

The Promises of God

Part 1

Introduction

Do you sometimes feel that living the Christian life is too hard? That Satan and the forces of evil have the upper hand? That as much as you try, you aren't growing in the Lord and becoming more like Him? If this sounds like you, there's good news. God didn't command us to live a righteous life, then just leave us to figure out how to do it on our own. Scripture provides us with the answers to all the issues of life. Let's begin with a scripture in Second Peter.

Our Study

The Scripture: 2 Peter 1:3, 4

"His divine power has given us everything we need for life and godliness through our knowledge of Him who called us by His own glory and goodness. Through these He has given us His very great and precious promises, so that through them you may participate in the divine nature and escape the corruption in the world caused by evil desires."

What a powerful statement! What a wonderful promise!

1. What has God given us? _____

Did you catch that phrase "everything we need." Not just "some of the things," but "everything."

2. How do we receive this gift? _____

We will be studying what this knowledge of God (Jesus) involves in a future study. But for now we want to look at another important aspect of this same scripture.

3. What else has God given us? _____

4. What do we receive through His promises? _____

Could anything be more important? This scripture says that God's promises enable us to "*participate in the divine nature and escape the corruption of the world.*"

His Promises Equip Us

One of God's most important reasons for giving us His promises is to equip us for the Christian life, to enable us to live a victorious life in Him. We all understand what it means to "*escape the corruption of the world,*" but exactly what does "*participate in the divine nature*" mean? The Living Bible makes this scripture clearer. It translates this phrase as "*His (Jesus') own character.*"

Isn't that what we all want and need? To be like Jesus--to have His divine character? But anyone who has tried to imitate Jesus knows it's easier said than done. However, God also tells us in Scripture the primary way we receive Jesus' character.

The Scripture: Romans 8:29 and 2 Corinthians 3:18

"For those God foreknew He also predestined to be conformed to the likeness of His Son, that He might be the firstborn among many brothers....We...are being transformed into His likeness with ever-increasing glory."

5. How do we receive the character of Jesus? _____

Hallelujah! We don't have to do it ourselves. We don't become like Jesus through our own striving. When we belong to Him, God does most of the work.

Let's look more carefully at the last part of that scripture, "escape the corruption of the world."

How do we escape this corruption? In His faithfulness God has given us additional promises that put us on the road toward righteousness. Let's look at two important ones.

The Scripture: 1 John 1:9

"If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness."

6. What is God's promise? _____

7. What must we do? _____

The Scripture: Psalm 32:5

"Then I acknowledged my sin to You and did not cover up my iniquity. I said, 'I will confess my transgressions to the Lord'--and You forgave the guilt of my sin."

8. What did God do when the psalmist confessed his transgressions? _____

God knew that being human we would continue to sin, so He gave us the means of being purified from that sin. To confess it to Him. Again, God makes it simple for us if we will only be obedient.

God Accomplishes His Purposes Through His Promises

But equipping us for this life isn't the only reason for God's promises. Throughout history God has accomplished His purposes for His people by means of His promises. Let's look at a few of the times.

The Scripture: Genesis 12:1-3

"The Lord had said to Abram, 'Leave your country, your people and your father's household and go to the land I will show you. I will make you into a great nation and I will bless you; I will make your name great, and you will be a blessing. I will bless those who bless you, and whoever curses you I will curse; and all peoples on earth will be blessed through you.'"

9. What was God's promise to Abram? _____

When it was time for God to release His captive people from their slavery in Egypt, He also began with a promise to Moses, the man He had chosen to lead them.

The Scripture: Exodus 3:10, 12

"Go, I am sending you (Moses) to Pharaoh to bring My people the Israelites out of Egypt...I will be with you. And this will be sign to you that it is I who have sent you: When you have brought the people out of Egypt, you will worship God on this mountain."

10. What did God promise Moses? _____

The coming of both Jesus and the Holy Spirit were Old Testament promises given long before Jesus' birth.

The Scripture: Isaiah 9:6, 7

"For to us a child is born, to us a son is given, and the government will be on His shoulders. And He will be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace."

This, of course, is a picture of Jesus, the coming Messiah for the Jews, the Savior of the Gentiles.

11. What were some of the names He would be known as? _____

The Scripture: Joel 2:28, 29

"I will pour out My Spirit on all people. Your sons and daughters will prophesy, your old men will dream dreams, your young men will see visions. Even on My servants, both men and women, I will pour out My Spirit in those days."

This scripture refers to the coming of the Holy Spirit and the day we live in now.

12. What did God say he would do? _____

13. What would be the result? _____

This happened on the day of Pentecost when the Holy Spirit fell on the 500 disciples of Jesus gathered in the Upper Room and they began to speak in other tongues.

At a time when Paul was one of the chief persecutors of Christians, the Lord appeared before him and commissioned him to be a missionary to the Gentiles. In describing his conversion and commission, Paul said the Lord had appeared before him and said:

The Scripture: Acts 26:17-18

"I will rescue you from your own people and from the Gentiles. I am sending you to them (the Gentiles) to open their eyes and turn them from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan to God, so that they may receive forgiveness of sins and a place among those who are sanctified by faith in me."

14. What was God's promise to Paul? _____

15. In his commission to Paul, the Lord also had a promise for us (the Gentiles). What was it? _____

Yes, God moves through His promises. But how does that apply to us? How do we receive the benefits offered in them. So far we have mainly looked at God's part, but the Bible clearly shows us that we have an important part as well.

We Must Have Faith

The Scripture: Mark 1:15

"'The time has come,' He (Jesus) said. 'The kingdom of God is near. Repent and believe the good news.'"

16. What must we do? _____

Jesus and His word are one and the same. The promises of God are part of His word. When we believe in Jesus, we must believe (have faith) in His promises as well.

This believing or faith is not just some intellectual assent. The Amplified Bible tells us: The Greek word for believe ...means "to adhere to, cleave to; to trust to have faith in; to rely on." This is a deep, abiding, unshakable belief that what God has promised He will perform.

Yes, to obtain the promises of God we must believe what God says about His own word.

The Scripture: Isaiah 55:10, 11

"As the rain and the snow come down from heaven, and do not return to it without watering the earth and making it bud and flourish, so that it yields seed for the sower and bread for the eater, so is My word that goes out from My mouth: It will not return to Me empty, but will accomplish what I desire and achieve the purpose for which I sent it."

17. What does God say His word will not do? _____

18. What will it do? _____

Yes, to see the promises of God fulfilled we must first of all believe them.

In the second half of this study, we will further learn how we can receive God's promises, as well as look at many of them.

The Answers

1. Everything we need for life and godliness
2. Through the knowledge of Him (Jesus)
3. His great and precious promises
4. Through them we may participate in the divine nature and escape the corruption of the world
5. God is conforming (transforming) us.
6. To forgive our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness
7. Confess our sins
8. Forgave the guilt of his sins
9. He would make him into a great nation and would bless him. He would make his name great and he would be a blessing. God would bless those who blessed him and curse those who cursed him. All the people of the world would be blessed through him.
10. He would be with Moses as he brought the people out of Egypt and they would worship Him on that mountain.
11. Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace
12. Pour out His Spirit on all people
13. They would prophesy, dream dreams, have visions
14. He would rescue him from his own people and from the Gentiles.
15. Our eyes would be opened and we would be turned from darkness to light and from the power of Satan to God, so we might receive forgiveness of sins and a place among those who are sanctified by faith in Jesus.
16. Repent and believe the good news
17. Return to him empty
18. Accomplish what He desires and achieve the purpose for which He sent it

All scripture quotations in this publication are from the Holy Bible, New International Version
(unless otherwise indicated)

Copyright © 1973, 1978, 1984, New International Bible Society

Copyright © 2000 by JoAnne Sekowsky