

Standing on the Promises of God

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Introduction

When someone makes a promise, he or she makes a solemn commitment. Promises play an important role in everyday activities. Employees perform an honest day's work, while employers agree to give an honest day's pay. When we take out a loan at the bank, we pledge to repay our debts. The exchange of vows at a wedding ceremony express a couples lifelong commitment to each other.

Promises are also an important part of the Christian religion (2 Pet. 1:1-4). God has made certain pledges to us, and we to Him. The song, *Standing on the Promises of God*, is an expression of our confidence in God and His promises.

This lesson is designed to deepen our appreciation for the promises of God. To this end, we ask three questions: First, what is the basic value of the thing promised; second, what is the character of the promisor; and, third, what are the conditions of the promise?

The Basic Value of the Thing Promised

Men have been known to promise things that in reality were of little value. Certain land deals, "get rich quick" schemes, and email offers from rich Nigerian widows fall into this category. Occasionally, we often get advertisements through the mail stating that if we will visit XYZ Land Development on Lake Pleasant Waters and sit through a high-pressure sales pitch, we will win either a new boat, a color television, or a set of

steak knives. Some years ago, we worshipped with a man who worked for one of these land development corporations. While he never saw anyone receive a new boat or a color T.V., he acknowledged that plenty of steak knives were given out.

God's promises, in contrast, are of immense value (2 Pet. 1:4). They include the forgiveness of sins (Isa. 1:18), fellowship with the Father (Isa. 57:15), an abundant life in the present (John 10:10), and hope for the hereafter (1 John 5:11). Such assurances involve man's most valuable possession, his soul (Matt. 16:26).

The Character of the Promisor

The character of the promisor often determines the worth of the promise. Many lack integrity and character, and this leads to broken promises. Examples of this can be seen on every hand: in politics, business, marriage, and even the church.

In contrast with man's inconsistency, God is faithful and unchanging (Num. 23:19; James 1:17). Moreover, He has the power to accomplish what He has promised (Gen. 18:10-14; Rom. 4:18-21). Accordingly, we can have every confidence that God will do as He has said (Heb. 6:16-19; 10:23).

The Nature and Conditions of the Promise

There are certain things God has not promised: Man is not promised a second chance after death (Tit. 2:11-12; Heb. 9:27), a life free of hardship (2 Tim. 3:12; James 1:2-4), or for that matter, another day of life (Prov. 27:1; James 4:13-15).


Certain of God's promises are unconditional. They are absolute and steadfast, without limitation or restriction. For example, God unconditionally promised never again to destroy the world by water as He did in the days of Noah (Gen. 9:11). His promise of summer and winter, seed-time and harvest still abides (Gen. 8:22). The promise of Christ's second coming also remains sure (John 14:1-3).

Certain of God's promises are conditional. That is, they will not be fulfilled until man responds in a certain way. For example, His promise to answer prayer is contingent upon our faith (James 1:6-7; 1 John 3:22; 5:14). The promise of forgiveness is based upon obedience (Acts 2:38; 22:16). So also, the hope of eternal life (Matt. 7:21; Heb. 5:9).

Conclusion

Such a study helps us gain a deeper appreciation for the promises of God. When we look at the value of the things God has promised, when we consider His character and the conditions of His promises, then we can truly realize that they are exceedingly great and precious. Therefore, let us manifest diligence and patience as we pursue the promises of God (Heb. 6:10-12; 10:35-36).

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