

# Receiving God's Promises

## The Big "If"

*"He who overcomes shall inherit these things."  
Revelation 21:7*

The Bible says God "has granted to us His precious and magnificent promises so that by them we might become partakers of His divine nature (2 Peter 1:4)." However, all God's priceless promises are conditional upon our obedience. This is what the Bible calls the obedience that comes from our faith (Romans 1:5; James 2:26). We can only receive God's promises **if** we obey God's Word. We might call this the big "**if**." Even in the Old Covenant, the promises of God were conditional upon His people's faithfulness. God promised the Hebrews they would be a holy nation and a kingdom of priests to Him **if** they obeyed His voice and kept His covenant (Exodus 19:5-6).

In the New Covenant, the promises of God start with the new birth. God promised us salvation **if** we receive Jesus Christ as our Lord (Romans 10:9). Christ is able to save you forever **if** you draw near to Him (Hebrews 7:25). God promised to forgive our sins **if** we confess our sins and forgive others their sins (Matthew 6:14; 1 John 1:9). God promised to give us His Holy Spirit **if** we obey Him (Acts 5:32). God promised to give us His grace **if** we humble ourselves under His mighty hand and love Jesus with an undying love (Ephesians 6:23; 1 Peter 5:5-6). God promised us His love **if** we love and obey Him and we do not love the world (Daniel 9:4; 1 John 2:15). Jesus Christ promised we would be His disciples **if** we deny ourselves, carry our own cross, give up everything for Him and lose our life for His sake (Matthew 16:24-26; Luke 14:27-33). Jesus' teaching on discipleship reminds me of the time a young man excitedly said to me, "Isn't it great that salvation is free!" His face fell when I replied, "Yes, and it will only cost you your whole life." By this, I meant that God offers us His gift of

salvation freely because His Son paid the price for our redemption. However, after we receive His gift, it will cost us everything to follow Christ.

Christ promised to reveal Himself to us **if** we keep His commandments (John 14:21). Christ promised to answer our prayers **if** we keep His commandments (1 John 3:22). God promised to meet our basic needs **if** we seek His Sovereignty in our life (Matthew 6:33). God promised we can know Him **if** we obey His commandments (1 John 2:3). Christ promised we would know His truth **if** we are willing to do God's will (John 7:17). Christ promised to set us free **if** we abide in His word (John 8:31-32). God promised we would be His Sons **if** we are led by His Spirit (Romans 8:14). Christ promised we would bear much fruit **if** we stay rooted in Him (John 15:5). Christ promised we will not see death, **if** we keep His word (John 8:51). God promised we would live in Him **if** we do not practice sin (1 John 3:6). God promised we would live and not die **if** by the Spirit we are putting to death the sinful actions of our body (Romans 8:13). Christ promised we would enter the kingdom of heaven **if** we do God's will (Matthew 7:21).

God promised us His rest **if** we trust Him and cease from our works (Hebrews 4:1-11). God promised us His inheritance **if** we suffer with Christ (Romans 8:17). God promised that we would have fellowship with Him **if** we walk in His light (1 John 1:5-7). God promised us His reward **if** we endure affliction by faith (Hebrews 10:35-39). God promised we would be members of His household **if** we hold fast our confidence in Christ until the end (Hebrews 3:6). God promised us His kindness **if** we continue in His grace; otherwise, we would be cut off (Romans 12:22). God promised us His eternal life **if** we obey His Son (John 3:36). God promised we would reign with Christ **if** we endure and overcome with Him (2 Timothy 2:12; Revelation 2:26).

The Bible says only those who overcome will inherit these promises. But how can we possibly overcome the big **if**? It is impossible for us to overcome the big **if** in our own ability. Many have tried but all have failed. We cannot overcome the big **if**; only Jesus Christ can. The Bible says Christ died so that we might receive His eternal promises (Hebrews 9:15). The way we overcome the big **if** is in Christ. "For as many as are the promises of God, in Christ they are yes (2 Corinthians 1:20)." We receive the promises of God by abiding in Christ. How do we abide and live in Christ? The apostle Paul said, "Now **if** we have died with Christ, we believe that we shall also live with Him (Romans 6:8; also 2 Timothy 2:11)." The way we live in Christ is to know (believe and act) that we have died in Christ. The fact is we have already died in Christ. God has already overcome the big **if** for us by including us in Christ's death. "Therefore, when one died, all died (2 Corinthians 5:12)." When Christ died, we died with Him and our old sinful nature was removed from us. "For we know that our old self was crucified with Him so that our body of sin might be done away with (Romans 6:6)." However, we must believe this divine truth in order to overcome the big **if**.

The Son of God has died for us and He now wants to overcome in us. As the apostle Paul declared, "I have been crucified with Christ and I no longer live but Christ lives in me, and the life that I live in the body, I live by faith in the Son of God who loved me and gave Himself up for me (Galatians 2:20). Believing we have died with Christ and that Christ lives in us is the secret to overcoming the big **if** and receiving all the promises of God.

*"Behold, I stand at the door and knock; **if** anyone hears My voice and opens the door, I will come in to him and will dine with him and he with Me." Revelation 3:20*

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