

The God That Promises

“He staggered not at the promise of God through unbelief; but was strong in faith, giving glory to God; And being fully persuaded that, what he had promised, he was able also to perform” (Romans 4:19-21).

“God is not a man, that he should lie; neither the son of man, that he should repent: hath he said, and shall he not do it? or hath he spoken, and shall he not make it good?” (Numbers 23:19).

It was one of those rare moments sketched in memory. During the introduction to my Sunday morning message I asked the African village congregation, “How many promises are there in God’s Word for you!” Enthusiastically, a young girl raised her hand and said, “There is one promise in God’s Word.” Someone else added, “There are two promises.” Finally, the church drummer enthusiastically proclaimed, “There are seven promises in God’s Word for His people.” All were wrong. All were far from the answer.

There are 7,487 promises in the Bible from God to man, and many of them are directed to us. Sadly, through ignorance, we live far below what God has in mind for us. We are the children of the promise (Romans 9:8; Galatians 4:28) and the heirs of promise (Hebrews 6:12, 17). It is our inheritance. God has many good things in mind for us.

There is even a *Personal Promise Bible* presently available. You can read your name personalized in over 5,000 places in the New Testament, Psalms, and Proverbs.

Here are a few examples:

“If **Kofi** dwells in the secret place of the Most High, **Kofi** will rest in the shadow of the Almighty” (Psalms 91:1).

“By which He has granted to **Kofi** His precious and exceedingly great promises..” (2 Peter 1:4).

“The Lord is **Kofi’s** shepherd. **Kofi** shall not want” (Psalms 23:1).

You may never own a *Personal Promise Bible* but you can mentally insert your name into every promise God intended for mankind.

Promises can be placed in all kinds of categories. Basically there are only two types: conditional and unconditional.

Most promises are conditional. God says, "I'll do this if you do that!" The condition(s) must be met in order for the promise to be fulfilled. God waits on us to do our part, so He can do His.

"If my people, which are called by my name, shall humble themselves, and pray, and seek my face, and turn from their wicked ways; then will I hear from heaven, and will forgive their sin, and will heal their land" (2 Chronicles 7:14).

Unconditional promises are without conditions. God will do it no matter what we do or don't do. Nothing can stop it.

"This same Jesus, who has been taken from you into heaven, will come back in the same way you have seen him go into heaven" (Acts 1:11, *NIV*).

"And it shall come to pass in the last days, saith God, I will pour out of my Spirit upon all flesh" (Acts 2:17).

Some promises combine both.

"And, behold, I send the promise of my Father upon you: but tarry ye in the city of Jerusalem, until ye be endued with power from on high" (Luke 24:49).

The unconditional part of this promise is that the Holy Spirit was to be sent. The condition was they had to wait in Jerusalem to receive it.

God is a Promise Keeper: "Deep in your hearts you know that every promise of the LORD your God has come true. Not a single one has failed! But as surely as the LORD your God has given you the good things he promised, he will also bring disaster on you if you disobey him. He will completely wipe you out from this good land he has given you" (Joshua 23:14-16, *NLT*).

Dick and Margaret were missionaries in a place caught up by an invasion. Their story is told in a book entitled, *Steel in His Soul, The Dick Hillis Story*. Dick developed a sickness and had to be admitted into the hospital. It was at the worst time. Margaret was sad as she watched her husband leave. Soon an army officer came with news. The enemy was near. Everyone should evacuate.

Margaret and her two children could not leave. She stayed. She prayed. Early the next morning she ripped a page from her wall calendar. It contained a Scripture: “What time I am afraid, I will trust in thee” (Psalms 56:3).

The town emptied during the day, but Margaret didn’t move. The next morning she again ripped a page from her calendar. The new day’s Scripture read: “Thou, Lord hast not forsaken them that seek thee” (Psalms 9:10).

The next day when she woke she heard distant sounds of gunfire. She worried about finding food for her hungry children. Someone came with a basket of eggs. Another person brought milk. The calendar verse for the day: “I will nourish you and your little ones” (Genesis 50:21).

The sounds of war grew stronger and Margaret prayed for protection and deliverance. The next morning she tore the page from her calendar. It read: “When I cry unto Thee, then shall my enemies turn back” (Psalms 56:9).

The fighting came closer. That night Margaret could not sleep. Danger was close. But, in the morning all was calm. The army officer returned and knocked on her door. He told her in amazement, “The enemy has retreated. It’s unbelievable!” No one could understand it. Peace returned. Margaret glanced at her calendar and praised the God that promises.