

The Great and Precious Promises of God

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During the Great War, two poor boys who had been living on very meager rations in the city were sent far into the country to live on a farm. There was plenty of food. Since they never had meat in the city, they were surprised the first morning that there was meat for breakfast. They then went out to play. At lunch, there was another hot meal with meat again. It was even more astonishing to have meat a third time at supper. Such food three times a time was something they never dreamed of. When they went to bed, the younger boy said to his brother, “Jim, if they set that table again in the middle of the night, don’t forget to call me.”¹

That is how it is with God’s promises, which Peter calls “exceeding great and precious” (2 Peter 1:4). *Great* and *precious* are two words which do not often come together. Many things are great that are not precious, such as great rocks of little value. Other things are precious that are not great—such as diamonds—which are precious precisely because they are not great.

God’s promises are so great that they are not less than infinite, and so precious that they are not less than inestimable.²

The promises of God are great and precious for several reasons.

Their Source

One might receive two letters in the mail today, one of which is from a credit card company and another from a sweetheart or grandmother. They have the same postage affixed, are in similar envelopes, and contain an equal number of sheets. Yet one will be quickly discarded and the other kept for years. What is the difference? The source.

Bible promises are made by God, not by man or a man's institution. Man may promise and then grow ill or die or lose the ability to perform. He might forget. He might promise something and later discover he does not have what we promised to give, or he might make a promise to someone and then discover a reason he should not keep the promise (e.g., the person is a swindler trying to take advantage of him).

Are there any conditions that would make it impossible for God to keep His promises? He will never grow ill, old, or die. He cannot be mistaken about His ability. He cannot be fooled (Galatians 6:7). God's authority, immortality, constancy, majesty, power, and honor are behind all His promises. Thus, His promises are sure (2 Corinthians 1:20; Hebrews 11:13; 13:8).

Their worth

"Exceeding great" notes their intrinsic worth; "precious" notes man's esteem of them. Suppose a Christian listed God's promises in one column and then assigned a dollar amount to each in a second

column. How much would he pay to have each blessing, if it were within his power to pay for even one of them? He could not do so, for that would bankrupt the collected riches of earth.

Their accessibility

There are things that would be wonderful blessings, but they are at such a distance or wrapped in so much red tape or require such effort, that that they are practically inaccessible. God's blessings are not like that.

God's promises are accessible to us because they are written in the Bible, which is available to all. The Bible is an exceedingly great and precious book, for it contains exceeding great and precious promises. If one desires to know of God's promises, all he must do is read God's book. The Bible is written in common language, is easily understood, and is readily available at an affordable price.

God's promises are accessible to man because God is no respecter of persons (Acts 10:34–35; Romans 2:11; cf. James 2:5). He favors no man; He forbids no person access His promises.

Many of God's promises are accessed through prayer. Suppose one needed a loan to purchase a car or house. He would have to go to the bank during its hours of business, approach a receptionist, and request an interview with a loan officer. He might have to wait or make an appointment to return. Once the initial interview was over, he might have to wait for a credit check and a form to go through the process. He might be asked to return to meet with a vice president to sign the note or mortgage.

Suppose one had to have something from the president

of the United States. We would likely have to wait weeks for an appointment to meet with some underling representing him. He might have to travel to Washington, D.C., and pass security checks. Eventually, he might receive the benefit, or be informed that it could not be done, but would probably still never even see the president.

But the King of kings, the Lord of lords (1 Timothy 6:15), the omnipotent Ruler of the universe, is not like that. God's bank is always open. It does not close at four nor is it closed on Sundays and holidays. All Christians must do to make a request of Him is to think of it—to ask Him in prayer (Hebrews 4:16). Whenever a child of God wants an audience, the Father is available (Luke 18:1; 1 Thessalonians 5:17). No one will tire God by frequent requests or overwhelm Him with great demands (James 1:5). Whatever man's problem, difficulty, or need, he can bring it to God. It needs no explanation for God understands (Matthew 6:8).

Their suitability

God's promises do not relate to things that do not interest us, but rather to things about which we are deeply concerned and readily need. How valuable to some would be the promise of a large sum of money, of a rich and extensive estate, of a crown. But what are they to the man who is dying of cancer, who has only a few moments longer to live?

How valuable is a promise of pardon to a convicted and condemned criminal? But what value is it to a person who is free and law-abiding? But the promises of the gospel are as suitable to our circumstances as possible. They secure light to those who are in

darkness, supply sustenance to those who are perishing of hunger, and grant pardon to those who are guilty and condemned.

[1] M. R. De Haan

[2] Charles Spurgeon