

# God's Promises

## His Miniature Prophecies

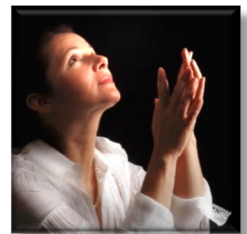
### Introduction:

Many Christians have studied the *promises of God* and been encouraged by personally *claiming them as their own*.

- God's Word contains literally hundreds of promises waiting to be ***claimed in faith***.
- It's our hope that your faith and trust in the Heavenly Father will be increased as you seek Him to answer your *needs* or *problems* through these amazing "little" prophecies.
- They are very personal – they are meant for you!

Many don't understand what ***claiming God's promises*** means! It is ***not*** a "push button" religion or a permissive "prayer demand" for God to answer your prayer.

- This is a study of how we really connect with God – how we develop a working relationship with Him.
- **And** – how we discover the amazing things He is willing to do for us.



In each ***promise*** there is a ***prophecy*** that it can be yours ***if*** you accept His "user manual" (details found in the Bible of how to activate them)!

This is not a flippant approach to Christianity. It is part of the secret to have victory over every problem ***and*** become friends with Jesus!!!

### The Bible's First Promise:

Adam and Eve had just sinned. We don't know how long it was before Christ came to the Garden of Eden to confront them. I'm sure it was a period of time so their "act of disobedience" could be thought out – pondered.

- They suddenly knew they were naked and, interestingly, they were ashamed.
- One can assume that they began to experience emotions they had never had before: fear, anxiety, remorse – and maybe even terror.

Then, in some way, they “*heard*” God approaching. We know it had to be Jesus because no one ever actually saw God the Father and lived (1 John 4:12)!

- I’m sure that meeting took a long time!
- In the next scene Jesus, Adam and Eve are by the forbidden tree from which they’d eaten. The serpent is still there.
- Will they now die? So far, no!

Here’s why (Jesus is speaking to the serpent/Satan – a prophecy):

*“And I will put hostility between you and the woman and between your offspring and her offspring; her offspring will attack your head, and you will attack her offspring’s heel.”* (Genesis 3:15 – NET).

- “*I*” – Jesus
- “*will put hostility*” – hatred
- “*between you and the woman*” – referring to Eve – but – a woman in prophecy represents God’s church – ***the future is foreseen***.
- “*between your offspring and her offspring*” – all of Satan’s “children” or followers and all of Eve’s descendants, making up the true church’s members, will be at war.
- “*her offspring will attack your head*” – the offspring of Eve, the true church, and, clearly, Jesus Christ will eventually bring you to an end – forever.
- “*you will attack her offspring’s heel*” – Satan will be capable of hurting the ***church*** (with persecution and even martyrdom) – but it will survive.

That’s the prophecy of the whole plan of redemption. A “Savior” is intimated. ***So Adam and Eve won’t have to immediately die.***

***Christ did die for everyone.*** So – is everyone going to be saved? This is a question that is most important to understand. Everyone’s name who will ever live on earth is recorded in the “*Book of Life*” (Revelation 17:8) – those who potentially could make up God’s eternal kingdom, His church, and be His children.

- Our lives, our choices, however, determine if our name is kept there (Exodus 32:32). ***It can be removed.***
- **This** brings us to a **key** issue of the promises of salvation:

## **God has given us conditions in how we are to relate to Him and He to us:**

In turn, God's **personal prophecies** are also conditional – based on how we relate to Him.

Here are examples:

- *“By this we know that we love the **children of God**, when we love God, and keep his commandments”* (I John 5:2).
- *“For ye are all the **children of God** by faith in Christ Jesus”* (Galatians 3:26).
- *“God has said: ‘I will live with them and walk among them, and I will be their God, and they will be my people.’ Therefore, ‘Come out from them and be separate, says the Lord. Touch no unclean thing, and I will receive you.’ And, ‘I will be a Father to you, and **you will be my sons and daughters**, says the Lord Almighty”* (II Corinthians 6:16-18 – NIV).



**Notice the conditions to be in the “family of God!”**

- 1. Loving God**
- 2. Keeping His commandments**
- 3. Having faith in Jesus**
- 4. Not being part of the world**
- 5. Not to be part of sinful things**

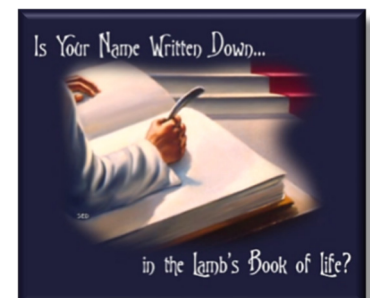
**God's promises – those “personal prophecies” – have been given to us as things we can pray for!** That means, however: Answers to our prayers are conditional!!!

We are not to **“use”** God – we are to fully permit Him to **“use us”** by complying with those conditions! Many Christians, even pastors, do not understand this.

***Presuming God will answer according to our will might actually mock what God wants, imposing on His grace!***

**This goes even deeper!** Fasten your seatbelts:

1. If we say we “have a message for someone from God or even from the Spirit” – it must be within the circle of His will – be in agreement with His Word – or it may be only a “human wish!”
2. If we see someone “slain in the Spirit” who has not made a full surrender to Jesus first, is it really the Holy Spirit working? If they have not come to the foot of the Cross, they are at risk of acting out the emotion of the hour.
3. If someone says that they have a “prophecy” (which is a very solemn statement) and it is more material/earthly



than spiritual, something is seriously missing. Chances are it is coming from the human mind.

Those who honor and consult with heaven or study the Bible, ***counsel with God.*** These issues are “holy matters” and are part of what determines if our name is to be retained in the Lamb’s “*Book of Life.*”

Claiming a promise, praying for help when in need, even asking for forgiveness of sins all relate to accepting the conditions God has given to us!

### **The Importance of these “Personal Prophecies” in the Bible:**

#### **God speaks to us through those promises.**

- Jesus told the paralytic that His sins were forgiven (Luke 5:43).
- He makes the same promise to us today: “*If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness*” (I John 1:9 – KJV). We conclude that the paralytic had confessed his sins!
- God in His unutterable love is saying: “You can really talk to me and be forgiven for the past!” But you must truly confess.

#### **He has promised to adopt us into His family.**

- “*The Spirit himself testifies with our spirit that we are God’s children. Now if we are children, then we are heirs – heirs of God and co-heirs with Christ, if indeed we share in his sufferings in order that we may also share in his glory*” (Romans 8:16-17 – NIV).
- The condition? We must be willing to suffer for His sake and stay true even in persecution.

#### **The promises of God are the only foundation of our faith.**

- “*I write these things to you who **believe** in the name of the Son of God so that **you may know** that you have eternal life*” (I John 5:13 – NIV).
- The conditions? That we “*believe*” on Jesus. The Greek word for “*believe*” means we trust Him so much that we copy Him.

#### **The promises of God lead us into hope, joy and peace.**

- “*Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace, **whose mind is stayed on thee:** because he trusteth in thee*” (Isaiah 26:3 – KJV).



- “I sat **down under his shadow** with great delight, and his fruit was sweet to my taste” (Song of Solomon 2:3 – KJV).
- The conditions? Our minds are to be on heavenly things; we really **trust** God and we pause to be bathed by His Spirit under heaven’s influence (best way – be in His Word).

Through these we can catch a glimpse of God’s love and glory!

### **Praying – Petitioning God for a Promise:**

These “personal prophecies” are so wonderful, we must learn how to make contact with God for them.

### **The Types of Prayer**

1. The prayer of reverence and adoration (Psalm 147)
2. The prayer of thanksgiving (Psalm 118)
3. The prayer of dedication (I Samuel 1:11)
4. **The prayer of petition** (Daniel 9:4-19, John 17:1-26)
  - a. The prayer of commitment (Mark 14:36)
  - b. The prayer of reception (Matthew 21:22, I John 5:15)



### **The Kinds of Petitions**

1. The prayer of commitment. This prayer is to be prayed when we are not sure of God’s will, as Christ prayed, “*Not as I will, but as Thou wilt*” (Matthew 26:39 – RSV). We may feel in ourselves that things should be a certain way, but God may have a different way. **We, therefore, commit our wills to His.**
2. The prayer of reception. This is a prayer that is much neglected. We pray, claiming a simple Bible text regarding that which God has clearly promised.
  - a. We are to ask, believe and give thanks for those things promised.  
 “For the pardon of sin, for the Holy Spirit, for a Christlike temper, for wisdom and strength to do His work, for any gift He has promised, we may ask; then we are to believe that we receive, and return thanks to God that we have received.”<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> *Education*, p. 258 (emphasis added).

“It is the will of God to cleanse us from sin, to make us His children, and to enable us to live a holy life. So we may ask for these blessings, and believe that we receive them, and thank God that we have received them.”<sup>2</sup>

b. We are to understand that the gift is in the promise.

“Whatever gift He promises, is in the promise itself. ‘The seed is the word of God.’ Luke 8:11. As surely as the oak is in the acorn, so surely is the gift of God in His promise. If we receive the promise, we have the gift.”<sup>3</sup>

c. We are to find subject matter for prayer in the promises.

“Every promise in the word of God furnishes us with subject matter for prayer, presenting the pledged word of Jehovah as our assurance.”<sup>4</sup>

d. We are not to be so concerned with seeing or feeling as with believing.

“The nobleman wanted to see the fulfillment of his prayer before he should believe; but he had to accept the word of Jesus that his request was heard and the blessing granted. This lesson we also have to learn. Not because we see or feel that God hears us are we to believe. We are to trust in His promises. When we come to Him in faith, every petition enters the heart of God. When we have asked for His blessing, we should believe that we receive it, and thank Him that we have received it. Then we are to go about our duties, assured that the blessing will be realized when we need it most. When we have learned to do this, we shall know that our prayers are answered. God will do for us ‘exceeding abundantly,’ ‘according to the riches of His glory,’ and ‘the working of His mighty power.’ Ephesians 3:20, 16; 1:19.”<sup>5</sup>

### The Problem of Presumption:

1. Presumption

a. Definition: Presumption is the act of taking God’s blessings for granted, to act or proceed with unwarranted or impertinent boldness.

b. Relevance: “Presumption is Satan’s counterfeit of faith.” “A belief that does not lead to obedience is presumption.”<sup>6</sup>

2. How to guard against presumption when claiming God’s promises.

a. Do not leave any conditions unfulfilled.

“Faith is in no sense allied to presumption. Only he who has true faith is secure against presumption. For presumption is Satan’s counterfeit of faith.

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<sup>2</sup> *Steps to Christ*, p. 51 (emphasis added).

<sup>3</sup> *Education*, p. 253 (emphasis added).

<sup>4</sup> *Thoughts From the Mount of Blessing*, p. 133.

<sup>5</sup> *The Desire of Ages*, p. 200 (emphasis added).

<sup>6</sup> *The Desire of Ages*, p. 126; *From the Mount of Blessing*, pp. 146-147.

Faith claims God's promises, and brings forth fruit in obedience. Presumption also claims the promises, but uses them as Satan did, to excuse transgression. Faith would have led our first parents to trust the love of God, and to obey His commands. Presumption led them to transgress His law, believing that His great love would save them from the consequence of their sin. It is not faith that claims the favor of Heaven without complying with the conditions on which mercy is to be granted. Genuine faith has its foundation in the promises and provisions of the Scriptures.”<sup>7</sup>

“There are persons who believe that they are right, when they are wrong. While claiming Christ as their Lord, and professedly doing great works in His name, they are workers of iniquity.... ‘Believe, believe,’ they say, ‘and you need not keep the law.’ But a belief that does not lead to obedience is presumption.... Obedience is the test of discipleship. It is the keeping of the commandments that proves the sincerity of our professions of love.... ‘Hereby we do know that we know Him, if we keep His commandments.’ 1 John 2:3.”<sup>8</sup>

**Note:** Conditions are then really commands, and commands are promises. Thus, all conditions are fulfilled in the same way as commands – by treating them as promises. A command of God, a condition of God becomes a promise of victory to the Christian who relies upon God by faith in Jesus Christ.

- b. Do not claim that prayer will always be answered in the very way and for the particular thing desired.

“When we do not receive the very things we asked for, at the time we ask, we are still to believe that the Lord hears and that He will answer our prayers. We are so erring and short-sighted that we sometimes ask for things that would not be a blessing to us, and our heavenly Father in love answers our prayers by giving us that which will be for our highest good – that which we ourselves would desire if with vision divinely enlightened we could see all things as they really are. When our prayers seem not to be answered, we are to cling to the promise; for the time of answering will surely come, and we shall receive the blessing we need most. But to claim that prayer will always be answered in the very way and for the particular thing that we desire, is presumption.”<sup>9</sup>

Note: The key word is “always.”

“When we pray for earthly blessings, the answer to our prayer may be delayed, or God may give us something other than we ask, but not so when we ask for deliverance from sin.”<sup>10</sup>

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<sup>7</sup> *The Desire of Ages*, p. 126 (emphasis added).

<sup>8</sup> *Thoughts From the Mount of Blessing*, pp. 146-147.

<sup>9</sup> *Steps to Christ*, p. 96 (emphasis added).

<sup>10</sup> *The Desire of Ages*, p. 266 (emphasis added).

## Special Conditions to Answered Prayer – Claiming His Promises:

### 1. Ask in Jesus' name.

*“Verily, verily, I say unto you, whatsoever ye ask in my name, He will give it to you” (John 16:23 – KJV).*

“Ask in my name,’ Christ says, ... Make use of my name. This will give your prayers efficiency, and the Father will give you the riches of His grace. Wherefore ask, and ye shall receive that your joy may be full.”<sup>11</sup>

“To pray in Christ’s name means much. It means that we are to accept His character, manifest His spirit, and work His works. The Saviour’s promise is given on condition. ‘If ye love Me,’ He says, ‘keep My commandments.’ He saves men, not in sin, but from sin; and those who love Him will show their love by obedience.”<sup>12</sup>

“When with earnestness and intensity we breathe a prayer in the name of Christ, there is in that very intensity a pledge from God that He is about to answer our prayer ‘exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think.’ Ephesians 3:20.”<sup>13</sup>

### 2. Fulfill any additional conditions attached to a particular promise.

#### a. The following promises have no conditions in their context – most do:

*“... how much more will the heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to those who ask Him!” (Luke 11:13).*

*“And my God will supply every need of yours according to his riches in glory in Christ Jesus” (Philippians 4:19).*

#### b. Besides the conditions we have already studied, additional specific conditions often occur within a particular promise. These must be fulfilled. Notice the following examples in which the additional specific conditions have been underlined:

*“If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness” (1 John 1:9).*

*“Thou [God] dost keep him in perfect peace, whose mind is stayed on thee, because he trusts in thee” (Isaiah 26:3).*

*“Seek **first** his kingdom and his righteousness, and all these things shall be yours as well” (Matthew 6:33 – NET).*

*“Rejoice in the Lord always; ... Let all men know your forbearance ... Have no anxiety about anything, ... And the peace of God, which passes all*

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<sup>11</sup> *Testimonies*, vol. 8, p. 178.

<sup>12</sup> *The Desire of Ages*, p. 668.

<sup>13</sup> *Christ’s Object Lessons*, p. 147.



*understanding, will keep your heart and minds in Christ Jesus” (Philippians 4:4-7).*

*“If any of you lacks wisdom, let him ask God ... with no doubting ...” (James 1:5-6).*

*“Count it all joy, my brethren, when you meet various trials, for you know that the testing of your faith produces steadfastness” (James 1:2-3 – NIV).*

### **Living a Holy Life – a Possibility!**

The first words in the Bible are: *“In the beginning God.”*

- Before then, there was no time – “He was.”
- Adam and Eve had no parents, no grandparents.
- They had no memory of the day before they were created.

God “started” this world and everything in it.

That God is defined – understood – as “before all” – thus, He is the standard of all – **and** He is:

1. All knowing (omniscient)
2. All powerful – above all (omnipotent)
3. All present (omnipresent)
4. Eternal (John 8:58)
5. Unexcelled in holiness – He is holy

### **Then comes this imperative:**

- *“For it is written: ‘Be holy, because I am holy’” (I Peter 1:16 – NIV).*
- In the promises there is the assurance that they are ***personal*** and ***possible***.
- In Biblical imperatives there is the assurance that we can follow this mandate!



***Be “holy,” like God is holy?*** Peter quoted this from Leviticus 19:2b. God had asked the ancient Israelites also to “be holy!”

**There is something about God that is holy that we should be able to understand and “copy.”** The request means that it can be fulfilled.

1. Peter notes: “*with minds that are alert ... set your hope on the grace to be brought to you when Jesus Christ comes*” (I Peter 1:13 – NIV).
2. Then: “As **obedient children**, *do not conform to the evil desires you had when you lived in ignorance*” (I Peter 1:14 – NIV).
3. “*But just as he who called you is holy, so be holy in all you do*” (I Peter 1:15 – NIV).

The first clue suggests that we have to have **clear minds**. Then, we are to be “**obedient children**,” avoiding evil desires of the past!

***That can only mean that God has some standard*** we are to obey.

What “standards” has God given us to **know what His holiness means**, what His character is like? There are two:

1. The example of Christ – His life, teaching and care for others.
2. The Decalogue or Ten Commandments.

We are to **love** like Christ and God love. But in this bent world, what does that love mean? The Ten Commandments tells us what that means!



- God told Isaiah: “*My thoughts are not your thoughts, nor your ways my ways*” (Isaiah 55:8).
- So, God puts holiness in terms that we can relate to and understand!

The Ten Commandments are a reflection of God’s love and character! In fact, some scholars say they are a “transcript of His character.”

- The first four guide us in our loyalty to Him.
- The last six share how we are to relate to others.

Karen Jobes, Ph.D., professor at Westmont College in California, noted in her book, *First Peter*, that the Ten Commandments are the “terms” in giving Christ preeminence! ***These represent “holiness” in terms we can understand.***

- “*For it is not those who hear the law who are **righteous in God’s sight**, but it is those **who obey the law** who will be **declared righteous**” (Romans 2:13 – NIV). (That means their names are kept in the Book of Life!)*

- “And by being perfected in this way [Christ became “perfect” through the things He suffered], he became the source of **eternal salvation to all who obey him**” (Hebrews 5:9 – NET).

“These things have I written unto you that **believe on the name of the Son of God**; that ye may **know that ye have eternal life**, and that ye may **believe on the name of the Son of God** (I John 5:13).

- This “believe” is *pisteuo* (G) and means that you trust God/Jesus **so deeply, you entrust yourself to Him. You take the risk of living a life that pleases Him in every way!**<sup>14</sup>

Jesus explained this further: “And everyone who has left houses or brothers or sisters or father or mother or wife or children or fields for my sake will receive a hundred times as much and will inherit eternal life” (Matthew 19:29).

**The promises in these texts?** We can be (1) declared righteous, (2) justified, (3) have eternal life and (4) be holy (perfected)!

- The condition?
- Obey Him.



“Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect” (Matthew 5:48). This text means the same thing Peter meant when he said we should be holy as God is holy.

**But you object: “I cannot be that way!”**

You claim:

1. “But we are all as an unclean thing, and **all our righteousnesses are as filthy rags**; and we all do fade as a leaf; and our iniquities, like the wind, have taken us away” (Isaiah 64:6).
2. Even Paul said: “For what I want to do I do not do, but what I hate I do ... it is no longer I myself who do it, but it is sin living in me” (Romans 7:15, 17b – NIV).



**Here is where, perhaps, the most important promises in the Bible are given!**

<sup>14</sup> Bauer-Danker Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament.

1. **“God made the one who did not know sin to be sin for us, so that in him we would become the righteousness of God”** (II Corinthians 5:21 – NET). Jesus legally took the guilt of every sin – past, present and future!
2. **“He himself bore our sins in his body on the tree, that we may cease from sinning and live for righteousness. By his wounds you were healed”** (I Peter 2:24 – NET). Our part is to **accept what He has done**, stop sinning and live for holiness, rightness and perfection.
3. But – how do I deal with sinning, wanting to sin, falling again and again?
  - **“(My little children, I am writing these things to you so that you may not sin.) But if anyone does sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous One** (I John 2:1 – NET). God knows that there is nothing good within us! When we fall, we confess and repent and Jesus pleads our case – immediately.
  - **How does He act as our attorney? He pleads His own merits before the Father!!!**  
*“Therefore he is able to save completely those who come to God through him, because he always lives to intercede for them”* (Hebrews 7:25 – NIV).
  - **God is the judge of man’s eternal future. But Jesus is right there, when we confess and repent, to plead our case. He** has never lost a case! How does all this work?
4. **“Therefore, since we have been declared righteous by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ”** (Romans 5:1 – NET).  
 Being declared **“righteous”** means that we are justified or pardoned.

### **Here is the Key!**

The faith that pardons comes from **the fruit of confession and repentance**. This brings justification and pardon.

- God gave Christ to the world to become the sinner’s substitute.
- **The moment** true faith in the merits of that costly atoning sacrifice is exercised, claiming Christ’s merits (His death, His perfect life, His obedience, His righteousness) and claiming Him as our personal Savior, **that moment** we are pardoned!!!



**“But thanks be to God, who gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ!”**  
 (I Corinthians 15:57 – NET).

## **The Blessed Hope (the greatest of all)**

The summation of all Christian faith, hope and anticipation **is** that the prophecies of the Bible are true!!! There are over 300 prophecies that were fulfilled in Christ's first coming. That evidence alone gives us faith, hope and anticipation:

1. We will have eternal Life
2. We will be changed into stress- and anxiety-free persons.
3. Jesus is coming again.
4. The saints will be part of His eternal family.
5. Those who had died in Christ will be raised to eternal life.

*“Listen, I will tell you a mystery: We will not all sleep, but we will all be changed—in a moment, in the blinking of an eye, at the last trumpet. For the trumpet will sound, and the dead will be raised imperishable, and we will be changed. For this perishable body must put on the imperishable, and this mortal body must put on immortality. Now when this perishable puts on the imperishable, and this mortal puts on immortality, then the saying that is written will happen, ‘Death has been swallowed up in victory’” (I Corinthians 15:51-54 – NET).*

“To dwell forever in this home of the blest, to bear in soul, body, and spirit, not the dark traces of sin and the curse, but the perfect likeness of our Creator, and through ceaseless ages to advance in wisdom, in knowledge and holiness, ever exploring new fields of thought, ever finding new wonders and new glories, ever increasing in capacity to know and to enjoy and to love, and knowing that there is still beyond us joy and love and wisdom infinite – such is the object to which the Christian hope is pointing, for which Christian education is preparing. To secure this education, and to aid others to secure it, should be the object of the Christian's life.”<sup>15</sup>

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<sup>15</sup> *The Review and Herald*, July 11, 1882. *Counsels to Parents, Teachers and Students*, p. 55.