



God's Promises

FINDING THE COURAGE TO BELIEVE

JAMES CLINTON

(Deuteronomy 1:8-11)



Rain splashing against a windowpane can evoke many emotions—comfort in the face of natural forces or restlessness during the idle rainy days of childhood. When a drizzle turns into a downpour and deafening thunder shakes the windows, people often become fearful.

Inevitably, the storm subsides and a ray of sunshine breaks through the clouds. A bright, multicolored rainbow may even appear. The rainbow stands as a reminder of God's faithfulness, that He will keep His promises. The rainbow first appeared to Noah centuries ago when God promised that He would never again destroy the earth with a flood: "This is the sign of the covenant which I make between Me and you. . . . I set My rainbow in the cloud. . . . It shall be, when I bring a cloud over the earth, that the rainbow shall be seen in the cloud; and I will remember My covenant" (Gen. 9:12-15).

THE FOUNDATION OF A PROMISE

A promise is essentially a guarantee that something will happen. A promise is only as good as the person who makes it, however. A person who has broken promise after promise cannot be trusted.

Most people try to keep their promises, but that doesn't always happen. They may forget or get distracted or change their minds. Some, of course, never intended to keep their promise in the first place. Sometimes they change their minds. In a world of broken promises, however, God's promises are certain. He never forgets; He never makes a promise He does not intend to keep; He never changes His mind.

Behind all the promises in Scripture stands our loyal, faithful God who can never lie (Num. 23:19). And He has proven

Himself true to His word again and again—whether it was His promise to provide Abraham with an heir (Gen. 15:4, 5; 17:15-22; 21:1-7) or to deliver the Israelites from slavery (Gen. 15:13-16; 50:24-26; Ex. 2:23-25; 3:7-10; 12:31-42). Because the estimated nearly three thousand promises recorded in the Bible are given by God Himself, we can be absolutely certain that they will come true.

GOD'S PROMISES TO HIS PEOPLE

Scripture holds two kinds of promises: *conditional* and *unconditional*. *Conditional* promises are those that will be fulfilled if the recipient does something. Leviticus 26:3-13 contains conditional promises. If the Israelites remained faithful to God and kept His commands, God promised to make their land fruitful.

Unconditional promises have no conditions attached. They will happen no matter what. The conditional promise mentioned above, that God would make the land fruitful if the Israelites obeyed, is couched in God's *unconditional* promise: God's covenant with Abraham, promising that his descendants will become a great nation and that all the families of the earth will be blessed through him (Gen. 12:1-3; 15:1-18). God didn't require anything from Abraham when He made that promise. Though the Israelites sinned against God and eventually faced defeat and captivity, God always preserved a remnant of faith-

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ful people. Eventually, of course, Abraham's descendant, Jesus Christ, fulfilled the promise as He became a blessing to the entire world.

God's ultimate unconditional promise is that "whoever calls on the name of the LORD shall be saved" (Joel 2:32; Rom. 10:13). To guarantee this promise of salvation, God gave His Son, Jesus, to die for our sin. This unconditional promise of salvation to those who believe forms the basis of God's new covenant with humanity and of all His other promises (Heb. 8:7-12). God also promises His presence with His people. Jesus told His followers, "I am with you always, even to the end of the age" (Matt. 28:20).

From the beginning, God wanted to make a certain nation His own special people. He promised to make Abraham's descendants into a nation that would enjoy a special relationship with Him (Gen. 12:2, 3). At Mount Sinai, God even called the Israelites "My people" (Lev. 26:12). Through Christ's sacrifice on the Cross, God invites all people to join His family of faith (John 1:12; 1 Pet. 2:9, 10; 1 John 3:1, 2). "For all the promises of God in [Christ] are Yes" (2 Cor. 1:20). In Christ, all of God's promises to save are fulfilled (Is. 35:3, 4; Matt. 1:21; 1 Tim. 1:15). Out of every nation, God is calling people to be His children (Rom. 8:16, 17; Rev. 5:9; 7:9). Indeed, He promises us that no one can snatch us out of His Son's hand (John 10:28).

The Bible is filled with wonderful promises from God. Believers can call on God and fully expect Him to answer in marvelous ways.

STANDING ON GOD'S PROMISES

When the storms assault us, we may find it difficult to trust in what we cannot see, to believe in what God has promised. During those times, it takes courage to lean on the invisible God. I've had to do just that

throughout my life—and very recently with the loss of my wife of fifty years. That's what the heroes of faith did (Heb. 11). In his lifetime, Abraham never saw the numerous descendants that God had promised (Gen. 15:4, 5), but he still believed in the God who made the promise because he knew that God was faithful.

Nothing is too hard for our all-powerful God. We need Abraham's courage to believe. We need to stand on God's promises, though the dark clouds of troubles and trials roll over our lives. God's certain promises give us hope and comfort. How many promises do we know and claim?

FURTHER MEDITATION:

Other passages to study about the issue of God's promises include:

- > Genesis 18:1-15
- > Mark 11:24
- > Romans 4:13-25
- > Hebrews 11:11-16
- > 2 Peter 1:4

To Learn More: Turn to the key passage note on God's promises at 2 Peter 1:4 on page 1668. See also the personality profile of Noah on page 16.

GREETING THE FAITHFUL

1 Simon Peter, a bondservant and apostle of Jesus Christ,

To those who have obtained like precious faith with us by the righteousness of our God and Savior Jesus Christ:

²Grace and peace be multiplied to you in the knowledge of God and of Jesus our Lord, ³as His divine power has given to us all things that *pertain* to life and godliness, through the knowledge of Him who called us by glory and virtue, ⁴by which have been given to us exceedingly great and precious promises, that through these you may be partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust.

FRUITFUL GROWTH IN THE FAITH

⁵But also for this very reason, giving all diligence, add to your faith virtue, to virtue knowledge, ⁶to knowledge self-control, to self-control perseverance, to perseverance godliness, ⁷to godliness brotherly kindness, and to brotherly kindness love. ⁸For if these things are yours and abound, *you will be* neither barren nor unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ. ⁹For he who lacks these things is shortsighted, even to blindness, and has forgotten that he was cleansed from his old sins.

¹⁰Therefore, brethren, be even more diligent

to make your call and election sure, for if you do these things you *will* never stumble; ¹¹for so an entrance will be supplied to you abundantly into the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.

PETER'S APPROACHING DEATH

¹²For this reason I will not be negligent to remind you always of these things, though you know and are established in the present truth. ¹³Yes, I think it is right, as long as I am in this tent, to stir you up by reminding *you*, ¹⁴knowing that shortly I *must* put off my tent, just as our Lord Jesus Christ showed me. ¹⁵Moreover I will be careful to ensure that you always have a reminder of these things after my decease.

THE TRUSTWORTHY PROPHETIC WORD

¹⁶For we did not follow cunningly devised fables when we made known to you the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, but were eyewitnesses of His majesty. ¹⁷For He received from God the Father honor and glory when such a voice came to Him from the Excellent Glory: "This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased." ¹⁸And we heard this voice which came from heaven when we were with Him on the holy mountain.

¹⁹And so we have the prophetic word confirmed,^a which you do well to heed as a

^{1:19} ^aOr *We also have the more sure prophetic word.*

KEY PASSAGE

PRECIOUS PROMISES

(1:4)



God's Promises

God gives great promises to all who have trusted in His Son as their Savior. When God looks at believers, He sees Christ's sacrifice on the Cross to take away sin. So He sees His people as righteous, and He bestows upon them "exceedingly great and precious promises."

Promises are only as good as the person who makes them. With God, a promise is an unbreakable covenant, a total commitment. Because God is faithful and trustworthy, we know that what He says in His Word will surely come to pass. His precious promises of salvation, transformation, and glorification will come true for all believers. God's promises of punishment and eternal separation will also come true for those who reject Him. Because of God's promises, we can be confident about the present and the future. God is in control, and He always keeps His promises. Name them, claim them, believe them.

To Learn More: Turn to the article about God's promises on pages 220, 221. See also the personality profile of Noah on page 16.

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covenant which I make between Me and you, and every living creature that *is* with you, for perpetual generations: ¹³I set My rainbow in the cloud, and it shall be for the sign of the covenant between Me and the earth. ¹⁴It shall be, when I bring a cloud over the earth, that the rainbow shall be seen in the cloud; ¹⁵and I will remember My covenant which *is* between Me and you and every living creature of all flesh; the waters shall never again become a flood to destroy all flesh. ¹⁶The rainbow shall be in the cloud, and I will look on it to remember the everlasting covenant between God and every living creature of all flesh that *is* on the earth." ¹⁷And God said to Noah, "This *is* the sign of the covenant which I have established between Me and all flesh that *is* on the earth."

NOAH AND HIS SONS

¹⁸Now the sons of Noah who went out of the ark were Shem, Ham, and Japheth. And Ham *was* the father of Canaan. ¹⁹These three

were the sons of Noah, and from these the whole earth was populated.

²⁰And Noah *began to be* a farmer, and he planted a vineyard. ²¹Then he drank of the wine and was drunk, and became uncovered in his tent. ²²And Ham, the father of Canaan, saw the nakedness of his father, and told his two brothers outside. ²³But Shem and Japheth took a garment, laid *it* on both their shoulders, and went backward and covered the nakedness of their father. Their faces *were* turned away, and they did not see their father's nakedness.

²⁴So Noah awoke from his wine, and knew what his younger son had done to him. ²⁵Then he said:

"Cursed *be* Canaan;
A servant of servants
He shall be to his brethren."

²⁶And he said:



God's Promises

PERSONALITY PROFILE

NOAH: FLOATING ON GOD'S PROMISES

(GENESIS 9)

Never underestimate the power of one person, especially one who believes God's promises. One good man can turn the tide of history. Long before the Flood, Noah learned that reliance on God would keep him afloat through life.

Noah received the divine order to build an ark because he found favor with God. In a world drowning in sin, Noah was chosen to prepare for the safety of a handful. God told Noah that because wickedness throughout the world was unrestrained, "everything that is on the earth shall die. But I will establish My covenant with you; and you shall go into the ark—you, your sons, your wife, and your sons' wives with you" (Gen. 6:17, 18).

Noah believed God and followed His instructions, building a huge ship on dry land. His neighbors could not imagine a purpose or need for such a vessel. We can only imagine the ridicule he must have endured! His ark became a monument to persistence. His faithful obedience brought about the salvation of his family. He became, like Adam, the second father of the human race.

After the Flood, God created the first rainbow as a sign of His perpetual promise to Noah and his descendants that He would never again destroy the earth by water. God's promises are trustworthy. God fulfills His promises even when we fail completely to hold up our side of the covenant. The rainbow reminds us of one part of God's commitment to us.

We may often feel surrounded by the rising tide of immorality in today's world. God's promises remain a safe vessel. In spite of overwhelming odds and the temptation to discouragement, God's faithfulness to Noah reveals that He will also keep the "great and precious promises" He has given us (2 Pet. 1:4).

To Learn More: Turn to the article about God's promises on pages 220, 221. See also the key passage note at 2 Peter 1:4 on page 1668.

"Blessed be the
The God of Shem
And may Canaan
27 May God enlarge
And may he be
And may Canaan

²⁸And Noah lived
dred and fifty years
were nine hundred
died.

NATIONS DESCEND

10 Now this is

of Noah:

And sons were born

²The sons of Noah

Madai, Javan, Tubal,

³The sons of Gomer

and Togarmah. ⁴Shem,

the firstborn of Noah,

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were separated in

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⁶The sons of Ham

and Canaan. ⁷Ham

Havilah, Sabtah,

the sons of Raamah.

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LORD." ¹⁰And the

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on top of it, as the LORD had commanded Moses. ²⁰He took the Testimony and put it into the ark, inserted the poles through the rings of the ark, and put the mercy seat on top of the ark. ²¹And he brought the ark into the tabernacle, hung up the veil of the covering, and partitioned off the ark of the Testimony, as the LORD had commanded Moses.

²²He put the table in the tabernacle of meeting, on the north side of the tabernacle, outside the veil; ²³and he set the bread in order upon it before the LORD, as the LORD had commanded Moses. ²⁴He put the lampstand in the tabernacle of meeting, across from the table, on the south side of the tabernacle; ²⁵and he lit the lamps before the LORD, as the LORD had commanded Moses. ²⁶He put the gold altar in the tabernacle of meeting in front of the veil; ²⁷and he burned sweet incense on it, as the LORD had commanded Moses. ²⁸He hung up the screen at the door of the tabernacle. ²⁹And he put the altar of burnt offering before the door of the tabernacle of the tent of meeting, and offered upon it the burnt offering and the grain offering, as the LORD had commanded Moses. ³⁰He set the laver between the taberna-

cle of meeting and the altar, and put water there for washing; ³¹and Moses, Aaron, and his sons would wash their hands and their feet with water from it. ³²Whenever they went into the tabernacle of meeting, and when they came near the altar, they washed, as the LORD had commanded Moses. ³³And he raised up the court all around the tabernacle and the altar, and hung up the screen of the court gate. So Moses finished the work.

THE CLOUD AND THE GLORY

³⁴Then the cloud covered the tabernacle of meeting, and the glory of the LORD filled the tabernacle. ³⁵And Moses was not able to enter the tabernacle of meeting, because the cloud rested above it, and the glory of the LORD filled the tabernacle. ³⁶Whenever the cloud was taken up from above the tabernacle, the children of Israel would go onward in all their journeys. ³⁷But if the cloud was not taken up, then they did not journey till the day that it was taken up. ³⁸For the cloud of the LORD was above the tabernacle by day, and fire was over it by night, in the sight of all the house of Israel, throughout all their journeys.

SOUL NOTE



Glory Be! (40:34) The cloud and the glory represented God's presence with His people. "The glory of the LORD filled the tabernacle" upon its completion, signifying His pleasure with the home that the people had built according to His instructions. Thousands of years later, God's glory again entered the temple in Jesus Christ. That glory is present in Christians' lives through the Holy Spirit. Believers are temples of the Holy Spirit filled with God's glorious presence (1 Cor. 6:19). God promises to be in us and to guide us, even as He guided the Israelites across the vast wilderness to the Promised Land. **Topic: God's Promises**



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TRIBAL LEADERS APPOINTED

⁹“And I spoke to you at that time, saying: ‘I alone am not able to bear you. ¹⁰The LORD your God has multiplied you, and here you *are* today, as the stars of heaven in multitude. ¹¹May the LORD God of your fathers make you a thousand times more numerous than you are, and bless you as He has promised you! ¹²How can I alone bear your problems and your burdens and your complaints? ¹³Choose wise, understanding, and knowledgeable men from among your tribes, and I will make them heads over you.’ ¹⁴And you answered me and said, ‘The thing which you have told us to do is good.’ ¹⁵So I took the heads of your tribes, wise and knowledgeable men, and made them heads over you, leaders of thousands, leaders of hundreds, leaders of fifties, leaders of tens, and officers for your tribes.

¹⁶“Then I commanded your judges at that time, saying, ‘Hear *the cases* between your brethren, and judge righteously between a man and his brother or the stranger who is with him. ¹⁷You shall not show partiality in judgment; you shall hear the small as well as the great; you shall not be afraid in any man’s presence, for the judgment is God’s. The case that is too hard for you, bring to me, and I will hear it.’ ¹⁸And I commanded you at that time all the things which you should do.

ISRAEL’S REFUSAL TO ENTER THE LAND

¹⁹“So we departed from Horeb, and went through all that great and terrible wilderness which you saw on the way to the mountains of the Amorites, as the LORD our God had

commanded us. Then we came to Kadesh Barnea. ²⁰And I said to you, ‘You have come to the mountains of the Amorites, which the LORD our God is giving us. ²¹Look, the LORD your God has set the land before you; go up and possess it, as the LORD God of your fathers has spoken to you; do not fear or be discouraged.’

²²“And every one of you came near to me and said, ‘Let us send men before us, and let them search out the land for us, and bring back word to us of the way by which we should go up, and of the cities into which we shall come.’

²³“The plan pleased me well; so I took twelve of your men, one man from *each* tribe. ²⁴And they departed and went up into the mountains, and came to the Valley of Eshcol, and spied it out. ²⁵They also took *some* of the fruit of the land in their hands and brought it down to us; and they brought back word to us,

saying, ‘It is a good land which the LORD our God is giving us.’

²⁶“Nevertheless you would not go up, but rebelled against the command of the LORD your God; ²⁷and you complained in your tents, and said, ‘Because the

LORD hates us, He has brought us out of the land of Egypt to deliver us into the hand of the Amorites, to destroy us. ²⁸Where can we go up? Our brethren have discouraged our hearts, saying, ‘The people *are* greater and taller than we; the cities *are* great and fortified up to heaven; moreover we have seen the sons of the Anakim there.’

²⁹“Then I said to you, ‘Do not be terrified, or afraid of them. ³⁰The LORD your God, who

“You shall not show partiality in judgment; you shall hear the small as well as the great; you shall not be afraid in any man’s presence, for the judgment is God’s.”

DEUTERONOMY 1:17

SOUL NOTE



The Promise Keeper (1:8) God explained to the Israelites that they were about to enter the Promised Land in fulfillment of His promises to their forefathers—Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. The nation had multiplied “as the stars of heaven” (1:10), also fulfilling a promise (Gen. 15:5). Like Israel, people sin, rebel, turn away, and face punishment. Regardless of their actions, however, God always keeps His promises in the end. Read God’s Word and claim His promises for your life.

Topic: God’s Promises

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them and destroyed them from before them, and dwelt in their place, just as Israel did to the land of their possession which the LORD gave them.)

¹³“Now rise and cross over the Valley of the Zered.’ So we crossed over the Valley of the Zered. ¹⁴And the time we took to come from Kadesh Barnea until we crossed over the Valley of the Zered was thirty-eight years, until all the generation of the men of war was consumed from the midst of the camp, just as the LORD had sworn to them. ¹⁵For indeed the hand of the LORD was against them, to destroy them from the midst of the camp until they were consumed.

¹⁶“So it was, when all the men of war had finally perished from among the people, ¹⁷that the LORD spoke to me, saying: ¹⁸‘This day you are to cross over at Ar, the boundary of Moab. ¹⁹And when you come near the people of Ammon, do not harass them or meddle with them, for I will not give you any of the land of the people of Ammon as a possession, because I have given it to the descendants of Lot as a possession.’”

²⁰(That was also regarded as a land of giants;^a giants formerly dwelt there. But the Ammonites call them Zamzummim, ²¹a people as great and numerous and tall as the Anakim. But the LORD destroyed them before them, and they dispossessed them and dwelt in their place, ²²just as He had done for the descendants of Esau, who dwelt in Seir, when He destroyed the Horites from before them. They dispossessed them and dwelt in their place, even to this day. ²³And the Avim, who dwelt in villages as far as Gaza—the Caphortim, who came from Caphtor, destroyed them and dwelt in their place.)

²⁴“Rise, take your journey, and cross over the River Arnon. Look, I have given into your

hand Sihon the Amorite, king of Heshbon, and his land. Begin to possess it, and engage him in battle. ²⁵This day I will begin to put the dread and fear of you upon the nations under the whole heaven, who shall hear the report of you, and shall tremble and be in anguish because of you.’

KING SIHON DEFEATED

²⁶“And I sent messengers from the Wilderness of Kedemoth to Sihon king of Heshbon, with words of peace, saying, ²⁷‘Let me pass through your land; I will keep strictly to the road, and I will turn neither to the right nor to the left. ²⁸You shall sell me food for money, that I may eat, and give me water for money, that I may drink; only let me pass through on foot, ²⁹just as the descendants of Esau who dwell in Seir and the Moabites who dwell in Ar did for me, until I cross the Jordan to the land which the LORD our God is giving us.’

³⁰“But Sihon king of Heshbon would not let us pass through, for the LORD your God hardened his spirit and made his heart obstinate, that He might deliver him into your hand, as it is this day.

³¹“And the LORD said to me, ‘See, I have begun to give Sihon and his land over to you. Begin to possess it, that you may inherit his land.’ ³²Then Sihon and all his people came out against us to fight at Jahaz. ³³And the LORD our God delivered him over to us; so we defeated him, his sons, and all his people. ³⁴We took all his cities at that time, and we utterly destroyed the men, women, and little ones of every city; we left none remaining. ³⁵We took only the livestock as plunder for ourselves, with the spoil of the cities which we took. ³⁶From Aroer, which is on the bank

2:20 ^aHebrew *rephaim*

SOUL NOTE



Armed and Ready (2:24, 25) God always keeps His promises, but that doesn't mean that life will be easy or smooth. God had promised a land to Israel and had made all the nations fear them, but the Israelites would have to battle against powerful armies in order to see the promise fulfilled. God gave Israel victories, but they had to trust God and fight. We too will see God's promises fulfilled, but we may have to fight some battles along the way—perhaps against fear, temptation, or suffering. Whatever we face, we must remember that God promises victory if we depend on Him.

Topic: God's Promises

law before all Israel in their hearing. ¹²Gather the people together, men and women and little ones, and the stranger who is within your gates, that they may hear and that they may learn to fear the LORD your God and carefully observe all the words of this law, ¹³and that their children, who have not known it, may hear and learn to fear the LORD your God as long as you live in the land which you cross the Jordan to possess."

PREDICTION OF ISRAEL'S REBELLION

¹⁴Then the LORD said to Moses, "Behold, the days approach when you must die; call Joshua, and present yourselves in the tabernacle of meeting, that I may inaugurate him."

So Moses and Joshua went and presented themselves in the tabernacle of meeting. ¹⁵Now the LORD appeared at the tabernacle in a pillar of cloud, and the pillar of cloud stood above the door of the tabernacle.

¹⁶And the LORD said to Moses: "Behold, you will rest with your fathers; and this people will rise and play the harlot with the gods of the foreigners of the land, where they go to be among them, and they will forsake Me and break My covenant which I have made with them. ¹⁷Then My anger shall be aroused against them in that day, and I will forsake them, and I will hide My face from them, and they shall be devoured. And many evils and troubles shall befall them, so that they will say in that day, 'Have not these evils come upon us because our God is not among us?' ¹⁸And I will surely hide My face in that day because of all the evil which they have done, in that they have turned to other gods.

¹⁹"Now therefore, write down this song for yourselves, and teach it to the children of Israel; put it in their mouths, that this song may be a witness for Me against the children of Is-

rael. ²⁰When I have brought them to the land flowing with milk and honey, of which I swore to their fathers, and they have eaten and filled themselves and grown fat, then they will turn to other gods and serve them; and they will provoke Me and break My covenant. ²¹Then it shall be, when many evils and troubles have come upon them, that this song will testify against them as a witness; for it will not be forgotten in the mouths of their descendants, for I know the inclination of their behavior to-day, even before I have brought them to the land of which I swore to give them."

²²Therefore Moses wrote this song the same day, and taught it to the children of Israel. ²³Then He inaugurated Joshua the son of Nun, and said, "Be strong and of good courage; for you shall bring the children of Israel into the land of which I swore to them, and I will be with you."

²⁴So it was, when Moses had completed writing the words of this law in a book, when they were finished, ²⁵that Moses commanded the Levites, who bore the ark of the covenant of the LORD, saying: ²⁶"Take this Book of the Law, and put it beside the ark of the covenant of the LORD your God, that it may be there as a witness against you; ²⁷for I know your rebellion and your stiff neck. If today, while I am yet alive with you, you have been rebellious against the LORD, then how much more after my death? ²⁸Gather to me all the elders of your tribes, and your officers, that I may speak these words in their hearing and call heaven and earth to witness against them. ²⁹For I know that after my death you will become utterly corrupt, and turn aside from the way which I have commanded you. And evil will befall you in the latter days, because you will do evil in the sight of the LORD, to provoke Him to anger through the work of your hands."

SOUL NOTE



Never Alone (31:7, 8) God encouraged Joshua through these words of Moses (later repeated in Josh. 1:6). He promised to be with Joshua in the coming task of conquering the land, so Joshua should be "strong and of good courage." God also promises to be with us in the pressures and challenges of life. The tasks ahead may be difficult, the enemy powerful, and the work immense, but God calls His people to trust Him. "He is the One who goes before you. He will be with you, He will not leave you nor forsake you." **Topic: God's Promises**

far country for Your name's sake ⁴²(for they will hear of Your great name and Your strong hand and Your outstretched arm), when he comes and prays toward this temple, ⁴³hear in heaven Your dwelling place, and do according to all for which the foreigner calls to You, that all peoples of the earth may know Your name and fear You, as *do* Your people Israel, and that they may know that this temple which I have built is called by Your name.

⁴⁴"When Your people go out to battle against their enemy, wherever You send them, and when they pray to the LORD toward the city which You have chosen and the temple which I have built for Your name, ⁴⁵then hear in heaven their prayer and their supplication, and maintain their cause.

⁴⁶"When they sin against You (for *there is* no one who does not sin), and You become angry with them and deliver them to the enemy, and they take them captive to the land of the enemy, far or near; ⁴⁷yet when they come to themselves in the land where they were carried captive, and repent, and make supplication to You in the land of those who took them captive, saying, 'We have sinned and done wrong, we have committed wickedness'; ⁴⁸and *when* they return to You with all their heart and with all their soul in the land of their enemies who led them away captive, and pray to You toward their land which You gave to their fathers, the city which You have chosen and the temple which I have built for Your name: ⁴⁹then hear in heaven Your dwelling place their prayer and their supplication, and maintain their cause, ⁵⁰and forgive Your people who have sinned against You, and all their transgressions which they have transgressed against You; and grant them compassion before those who took them captive, that they

may have compassion on them ⁵¹(for they are Your people and Your inheritance, whom You brought out of Egypt, out of the iron furnace). ⁵²that Your eyes may be open to the supplication of Your servant and the supplication of Your people Israel, to listen to them whenever they call to You. ⁵³For You separated them from among all the peoples of the earth to be Your inheritance, as You spoke by Your servant Moses, when You brought our fathers out of Egypt, O LORD GOD."

SOLOMON BLESSES THE ASSEMBLY

⁵⁴And so it was, when Solomon had finished praying all this prayer and supplication to the LORD, that he arose from before the altar of the LORD, from kneeling on his knees with his hands spread up to heaven. ⁵⁵Then he stood and blessed all the assembly of Israel with a loud voice, saying: ⁵⁶"Blessed be the LORD, who has given rest to His people Israel according to all that He promised. There has not failed one word of all His good promise which He promised through His servant Moses. ⁵⁷May the LORD our God be with us, as He was with our fathers. May He not leave us nor forsake us, ⁵⁸that He may incline our hearts to Himself, to walk in all His ways, and to keep His commandments and His statutes and His judgments, which He commanded our fathers. ⁵⁹And may these words of mine, with which I have made supplication before the LORD, be near the LORD our God day and night, that He may maintain the cause of His servant and the cause of His people Israel, as each day may require, ⁶⁰that all the peoples of the earth may know that the LORD is God; *there is no other*. ⁶¹Let your heart therefore be loyal to the LORD our God, to walk in His statutes and keep His commandments, as at this day."

SOUL NOTE



God Never Changes (8:56) God keeps His promises. "There has not failed one word of all His good promise, which He promised through His servant Moses." God had promised to deliver Israel from Egypt, lead them through the wilderness, and guide them into the Promised Land. Hundreds of years had passed; many of the people had sinned and faced punishment. This generation of Israelites reemphasized their confidence in God's promises. God's Word contains His promises to the faithful. Believers can still claim those promises, for God will never change and will always keep His promises. **Topic: God's Promises**

Blessed be the LORD God of Israel
From everlasting to everlasting!^a

And all the people said, "Amen!" and praised
the LORD.

REGULAR WORSHIP MAINTAINED

³⁷So he left Asaph and his brothers there before the ark of the covenant of the LORD to minister before the ark regularly, as every day's work required; ³⁸and Obed-Edom with his sixty-eight brethren, including Obed-Edom the son of Jeduthun, and Hosah, to be gatekeepers; ³⁹and Zadok the priest and his brethren the priests, before the tabernacle of the LORD at the high place that was at Gibeon, ⁴⁰to offer burnt offerings to the LORD on the altar of burnt offering regularly morning and evening, and to do according to all that is written in the Law of the LORD which He commanded Israel; ⁴¹and with them Heman and Jeduthun and the rest who were chosen, who were designated by name, to give thanks to the LORD, because His mercy endures forever; ⁴²and with Heman and Jeduthun, to sound aloud with trumpets and cymbals and the musical instruments of God. Now the sons of Jeduthun were gatekeepers.

⁴³Then all the people departed, every man to his house; and David returned to bless his house.

GOD'S COVENANT WITH DAVID

17 Now it came to pass, when David was dwelling in his house, that David said to Nathan the prophet, "See now, I dwell in a house of cedar, but the ark of the covenant of the LORD is under tent curtains."

Then Nathan said to David, "Do all that is in your heart, for God is with you."

But it happened that night that the word of the LORD came to Nathan, saying, ⁴⁴"Go and tell My

servant David, 'Thus says the LORD: "You shall not build Me a house to dwell in. ⁵For I have not dwelt in a house since the time that I brought up Israel, even to this day, but have gone from tent to tent, and from one tabernacle to another. ⁶Wherever I have moved about with all Israel, have I ever spoken a word to any of the judges of Israel, whom I commanded to shepherd My people, saying, 'Why have you not built Me a house of cedar?' "' ⁷Now therefore, thus shall you say to My servant David, 'Thus says the LORD of hosts: "I took you from the sheepfold, from following the sheep, to be ruler over My people Israel. ⁸And I have been with you wherever you have gone, and have cut off all your enemies from before you, and have made you a name like the name of the great men who are on the earth. ⁹Moreover I will appoint a place for My people Israel, and will plant them, that they may dwell in a place of their own and move no more; nor shall the sons of wickedness oppress them anymore, as previously, ¹⁰since the time that I commanded judges to be over My people Israel. Also I will subdue all your enemies. Furthermore I tell you that the LORD will build you a house."^a ¹¹And it shall be, when your days are fulfilled, when you must go to be with your fathers, that I will set up your seed after you, who will be of your sons; and I will establish his kingdom. ¹²He shall build Me a house, and I will establish his throne forever. ¹³I will be his Father, and he shall be My son; and I will not take My mercy away from him, as I took it from him who was before you. ¹⁴And I will establish him in My house and in My kingdom forever; and his throne shall be established forever." "' "

16:36 ^aCompare verses 35, 36 with Psalm 106:47, 48 **17:10** ^aThat is, a royal dynasty

SOUL NOTE



His Kingdom Forever (17:12) David told the prophet Nathan that he wanted to build a temple to house the ark of the covenant. But the Lord told Nathan that David was not to build that temple; rather, his son Solomon would do so. God promised of Solomon, "He shall build Me a house, and I will establish his throne forever." Solomon did build a beautiful temple for God in Jerusalem. And a King from David's line—Jesus Christ—still sits on the throne and will do so forever. God always keeps His promises. **Topic: God's Promises**

¹⁰For He is good,
For His mercy endures forever,^a

the house, the house of the LORD, was
filled with a cloud, ¹⁴so that the priests could
continue ministering because of the cloud;
the glory of the LORD filled the house of

6 Then Solomon spoke:

The LORD said He would dwell in the
dark cloud.
I have surely built You an exalted house,
And a place for You to dwell in forever.”

SOLOMON'S SPEECH UPON COMPLETION OF THE WORK

Then the king turned around and blessed
the whole assembly of Israel, while all the as-
sembly of Israel was standing. ⁴And he said:
Blessed be the LORD God of Israel, who has
dwelt with His hands *what* He spoke with
His mouth to my father David, saying, ⁵“Since
I say that I brought My people out of the
land of Egypt, I have chosen no city from any
land of Israel *in which* to build a house, that
My name might be there, nor did I choose any
man to be a ruler over My people Israel. ⁶Yet I
have chosen Jerusalem, that My name may be
there, and I have chosen David to be over My
people Israel.” ⁷Now it was in the heart of my
father David to build a temple^a for the name of
the LORD God of Israel. ⁸But the LORD said to
my father David, “Whereas it was in your
heart to build a temple for My name, you did
not do that it was in your heart. ⁹Nevertheless
you shall not build the temple, but your son
who shall come from your body, he shall build
the temple for My name.” ¹⁰So the LORD has
fulfilled His word which He spoke, and I have
dwelt in the position of my father David, and sit
on the throne of Israel, as the LORD promised;

and I have built the temple for the name of the
LORD God of Israel. ¹¹And there I have put the
ark, in which *is* the covenant of the LORD
which He made with the children of Israel.”

SOLOMON'S PRAYER OF DEDICATION

¹²Then Solomon^a stood before the altar of
the LORD in the presence of all the assembly of
Israel, and spread out his hands ¹³(for Sol-
omon had made a bronze platform five cubits
long, five cubits wide, and three cubits high,
and had set it in the midst of the court; and he
stood on it, knelt down on his knees before all
the assembly of Israel, and spread out his
hands toward heaven); ¹⁴and he said: “LORD
God of Israel, *there is* no God in heaven or on
earth like You, who keep *Your* covenant and
mercy with Your servants who walk before
You with all their hearts. ¹⁵You have kept what
You promised Your servant David my father;
You have both spoken with Your mouth and
fulfilled *it* with Your hand, as *it is* this day.
¹⁶Therefore, LORD God of Israel, now keep
what You promised Your servant David my fa-
ther, saying, ‘You shall not fail to have a man
sit before Me on the throne of Israel, *only* if
your sons take heed to their way, that they
walk in My law as you have walked before
Me.’ ¹⁷And now, O LORD God of Israel, let Your
word come true, which You have spoken to
Your servant David.

¹⁸“But will God indeed dwell with men on
the earth? Behold, heaven and the heaven of
heavens cannot contain You. How much less
this temple^a which I have built! ¹⁹Yet regard
the prayer of Your servant and his supplica-
tion, O LORD my God, and listen to the cry and
the prayer which Your servant is praying

5:13 ^aCompare Psalm 106:1 6:7 ^aLiterally *house*,
and so in verses 8–10 6:12 ^aLiterally *he* (compare
1 Kings 8:22) 6:18 ^aLiterally *house*

SOUL NOTE



God Never Fails (6:14–17) Solomon had become king over Israel because of
God's covenant with David, his father. God had promised David, “You shall not fail
to have a man sit before Me on the throne of Israel, only if your sons take heed to
their way.” Even though the nation eventually went into captivity, God kept His
promise, as He always does. Many of the sons (descendants) of David did not “take heed to
their way,” but one descendant of David does sit on the throne forever. Jesus Christ is the
final fulfillment of God's promise to David, and He reigns forever. **Topic: God's Promises**

18 "Come now, and let us reason together,"
Says the LORD,
"Though your sins are like scarlet,
They shall be as white as snow;
Though they are red like crimson,
They shall be as wool.
19 If you are willing and obedient,
You shall eat the good of the land;
20 But if you refuse and rebel,
You shall be devoured by the sword";
For the mouth of the LORD has spoken.

THE DEGENERATE CITY

21 How the faithful city has become a
harlot!
It was full of justice;
Righteousness lodged in it,
But now murderers.
22 Your silver has become dross,
Your wine mixed with water.
23 Your princes *are* rebellious,
And companions of thieves;
Everyone loves bribes,
And follows after rewards.
They do not defend the fatherless,
Nor does the cause of the widow come
before them.
24 Therefore the Lord says,
The LORD of hosts, the Mighty One of
Israel,
"Ah, I will rid Myself of My adversaries,
And take vengeance on My enemies.
25 I will turn My hand against you,
And thoroughly purge away your dross,
And take away all your alloy.
26 I will restore your judges as at the first,
And your counselors as at the
beginning.
Afterward you shall be called the city of
righteousness, the faithful city."

27 Zion shall be redeemed with justice,
And her penitents with righteousness.
The destruction of transgressors and
sinners *shall be* together,
And those who forsake the LORD shall
be consumed.
29 For they^a shall be ashamed of the
terebinth trees
Which you have desired;
And you shall be embarrassed because
of the gardens
Which you have chosen.
30 For you shall be as a terebinth whose
leaf fades,
And as a garden that has no water.
31 The strong shall be as tinder,
And the work of it as a spark;
Both will burn together,
And no one shall quench *them*.

THE FUTURE HOUSE OF GOD

2 The word that Isaiah the son of Amoz ^{sent}
concerning Judah and Jerusalem.

2 Now it shall come to pass in the latter
days
That the mountain of the LORD's house
Shall be established on the top of the
mountains,
And shall be exalted above the hills;
And all nations shall flow to it.
3 Many people shall come and say,
"Come, and let us go up to the mounta-
in
of the LORD,
To the house of the God of Jacob;
He will teach us His ways,
And we shall walk in His paths."

1:29 ^aFollowing Masoretic Text, Septuagint, and
Vulgate; some Hebrew manuscripts and Targum
read *you*.

SOUL NOTE



Peace Plan (2:4, 5) How we long for peace in the world and in our homes! The Bible promises that one day all nations will live in peace when the Messiah reigns. The nations will turn their implements of war into implements of commerce: "Nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war anymore" (2:4). This wonderful offer of God's peace is our promise of hope in a broken world. Until that day, God encourages us to "walk in the light of the LORD" (2:5). We walk in light when we follow God's plan for righteous living and seek guidance from His Word.
Topic: God's Promises

Choose the good, the land that you dread will be forsaken by both her kings. ¹⁷The LORD will bring the king of Assyria upon you and your people and your father's house—days that will not come since the day that Ephraim deserted from Judah.”

And it shall come to pass in that day
That the LORD will whistle for the fly
That is in the farthest part of the rivers
of Egypt,
And for the bee that is in the land of
Assyria.
They will come, and all of them will
rest
In the desolate valleys and in the clefts
of the rocks,
And on all thorns and in all pastures.

In the same day the Lord will shave with
a hired razor,
With those from beyond the River,^a with
the king of Assyria,
The head and the hair of the legs,
And will also remove the beard.

It shall be in that day
That a man will keep alive a young cow
and two sheep;
So it shall be, from the abundance of
milk they give,
That he will eat curds;
For curds and honey everyone will eat
who is left in the land.

It shall happen in that day,
That wherever there could be a
thousand vines
Worth a thousand *shekels* of silver,
It will be for briers and thorns.
With arrows and bows men will come
there,

Because all the land will become briers
and thorns.

²⁵ And to any hill which could be dug with
the hoe,
You will not go there for fear of briers
and thorns;
But it will become a range for oxen
And a place for sheep to roam.

ASSYRIA WILL INVADE THE LAND

8 Moreover the LORD said to me, “Take a large scroll, and write on it with a man’s pen concerning Maher-Shalal-Hash-Baz.” ²And I will take for Myself faithful witnesses to record, Uriah the priest and Zechariah the son of Jeberechiah.”

³Then I went to the prophetess, and she conceived and bore a son. Then the LORD said to me, “Call his name Maher-Shalal-Hash-Baz; ⁴for before the child shall have knowledge to cry ‘My father’ and ‘My mother,’ the riches of Damascus and the spoil of Samaria will be taken away before the king of Assyria.”

⁵The LORD also spoke to me again, saying:

⁶ “Inasmuch as these people refused
The waters of Shiloah that flow softly,
And rejoice in Rezin and in Remaliah’s
son;
⁷ Now therefore, behold, the Lord brings
up over them
The waters of the River,^a strong and
mighty—
The king of Assyria and all his glory;
He will go up over all his channels
And go over all his banks.
⁸ He will pass through Judah,

^{7:20} ^aThat is, the Euphrates ^{8:1} ^aLiterally *Speed the Spoil, Hasten the Booty* ^{8:7} ^aThat is, the Euphrates

SOUL NOTE



With Us (7:14) When King Ahaz refused to ask God for a sign of His promises, the prophet Isaiah announced that God would give His own sign to the “house of David” (the messianic line, 7:13). God promised that a virgin would bear a Son whose name, Immanuel, means “God with us.” Matthew quoted this passage as being fulfilled in the miraculous virgin birth of Jesus Christ (Matt. 1:23). The coming of Christ shows that God keeps His promises to be with us personally and permanently.

Topic: God’s Promises

A remnant of them will return;
The destruction decreed shall overflow
with righteousness.

For the Lord GOD of hosts
Will make a determined end
in the midst of all the land.

²⁴Therefore thus says the Lord GOD of hosts:
My people, who dwell in Zion, do not be
afraid of the Assyrian. He shall strike you with
a rod and lift up his staff against you, in the
manner of Egypt. ²⁵For yet a very little while
and the indignation will cease, as will My an-
ger in their destruction." ²⁶And the LORD of
hosts will stir up a scourge for him like the
scourge of Midian at the rock of Oreb; as His
rod was on the sea, so will He lift it up in the
manner of Egypt.

It shall come to pass in that day
That his burden will be taken away from
your shoulder,
And his yoke from your neck,
And the yoke will be destroyed because
of the anointing oil.

He has come to Aiath,
He has passed Migron;
At Michmash he has attended to his
equipment.
They have gone along the ridge,
They have taken up lodging at Geba.
Ramah is afraid,
Gibeah of Saul has fled.
Lift up your voice,
O daughter of Gallim!
Cause it to be heard as far as Laish—
O poor Anathoth!^a
Madmenah has fled,
The inhabitants of Gebim seek refuge.
As yet he will remain at Nob that
day;

He will shake his fist at the mount of the
daughter of Zion,
The hill of Jerusalem.

³³ Behold, the Lord,
The LORD of hosts,
Will lop off the bough with terror;
Those of high stature *will be* hewn
down,
And the haughty will be humbled.
³⁴ He will cut down the thickets of the
forest with iron,
And Lebanon will fall by the Mighty
One.

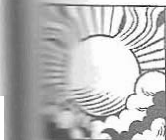
THE REIGN OF JESSE'S OFFSPRING

1 There shall come forth a Rod from
the stem of Jesse,
And a Branch shall grow out of his roots.
² The Spirit of the LORD shall rest upon
Him,
The Spirit of wisdom and understanding,
The Spirit of counsel and might,
The Spirit of knowledge and of the fear
of the LORD.

His delight is in the fear of the LORD,
And He shall not judge by the sight of
His eyes,
Nor decide by the hearing of His ears;
But with righteousness He shall judge
the poor,
And decide with equity for the meek of
the earth;
He shall strike the earth with the rod of
His mouth,
And with the breath of His lips He shall
slay the wicked.

10:30 ^aFollowing Masoretic Text, Targum,
Vulgate; Septuagint and Syriac read *Listen to her,*
O Anathoth.

SOUL NOTE



Branching Out (11:1, 2) Isaiah referred to the Messiah as the **Branch** (see also 4:2) that would grow from the family line of King David. While David's line was still on the throne, it was cut down like a tree. God never left His people without hope, however. God promised a day when David's family line would sprout and blossom in a new way. When Jesus was born, the angel announced, "The Lord God will give you a son and a king, and He will sit on the throne of His father David" (Luke 1:32). God's promises provide a ray of light even when life seems darkest. **Topic: God's Promises**

For I am holier than you!^c
 These *are* smoke in My nostrils,
 A fire that burns all the day.

- ⁶ “Behold, *it is* written before Me:
 I will not keep silence, but will repay—
 Even repay into their bosom—
⁷ Your iniquities and the iniquities of your
 fathers together,”

Says the LORD,
 “Who have burned incense on the
 mountains
 And blasphemed Me on the hills;
 Therefore I will measure their former
 work into their bosom.”

⁸Thus says the LORD:

- “As the new wine is found in the cluster,
 And *one* says, ‘Do not destroy it,
 For a blessing *is* in it,’
 So will I do for My servants’ sake,
 That I may not destroy them all.
⁹ I will bring forth descendants from
 Jacob,
 And from Judah an heir of My
 mountains;
 My elect shall inherit it,
 And My servants shall dwell there.
¹⁰ Sharon shall be a fold of flocks,
 And the Valley of Achor a place for herds
 to lie down,
 For My people who have sought Me.

- ¹¹ “But you *are* those who forsake the LORD,
 Who forget My holy mountain,
 Who prepare a table for Gad,^a
 And who furnish a drink offering for
 Meni.^b

- ¹² Therefore I will number you for the
 sword,

And you shall all bow down to the
 slaughter;
 Because, when I called, you did not
 answer;
 When I spoke, you did not hear,
 But did evil before My eyes,
 And chose *that* in which I do not
 delight.”

¹³Therefore thus says the Lord GOD:

- “Behold, My servants shall eat,
 But you shall be hungry;
 Behold, My servants shall drink,
 But you shall be thirsty;
 Behold, My servants shall rejoice,
 But you shall be ashamed;
¹⁴ Behold, My servants shall sing for joy ~~in~~
 heart,
 But you shall cry for sorrow of heart,
 And wail for grief of spirit.
¹⁵ You shall leave your name as a curse ~~to~~
 My chosen;
 For the Lord GOD will slay you,
 And call His servants by another name.
¹⁶ So that he who blesses himself in the
 earth
 Shall bless himself in the God of truth;
 And he who swears in the earth
 Shall swear by the God of truth;
 Because the former troubles are
 forgotten,
 And because they are hidden from My
 eyes.

THE GLORIOUS NEW CREATION

- ¹⁷ “For behold, I create new heavens and a
 new earth;

65:11 ^aLiterally *Troop* or *Fortune*, a pagan deity
^bLiterally *Number* or *Destiny*, a pagan deity

SOUL NOTE



Brand New World (65:17–20) Isaiah is the only prophet in the Old Testament who saw all the way to the new heavens and new earth. Like the apostle John, the prophet saw a time when tears would be wiped away and God’s people would live with Him in a continual state of eternal bliss (Rev. 21:4). Even the best of God’s promises for this life cannot compare to His wonderful promises for the life to come. The God who loves us enough to redeem this fallen world will one day express the greatness of His love by creating a brand-new world for His children.

Topic: God’s Promises

flesh?^a ²For if Abraham was justified by works, he has *something* to boast about, but not before God. ³For what does the Scripture say? *“Abraham believed God, and it was accounted to him for righteousness.”*^a ⁴Now to him who works, the wages are not counted as grace but as debt.

DAVID CELEBRATES THE SAME TRUTH

⁵But to him who does not work but believes on Him who justifies the ungodly, his faith is accounted for righteousness, ⁶just as David also describes the blessedness of the man to whom God imputes righteousness apart from works:

- ⁷ *“Blessed are those whose lawless deeds are forgiven,
And whose sins are covered;
⁸ Blessed is the man to whom the LORD shall not impute sin.”*^a

ABRAHAM JUSTIFIED BEFORE CIRCUMCISION

⁹Does this blessedness then *come* upon the circumcised *only*, or upon the uncircumcised also? For we say that faith was accounted to Abraham for righteousness. ¹⁰How then was it accounted? While he was circumcised, or uncircumcised? Not while circumcised, but while uncircumcised. ¹¹And he received the sign of circumcision, a seal of the righteousness of the faith which *he had while still* uncircumcised, that he might be the father of all those who believe, though they are uncircumcised, that righteousness might be imputed to them also, ¹²and the father of circumcision to those who not only *are* of the circumcision, but who also walk in the steps of the faith which our father Abraham *had while still* uncircumcised.

THE PROMISE GRANTED THROUGH FAITH

¹³For the promise that he would be the heir of the world was not to Abraham or to his seed through the law, but through the righteousness of faith. ¹⁴For if those who are of the law *are heirs*, faith is made void and the promise made of no effect, ¹⁵because the law brings about wrath; for where there is no law *there is* no transgression.

¹⁶Therefore *it is* of faith that *it might be* according to grace, so that the promise might be sure to all the seed, not only to those who are of the law, but also to those who are of the faith of Abraham, who is the father of us all ¹⁷(as it is written, *“I have made you a father of many nations”*^a) in the presence of Him whom he believed—God, who gives life to the dead and calls those things which do not exist as though they did; ¹⁸who, contrary to hope, in hope believed, so that he became the father of many nations, according to what was spoken, *“So shall your descendants be.”*^a ¹⁹And not being weak in faith, he did not consider his own body, already dead (since he was about a hundred years old), and the deadness of Sarah’s womb. ²⁰He did not waver at the promise of God through unbelief, but was strengthened in faith, giving glory to God. ²¹and being fully convinced that what He had promised He was also able to perform. ²²And therefore *“it was accounted to him for righteousness.”*^a

²³Now it was not written for his sake alone that it was imputed to him, ²⁴but also for us. It shall be imputed to us who believe in Him who raised up Jesus our Lord from the dead.

4:1 ^aOr Abraham our (fore)father according to the flesh has found? **4:3** ^aGenesis 15:6 **4:8** ^aPsalms 32:1, 2 **4:17** ^aGenesis 17:5 **4:18** ^aGenesis 15:5 **4:22** ^aGenesis 15:6

SOUL NOTE



Fully Convinced (4:20–22) Paul wanted his readers to understand salvation by faith. Many Jews thought that they would be saved simply because they were Jews and had the Law from Moses. Paul explained, however, that obeying laws can't save anyone because no one can keep God's laws perfectly. Instead, salvation is by faith. Abraham lived before Moses, and so he could not obey the laws of Moses. Yet when God promised Abraham a son, Abraham believed God. That belief "was accounted to him for righteousness." We cannot earn our salvation; we accept God's promise fully convinced that He will keep it. **Topic: God's Promises**

flesh?^a ²For if Abraham was justified by works, he has *something* to boast about, but not before God. ³For what does the Scripture say? *“Abraham believed God, and it was accounted to him for righteousness.”*^a ⁴Now to him who works, the wages are not counted as grace but as debt.

DAVID CELEBRATES THE SAME TRUTH

⁵But to him who does not work but believes on Him who justifies the ungodly, his faith is accounted for righteousness, ⁶just as David also describes the blessedness of the man to whom God imputes righteousness apart from works:

*“Blessed are those whose lawless deeds are forgiven,
And whose sins are covered;
Blessed is the man to whom the LORD shall not impute sin.”*^a

ABRAHAM JUSTIFIED BEFORE CIRCUMCISION

⁹Does this blessedness then *come* upon the circumcised *only*, or upon the uncircumcised also? For we say that faith was accounted to Abraham for righteousness. ¹⁰How then was it accounted? While he was circumcised, or uncircumcised? Not while circumcised, but while uncircumcised. ¹¹And he received the sign of circumcision, a seal of the righteousness of the faith which *he had while still* uncircumcised, that he might be the father of all those who believe, though they are uncircumcised, that righteousness might be imputed to them also, ¹²and the father of circumcision to those who not only *are* of the circumcision, but who also walk in the steps of the faith which our father Abraham *had while still* uncircumcised.

THE PROMISE GRANTED THROUGH FAITH

¹³For the promise that he would be the heir of the world *was* not to Abraham or to his seed through the law, but through the righteousness of faith. ¹⁴For if those who are of the law *are* heirs, faith is made void and the promise made of no effect, ¹⁵because the law brings about wrath; for where there is no law *there is* no transgression.

¹⁶Therefore *it is* of faith that *it might be* according to grace, so that the promise might be sure to all the seed, not only to those who are of the law, but also to those who are of the faith of Abraham, who is the father of us all ¹⁷(as it is written, *“I have made you a father of many nations”*^a) in the presence of Him whom he believed—God, who gives life to the dead and calls those things which do not exist as though they did; ¹⁸who, contrary to hope, in hope believed, so that he became the father of many nations, according to what was spoken: *“So shall your descendants be.”*^a ¹⁹And not being weak in faith, he did not consider his own body, already dead (since he was about a hundred years old), and the deadness of Sarah’s womb. ²⁰He did not waver at the promise of God through unbelief, but was strengthened in faith, giving glory to God. ²¹and being fully convinced that what He had promised He was also able to perform. ²²And therefore *“it was accounted to him for righteousness.”*^a

²³Now it was not written for his sake alone that it was imputed to him, ²⁴but also for us. It shall be imputed to us who believe in Him who raised up Jesus our Lord from the dead.

4:1 ^aOr Abraham our (fore)father according to the flesh has found? 4:3 ^aGenesis 15:6 4:8 ^aPsalms 32:1, 2 4:17 ^aGenesis 17:5 4:18 ^aGenesis 15:5 4:22 ^aGenesis 15:6

SOUL NOTE



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who did not spare His own Son, but delivered Him up for us all, how shall He not with Him also freely give us all things? ³³Who shall bring a charge against God's elect? *It is* God who justifies. ³⁴Who is he who condemns? *It is* Christ who died, and furthermore is also risen, who is even at the right hand of God, who also makes intercession for us. ³⁵Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? *Shall* tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword? ³⁶As it is written:

"For Your sake we are killed all day long; We are accounted as sheep for the slaughter."^a

³⁷Yet in all these things we are more than conquerors through Him who loved us. ³⁸For I am persuaded that neither death nor life, nor angels nor principalities nor powers, nor things present nor things to come, nor height nor depth, nor any other created thing, shall be able to separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.

ISRAEL'S REJECTION OF CHRIST

⁹I tell the truth in Christ, I am not lying, my conscience also bearing me witness in the Holy Spirit, ²that I have great sorrow and continual grief in my heart. ³For I could wish that I myself were accursed from Christ for my brethren, my countrymen^a according to the flesh, ⁴who are Israelites, to whom *pertain* the adoption, the glory, the covenants, the giving

of the law, the service of God, and the promises; ⁵of whom *are* the fathers and from whom, according to the flesh, Christ *came*, who is over all, *the* eternally blessed God. Amen.

ISRAEL'S REJECTION AND GOD'S PURPOSE

⁶But it is not that the word of God has taken no effect. For they *are* not all Israel who *are* of Israel, ⁷nor *are* they all children because they are the seed of Abraham; but, *"In Isaac your seed shall be called."*^a ⁸That is, those who *are* the children of

the flesh, these *are* not the children of God; but the children of the promise are counted as the seed. ⁹For this *is* the word of promise: *"At this time I will come and Sarah shall have a son."*^a

¹⁰And not only *this*, but when Rebecca also had conceived by one man, *even* by our father Isaac ¹¹(for *the children* not yet being born, nor having done any good or evil, that the purpose of God according to election might stand, not of works but of Him who calls), ¹²it was said to her, *"The older shall serve the younger."*^a ¹³As it is written, *"Jacob I have loved, but Esau I have hated."*^a

ISRAEL'S REJECTION AND GOD'S JUSTICE

¹⁴What shall we say then? *Is there* unrighteousness with God? Certainly not! ¹⁵For He

8:36 ^aPsalm 44:22 9:3 ^aOr relatives
9:7 ^aGenesis 21:12 9:9 ^aGenesis 18:10,14
9:12 ^aGenesis 25:23 9:13 ^aMalachi 1:2, 3

SOUL NOTE



Always with Us (8:38, 39) Painful separations happen constantly—friends move away; loved ones die; marriages break up. When people have trusted Christ for salvation, however, nothing can separate them from the love of God. Death cannot separate, for we will be in God's presence. And nothing in life is powerful enough to take God away. Nothing in the realm of the unseen, nothing in time, and nothing in all of the vast universe can separate believers from God's love. When we feel alone or far from God, we must remember His promise that He is with us always, even to the end of the world (Matt. 28:20). **Topic: God's Promises**

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GREETING

1 Paul, a bondservant of God and an apostle of Jesus Christ, according to the faith of God's elect and the acknowledgment of the

truth which accords with godliness,² in hope of eternal life which God, who cannot lie, promised before time began,³ but has in due time manifested His word through preaching,

SOUL NOTE



Promises Kept (1:2) The power of any promise depends on the character of the person who is making the promise. God promised eternal life "before time began." Those who accept Jesus Christ as Savior will obtain the fulfillment of that promise. We can be certain that the promise will be fulfilled, because it is not in God's character to lie. Because we can trust in the character of God, we can also trust in His promise of eternal life in heaven with Him. Such a promise should motivate us to live for Him each day. **Topic: God's Promises**

PERSONALITY PROFILE



Men's Issues

TITUS—CHOOSING GODLY MEN

(TITUS 1:6)

Titus served as the apostle Paul's ambassador to Crete. They spent time on the island spreading the gospel, and Paul left his young disciple behind to strengthen the local churches. The letter Paul sent Titus served as a job description for a crucial task. Paul knew that the success of Titus's efforts would depend on his ability to identify a few good and godly men.

Paul and Titus were fishers of men. They preached a gospel that functioned like a huge net. People of all different backgrounds, experiences, and levels of maturity were drawn to Christ. That diverse gathering of people had to be sorted out and organized. Character qualities had to be identified. Leadership qualities had to be utilized. Titus had the difficult task of spotting those who were on their way to maturity in Christ. He had to further equip and encourage them to serve others as leaders in the church.

On Crete, Paul told Titus to start with the men. He gave Titus a list of traits to look for in a man who would make a good elder among believers. The qualities Paul listed still measure a man's leadership potential. In fact, those qualities (Titus 1:5-9) include most of the male issues facing men today. Titus was on the lookout for men who were:

- > Blameless—who didn't leave problems unsettled in their lives.
- > Faithful to one wife.
- > Raising healthy children.
- > Living out a humble relationship with God.
- > Not self-willed, quick-tempered, violent, or greedy.
- > Practicing hospitality and loving good things.
- > Thinking clearly and pursuing justice, holiness, and self-control.
- > Effectively modeling and teaching the Christian faith.

The church of Jesus Christ still longs for people who will live out their faith with such character. When such leaders are in place, the gospel spreads its net in even wider circles, and more and more people come to Christ. Titus was looking for leaders who had what it takes to care for souls.

To Learn More: Turn to the article about men's issues on pages 1600, 1601. See also the key passage note at Titus 2:2 on page 1615.

with them *and be* their God. ⁴And God will wipe away every tear from their eyes; there shall be no more death, nor sorrow, nor crying. There shall be no more pain, for the former things have passed away.”

⁵Then He who sat on the throne said, “Behold, I make all things new.” And He said to me,^a “Write, for these words are true and faithful.”

⁶And He said to me, “It is done!^a I am the Alpha and the Omega, the Beginning and the End. I will give of the fountain of the water of life freely to him who thirsts. ⁷He who overcomes shall inherit all things,^a and I will be his God and he shall be My son. ⁸But the cowardly, unbelieving,^a abominable, murderers, sexually immoral, sorcerers, idolaters, and all liars shall have their part in the lake which burns with fire and brimstone, which is the second death.”

THE NEW JERUSALEM

⁹Then one of the seven angels who had the seven bowls filled with the seven last plagues came to me^a and talked with me, saying, “Come, I will show you the bride, the Lamb’s wife.”^b ¹⁰And he carried me away in the Spirit

to a great and high mountain, and showed me the great city, the holy^a Jerusalem, descending out of heaven from God, ¹¹having the glory of God. Her light *was* like a most precious stone, like a jasper stone, clear as crystal.

¹²Also she had a great and high wall with twelve gates, and twelve angels at the gates, and names written on them, which are *the names* of the twelve tribes of the children of Israel: ¹³three gates on the east, three gates on the north, three gates on the south, and three gates on the west.

¹⁴Now the wall of the city had twelve foundations, and on them were the names^a of the twelve apostles of the Lamb. ¹⁵And he who talked with me had a gold reed to measure the city, its gates, and its wall. ¹⁶The city is laid out as a square; its length is as great as its

21:5 ^aNU-Text and M-Text omit *to me*.
 21:6 ^aM-Text omits *It is done*. 21:7 ^aM-Text reads *overcomes, I shall give him these things*
 21:8 ^aM-Text adds *and sinners*. 21:9 ^aNU-Text and M-Text omit *to me*. ^bM-Text reads *I will show you the woman, the Lamb’s bride*. 21:10 ^aNU-Text and M-Text omit *the great and* and read *the holy city, Jerusalem*. 21:14 ^aNU-Text and M-Text read *twelve names*.

SOUL NOTE



All Things New (21:5) Everything that has been perverted by sin, death, and decay will be created over again at the end of history. All pain, sorrow, and death will pass away (21:4). Once again, everything will be perfect, straight from the hand of God. God promises that He will “make all things new.” Broken lives will be healed. Tears will cease. Souls will be renewed. Believers will be given heavenly bodies for living with God in paradise forever. This recreated and renewed world is God’s spectacular gift to those who have trusted in Him. We must stand strong for God; His promises will surely come to pass. **Topic: God’s Promises**

SOUL NOTE



True Home (21:10–27) Most people know the wonderful feeling of having a place where they are wanted and cared for, a place that they can call their own. John described the heavenly home that is waiting for Jesus’ followers. In the new Jerusalem, the streets are made of gold and the foundations adorned with jewels. And most importantly, God lives there. His glory gives light to the city. Although we may have a home we enjoy on this earth, one day we will reach our ultimate destination—our true home in heaven with God forever. We must be sure we are ready. **Topic: Eternal Life**

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