

Midtown Messenger

Volume 1

December 16, 2018

Issue 40

STANDING ON THE PROMISES OF GOD (II)

Ronnie Scherffius

In ancient times Peter strongly rejected those who, because of the passing of much time, doubted and denied the promise of man's salvation at the return of Christ when he wrote, "But, beloved, be not ignorant of this one thing, that one day is with the Lord as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day. The Lord is not slack concerning his promise, as some men count slackness; but is longsuffering to us-ward, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance" (2 Pt. 3:8-9).

We noted last week, that the passing of time will not hinder God's faithfulness to His promises. Jehovah God declared to the great patriarch Abram, "I am the LORD that brought thee out of Ur of the Chaldees, to give thee this land to inherit it" (Gen. 15:7). Thereafter a rather strange occurrence took place: "And he (God) said unto him (Abram), Take me a heifer of three years old, and a she goat of three years old, and a ram of three years old, and a turtledove, and a young pigeon. And he took unto him all these, and divided them in the midst, and laid each piece one against another: but the birds divided he not...And it came to pass, that, when the sun went down, and it was dark, behold a smoking furnace, and a burning lamp that passed between those pieces" (Gen. 15:9-10, 17). As strange as this may seem to us, an understanding of the culture of that time will help us clearly to understand. When two made an agreement, an animal would be killed, divided in half, separated on the ground and each party would pass/walk between the halves of the animal. The meaning of this action is—if either party violated the contract he would suf-

fer the consequence of the animal whose blood sealed the contract and through whose remains each party passed, signifying their agreement to the terms. Thus, Jehovah God made a promise to Abraham — that promise was fulfilled:

"And the Lord gave unto Israel all the land which he swore to give unto their fathers; and they possessed it, and dwelt therein. And the Lord gave them rest round about, according to all that he swore unto their fathers: and there stood not a man of all their enemies before them; the Lord delivered all their enemies into their hand. There failed not ought of any good thing which the Lord had spoken unto the house of Israel; all came to pass." (Josh. 21:43-45)

Man can stand on the promises of God! Yes, the promise God made to Abraham was not fulfilled in a day but even after the passing of time (which means nothing to God!) God's promises stand!

Not only will time not hinder God from keeping His promises, **man's interference in God's plans will not diminish God's power and abilities to fulfill His promise.** God called Abram (75 yrs. old) out of Ur and promised him that through him all nations would be blessed:

"Now the Lord had said unto Abram, Get thee out of thy country, and from thy kindred, and from thy father's house, unto a land that I will shew thee:

And I will make of thee a great nation, and I will bless thee, and make thy name great; and thou shalt be a blessing: And I will bless them that bless thee, and curse him that curseth thee: ***and in thee shall all families of the earth be blessed***" (Gn. 12:1-3).

Since Abraham (age 85) had no children and his wife Sara (age 75) was barren, he supposed the promise would be fulfilled in Eliezer, the steward of his house (Gen. 15:2-3). But God told Abraham the promised seed would "come forth out of his own bowels" (Gen. 15:4). The implication is clear — the child would come from Abraham and Sara.

Sara, because of her age and barrenness, provided to Abraham her Egyptian handmaid Hagar supposing that, through her handmaid she would provide a son to Abraham and thus, through her interference, help to fulfill the promise of God. But this interference did not overturn the promise of God that a son would be born to Abraham and Sara (Gen. 17:19). Even ***after*** Sara had past the age of child bearing, God promised that it would in fact be she who would bare a son unto Abraham (Gen. 18:11). Finally, when Abraham was 100 years old, even after the interference of man—Sara gave birth to Isaac just as God had promised (Gen. 21: 1-2).

So it is seen that mankind can in no way through his interference with the plans of God change, make void, or undue the promises of God. Thus we understand that man can stand on the promises of God when it comes to our salvation.

Another note worthy to be made regarding God's power and faithfulness of keeping His promises is this supreme fact - death cannot keep God from fulfilling His word! We will consider that as we close our study next week.

HELP FROM UNEXPECTED SOURCES

In 1803, Thomas Jefferson commissioned Lewis and Clark to lead an expedition across an unexplored America to the Pacific coast, but it might have failed without help from unexpected sources. The expedition was called "Corps of Discovery" and it lived up to its name. It cataloged three hundred new species, identified nearly fifty Indian tribes, and traversed terrain that had never been seen by Europeans.

They were joined along the way by a French fur trader and his wife Sacajawea. They soon found her to be invaluable as an interpreter and guide. During the trip, Sacajawea was reunited with her family. Her older brother had become the tribe's chief, and he helped the explorers acquire horses and a map of the uncharted West. Without Sacajawea's and her brother's unexpected help, the expedition might not have succeeded.

The Bible tells of an expedition that also received help from unexpected sources (Joshua 2:1-14). The Israelites had sent spies into Jericho, a city in the land promised to them. Rahab agreed to ensure their escape in exchange for her family's protection when Jericho fell. In this way the sovereign God of grace used her to prepare the way for a victory in Israel's conquest and settlement of the Promised Land.

Are we in the middle of a challenge? Let's remember that God can provide help from unexpected sources.

-Selected-

PRIVILEGED TO SERVE

Week of December 16, 2018

Sunday Morning:

Announcements: Jeff Harris
Scripture Reading: Isaac Jobes

Lord's Supper & Offering

Bread: Bryant Siegel
Fruit of the Vine: Dennis Bryson
Offering: Bryce Dolan
Assist: Curtis Scherffius, Kirk FitzSimmons, Manny Flonnory

Sunday Evening: Bryant Siegel, Dennis Bryson

Prayer

A.M. Closing: Steve Randle
P.M. Closing: Wayne Martin

Ushers: Don Lynn
Allen Clifton

Wednesday Devotional: Kevin Sheeran

Open/Close Building: Helen & Willie Cannady

Sound System: Will Burleson

Greeters:

Allen Clifton
Don Lynn

Prepare Communion: Scherffius

Today is the Annual White Elephant Exchange after evening worship. Please bring a wrapped gently used gift and your favorite finger food.

Sunny Glen Children's Home is requesting the following items: toilet paper & cereal. Please place the items in the donation box in the hallway.

2019 POCKET DIRECTORY:

Please update your contact information for the 2019 pocket directory in the foyer.

IN NEED OF PRAYERS:

BILL YOUNG, who is at Citizens hospital; JAUNICE STEPHENS, who had a heart attack. She is the sister of Pat Atkinson.

UPCOMING EVENTS

Dec. 16: White Elephant gift exchange @ the building
Jan. 4-6: Winter Retreat @ Leakey for Youth
Jan. 6: Forever Young group meeting @ 4pm
Jan. 12: GEMS meeting

BIRTHDAYS & ANNIVERSARIES:

Happy Birthday: Kirk FitzSimmons (20); Kasi Jobes, Alex Scherffius, Benjamin Bryson (21); Leta Reeves (22)

Happy Anniversary: Pat & Josha Gooch (17); Rex & Marilyn Horst (22)

Please sign up to prepare communion, open & close the building, and host youth devotionals for 2019. Sign up sheets are on the bulletin board in the hallway.

KEEP IN PRAYER

MIDTOWN MEMBERS

Jeff Cannady Della Rampley
Dee Gilpatrick Clark Withers
Ann Pantel

SHUT-INS

Faye Henderson Sandy Malone

FRIENDS & FAMILY

Victor Benitez Vikram Gottam
(brother of Virginia Escojido) (brother-in-law of Archana Verma)
Kim Neel-Farthing Antonio Benitez
(daughter of Joyce) (brother of Virginia Escojido)

If you would like to add or remove a name on the "Keep in Prayer" List, please see Nina Siegel.

MIDTOWN CHURCH OF CHRIST

Minister: Ronnie Scherffius
Secretary: Nina Siegel

TIMES OF SERVICES

Sunday Bible Class: 9:00AM
Sunday Morning Worship: 10:00AM
Sunday Evening Worship: 5:00PM
Wednesday Bible Class: 7:00PM

RECORD OF ATTENDANCE

Week of December 9, 2018

Bible Class.....125
A.M. Worship.....151
P.M. Worship.....111
Wednesday Bible Study.....91

Offering \$4,744

QUICK REFERENCE

Use this quick reference to help you grow in knowledge:

Older People

Respect, esteem.....Pro. 16:31; 23:22
Provide for them.....1 Tim. 5:8
Lev. 19:32; Titus 2:2-5; 2 Tim. 4:7-8



SUPPORTED WORKS

India - Mani Pagidipalli
New Zealand - James & Emily Cammock
Bible Land Passages - John & Carla Moore
Southwest School of Bible Studies - Cody Kilgore

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