

“The Promise Fulfilled”

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“Of this man’s seed hath God according to His promise raised unto Israel a Saviour, Jesus.”
Acts 13:23.

Men often make promises that they cannot or do not fulfill. But God’s promises are as much better than man’s promises as the heavens are higher than the earth. He never promises anything that He cannot do; and He never forgets; and He cannot lie. Therefore when God promises anything, it is just as sure as though it were already done. He may not do it just when we think He will, or in just the way that we suppose He will, but we may be certain that it will be done at the right time, and in the very best way, and exactly as He promised. So do not be afraid to trust Him, though He seem to wait long sometimes; He has not forgotten, and He will surely keep His promise.

Last week we learned of the wonderful promise concerning the “Lamb of God:” God so loved lost and dying man that He promised to send His only begotten Son to die for them, “that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life.”

Thousands of years passed by and God had not yet fulfilled His promise. The Lamb of God had not yet been slain.

Had God forgotten His promise? Could it be possible that God would not keep His word? No, never.

Many thought He would never keep His word, and they stopped looking for Him. But a few faithful ones still believed and watched and longed for the Saviour.

And were they disappointed? Oh, no. God never disappoints those who trust in His word. God had for a long time been quietly preparing the way for His coming Son. It was then time for Him to appear.

Suddenly a glorious light appeared in the sky one night. Bethlehem’s plains were lighted up with multitudes of heavenly beings. An angel’s voice was heard speaking to the believing shepherds. Listen! What did he say?—

“Fear not: for, behold, I bring you GOOD TIDINGS OF GREAT JOY, which shall be to all people. For unto you is born this day in the city of David a SAVIOUR, which is Christ the Lord! And this shall be a sign unto you; Ye shall find the babe wrapped in swaddling clothes, lying in a manger.”

Ah, the long-looked-for day had really come. The promise was to be fulfilled. The innocent Lamb of God was about to be slain. He was already lying a helpless babe, in the manger at Bethlehem!

"Glory to God in the highest" was sung by the angels, and echoed in the hearts of the shepherds; for was not that the best news that could ever come to a fallen world? Man was to be redeemed from the power of Satan and from his cords of sin!

Do you wonder that the shepherds left their sheep and went with haste to Bethlehem? We read that they stopped not until they had found Mary and Joseph, and had seen with their own eyes, their Saviour, the Creator of heaven and earth,—"lying in a manger!" And they returned glorifying and praising God and telling everyone they saw of the glad, glad news which the angel brought.

And the blessed babe grew,—just as other babies grow. And when He was eight days old His name was called "Jesus," because He was to save His people from their sins.

We should be glad to tell you of the joy of Simeon and Anna when they saw Him in the temple of Jerusalem, and of the wise men who came from the far east to worship Him and give Him presents, but you must read that for yourself in your Bible. [Luke 2:21-39]

Although the few who had believed the promise were filled with unspeakable joy when He came, the many who had not believed the promise, were not glad to see Him; and their hearts were filled with hatred toward the One who had come to save them! King Herod sent his soldiers and tried to kill Him, but Joseph had been warned in a dream and had taken Jesus and His mother and fled by night into Egypt.

After the king's death they returned and lived in a town called Nazareth; and Jesus "increased in wisdom and stature, and in favour with God and man." But He never thought that He knew too much to help and obey His parents. He helped His father at the carpenters' trade, and was subject unto them both in everything.

He came as a little child that He might know all the trials and temptations of a child, so that He might know how to comfort and help you as well as older people. He made it possible for you to be as kind and lovely and perfect a child as He was, if you yield to God's Spirit as completely as He did. Satan tempted Him to be naughty in the same ways that he tempts you, but Jesus never yielded to him once, because He allowed God, His mighty Helper, to stay with Him every minute.

He was so perfect that at His baptism, when He was about thirty years old, the voice of God sounded out of heaven and said, "This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased."

After His baptism, He was in the wilderness among the wild beasts, without food, for forty days and forty nights tempted of the devil. But though so weak and hungry and tired, His heart was so filled with the precious words of God that He could drive Satan away with them every time. And that shows how we also may drive him away.

And Jesus began to preach, and He went from city to city healing the sick, cleansing the lepers, giving sight to the blind and life to the dead, and doing good to all.

But He was hated and rejected, and cast out of the synagogues, betrayed by one of His own disciples, crowned with thorns, and finally crucified between two thieves! No wonder that the sun hid its face, and the earth shook, and the rocks were rent.

But the fearful price was paid. The Lamb of God had shed His precious blood to redeem us from the power of Satan. A "way" had been opened through the wall of sin back to God. God had "according to His promise raised unto Israel a Saviour, Jesus."

And the joy of it is that this way back to God is a "living way,"—not a dead way. Jesus lives again!

On the third day, angels rolled the stone away from the tomb and Jesus rose triumphant with the keys of death and the grave; and after forty days He was taken up in a cloud to heaven where He still lives to help and lead us along, like a shepherd, in the right way.

And we have the promise that in the same manner in which He was taken up into heaven, He will come again, to take those who have accepted Him as their Saviour to reign with Him for ever.

Then will He welcome them back to God, back to Eden, and back to everything that they had lost by sin.

When you are tempted to sin, think of the price that Divine love has paid for you, and yield to Him His own, and let Him save you.