

*Let us therefore strive to enter that rest,
So that no one may fall by the same sort of disobedience.
For the word of God is living and active*

Hebrews 4:11-12

If you do not hear the Word of God, you will not know the Word of God.

If you do not know the Word of God, you cannot know God's ways.

If you do not know God's ways, you will easily and quickly decide the world's ways are the best ways, but they are the ways of the false god or idol you have set up in your soul in the place of the Lord.

8 - TWO GREAT PROMISES

The Bible teaches that God's "eternal power and divine nature" are clearly understood by everyone, since they are revealed in creation itself. Our own selves and the world we live in reveal God's power and character. But, those of us educated by and conformed to modern Western culture may have a hard time accepting the fact that this evidence exists in nature, because we think as secular humanists. Yet it is true. Creation itself testifies not only to the existence of God, but also to his eternal power, and it provides details of God's personal character - that he is organized, creative, well planned, caring, providing, personal, eternal, transcendent, and more.

There is also detailed revelation that has been recorded from the beginning of time in written form and collected in what we call the Word of God, or the Bible. In the text of Scripture the plan of God and greater detail regarding his eternal character are revealed. This revealed information can all be classified as promises of God. Keep in mind however, that not every "promise" in the Word of God is something we would desire or find pleasant in our fallen human state. The natural man might not consider many of God's promises to be positive things.

Some of the promises in the Bible can be likened to things we might use our three wishes from a genie in a bottle on. They are things we would not hesitate to call blessings. These promises guarantee what God is going to do for us. They may manifest in our temporal lives by being fulfilled in a moment, or in days, or months, or even years.



Many of the promises of God come with qualifying conditions - akin to "wait for it" - and require us to possess certain character traits such as endurance, patience, faithfulness, and confidence. Some of these promises are given along with phrases such as "in that day", "in due season", "do not give up", and even "these died in faith not having received the things promised but having seen them and greeted them from afar."

I will identify a few of the promises we have available to us in the Word of God here in the next few chapters. I would like to begin with two overall summary statements. The first is:

1. GOD IS GOOD

This is a foundational insight and it is always true. This fact is independent of our feelings, opinions, situations or environments. The bedrock truth that God is good is confirmed several places in the Bible:

Give thanks to the Lord, for He is good!
- 1 Chronicles 16:34

...giving thanks to the Lord: For He is good"
- Ezra 3:11

Good and upright is the Lord.
- Psalm 25:8

No one is good but One, that is, God
- Jesus quoted in Mark 10:18

Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, and comes down from the Father of lights, with whom there is no variation or shadow of turning.
- James 1:17

Understanding and trusting the fact that our Lord, the Creator God, is absolutely good is absolutely necessary for a person to enter into the rest of God. In spite of all the evil in the world and the sin in our own hearts, the eternal character of God's goodness is active in our world and in our lives. We must come to grips with the fact that light, truth and life can exist simultaneously in a temporal world where darkness, deception and death also exist.

The presence of darkness does not prove that light does not exist, because the existence of light is the only possible way for darkness to be defined. Light is a thing. Darkness is a non-thing. Darkness is nothing more than the absence of light. You have a light switch to turn on the light - but you do not turn on the dark with a dark switch.

In the same way, if there were no truth, deception would not be deceitful, because deception is nothing more than truth perverted. And, something cannot be said to be dead unless what you mean is that its life has been taken away. Darkness, deception and death are non-things. They only exist when you have removed light, truth and life.

By the same reasoning, there is actually no mystery to the concept that God is eternally good even when we experience bad in life. In fact, a large portion of God's promises involve him defeating evil, destroying death, and bringing about the utter annihilation of anything that stands in rebellion to his good nature. God wages battle by being good and for the sake of good.

To have faith in God and to enter into his rest your soul will have to hear, understand, and believe that God is good. If you cannot accept this promise, then you cannot have faith in the true God - and you will never enter his rest.

Darkness is nothing more than the absence of light. Deception is nothing more than truth perverted. Death only means life has been removed. Darkness, deception and death are non-things. They only exist when you have removed light, truth or life.

Without faith it is impossible to please him, for whoever would draw near to God must believe that he exists and that he rewards those who seek him.

– Hebrews 11:6

The second truth we need to understand and believe to begin entering into God's rest is this:

2. IF YOU SEEK GOD, YOU WILL FIND GOD

The Bible teaches that if we seek to understand God, he will reveal himself to us - that if you decide to seek the Lord, you will find him. God is not hiding. If anyone is hiding it is mankind. In the Garden of Eden it was Adam who hid himself from God, because Adam knew the truth about his own sinfulness and God's righteousness. Adam knew he had sinned, so he hid.

The opposite of seeking the truth is suppressing the truth. As we have seen, the fact that God is driving out sin, evil, darkness, and death is a basic truth revealed to all mankind through creation itself. But all humans - just like Adam - are afraid of this truth because man is by nature in rebellion against God. In fear then, men suppress the truth to help them maintain their sanity, because they know God is bringing wrath and judgment on their evil and sin.

For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who by their unrighteousness suppress the truth.

– Romans 1:18

So, what may be known about God is revealed and available for those who want to seek and find the Lord. This second promise is a great promise. Not only is God good, but if you want to find this good God he promises that you *will* find him.

I love those who love me, and those who seek me diligently find me.
– Proverbs 8:17

From there you will seek the LORD your God and you will find him, if you search after him with all your heart and with all your soul.

– Deuteronomy 4:29

You will seek me and find me, when you seek me with all your heart.
– Jeremiah 29:13

Jesus said: "I tell you, ask, and it will be given to you; seek, and you will find; knock, and it will be opened to you. For everyone who asks receives, and the one who seeks finds, and to the one who knocks it will be opened."

– Luke 11:9-10

These, then, are the first two great promises declared by both the Word of God and by creation itself:

1. **God is good**
2. **If you seek God, you will find him**

You can begin preparing your soul to enter the rest of God by hearing, knowing, and trusting these two promises. They will fortify your mind during times of trouble and confusion, and they will prevent the invasion of lies, deceit and corrupted ideologies that contradict the nature of God and his availability.

Remember, these promises are true. God's very Word and his reputation stand behind them. No matter what the world tells you or what deception tries to convince you of, the Word of God is living

and active, standing eternal over all creation with God himself.

*For the word of God is living and active,
sharper than any two-edged sword,
piercing to the division of soul and of spirit,
of joints and of marrow,
and discerning the thoughts and intentions of the heart.
And no creature is hidden from his sight,
but all are naked and exposed
to the eyes of him to whom we must give account.*

– Hebrews 4:11-12

Begin to know these promises and remember them. Concentrate on them, because they will stabilize your soul in good times and bad, in life or death, and in the light or in darkness.

There are many more promises with even more detail revealed in Scripture. We will now take a look at more of God's promises that teach the ways of the Lord that will help us anchor our souls and maintain our place in the rest of God.

9 - THE PROMISES: KNOWING GOD'S WAYS

Some promises include temporal blessings and daily provisions for life.

Other promises include a call to service, endurance, and the sacrifice of temporal blessings in order to achieve God's plan for us as we run the race of life marked out for us.

The first kind of promise is about blessings to be enjoyed with thanksgiving in this lifetime. The second kind normally pertains to blessings and provisions for the future.

These two types of promises are distinguished in Hebrews 11 where a rather extensive list of believers, leading all the way up to the time of Jesus Christ are commended. Some of these believers had faith to trust God for temporal blessings and daily deliverance. Others were denied temporal blessings, and endured hardships in order to fulfill God's plan for them in history.

The writer of Hebrews identifies 10 situations where believers received deliverance or provision, and took leadership to accomplish God's temporal plan. In Hebrews 11:33-35 these heroes of faith accomplished these things and received these blessings during their lives in this world:

Paul used all of these arguments in Romans 1:18-23; 2:14-15 and Acts 14:14-18; 17:24-28 to cause the pagans to reevaluate their theology. Romans 1:20 says, “For since the creation of the world God’s invisible qualities – his eternal power and divine nature– have been clearly seen, being understood from what has been made so that we are without excuse.” These invisible qualities of God’s eternal power and divine nature are seen in creation:

1. Glory revealed in the skies and universe (Psalm 19:1)
2. Power revealed in the immovableness of the earth and solar system (Psalm 93:1; 19:1)
3. Supremacy revealed in creation (Acts 14:15)
4. Goodness revealed in sending the sun and rain for all people (Matthew 5:45; Acts 14:17)
5. Intelligence revealed in our own skill and ability to design (Acts 17:29)
6. Greatness revealed in the vastness of the seas and outer space (Psalm 29:3-5; 93:4)
7. Judgment revealed in thunder and storms (Job 37:1-5)

If God Does Exist, Who is He?

God would have to be greater than his creation in every way.

God’s creation would reflect his nature and his qualities just as Romans 1:20 says:

“For since the creation of the world God’s invisible qualities—his eternal power and divine nature—have been clearly seen, being

The Universe Appears As:	First Cause (God) Must Be:
Limitless Space	Infinite
Unending Time	Eternal
Perpetual Motion	Omnipotent
Unbordered Variety	Omnipresent
Infinitely Complex	Omniscience
People Have:	First Cause (God) Must Be:
Personality	Personal
Feelings	Emotional
Will	Volitional
Ethics	Moral
System of Right and Wrong	Holy
System of Justice	Just
Love	Loving
Life	Living

The above descriptions of the creation and human creatures reflect a First Cause, or a God that exactly matches the God described in the Jewish and Christian Scriptures. Whoever God is, his character and his qualities must be seen in creation itself. If what a person describes as “god” is not compatible with the created world then that “god” is not the True God.

To create this universe, God must be transcendent (outside the boundaries of the universe). This means God cannot be described as one with the universe like the force in Star Wars. The First Cause cannot be the mindlessness, less-than-conscious unity known as the Supreme Soul of Eastern religions, because that state itself lacks purpose and design. The Creator must be personable since he created people with personalities.