

We know the promises of the Lord and know that they stand fast, but time and again we reach a place where we feel that the Lord has left us in the lurch and not fulfilled his promise to us. We then become disheartened and even angry with the Lord.

However, if we reflect on the matter we will find that the Lord has not left us in the lurch, but that we misunderstood the promise or did not grasp the time for the fulfilment of the promise correctly.

In any case it is not simply a matter of promise and fulfilment that go together like cause and effect – although it does have a lot to do with this as well.

A promise from the Lord is akin to his Word going forth and we can also apply the parable of the sower to it. The sower sows these promises, but some fall next to the road and are eaten by birds, a portion falls on rocky places and is scorched and some are choked by weeds. Even those that fall in good soil do not come up immediately.

When one looks at the old pilgrims in the Bible, one notices that for them also promises did not come up immediately. I quote a few examples of people who received the promise, but never the fulfilment (because God determined something better for them):

1. Hebr. 11:32 And what more shall I say? I do not have time to tell about Gideon, Barak and Samson, Jephthah, David, Samuel and the prophets, who through faith conquered kingdoms, administered justice, and gained what was promised; who shut the mouths of lions, v.34 quenched the fury of the flames, and escaped the edge of the sword, whose weakness was turned to strength; and who became powerful in battle and routed foreign armies. V.35 Women received back their dead, raised to life again. Others were tortured and refused to be released, so that they might gain a better resurrection. V.36 Some faced jeers and flogging, while still others were chained and put in prison. V.37 They were stoned; they were sawn in two; they were put to death by the sword. They went about in sheepskins and goatskins; destitute, persecuted and ill-treated - v.38 the world was not worthy of them. They wandered in deserts and mountains, and in caves and holes in the ground. V.39 These were all commended for their faith, yet none of them received what had been promised.

In Hebr. 11:13 the scriptures also say - All these people were still living by faith when they died. They did not receive the things promised; they only saw them and welcomed them from a distance. And they admitted that they were aliens and strangers on earth.

Those for whom the promise indeed went into fulfilment, it also took a long time – until they became disheartened and bade the promise farewell. For them the promise first had to die.

- 1 Jacob received the promise that his brothers would bow before him, but it cost him slavery, prison and a famine before it came to pass.
- 2 Abraham had to leave his family and journey to the Promised Land, but it cost him famine in Canaan and an embarrassment in Egypt before he could go and live there – and even then he neglected the promise by allowing Lot to live there.
- 3 John the Baptist had the promise of the Lamb of God and later had to ask – Are you the one who was to come?

We receive the answer in 1Cor. 15:36 - How foolish, What you sow does not come to life unless it dies. V.37 When you sow, you do not plant the body that will be, but just a seed... V.38 But God gives it a body as he has determined.

So also with the seed of the Lord. He fulfils his promise after he has sown it in the shape of a seed and awakens it in a shape as determined by him, but he awaits it like the farmer:

Remember the scriptures in James 5:7 – Be patient, then, brothers, until the Lord's coming. See how the farmer waits for the land to yield its valuable crop and how patient he is for the autumn and spring rains.

We also just have to wait for the promises until our souls have received the early and late rains, because the Lord also awaits them patiently.

As best example I hold up to you the promise of the Father in John 3:16 - For God so loved the world...

Here he says nothing about the Lord Jesus having to die – yet that promise had to die on the cross so that we could receive the promise of salvation and John said ahead of time, but did not realise, that the Lamb of God first had to die.

Will we then not see the promise from a distance and believe and welcome it and, like the farmer, patiently await it?