

## Faithful is He Who Promised – Heb 10:23

Last week we looked at some of God's preparations for the coming of Messiah, Jesus Christ. We pointed out that for a period of about 3000 years, God made promises about who the Messiah would be, how He would come, and what would be the results of His coming. We saw that when the time was right, and all the preparations had been made, Jesus was born in Bethlehem, from the lineage of David, the tribe of Judah, the family of Abraham, just as God had said. We were told that the purpose of His coming was to save His people from their sins, to establish a new covenant between God and man and to set up a kingdom that would never end. Today we will look at the results of His faithfulness in keeping those promises. We start in Hebrews 10:23, "Let us hold fast the confession of our hope without wavering, for he who promised is faithful."

I want to focus at the end of that statement, the basis of the action – "for he who promised is faithful." What is the evidence of His faithfulness? The history of promises that He has kept. These are too numerous to count, but let's recall just a few as they relate to the coming of Christ. First, He was born of a virgin, as foretold by Gen 3:15 and Is 7:14; second, He was born in Bethlehem, as Micah 5:2 said; third, He was of the line of David, as foretold by 2 Sam 7:13, but avoiding the curse of Jeconiah announced in Jer 22:30 because Mary was descended from David through Nathan, giving the blood relation, while Joseph was descended through Jeconiah, giving the legal right to the throne. Shortly after His birth, Jesus was taken to Egypt to be protected from the massacre predicted in Jer 31:15, and fulfill Hos 11:1. Prior to His public ministry, Jesus was announced by John the Baptist, fulfilling the prophecies of Isa 40:3 and Mal 3:1, and His ministry began in Galilee, as predicted by Isa 9:1. In His ministry, Jesus was the only prophet of Israel to give sight to the blind, restore hearing to the deaf, and make the lame to walk, as foretold by Isa 35:5-6. Jesus presented Himself to Israel as its king on the very day that Dan 9:25-26 predicted, and in the exact way that Zech 9:9 said. In His death, Jesus fulfilled every detail of Psalm 22, and in His resurrection, He fulfilled Ps 16:10. There is no question that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God who was prophesied, and there is no question that God has kept His Word. He who promised is faithful.

Now, what should be the results of that faithfulness in our lives? We go back to our text, "Let us hold fast the confession of our hope without wavering." What is that hope? We find it starting in v. 9: "Therefore, brothers, since we have confidence to enter the holy places by the blood of Jesus, by the new and living way that he opened for us through the curtain, that is, through his flesh, and since we have a great high priest over the house of God, let us draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith, with our hearts sprinkled clean from an evil conscience and our bodies washed with pure water." In short, this says we have the hope of free access to God through the forgiveness of sins, paid for by the blood of Jesus Christ. We have the hope of a faithful intercessor in Jesus, our great high priest.

This is a key reason for us to celebrate at Christmas. The babe in the manger came to accomplish the work that we could never do ourselves. He, the eternal God, came to be one of us, to die in our place, taking the punishment our sins deserved, so that we could have full forgiveness of sins through faith in Him. God said in Isaiah 59:16, "He saw that there was no man, and wondered that there was no one to intercede; then his own arm brought him salvation, and his righteousness upheld him." Then in v. 20, "and a Redeemer will come to Zion, to those in Jacob who turn from transgression." At Christmas we celebrate that the Redeemer has come to bring us salvation, to be our intercessor.

What else are we told to do because of God's faithfulness in giving us salvation? Heb 10:24, "And let us consider how to stir up one another to love and good works, not neglecting to meet together, as is the

habit of some, but encouraging one another, and all the more as you see the Day drawing near.” Think of the words in some of our Christmas carols: “O come, all ye faithful...”, “Good Christian men, rejoice...”, “Come and worship, worship Christ the new-born king”, “Go, tell it on the mountain...” These call us to gather together, to encourage one another in worship, and then to go out and tell others the good news. Yes, we all look forward to gathering with family to celebrate the holiday, and that is a huge blessing, but we should also look forward to gathering with the family of God to worship our great God and Savior, Jesus Christ, and to encourage one another to faithfully follow Him in life and service.