

Christmas: Promises Made, Promises Kept!

Advent is about God making and keeping His promise.

“Promises Made, Promises Kept!”

This is President Trump’s 2020 campaign slogan.

My former systematic theology professor Dr. Wayne Grudem lists 30 promises made and kept by President Trump. See his article “30 Good Things President Trump Has Done for America.”

1. Promises Made & Kept: Trump appointed 3 originalist SCOTUS justices.
2. Made & Kept: Historic tax cuts and deregulation.
3. Made & Kept: Built a stronger military and border wall.
4. Made & Kept: Reduced prescription drug prices and is delivering a COVID19 vaccine in record time (Operation Warp Speed).
5. Made & Kept: Energy production and independence.
6. Made & Kept: Negotiated new trade agreements that are more favorable to the United States with Mexico, Canada, and China.
7. Made & Kept: Defeated ISIS and recognized Jerusalem as the capital of Israel and is making peace between Israel and Arab nations.
8. Made & Kept: Protected amendments of the Constitution: freedom of religion and freedom of speech.
9. Made & Kept (What is most important to God): Protection for unborn babies.

It is rare for politicians to make and keep promises. It is God’s nature.

“Promises made. Promises kept,” could be God’s campaign slogan! God made one great promise and kept it. The great promise God made and kept was to send us a Savior. We desperately need a Savior and Righteous King.

God’s promise made and kept over many generations and thousands of years.

Matthew’s genealogy: 42 generations forwards from Abraham to Jesus which is approximately 3000 years.

Luke’s genealogy: 76 generations backwards from Jesus to Adam which is approximately 5000 years.

[Note: In the Bible a generation can be 40, 70, or 100 years. According to Psalm 90:10 it is 70 which is halfway between 40 and 100. Therefore, multiply the number of generations by 70.]

The point: God made and kept His promise over many generations and thousands of years!

The first time God spoke the promise was right after the first human beings made in God's image sinned. The promise was spoken as a curse upon Satan: Genesis 3:15:

*I will put hostility between you and the woman,
and between your seed and her Seed (Descendent).
He will crush your head,
and you will strike His heel.*

In a general sense this means a perpetual struggle between good and evil. It means that the human race (woman's seed or offspring) and the serpent's race will repeatedly attack and injure each other. But good (woman's Seed) will eventually triumph over evil (Satan's seed).

This has a more specific meaning. It is the first promise of a Messiah-Savior in the Bible (known as the *Protoevangelium*). The serpent is symbolic of Satan and the seed of the woman who will crush the head of the serpent is the Messiah. If you step on the head of a snake then the snake will bite your heel. You will receive a crippling bite, but the snake will receive a death blow. Satan used sinful people to give Jesus a crippling blow on the cross. But the death, resurrection, and ascension of Jesus delivered a crushing blow to the head of Satan. Eventually all the evil offspring of the serpent will be defeated by the one Seed of the woman.

Paul alludes to this promise, Romans 16:20: *The God of peace will soon crush Satan under your feet. The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you.* Hebrews 2:14-15: *Since therefore the children share in flesh and blood, He himself likewise partook of the same things, that through death He might destroy the one who has the power of death, that is, the devil, and deliver all those who through fear of death were subject to lifelong slavery.*

The promise was made and shown to Abraham when God told him to sacrifice Isaac but provided a ram for a substitute.

The promise was shown to Moses in the Passover when the blood was put on the doorposts to save the Hebrew firstborn. God showed the promise to Moses again with the serpent on the pole. (Jesus referred to this event as a prophecy of his sacrificial death for sin: John 3:14-15.)

David by the inspiration of the HS saw the promised Messiah as the Son of God (Psalm 2), a crucified God-Man (Psalm 22), a resurrected Messiah-Savior (Psalm 16), and a reigning King (110). [David's Psalms with NT confirmation: Psalm 2 (Hebrews 5:5); Psalm 22 (Matthew 27:46); Psalm 16:10 (Acts 2:27); Psalm 110:1 (Acts 2:34).]

Prophets added to God's promise made and kept and revealed the birth of the Messiah-Savior, Isaiah 7:14: *Therefore the Lord Himself will give you a sign: Behold, a virgin will be with child and bear a son, and she will call His name Immanuel.*

Prophet Micah 5:2:

*“But as for you, Bethlehem Ephrathah,
Too little to be among the clans of Judah,
From you One will come forth for Me to be ruler in Israel.
His times of coming forth are from long ago,
From the days of eternity.”*

The Savior was born of a virgin in Bethlehem; a promise made, a promise kept.

Prophet Isaiah gave more precise details about God's promise. Isaiah saw the promised Messiah-Savior as a sacrificial atonement for sin, Isaiah 53:5-6: *But the Messiah-Savior was pierced for our transgressions; he was crushed for our iniquities; upon him was the chastisement that brought us peace, and with his wounds we are healed. All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned—every one—to his own way; and the Lord has laid on him the iniquity of us all.* Jesus read Isaiah 61:1-2 as a prophesied promise of his ministry (Luke 4:17-20):

*The Spirit of the Lord God is upon me,
because the Lord has anointed me
to bring good news to the poor;
he has sent me to bind up the brokenhearted,
to proclaim liberty to the captives,
and the opening of the prison to those who are bound;*

to proclaim the year of the Lord's favor.

Read the Gospels. The Messiah-Savior, Jesus Christ, was crucified as an atonement for sin, raised from death on the third day, and ascended to God's right hand, a promise made and kept.

God's promise made and kept despite human sin and satanic opposition.

Satan used Cain's jealousy and anger to murder his righteous brother.

In Noah's day the people of the world became demon possessed and violent.

God destroyed them with a flood and only saved Noah and his family.

Satan tempted Sarah and Abraham to fulfill God's promise of a son according to their own misunderstanding and so Ishmael was born.

God promised to give a son to Sarah and she laughed in unbelief (Genesis 18). Satan attempted to negate the promise by using Abraham's fear and King Abimelech. Abraham said Sarah was his sister and Sarah said Abraham was her brother not his wife. God threatened to kill Abimelech and he returned Sarah to Abraham (Genesis 20). Right after this incident Isaac was born. Isaac was a miraculous ancestor of the promised Messiah-Savior. Satan tried to keep the Hebrews as slaves in Egypt and prevent God's promise from being fulfilled. God miraculously delivered them.

When Hebrews finally gained the Promised Land and kings, Satan stood against Israel. 1 Chron. 21:1: *Then Satan stood against Israel and incited David to number Israel.* David's census was an act of pride and God punished Israel. This was not the only time Satan stood against Israel. Satan attempted to destroy God's chosen people by dividing the nation after King Solomon into Israel and Judah. Satan used evil kings like Ahab and Jezebel to introduce idolatry. God raised up prophets to counteract Satan's influence. But because of Israel's and Judah's idolatry they were defeated by enemies and exiled to Babylon.

After the Jews returned to Jerusalem from exile, God raised up some prophets after the exile to reiterate God's promise of a Messiah-Savior (Haggai, Zechariah, and Malachi). Malachi 3:1: *"Behold, I send my messenger, and he will prepare the way before me. And the Lord whom you seek will suddenly come to his temple; and the messenger of the covenant*

in whom you delight, behold, he is coming, says the LORD of hosts.” 4:5: “Behold, I will send you Elijah the prophet before the great and awesome day of the LORD comes.” John the Baptizer appeared and prepared the way for the Messiah-Savior.

Satan opposed Jesus Christ and attempted to negate God the Father’s promise by tempting Jesus to sin. Satan tempted Jesus to sin at the beginning of his ministry in the wilderness and at the conclusion of his ministry in the Garden of Gethsemane and many occasions in between. When Jesus told the disciples he must go to Jerusalem and be killed and raised on the third day, Peter tried to stop him, and Jesus said to Peter, “Get behind me, Satan! You are a hindrance to me.” (Matthew 16:21-23) The Messiah-Savior, Jesus Christ, was crucified as an atonement for sin, raised from death on the third day, and ascended to God’s right hand, a promise made and kept.

God’s promise made and will be kept by Jesus Christ’s second coming.

He will return and reign in righteousness over this world.

The OT saints were promised the coming of a Messiah-Savior. They looked forward with eager expectation.

The Old Testament prophesied the future Millennial reign of Jesus Christ over the whole earth from Jerusalem.

Zechariah 14:8-9, 16: On that day living waters shall flow out from Jerusalem, half of them to the eastern sea and half of them to the western sea. And the LORD will be king over all the earth. All the nations shall go up to Jerusalem year after year to worship the King, the LORD of hosts.

Isaiah saw the Millennial Kingdom of Christ, chapters 9-11.

Isaiah 9:6-7:

For to us a child is born,
to us a son is given;
and the government shall be upon his shoulder,
and his name shall be called
Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God,
Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace.
Of the increase of his government and of peace

there will be no end,
on the throne of David and over his kingdom,
to establish it and to uphold it
with justice and with righteousness
from this time forth and forevermore.
The zeal of the LORD of hosts will do this.

Isaiah 11:6-9:

The wolf shall dwell with the lamb,
and the leopard shall lie down with the young goat,
and the calf and the lion together;
and a little child shall lead them.
They shall not hurt or destroy
in all my holy mountain;
for the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the LORD
as the waters cover the sea.

We, NT saints, are promised a second coming of the Messiah-Savior. We look forward with an eager and holy expectation.

Revelation is the one book of the Bible that is yet to be fulfilled. Jesus Christ will ride from heaven on a white horse. His is called Faithful and True. Here is the reason God makes and keeps His promise: He is faithful and true.

Jesus Christ will defeat the Antichrist and throw him into a lake of fire. He will lock Satan in prison for 1000 years. He will reign over the nations for 1000 years. The Millennial Kingdom of Jesus Christ is a promise made and it will be kept. It will be kept because all the promises made about the first coming of the Messiah-Savior were kept.

God's promise made, God's promise kept, God's promise remembered.
Communion is God's promise remembered.

Read 1 Corinthians 11:23-26.

Eat the bread: 11:23-24.

Drink the cup: 11:25-26.