

SABBATH THOUGHT 2022-04-09—PROMISES OF GOD

May God bless you on His Sabbath day!

Passover—the memorial of the sacrifice of Jesus Christ—is the most notable event of all time. Why? Because God’s entire plan for all the heavens and earth for the eternity to come hinge upon the singular sacrifice of the Son of the Most High. David wrote:

PSALMS 102:25-28 Of old You have laid the foundation of the earth, and the heavens are the work of Your hands. 26 They shall perish, but You shall endure; yea, all of them shall become old like a garment; like a vesture **You shall change them [the heavens and earth], and they shall be changed;** 27 But You remain the same, and Your years shall have no end. **28 The children of Your servants shall continue, and their seed shall be established before You.**”

God envisions and wills to create a new heaven and new earth. The latter is where the Great King (Mat. 5:35) will have His throne and the former will be like a gloriously beautiful garden spread out across the universe for all His children to enjoy. How can anything we have known and seen in this life compare? I cannot envisage the most beautiful garden or sunset or snow-capped mountain or forest of majestic trees or field of flowers being but a pale shadow of the new things to come.

But only by the sacrifice of Jesus Christ will there be children who will sing and rejoice with all manner of praise and honor and glory to God the Father and Jesus Christ. It is that singular sacrifice that makes possible the *promises* of God to come to pass. For us, the greatest *promise* of God is to become children of the Almighty:

1 CORINTHIANS 6:18 And **I shall be a Father to you, and you shall be My sons and daughters,**” says *the Lord Almighty*.

There are truly no words to thank God for the calling to become His children. Who can imagine or even contemplate the new life that awaits? It is a *promise*! How does one even comprehend a new life of ETERNITY?

1 JOHN 2:25 And this is the promise that **He has promised us: eternal life.**

Have you considered the fact that you and I have a seed of that eternity within us? The Holy Spirit is of God so it is a speck of eternity in us. What is eternity? I am not certain I can define it with words. Some say eternity is the state of being timeless; however, that implies that time does not exist. Will that be the case in God’s kingdom? Perhaps. Others say eternity is life unaffected by time; that is, life continues without limit. Of this, I am certain because inside of each of us is that seed of eternal life!

1 PETER 1:3-4, 23 Blessed *be* the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, Who, according to His abundant mercy, **has begotten us** again unto a living hope through *the* resurrection of Jesus Christ from *the* dead; 4 Unto **an inheritance incorruptible and undefiled and unfading**, reserved in heaven for us, ... 23 *For* you have been begotten again, not from corruptible seed, but **from incorruptible seed, by the living Word of God, which remains forever.**

Fulfillment of God's *promise* of eternal life as His children is our great hope; however, we still live in this physical life. And it is for that very reason that we have other *promises* of God to help us finish the course of this life:

MATTHEW 6:25-33 Because of this I say to you, **do not be anxious about your life as to what you shall eat and what you shall drink; nor about your body as to what you shall wear.** Is not life more than food, and the body *more* than clothing? ... 30 Now if God so arrays the grass of the field, which today is and tomorrow is cast into the oven, *shall* He not much rather clothe you, O *you* of little faith? 31 Therefore, do not be anxious, saying, 'What shall we eat?' or 'What shall we drink?' or 'With what shall we be clothed?' 32 For the nations seek after all these things. And your heavenly Father knows that you have need of all these things. 33 But *as for* you, seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and **all these things shall be added to you.**

The providence of God pertains not just to physical needs. He *promises* to help us in this life ("**shall** be added to you") to attain unto the eternity of the next. First of all, God *promises* never to abandon His children:

JOHN 14:18 **I will not leave you orphans;** I will come to you.

Though at times we may feel abandoned God *promised* "In no way will I ever leave you; no—I will never forsake you in any way." (Heb. 13:5). Never will we be left alone. While God had to forsake Jesus Christ when He was made sin for us (Mat. 27:46), we have His faithful word. Of all that matters in life—whether God heals us or allows us to suffer—this is the greatest comfort.

Being loved is a fundamental need. I have experienced being alone and it is a terrible state. I have also seen it in others. For several years mine was a place for foster children. I saw the pain they bore at being abandoned by their parents. One little boy, about the age of 5, stayed for a couple of months because his father could not support him. He later returned home and I never knew what became of him until I saw a sign that caught my attention at the entrance to the state fairgrounds. As I approached, there was a full-size picture of the little boy with a caption that read, "All I want is a family who loves me." To this day, it was one of the saddest moments in my life. That is why God's *promise* to never forsake us means so much—our parents do not or cannot always keep that promise.

But God is always there for us. And much more. He is ready to listen to us and provide for us:

HEBREWS 4:16 Therefore, we should come with boldness to the throne of grace, so that **we may receive mercy and find grace to help in time of need.**

Through the vastness of space and time, we can come before God who hears us. I do not understand how it works, but I know it does. Whether we cry aloud or whisper, He *promises* He hears our prayers:

MATTHEW 21:22 And **everything that you shall ask in prayer, believing, you shall receive.**”

Perhaps the greatest *promise* of this life is that of forgiveness:

1 JOHN 1:9 If we confess our own sins, **He is faithful and righteous, to forgive us our sins,** and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.

It can be hard to comprehend how God is able to forgive some of the most heinous of sins. I imagine that David knows that better than most. Psalm 51 is a reflection of the emotional longings in his heart for God’s forgiveness. While we strive to have a loving heart, God IS love. His whole being and purpose and existence is love. His love is so great that He will be “all in all” (1 Cor. 15:28) of the billions and billions of His children. That the love of God finds fulfillment in so many it is beyond our capacity to grasp the depths of His love.

Another *promise* of God that we have all personally received and seen fulfilled is healings:

PSALM 103:2-3 Bless the LORD, O my soul, and forget not all His benefits; 3 Who forgives all your iniquities, **Who heals all your diseases.**

While all must suffer for the sake of the kingdom—and some now endure terrible afflictions—they are but for a short time (2 Cor. 4:17) compared to eternity. We also must realize that we suffer for the great *promises* yet to come:

HEBREWS 11:25-26 **Choosing to suffer affliction with the people of God,** rather than to enjoy *the* temporary pleasure of sin; 26 For he esteemed the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures of Egypt because he was **looking intently to the reward.**

Most of us did not choose to suffer but that is not what the Scripture says. It says we choose to suffer **with** the people of God—those that lived before us, those who suffer now, and those who will suffer. We also have God *promise* to help us endure our trials:

1 CORINTHIANS 10:13 No temptation has come upon you except what is common to mankind. For **God, Who is faithful, will not permit you to be tempted beyond what you are able to bear**, but with the temptation, He will make a way of escape, **so that you may be able to bear it**.

In fact, it says that God will not **permit** us to endure the unbearable. No matter how dire our situation, God knows our limits even if we do not. Sometimes it is hard to believe this. I have heard of the severe suffering others have endured, even to the point of giving up hope. I cannot remember a single case, though, when they did not receive extra hope or encouragement or healing just when they needed it most. God has never forsaken His children even if we sometimes feel that way.

God made all of His *promises* to ensure that we complete the judgment of this physical existence in order to enter into the true, spiritual life:

REVELATION 21:1-3 Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth; for the first heaven and the first earth were passed away, and there was no more sea. 2 And I, John, saw the holy city, *the* new Jerusalem, coming down from God out of heaven, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband. 3 And I heard a great voice from heaven say, “Behold, **the tabernacle of God is with men; and He shall dwell with them, and they shall be His people; and God Himself shall be with them and be their God.**”

We endure and wait so we can see the new heaven and new earth—our new home. We are comforted in afflictions by the wonder of all that God has *promised* to give us. We are awed at the sight in our mind’s eye of the New Jerusalem descending to this earth. It is surrounded by a wall with twelve gates, each made out of a single pearl and setting atop twelve foundations made of precious stones. In the midst of the city is the throne of God the Father and Jesus Christ. From their throne flows a river along a street of transparent gold, which is lined on either side and in the middle with the tree of life. Each month, they produce twelve fruits; the sweetness of which no man has ever tasted nor can imagine. (Rev. 21-22.) Can you picture it? Do you have an image in your mind? Now, imagine you are there and, while taking the grandeur of it all, there in front of you is the abode in that city that God has prepared just for you (John 14:2-3)!

This will be the fulfillment of God’s *promises*. In all things, we stand on those *promises* and all of God’s *promises* exist because of the sacrifice of Jesus Christ, of whom is Passover the memorial. I hope this Passover brings to mind all of God’s wonderful and amazing eternal *promises* He has made to YOU!

May God’s grace and peace be upon you!

Steven Greene

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