

# GOD'S FAITHFULNESS

By

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## *THE ANSWER TO OUR FEAR AND ANXIETY*

This is the scared generation. Much of society has been paralyzed by fear. Violence in the streets make people prisoners in their own homes, and over all hovers a fear of the tyranny of a government which seeks to control every facet of life, and places the home and Christian values at risk in order to carry out its pagan agenda.

Added to these are personal fears concerning illness, unemployment, divorce, loneliness, and financial loss — and the list could go on. These are intense times with a tragedy every moment, and many are left staggering under the load.

While some may see only this great cloud of oppression, those who are in Christ see beyond this cloud to the reality of God and His faithfulness to His people. We are exhorted to **“draw near with a true heart in fullness of faith...for he is faithful that promised.”**<sup>1</sup> It is belief in the **faithfulness of God** that will give peace, assurance and strength to survive the tension of our time.

**FAITHFUL TO PROMISES.** Abraham and Sarah provide the classic example of what it means to believe in God's faithfulness. “By faith Sarah received power to conceive seed when she was past age, since she counted **him faithful who had promised.**”<sup>2</sup>

It was through his son, Isaac, that God had promised the Christ, yet Abraham was commanded to offer Isaac as a sacrifice on Mount Moriah.<sup>3</sup> As father and son began the ascent up the mount, Abraham instructed the attendants to wait, saying, “Wait here...I and the lad will go yonder and worship, and come again to you.”<sup>4</sup> To say that they would both return indicates that Abraham believed that nothing could hinder God's promise, not even Isaac's death. “By faith Abraham, being tried, offered up Isaac; yes, he that had gladly received the promises was offering up his only begotten son; even he to whom it was said, In Isaac shall thy seed be called: accounting that God is able to raise up, even from the dead; from whence he did also in a figure receive him back.”<sup>5</sup>

This event foreshadowed another promise of the impossible, the resurrection of Jesus. Paul preached that God would judge the world through Christ, and that He had given assurance of this “in that he has raised him from the dead.”<sup>6</sup> God has been faithful to His most extreme and incredible promises.

**NOT LIMITED TO OUR UNDERSTANDING.** The man admired in our culture is the one who sets his own goals, plans the strategy to reach them and clearly understands each step on the way. Holding this ideal, one can easily be filled with doubts by the uncertainties now saturating our fast-changing world.

How can God give us peace in a world gone mad? When will He bring an end to the wickedness? Why doesn't He answer my prayer?

God's faithfulness does not require that we know all the why's, only that we obey and believe Him. When Peter raised objections to his feet being washed by Jesus, Jesus

said, “What I do you don’t know now, but you shall know hereafter.”<sup>7</sup> It was like saying to Peter, “Trust me. I know what I’m doing, and it’s the right thing.”

When years had passed and Sarah remained barren, she took charge of the situation and gave Abraham here handmaid to bear him a child. Then, as promised, God gave Sarah a son. Great sorrow and tragedy would have been avoided had they relied solely on God’s faithfulness.

In the grip of sickness and pain we ask, “Why does God allow this? Why doesn’t He do something?” All the time He is there to give spiritual strength and peace, to draw us to him, to purge us from idolatry and the world’s false hopes, and to shape our character more to Christ’s likeness. Like David we can say, “I know O God that your judgments are right and that you *in faithfulness* have afflicted me.”<sup>8</sup>

**FAITHFUL IN WARNINGS.** While God certainly has the right and power to act without warning to punish and destroy those who reject His purpose, He chooses to show amazing mercy by giving due warning before such judgment. Adam and Eve were warned that to eat of the forbidden tree would bring death.<sup>9</sup> The Adversary persuaded Eve that God was unreliable, saying “Thou shall NOT surely die.”<sup>10</sup> It was God who proved to be faithful to His word, to the sad dismay of the unbelieving pair.

Warnings were given years before judgment fell on Noah’s generation. Lot and his family were duly warned of the destruction of Sodom, to give them opportunity to escape. When Abraham looked in that direction he saw the smoke ascending to heaven, and knew that God had been faithful to the warning He had given.<sup>11</sup>

Jerusalem was repeatedly warned that her disobedience would bring judgment. They were convinced that their nation was so special that it would stand forever, but in 70 AD it was wiped out by the Roman army, again demonstrating the faithfulness of God’s word. He has warned of a day in which He will bring destruction to all the ungodly, but not many believe that He will actually carry out this promise. He is generally presented as the God of such sentimental love that He embraces all, both good and evil, and in the final analysis will not have the heart to execute anyone. Such a view, instead of revealing one’s reverence and adoration for God, actually reveals disbelief in God’s faithfulness.

Modern clergymen and theologians have hammered away on this theme until they have removed from the national conscience any concern for accountability to God in judgment. **The leaders of our country are advocating and exemplifying a class of spiritual depravity and rebellion against God never before seen in the modern Western world.** Public school teachers are forbidden to teach children that God has a moral code to be followed. When a local college student, visiting a High School campus, said that all non-Christians were lost and would go to hell, he was publicly condemned by the media and forbidden further access to the school. The community was outraged over this simple statement. Teaching that all accountable to God is strictly taboo in our society.

If God’s warnings of judgment are only empty words, then so is His promise of justice for the redeemed — and away goes the hope of life and immortality.

But God is faithful that promised. Because of this we can take heart at David’s advice: “Fret not yourself because of evil-doers, neither be you envious against them that work unrighteousness. For they shall soon be cut down like the grass, and wither as the green herb...the wicked shall perish, and the enemies of Jehovah shall be as the fat of

lambs: they shall consume; in smoke shall they consume away<sup>12</sup>...but the meek shall inherit the land and shall delight themselves in the abundance of peace.”<sup>13</sup> Justice and righteousness will prevail.

**FAITHFUL TO FORGIVE.** While God’s judgment is sure to come, His warnings are not given to lay guilt and fear upon those who place their trust in Him. The text which pronounces His faithfulness and tells us to “draw near” first describes how access to God is made “by the blood of Jesus, by the way which he dedicated for us, a new and living way, through the veil, that is to say, his flesh.”<sup>14</sup>

We dare not draw near to Almighty God in our own true character without the cleansing and covering provided through the act of Jesus in dying for our sins. But, how do we know that His death is sufficient to remove our guilt and make us fit for the Father’s presence? Even after coming to faith in Him and repenting of sin, and after having been baptized as He commanded, we recognize that we still come far short of His glory and the image which he desires for us. If, like Paul, we do not practice what we want to do, but do what we hate,<sup>15</sup> where is there grounds for our confidence?

It is in the faithfulness of God. Forgiveness takes place in the mind of God, and we can be assured of forgiveness only because He promises it. To the Christian is the promise, “If we confess our sins He is FAITHFUL and righteous to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.”<sup>16</sup>

**BE NOT ANXIOUS.**<sup>17</sup> The effort to destroy Christian faith is growing more intense, but it is nothing new; it was predicted from early on.<sup>18</sup> Christ still has all authority, though viciously opposed, and the purpose of God will be accomplished. Whatever heartache or burden you must suffer, and in spite of all opposition, none of God’s promises will fail. “For He is faithful that promised.”

#### REFERENCES

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|---------------------|------------------------|-------------------------------------|
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| 2. Hebrews 11:11    | 8. Psalms 119:75       | 14. Hebrews 10:19–20                |
| 3. Genesis 22:2     | 9. Genesis 2:17        | 15. Romans 7:15                     |
| 4. Genesis 22:5     | 10. Genesis 3:4        | 16. John 1:9                        |
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| 6. Acts 17:31       | 12. Psalms 37:1, 2, 20 | 18. Genesis 3:15,<br>Psalms 2:2, 3. |

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