

# Waiting On A Promise

We have all made promises and have had promises made to us. It's difficult to wait on these promises. Today we talk about waiting on a promise.

## Introduction

Do you remember as a child being given a promise by a parent? Maybe it went something like this, "If you behave and are a good kid, I promise you that Santa will bring something for you at Christmas." What about a promise as an adult? Maybe a promise you have heard from your boss is, "If you finish this project by this deadline, I promise you that others will take notice and you will be compensated accordingly."

We have all made promises to others and have been given promises. Maybe you have some experience when what was promised never came to fruition and left you disheartened. Or maybe you are still waiting for the promise to become complete. Either way, today as we talk about the promises of God, we will learn how people deal with the wait. We will talk about what individuals do when waiting for a promise to be fulfilled. What about you? What do you do when you are waiting to hear an answer from God or waiting for his promise to come to pass?

## Abraham Waiting on a Promise

Let's start by looking at Abraham. We read about him in the book of Genesis. Abraham received a promise from God when he was 75 years old. He and his wife Sarah were told by God to relocate his estate to Egypt. Through a series of events, he was forced from Egypt and moved to the Negev and several other places. Abraham was unsettled.

We read the promise God made with Abraham during this time of wandering in Genesis 12:1-6.

### Genesis 12:1-6

(1) The LORD had said to Abram, "Go from your country, your people and your father's household to the land I will show you. (2) "I will make you into a great nation, and I will bless you; I will make your name great, and you will be a blessing. (3) I will bless those who bless you, and whoever curses you I will curse; and all peoples on earth will be blessed through you." (4) So Abram went, as the LORD had told him; and Lot went with him. Abram was seventy-five years old when he set out from Harran. (5) He took his wife Sarai, his nephew Lot, all the possessions they had accumulated and the people they had acquired in Harran, and they set out for the land of Canaan, and they arrived there. (6) Abram traveled through the land as far as the site of the great tree of Moreh at Shechem. At that time the Canaanites were in the land.

God made a promise that Abraham would be made into a great nation. But how could that be? He was 75 years old and his wife was barren. He had God's favor upon his life and we read of the blessings God placed on him and how the world would be blessed through him.



Abraham must have been wondering how could this be? As matter of fact, twenty-five years go by until God brings up this promise to Abraham again. We find another interaction between God and Abraham in Genesis 15:3-5

#### Genesis 15:3-5

(3) And Abram said, "You have given me no children; so a servant in my household will be my heir." (4) Then the word of the LORD came to him: "This man will not be your heir, but a son who is your own flesh and blood will be your heir." (5) He took him outside and said, "Look up at the sky and count the stars—if indeed you can count them." Then he said to him, "So shall your offspring be."

Abraham's response while waiting for God to fulfill his promise was to sleep with his wife's maidservant and produce an heir. Abraham tried to hurry God's plan along, twenty-five years is a long time to wait. However, God gave him a son at the age of 100.

Abraham's legacy is that he is the father of the nation of Israel, God's chosen people. The writer of Hebrews writes this about Abraham in Hebrews 11:11-12

#### Hebrews 11:11-12

(11) And by faith even Sarah, who was past childbearing age, was enabled to bear children because she considered him faithful who had made the promise. (12) And so from this one man, and he as good as dead, came descendants as numerous as the stars in the sky and as countless as the sand on the seashore.

#### Moses Waiting on a Promise

Abraham while waiting on God tried to do things on his own terms at first. We read how Moses in the book of Exodus was given a promise too of delivering the people of Israel out of Egypt and entering into a new land with new-found freedom. Exodus 3:7-10 says:

#### Exodus 3:7-10

(7) The LORD said, "I have indeed seen the misery of my people in Egypt. I have heard them crying out because of their slave drivers, and I am concerned about their suffering. (8) So I have come down to rescue them from the hand of the Egyptians and to bring them up out of that land into a good and spacious land, a land flowing with milk and honey—the home of the Canaanites, Hittites, Amorites, Perizzites, Hivites and Jebusites. (9) And now the cry of the Israelites has reached me, and I have seen the way the Egyptians are oppressing them. (10) So now, go. I am sending you to Pharaoh to bring my people the Israelites out of Egypt."

Through a series of miracles, Moses convinced the stubborn Pharaoh of Egypt to free the enslaved Israelites. Because of the rebelliousness of the people of Israel, they wandered in the desert for 40 years.

For 40 years, Moses had to keep inspiring the people to move toward the promised land. How tired he must have felt with the complaining of the people. Every parent knows the road trip question that children ask, "Are we there yet?" Moses had hundreds of thousands of people asking him this often.



So how did Moses deal with waiting for God's promise to yet be fulfilled? Every place they set up camp, he had a tent of meeting. He had a place where we went and met with God. Moses regularly interceded for the people. He sought God, knew God, and studied God.

Hebrews says this about him in chapter 11 verses 24 – 26.

Hebrews 11:24-26

(24) By faith Moses, when he had grown up, refused to be known as the son of Pharaoh's daughter. (25) He chose to be mistreated along with the people of God rather than to enjoy the fleeting pleasures of sin. (26) He regarded disgrace for the sake of Christ as of greater value than the treasures of Egypt, because he was looking ahead to his reward.

### The Disciples Waiting on a Promise

Keep looking forward. That is the response Moses had to the promise God had made. Jesus gave a promise to the disciples after he had risen from the dead.

We find this promise in Acts 1:1-5 and verse 8.

Acts 1:1-5

(1) In my former book, Theophilus, I wrote about all that Jesus began to do and to teach (2) until the day he was taken up to heaven, after giving instructions through the Holy Spirit to the apostles he had chosen. (3) After his suffering, he presented himself to them and gave many convincing proofs that he was alive. He appeared to them over a period of forty days and spoke about the kingdom of God. (4) On one occasion, while he was eating with them, he gave them this command: "Do not leave Jerusalem, but wait for the gift my Father promised, which you have heard me speak about. (5) For John baptized with water, but in a few days you will be baptized with the Holy Spirit."

Acts 1:8

(8) But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth."

The disciples were in Jerusalem for Pentecost or the Feast of Weeks which was an annual festival held 50 days after Passover. Jesus had ascended into Heaven 40 days after Passover. Jews had gathered in Jerusalem from several nations to participate in the festival.

It was during this 10 day period when Jesus gave the promise, ascended into heaven, and Pentecost that we read of the disciples' response to waiting for Jesus' promise.

Acts 1:12-14

(12) Then the apostles returned to Jerusalem from the hill called the Mount of Olives, a Sabbath day's walk from the city. (13) When they arrived, they went upstairs to the room where they were staying. Those present were Peter, John, James and Andrew; Philip and Thomas, Bartholomew and Matthew; James son of Alphaeus and Simon the Zealot, and Judas son of James. (14) They all joined together constantly in prayer, along with the women and Mary the mother of Jesus, and with his brothers.



They were constantly in prayer. This is the perfect response when waiting for God to show up. They were in hopeful expectation that the long-awaited gift would take place.

Acts 2:1-4 says this:

Acts 2:1-4

(1) When the day of Pentecost came, they were all together in one place. (2) Suddenly a sound like the blowing of a violent wind came from heaven and filled the whole house where they were sitting. (3) They saw what seemed to be tongues of fire that separated and came to rest on each of them. (4) All of them were filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in other tongues as the Spirit enabled them.

This newfound power propelled the disciples to boldly preach the gospel. Jesus fulfilled his promise by sending the Holy Spirit to baptize believers by giving them power. This power is for us today. The Holy Spirit is who enables us to spread the good news of Jesus Christ.

## Conclusion

We just spoke about people whom God promised something to and he came through. If God promises something, he will bring it to fruition. So what is our response? What do we do in the waiting time? God is faithful to fulfill his promise.

1 Thessalonians 4:16 – 18 tells us of our Blessed Hope. The final promise of our salvation.

1 Thessalonians 4:16-18

(16) For the Lord himself will come down from heaven, with a loud command, with the voice of the archangel and with the trumpet call of God, and the dead in Christ will rise first. (17) After that, we who are still alive and are left will be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air. And so we will be with the Lord forever. (18) Therefore encourage one another with these words.

Our only response, while we wait for this promise to be fulfilled, is to pray with hopeful expectation and to worship Him in the waiting.

You may be waiting for a yet to be fulfilled promise. Your response is key. Cling to his promise and believe that what God says he will do, he will accomplish, in His perfect timing.

