

Devotion 9:

Our Father Keeps His Promises

Joshua 1—24

I believe it is natural for us humans to want guarantees in this life. We desperately seek formulas and recipes for “success” in marriage, business, family, health, and a myriad of other areas important to us. But the longer one travels on this planet, the more one realizes that there aren’t many things that are certain in this fallen, sin-depraved world.

Joshua points us to our sure anchor. 18 times in this book we read something along this line: *“I have given them into your hand”* (10:8) and *“the Lord was fighting for Israel.”* (10:14) 31 kings are defeated (12:24) and the Promised Land is parceled out to the 12 tribes. But the climactic moment in the book of Joshua is 21:43-45:

“So the Lord gave Israel all the land he had sworn to give their forefathers, and they took possession of it and settled there. The Lord gave them rest on every side, just as he had sworn to their forefathers. Not one of their enemies withstood them; the Lord handed all their enemies over to them. Not one of all the Lord’s good promises to the house of Israel failed; every one was fulfilled.”

I do not see such consistency, such soundness, in any other person’s words. The house painters said they would include a privacy fence at the time of the estimate; when the bill came, it wasn’t so. Children say they will call or stop by; it often isn’t so. My parents pledged to each other to remain married until death did them part. It wasn’t so. I shared the same pledge as an adult. It wasn’t so.

Now there are probably some good reasons for people failing to keep their lesser promises. A friend has forgotten to meet us at agreed upon times and places. Traffic, illness, and the weather have prevented events and circumstances from “being so.” And we are all too familiar with some bad reasons for people bailing out on their word: revenge, pride, protectiveness, and comfort. But Joshua 1--24 is shouting to me that our Father is different. He does what He says He will do. Period. Count on it.

Joshua’s farewell to Israel’s leaders in Joshua 23:14 says this: *“You know with all your heart and soul that not one of all the good promises the Lord your God gave you has failed. Every promise has been fulfilled; not one has failed.”* Joshua says this about 700 years after those promises had been given to Abraham. Solomon says in I Kings 8:56: *“Praise be to the Lord, who has given rest to his people Israel just as he promised. Not one word has failed of all the good promises he gave through his servant Moses.”* Solomon said this about 600 years after had Moses received the promises from our Father.

There is a promise running through the Old Testament for over 4,000 years like a red thread. We find it first in Genesis 3:15:

“I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your offspring and hers; he will crush your head, and you will strike his heel.”

The vast majority of theologians down through the ages agree that this is referring to Jesus’ eventually being the seed who would come from a woman and who would crush Satan’s head. *“But when the time had fully come, God sent His Son, born of a woman, born under the law, to redeem those under law, that we might receive full rights of sons.”* (Gal. 4:4-5) Our Father kept His ultimate promise: to send a Savior who would redeem us and give us *“the right to become children of God.”* (Jn. 1:13)

If you think about it, we are in a very similar place as our brothers and sisters of Israel were on the east side of the Jordan River. It has been over 2,000 years since Jesus said He would return to take us home to the ultimate promised land, heaven. The flesh can be tempted to doubt if our Father will keep His promise and tell His beloved Son to return to earth one more time. Listen to II Peter 3:3, 8-9:

“First of all, you must understand that in the last days scoffers will come, scoffing and following their own evil desires. They will say, ‘Where is this coming he promised? Ever since our fathers died, everything goes on as it has since the beginning of creation...But do not forget this one thing, dear friends: With the Lord a day is like a thousand years, and a thousand years is like a day. The Lord is not slow in keeping his promise, as some understand slowness. He is patient with you, not wanting anyone to perish, but everyone to come to repentance.’”

So what does all this mean to us dearly loved children today? Do you find yourself in uncertain circumstances? Doctors don’t really know what is wrong with your or a loved one’s body. A relationship appears to be on the brink of dissolution and your next step isn’t clear. Your financial future is cloudy and shaky. Maybe it is time to lift your eyes to our Father and cling to the certainty that He brings:

He is indeed with us always, even till the end of the age. Mt. 28:20

He will not leave us or forsake us. Heb. 13:5

He is working for good in all things. Rom. 8:28

He is coming back soon. Rev. 22:7

He will one day wipe away every tear and remove death, mourning, crying, and pain. Rev. 21:4

How do we know this is true? Because our Father keeps His promises.