

=BIBLE PROMISES=

Lesson 9

Bible Promises About Life's Pathway

AIM: to teach my pupils that life on earth can never be perfect, but that with the Lord's help there can be true happiness and contentment.

POINT OF CONTACT: Think about the beauty and fragrance of a lovely rose and then realize that many lovely roses have thorns. Think about a time when you have been especially happy and perhaps have laughed a great deal; then remember a time shortly thereafter when you were unhappy or terribly sad about something. Think about a time when, as a result of your witnessing, someone was saved; then remember the time when you were ridiculed and perhaps criticized because your separated life caused you to say "no" to some temptation. Think about a time when you were victorious over a bad behavior pattern and then about the time that you were discouraged because your behavior caused problems.

INTRODUCTION: How can a Christian's life be described? Now that he is saved, is he sinless? Does he display perfect behavior? Is he free from all troubles? Jesus said to His disciples, "In the world ye shall have tribulation," John 16:33b. Tribulation is not only persecution or trouble from the world, but it is also distress from within. We need to understand two very basic truths: (1) We are still in the world even though we are no longer of the world, if we have been born again. The ruler of this world, Satan, is not happy with our new position and will fight us to keep us from being shining lights that would lead others out of darkness into the light of the Gospel. (2) Although we have been given a new nature, we still have the old nature with us. The Christian's pathway, therefore, will be dotted with ruts caused by our own old natures and by the Devil. We need to remember always that He that is in us is greater than he that is in the world, I John 4:4. God has made certain promises to us that will smooth out the rough places and fill in the ruts. Jesus said, "These things I have spoken unto you, that in me ye might have peace. In the world ye shall have tribulation: but be of good cheer; I have overcome the world," John 16:33.

- I. GOD PROMISES RELIEF FROM THE TRIBULATIONS OF THE WORLD. (A certain amount of tribulation—known only to God—must come before a person enters into the kingdom of God, Acts 14:22.)
 1. The Lord limits the extent and the severity of the tribulations. (The Devil is the cause of tribulation against Christians, Revelation 20:10.)
 - 1) The Devil cannot do any more to the Lord's people than the Lord will allow. When the Devil told of his intentions against Job, the Lord told him how far he could go against Job; then he could go no further, Job 1:12; 2:6. The Lord also limits the strength of the temptations which the Devil sends our way, I Corinthians 10:13.
 - 2) God promises to provide always a way for Christians to escape Satan's attempts at making them fall into sin, I Corinthians 10:13.
 2. Persecution confirms to the Christian that he belongs to Jesus, John 15:18-21. Hatred from the world reminds Christians that the world hated Jesus before it hated the Christians.
 - 1) The Lord has promised that He will live in His people and walk with them. There can be no agreement between Christ and the Devil, II Corinthians 6:16, 17.
 - 2) The Christian who has found harmony with the world can know that he is not walking in God's will. The fully separated Christian cannot agree with the practices nor the thinking of the world.
 3. God helps Christians to glory in tribulation, Romans 5:3-5.
 - 1) Trials help God's people to become more what they ought to be, Job 23:10; Psalm 119:67.
 - 2) Having tribulations is a sign that a Christian is capable of being tested, I Corinthians 10:13.
 4. God has promised to give peace in the midst of tribulations.
 - 1) He gives Christians the inward knowledge that everything is going to be all right, John 16:33. He lets them know that all things are working together for good, Romans 8:28.
 - 2) He commands Christians to put themselves into the position of making His peace available to them, Philippians 4:6, 7; James 3:18. If God's people tell Him about everything instead of worrying, they have His promise of peace.

5. God promises to show constant, uninterrupted love to His people. God has given His promise that nothing can ever separate His people from His love, Romans 8:35-39. This passage of Scripture lists every kind of trouble that can be imagined.
6. God has promised to defend His own. God will take care of any vindication or vengeance that might be due because of troubles that have been caused by others, Romans 12:17-21.
7. God has promised to protect His own in the midst of troubles. Look at Acts 14 for an idea of how Christians who were doing their work of witnessing were mistreated. Until God's purpose for Paul's life had been fulfilled, no person could take his life.
8. God gives rewards for enduring tribulations.
 - 1) He gives glory. The troubles will be nothing compared to the glory which shall be received for enduring them, II Corinthians 4:17, 18.
 - 2) He gives happiness, James 5:11; I Peter 3:14-18; 4:14.
9. God protects the souls while tribulation is being endured. They will never be destroyed by Satan, I Peter 4:19.

II. GOD PROMISES RELIEF FROM TROUBLES WHICH ARE CAUSED BY THE CHRISTIAN'S OLD SINFUL FLESH. Christians' old sinful natures can make them go into sin, James 1:12-16. There is a constant warfare within the Christian—the flesh against the Spirit and the Spirit against the flesh, Galatians 5:17.

1. God has promised to be a loving Father to His children.
 - 1) He promises correction when they do wrong, Deuteronomy 8:5. When they are corrected and chastened by the Lord, they realize His love and their wonderful relationship to Him as His children. The “spankings” which are received from Him are signs that His children have been received into His family, Hebrews 12:6.
 - 2) He makes them happy in His dealings with them, Psalm 94:12-15. Because He keeps bringing them back to Himself, His own shall naturally follow Him when He calls for them.
2. God promises to extend His mercy and understanding to the troubled. Mercy causes a withholding of judgment or punishment even when justice demands it. Mercy implies a lack of severity in punishing.
 - 1) God is full of tender mercy, James 5:11. He is rich in mercy, Ephesians 2:4. Luke 1:50, “And his mercy is on them that fear him from generation to generation.”
 - 2) God promises mercy to those who are merciful toward others, Matthew 5:7; Luke 6:36; Ephesians 4:32.
 - 3) God promises to give mercy to those who come boldly to Him, Hebrews 4:14-16. He understands their problems completely, for He “was in all points tempted like as we,” but He was able to overcome every temptation. Jesus' people therefore are not to become discouraged with any temptation, nor do they have any excuse to be so weak that any temptation might overtake them.
3. God gives comfort and forgiveness to those who might have been cast down by temptation.
 - 1) There is comfort for the Christian who sorrows because of his sin. The godly sorrow for sin causes the Christian to repent of his sin and thus to be more careful next time the temptation comes. There also comes a time when the sorrow for that sin will end; there will be comfort instead, II Corinthians 7:8c, 9.
 - 2) God promises forgiveness for sin that is confessed to Him. Review I John 1:9.
4. Jesus promises to be a constant lawyer pleading His people's case before the Father. We have learned that Satan is an accuser of the brethren; he points out the weak points. God's people are to be on guard against committing sin, but if they do sin, they can count on Jesus being present to remind the Father of the penalty which He paid for their sins, I John 2:1.
5. The Holy Spirit prays for us. We do not know what we need to make our weaknesses into strength. Those of us who seek to have our lives controlled by God will not ever be condemned by Him, Romans 8:1, 26.

CONCLUSION: In spite of constant struggling against forces of evil and our old nature, we who have been born again can count on being happy and content in the Lord. We can count on victories now and final victory when our life on earth has ended. Jesus will deliver us from the body of sin and death, Romans 7:24, 25. Jesus overcomes the world for us now, I John 5:4, 5. Let us be of good cheer in these promises.