

## **THE PROMISES OF GOD**

**By Henry Mahan**

**Bible Text: 2Cor. 1:17-22**

**TV-505a**

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The Title of our message today, is the “Promises of God.” Now, it would be very helpful if you would take your bibles and open them to the Book of Second Corinthians. I’m going to be speaking from Chapter 1, Chapter 1, of Second Corinthians, verses 17 thru 22.

I think it would be especially meaningful and a blessing to you if you would take your Bible and follow, as I preach from this passage of scripture, a very interesting scripture, very enlightening, the promises of God.

Now, the Apostle Paul had visited and preached in the city of Corinth, great and mighty, well-known, famous city, of Corinth. But, the religious leaders rejected his message; they hated his message of grace and salvation in Christ. And the local authorities also threatened to kill him. And Paul was greatly troubled, and I think about to leave the city. But, the Lord spoke to him during the night, in a vision.

And this is what the Lord said to him: He said, “Now Paul, do not be afraid, do not leave the city.” “No one will harm you, but you stay there and preach the Gospel, and I’ll be with you, for I have much people in this city.” Did you hear that? The Lord said, “you just stay right where you are, nobody is going to harm you, or hurt you.” “I’ll be with you and you preach, because I have much people in this city.”

You see, the Lord knoweth them that are His. And so, Paul stayed in Corinth and preached to them for almost two years. And God raised up a great church. The church of Corinth. You have in your Bible there, the First Epistle to the Corinthians and the Second Epistle to the Corinthians. There was a great and strong church there in Corinth. Paul preached to them. Almost two years, I think about a year and a half. And when he left, he promised, he promised them that he would come back and preach to them again.

Well, Paul didn’t get back. He had to cancel the visit. Now he had told them, “I’ll be back, I’ll be back.” “I’ll come back and preach to you.” But he couldn’t come back. He had to cancel the visit. And when he cancelled his visit, his second visit to them, many of them were offended, deeply offended. And some of his enemies, some people that didn’t like him, even in the church, and out of the church.

Some of his enemies, said, “Now, Paul promised to come back here and he didn’t keep his word, he didn’t keep his word. He said yes, and he meant no. So, his word’s not good, you can’t believe him, you can’t trust him.” This is what they said. “And neither is his gospel, so don’t pay attention to him.”

That’s when he wrote my text today. Are you with me? Do you understand where we are? That’s when he wrote this Second Epistle and this particular portion of it. In Second Corinthians, chapter 1: verse 17. That’s where we’re going to start, verse 17.

This is what he’s saying in verse 17, do you have it? He said, “I have not used lightness, I haven’t been flippant and frivolous and lightness. I haven’t used lightness or deceit when I cancelled my visit with you. When I say yes, I mean yes, and when I say no, I mean no. But remember, I’m only a man while I am an apostle, while I am an ambassador of Christ, and while I’m a preacher of the Gospel. And I’m a truthful man, a man of honesty and integrity. When I say yes, I mean yes, when I say no, I mean no. But, I’m only a man and I have no power over circumstances.”

And I have no power over God’s providence. And sometimes when I make a promise and I mean to keep it, and I say yes, yes I will come, and then I have to say no, I can’t come, I can’t come, because I have no control over events, and over trials, and over circumstances that God is pleased to bring into my life. Do you see that? That’s what he’s saying there.

But then in verse: 18, Now look at this. But he saith, “but you know, some of these people said, Paul, you can’t believe it. You can’t say yes and then no. You can’t believe it, so you can’t believe his gospel.”

Now, listen to him, but he says in verse: 18, “As God is true, our gospel is not yes and no. Our gospel is not uncertain. Our gospel is sure. I may say yes, and afterwards have to say no, but our gospel is not yes and no, our gospel is yes.” Yes, so be it: (Amen) Our gospel is certain; our gospel is as firm and as sure as the throne of God. Our gospel is true.

My friends, don’t ever be guilty, now listen to me, you listen very carefully to me right here...don’t ever be guilty of judging God’s gospel by God’s vessel that preaches the gospel. Don’t ever do that. You see, Paul himself, said, “*We have this treasure.*” This gospel is a treasure, it’s a gem, it’s a treasure, it’s a diamond. It’s the riches of grace. “*We have this treasure in earthen vessels, that the power might be not of us, but of God.*”

“*Your faith should not stand in the wisdom of men but in the power of God.*” And the riches of his grace is brought to you in a clay pot, in an earthen vessel, in a pitiful mound of flesh. And the vessel is uncertain, but the gospel is certain. Do you understand that? Don’t ever be guilty of judging the Lord’s gospel by the vessel, because the vessel is weak.

But, the gospel is the power, the power of God. The vessel is earthen, of the earth, earthy. The gospel is from God above, the Lord from Heaven. Our confidence, you see, is not in men, but in Christ.

That's the reason Paul wrote in Philippians, 3: He said, "*Now, we are the circumcision, we're true Israel, who worship God in the Spirit,*" not in form and ceremony and ritualism, but in Spirit. And we rejoice in Jesus Christ, and we have no confidence in the flesh, none, whatsoever." In ours or yours, or anyone else's. It's still flesh. That which is born of the flesh is flesh. That, which is born of the spirit, is spirit.

Now look at verse, 19: Now He says in verse: 17, "I told you yes and I had to tell you no. I had to, because I'm only a man and I have no control over circumstances. I have no control over God's providence. And things happen that hinder me from doing what I fully intended to do. But now, don't judge my gospel by my weakness and by my flesh, and by my inability. My gospel is sure, and yes, yes, yes, yes and (Amen)!" Verse: 19: "The Son of God, our Lord Jesus Christ, who was preached among you, by me, and Silas and Timothy, He's not yes and no, He's not yes and no. He's not uncertain, He's not doubtful, but, our gospel in Christ, is always yes, yes, yes." We're changeable, He's unchangeable. What does the scripture say? "*Jesus Christ the same yesterday, today, and forever.*"

He said in Malachi, 3: I'm the Lord, I change not, I change not. The gifts and calling of God are without change. We're changeable. He's unchangeable, He's unchangeable. Now listen, I'm going to give you some areas in which our Lord Jesus, in every area, He's unchangeable. But, I want you to think about these. He's unchangeable in his deity, He's God, He's God.

*"In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God, the same was in the beginning with God, and without him was not anything made that was made. And the word was made flesh and dwelt among us. We beheld His glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father."* Our Lord Jesus Christ, unchangeable, immutable, infinite, unchangeable in His deity, unchangeable in His person. He's the God Man, yes, eternal God, and Man.

Have you read that scripture in First Timothy 2, verse: 5? I want you to listen to it, "*there's one God, we know that, one God. And there's one mediator between God and Men. That's the man, Christ Jesus,*" God Man, the Man. Pilot said, "*Behold the Man.*" There's a Man in glory, it's the Son of God. It's the God Man, it's the Lord from Heaven, and He's unchangeable in His deity, and unchangeable in His person. He's the Man, Jesus Christ.

Let me tell you, if there's one man in glory, there can be another, and another, and another, and another, because of Him. And then He's unchangeable in his purpose, unchangeable in His purpose. Have I not spoken, shall I not do it? "*Who he foreknew, He predestinated to be conformed to the image of his son. And whom he predestinated he called, and whom he called, He justified. And whom He justified, He glorified.*"

*“What shall we say to these things? If God can be for us, who can be against us? Who can separate us from the love of God? Who can condemn us? Who can lay anything to our charge, if God be for us?”* Unchangeable in His purpose, unchangeable in His promises and unchangeable in His power. *“He’s able to save to the uttermost, them that come to God by Him.”* So, we call Him, we preachers, ambassadors of Christ, call upon you to trust, not in us, trust Him. To believe, not in us, in Him. To rest, not in us, but Him. To hear, not our word, but His word. Don’t judge the gospel by the vessel in which God is pleased to send it to you.

I had a dear friend, a dear, dear friend that I knew for many, many years. One of the finest. Preachers I’ve ever heard preach. A brilliant man, a scholar. Pastored a large church, preached the gospel of the grace of God. Preached it so ably, so powerfully. I never heard a man preach the gospel of Christ more clearly and plainly, than this man. I knew him for 20, 25 years. Walked with him, preached with him, fellowshiped with him, loved him.

He had a lot of trials, and troubles, and heart surgery and all of these other things. And became so depressed, and so troubled, and so down. When he preached his last message on a Wednesday night, he said to a friend of mine, “I’m so low, I’m so blue, I don’t know what I’m going to do.” The next Saturday morning, he sat down prepared his messages for Sunday, and then picked up a pistol and blew his brains out. And his congregation was devastated. His people were literally devastated. But, as I spoke to many of them, after this happened, and told them, it’s not the vessel, it’s the Lord Jesus Christ that saves.

You see, my friends, “swift to it’s close, ebbs out life’s little day, if earth’s joys grow dim, and it’s glory fades away, change and decay and all around I see, oh thou, who changeth not, abide with me.”

So, when Paul told these, people, “I’m coming back, but he couldn’t, and many of them were offended.” They found fault, they criticized, they said, “you can’t believe him, he lied to us, you can’t trust him, don’t believe his gospel” He said, “whoa now, hold it.” “When I say yes, I mean yes, and when I say no, I mean no. But I’m a man, and I have no control over these trials and these things that happened. It’s the Providence of God.” But I’ll tell you who doesn’t change, I’ll tell you who never changes in His deity, in His person, in His promises, in His power, in His work, in anything. And that’s Christ the Lord. You trust Him.

I want you to look carefully at verse: 20. This verse, I said to someone one time, “if you can learn the meaning of this verse of scripture, if you can lay hold of it, if you can get a good knowledge of this verse of scripture, right here, it’s meaning, you’ll have a good knowledge of the gospel, and the redemptive glory of God.”

Now, here it is... there ought to be a “*Selah*” in verse 20, Second Corinthians, 1. In the Psalms, it’s in there 70 some odd times. (S-E-L-A-H). There’ll be a statement: “*The Lord God reigneth, in the armies of Heaven and among the inhabitants of the men,*” and

Selah here, (S-E-L-A-H). You know what the word Selah means? You see it in the book, and so forth. (Selah). That's a musical term, and it means "pause right there, pause right there." Think about that. Study that. Say it again, that's what the word (Selah) means. Now here, there ought to be a (Selah) here, listen. Paul says this: "*for all the promises, of God in Christ, are yes, all the promises of God, in Christ, are yes, and Amen, to the glory of God, to the glory of God.*" We point you to Him. We say, "Look to Christ, believe on Christ, come to Christ, rest in Christ." Don't you trust this flesh, don't you look to this flesh, don't you put your hope and confidence in this flesh, you look to Him. Not in yours, or anybody else's, you look to Him." Man will fail you. He never fails. He never changes.

Now watch this, let me break this down. "*All the promises of God.*" Whose promises? Whose promises? The only one who can make a promise and keep it. The only one who can make a promise and beyond a shadow of a doubt, absolutely, without reservation, keep it. You see, that's the bases of Abraham's faith. He believed that God was able to do all that He promised. All the promises of, whose promises? The promises of God.

What are these promises of God? Well, "the promise of forgiveness". The promise of forgiveness. You know, David wrote, "*Lord, if Thy shouldest mark iniquity, who would stand? But there's forgiveness with Thee.*" He's promised forgiveness. He's not going to back up on it. He's promised it. He's promised eternal life. The scripture says, "*Lay hold on eternal life, which God who cannot lie, promised.*" Promised before the world began, He promised it. He promised his presence, He said, "*I'll never leave you; I'll never forsake you. Lo, I 'm with you always, even to the end of the world.*" That's a promise! All the promises of God, the only one who can make a promise, and keep it.

Watch it now, all of them are in Christ. In whom? In Christ. They're all in Christ Jesus, His Son. He put them there, He vested everything in Christ. "*The Father loveth the Son, and has given all things into His hands.*" All things are in Christ. "*That should be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ who has blessed us with all spiritual blessings, in the Heavenly's, in Christ.*"

All the promises of God are in Christ. "*According as he chose us in Christ, before the foundation of the world. That we should be holy and without blame before him in love, having predestinated us to the adoption of sons, according to the good pleasure of his will. Who worketh all things after the council of his own will, that you should be to the praise of his glory, who made us accepted in the beloved.*" His blessings are in Christ. When were the promises of God made? Now think about it, you listen. You listen; I use to have a teacher. It's been a long time ago, in the Second grade, I still remember her. She made an impression on me. She tried to teach me some things. And before she would tell us something really important, she would say, "now young people, put your thinking caps on a minute. Put your thinking caps on." I'm saying you listen. When were the promises of God made? Well, before the world began. "*Known unto God are all of his works from the beginning.*"

Now listen, when they were made, only Christ existed. God hadn't made anything yet. Before the foundation of the world, before the morning stars sang together, before the creatures shouted for joy, Christ said, "*Father glorify me with the glory which I had with thee, before the world was.*" So, when he made these promises, He (made them in the only one who stood, His Son. That's right, (covenant promises). That's the reason they're in Christ. That's where they belong. Christ is the only one who can fulfill them. The only one who can fill the storehouses. That's right, and these promises. Listen, the promises of God, all the promises of God, in Christ, are yes. Yes, and amen! So be it. His promises like the author are unchanging. His promises are like His covenant, (unchanging). His promises are like His savior, (unchanging). His promises are like His gospel, (unchanging). All the promises of God in Christ are yes, yes! Will God forgive sins in Christ? Yes! Will God pardon a sinner like me in Christ? Yes! Will God give eternal life, to a person like me, who doesn't deserve it? Yes! Will God accept me? Yes! Will God take me to glory in Christ? Yes! There are no (no's) in Him. All the promises of God in Christ are yes! Amen, so be it! That's solemn.

Numbers 23 says, "*That God's not a man that He should lie, all men are liars.*" That's right. Oh preacher come on, that's what the Bible says. All men are liars. But God's not a man that he should lie, nor the son of man that he should repent. Has He said, and shall He not do it? Has God spoken, shall He not make it good? God promised, He promised eternal life, before the world began. And there wasn't but One, before the world began. That was before the angels, and before the seraphim's, and before the Heavenly Host. (Christ). And he promised them in Christ.

You see, salvation is not of the preacher, or the penitent, it's of the Lord. Salvation's not of the church, nor the senate or the board of the Lord. Salvation's not of our will or our works, it's of the Lord. *It's not of him that willeth, or him that runneth, but of God that showeth mercy.* And it's sure, sure as His throne.

Now, let me give you some things in closing, verse: 21. That's verse 20; you get a hold of that verse right there. You camp there. After I leave this half hour program, you sit there, sit on that verse: verse 20. "*All the promises of God in Christ are yes, amen to the glory of God, to the praise of his glory.*"

Now, verse: 21, four things God has done for us who believe:

- (1) He's established us in Christ. That's what it says; "*God has established us in Christ.*" There's no stability in this flesh. It's changing. You know, you, see. Adam fell, he was created perfectly, he fell. There was no stability in the flesh. There's no stability in high office. My friend, who killed himself, was in a high office. Judas was in a high office too, there's no stability there, no matter who it is, there's no stability in the Ministry. "Demas left us," Paul said. There's no stability in baptism. Simon Magus did that, but the stability's in Christ. God has established us in Christ. In his love, in his blood, in his righteousness, in his body.
- (2) Verse: 21, God has anointed us, that's what it says, see it there? God has anointed us, established us in Christ, and anointed us. You know, when you think of

- anointing, what do you think of? Two things: the king was anointed. David was anointed King by Samuel, King over Israel, anointed. God said, "Samuel, arise, and anoint him." Aaron the Priest was anointed. You and I, God has anointed us, with the oil of gladness by His spirit. We are Kings and Priests unto God. Royal Priesthood, a Holy Nation. That's right, Royal Priest, a Kingly Priest.
- (3) Verse: 22, "*God has sealed us,*" sealed us. We're preserved. Now, people argue all the time, about the security of the believer. Two words are important in this matter of security. One is (preservation) and one is (perseverance). Preservation, we're kept by the power of God. Perseverance through faith. God said I'll never leave them. That's preservation. They'll never leave me, that's perseverance. See that? He has sealed us.
- (4) And then last, verse: 22, "*God hath given us the earnest of his Spirit*" Do you know what earnest is? A token. Have you ever paid earnest money on a piece of property? You put the money down, it's yours. He can't sell it to anybody else but you, when you bring the rest of the money. He's given us an earnest. And that earnest, and that token, is His Spirit. And He's not an outward property; He's an inward property. The Holy Spirit is not a profession, He's an experience. All the promises of God in Christ are genuine, and (Amen)!