

December 1, 2019,
Advent Sunday
Rev. Silvan Chandrakumar A.

Celebrating the Promises of God

Old Testament 1 Sam. 2: 1-10; Psalm 66; Epistle to the Hebrews. 11: 29-40; The Gospel of Luke. 1: 39–45

Christmas is a time to remember God's promises. Jesus Christ, His only begotten Son, is the most important of God's promises. The Advent Season is a day of preparation for the birthday of Jesus.

1. The God of Promises - Old Testament (1 Sam. 2: 1-10)

Hannah knew what it was like to suffer pain. She was barren. Her husband's second wife, Peninnah, often provoked her to tears because of this. But when she cried out to God for a son that she could dedicate to him, God answered her prayer and gave her the boy, Samuel. Overcome by emotion at God's gracious dealings with her, Hannah rejoices in God's sovereign rule over all things. She cries out, "My heart rejoices in God!" (1 Samuel 2:1).

Then Hannah prayed and said: "My heart rejoices..." The word translated "rejoice" here is a word that means "to exult or triumph." It is the rejoicing that is associated with victory.

What Hannah says in her song here, it would be this: "God is in control. Therefore, celebrate!" Have you ever thought about that? God is in control, He keeps His promises and therefore we may rejoice in Him. It is sometimes hard for us to see this when we are going through a difficult time. That's when it can be helpful to hear the testimony of someone else who has gone through a difficult time and has already passed to the other side. That's where Hannah's song comes in today. This song is her testimony, not only of what God has done in her life but of how God operates in all of life. And so it can be an encouragement to us.

Why does Hannah celebrate? Because God is in control of all things and HIS promises came true. This is her story. This is her song.

The Bible is a book of many promises. The promises of God are the foundation of the Christian faith and Church.

2. The God of Promises - New Testament (Luke 1: 39-41)

The greatest promise God has made is His Son, Jesus Christ (Acts 7:17; 13: 23,32; Gal. 3:22; Rom. 15: 8). When Gabriel made this promise to the virgin, she could not believe it. Gabriel replied, 'the Holy Spirit

will come upon you and the power of the Most High will overshadow you' (Luke 1:35). Mary went to her cousin Elizabeth's house to celebrate the promise of this God. When Elizabeth heard Mary's greeting, the baby leaped in her womb. Elizabeth was filled with the Holy Spirit (Luke 1:41). Like Hannah, Mary too in her Magnificat shared her testimony in song. 'Blessed is she who has believed that the Lord would fulfill his promises to her!'. Believe God's promises and make it a celebration.

The promises in the New Testament are essentially three facts.

#Abraham's Promise of a Seed (Romans 4: 13-16,20, 9: 8,9, 15: 8, Gal 3: 16-22, 4:23, Hebrews 6: 13-17, 7 : 6, 11: 9,11,17). Abraham believed these promises. And they were confirmed with Isaac and Jacob.

#The Promise of the Seed of David: Jesus is the promised Savior (Acts 13:23). Stephen spoke of the time of Christ's coming (Acts 7:17): 'The promised time is near.' David's promise of a Savior was confirmed in Christ (Acts 13:32). Paul made it clear that the promise was by faith in Jesus Christ (Gal 3:22). Abraham's promise of a seed and his promise to David about a king are contained in the promise

made to the fathers (Romans 15: 8). In speaking of the future of Israel, the apostle also states that the Israelites were heirs of the promise (Romans 9: 4,8,9).

This includes the promise of life in Christ Jesus (2 Tim. 1: 1), the promise of eternal inheritance (Hebrews 9:15), and the promise of eternal life (1 John 2:25).

#The Promise of the Holy Spirit: This promise was realized only after Christ's ascension (Lk. 24:49; Acts 1: 4; 2:33; Eph. 1:13). The promise of entering His rest remains (Hebrews 4: 1). The new heavens and the new earth, which produce righteousness, are another promise of the Lord (3 Peter 3:13; Isaiah 52:11).

3. Accept Promises Through Faith (Heb. 11: 29-40)

The chapter defines faith as the assurance (*hupostasis*—reality) of things hoped for and the proof (*elegchos*—proof or certainty) of things not seen. Hebrews 11 is the great faith chapter of the Bible, first defining faith (v. 1) and then using well-known Hebrew people to show faith in action. These people heard God's promises and believed

them in spite of waiting for a very long time to see the promises fulfilled-some promises never having been fulfilled in their lifetime. For instance, Abraham didn't live long enough to see the nation that sprang from his seed. God has reserved the fulfillment of the promise for the world to come v. 40.

God's promises urge us not to stumble in the midst of adversity. While many received positive blessings, others suffered mockery, scourging, chains, and imprisonment, with the impending resurrection of others. Some suffered for good by faith, and some by evil through faith. But all of them lived their lives in faith. The list of believers mentioned in this chapter received the promises by faith (Hebrews 6:12).

"God having provided some better thing concerning us" (v. 40a). Because God is faithful in His promises, Now that Christ has come, we can see more clearly what God wants of us-and we celebrate a kind of grace beyond anything found previously. we are encouraged to believe, celebrate, and rely on His Word.

Please go to the next page - thank u



Advent Wreath

1st CANDLE – (purple) **THE PROPHECY CANDLE or CANDLE OF HOPE** – We can have hope because God is faithful and will keep the promises made to us. Our hope comes from God. (Romans 15:12-13)

2nd CANDLE – (purple) **THE BETHLEHEM CANDLE or THE CANDLE OF PREPARATION** – God kept his promise of a Savior who would be born in Bethlehem. Preparation means to "get ready". Help us to be ready to welcome YOU, O GOD! (Luke 3:4-6)

3rd CANDLE – (pink) **THE SHEPHERD CANDLE or THE CANDLE OF JOY** – The angels sang a message of JOY! (Luke 2:7-15)

4th CANDLE – (purple) **THE ANGEL CANDLE or THE CANDLE OF LOVE** – The angles announced the good news of a Savior. God sent his only Son to earth to save us, because he loves us! (John 3:16-17)

5th CANDLE – (white) "**CHRIST CANDLE**" – The white candle reminds us that Jesus is the spotless lamb of God, sent to wash away our sins! His birth was for his death, his death was for our birth! (John 1:29)

HAVE A BLESSED ADVENT SUNDAY !