

THE NATURE OF GOD'S PROMISES 2Pet.1:1-11

I. INTRODUCTION

1. I shall use this text to introduce God's promises, but shall enlarge upon it and extend its limited application to a broader study of God's promises and make a study of the nature of God's promises as they pertain to both saint and sinner.
2. In introducing this text take notice that Peter directs our attention to God's promises given to those who "have obtained like precious faith with us through the righteousness of God and our Savior Jesus Christ," Vv.1,4a.
 - a. "Through the righteousness of God and our Savior Jesus Christ" refers to God's means of making men righteous or saving them through the faith of Jesus Christ by means of their faith in and obedience to the gospel of Christ, Rom.1:16,17; Gal.2:16; Rom.3: 19-26; 10:1-4; Phil.3:7-9; Cf. Mk.16:15,16; Rom.4:25; Gal.3:22-29
3. He says to those "who have obtained (this) like precious faith," "Grace and peace be multiplied unto you (be yours in ever-increasing measure; be to you in increasing abundance) through the knowledge of God, and of Jesus our Lord (i.e., through coming to know him and Jesus; or as you advance in the knowledge of him and Jesus; or through a full knowledge of God and Jesus)," v.2. Cf. 2Pet.3:18.
4. Then he adds in v.3: "According as ("seeing that"; "because that"; "inasmuch as") his divine power hath given unto us (those who have obtained this like precious faith through the righteousness of God, or God's means of making men righteous) all things that pertain unto life and godliness (cf. Rom.8:28,29), through the knowledge of him (through our coming to know him; or as we advance in the knowledge of him) that *hath called us to glory and virtue.*" Cf. 1Th.2:12; 2Th.2:14; 2Tim.1:9; 1Pet.5:10.
 - a. God "hath called us by his own glory and virtue," ASV.
 - b. "Who called us to his own glory and excellence," ESV.
 - c. "Him who through his glory and excellence called us to him," Gspd.
 - d. "Him who called us by a glorious manifestation of his goodness," TCNT.

- e. “The One who called us by his own splendor and might,” NEB.
 - f. “Him who called us to his own glory and excellence,” Mof.
 - g. “Him who has called us to share His glory and virtue,” Norlie.
5. He continues in v.4: “Whereby are given unto us (“For it was through this that he gave us,” TCNT; “Thus he has given us,” Gspd.; “Through this might and splendor he has given us,” NEB; “it is through these that He has given us,” Wms.) exceeding great and precious promises (“high and treasured promises,” Knox; “promises, beyond all price,” NEB; lit. “very great promises”): that by these (i.e., by means of these promises, or through them) ye might be partakers of the divine nature (become sharers in the divine nature) having escaped (i.e., after having escaped) the corruption that is in the world through lust (or because of evil desires).”
 6. In the remainder of this text Peter tells all who “have obtained like precious faith...through the righteousness of God” what we must do and not do and why, in order to make our “calling and election sure” and to gain “entrance...into the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ,” vv.5-11.
 7. While the promises of God in this text have reference to and are limited in application to those who have obeyed the gospel and been made righteous by God’s means of making men righteous, we wish to expand on the idea of God’s promises in this study and develop the topic: The Nature of God’s Promises, i.e., his promises as they apply to all men, both the saved and the unsaved, the saint and the sinner.

II. DISCUSSION

A. GOD’S PROMISES ARE GREAT, PRECIOUS AND ALL-IMPORTANT, 2Pet.1:3,4.

1. God’s promises are “very great”; they are “beyond all price”; they are “high and treasured promises,” whether including all men or limited to those of “like precious faith”; whether made to saint or sinner.
2. They are made possible by God himself and they are “exceeding great and precious promises.”
 - a. “Great” is the translation of the Greek “megas,” as used in:

- (1) Lk.1:32, referring to Jesus: “He shall be *great*, and shall be called the Son of the Highest...”
- (2) Heb.10:21: “And having an *high* priest over the house of God.” (“great priest,” ASV; Wms.; ESV) See Heb.4:14.
- b. “Precious” is the Greek “*timos*,” as used in:
 - (1) 1Cor.3:12: “Now if any man build upon this foundation gold, silver, *precious* stones...”
 - (2) 1Pet.1:19: “But with the *precious* blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot.”
- 3. Heb.8:6 emphasizes that the Christ “hath...obtained a more excellent ministry...also he is the mediator of a better covenant, which was established upon better *promises*.”
- 4. Any and all promises of this better covenant of which he is the mediator are great, precious, and all-important.
 - a. For by them “all things that pertain unto life and godliness” are made possible.
 - b. And by them and only by them is it possible for men to be partaker of or become sharers in the divine nature, or be saved from the corruption that is in the world through evil passions.

B. GOD’S PROMISES ARE CERTAIN OF FULFILLMENT.

- 1. This fact the scriptures affirm. Consider:
 - a. Heb.10:23; 1Cor.1:9; 10:13; 2Cor.1:18; Cf. Deut.7:9; Isa.49:7.
 - b. Rom.4:21; Cf. Heb.11:17-19; Gen.18:14; Job 42:2; Mt.19:26; Lk.1:37.
 - c. 2Pet.3:9; Cf. Heb.10:37; Hab.2:3.
- 2. This fact the Scriptures illustrate
 - a. God promised the Messiah, Gen.3:15.
 - (1) In the “fullness of time” God fulfilled his promise in sending his Son, Gal.4:4; 1Tim.2:5,6; Cf. Mk.1:15.
 - b. God promised to curse the ground no more for man’s sake, and that while the earth remaineth, seedtime and harvest and cold and heat, and summer and winter, and day and night shall not cease, Gen.8:20-22.

- (1) This is a promise he has faithfully kept. Cf. Mt.5:45; Ac.14:17.
- (2) We have his word that he will continue to keep it!
- c. God promised Abraham a son when Abraham was 75 years old of Sarah who was barren, Gen.12:1-3; 15:1-6; 16:1; 17:15-21.
 - (1) 25years later, when Abraham was 100 years old Isaac was born unto him of Sarah, Gen.21:1-5.
- d. God promised Abraham's descendants a land, Gen.12:1-7.
 - (1) Hundreds of years later, even after their bondage in Egypt, he gave them Canaan, Josh,21:43-45; 23:14.
- e. God promised (threatened) the Amalekites with total destruction, Exo.17:14.
 - (1) Some 400 years later God ordered king Saul to carry out this decree to destroy them, 1Sam.15.
- f. God promised to bless all nations (both Jew and Gentile) through Abraham's seed, Gen.12:3; 18:18; 22:18.
 - (1) Over 1900 years later he kept that promise through Jesus Christ, the seed of Abraham, the Savior of all men, Gal.3:15-29; 1Tim.2:3-6.

C. GOD'S PROMISES ARE SOMETIMES UNCONDITIONAL.

1. One such promise is that the Redeemer, the Son of God, would come, Gen.3:15.
 - a. The promises made to Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, and Judah involved this Son. Cf.Gen.49:10; Heb.7:12-14.
 - b. God's promises regarding David's throne involved this Son, 2Sam.7:12,13; Lk.1:30-33; Ac.2:29-30.
 - c. At the right time, when the time was fulfilled, or "in the fullness of time," God sent forth his Son," as promised, Gal.4:4; Cf. Mk.1:15.
 - d. Obviously, this promise of God was an unconditional promise.
2. Another, is that of the Rainbow covenant made with Noah and his seed after him, for perpetual generations, that he would

- never again destroy the earth with a flood, of which the Rainbow in the cloud became a sign, Gen.9:8-17.
3. Another such promise was that God would take Abraham's descendants out of the Egyptian bondage, Gen.15:13-16.
 4. The fact that the kingdom of God or the kingdom of God's dear Son would be set up, and that it never would be destroyed is an unconditional promise of God, Dan.2:44 (Col.1:13); Cf. Lk.1:26-33; Heb.12:28.
 5. That the crucified and risen Lord will come again is another unconditional promise of God, Ac.1:9-11; 1Th.4:13-18; Heb.9:27.
 6. The resurrection of all the dead is an unconditional promise of God, Jno.5:28,29; Ac.24:15; 1Cor.15:21,22.
 7. The final judgment of all men is another unconditional promise of God, Eccl.12:13,14; Mt.25:31-33; Ac.17:30,31; Rom.2:16; 14:12; 2Cor.5:10; 2Tim.4:1; Heb.9:27.

D. GOD'S PROMISES ARE SOMETIMES CONDITIONAL.

(Blessings based on conditional promises are never bestowed until the specific condition or conditions are met! One who refuses for whatever reason to meet the specific conditions has no right to expect to receive the promised blessing!

We have no record of anyone ever receive such blessings without meeting the specific conditions. We have no reason to hope that anyone ever will!)

1. Lot and family were promised they could safely escape with their lives from the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah *if and only if* they did not look behind them, neither stay in all the plain, Gen.19:17; Cf. v.26.
2. The sparing of the firstborn of the Israelites while still in Egyptian bondage was a conditional promise – *if and only if* the blood was sprinkled upon the tops and sides of the doors the firstborn would be spared, Exo.12:13,21-29.
3. God sent fiery serpents among his children the Israelites because they had sinned against Him and Moses, his lawgiver. But promised to heal all of them *if and only if* they would look upon the serpent of brass he commanded Moses to make and place upon a pole, Num.21:4-9.
4. God gave (promised) the city of Jericho to his people Israel in their first successful effort to capture the land of Canaan, and

the walls of city would fall, *if and only if* they obeyed him, or followed God's plan to the letter, Josh.6:1-5,16,20,21.

- a. God gave them the city on the basis of his conditional promise. See Josh.6:16.
 - b. Heb.11:30 declares: "By faith the walls of Jericho fell down, after they were compassed about seven days."
 - c. Rom.10:17 says: "So then faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God." Cf. Jas.2:14-26.
5. The cleansing and or healing of Naaman was effected by virtue of a promise of God through his prophet Elisha, but upon very specific conditions, 2Kgs.5:10-14.
 6. Restoring sight to the man born blind is dependent upon the condition of his washing in the pool of Siloam obeying Jesus' command to do so, Jno.9:1-7.
 7. Salvation from past sins is promised on the basis of certain specific conditions, Mk.16:15,16; Ac.2:36-41; Ac.22:16; 16:25-34; See Rom.10:17; 1Cor.3:5; 15:11.
 8. God has promised to bless us with all spiritual blessings, but they are promised only to those who are in Christ, Eph.1:3-6.
 - a. Therefore, all spiritual blessings are to be received conditionally. The condition being that one be in Christ.
 - b. But getting into Christ is conditional, Rom.6:3-6; Gal.3:26-29; Col.2:8-12.

E. GOD'S CONDITIONAL PROMISES ULTIMATELY INVOLVE ETERNAL SALVATION FOR BELIEVERS, 2Pet.1:5-11.

1. From these verses we first notice things the believer must do, and which, if done, "make his calling and election sure", with the promise of the Lord that "ye shall never fall," vv.5-10.
2. Then notice that these things, if done, not only keep one from falling, but gain for him "an entrance into the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and savior Jesus Christ," v.11. Cf. 1Pet.1:3-5; Mt.7:21-23; Jas.2:5.
3. Eternal life, eternal salvation, the crown life, the crown of righteousness are promises of God for which believers hope, Tit.1:2.
 - a. But they base their hope on knowing and meeting the conditions of God attached to the promise, Mt.25:46

(1Jno.3:7); 1Jno.2:24,25; Heb.5:8,9; Jas.1:12;
2Timn.4:6-8; Rev.2:10; Rom.8:24,25.

III. CONCLUSION

1. In this study our attention has been directed to the nature of God's promises, by which we have been reminded that they:
 - a. Are great, precious and all-important.
 - b. Are certain of fulfillment.
 - c. Are sometimes unconditional.
 - d. Are sometimes conditional.
 - e. Ultimately involve our eternal salvation.
2. May we with God's help through his revealed word be led to respect his promises as we ought, and manifest it by a faithful, obedient service to the Lord.
3. Once again reminding you – one and all – that God's promises with regard to salvation both here and hereafter are conditional; therefore, no one can expect to receive these promises unless and until that one is ready to meet the stated conditions!
4. Are you ready here and now to comply with God's conditions of salvation?
5. Whether you spend eternity in heaven or in hell will depend on whether or not you by faith recognized, respected and obeyed the conditions of God's will pertaining to your salvation while in this fleshly body.
6. For sure, you will spend eternity in one or the other of the two!