

BASIC BIBLE TRUTHS

God's Promises

PAST, PRESENT AND FUTURE

When you have read this article you will know the answers to these questions:

1. What promises has God made in the Bible?
2. Which promises has God already kept?
3. How do we know that God will keep all His promises?
4. Which promises does God still have to fulfil?
5. Has God made any promises to you?

We have all suffered from broken promises. They may have been made by politicians before an election. Few of such promises have been kept. Perhaps employers, or friends, have not kept their promises to us. Most painfully of all, sometimes our relatives have let us down.

Thankfully, God does not behave like that. He is "abounding in goodness and truth" (Exodus 34:6). He will keep all His promises. Because He knows everything and controls the universe, His promises cannot fail.

1. WHAT PROMISES HAS GOD MADE IN THE BIBLE?

God has made many promises. Here are just a few of them:

To Moses God said: "But truly, as I live, all the earth shall be filled with the glory of the LORD" (Numbers 14:21). This proves that men will never destroy the earth. **To Abram** (later Abraham), who became the father of the Jewish race, God said: "I will make you a great nation; I will bless you and make your name great; and you shall be a blessing. I will bless those who bless you, and I will curse him who curses you; and in you all the families of the earth shall be blessed" (Genesis 12:2,3).

When God led Abraham to the land of Canaan (modern Israel), He promised: "All the land which you see I give to you and your descendants forever. And I will make your descendants as the dust of the earth" (Genesis 13:15,16). God repeated these promises to Abraham's son, **Isaac**, and his grandson, **Jacob** (Genesis 26:4; 28:13,14). Many nations, like the once mighty Babylonians, no longer exist. But God made a special promise to **the Jewish nation**: "For I am with you, says the LORD, to save you; though I make a full end of all nations where I have scattered you, yet I will not make a complete end of you" (Jeremiah 30:11).

The Jews have been scattered all over the world, yet they still exist as a nation. A man once asked, "What is the secret of the indestructible Jew?" The secret is, that the Jews are God's chosen people, and His witnesses on the earth. God has great plans for them. We shall look at them later.

King David was a great king of Israel, a man after God's own heart (1 Samuel 13:14). Because of this, God made a wonderful promise to David: "I will set up your seed after you ... and I will establish his kingdom ... and I will establish the throne of his kingdom forever. I will be his father, and he shall be my son. Your house and your kingdom shall be established for ever before you. Your throne shall be established forever" (2 Samuel 7:12-16). The Apostle Peter tells us that these promises will be fulfilled in **Jesus Christ**. He is the Son of God, and Saviour of the world. He is the great "son of David". Peter said that God will "raise up the Christ to sit on his throne" (Acts 2:29-32). Jesus has been raised from the dead, just as God promised in Psalm 16:10. One day he will return to be king upon David's throne in Jerusalem (Acts 1:11; Revelation 11:15; Matthew 5:35). God has promised: "All kings shall fall down before him; all nations shall serve him" (Psalm 72:11). God confirmed these promises about Jesus to Mary, his mother, by an angel: "The Lord God will give him the throne of his father David ... and of his kingdom there shall be no end" (Luke 1:32,33).

God has made many more promises in the Bible. However, we have looked at enough to show that God is serious about His future plans for the earth, and for Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, David, Jesus and the Jews.

2. WHICH PROMISES HAS GOD ALREADY KEPT?

God's promise to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, that Israel would become a great nation, has been kept. God also kept His promise to the Jews that they will never die out, in spite of terrible persecutions. Jesus Christ was raised from the dead, exactly as God promised. However, God still has many important promises to keep.

3. HOW DO WE KNOW THAT GOD WILL KEEP ALL HIS PROMISES?

We know this for two very good reasons:

(a) Every single promise God ever made, that relates to the past, has been kept. That gives us confidence that He will keep those which are promised for the future.

(b) God's power is supreme. Nothing can go wrong with His future plans.

4. WHICH PROMISES DOES GOD STILL HAVE TO FULFIL?

Abraham has not yet inherited the land of Israel for an everlasting possession. Nor have all nations on the earth yet been blessed in Abraham. Hebrews 11:13 says Abraham, Isaac and Jacob all "died in faith, not having received the promises". Is it too late, then? No. God will raise them from the dead, just as He raised Jesus. God will then keep His promises to them. Jesus himself said that Abraham, Isaac and Jacob will be in God's kingdom (Luke 13:28). Jesus has not yet become king, sitting upon the throne of David. But he will, when he returns to the earth (Acts 3:19-21). The Jews still exist as a nation. They are back in Israel, the land God promised Abraham. This is the first phase of God's developing plan for them, because, "He who scattered Israel will gather him, and keep him as a shepherd does his flock" (Jeremiah 31:10).

After a time of trial, the Jews will receive God's promised blessing: "They shall be my people, and I will be their God." In that day, "One king (Jesus) shall be king over them all" (Ezekiel 37:22,23).

5. HAS GOD MADE ANY PROMISES TO YOU?

Yes, He has—if you are prepared to do two important things:

(a) Believe the good news of the Kingdom of God, and be baptized (Mark 16:16); and

(b) Love Jesus Christ and keep his commandments (John 14:21).

If you do these things, what has God promised you? A share in all the blessings you have just read about. For, "There is neither Jew nor Greek ... slave nor free... male nor female; for you are all one in Christ Jesus" (Galatians 3:28).

Imagine it. God has promised that you can be raised from the dead. You can have everlasting life. You can live forever with Jesus in His kingdom. No greater promises will ever be made to you. For true believers, life today is a great joy. These precious promises give peace of mind now. This hope is "an anchor of the soul, both sure and steadfast" (Hebrews 6:19).

God invites you to share in the greatest promises ever made. To receive the blessings, you must "fear God, and keep his commandments, for this is the whole duty of man" (Ecclesiastes 12:13). Do that, and by God's mercy you will live forever. That's a promise.