

MSB237

MORE Seed and Bread

BRIEF BIBLICAL MESSAGES FROM

THE WORD OF TRUTH MINISTRY

Otis Q. Sellers, Founder - David R. Hetteema, Director

THE PROMISE OF THE FATHER

By John C. Ribbens

God has made many promises to mankind in Scripture. We need to know and believe these promises. In the prologue to the gospel written by the historian Luke, he declared, **Forasmuch as many have taken in hand to set forth in order a declaration of those things that are surely believed among us, even as they delivered them unto us, which from the beginning were eyewitnesses, and ministers of the word; it seemed good to me also, having had a perfect understanding of all things from the very first, to write unto thee in order, Theophilus, that thou mightest know the certainty of those things, wherein. thou hast been instructed** (Luke 1:1-4). Here before us we have in our possession a flawless record of the events concerning Christ and His ministry. Luke speaks of **a virgin espoused** (betrothed) **to a man whose name was Joseph. of the house of David; and the virgin's name was Mary** (Luke 1:27). It was in the sixth month (of her cousin Elizabeth's pregnancy, who was the mother of John the Baptist) that the angel Gabriel, was sent from God telling Mary, **And, behold, thou shalt conceive in thy womb, and bring forth a Son, and shalt call His name Jesus** (*Heb.-Jehoshua*, savior/salvation). **And He shall be great, and shall be called the Son of the Highest: and the Lord God shall give Him the throne of His father David: and He shall reign over the house of Jacob for ever** (with respect to the eons); **and of His kingdom** (government) **there shall be no end** (Luke 1:31-33).

This prophecy provides for mankind the ultimate hope that God has committed himself to be the Savior of the world. Confirmation of this awesome promise is found in the words of Isaiah, who said, **For unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given: and His name shall be called, Wonderful Counseller, the Mighty God, the everlasting Father, the**

Prince of Peace. Of the increase of His government and peace there shall be no end, and upon the throne of David, and upon His kingdom, . . . (Isa. 9:6-7). This statement indicates He has accepted the full responsibility for the future of mankind and the nations upon the earth. Now, upon the birth of Christ, the angel of the Lord appeared to shepherds abiding in the fields and announced . . . **Fear not: for, behold, I bring you tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people. For unto us is born this day in the city of David a savior which is Christ the Lord** (Luke 2:10-11). The word "Christ" is the Anglicized-Greek form of the Hebrew word *mashiyach*, meaning "messiah" or "anointed," who was the long-awaited king over Israel. This proclamation signaled that God had brought into the world the one declared in John 4:42 to be "Christ, the Savior of the world." No matter how bleak or desperate the life situation "may be for millions, this promise means that mankind will be preserved.

This knowledge was not lost in the hearts and minds of Israelites who anticipated the long awaited birth of the Savior. One such individual was the aged Simeon . . . **a just and devout** (God-fearing man), **waiting for the consolation of Israel: and the Holy-Spirit was upon him. And it was revealed unto him by the Holy Spirit, that he should not see death, before he had seen the Lord's Christ** (Luke 2:25-26). When Joseph and Mary brought Jesus into the temple, **he took him up in his arms, and blessed** (eulogized) **God, and said, Lord, now lettest thy servant depart in peace, according to Thy word: For mine eyes have seen Thy salvation** (bringing Christ), . . . **a light to lighten the Gentiles** (nations), **and the glory of Thy people Israel** (Luke 2:29-32). What a thrill it must have been for Simeon to cradle in his arms this infant, who was destined to be the Savior of the world.

When Jesus became twelve years old, his parents, as part of the divine religion of Israel, took him to Jerusalem to observe the annual feast of the Passover. This feast attracted thousands of God-fearing Israelites each year. Following the feast, his parents returned to Galilee, thinking He was in the group. However, this young man lingered in the temple, and . . . **they found him sitting in the midst of the doctors** (teachers of great learning), **both hearing them, and asking them questions. And all that heard Him were astonished at His understanding and answers** (Luke 2:46-47).

As Jesus entered into His public ministry, it became plain to all who heard and witnessed the miracles He performed, that this was indeed Jehovah-

Ropheka of whom Moses spoke, saying, "For I am the Lord that healeth thee" (Exod. 15:26).

What Jesus did for thousands during His earthly ministry would soon be duplicated, reaching out to thousands of Israelites in the land and in the dispersion, during the Acts Period by the apostles. Jesus told John the Baptist, as proof of His credentials, **The blind receive their sight, and the lame walk, the lepers are cleansed, and the deaf hear. The dead are raised up and the poor have the gospel preached to them** (Matt. 11:5). This powerful display of the marvelous miracles Christ performed could not be contested. Even one of the Pharisees conceded . . . **Rabbi, we know that Thou art a teacher come from God: for no man can do these miracles that Thou doest, except God be with Him** (John 3:2). Soon, Jesus publicly identified Himself with the twelve disciples to whom He gave the power and authority over all devils (unclean spirits), and to heal all manner of sickness and diseases. The apostles now possessed the mighty power of God, preaching the Kingdom of God, as instructed by Jesus to, "Heal the sick, cleanse the lepers, raise the dead, cast out devils: freely have ye received, freely give" (Matt. 10:8). There is no man on earth today who can rightfully claim to possess such power and authority. In obedience to the command of the Lord, 70 others were instructed **to go into every city and place whither He Himself would come, . . . And into whatsoever city ye enter, and they receive you, eat such things as are set before you and heal the sick that are therein, and say unto them, the kingdom of God is come nigh unto you** (Luke 10: 1-9). **And the seventy returned again with joy, saying, Lord, even the devils are subject unto us through Thy name** (Luke 10: 17). Jesus responded saying, **"I beheld Satan as lightning fall from heaven"** (Luke 10:18).

These disciples were exercising the great power God had given them, and Christ was demonstrating that He could obliterate the results of the Satanic lie, **"thou shalt not surely die."** The power these men had was only a foretaste of the mighty power of God that will touch the life of every person in the Kingdom of God. When God goes into action, **"The inhabitant shall not say, I am sick: the people that dwell therein shall be forgiven their iniquity"** (Isa. 33:24). These disciples were the recipients of the nature of Christ, becoming eons by whom God flowed out to men.

As the Lord neared the end of His public ministry, He took His disciples aside and said, **Believest thou not that I am in the Father, and the Father in Me? The words that I speak unto you, I speak not of myself: but the Father that dwelleth in Me, He doeth the works. . . . Verily, verily, I say unto you, he that believeth in Me, the works that I do shall he do also; and greater works than these shall he do; because I go unto My Father. And whatsoever ye shall ask in My name, that will I do, that the Father may be glorified in the Son** (John 14:10-13). Clearly, men living today have not been authorized by God to exercise these powers. No man can do these miracles in this dispensation.

As His crucifixion drew near, Jesus told these disciples, **And I will pray the Father, and He shall give you another Comforter** (paraclete), **that He may abide with you forever** (John 14:16). "Forever" means "in relation to the eon," and He went on to explain, **Even the Spirit of truth; whom the world cannot receive, because it seeth Him not, neither knoweth Him but ye know Him: for He dwelleth with you, and shall be in you. I will not leave you comfortless: I will come to you** (John 14:17-18). This directive does not refer to the second coming of Christ. The irrefutable fact was that within a matter of days, when the day of Pentecost would come, a company of about 120 disciples, including the twelve (now with Matthias), would become the recipients of the outpouring of the Holy Spirit. **So then after the Lord had spoken unto them, He was received up into heaven, and sat on the right hand of God. And they went forth, and preached every where, the Lord working with them, and confirming the word with signs following them** (Mark 16:19-20).

The Lord, upon His resurrection, found the eleven gathered together at Jerusalem, and said, **And, behold, I send the promise of My Father upon you: but tarry ye in the city of Jerusalem, until ye be endued with power from on high** (Luke 24:49). In anticipation of that momentous day Jesus said to them, **These things have I spoken unto you, being yet present with you. But the Comforter, which is the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in My name, He shall teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you** (John 14:25-26). **But when the Comforter is come, whom I will send unto you from the Father, even the Spirit of truth, which proceedeth from the Father, He shall testify of Me** (John 15:26). In faithfulness to His spoken word, the book of Acts records, **And when the day of Pentecost was fully come, they were all with one accord in one place. . . and they were all filled**

with the Holy Spirit and began to speak with other tongues as the Spirit gave them utterance. And there were dwelling at Jerusalem Jews, devout men, out of every nation under heaven (on earth). Now when this was noised abroad, the multitude came together, and were confounded, because that every man heard them speak in his own language (Acts 2:1,4-6). This multitude was utterly amazed by this stupendous event, asking, "What does it mean?" And some mocked, saying they were all full of new wine. Peter then pronounced these awesome words . . . **Ye men of Judea and all ye that dwell in Jerusalem, be this known to you and hearken to my words: for these are not drunken, as ye suppose, seeing it is but the third hour of the day. But this is that which was spoken by the prophet Joel, And it shall come to pass in the last days, saith God, I will pour out of My Spirit upon all flesh: and your sons and daughters shall prophesy, and your young men shall see visions, and your old men shall dream dreams: and on My servants and on My handmaidens I will pour out in those days of My Spirit: and they shall prophesy (Acts 2:14-18).**

This great work of the Holy Spirit ushered in the 33-year Acts Period as a foretaste of the coming Kingdom. God had given these simple, plain fisherman the earnest of the Holy Spirit making them powerful, God-commissioned heralds proclaiming the gospel of the manifest Kingdom of God. And such is the power of God that will be seen again, when Christ our Savior comes in His Kingdom. The promise of the Father will be fully realized when all men see the blazing forth of His glory in His *ephiphaneia*. That is our hope and what we live looking for (Titus 2: 13).

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