

THE PROMISES OF GOD

2nd Cor. 1:20, "For all the promises of God find their Yes in him." and 2 Peter 1:4, "by which He has granted to us exceeding great & precious promises"

INTRODUCTION: God is dependable.

You can count on him.

He will not let you down. *(See Phillips Trans) over}*

He has "exceeding great and precious promises,"

2nd Peter 1:4

I. First, Notice the Great Variety of God's promises.

A. "All the promises of God," all kinds of promises - for every circumstance of life.

O.T. promises and N.T. promises,

(p.1) ~~*NOTE from Genesis through Revelation.~~

~~B. Notice some of the many kinds of promises:~~

~~1. Promises of salvation, I Jn. 2:25.~~

~~2. Promises for cleansing & forgiveness, Prov. 5:7, and Ps. 119:11.~~

~~3. Promises for comfort and satisfaction, Jn. 14:1-3; I Thes. 4:13-18; Ps. 63:6-8, and 65:4.~~

~~4. Promises for deliverance and security, Job. 11:8-10; Ps. 119:117; Mt. 28:20.~~

~~5. A promise for open windows of blessing, Malachi 3:10.~~

~~6. A promise for "all your need," Phil. 4:19.~~

II. Notice the Heavenly Dignity of these promises: they are not of MAN but of GOD.

A. They partake of the very nature of God; see the divine qualities of these promises.

B. They reveal something of the will and purpose of God.

~~* C. NOTE, R2~~

~~III. Notice their Surety or their Guarantee.~~

~~A. They are "in Him" -- in Jesus Christ Jesus himself has guaranteed them.~~

~~B. They remind us of the surety of the covenant.~~

"He is the divine "Yes."

Every promise of God finds its affirmative in him, and through him can be said the final amen, to the glory of God.

We owe our position in Christ to this God of positive promise;

it is he who has consecrated us to this special work, he who has given us the living guarantee of the Spirit

in our hearts." (2 Cor 1:20-22, Phillips trans.)

~~C. The promises of God form a great checkbook and every check is endorsed by the Mediator of our faith, the Lord Jesus Christ, and his word and honor are pledged to their fulfillment. (Heb. 10:23)~~

~~D. In a sense they are given to Him as our Federal Head and Representative; he fulfilled the conditions of redemption, and now, for his sake, we can claim every one of the promises just as fully as if we had fulfilled the conditions ourselves.~~

~~E. Christ today pleads and intercedes in heaven for us.~~

IV. Notice now the CERTAINTY of God's promises.

A. "All the promises of God in Him are YEA, or 'Yes indeed'."

~~B. Paul may not have kept his promise about coming to the Corinthians (vs. 15-19).~~

C. God always reassures us with his certain "Yea - yes indeed."

* D. See NOTE, P. 3

IV. Notice next the REALITY of God's promises.

A. "Amen" signifies "verily, really." (vs. 20b)

B. God's promises are REAL - not imaginary.

C. Some people deliberately make promises in order to avoid doing something.

It is easier to promise than it is to ACT.

D. God's promises make the thing which he promises as sure and real as if it were already done. (Compare Gen. 12:7 with 15:18).

E. The "AMEN" is our answer to God's "Yea" or "Yes." It should be the act of faith by which we make the promises our own. "We utter the 'Amen'" (vs. 20b)

1. When we receive a check from anyone it is of no value unless we first believe it is real and good.

2. Then you must write your own name upon the back of it, and thus personally appropriate it to yourself, and then it becomes payable.

* F. See NOTE - (our "amen")
(top of P. 4)

To go uninvited to
someone's house and make
yourself at home is
presumption.

② To take for granted
that a gracious host &
hostess mean what they
say when they invite
you to make yourself
at home is politeness.

V.. The RESULT of the Promises of God.

A. "The glory of God." (vs. 20b)

B. We glorify his condescending love in making the promises.

C. We glorify his power as we see him keeping the promises.

D. We glorify him in our lives as we live according to his promises and requirements.

* E. See NOTE, (mid. p. 4)

~~VII. The REALIZATION of God's promises.~~

~~A. "By us" - his believing children. (KJV)~~

~~B. We must know his promises.~~

~~C. We must learn how to use them.~~

~~(When potatoes were first introduced into Ireland, they were rejected, because the Irish people didn't know how to use them!)~~

~~D. When the promises are conditional, we must fulfill the conditions attached to them.~~

~~E. We must APPROPRIATE God's promises.~~

~~F. We must bear witness to the fulfillment of God's promises.~~

CONCLUSION: God has promised us that, although the heavens and the earth shall pass away, His word will never pass away. Very few people out of all the earth's inhabitants since the creation of Adam and Eve ever imagined that the stars they saw in the heavens would some time pass away or burn out. But ~~this is what~~ geophysicists tell us, ~~now~~ ^{though} it will take unimaginably long ages, ~~but~~ some time in the distant future our sun and the other stars will burn themselves out, and perhaps new stars will take their places. But God's word is more secure than ~~our~~ the laws of nature; even though the heaven and the earth shall pass away, the promises of God will never fail in the smallest respect. God is dependable. You can count on Him. He will not let you down.

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limited
under-
standing
of

(variety)

I.B. Paul would naturally think of all the promises of God in the O.T. Scriptures.

The O.T. pages are studded with those promises as the night sky is with stars.

Some were prophetic visions of what God had in store for his people when the time was ripe.

Some were direct and simple promises of his forgiving mercy and deliverance. Many spoke of God's promise of redemption and forgiveness that would restore people to fellowship with God.

There were also promises of a new kingdom in which God's rule would become supreme, and righteousness and peace would be established on the earth.

These promises were definite and clear to the Apostle Paul, and he wanted the Corinthian Christians to understand and appreciate and claim them by faith, for they were not to Jews alone, but to all believers everywhere in God's Messiah and Redeemer. The future blessedness of all God's children is included in His promises.

In this universal kingdom, which they entered through faith in Christ, all believers, Jews and Gentiles, black and white, slaves and free, women and girls, as well as men and boys, would find an equal opportunity to worship, praise, and serve the Lord.

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(over)

(Dignity)

II.C. It is part of the will and purpose of God to give us his blessings and do wonderful things for us, as we lean on his promises.

The hope he has put in our hearts is a reflection of the things God has prepared for those who love and trust in him.

Christ purifies our desires.

He makes us want the things God is waiting and anxious to GIVE.

He awakens the spiritual hunger which he came to SATISFY.

As we abide in Christ we learn what it is we ought to pray for, with the assurance that such prayers will surely be answered.

We realize that life does not consist in the possession and enjoyment of material things.

But this doesn't mean that our material hopes won't be fulfilled.

Jesus promised that if we seek first the Kingdom of God all that we need will be added to us.

The material blessings of life, and the peace, freedom, and happiness for which we naturally long, will come to us, because we NEED them; they are by-products of the spiritual blessings of the Kingdom of God.

Christians find material and physical blessings in their fullness only when they cease to set their hearts upon them, and only when they cease to give them the highest priority in their life. — when they seek first to know and do the will of God for the glory of God.

→ "Your Heavenly Father knows that you have need of these things." (mt. 6:8)

(certainty)

III. D. We are assured of the certainty of the promises of God because of his hold of us, not our hold on him. This is what makes us as Christians worthy of trust.

Paul's credibility and stability as a minister was under attack in Corinth. His enemies accused him of being vacillating and of not keeping his word. Evidently Paul's entire style of ministry was under attack. There were those who wanted Paul to be more positive, forceful, decisive, dogmatic, and inflexible. They accused Paul of not keeping his word to return to Corinth for another visit soon after his last visit. Paul's explanation, and his reason for changing his plans, are given in Chapter 2, verses 1-4. Evidently they had a very "painful" confrontation, as he called it, and he changed his mind about returning so soon, to give things time to calm down and ill feelings to heal. He didn't want to cause them more pain.

He changed his plans because of the new circumstances, as any wise person, it seems, SHOULD do. But his critics condemned him for that.

This passage throws light on Paul's style of ministry. Today, in our time, as then in that second generation of Christian churches, there were those ministers who felt the pastors should exercise a great deal of "authority" in the churches. Paul said in 1:24 "not that we lord it over your faith; we work WITH YOU, for your joy." It wasn't Paul's style of ministry to "lord it over the faith" of the Christians in the churches where he ministered. He preferred to work "with" them than to make DEMANDS of them. The pastor does not have the right to arbitrarily impose his own ideas on his hearers, or to dictate their conduct. It is the authority of the Spirit that counts, and the Spirit does not dictate like this. He PERSUADES: he reveals the truth which brings us own conviction and authority; he subdues by the power of goodness and love.

(Reality - "Amen")

IV. F. We claim the promises of God by uttering the "Amen" to them. "Amen" is a Hebrew word meaning "so be it." It was taken over into Greek as a word of reverent affirmation. It was used in Christian worship to show agreement to a declaration or testimony [1 Cor 14:16, for example]. This "Amen", like all Christian speech and action, is expressed THROUGH CHRIST. The "we" here [RSV] probably refers to the group of Christians who express grateful praise to God for what he has done.

When Christians say "Amen" to the promises of God, they are CLAIMING THE PROMISES BY FAITH FOR THEMSELVES, as trusting children of God.

(Result - Glory of God)

V. E. How can you know if you are living in the will of God, and have a right or privilege of claiming the promises of God for yourself? Just as Paul had to test himself in this regard, we can and MUST test ourselves the same way, before we can assume that we indeed have the "earnest" or "guarantee of the Spirit in our hearts" [vs. 22].

No one can be sure of this spiritual condition merely by a surge of emotion and tears which take control so that they are no longer in command of their words or actions. The test of the Spirit's presence is ethical and spiritual, not emotional. The proof of the Spirit is righteousness, goodness, and love. The possession of the Holy Spirit is best determined by asking certain questions:

1. Is this action that is suggested one that Christ would have us take?
2. Is it in line with his command or his purpose, his teaching and example?
3. Is it consistent with the teaching and example of the N.T. as a whole, and with the best traditions of the finest Christian churches down through the years?
4. What is the influence of the suggested action on others? Does it produce in them the desire to know God and to be faithful followers of Jesus Christ?
5. Is it for selfish reasons or for the glory of God? Do spiritual values become more real, and material values less important, through this?