

WHAT IS A PROMISE?

Joshua 1:1-2:24

Introduction: Ever make a "promise?" Ever have someone make you a "promise?" What exactly is a "promise?" The dictionary defines "promise" as a pledge to do or not do something specified. Just how valid is a "promise?" How binding is a "promise?" Is there a time limit to a "promise?"

All of us have had promises made and then broken, not kept, with sometimes heartbreaking results. Sometime or other each of us has also made a promise but failed to keep it for whatever reason.

I. WHAT IS A "PROMISE" WHEN IT IS MENTIONED IN THE BIBLE?

1. A promise is words said or written binding a person to do or not do something.
2. It is an indication of what may be expected.
3. It is an indication of future excellence, something that gives hope of success.
 - It is to give ground for expectation.
 - It is to assure.
 - It is to give one' word.
4. A "vow" is a promise made to God.
 - It is a solemn promies.
 - It is a solemn declaration or affirmation.
 - Solemn is to be serious, grave.
 - Solemn is done with form and ceremony.
5. A "pledge" is a solemn promise.
 - It is something that secures or makes safe.

II. GOD MADE PROMISES

1. God made a promise to Abraham some 600 years before Moses and Joshua appeared.
2. Moses and the people of Israel wandered in the wilderness for 40 years and they wondered why it was taking God so long to keep His promise.
 - Israel had refused to believe that God would be with them in taking the promised land.
 - Only two of the spies believed God's promise to be with them.
3. Moses died before Israel crossed over into the promised land and Joshua was appointed by God to take Moses' place.
 - God's appointed leader of the million people of Israel had to see to their daily needs, to get them through wars, it was an awesome responsibility.
 - Joshua accepted God's task for him because God promised to be with him and the people.
 - God's promises are different from our promises because He is able to KEEP His.

4. Joshua reminded Israel of God's promise to give them the land.
 - As their spiritual leader also, Joshua reminded them of God's promise and His ability to keep His promise.
 - All spiritual leaders must believe God keeps His promises before they can ever convince others.

5. In spying out the land, the spies found some one receptive to them.
 - A Gentile woman hid them in her house because she believe in their God.
 - The spies made a promise to Rahab (the Gentile woman) that she would be spared.
 - She believed their promise to spare her and her household because of their God.
 - She and all those in her house were indeed spared when the walls of Jericho fell.

6. God kept His promise to Israel for they indeed inhabited the land God promised them with His assistance.

CONCLUSION:

1. Have you ever had a promise made to you and it was broken?
 - What was the result?
 - Has broken promises made to you affected your attitude about promises?

2. Have you ever broken a promise?

3. Is it possible that people take God's promises in the same attitude as they do everyone else?

4. Think about some promises God has made to you, to your church, to the world.

5. Have all the promises God has made to you been kept? Why?

6. Do you believe that God will keep His promises to you?

7. Did God keep His promise to Joshua to be with him every step of the way in taking the land?

8. Did God keep His promise to give His people, Israel, a land?

9. What kind of attitude would one exhibit if one had complete trust in God's keeping His promises?

10. What kind of attitude do you have right now?