacular, but God, though often doing supernatural things, prefers to work through human beings. As mundane as we usually are. Why? Because, we're supposed to be His instruments on earth. We're supposed to be His hands and feet. To be those who work out His will, exercise His authority, wield dominion over this planet as He'd originally designed us to do before the devil hoodwinked us into handing it all over to that evil creature. As much as we do God's will, as His enemy agents fighting the devil behind his lines, in the enemy's temporary territory, we create beachheads and pockets of resistance to the devil's murderous schemes. For just one example, reread what the Lord taught about showing kindness and caring for the "least of these My brothers and sisters". Sure, the Lord could simply eliminate all poverty, suffering, pain and death in this current world, but humanity, in the long run, would have to undergo a different kind of suffering to mature our character to truly become the people of God, truly Christ Jesus' brothers and sisters, capable of ruling and reigning as His administrators over the whole planet, as Adam and Eve were supposed to be from the beginning of this age.

While it seems we're born with a stubborn streak of impatience, that always wants to take the easy way, every shortcut, and chide God for not jumping to respond to our every prayer, no matter how trivial and selfish, we forget that His ways are higher than our ways, and His thoughts are higher than our thoughts. So much higher they can't even be compared. His and ours are not even on the same measuring scale. Yet, because He created us in His image, our thought processes bear a clear resemblance to His, for all of us are His creatures. And those of us who obey Him, receive Lord Jesus' life into our very beings, become His actual children. When we do, we slowly but surely begin to recognize that His ways are always and forever, way, way better than ours. And that faith and trust in Him is always the best policy. We just have to lay aside our preconceived notions of how we think He should act. For we've just no idea of what's best for other people, let alone ourselves. He knows everything forwards and backwards, from ending to beginning, and everything in between. He knows what He's doing. How often can we honestly say the same about ourselves?

Last month, Israel was viciously attacked by evil hordes of people who call themselves Hamas. Though it caught Israel off guard, since it was a high holy day, God was not surprised. And while God is never the author or instigator of evil, because He is love and is the very opposite and antithesis of evil, because He is God, the famous verse Romans 8:28 declares: "And we know

that God causes everything to work together for the good of those who love God and are called according to His purpose for them”. Consider the current Gaza war. Thousands of Arabs living in areas called Palestine, have, since the war began, been dreaming. The Lord Jesus, has been appearing in the dreams of multitudes, and guess what, nearly all of them have given their lives to Him. They’re now saved. Unto eternal life. They’re now true brothers and sisters of all believers. So can good come out of Hamas’ vicious, ruthless attacks? Well, looks like their ranks of supporters are starting to thin as more and more of them join the ranks of the Family of God, the Church of Christ Jesus! What the devil meant for evil, God turns it around and brings forth great good out of it!! Everlasting life for those who had been on their way to hell!

Then the prophecies we just read from Ezekiel speak directly to the current conflict. For Edom and the Edomites were descendants of Esau, Jacob’s older twin brother. You know, the red-haired outdoorsy one who sold his firstborn birthright for a bowl of stew. Remember the Lord told Rebekah that in her womb were two nations, fighting each other, in Genesis 25? Well, they’re still fighting. What the Lord said of them in Ezekiel 35 is spot on, describing the visceral hatred that those Arabs, believing lies, have for Israel, who want nothing but the complete extermination of all the Jews. That’s what “from the River to the Sea” actually means. The useful idiots of our esteemed colleges and universities, supposedly the smart, bright, intelligent future of our nation, are the

most gullible, ignorant generation of Americans ever born! Deceived and being deceived, is how the Bible describes this generation of the last days. Reread Ezekiel 35 to see what becomes of those who hate God's people, Israel. And beware!

Last Thursday was Thanksgiving Day. While we all know it started with 53 surviving Pilgrims gathered with some 90 Native Americans in a feast of Thanksgiving to God for all His manifold blessings. Though other earlier worship services thanked God for His providence, that thanked Providence for His providence, in Virginia and Texas, etc., the one in Plymouth, Massachusetts set the standard and precedent for our national holiday. What is lesser known about that first Thanksgiving is the pivotal role of one of the Indians of the Pawtuxet tribe. This one Indian, Tisquantum, commonly known by the abbreviated, Squanto, was key to the Pilgrims' survival. For without him, it is unlikely that any of the would-be settlers would have been able to settle at all, other than in caskets in graveyards. Truly Squanto was God's instrument to ensure the success of this Providential Promise to raise up a new Christian homeland with liberty and justice for all.

It just so happened that in 1614 a group of unscrupulous Englishmen from the Jamestown, Virginia colony, "appeared off the coast of present-day New England, abducted Squanto—then probably in his 20s—and carried him to Spain along with several dozen other captives to be sold into slavery". Catholic theologian Damian Costello wrote, "For six weeks, Squanto lay bound in

chains in the darkness and filth of the ship's hold". Upon reaching Spain, at the slave market, Providence, as we know another name for God, intervened, directing some Spanish priests to buy him, rescuing him from servitude. They taught him the Christian faith and presumably, he was baptized. Somehow, by 1617 he had relocated to England, learned the English language and worked as a translator. Two years later in 1619, he was finally able to return to North America, only to find his tribal village deserted, for no one had survived a plague that struck them. He was the last of his tribe. Managing to join another tribe, the Wampanoag, he was told about the starving and desperate Pilgrims. It was now 1621, and barely half their original number were still living. Those wicked English he could have thought, who had abducted him across the ocean to Europe, responsible for his near life of slavery, now found himself fluent in their language! Who could blame him for leaving those pesky English to perish? Didn't they deserve it for all they had done to him and his now-extinct tribe? But no, he had become a Christian and he, a Roman Catholic, turned around, taught the Protestant Calvinists how to grow food, build shelters and survive. That year, their harvest came in, and as united peoples, Europeans and Native Americans, with great Thanksgiving to Providence, they all celebrated for three days! So you see yet again, God knows what He's doing! Trust King Jesus, even in your darkest hours, when all seems lost! Give Him everything, and be bound for Heaven!

