

A Time Between Promise and Performance

"For all the promises, of God in him are yea, and in him Amen, unto the glory of God by us." 2Corinthians 1:20

PROMISE (NOUN AND VERB)

A. Noun.

1. epangelia ^1860^, primarily a law term, denoting "a summons" (epi, "upon," angello, "to proclaim, announce"), also meant "an undertaking to do or give something, a promise." Except in <Acts 23:21> it is used only of the "promises" of God. It frequently stands for the thing "promised," and so signifies a gift graciously bestowed, not a pledge secured by negotiation; thus, in <Gal. 3:14>, "the promise of the Spirit" denotes "the promised Spirit": cf. <Luke 24:49; Acts 2:33> and <Eph. 1:13>; so in <Heb. 9:15>, "the promise of the eternal inheritance" is "the promised eternal inheritance." On the other hand, in <Acts 1:4>, "the promise of the Father," is the "promise" made by the Father.

The occurrences of the word in relation to Christ and what centers in Him, may be arranged under the headings (1) the contents of the "promise," e. g., <Acts 26:6; Rom. 4:20; 1 John 2:25>; (2) the heirs, e. g., <Rom. 9:8; 15:8; Gal. 3:29; Heb. 11:9>; (3) the conditions, e. g., <Rom. 4:13,14; Gal. 3:14-22; Heb. 10:36>.

PROMISE (NOUN AND VERB)

B. Verbs.

1. epangello ^1861^, "to announce, proclaim," has in the NT the two meanings "to profess" and "to promise," each used in the middle voice; "to promise" (a) of "promises" of God, <Acts 7:5; Rom. 4:21>; in <Gal. 3:19>, passive voice; <Titus 1:2; Heb. 6:13; 10:23; 11:11; 12:26; Jas. 1:12; 2:5; 1 John 2:25>; (b) made by men, <Mark 14:11; 2 Pet. 2:19>. See PROFESS.

ALL THE PROMISES-- 2 COR. 1:20

- I. **THE DIGINITY OF THE PROMISES.** Notice the apostle's words: "For all the promises of God in him are yea"

These promises were all made according to the purpose of his own will. We sometimes read, or hear, or speak of the promises written in God's Word, but do not give them as much credit as if they were the promises of a friend, or of our father, or our brother.

"the promises of God." Men often change their minds; even the apostle did that, and therefore he was wise to try to take the thoughts of those, to whom he was writing, off from the promises even of an apostle, which were liable to change, and which might very properly not be carried out because of altered circumstances, and lead them away to the promises of God, which are unfailing and unchangeable, and are always fulfilled to His glory and to our profit.

. What! Has it come to this,-- that God's own children cannot believe Him? Is it so, that we, who say that "we love him because he first loved us" <1 Jn 4:19>, yet add to that declaration, "but there are some of his promises which we cannot believe"? "God, that cannot lie."

Further, His power is bound up with His promise. Shall it ever be said that God failed to keep His promise because He could not keep it, or because He miscalculated His resources, or His arm waxed short, or the great deeps of His eternal Godhead became dried up? No; that cannot be, for what He has promised He will always be able to perform.

So, then, if we slight the promises of God, we slight also His truth, His immutability, and His power.

And we also seriously compromise His mercy and His love. It was love that moved Him to give the promise

II. THE RANGE OF THE PROMISES, for Paul here speaks of "all the promises of God."

There is a prospect for you: "All the promises." There are very many of them, and they are found in both the Old and the New Testaments. There was one given at the gates of the garden of Eden, very near the commencement of human history. There is another right at the end of the Revelation: "Surely I come quickly." The Bible is a Book of precious promises; heart of the text: "For all the promises of God in him are yea, and in him Amen"

All the promises," the Old Testament ones as well as those in the New Testament, are sure and steadfast. The conditional promises-- if we believe, and if we repent,- - God will certainly fulfil; and the unconditional ones-- the promises of the

everlasting covenant, in which He pledges Himself to give men repentance, and to give them new hearts and right spirits,-- He will keep them, too.

God will fulfil all temporal promises. Bread shall be given you, and water shall be assured unto you, if you are the Lord's children. He will keep His promises about temporal affairs as well as those which concern everlasting joys and blessings.

"No good thing will he withhold from them that walk uprightly" <Ps 84:11>. You may speak of the promises in any way that you please, and then you may say that the Lord will keep them all;

Men's promises are but breath, they would never feed us; but God's promises can satisfy us, for they are the substance of the things hoped for; and faith, the evidence of things not seen, rejoices to see that which is invisible, to lay hold of that which it cannot touch, and to feed upon that which, as yet, it cannot taste. Faith works wonders.

THE STABILITY OF THE PROMISES.

ALL THE PROMISES-- 2 COR. 1:20

The promises of God are very firm, for first, they are settled on an everlasting basis, for they are promises in Christ. As I look at the text, I can see two words leaping up out of it; and as I look at it again, I see the same two words leaping up again: "**in him.**" all the promises of God" are in Christ Jesus our Lord.

Col 2:9

9 For in him dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily.

John 15:7

7 If ye abide in me, and my words abide in you, ye shall ask what ye will, and it shall be done unto you.

THE RESULT OF THE PROMISES.

The promises of God are His glory. There is no pretended god that has ever been supposed to make promises like those of our God. Turn to the Koran, and see what Mohammed has promised. Ah, me! What a beggarly array of promises does he set before his followers! Turn to Brahma and Buddha, and read all the so-called sacred books written by their priests, and see what their gods are said to

have promised. You can put the essence of it all into an egg-shell, and not see it even then. But our God has promised more than heaven and earth can hold. He has promised to give Himself to His people. He is the great Promiser,-- the mighty Promiser. I set the promises of God in comparison and contrast with all the promises that were ever made in connection with all false systems of religion under heaven, and unhesitatingly declare that there are none that can compare for an instant with the promises of the Most High that "he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life" <Jn 3:15-16>! The gift of the Redeemer, the life of the Redeemer, the death of the Redeemer, the intercession of the Redeemer, the making the promises sure,-- all this is greatly to the glory of God.

!" Now look. God wants to have the glory of being merciful; yes, but He cannot have that glory unless there is a sinner somewhere to whom He can show mercy; a sinner is an essential part of the whole business.

Suppose that the king, who made the great supper, had said to his servants, "Go out into the highways and hedges, and compel them to come in" <Lk 14:23>; and that they had come back to him, and said, "There is not a single creature under the hedges or in the highways; there is not even a solitary beggar anywhere about the streets or lanes of the city." Then he could not have had the feast, whatever dainties he might have prepared, if he had not anybody to eat them. It would have been a mournful business to have the oxen and failings killed, and heaped upon the tables, yet nobody to sit down to here partake of them. Even the king, if he is to have honour, must be dependent for once on the beggars in the highways and hedges. Is not this wonderful? God wants to show His power in pardoning my sin, but He cannot do it if I have no sin to be pardoned; and if I do not come to Him to be pardoned, and do not ask for His mercy, then it lies like dead capital never spent. The Lord delights to help the weak; it is His joy to do it; but suppose that there is no weak person anywhere, what is to happen then? Ah! but I think I hear the weak souls crying out, "By us! By us! 'To the glory of God by us.' He delights to help the poor and needy, and He cannot do so if there are not some poor and needy ones for Him to help; so, when we seek His aid, it is 'to the glory of God by us.' "And the Lord delights to make His strength perfect in our weakness.

Luke 1:11 PP8

1. That an angel should now appear, as such a favour had not been granted for 400 years.

2. The person to whom this angel was sent-- one of the priests. The sacerdotal office itself pointed out the Son of God till he came: by him it was to be completed, and in him it was to be eternally established: Thou art priest forever, <Psa. 110:4>

3. The place in which the angel appeared-- Jerusalem; out of which the word of the Lord should go forth, <Isa. 2:3>, and not at Hebron, in the hill country of Judea, where Zacharias lived, <Luke 1:39>, which was the ordinary residence of the priests, <Josh. 21:11>, where there could have been few witnesses of this interposition of God, and the effects produced by it.

4. The place where he was when the angel appeared to him-- the temple, which was the place where God was to be sought; the place of his residence, and a type of the human nature of the blessed Jesus, <John 2:21>

5. The time in which this was done-- the solemn hour of public prayer. God has always promised to be present with those who call upon him. When the people and the priest go hand in hand, and heart with heart, to the house of God, the angel of his presence shall surely accompany them, and God shall appear among them.

6. The employment of Zacharias when the angel appeared-- he was burning incense, one of the most sacred and mysterious functions of the Levitical priesthood, and which typified the intercession of Christ: confer <Heb. 7:25>

Heb 7:25

25 Wherefore he is able also to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by him, seeing he ever liveth to make intercession for them.

Luke 9:24

24 For whosoever will save his life shall lose it: but whosoever will lose his life for my sake, the same shall save it.

[On the right side ...] The altar of incense stood close by the veil which divided the holy place from the most holy. On the north stood the table of showbread; on the south the golden candlestick. As Zechariah entered, therefore, with his face to the west, the angel would stand on the north, or near the table of showbread. That table was 18 inches square and precious metal. Upon this altar incense was burned every morning and every evening, so that it was literally perpetual, <Exo. 30:8>. Neither burnt-sacrifice, nor meat-offering, nor drink-offering was permitted upon this altar; nor was it ever stained with blood except once annually, when the priest made atonement, <Lev. 16:18-19>.

FEAR NOT, FOR THY PRAYER HAS BEEN HEARD.

No doubt for that of a child.

And Zacharias said unto the angel, Whereby shall I know this? for I am an old man, and my wife well stricken in years.

IS GOD'S WORD NOT ENOUGH, HIS PROMISE,,, BUT WE HUMANS HAVE TO HAVE PROOF.

Luke 1:19

And the angel answering said unto him, I am Gabriel, that stand in the presence of God; and am sent to speak unto thee, and to shew thee these glad tidings.

1:20

And, behold, thou shalt be dumb, and not able to speak, until the day that these things shall be performed, because thou believest not my words, which shall be fulfilled in their season.

7. The long continued and publicly known dumbness of the priest, who doubted the word thus miraculously sent to him from the Lord: a solemn intimation of what God would do to all those who would not believe in the Lord Jesus. Every mouth shall be stopped.

Luke 1:23 PP2

HE DIDN'T STOP WORKING.

Again, Zacharias did not hasten to his house to tell his wife the good news that he had received from heaven, in which she was certainly very much interested: the angel had promised that all his words should be fulfilled in their season, and for this season he patiently waited in the path of duty. He had engaged in the work of the Lord, and must pay no attention to anything that was likely to mar or interrupt his religious service. Preachers who profess to be called of God to labour in the word and doctrine, and who abandon their work for filthy lucre's sake, are the most contemptible of mortals, and traitors to their God.