Evergreen Church

God's Provision

By John McCoury
Roan Mountain, Tennessee

"Then God said, I give you every seed-bearing plant on the face of the whole earth and every tree that has fruit with seed in it. They will be yours for food." Genesis 1:29 The point of this whole narrative is that God has made a marvelously complete provision for His creation. The world of nature is full of the most astonishing pieces of evidence of the care of God.

How is it that certain birds can fly with an unerring instinct halfway around the world and find a tiny pinpoint of land in the middle of the ocean, though this is the first time they have made the flight? How is it that bees can maintain the temperature of their hive within a variation of a few degrees, regardless of whether it is a hot summer's day or a cold winter's morning outside? How is it that certain varieties of spiders have learned how to capture bubbles of air and build nests underwater, bringing those bubbles down from the surface and thus creating tiny diving bells in which they rear their young? Who taught them to do a strange thing like that? But look at people. Look how apparently ill-equipped we are, with basically no instincts at all. We must be patiently taught everything all over again in each generation. If children are abandoned to the wilds, as sometimes through accidents they have been, their lives will be more beast-like than the beasts. They cannot even talk to one another. Isn't it humbling to realize that we could solve the problems of the earth by removing one species: Homo sapiens? If something happened tomorrow to remove humans from the face of the earth, it would not be long until the skies would clear and the stars could be seen at night, the waters and rivers would run clear again, the forests would grow back on the denuded hillsides, and the earth would be restored to an orderly, balanced, beautiful kingdom. What is the problem? Humanity is the problem. Why is this? The Lord Jesus put His finger right on the answer when He said, '*Man does not live on bread alone, but on every word that comes from the mouth of God*' (Matthew 4:4). When God provided bread as people's basic food, bread made from the grains of earth, the seed-bearing plants and their fruits, He intended, as we have seen all through this account, that such physical bread would be a picture of the bread desperately needed at the spiritual level of people as well. That bread of the spirit is the understanding of God's will. I am the bread of life, said Jesus. "*He who comes to me will never go hungry. . . that eats of me shall never hunger"* (John 6:35). He will never walk in darkness; will never be at a loss to know what is the next step to take to solve the problems with which he is confronted; will not be left like a naked, homeless orphan wandering blindly through a mysterious universe whose forces he does not understand, but he will know where he is going and what he is doing and how to do it. The Son of God has come, and He gives us understanding. Lord, I hunger for the bread of the spirit. May that bread be my provision today as I seek to understand and do Your will. Isn't it humbling to realize that we could solve the problems of the earth by removing one species: Homo sapiens? How does God's provision of His Son enlighten us?

John McCoury is pastor of Evergreen church in Roan Mountain, Tennessee and also chaplain at Roan Highlands Nursing Center.

Sudoku

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Pleasant Hill Baptist Church

Blameless At His Coming

By Caron Cline
Burke County

Good news: Jesus is coming soon. We have heard this declaration our entire lives, yet most churches have stopped preaching it and most Christians have stopped believing it. Redemption seems distant. Every generation of believers has believed they would experience the rapture but no generation has seen the fulfillment of Biblical prophecy as we have. Israel became a nation in 1948 which started the prophetic clock ticking toward the end of the Age of Grace. East Jerusalem was reclaimed and reunited in 1967. Technology is now in place for a one-world government, currency, and ruler. The mark of the beast for everyone in the world is now very possible. Earthquakes, wars, plagues, etc. are increasing exponentially.

2 Timothy 3:1-5 says: *"But mark this: There will be terrible times in the last days. People will be lovers of themselves, lovers of money, boastful, proud, abusive, disobedient to their parents, ungrateful, unholy, without love, unforgiving, slanderous, without self-control, brutal, not lovers of the good, treacherous, rash, conceited, lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God—having a form of godliness but denying its power. Have nothing to do with such people"*. Jesus is coming back for a pure bride; a bride who has made herself ready. (Revelations 19:7) The church today is largely unprepared. Believers are focused more on the storms of politics, inflation, health crises, climate change, and rising crime than they are on the face of Jesus. Because of this, the church is sinking fast. We have a responsibility and a mandate to remain alert, dressed, and ready for our bridegroom. Those in darkness should see a stark difference between our reactions to the chaos of this world and theirs. Judgment is coming to those who do not know the Lord and the church is not rising up with the message of repentance. We must become driven by eternity. Paul had evidently taught the believers at Thessalonica both the truths of the rapture and the second coming of Christ, known as the day of the Lord. There was a bit of confusion in the church and this letter was sent to bring clarity. Jesus will come someday for His bride and a day of judgment or tribulation will follow. Believers need not fear for we are not appointed for wrath, but for salvation. Only those who are saved during the tribulation will experience the terrible days described in the word of God. Those who are presently following Jesus may experience difficulties but not the wrath of God which is reserved for those who have rejected Him. In light of this, Paul offers some simple instructions for living in a manner worthy of our calling in these last days.

1. Abstain from sexual immorality (1 Thessalonians 4:3-7)
2. Love one another (1 Thessalonians 4:9-10)
3. Do not repay evil for evil—Never take revenge…. let the Lord handle it. (1 Thessalonians 5:15)
4. Rejoice always—Joy in the midst of difficult days always draws attention—point to Jesus. (1 Thessalonians 5:16)
5. Pray without ceasing—Wholly rely on the only One Who can either change the circumstances or provide the grace to endure them. Stay dependent. (1 Thessalonians 5:17)
6. In everything give thanks—be grateful for every blessing as well as every difficulty, realizing that the Lord is sovereign over everything that happens in our lives. Stand on His promise to use it for good. (1 Thessalonians 5:18)
7. Do not quench the Spirit—allow Him full access to every part of your life. It is the Holy Spirit Who provides the wisdom, discernment, and power to live this abundant and eternal life. If we purposely choose to live by the flesh as the citizens of this earthly kingdom do, we will forfeit the power necessary to shine the light of the glory of God which is our only real reason for remaining in this world. (1 Thessalonians 5:19)
8. Do not despise prophecies—line them up with God's Word, but be open to a prophetic word for your life from another believer. Be willing to step out in faith when that word comes. (1 Thessalonians 5:20)

The bride of Christ must live expectantly, intentionally, and confidently before a lost and dying world. Jesus really is coming soon! Come, quickly, Lord Jesus!

"Now may the God of peace, Himself, sanctify you completely; and may your spirit, soul and body be preserved complete, without blame at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. Faithful is He who calls you, and He also will bring it to pass". (1 Thessalonians 5:23)

Caron Cline is a follower of Jesus Christ who loves to teach the word of God. Her desire is to see every believer growing in the grace and knowledge of the Lord.

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Can a woman forget her sucking child, that she should not have compassion on the son of her womb? yea, they may forget, yet will I not forget thee. Isaiah 49:15