

God's Promises Never Fail

Isaiah Series, Message 1

By Pastor Matt Black

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Lord's Day evening

Isaiah 1:1-9

Introduction: Open your Bibles to the book of Isaiah. We will be looking at Isaiah chapter 1, and verses 1 through 9. This evening we begin a series through this entire book. It will most certainly carry us through this year on Lord's Day evenings, and most likely into the next. This evening we begin the first message in this series entitled "God's Promises Never Fail." Let us begin reading in Isaiah 1 and verse 1.

[read Isaiah 1:1-9]

Isaiah is a book that has one unifying message that is unfolded in various ways. That one note that is sounded from almost every page of this prophecy is that of Christ. Many have wondered where Christ might be found in the Old Testament. Well, you need not go farther than the Isaiah's prophecy. Matthew Poole, the old Puritan commentator says this about Isaiah, he says, "[Isaiah] doth so evidently and fully describe the person, and offices, and sufferings, and kingdom of Christ, that some of the ancients called him the *fifth evangelist*."¹

Others have called the book of Isaiah "the little Bible."

"Like the sixty-six books of the Bible, Isaiah contains sixty-six chapters. The first thirty-nine chapters, like the thirty-nine books of the Old Testament, are primarily concerned to expose sin. The tone dramatically changes from confrontation to comfort, however, beginning with chapter 40, just as the note of Gospel hope begins with the fortieth book of the Bible, i.e. [the Gospel of] Matthew."²

In Isaiah we will see that earthly kings fail to establish a society that lived under the sovereign rule of God. The Messiah however, which we so clearly see in this book, would "not fail nor be discouraged" in His quest to "set judgment in the earth" (Isaiah 42:4). We see the kingdom of God announced by those who preach the Gospel.

Isaiah 52:7

How beautiful upon the mountains are the feet of him that bringeth good tidings,
that publisheth peace...that saith unto Zion, Thy God reigneth!

Who is this messenger that brings good news of the Kingdom of God? It has its ultimate fulfillment in our Lord Jesus Christ. Malachi promises that the Messenger of the Covenant, that is, Jesus Christ, will come—listen to the words of Malachi 3:1.

Malachi 3:1

Behold, I will send my messenger, and he shall prepare the way before me: and the Lord, whom ye seek, shall suddenly come to his temple, even the messenger of the covenant, whom ye delight in: behold, he shall come, saith the LORD of hosts.

¹ Matthew Poole. *Commentary on the Whole Bible: Psalms to Malachi* (Hendrickson), 326.

² Michael Gowens. *Understanding your Bible*, Sovereign Grace Publications: Lexington, KY, 2005), 134.

So Christ is promised to come and commence His kingdom. The very founding of the kingdom will be done in a supernatural way. Immanuel, "God with us" or as we see in the New Testament, God in the flesh (John 1:14), enters time and space and establishes His kingdom. "A virgin shall conceive, and bear a son, and shall call his name Immanuel" (Isaiah 7:14). So Mary who has never known a man is with child by the Holy Ghost, and has a supernatural birth. In Isaiah 9:6, we read, "unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given: and the government shall be upon his shoulder: and his name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, The mighty God, The everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace. 7 Of the increase of *his* government and peace *there shall be* no end, upon the throne of David, and upon his kingdom, to order it, and to establish it with judgment and with justice from henceforth even for ever." The child was born for the kingdom! The child was born to sit on the throne of David, and to order it and rule and reign over it!

And when does this kingdom find establishment? When does Christ sit on David's throne? Peter tells us exactly when this took place in Acts 2:29. Listen to Peter preaching at Pentecost: he says, "Men *and* brethren, let me freely speak unto you of the patriarch David, that he is both dead and buried, and his sepulchre is with us unto this day. 30 Therefore [David] being a prophet, and knowing that God had sworn with an oath to him, that of the fruit of his loins, according to the flesh, he would raise up Christ to sit on his [David's] throne; 31 He seeing this before spake of the resurrection of Christ, that his soul was not left in hell, neither his flesh did see corruption. 32 This Jesus hath God raised up, whereof we all are witnesses." So Christ was raised to David's throne on the Day of His resurrection! This is the ultimate fulfillment of the Kingdom of God and of the Gospel. This kingdom is here and now. Oh yes, there are other aspects of the kingdom that will be made manifest in the future, but Isaiah is primarily concerned with what we call "the Kingdom of God" as it is seen in the Gospel. The Old Testament is constantly pointing toward these Gospel times that we live in. There is much longing, waiting, and hoping in the Old Testament, and in this book of Isaiah. God had made a promise to Adam and Eve, to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, to Moses, and all the people of Israel, that He would send the Messiah. They were waiting and anticipating. The book of Isaiah stirs up that anticipation to a feverish pitch. So as we open this Gospel book, I want you to be thinking of Christ, to be saturated with how He worked in our brethren under the Old Covenant.

So this is what we are going to see in the weeks and months ahead if the Lord allows. But today in our text, we find that Israel was in a desperate situation. There were only a few who were truly following the Lord in Isaiah's day. Isaiah began prophesying around 740 BC and continued forty years. Jewish tradition tells us that Isaiah was born in royalty. The first verse reads like this:

Isaiah 1:1

The vision of Isaiah the son of Amoz, which he saw concerning Judah and Jerusalem in the days of Uzziah, Jotham, Ahaz, *and* Hezekiah, kings of Judah.

So Isaiah was the "son of Amoz." So, Isaiah's uncle would probably have been, Amaziah, king of Judah. Whether this is true or not, we see that Isaiah was given a message or a "vision" concerning Judah and Jerusalem. We are going to see that this revelation on the true nature of this divided monarchy is very, very ugly. But no matter how ugly things get, we always see God right there, ever present, and ever

faithful. God never forgets his promises, no matter how much we forsake Him. God is faithful even when we are faithless.

So that brings us to an obvious question: How do we know that God will keep His promises? This is what we will be dealing with in our text this evening. Tonight we will look at three reasons:

God always keeps His promises because:

1. God can do the Impossible.
2. God can see the Unseeable.
3. and God can change the Unchangeable.

So let's look at our first point:

- I. God can do the Impossible. And what an impossible situation it was! It was so impossible that God calls heaven and earth to account as a witness.

v.2 "Hear, O heavens, and give ear, O earth..." He wants to awaken the entire world to this impossible situation in which he is delivering a message to a bunch of senseless creature—a people so hardened in heart, that the Lord in this passage compares them to dumb animals! He says animals have more sense than these peoples. But let's look at these impossibilities. This is the only part we can see. We do not live in the divine realm. God calls us to listen to what he has to say. And so the Lord begins with the obvious.

- A. You see, man sees only impossibilities. We are not seated on the throne in the heavens, and so our perspective is always finite and limited, but God is calling us to take a look at these impossibilities.

1. First, there was an impossible promise.

v.2b "I have nourished and brought up children."

This is the Gospel promise that comes from Genesis 1, through the call of Abraham, and then to the end of the age. You see back in Genesis 3:15, God had promised a SEED that would bruise the head of the forces of hell (the serpent), though Satan would bruise the heel of Christ in the crucifixion. This seed is what God is referring to, when he says here "I have nourished and brought up children." He's just doing what he promised to do. He confirmed this to Abraham. He said, to Abraham, you just keep looking and waiting and anticipating, because Messiah is coming—and when He is born, His kingdom will be established. Listen to God's promise to Abraham:

Genesis 22:18

God said, "And in thy seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed."

Do you hear the Gospel promises in this verse? All nations will be blessed by the seed of the woman, the seed of Abraham! All nations will be blessed when Christ comes to earth! All nations will be blessed because that's how far His kingdom spans! The "everlasting gospel" extends to all they "that dwell on the earth, and to every nation, and kindred, and tongue, and people" (Revelation 14:6).

This promise is found over and over again. We read in Genesis 17:8:

Genesis 17:8

I will give unto thee, and to thy seed after thee, the land wherein thou art a stranger, all the land of Canaan, for an everlasting possession; and I will be their God.

Eternal blessing and land are promised to the God's people because of Christ. It is on the basis of the Messianic seed that God promises to "be our God." This is only possible because of Christ's work on our behalf! This is the Gospel. And what about the land? What does the Scripture say?

Psalms 25:12-13

What man *is* he that feareth the LORD? him shall he teach in the way *that* he shall choose. 13 his seed shall inherit the earth.

Psalms 37:9

those that wait upon the LORD, they shall inherit the earth.

Psalms 37:22

For *such as be* blessed of him shall inherit the earth;

Matthew 5:5

Blessed *are* the meek: for they shall inherit the earth.

This is the Gospel promise! God has and will nourish up children, but it seems impossible. Why?

2. Because there was also an impossible people.

v.2 "they have rebelled against me." These people were given the Lord God to guide them in the wilderness, and the prophet Moses! They were led by a pillar of cloud by day and a pillar of fire by night. And even during this they hated God and murmured and complained. Then God brought them into the promised land with Caleb and Joshua. They conquered heathen nations, but eventually began to adopt the practices of the heathen because they did not "destroy them utterly." You can hear the Lord's condemnation: "they have rebelled against me." Then the Lord gave them judges. Oh how wicked these people became. There was virtually no difference between them and the heathen, and in many things they went even beyond the wickedness of the heathen. Then the Lord brought to them a kingdom. David was a man after God's own heart, and truly David was a true picture of the kingdom of Christ. David conquered and David loved God. But then came Solomon who held the kingdom together, but

"with the death of Solomon, the glory days of the monarchy passed away and the long slide down the slippery slope toward ruin and judgment began."³

Israel divided from Judah, and you have so many wicked kings. There are a few bright spots where we see, revival, reform, and repentance, but for the most part, the people were giving their children to Molech,

³ Gowens. *Understanding*, 86.

setting up Ashteroth polls, and worship a myriad of heathen idols and false deities.

And yet, do we find our culture and community any less impossible? We live in just as much of a pluralistic society as the Jews of old lived. We hear constantly that "all roads lead to heaven." They say, "it matters not what you call God, whether it be Mohamed or Jesus or Buddha! May all of these sentiments be accursed. It is utterly blasphemous to put our blessed Lord Jesus Christ in the same sentence with these false deities and false prophets.

So you see the impossibility of the people.

3. And if that wasn't enough, there was an impossible position. "gone away backward" Look at verses 3-4.

Isaiah 1:3-4

The ox knoweth his owner, and the ass his master's crib: *but* Israel doth not know, my people doth not consider. 4 Ah sinful nation, a people laden with iniquity, a seed of evildoers, children that are corrupters: they have forsaken the LORD, they have provoked the Holy One of Israel unto anger, they are gone away backward.

The term here "gone away backward" is a very important one. It has the meaning of apostasy. What does it mean when we say someone is an apostate? It means they seemed to know the faith, but then they left it. We get the phrase "backslider" from the English phrase "gone away backward."

Have you ever said that someone who had made a profession of faith in Christ was a "backslider"? As if they had just become carnal in their sins, but they must still be saved. Do you understand that this is an utterly unbiblical and anti-biblical idea when it is applied that way? A person who slides back from the faith is an apostate! Remember Hebrews 6?

Hebrews 6:4-9

For *it is* impossible for those who were once enlightened, and have tasted of the heavenly gift, and were made partakers of the Holy Ghost, 5 And have tasted the good word of God, and the powers of the world to come, 6 If they shall fall away, to renew them again unto repentance; seeing they crucify to themselves the Son of God afresh, and put *him* to an open shame.

- 9 ¶ But, beloved, we are persuaded better things of you and things that accompany salvation

What was the writer of Hebrews saying here? If you fall away you are not saved in the first place. "We are persuaded *better* things of you" we are persuaded that your life consists of "things that accompany salvation," because those who fall away don't have it in the first place.

So all this looks like a terribly impossible situation does it not? But remember God is the God of all impossibilities!

Genesis 18:14

Is any thing too hard for the LORD?

- B. Impossibilities do not exist with God. Look back at verse 2, who is it that is speaking? “for the LORD hath spoken” –the I AM has spoken! The theme of so much of the book of Exodus is “I AM THE LORD.” God delivers an impossible promise that he will deliver these helpless slaves out of the most powerful nation on the earth. And what is his guarantee that He’ll make this happen?

Exodus 14:18

And the Egyptians shall know that I *am* the LORD, when I have gotten me honour upon Pharaoh, upon his chariots, and upon his horsemen.

Each plague God sent, each calamity he sent, He proved it by His name. Why has God chosen to deliver Israel?

So that “thou shalt know that I *am* the LORD:” (Exodus 7:17)

Why does God put up with Israel and redeem Israel?

1Samuel 12:22

For the LORD will not forsake his people for his great name’s sake: because it hath pleased the LORD to make you his people.

Over and over again God gives the cause for His mercy:

Isaiah 48:9

For my name’s sake will I defer mine anger, and for my praise will I refrain for thee, that I cut thee not off.

Isaiah 48:11

For mine own sake, *even* for mine own sake, will I do *it*: for how should *my name* be polluted? and I will not give my glory unto another.

What does God say to the sons of Jacob in Malachi?

Malachi 3:6

For I *am* the LORD, I change not; therefore ye sons of Jacob are not consumed.

Don’t you see, there is nothing impossible with God, because it’s not based on what the sons of Jacob can accomplish. All they and we can accomplish is to pile iniquity upon iniquity. But God will keep His promises! It’s all based on His power and His name! God can do the Impossible.

II. But we also notice that God can see the Unseeable.

A. God sees mankind.

1. God sees man’s actions. “Hear O heavens” He says listen all of heaven and earth—I’m going to tell you what man is really like!

2Cor 5:10

For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ; that every one may receive the things *done* in *his* body, according to that he hath done, whether *it be* good or bad.

2. God sees man's heart. "ox knoweth his owner"

3 The ox knoweth his owner, and the ass his master's crib: *but* Israel doth not know, my people doth not consider. 4 Ah sinful nation, a people laden with iniquity, a seed of evildoers, children that are corrupters: they have forsaken the LORD, they have provoked the Holy One of Israel unto anger, they are gone away backward.

Jer 17:9 The heart is deceitful above all *things*, and desperately wicked: who can know it?

B. God sees all of time. "the vision of Isaiah"

1. God sees the past. "I have nourished and brought up children" v.2
God saw the whole plan. He saw man Fall in Adam! He knew that the Law would have to come to magnify man's sin.

God see your past! He sees that you are fallen. He sees you family, your experiences both good and bad. He knows you better than you know yourself.

Psalms 139:2

Thou knowest my downsitting and mine uprising, thou understandest my thought afar off.

2. God sees the present. "Ah sinful nation" v.4 Here the Assyrian nation is going to overtake Judah. Isaiah sees the impending doom and their ubiquitous sinful condition.

God sees your present! He sees your condition. He knows our iniquities. We cannot hide them from Him. We ought to instead confess them!

3. God sees the future. "ye will revolt more and more" v.5 God knows that if he leaves man to himself man will "revolt more and more." That is always the case. Man is free to do what he will, but he will always. But God knows what we will do, because God not only can predict the future, he has planned the future!

Ephesians 1:11

All things happen after the counsel of His own will

III. God can change the Unchangable.

A. With Man in control, there is no Hope of change.

1. There was an irreversible disease. "no soundness in it" v. 6 Man cannot change himself!

2. There was an unquestionable destruction. "your cities are burned with fire" v. 7 Their cities were not burning yet, but it was as good as done in God's eyes. Whether it be the Assyrians, or the

Babylonians, or even later the Romans, the Jewish nation was to be utterly destroyed!

3. There was an imminent destiny "a besieged city" v.8
And the daughter of Zion is left as a cottage in a vineyard, as a lodge in a garden of cucumbers, as a besieged city.

Like a lone cottage in the vineyard: As if the whole city is destroyed, and there is only one house standing!

Lodge in a garden of cucumbers: A ramshackle shack that someone just threw out there to sell cucumbers

A besieged city: a surrounded city! destruction is waiting. We spoke of this— Judgment day is coming!

With all these unchangeable things, is there any hope?
The answer is always YES!!

2Co 5:17 Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new.

Re 21:5 And he that sat upon the throne said, Behold, I make all things new. And he said unto me, Write: for these words are true and faithful.

1Ti 1:15 This *is* a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptance, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners; of whom I am chief.

- B. With God in control, no situation is beyond Hope of change! Verse 9
1. Change comes from knowing God's Name! "the LORD of hosts"
 2. Change comes from knowing God's Plan! "left unto us...a remnant"
 3. Change comes from knowing God's Grace! "we should have been"

Conclusion: Are you without hope in life or in a certain situation? Are you seeing things from your perspective, or God's? God keeps His promises. He cannot do otherwise! Do you believe that? You ought to!

Closing Hymn: 336 My Hope is in the Lord