

Christianity 101

The Promises of God! Part 1

A Bible Study of The Mount Zion Church

Written by
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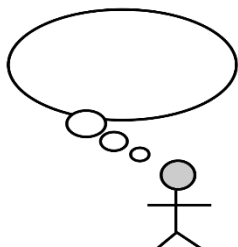
Introduction: One of the more common approaches to promoting Christianity occurs as preachers and pastors highlight how one can actualize the promises of God in their lives. Commercialized religion suggests that one could buy God's promises at just the right price. Some even suggest that attending a specific church location is the key because they are the Holy Ghost Headquarters. It would seem the formula for achieving the promises of God includes everything from wearing certain clothing to completing religious acts of righteousness. And yet, as Bible students, we must ask ourselves is that what the Word of God actually means? The following lesson is intended to clarify 1. How we position ourselves to get the promises of God 2. What God intends when He makes promises to us.

Promise (Noun) a declaration or assurance that one will do a particular thing or that a particular thing will happen.

Using this common definition, we see that promises have something to do with having the ability to ensure that one's declarations become a reality. Promises are more than statements about what could happen. Promises are statements about what will happen.

With this in mind, we must first acknowledge that to be able to cause what one says to occur requires the ability or power to make it happen. We often hear people make promises, yet their ability to make happen what they say is limited. For example, as one watches television, commercials about medicine tell us that a particular prescription works on a particular ailment. However, a close listening of the commercial will identify that X amount of people prescribed saw results in X number of weeks. The percentage of people is never 100 % because pharmaceutical companies cannot promise their medication works for everyone. The medicine's power is limited, therefore the company's ability to promise success is limited to most but not all patients.

- Promises are only as true as the power behind them to accomplish what is said.



Have you ever made a promise that you did not have the power to accomplish? One such statement was made in Matthew 26: 31-34 by Peter. Notice, his emotion and fervor for Jesus gave him a desire to do, but desire alone does not make something happen. "I will never say I don't know you!"

sounds good in the moment, yet in the face of death, Peter did not keep his promise. In that moment, fear was a greater power than his commitment to Jesus.

What Is God Promising Us?

We can acknowledge the power needed to make a promise occur. Some promises we make are possible because our power is limited. All the promises God makes are possible. There is a distinct difference between our power and God's power. God has all power! Having all power ensures that every promise can become reality.

But how many promises are in the Bible from God? When one researches the promises of God (thanks Google!) you will find that some say there are as few as 3000 and as many as over 15, 000. One writer identified a very exact number of 8, 810! Wow, that's a lot!

Since we cannot study all of the promises of God, what can we do? The smarter approach is to identify a promise that covers all of God's promises and identifies God's intent for mankind. This leads us to Genesis 17: 7-8. Here we find God's promise to Abraham.



What does God promise to Abraham? _____
(look for the repeated phrase)

- To make this one promise happen, what does God have to do?
 - What actions are required?
 - How much time is required?
 - How many resources are required?

This becomes the key to us understanding the 3000 or 8, 810, or 15, 000 or however many promises we find in the Bible! In order for God to make this one promise happen, all of the others must happen.

Repetitively through God's Word we find that His sole intent is for us, to be His. I will be your God and you will be my people is the foundational statement of God's purpose and He moves through history to accomplish this task.

Let's analyze Psalm 1 with the understanding that all of God's word leads us to His intent to be our God and for us to be His people.

Since we are talking about God's promises, let us begin it with the following phrase:

God promises me that

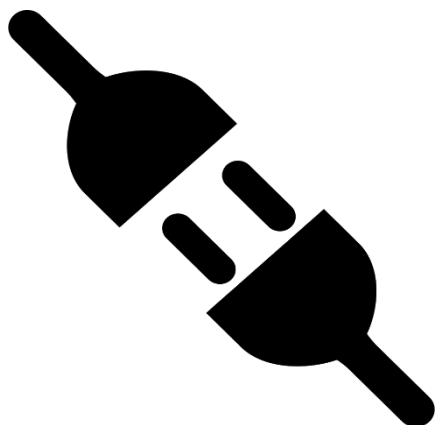
Psalm 1

- ¹ Blessed is the one
who does not walk in step with the wicked
or stand in the way that sinners take
or sit in the company of mockers,
² but whose delight is in the law of the LORD,
and who meditates on his law day and night.
³ That person is like a tree planted by streams of water,
which yields its fruit in season
and whose leaf does not wither—
whatever they do prospers.
⁴ Not so the wicked!
They are like chaff
that the wind blows away.
⁵ Therefore the wicked will not stand in the judgment,
nor sinners in the assembly of the righteous.
⁶ For the LORD watches over the way of the righteous,
but the way of the wicked leads to destruction.

BECAUSE He is trying to get me to a point where I am functioning as His...Therefore, He will do the following as I follow His expectations.

1. Bless me (vs. 1)
2. Establish me (beginning of vs. 3)
3. Protect me (middle of vs. 3)
4. Prosper me (end of vs. 3)

If I choose not to be His (key word choose) verses 4-6 become the result.



Promise Blockers!

A word of warning! Two things can disconnect God's promises in your life. Only two.

1. Disobedience
2. Lack of Faith

These two disconnectors have interrupted God's power in our individual lives more often than many of us would like to admit! When was the last time that God had to delay or deny a promise to you because you chose a different answer than His? We see this occur in Numbers 13: 2, 17-20, 25-29, 31. as the original blessing of The Promised Land was passed on to the descendants of those who came out of Egypt. The forefathers' lack of faith and disobedience caused their promise to be denied to everyone except Caleb and Joshua. In one decision, they overrode God's plan for their lives and missed their blessing.

Faith and obedience always open the door to God's ultimate promises to become manifested in our lives. The key to understanding this idea is that God cannot be your god if you and I are the ones directing our own lives. In Psalm 119: 105 we are reminded that God's Word directs and gives safety. "Lamp and Light" are the images used to let us know what God wants to do for us. If, however, we choose to direct ourselves, then we have made ourselves god and disconnected ourselves from God's promises.

Remember, God has a plan which is centered on the salvation of mankind. To make that plan come to fruition, He declares (promises) to be our God. In order to fulfill His role of "our God," He must provide, protect, etc. All of this moves us towards fulfilling our ultimate purpose which is to be His people. In our next lesson, we will identify what we are supposed to do with God's promises when they happen in our lives!

Let's Pause here and consider the following:

1. What are promises?
2. Why does God make promises to me?
3. How can I mess up God's promised plan?