

FAITH AND THE PROMISES OF GOD

Genesis 17:15-19

INTRODUCTION: A French lady had been taught in her youth to make a little box of Bible verses containing a selection of God's promises from the Scriptures. Each verse was written on a small piece of paper about the size of a piece of chewing gum, and each was then rolled up to make a miniature scroll. About forty or fifty of these were placed in a tiny open box so that the tops were even, and each one was visible. This was called the promise box. She had been encouraged to pull out one verse each morning and read it.

One day when she was much older she was feeling awfully discouraged by what had happened to her that busy day. In her depression, her mind turned to the little box of promises that had long since been forgotten. She went to the drawer of the dresser where she had kept the box. She took it out and prayed, "Lord, you know how depressed I am, and you know that I do need a word of encouragement. Isn't there a promise here somewhere that can help me?" She finished praying and stepped over to the window where the light was better for reading. As she did, she tripped over a loose edge of the rug and all the promises spilled out on the carpet. As she lay on the floor she looked up to heaven and said, "Lord, how foolish I have been to ask for one promise when there are so many glorious promises in your Word."

I. PROMISES OF GOD

A. GOD'S THREEFOLD PROMISE TO ABRAM. (12:2)

1. Make of thee a great nation.
2. Make thy name great.
3. Abram would be a bless.

B. GOD PROMISED ABRAM THE LAND OF CANAAN. (12:7)

C. GOD PROMISED ABRAM A SON. (15:4; 17:16)

1. Abram's laughter of joy. (17:17)
2. Sarah's laughter of unbelief. (18:12)
3. Sarah's laughter of joy. (21:6)

II. PERFORMANCE OF GOD

A. GOD IS TRUE TO HIS WORD. (21:1& 2)

B. GOD HAS THE POWER TO FULFILL HIS WORD.

And being not weak in faith, he considered not his own body now dead, when he was about an hundred years old, neither yet the

deadness of Sara's womb: He staggered not at the promise of God through unbelief; but was strong in faith, giving glory to God; And being fully persuaded that, what he had promised, he was able also to perform. (Rom. 4:12-21)

Through faith also Sara herself received strength to conceive seed, and was delivered of a child when she was past age, because she judged him faithful who had promised. (Heb. 11:11)

III. PRIZE OF FAITH

A. GOD TESTED THE FAITH ABRAHAM. (22)

1. By faith Abraham believed God could raise up Isaac from the dead. (Heb. 17-19)

QUOTE: A Faith that is incapable of enduring trial is no faith at all.

B. GOD BLESSED THE FAITH OF ABRAHAM.

And I will make thy seed as the dust of the earth: so that if a man can number the dust of the earth, [then] shall thy seed also be numbered. (Gen. 13:16)

And he brought him forth abroad, and said, Look now toward heaven, and tell the stars, if thou be able to number them: and he said unto him, So shall thy seed be. 6 And he believed in the LORD; and he counted it to him for righteousness. Gen. 15:5-6)

Therefore sprang there even of one, and him as good as dead, [so many] as the stars of the sky in multitude, and as the sand which is by the sea shore innumerable. (Heb. 11:12)

ILLUSTRATION: Norman Rockwell pictured throngs of people passing by the open door of a beautiful church. The people are going by with heads down and downcast eyes. All they are seeing is a narrow strip of sidewalk stretching before them. Over the door of the cathedral are the words LIFT UP THINE EYES.

Hubert Humphrey was so impressed with what Norman Rockwell had done that he wrote an article and entitled it "Four Words To Remember."