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The Treasure Is Yours

955-A

Series: God's Living Legends II

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INTO HIS LIKENESS RADIO

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This was the most exciting day in little Eddy's life. Eddy had just been given a brand new car for a graduation present. His parents gave in and gave him just the model he had always wanted. It was a GTZ convertible. It had mag wheels—you know the kind. It had a four-channel stereo with more lights and buzzers than a nuclear plant. It had a computerized, fuel-injected engine that looked like it was ready for the Daytona 500. It had wide, oval tires that looked like racing slicks, a digital dashboard that looked like control central at IBM, and a color-coordinated velour interior that would look good in anyone's living room. Everything a car could have, this one had; and everything it had, he wanted.

But Eddie didn't *have* the car, yet. His parents had purchased it and paid for it. Theoretically, it was his. But even though he, in essence, owned it, he was still driving his 1975 Ford with the broken tail light, the dented door, and faded paint. You ask why?

Well, the problem was communication. His parents had to leave town unexpectedly, and they left him a note (in the one place they thought he would be sure to find it—on the refrigerator door) telling him the car was in, and it was paid for. All he had to do was go down, sign the title, and drive it home. He *owned* it. He just didn't have it yet.

But he thought the note on the fridge was a list of chores he was supposed to do while his folks were gone, so he never looked at it. There it was. It was all his, the thing he wanted most in life. But because he didn't take the time to read the note and follow the instructions, he never got it, at least not until his folks came home. All that he wanted, he owned; but he had never claimed it, so it didn't do him any good.

You say, "That's sad." Yes it is, not only for Eddie, but what about his parents? They had paid the price so that he could have it, but he still did not possess what was his. He had clear title to the thing he wanted most and yet he was living his life as though he didn't own it. That is sad. But that's not nearly so sad as a

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Christian who has been given clear title to the most incredible life this world has to offer, who goes around like a spiritual pauper because he has never bothered to read the instructions, meet the requirements and claim what is his.

The Scripture says our God has given unto us exceeding great and precious promises, promises that by these, the Scripture says,

we may be partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust.

(II Peter 1:4 NKJV)

In our last two studies we have been examining those precious promises, looking at them through the eyes of Scripture and through the eyes, in particular, of a man named David, one of God's Living Legends.

We have been looking at II Samuel 7. This is how it all came about. Our young king-to-be finally had become king. You may remember that he had a proposal for God. He felt bad that God didn't have a nice house to live in. So he said, "God, I'm going to build You a house." But God appeared to Nathan the prophet and said, "No, I've got an alternate plan. You don't build Me a house, I'm going to build you, David, a house, a kingdom; a spiritual house, a kingdom that will last forever.

David's response to that promise from God forms the backdrop for our study on how to claim the promises of God. The sad thing is that most of us as Christians want to claim God's Word as ours, but simply don't know how. A lot of people are trying to give us help but may not be giving us the truth. Look at how David received the promise.

1- He humbled himself. He just fell in awe before God that this great God would give to him a gift so great. Is that the way you claim God's promises? Or do you strut into His presence and say, "Okay, Lord, give them to me! They're mine." David humbled himself.

2- We learned in the last lesson that, before he said a word about the promise itself, he began to worship. We learned that he worshiped God for His Word, for His Works, for His Worth and for His Ways. Having fallen down before God and exalted God and worshipped God, *then*, he quietly and graciously said, "Okay, Lord, I take what You've given to me." Verse 25 begins like this. It is the touchstone of our study. It goes like this, as David

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is speaking,

“Now, O Lord God, the word which You have spoken concerning Your servant and concerning his house, establish it forever and do as You have said.”

(II Samuel 7:25 NKJV)

3- Then it was as if David remembered why God had done it. He said,

So let Your name be magnified [that’s why] forever, saying, “The Lord of hosts is the God over Israel.” And let the house of Your servant David be established before You.

(II Samuel 7:26 NKJV)

In verse 27, he repeats the promise,

For You, O Lord of hosts, God of Israel, have revealed this to Your servant, saying, “I will build you a house.” Therefore Your servant has found it in his heart to pray this prayer to You.

(II Samuel 7:27 NKJV)

“Lord, the only reason I’m praying is because I’m quoting back to You what You have given to me. Thank You Lord.” Then in verse 28, he says,

And now, O Lord God, You are God, and Your words are true, and You have promised this goodness to Your servant.

(II Samuel 7:28 NKJV)

Then in verse 29, David actually lays hold of the promise. Here is what he says,

Therefore, let it please You to bless the house of Your servant, [like You said] that it may continue before You forever; for You, O Lord God, have spoken it, and with Your blessing let the house of Your servant be blessed forever.

(II Samuel 7:29 NKJV)

David has humbled himself before God, worshipped God and claimed a promise. It was a specific promise. It was an unconditional promise with conditional blessings. It was a personal promise. It was a powerful promise. It changed his life. It changed his ministry. It changed the course of eternity.

Your God has given *you* exceeding great and precious promises. But like young Eddie, so often we don’t bother to read the instruction book. We don’t read the note on the refrigerator door, so we never lay hold of the thing we have title to. We live out our Christian experience without *power* because we’ve never claimed the promises that are ours.

CONSOLIDATED PROMISES

In the last lesson we began a look at consolidating the promises. We found out that one of the big problems is that we, as Christians, like to take bits and pieces of promises out of context, out of the Scripture, then isolate them and claim them because it puts God in a box and forces Him to do what we want.

We learned in the last lesson, that in order to really claim the promises, first you consolidate the promises. That means you take a concordance, and you find everything you can about a given subject. You lay it out before you and, having put all of it in context, *then* you are prepared to claim the promise. You can't claim a promise out of context any more than you can take a legal document that has been prepared for you and pick one paragraph out and lay hold of that paragraph and tell your lawyer you want to claim that paragraph but the other four paragraphs you don't want to live up to. It doesn't work.

In the last lesson, I gave you an assignment. I'm sure you remember—I can tell by the bright looks on your faces. That assignment was to take one subject, the peace of God, from a passage we all claim. It is John 14:27,

Peace I leave with you, My peace I give to you; not as the world gives do I give to you. Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid.
(John 14:27 NKJV)

How many of you love that verse? Can I see your hands? Your hands do go up. That's good. Okay that is a *powerful* promise. It is an exceeding great and precious promise. It is the kind of promise that everybody wants to claim. It says that God has some kind of uncanny, indescribable, spiritual kind of peace that is available to every Christian. We want to have it. But many people claim it but still don't have it. So what they do is assume,

1- God did not mean it.

2- They are not spiritual enough. This is for Superman and Wonder Woman.

3- Maybe God has lost his touch. Maybe it used to work back in the old days.

4- Maybe, let's just don't talk about it, we don't want to embarrass God.

Beloved, don't worry about embarrassing God. All of those

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assumptions are wrong. What has happened is, usually, we have not read the fine print. We haven't really claimed the promise of peace. We have taken it out of context.

The promise of peace is real. But it is a limited promise. It is given only to Christians remember. Don't tell your unbelieving friends that they can claim this promise and have peace. Without the Prince of Peace they can't have peace. Peace is an internal solution to an external problem and it comes from having the Holy Spirit reside within you.

In the last lesson, we looked at Philippians 4:6,7; Isaiah 26:3 and Psalm 119:165. We learned that in order to get this peace, this wonderful peace that,

1- We had to stop worrying. It is a commandment.

2- We had to worship, ask, and praise every time we were tempted to worry.

3- It was conditioned on keeping our eyes focused on Him.

You will keep him in perfect peace, whose mind is stayed [fixed] on You, because he trusts in You.

(Isaiah 26:3 NKJV)

4- We found it was conditioned on our being in love with His Word.

Great peace have those who love Your law,

(Psalm 119:165 NKJV)

There are others. I asked you to spend the week looking up some of the other ones and trying to find out for yourselves how to claim the peace of God. I hope that maybe last week and the week before, were better weeks for some of you because you took those verses, laid them out, found out what was expected of you, humbled yourself before God and quietly claimed the promise of peace. You found that an uncanny kind of calm controlled your life in the midst of circumstances that would normally have riled you up or upset you, or driven you to worry. It is a claimable promise, but not just by claiming a verse out of context. You have to consolidate the promise.

Let's look at one more. Let's take the twin sister of peace. How many of you would like joy? Sure you would. John 15:11 is the one we claim most often.

These things I have spoken to you, that My joy may remain in you, and that your joy may be full.

(John 15:11 NKJV)

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“Amen, Lord! Make me joyfull!” You see, God wants us to have joy, that inner excitement over who God is that transcends circumstances. But how do we get it? We ask for it, but we don’t always have it. Let’s look at what the Scripture says and consolidate the promises of joy.

1- The first prerequisite is obedience. John 15:10 says,

If you keep My commandments, you will abide in My love, just as I have kept My Father’s commandments and abide in His love.

These things I have spoken to you, that My joy may remain in you, and that your joy may be full. (John 15:10,11 NKJV)

Joy is yours, but not if you’re out of fellowship and in disobedience to the Word of God.

2- Death to self. John the Baptist gives us another key to claiming the joy of God.

He who has the bride is the bridegroom; but the friend of the bridegroom, who stands and hears him, rejoices greatly because of the bridegroom’s voice. Therefore this joy of mine is fulfilled.

He must increase, but I must decrease.

(John 3:29,30 NKJV)

So death to self is another key to appropriating the joy of the Lord. Do an analysis of your life. Do an inventory of your life. Find the things in your life that you are clinging to that deny Christ the right to rule in your life. You will find where the joy went.

3- In John 16:24 we learn that answered prayer produces joy.

Ask, and you will receive, that your joy may be full.

(John 16:24b NKJV)

So the more we learn to pray in harmony with God’s will, we learn that, according to I John 5:14,

...this is the confidence that we have in Him, that if we ask anything according to His will, He hears us.

And if we know that He hears us, whatever we ask, we know that we have the petitions that we have asked of Him.

(I John 5:14,15 NKJV)

So when we learn to pray in accordance with His will, God answers those prayers. As God answers them He fills us with joy.

4- The receiving of the Word produces joy.

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...these things I speak in the world, that they may have My joy fulfilled in themselves. (John 17:13 NKJV)

5- The sharing of the Word produces joy. When you share your testimony, when you share the Scripture, God fills your heart. He promises an unspeakable joy as we see in Acts 13:52.

6- Unity in the church and among the body of Christ produces joy according to Philippians 2:2.

7- One of the most exciting, encouraging ways Scripture says to get joy is to pour your life into somebody else. In Philippians 4:1, Paul refers to these dearly beloved ones as his "joy and crown". In I Thessalonians 2:19, he says,

For what is our hope, or joy, or crown of rejoicing? Is it not even you in the presence of our Lord Jesus Christ at His coming?

For YOU ARE OUR GLORY AND JOY.

(I Thessalonians 2:19,20 NKJV)

In III John 4 we read this most incredible statement,

I have no greater joy than to hear that my children walk in truth. (III John 4:4 NKJV)

There is no greater source of joy than to see those whose lives have been touched by yours growing on into the likeness of Christ. In the opposite fashion, there is nothing that breaks your heart or produces more sadness than to see your children or those who are your children in Christ, wander off into ways that break your heart and break God's heart. So what he is saying here is, pour your life, the principles in your life and the person of Christ into your life, into others *now*. You will be storing up joy for your old age. That is the promise.

If you want to study this concept further, let me give you some more verses. Look at James 1:2; I John 1:4; II John 12 and Romans 15:32. It is the will of God that you and I be filled with joy. It is a great and precious promise. But, Beloved, unless we are in obedience to His known will, unless we are dealing with things that crowd out His Lordship, unless we are praying aright, and unless we are pouring our lives into others' lives, don't expect that extra measure of joy. You can't just rush into His presence and say, "Okay, Lord, gimme joy!" God says, "I'd love to. It is an act of grace. I've promised it to you. However, have you read the whole Book?"

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Do you remember what you do? You come into His presence and you worship Him for His Word, or His Worth, or His Works, or His Ways. Then, having honestly met the requirements of Scripture, you pray,

*God now I claim
What you've offered to me.
Just as you promised,
So shall it be.
Humbly I give
ALL THE GLORY to thee!*

Or as David prayed,

And now, O Lord God, You are God, and Your words are true, and You have promised this goodness [joy] to Your servant.

Now therefore, let it please You to bless the house of Your servant, [grant him joy] that it may continue before You forever; for YOU O LORD GOD, HAVE SPOKEN IT.

(II Samuel 7:28,29a NKJV)

AMEN.

Learn to consolidate the promises. Then claim the promises. It will change your life.

THOSE UNCONDITIONAL PROMISES

As we have been looking mostly at conditional promises, I want us to look now for a few moments at unconditional promises. These are promises that will come to pass whether you claim them or not.

You say, "Give me a break! Why claim them if they are going to happen anyway?" There are two reasons:

- 1- The Scripture says it glorifies God.
- 2- The Scripture says that it will help you

escape the corruption that is in the world through lust.

(II Peter 1:4 NKJV)

It will change your life. David is proof of this. Do you remember what he said in verse 21?

For Your word's sake, and according to Your own heart,

(II Samuel 7:21 NKJV)

God is going to *do* it for His Word's sake. You are going to *claim* it for His glory.

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I want to give you just two of them today, so hopefully you will understand the principle and you can apply it to many, many more. Here are two unconditional promises. They are going to happen, Beloved.

1- Let's begin with the promise of the resurrection. It is a promise you can claim when the fear of death or the death of a loved one who is a believer, has filled you with anguish or fear. This is a promise to claim in I Corinthians 15.

If in this life only we have hope in Christ, we are of all men the most pitiable [miserable].

But now Christ is risen from the dead, and has become the firstfruits of those who have fallen asleep. [That's a promise!]

For since by man came death, by Man also came the resurrection of the dead.

For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ all shall be made alive. [That's a promise you can claim!]

(I Corinthians 15:19-22 NKJV)

Behold, I tell you a mystery: We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed—[That's a promise!]

in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet. For the trumpet will sound, and the dead will be raised incorruptible, AND WE SHALL BE CHANGED.

(I Corinthians 15:51,52 NKJV)

[In the light of those kinds of promises] "O Death, where is your sting? O Hades, where is your victory?"

The sting of death is sin, and the strength of sin is the law.

But thanks be to God, who gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.

Therefore, my beloved brethren, be steadfast, immovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, knowing that your labor is not in vain in the Lord. [That's a promise!]

(I Corinthians 15:55-58 NKJV)

What a promise!

*So, God, now I claim
What you've offered to me.
Just as you promised,
So shall it be.
Humbly, I give
All the glory to thee.*

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Does that ensure the resurrection? How many of you think it does? Don't raise your hand. I'm just doing this so it will sound good on tape. No, the resurrection is a finished fact for the child of God, whether he lays hold of it or not. But why drive around in a 1975 Ford of fear, when your new limousine of faith has been purchased for you and the title is yours to claim? It is yours either way. But when you lay hold of it, God can take His Word and in a gentle breeze of confidence, blow across your life in the midst of times of fear and doubt. Satan *hates* that. God *loves* it. So claim the promise of the resurrection and *stand* on it when the winds of doubt begin to blow against your life. It will change your life.

2- The promise of security. Romans 8:39 says what?

Nothing can separate you from the love of God.

(Romans 8:39 paraphrased)

He has added in John 10,

And I give them eternal life, and they shall never perish; [Never? Never] neither shall anyone [Any? Any] snatch [pluck] them out of My hand.

My Father, who has given them to Me, is greater than all; and no one is able to snatch [pluck] them out of My Father's hand.

I and My Father are one.

(John 10:28-30 NKJV)

There are no escape clauses in that one.

Another reassurance is John 3:16:

For God so loved the world that He [did what?] gave His only begotten son, that whosoever believes on Him SHALL NOT PERISH—SHALL NOT PERISH but have, have, have everlasting life.

And another is Philippians 1:6,

Being confident of this very thing, that He who has begun a good work in you will [do what?] complete it until the day of Jesus Christ;

(Philippians 1:6 NKJV)

So God has given to us exceeding great and precious promises that guarantee us eternal security. You may have broken the heart of God, you may have broken your word to God, you may have violated His will, but He will never leave you or forsake you. That's why He said to David,

I will be his Father, and he shall be My son. If he commits

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iniquity, I will chasten him with the rod of men and with the blows of the sons of men.

BUT MY MERCY SHALL NOT DEPART AWAY FROM HIM...
[why? Because he deserves it? No. Because I made an unconditional promise to the house of David.]

And your house and your kingdom shall be established forever before you. Your throne shall be established forever.

(II Samuel 7:14-16 NKJV)

Beloved, He has given us an unconditional promise,

And I give them eternal life, and they shall never perish; neither shall anyone [no one, no thing can] snatch them out of My hand.

(John 10:28 NKJV)

So if you are living a life filled with doubt about your salvation, then get up every morning for the rest of your life, every morning, fall down beside your bed, (that's the part we do best) and claim this unconditional promise that it is,

Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to His mercy He saved us...

(Titus 3:5 NKJV)

But we shall never, ever perish. Cry out,

Who am I, O LORD God? That You have brought me this promise? Now, O LORD, You are that God, Your words be true and I accept Your promise.

(II Samuel 7:18 paraphrase)

Amen.

You are secure in Christ, but it didn't happen because you claimed it, Beloved, it was yours all along. All you did was reach up and take what was already yours. You took the title. Satan *hates* it. He wants you to live minute by minute tormented by fear, anxious about eternity. God has said, "No! It is finished!" That's a promise. Great and precious promises. Unconditional promises that you can lay hold of.

THOSE LIMITED PROMISES

Thirdly, there are limited promises. Limited promises are promises that are limited by time or object. I don't know how to break this to you, but not every promise God ever made was made to you. You can't tell that sometime when you listen to the radio or turn on the television, but it is true. How many of you would want to claim God's promises to Pharaoh? Can I see your hands? How about to Saul? How about God's promise to

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Lot's wife? The price of salt would plummet. Would you want to claim His promise to Cain? Some of these were specific promises to specific people for specific times for specific purposes. They may have eternal truths attached, and they may be duplicated in other parts of Scripture to the whole body, but be careful that you don't snatch something out of context, shake your fist in God's face and claim it.

Moses. God told Moses he could but speak to a rock and he would get water. Have you ever tried that? It would be perfect in Texas, wouldn't it? Spiritually, of course, it works. You can speak to the THE ROCK, Jesus Christ, and out of Him will pour forth rivers of Living Water. The picture is perfect, but don't take literal promises made for specific purposes to others, and assume that God will turn you into Superman and allow you to have them.

Jesus could have spoken to a rock, and it would have become bread according to Matthew 4. He had that privilege. But it was not His Father's will. Satan was testing Him to see if He would claim a promise wrongfully. Don't you see how it works? He then goes on and quotes Psalms 91:11 to Jesus and just dares him to claim it. Jesus said,

You shall not tempt the Lord your God." (Matthew 4:7 NKJV)

His whole attack on Jesus in the wilderness was to take Him in His weakened condition, and try to get Him to take spiritual promises and claim them in the physical realm. This is still what Satan wants to do. You've got to find out who the promise was made to, my friend. If your boss promises you a raise, (and for your sake, I hope he does because there's not a lot of that going around these days, but maybe he will) and if I walk in and try to claim it, what do you reckon is going to happen? Never mind. You see, he didn't make the promise to me. Not every promise God made to Israel and not every promise God made to Abraham, Isaac or Jacob or David, or anyone else in Scripture, was meant for me either. Some were. Some weren't. So I want to give you some rules of thumb to look at.

Limited Promises

1- Is it a spiritual promise that is verified in the New Testament? You can claim Joshua 1:8 because it is verified in II Timothy 3:15 and 16. You can claim Joshua 1:9 because it is verified in Hebrews 13:5. You can claim Psalm 103:12 because I John 1:9 guarantees it. You see? Is it verified in the New Testament? That

is one check point.

2- Is this promise for all believers, and is it only for believers? You can't take a well-meaning non-Christian and tell him to claim the promise of peace until the Prince of Peace lives in him. You can't tell that unbeliever to claim the promise of agape love for his or her mate until the living love of God comes to live in them. So many people misquote Christian principles, taking them out of context and making Christian promises that require a Christian's power to non-Christians. We frustrate them and we blaspheme God. Without the Holy Spirit, Beloved, you cannot accomplish spiritual things.

So many of the promises are limited promises. Some are limited to a certain person, to Moses, to Abraham, or to Elijah. God said, "Elijah, I'm going to take you up to heaven in a special vehicle, in a whirlwind, and you are not going to taste death." Now God didn't promise you that. But, if you are present at the rapture (conditional promise) you will get to experience it. But you can't claim that. It wasn't given to you. God promised Samson incredible strength if he didn't cut his hair. Now you barbers can relax. God didn't promise that to all of us. Praise God.

The Old Testament is filled with promises. Many of them are limited promises. We need to learn to tell the difference.

3- Always make certain that the promise you have found, when standing alone, does not violate the rest of Scripture. So many people I have heard in my lifetime quote Matthew 10:35,

"For I have come to 'set a man against his father, a daughter against her mother, and a daughter-in-law against her mother-in-law';"
(Matthew 10:35 NKJV)

They use that as a reason to show disrespect for their parents. That can't be what that passage meant, otherwise it would violate Luke 18:20, Mark 7:10, and Ephesians 6:2. You see, the Word of God is a singular book. Every word is in harmony with every other word. So if you claim one promise that violates other passages of Scripture, you are misinterpreting the promise, and you are tempting God.

Limited Promises—some are limited only to believers. Some are limited only to Israel. Some are limited only to one group or one person. Claim the ones that belong to us, Beloved. That is enough. So often we are looking for physical answers to spiritual problems. The big issue, my friend, is, "What is this kingdom God

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has placed us in? Is it spiritual or is it physical?”

If it is spiritual, and we know that it is, then concentrate on laying hold of the spiritual promises by which we have become partakers of the divine nature. Stop trying to turn God into a genie that you rub the way Satan did, and try to get something that may not be His will. He can still give you water from a rock, but you will get thirsty again. Drink of Him, the Scripture says, with Living Water, and your spirit will forever be satisfied.

God can part seas for you. Sometimes He does. But what He really wants you to know is,

When you pass through the waters, I will be with you; And through the rivers, they shall not overflow you. When you walk through the fire, you shall not be burned, Nor shall the flame scorch you.
(Isaiah 43:2 NKJV)

God can still keep you from dying. He did it for Lazarus once. But eventually he died. He could have kept His own Son alive, but after only 33 years, He called Him home. Why? It fulfilled His plan. It perfected His will. He can keep you from death, but which is better? Life or death? Paul said death is better when God is through with you here. Life is better until He is. He that believes in Him shall *never* die. That's the truth. You can claim that, you see, but most of the promises, Beloved, are spiritual promises so that we can,

become partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption in the world through lust. (II Peter 1:4 NKJV)

Which would be better: If God would make you rich, make you well, make you successful or accomplish His purposes in your life and in the life of those around you? Or what would it profit if you were to lose everything by this world's standards, but standing on the promises of a God who is by nature of being Spirit, your mind was changed, and your heart was changed, and your life is changed in the process. Which would you rather have? Sometimes you can have both, but not always, and not usually.

In the next lesson, we will look at “restricted” promises. These are promises restricted to somebody else's will. We will look at “reverse” promises. These are promises guaranteeing us the things the world doesn't want, but the things God wants. We will look at “personal” promises. These are promises you get from reading the Scripture for yourself.

But in closing, let me ask you this: What about you? Have you

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been questioning the sovereignty of God? Then get up tomorrow morning and claim Romans 8:28. Have you been questioning your security in Christ? Then claim John 10 or John 3:16. Have you been questioning life after death? Then claim I Corinthians 15, Luke 24 and John 11. Have you been questioning the rapture? Claim I Thessalonians 4. They are yours! Have you been questioning the love of God? Claim John 15:9. Have you been questioning God's forgiveness? Claim John 8:11. Don't you see? Satan, the Scripture says, is a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour. He has two goals.

1- Either he wants you to refuse the promises like the boy in the opening illustration, by living like a pauper when you own the heavens,

2- Or he wants you to misuse the promises, by not consolidating them, or not understanding which ones are limited or conditional.

Either way, his *real* purpose is to do what he tried to do with Jesus in Matthew 4. He wants us to think and act in the physical realm, give God a little credit, and move on, rather than standing on His incredible promises by which we may become transformed to the divine nature. We actually receive his character.

There's a war going on, Beloved, a full-fledged war. The battlefield is the terrain around the promises of God. You may be saying, "But why do you just talk about the negative stuff? Why don't you just talk about the neat stuff? Why give us conditions and limits and restrictions? You'd get a bigger crowd if you'd just promise us all this stuff."

My friend, imagine you are out searching for hidden treasure. You know it is in a given area. It is yours for the taking, but you don't know for sure how to find it. Now suppose a friend comes along with a map and says, "Don't go over there, there are mine fields over there, you'll get blown to bits. Don't go too far to the left, there is a cliff, and you'll fall off. And don't go near that fence, there is quicksand there. It looks good, but you'll go down."

Now what would you say to him? "Stop being so negative. I came to hear about gold and diamonds, not quicksand and mines." No, I think you would say, "Thank you, brother, for telling me where NOT to go. Now I'm free to walk directly to where the treasure is." Don't you see, my friend, that's the purpose of this study. God has given to us

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exceeding great and precious promises: that by these we might become partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust.

(II Peter 1:4 NKJV)

We mustn't grab the limitations and miss the real thing. We mustn't wander into quicksand and miss the gold. Too much is at stake. Our walk with God is at stake.

So let's leave this place today excited about the search for hidden treasure. Let's leave this place standing at the feet of God and praising Him, humbling ourselves that He has given unto us great and precious promises such as these. And let's not stop until we have claimed the treasure. It's ours.

THE TREASURE IS YOURS

It's there! Oh, such joy! I cannot restrain it!
A treasure so rich my mind can't contain it.
As high as the mountains, as deep as the sea,
An ocean of promises, waiting for me!

It isn't enough to just stand here and name them,
My heart wants to race and just jump in and claim them.
But just at the shore a sign beckons that reads...
This treasure is yours. It will meet all your needs.

But twixt here and there, some things you must know,
So that ere you begin claiming, you'll know how to go.
There's a sign to the left that says, "Danger! Beware!"
And you must! For a deep ridge of quicksand is there.

If you just get off course and on that pathway trod
You'll forget you must first know the whole mind of God.
Before you start claiming a verse or a word,
You'll study the Book for the mind of the Lord.

And just to your right is another big sign,
Not to keep you from claiming, it's just to remind
That not all of the treasure is designed just for you,
God laid up some nuggets for other folks, too.

So don't stray too far lest in danger you roam,
Not all of the treasure is for you to take home.
But, Beloved, don't tarry, just look straight ahead,
The treasure's all there, just like the Book said.

The Treasure Is Yours

The signs aren't to stop you, no that would be worse,
The signs are to keep you from straying off course.
The treasure is yours! Let no one dissuade you,
God wants you to claim it! He longs to persuade you

To quietly, humbly take what is there:
Jewels so precious, treasures so rare,
Promises meant to transform your soul,
To change your perspective, to make your life whole.

The treasure is yours! God's proclaiming today
Oh, Christians take heart! You can just hear Him say,
"If you stay right on course without fail you will make it.
For the treasure is yours!" And God wants you to take it.

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