

## ON WHOSE PROMISES DO YOU RELY?

### *Note to the speaker:*

Instill appreciation for Jehovah as a God who always fulfills his promises. Make clear that we need to keep our word as well. Show the wisdom of trusting in Jehovah rather than in imperfect humans, whose promises often prove to be empty. Motivate all to trust Jehovah and to reach out for the marvelous future that he has promised

### **CURRENT ATTITUDES TOWARD PROMISES** (7 min.)

Political promises held in low esteem because politicians fail to keep them

Either they are not made with intention of being kept or those making them are powerless to do so

Emperor Napoleon I is reputed to have said: "If you want to get on in this world, make many promises, but don't keep them"

The president of the United States declared during the 1940 election campaign: "I shall say it again and again and again: your boys are not going to be sent into any foreign wars," but already he had committed the United States to a huge program of military aid to Britain and had drawn up plans for a simultaneous war with Germany and Japan (*The New York Times* 7/2/71 p. 33)

In 1988 a candidate for the U.S. presidency said: "The Congress will push me to raise taxes, and I'll say no, and they'll push, and I'll say no, and they'll push again, and I'll say to them, 'Read my lips: No new taxes.'" Then two years later, after he had been elected, he said: "It is clear to me that . . . the deficit problem and the need for a package that can be enacted require . . . tax revenue increases . . ." (*The New York Times* 6/27/90 p. 1)

Religious promises lose credibility when future well-being is promised in return for money contributions

Personal promises often void of any value

Promises broken daily, appointments not kept

"A promise is a promise," a phrase often heard—challenging someone to make good on an undertaking

Promised rewards or services forgotten

Engagements to marry and vows treated lightly and broken

One sociology professor says first marriages have only a 50-50 success rate these days because too many people are saying, "I do," when they really do not

With many, promise is made with idea that it will be kept if convenient

No wonder disillusionments, disappointments, deeply felt hurt, and even anger are added to the ills of mankind today (*w73* 59)

### **THE BIBLE'S VIEW OF PROMISES** (10 min.)

Bible shows that whatever we say should be truthful (Ps 15:2; Pr 12:22; Eph 4:25)

One should carefully think matters out before making promises (Ps 34:13; Pr 20:25; Ec 5:2)

Once promises are made, we should put forth effort to keep them (De 23:23)

Those who fail to make good on their vows (solemn promises) are ranked as stupid or untrustworthy in word (Ec 5:4-6; *w77* 243)

Jephthah proved to be a man of his word, even though it brought great hurt to him (Jg 11:30-35; Ps 15:1-4; *it-2* 28)

An oath is a fortified promise, and a person given to false oaths is subject to condemnation by the Bible's Author (Zec 8:17; *it-2* 516-18)

Joshua did not break his covenant with the Gibeonites even though he later learned that they had deceived him into making it (Jos 9:15-21)

We too should keep our word

We must not make promises and then break them when more appealing opportunities open up to us

Jesus said: "Just let your word *Yes* mean Yes, your *No*, No" (Mt 5:37; *w89* 9/15 28-9)

A person should sincerely mean what he says

Once one's word is given, the keeping of it should be viewed as a sacred duty that must be fulfilled (Jas 5:12)

Another related expression is "covenant," a solemn agreement (*it-1* 520-1)

In effect, any promise made by Jehovah is a covenant, as it is certain to be carried out

People who are false to agreements are classified with those disapproved by God (Ro 1:28, 31, 32)

Zedekiah's breaking of a covenant even with enemy earned God's disapproval (2Ch 36:11-13; Eze 17:11-18; *w77* 454)

### **JEHOVAH SETS THE PERFECT EXAMPLE AS A PROMISE KEEPER** (10 min.)

No promise of Jehovah will ever go unfulfilled (Heb 10:23)

His past record as a Fulfiller of his word is without a single flaw

Joshua and Solomon both testified to this quality of their God (Jos 21:45; 1Ki 8:56)

Jehovah declares: "So my word that goes forth from my mouth will prove to be. It will not return to me without results, but it will certainly do that in which I have delighted, and it will have certain success in that for which I have sent it" (Isa 55:11; *w75* 700)

He is well able to make this firm declaration, since he has the unlimited power to bring to pass all his promises (Isa 14:24, 27; *go* 30-1)

His unchangeableness and his undeviating truthfulness are a warranty that what he promises he will carry out (Heb 6:17, 18; *w65* 688-9)

God's loyalty to his own Word is basis for the strong faith and hope of those who come to know him (Ro 4:20, 21)

All his faithful slaves should imitate him

#### **DIVINE PROMISES ALREADY FULFILLED AND THOSE YET TO BE REALIZED** (13 min.)

Like Joshua and Solomon, we also can testify that God has kept all his good promises

Jehovah's promise of a "seed" was fulfilled in Christ (Ge 3:15; 22:15-18; Ga 3:16)

God promised the Messiah, and that One appeared 1,900 years ago (Da 9:24-27)

Jesus promised to establish his Kingdom in the time of the end

We already see the evidence that the King Jesus Christ is with God's people today, directing their work of global witnessing even in the midst of superhuman and human enemies (Re 11:15, 18; 12:10-12)

With eagerness we look forward to fulfillment of all the other promises of God (1Co 15:24-28; Re 17:15-18; *re* 256-8; *w74* 346)

Earth-wide Paradise promised for the blessing of all of God's obedient earthly subjects (Re 21:1-4; *Lmn* 29-30)

Jesus' course of perfect integrity-keeping confirmed and made possible the realization of all of God's promises (2Co 1:20)

#### **ON WHOSE PROMISES, THEN, WILL YOU RELY?** (5 min.)

The promises of imperfect humans cannot be relied on

Men are unable to direct events that affect fulfillment (Ps 146:3, 4; *w88* 4/15 10-12)

Often promises are made with some selfish, ulterior motive, so it is important to heed the counsel at Psalm 118:8, 9

If we trust Jehovah's promises, what a marvelous future awaits us! (2Pe 3:13; *su* 107-12)

We can be sharers in the fulfillment of the Millennial blessings if we exercise faith in Jehovah and imitate his respect for promises

(Adhere closely to the outlined material, and observe the indicated timing of each section. Not all cited texts need be read. Source material in parentheses need not be mentioned)