

The Character and Promises of God

Does God always keep His promises?

The Character of God

A. The Unchangeableness or Immutability of God: God is unchanging in his being, perfections, purposes and promises; yet He does act and feel emotions in response to different situations.

1. God never changes

“For I, the LORD, do not change; therefore you, O sons of Jacob, are not consumed.”
(Malachi 3:6, NASB)

“In the beginnings you laid the foundations of the earth, and the heavens are the work of your hands, they will perish, but you remain; they will all wear out like a garment. Like clothing they will be discarded. But you will remain the same, and your years will never end.” (Ps 102:25-26, NIV)

“Before the mountains were born or you brought forth the earth and the world, from everlasting to everlasting you are God.” (Ps 90:2, NIV)

“Jesus Christ is the same yesterday and today and forever.” (Hebrews 13:8, NASB)

2. God’s Purposes never changes

“I know that you can do all things, and that no purpose of yours can be thwarted.”
(Job 42:2, NASB)

“Remember the former things long past, for I am God, and there is no other; I am God, and there is no one like Me, declaring the end from the beginning, and from ancient times things which have not been done, saying, ‘My purpose will be established, and I will accomplish **all** My good pleasure... Truly I have spoken; truly I will bring it to pass. I have planned it, surely I will do it.’” (Is 46:9-11, NASB, emphasis added)

“The LORD nullifies the counsel of the nations; he frustrates the plans of the peoples. The counsel of the LORD stands forever. The plans of his heart from generation to generation.” (Ps 33:10-11, NASB)

Who is like God? Who is greater than Him is power? Who can thwart his purposes?

3. God’s Promises never change

“God is not a man, that He should lie, nor a son of man, that He should repent; has He said, and will He not do it? Or has He spoken, and will He not make it good?”
(Num 23:19, NASB)

“For the gifts and calling of God are irrevocable.” (Rm 11:29, NASB)

God always keeps His promises since His promises are based on His nature and purpose!

- B. The Truthfulness of God: God always represents things as they really are. All of God's knowledge and words are both true and the final standard of truth.

"...You have ransomed me, O LORD, God of truth." (Ps 31:5, NASB)

"...I, the LORD, speak the truth; I declare what is right." (Is 45:19, NIV)

"The sum of your Word is truth, and every one of your righteous ordinances is everlasting." (Ps 119:160, NASB)

"Jesus said to him, I am the way, the truth and the life..." (John 14:6, NASB)

God will always keep His promises because He said He would and He is a truthful God!

- C. Faithfulness of God: He will always do what He has said and fulfill what He has promised!

"For I proclaim the name of the LORD; ascribe greatness to our God! The Rock! His work is perfect, for all His ways are just; a God of faithfulness and without injustice, righteous and upright is He." (Deut 32:3-4, NASB)

"Faithful is He who called you, and He also will bring it to pass." (1 Thess 5:24, NASB)

"And I saw heaven opened, and behold, a white horse, and He who sat on it is called Faithful and True, and in righteousness He judges and wages war." (Rev 19:11, NASB)

"God is faithful, through whom you were called into fellowship with His Son, Jesus Christ our Lord." (1 Cor 1:9, NASB)

"So then, those who suffer according to God's will should commit themselves to their faithful Creator and continue to do good." (1 Peter 4:19, NIV)

"For the LORD is good; His lovingkindness is everlasting, and His faithfulness to all generations." (Ps 100:5, NABS)

God will always keep His promises because He is a faithful God!

The Promises of God

- A. The Promises to Israel

"Then what advantage has the Jew? Or what is the benefit of circumcision? Great in every respect. First of all, they were entrusted with the oracles of God. What then? If some did not believe, their unbelief will not nullify the faithfulness of God, will it? May it never be! Rather, let God be found true, through every man be found a liar..." (Rm 3:1-4, NASB)

"I say then, God has not rejected His people, has He? May it never be!...God has not rejected His people whom He foreknew..." (Rm 11:1-2, NASB)

"For I do not want you, brethren, to be uniformed of this mystery – so that you will not be wise in your own estimation – that a partial hardening has happened to Israel until the fullness of the Gentiles has come in; and so all Israel will be saved; just as it is written,

the Deliverer will come from Zion, he will remove ungodliness from Jacob. This is My covenant with them, when I take away their sins.” (Romans 11:25-26)

B. The Promises to the Believer

- a. The promise of salvation by grace through faith alone! (Gal 2:16; 3:10-14; 21-29
Eph 2:8-9; Romans 11:6; 4:5; 3:28; 5:1; Acts 16:30-31)

“For we maintain that a man is justified by faith apart from works of the law.”
(Romans 3:28)

“Nevertheless knowing that a man is not justified by the works of the Law but through faith in Christ Jesus, even we have believed in Christ Jesus, so that we may be justified by faith in Christ and not by works of the Law; since by the works of the Law no flesh will be justified.” (Galatians 2:16, NASB)

“But if it is by grace, it is no longer on the basis of works, otherwise grace is no longer grace.” (Romans 11:6)

“But to the one who does not work, but believes in him who justifies the ungodly, his faith is credited as righteousness.” (Romans 4:5)

- b. The promise of eternal life (John 10:27-29; 1 John 5:11-13)

“My sheep hear My voice, and I know them, and they follow Me, and I give eternal life to them, and they will never perish; and no one will snatch them out of My hand”
(John 10:27-28, NASB)

- (1) What does God give us?
- (2) Will we ever perish?
- (3) Who is holding onto whom?
- (4) Who can take you out of His hand?

“God is not a man, that He should lie, nor a son of man, that He should repent; has He said, and will He not do it? Or has He spoken, and will He not make it good?”
(Num 23:19, NASB)

“And the testimony is this, that God has given us eternal life, and this life is in His Son. He who has the Son has the life; he who does not the Son of God does not have the life. These things I have written to you who believe in the name of the Son of God, so that you may know that you have eternal life.” (1 John 5:11-13)

- (1) What is the source of eternal life?
- (2) Who has eternal life?
- (3) When does eternal life begin?
- (4) When will it end?

- c. The promise of total forgiveness

“When you were dead in your transgressions and the uncircumcision of your flesh, he made you alive together with him, having forgiven us all our transgressions, having canceled out the certificate of debt consisting of decrees against us, which was hostile to us; and he has taken it out of the way, having nailed it to the cross.” (Col 2:13-14)

He made you alive

having forgiven (aorist, middle, ptcp)

having canceled out (aorist, active, ptcp)

“For by one offering He has perfected for all time those who are sanctified.” (Heb 10:14)

“As far as the east is from the west, so far has he removed our transgressions from us.”
(Psalms 103:12)

d. The promise of completeness

“For in Him all the fullness of deity dwells in bodily form and in Him you have been made complete...” (Col 2:9-10; perfect, passive verb)

e. The promise of security in our relationship (Romans 8:38-39; Eph 1:13-14; Heb 13:5)

Deductive argument:

- (1) The security of salvation is dependent on the nature of God.
- (2) The nature of God never changes.
- (3) Therefore the security of salvation never changes.

“...He himself has said, I will never desert you, nor will I ever forsake you.” (Heb 13:5)

“For the gifts and the calling of God are irrevocable.” (Romans 11:29)

“My sheep hear My voice, and I know them, and they follow Me, and I give eternal life to them, and they will never perish; and no one will snatch them out of My hand”
(John 10:27-28, NASB)

Consider these truths

When we trust Christ we are forgiven from all our sins.

Before we trust Christ, God knows everything we will ever do wrong.

When we trust Christ, who is the only judge, declares us not guilty. (John 5:24)

Ramifications of the previous truths

So, what will condemn us? It can't be sin since it is all forgiven – past, present, future.

And what would change God's mind about us? Can't be new info since He knows all.

Who would condemn us? The only judge has already entered the verdict – not guilty.

f. The promise of no more judgment

“Truly, truly, I say to you, he who hears My word, and believes Him who sent Me, has eternal life, and does not come into judgment, but has passed out of death into life.”
(John 5:24)

“Therefore, having been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ.” (Romans 5:1) [justified = aorist, passive, ptcp]

Justification is a forensic term (legal) which means to declare one righteous.

Passive verb means we are acted upon. Aorist is a point in time action.

g. The promise of no condemnation

“There is therefore now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus.”(Rm 8:1)

C. The Covenants of God

1. Types of Covenants: Conditional and Unconditional

2. The Conditional Covenant: Mosaic Covenant (Deut 7:9-11)

The book of Deuteronomy is written in the form of a treaty, i.e. an agreement.

3. Unconditional Covenants:

a. Noahitic Covenant: Genesis 9:8-17

“...to remember the everlasting covenant between God and every living creature” (16)

b. Abrahamic Covenant: Genesis 15:1-21; Genesis 17:7-13; Galatians 3:6-29

“Now the Lord said to Abram, go forth from your country, and from your relatives and from your father’s house, to the land which I will show you; and I will make you a great nation, and I will bless you, and make your name great; and so you will be a blessing; and I will bless those who bless you, and the one who curses you I will curse. And in you all the families of the earth will be blessed.” (Genesis 12:1-3, NASB)

(1) Three elements of the promise: A great Nation, a great Name, a great Blessing!

“It came about when the sun had set, that it was very dark, and behold, there appeared a smoking oven and a flaming torch which passed between these pieces. On that day the Lord made a covenant with Abram, saying, To your descendants I have given this land, from the river of Egypt as far as the great river, Euphrates” (Genesis 17:17-18)

(2) Two parties involved in the covenant but only one is responsible for it!

(3) The land is an on-going element of the covenant.

“Even so Abraham believed God, and it was reckoned to him as righteousness. Therefore, be sure that it is those who are of faith who are sons of Abraham. The Scripture foreseeing that God would justify the Gentiles by faith, preached the Gospel beforehand to Abraham, saying, all the nations will be blessed in you.” (Galatians 3:6-8)

(4) The blessings is for all people and for all time.

“What I am saying is this: the Law, which came four hundred and thirty years later, does not invalidate a covenant previously ratified by God, so as to nullify the promise. For if the inheritance is based on law, it is no longer based on a promise; but God has granted it to Abraham by means of a promise.” (Galatians 3:17-18)

(5) The Law had no effect on the promise to Abraham.

c. Davidic Covenant (2 Samuel 7:8-17)

“Your house and your kingdom shall endure before Me forever; your throne shall be established forever.” (2 Samuel 7:16)

d. The New Covenant: Jeremiah 31:27-34; Hebrews 6-9

“Behold, days are coming, declares the Lord, when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah, not like the covenant which I made with their fathers in the day I took them by the hand to bring them out of the land of Egypt, My covenant which they broke, although I was a husband to them, declares the Lord. But this is the covenant which I will make with the house of Israel after those days, declares the Lord, I will put My law within them and on their heart I will write it; and I will be their God, and they shall be My people.” (Jeremiah 31:31-33)

This covenant is based solely on the unchanging nature and promise of God!!!!

4. The explanation of the interplay of the Mosaic and Abrahamic covenants (Gal 3:15-29)

“For through the Law I died to the Law, so that I might live to God.” (Gal 2:19)

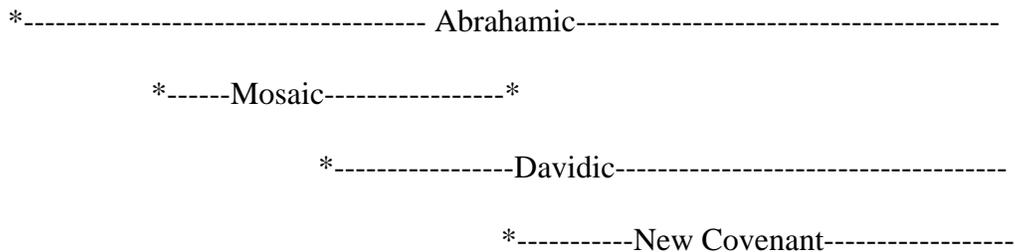
“For if the inheritance is based on law, it is no longer based on promise; but God have granted it to Abraham by means of a promise.” (Gal 3:18)

“Therefore the Law has become our tutor to lead us to Christ, so that we might be justified by faith. But now that faith has come, we are no longer under a tutor.” (Galatians 3:24-25, emphasis added)

“For sin shall not be master over you for you, for you are not under law but under grace.” (Romans 6:14)

“For Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to everyone who believes.” (Rm 10:4)

5. Diagram representing the time line of various covenants:



The Church and believing Israel are co-inheritors of the universal blessing!

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