

### 3 The Bible - Other Promises

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This topic is called 'Other Promises' because in Part 1 we have already thought about the important promises that God made to Abraham and to David.

#### Think about human promises

What is a promise meant to be? Does it mean that you are capable of doing the thing you are promising to do? Does it mean that you intend to do it?

What prevents people from carrying out their promises? Do these things apply to God?



Look at 2 Peter 1:1-5 and make some notes about the important things it says

#### The New Testament Word

The Greek word for a promise is *epaggelia*, (in Greek it's written επαγγελια).

##### Promises

In the NT the noun *epaggelia* means a promise, and the verb *epaggellesthai* means to promise.

(i) These words in classical Greek are very common - in fact they are almost technical - in connexion with public announcements. They are the words which are used of the announcement of the public games, or of the public sacrifices to the gods. They are used of announcements which are everybody's concern.

(ii) In classical Greek there is more than one word for a *promise*, and the most interesting and significant thing about *epaggelia* is that its characteristic meaning is *a promise which is freely offered and volunteered*. It is not a promise which is extracted or coerced or wrung from someone.

*Epaggelia* is characteristically a promise freely made and freely given. It has in it far more of a free offer than a conditioned promise.

*William Barclay, New Testament Words, SCM Press*



#### Some examples



Look at Romans 8:28. What does 'working for the good' of a disciple mean? Does it mean giving him everything he or she wants? Consider Hebrews 12:3-11 and think about how this explains what Paul is talking about.



Look at Matthew 28:20. The last sentence, literally, is 'I am with you all the days until the end of the age.' Think about it carefully and consider what it really means. What are the effects of this promise on:

When we feel alone?

Our prayers?

The way we live?



Look at Mark 10:28-31. What does this promise mean in practice?



Read Psalm 34:7. How far should we trust the Lord to deliver us? Are there any limits?



2 Timothy 4:8. Consider Paul's situation when he wrote this - about to be put to death for his faith. Note the condition - 'those who long for his appearing'. How do we long for Christ's return?

What other promise have you read which you find particularly helpful?