

=BIBLE PROMISES=

Lesson 1

Bible Promises About God's Creation

AIM: to teach my pupils through the study of God's covenant with Noah that we can trust Him entirely in everything

POINT OF CONTACT: Because we now begin a new series of lessons on "Bible Promises," a good point of contact could concern promises we make. The class could discuss the procedure which one may follow when he wishes to borrow some money. He has to promise to repay the money; he signs his name to the contract as a written pledge that he will keep his promise. God has given us many promissory notes in writing.

The class could also discuss the cycle of seasons which we experience every year. Let the class think about this question: Does summer ever come in the middle of winter? Do plants begin to grow and then winter comes with no harvest time? Is the cycle of seasons ever interrupted or rearranged? No. There is a reason why this is so. We will discover that reason in our lesson for this week, which is the promise found in Genesis 8:22.

INTRODUCTION: "In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth," Genesis 1:1. Man and his mate were created and placed in a beautiful garden home. Also present in the world was a powerful being who had challenged God but was far inferior to Him. This powerful person, Satan, tempted Adam and Eve and caused them to disobey God. Later God realized the truth of His foreknowledge that man's heart was evil continually, and He determined to destroy the creation which He had made. He caused a great flood to destroy all animals and people who were not in the ark which He had instructed Noah to build. Noah's family—eight people in all—were safe in the ark until the flood waters receded from the earth. After Noah and his family had been in the ark for a year, the waters went down, and the earth dried up. After coming out of the ark, Noah built an altar and praised God for his safety. God smelled a sweet smelling savour in the sacrifice. Ephesians 5:2 identifies the sweet smelling savour—it is Jesus. Jesus would be the seasoning that would keep the world from being entirely rotten. Because of Jesus' love and His willingness to be the Sacrifice for the sins of all mankind from the foundation of the earth (Revelation 13:8), God made a great promise concerning His creation. We will study that promise in this week's lesson.

The Bible contains hundreds of promises; the word "promise" is actually used more than 100 times. All of God's promises are stated clearly and simply. Anybody can understand them and apply them. If the full meaning of a promise appears doubtful in one place, it is cleared up in other promises. The promises show God's love and warmth for His children. Not one of the promises is expressed in a cold or reserved manner. II Corinthians 11:3 stresses the simplicity that is in Jesus and His Word. If we cannot take Him at His Word, our thinking is not clear; it is cluttered. There is peace in security; there is security in consistency. The only truly consistent Person is the Lord. In Him we can be secure and peaceful. Even the nature of His creation is consistency. Listen to the lesson for this week, and you will understand.

I. GOD COMPOSED THIS PARTICULAR PROMISE IN HIS HEART BEFORE STATING IT. Notice Genesis 8:21, 22.

1. What is a promise? A promise is a statement or a series of statements which indicate some good that one person will do for another. The very nature of a promise is that the person who receives the pledge can expect that it will be done.
2. What is this promise? We can consider it in four parts.
 - 1) God will not again curse the ground because of what man was and is. God had originally cursed the ground after Adam and Eve had sinned, Genesis 3:17-19. Sorrow had come into the world. Thorns and thistles were allowed to come into God's beautiful creation. Man would have to fight the adverse forces of nature in order to provide food and sustenance for himself. His body would have to return to the ground; it had begun to deteriorate when his spirit died. God added to the curse when he sent the flood waters to cover the earth and all living upon it,

except for those who were found safe in the ark. (A Bible scholar has stated that the Hebrew words for “I will not again curse the ground any more” indicate: “I will not add to curse the ground any more.” God was determining not to add to the curse again.)

- 2) God decided not to interrupt the original cycle of light and dark again. During the six days of creation, the 24-hour period of light and dark—day and night—had played a specific part in the plan. The earth was turning on its axis.
 - 3) God determined not to interrupt the cycle of temperature changes. The earth was also in motion in its orbit around the sun, and it would continue to be so. It would not vary in its distance from it; God would see to that.
 - 4) God determines that the growing seasons would remain. There would be a time for plants to ripen and bear their own seed, a time to harvest them, a time to let the ground rest, and a time for planting. This cycle would not change, nor would it be interrupted.
3. What would be the termination date of this promise? There will be no termination date. It is an everlasting covenant, Genesis 8:21; 9:16. God will never again destroy the earth by a flood nor interrupt its original cycles of seasons and temperatures.
- 1) The present earth will be destroyed. A new earth will take its place, II Peter 3:13; Revelation 21:1. This is a wonderful promise within the promise that the old earth will remain in its present patterns until it is done away. The old earth will not be destroyed by flood; it will be destroyed by fire, II Peter 3:10.
 - 2) The inhabitants of the earth can count on the present earth’s functions remaining as they are until after Jesus has come for His own, until after the Tribulation Period and until after the Devil and his angels have been chained in Hell. From time to time there have been speculations about whether bombings or other man-made eruptions could change climates, etc. Nothing can change God’s promises.

II. GOD GAVE HIS PROMISE TO NOAH, Genesis 9:8-17.

1. The covenant, or the promise, had to be stated. It had to be expressed to the person to whom it would apply.
 - 1) The promise applied to Noah and his family. It was expressed to him for his family and all life.
 - 2) The promise applies to every person and every living creature from the time of Noah, Genesis 9:12. It is for all “perpetual generations”—for every generation coming after forever. We can claim this promise as having been made directly to us.
2. It was a verbal promise accompanied by a signature. (It was, of course, written into the Scripture recorded by Moses.)
 - 1) The signature was placed in the sky by God. It was placed there as a carbon copy of His promissory note so that he could see it and remember His covenant with man. We do not have to remember it; He remembers it, Genesis 9:16.
 - 2) The signature was in the shape of a bow. This bow was not intended to be used against man; it was not a weapon. The bow, in fact, is curved away from man and is not accompanied with arrows. Upon seeing the rainbow in the cloud, we can know that God sees it there and remembers that the entire earth will not be plunged into a series of floods which would be followed by periods of rebuilding. Noah could have thought this, for he knew that all men were still sinful.

Encourage your class to watch for a rainbow and, upon seeing it, to remember that God placed it there for a reason. The rainbow is not just some natural phenomenon which has no particular meaning. A rainbow is a set of colored arcs which are seen against the sky whenever falling water droplets are illuminated by a strong light source (the sun or the moon). The same colors are always seen, and they are always arranged in the same pattern. If the secondary rainbow is seen above the primary rainbow, the color pattern will be just reversed.

In the primary rainbow, the colors are arranged in this fashion: The top arc is red; the colors following under the red are orange, yellow, green, blue, indigo, and violet. The colors of the

spectrum are arranged in the order of their wave lengths. Red is the long-wave extreme of the visible spectrum. When light is refracted—deflected from a straight path—as it passes from one medium (as air) into another (as water), why is the pattern of spectrum colors always the same? Why doesn't blue suddenly change wave lengths, or why doesn't the long wave length suddenly appear to be blue instead of red? Why does this bow occur when there is moisture in the air? Why doesn't it start appearing when there has been a lack of rain? These laws have been set up by God, and God keeps them operating. As the God of the universe, He has all its laws under His control and command, and nothing can stand in the way of the fulfillment of any promise He has made. When Newton recombined the colors of the spectrum, he produced white light again. He thus concluded that all the spectrum colors had been present in the original beam of light. This is further proof of the constancy of God. No law and no pattern which He has set up is ever changed.

III. GOD WILL REMEMBER HIS PROMISE. How do we know this?

1. God has kept every past promise that He has ever made. I Kings 8:56b, “there hath not failed one word of all his good promise, which he promised by the hand of Moses his servant.” There are too many fulfilled prophecies and promises written in the Bible to deny that Somebody Who is eternal and truthful made them. Until the waters go over the earth again, the saints will have no reason to doubt the covenant-keeping God. God's deeds match His declarations.
2. It is impossible for God to lie. Whatever He declares is truth and fact, Hebrews 6:18; Numbers 23:19.
3. God's words will never pass away, Luke 21:33. They will never be erased from existence.
4. God has assured His own that His promises are so, I John 5:10. Belief in Jesus is assured in us by the Holy Spirit. It is through Jesus that the Word of God has been given (John 1:14); it is through Jesus that the world was created (John 1:1-3); it is through Jesus that the world “hangs together”—consists; and it is through Him that it continues in its set patterns and paths (Colossians 1:17).
5. God is faithful, Lamentations 3:23; Hebrews 10:23.

CONCLUSION: Intermingled in God's Word are facts and promises. Bible facts are to be accepted as being actual and therefore must be believed. Promises, on the other hand, are to be received and claimed. Let us accept the fact that the God of creation is watching over His creation to keep it moving in its original patterns. Let us accept His promise of love and assurance that He will never again cause the complete flooding of the earth and destruction of life as He did in Noah's day. No law and no pattern which he has set up is ever changed. There is security and contentment in the constancy of God. Let us instill in the pupils a confidence, a real childlike faith in the promises of God as we teach this new series of lessons. They need the security only He can give.

MEMORY VERSE: Genesis 8:22, “While the earth remaineth, seedtime and harvest, and cold and heat, and summer and winter, and day and night shall not cease.”

QUESTIONS:

1. To what man did God give His promise of keeping watch over His creation?
2. What was the signature to this promise?
3. Do the colors of the rainbow always fall in the same pattern?
4. Who is to remember the covenant when the rainbow is seen in the sky?