

Class Notes for Week 2 – Promises to Noah & to David

Whereby are given unto us exceeding great and precious promises: that by these ye might be partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust. 2 Peter 1:4

1. God's Covenant with Noah

In the course of time, man's wickedness drove God to bring the judgement of the Flood upon the earth.

The earth also was corrupt before God, and the earth was filled with violence. And God looked upon the earth, and, behold, it was corrupt; for all flesh had corrupted his way upon the earth. And God said unto Noah, The end of all flesh is come before me; for the earth is filled with violence through them; and, behold, I will destroy them with the earth. (Genesis 6:11-13)

But in the aftermath, He made a second great promise to faithful Noah: "I will not again curse the ground any more . . . While the earth remains . . . summer and winter, and day and night shall not cease" (Genesis 8:21,22). This promise of the permanence of the earth was confirmed by a covenant, made by God with all flesh, and symbolised in the rainbow (Genesis 9:11-13).

2. God's promises to David

Nearly 1,000 years after Abraham, when his descendants, the nation of Israel, had become a kingdom in the land of promise, God made further momentous promises to David the king. In fact, it was so solemn a promise, it is referred to as the Covenant with David. And like the promises to Abraham, it combined plain, practical ideas with cryptic statements that must have puzzled David for years.

Here is a sample, taken from 2 Samuel 7: "The Lord declares to you", said Nathan, "that the Lord will make you a house" (v.11). This sounded like an odd statement, because it was David who wanted to build God a house – that is why he had called for Nathan in the first place! But as the prophet continued, it became obvious that the Lord had in mind a different kind of house: "I will raise up your son after you, who shall come forth from your body, and I will establish his kingdom. He shall build a house for my name, and I will establish the throne of his kingdom..." (v. 12,13).

So far, the promise could fit neatly David's son Solomon, who succeeded him on the throne. But God continued, "I will be his father, and he shall be my son" (v.14). What was that?! How could the person referred to be David's son, and yet have God for his father as well? It was very mysterious. The climax of the promise came at the end: "Your house and your kingdom shall be made sure for ever before me; your throne shall be established for ever" (v. 16). The house of David was clearly his family or dynasty.

Once more, God had made a promise which, upon His honour, He could not break, and King David, like Abraham, died believing the eternal God would keep His word.

These promises too were affirmed by God by covenant and oath (Psalm 89:3,4), and were reiterated by the angel Gabriel at the announcement of Jesus's birth (Luke 1:32,33).

But David's Kingdom did not last forever (Ezekiel 21:26-27), and so like the promises to Abraham, we await their future fulfillment!

All these promises are centred in Jesus, the Son of God (Luke 3:38; Acts 13:32,33; Romans 15:8,9; 2Corinthians 1:19,20), and so the New Testament begins with the words: "The book of the generation of Jesus Christ, the son of David, the son of Abraham" (Matthew 1:1).