



#70

THE PROMISES OF JESUS

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ACTS 27:39–28:10

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- If we're not careful I think we can get bogged down in the specifics of these kinds of passages and miss the forest for the trees. It's easy for me to look at this passage and almost imagine this is a prequel to Pirates of the Caribbean. What's the point of all this? I think the MAIN ONE is this: **Jesus can and does keep His promises.**

1. JESUS CAN AND DOES KEEP HIS PROMISES

- **Q. What's going on with Paul right now?** **A.** Well he's previously escaped a plot by a certain group of Jews to kill him & he's now a prisoner under an imperial guard. They're taking him to Rome via the Mediterranean.
- **Q. Why is Paul being treated like this?** **A.** Simply because he was preaching the gospel—the good news that Jesus has done what we have not, in order to give us what we could not get.
- **Now this Voyage was very hard going**—they nearly died multiple times!
- **Luke writes earlier in chapter 27**, “20 When neither sun nor stars appeared for many days, and no small tempest lay on us, all hope of our being saved was at last abandoned.”
- **What's more, when they finally made it to land they ran their ship aground!** At this point the soldiers decide to kill the prisoners so none may escape!
- When they finally get ashore and start a fire, they're in the clear. **NOPE. A VIPER BITES PAUL'S HAND!** And yet, he survives.
- **Q. How on earth is Paul surviving all this?!** **A.** Acts 23:11 is how.
- **ACTS 23:11** The following night the Lord stood by him and said, “Take courage, for as you have testified to the facts about me in Jerusalem, so you must testify also in Rome.”
- **A. Here's the answer & point:** Jesus promised Paul he would reach a specific *DESTINATION* & He keeps His promises.
- **The other day I was talking to a friend of mine about the fact that Jesus always keeps his promises.** We were talking about how wonderful it is to know that Jesus has totally good intentions and total ability. **And then he said something that hit me hard:** “You know, when me and my brother and sister were young, for a few years my dad would call a little before Christmas and promise us he'd come see us and bring us presents. But he never showed. And that was hard. Eventually we just stopped believing him. I think he had the intention to come but just couldn't get free of the stuff that controlled him.”
- **Jesus doesn't do that**—He has the best of intentions and He is sovereign over all so that nothing can sway His hand or thwart His plan!
- What if I wrote you a \$10,000 check; what would you think while heading to the bank? What about Bill Gates?
- **If Jesus writes you a check—if He makes you a promise—take it to the bank.** It will clear. Jesus can and does keep His promises.
- Now, the real question is...

2. WHAT HAS JESUS PROMISED US?

1. WE WILL HAVE TRIBULATION (SOMETIMES THINGS WILL GO TERRIBLY BAD)

- **Look at Paul.**
- **Doesn't this look a lot like the promise Jesus makes to His disciples in JOHN 16:33?** “In the world you will have tribulation.”
- Look, we say this a lot at Ekklesia. Do you see why? There are two reasons: **1)** It's all throughout the Bible. **2)** The very opposite is proclaimed by a lot of people who call themselves Christians.

2. WE WILL BE BLESSED BEYOND MEASURE (SOMETIMES THINGS WILL GO WONDERFULLY WELL)

• Look at verse 1 in chapter 28!

• **ACTS 28** 1 After we were brought safely through, we then learned that the island was called Malta. 2 The native people showed us unusual kindness, for they kindled a fire and welcomed us all, because it had begun to rain and was cold... 7 Now in the neighborhood of that place were lands belonging to the chief man of the island, named Publius, who received us and entertained us hospitably for three days. 8 It happened that the father of Publius lay sick with fever and dysentery. And Paul visited him and prayed, and putting his hands on him, healed him. 9 And when this had taken place, the rest of the people on the island who had diseases also came and were cured. 10 They also honored us greatly, and when we were about to sail, they put on board whatever we needed.

• **Do you remember MARK 10:28-31?** 28 Peter began to say to [Jesus], "See, we have left everything and followed you." 29 Jesus said, "Truly, I say to you, there is no one who has left house or brothers or sisters or mother or father or children or lands, for my sake and for the gospel, 30 who will not receive a hundredfold now in this time, houses and brothers and sisters and mothers and children and lands, with persecutions, and in the age to come eternal life."

• **We're told even in this life we'll be blessed beyond measure, but WE DON'T GET TO DEFINE WHAT "BLESSING" MEANS—Jesus does. And He says one of the primary ways is through relationships within the Church.**

3. WE WILL HAVE REJUVENATING JOY (NO ONE CAN TAKE OUR JOY FROM US)

• When things go well, it's easy to be joyful! **Q.** But what about when things go badly?

• **JOHN 16:22** "So also you have sorrow now, but I will see you again, and your hearts will rejoice, and no one will take your joy from you." ***BECAUSE OF THE RESURRECTION OF JESUS, IN HIM, THERE'S JOY!**

• **That's why Paul can write things like this in 2 CORINTHIANS 4, 8** "We are afflicted in every way, but not crushed; perplexed, but not driven to despair; 9 persecuted, but not forsaken; struck down, but not destroyed."

• **Because if you're in Christ through faith in Him,** Jesus has the best of intentions and He is totally able to make "all things work together for good, for those who love God and are called according to His purpose."

4. WE WILL REACH A SPECIFIC DESTINATION (THE ETERNAL CITY WITH THE TREE OF LIFE IN THE MIDDLE AND JESUS FACE TO FACE)

• Paul was promised he would reach an earthly city but **WE** are promised an eternal one!

• **REVELATION 22:1-5** Then the angel showed me the river of the water of life, bright as crystal, flowing from the throne of God and of the Lamb 2 through the middle of the street of the city; also, on either side of the river, the tree of life with its twelve kinds of fruit, yielding its fruit each month. The leaves of the tree were for the healing of the nations. 3 No longer will there be anything accursed, but the throne of God and of the Lamb will be in it, and his servants will worship him. 4 They will see his face, and his name will be on their foreheads. 5 And night will be no more. They will need no light of lamp or sun, for the Lord God will be their light, and they will reign forever and ever.

• **There is no harm that won't be mended;** there are no tears that Jesus won't wipe away; there's no suffering that will not be worth it in the end when we see Jesus face to face; there's no darkness that will not be drowned by the light of; there's no hurt that the Tree of Life won't heal.

Q. Do you live and breathe by the Promises of Jesus? **A.** You can—He who promised is faithful.

3. HOW CAN WE GET THIS GLORIOUS DESTINATION?

• **Q.** How can we having each sinned against God—*defamed His name, living for our glory instead of His*—ever receive these kind of earthly & eternal promises? **Q.** How we can receive access to the Tree of Life & be healed?

George Herbert answered that for us in 1600's as he wrote his poem *The Sacrifice* which imagines Jesus hanging "O all ye who pass by, behold & see; Man stole the fruit, but I must climb the tree; The tree of life to all but me."

• **We get these wonderful promises—we get that eternal city with the tree of life—because on the cross, Jesus received the Tree of Death and was destroyed—for us.**

20 For all the promises of God find their Yes in him. That is why it is through him that we utter our Amen to God for his glory.