

The Choice of Life and Death (Go to Meeting)

Albert Jones—August 6, 2021

Tonight's message focus on the age-old question that is set before us: life and death. It's a question that each and every one of us thinks about, and we have convinced ourselves that that we have chosen life and walking in that way of life.

I want to focus on this question that God has put before us, and the choice that we have to make. How the decision that we make impact our lives in our walk with God.

It's a profound miracle from our own perspective that God called us out of this world, and He has given us hope in His Son Jesus Christ, enabling us to comprehend His word and be able to live by it. That's make possible by a work that God is doing in us.

But the question of life and death has been posed many times throughout this Scripture. How did death come into the world? *Let's start our exploration of this question in Rom. 5!* The Apostle Paul expressed an aspect of this to contemplate:

Romans 5:12: "Therefore, as by one man sin entered into the world, and by means of sin *came* death; and in this way death passed into all mankind; *and it is* for this reason that all have sinned. For before *the* Law, sin was in *the* world. However, sin is not imputed... [is put to account] ...when law does not exist; nevertheless, death reigned from Adam until Moses, even upon those who had not sinned in the likeness of the transgression of Adam, who was a type of the *One* Who was to come" (vs 12-14).

A very key realization and understanding on the part of Paul, which we will elaborate even further as we go through. He explains it very clearly that it was by one man that sin came into the world as it is, will be or has been by One Who it will be resolved.

We have both a statement of the problem and an understanding of the solution. Let's see how we navigate or how we are counted worthy. God instructs us from the very beginning. Let's read the well known Scripture that describes the incident where this came to be.

Genesis 2:8: "And the LORD God planted a garden eastward in Eden; and there He put the man whom He had formed." *So, God has made man in His image*

Verse 9: "And out of the ground the LORD God caused to grow every tree that is pleasant to the

sight and good for food. The Tree of Life also was in the middle of the garden, and the Tree of *the* Knowledge of Good and Evil."

Verse 15: "And the LORD God took the man and put him into the Garden of Eden to dress it and keep it."

That was part of what man's charge was, to guard the garden that God has put him in.

Verse 16: "And the LORD God commanded the man, saying, 'You may freely eat of every tree in the garden, **but you shall not** eat of the Tree of *the* Knowledge of Good and Evil, for in the day that you eat of it in dying you shall surely die'" (vs 16-17).

This was instruction that God had given from the very beginning. After having instructing Adam, God prepared him and helped him to understand what was expected of him.

Then comes the great deceiver and liar on the scene whose itinerary is to undermine this purpose and plan for which God had created there.

Genesis 3:1: "Now, the serpent was more cunning than any creature of the field, which the LORD God had made. And he said to the woman, '*Is it* true that God has said, "You shall not eat of any tree of the garden"?' And the woman said to the serpent, 'We may freely eat the fruit of the trees of the garden, but of the fruit of the tree which *is* in the middle of the garden, God has *indeed* said, "You shall not eat of it, neither shall you touch it, lest you die."' And the serpent said to the woman...' (vs 1-4).

Casting doubt; he hasn't changed so he still does that in our lives today.

"... 'In dying, you shall not surely die!.... [to cast doubt on the instruction that God had given] ...For God knows that in the day you eat of it, then your eyes shall be opened, and you shall be like God, deciding... [to ascertain by observation, experiment and reasoning] ...good and evil" (vs 4-5).

Verse 6: "And when the woman saw that the tree *was* good for food... [an observation that there's nothing wrong with it] ...and that it was pleasing to the eyes, and a tree to be desired to make *one* wise, she took of its fruit and ate. She also gave to her husband with her, and he ate."

This is the action that is most egregious, the fact that Adam accepted this and ate it.

Verse 7: “And the eyes of both of them were opened... [Satan’s part lie; their eyes were opened] ...and they knew that they *were* naked; and they sewed fig leaves together and made coverings for themselves. And they heard the sound of the LORD God walking in the garden in the cool of the day. Then Adam and his wife hid themselves from the presence of the LORD God among the trees of the garden. And the LORD God called to Adam and said to him, ‘Where *are* you?’” (vs 7-9).

This is interesting that God would have to look for His servant, His created being, who is hiding from God. Sin has a tendency to have that kind of impact on our lives. It either pushes us away from God or it turns God’s face away from us.

This is something that we should keep in mind as we go through this study. God preserved this Truth in His Word, that there is a choice that one has to make:

- you either believe God ***or*** you believe Satan
- you either believe God ***or*** you believe your own reasoning
- you either believe God ***or*** you believe what’s presented in this world and all this glitter is good and right

We know that that’s a false sense of security, when one turns to the world and away from God, but turns to his own thoughts.

Deut. 30 is also a place where choices are offered, not for denying something that is good, but choices are offered for one to choose and given the opportunity to choose correctly. It gets right back down to the question that if Adam and Eve had obeyed God, the outcome could have been different. We have that same choice before us; God inspired this to be written:

Deuteronomy 30:10: “**If you shall obey the voice of the LORD your God** to keep His commandments and His statutes, which are written in this Book of the Law, *and* if you turn to the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul; for this commandment, which I command you today *is* not hidden from you, neither is it far off. It *is* not in heaven *that you should* say, ‘Who shall go up to heaven for us, and bring it to us, so that we may hear it and do it?’ Neither *is* it beyond the sea *that you should* say, ‘Who shall go over the sea for us to bring it to us, so that we may hear it and do it?’” (vs 10-13).

Verse 14: “**But the Word is very near you...**” *Indeed in the Garden of Eden the Word was in their midst!* The Word was there instructing them.

“...in your mouth and in your heart, so that

you may do it. Behold, I have set before you this day life and good, and death and evil, in that I command you this day to love the LORD your God, to walk in His ways, and to keep His commandments and His statutes and His judgments so that you may live and multiply. And the LORD your God shall bless you in the land where you go to possess it” (vs 14-16).

Very important instructions that God has given to His people.

Verse 17: “But if your heart turn away so that you will not hear...”

Whether that is to stubbornness of heart by inclining yourself to something false and untrue, or lusting after something that isn’t for you. Turning your heart away so you will not hear the Lord your God.

“...but shall be drawn away and worship other gods and serve them” (v 17). *We know that there’s a lot of different things that can be made into gods in one’s life!*

Verse 18: “I denounce to you this day that you shall surely perish; you shall not prolong *your* days on the land where you pass over Jordan to go to possess it. I call heaven and earth to record this day against you *that* I have set before you life and death...” (vs 18-19).

We know the question that is being offered here is higher than just a physical inheritance of land. It is indeed wrapped up in the promise of physical blessings, good things occurring in one’s life and family. Prosperity and the hope that God extended to them. There’s a larger question here. He’s setting before them:

“...life and death... [along with] ...blessing and cursing. Therefore, choose life, so that both you and your seed may live, **that you may love the LORD your God, and may obey His voice, and may cleave to Him; for He is your life,** and the length of your days, so that you may dwell in the land, which the LORD swore to your fathers—to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob—to give it to them” (vs 19-20).

Promises made, and promises that are being kept! God is a God who always keeps His Word. We know that to be true. In our entire lives and existence is dependent upon God’s Truth and His Word that way. Let’s elaborate on this just a little bit more.

Leviticus 18:1: “And the LORD spoke to Moses, saying, ‘Speak to the children of Israel and say to them...’” (vs 1-2).

A true statement that had to be said many times. Here is God in their midst working with them, blessing them with great miracles, as He is in our

midst through the Holy Spirit that we possess, doing great things in our lives having given us incredible promises.

These words speak across time to us, v 2: “Speak to the children of Israel and say to them, ‘I *am* the LORD your God. As they do in the land of Egypt... [as they do in the world in society around us] ...where you dwelt, you shall not do. And you shall not do as they do in the land of Canaan, where I am bringing you. Neither shall you walk in their ordinances” (vs 2-3). *God is distinguishing the difference between:*

- what is right and what is not good
- what is good and what is evil
- what brings life, and what brings death

God says, ‘Don’t do as they do!’

Verse 4: “You shall do My judgments... [the Lord God’s judgments] ...and keep My ordinances... [God’s ways, God’s truths, God’s principles] ...and walk in them. I *am* the LORD your God. And you shall keep My statutes and My judgments, which if a man does, he shall live in them. **I am the LORD**” (vs 4-5).

So, we have there very important words that we need to hold onto as God’s people, as they should have held onto, also as God’s people.

When Adam sinned, he literally hid from God. God called to Adam, ‘Where are you?’ God calls to us, as well. He offers a choice each and every day in our lives. We have choices every day in our lives, even as God’s people. As He did to the physical people of Israel, He also does to His spiritual house!

He says, very clearly, that ‘today, **IF**...’ God speaks to us in that same clear instructional way. There is a way that one should walk.

Hebrews 3:7: “For this reason, even as the Holy Spirit says, **Today, if you will hear His voice**, harden not your heart, as in the rebellion, in the day of temptation in the wilderness, where your fathers tempted Me *and* tried Me, and saw My works forty years” (vs 7-9).

This is what God is instructing us each and every day, that we should be seeking Him and studying His Word, because He doesn’t speak audibly to us anymore. But He has inspired His words to be preserved for us to read as often as we need to hear them, by opening the Bible and reading the Word of God. Truly this is a blessing from God to able to have that. But He goes further than that. ***Yes, we have made a commitment to follow God!***

That commitment is lifelong, and we have pledged our very life to it. It is important to

understand that God is extending instruction to us through His Word.

Jeremiah 18:1: “The Word, which came to Jeremiah from the LORD, saying, ‘Arise and go down to the potter’s house, and there I will cause you to hear My words” (vs 1-2). *This is God inspiring this through Jeremiah!*

Verse 3: “Then I went down to the potter’s house, and, behold, he was working at his wheel. And the vessel that he made of clay was ruined in the hand of the potter, so he made it again into another vessel, as seemed good to the potter to make *it*. Then the Word of the LORD came to me, saying, ‘O house of Israel... [people of God] ...can I not do with you *even* as this potter?’ says the LORD. ‘Behold, as the clay is in the potter’s hands, *so are* you in My hand, O house of Israel. If at any time I shall speak concerning a nation... [any nation] ...and concerning a kingdom... [any kingdom] ...to pluck it up and to pull it down, and to destroy *it*; if that nation, against whom I have spoken, will turn from their evil, I will repent of the evil that I thought to do to them. And if at any time I shall speak concerning a nation, and concerning a kingdom, to build it and to plant *it*; if it does evil in My sight, that it not obey My voice, then I will repent of the good with which I said I would do them good” (vs 3-10).

Verse 11: “Now, therefore, speak to the men of Judah, and to the people of Jerusalem, saying, “Thus says the LORD, ‘Behold, I am forming evil against you, and devising a plan against you. Return now, each one from his evil way, and make your ways and your doings good.’” And they said, ‘There is no hope; but we will walk after our own ways, and we will each one do *according to* the stubbornness of his evil heart” (vs 11-12).

In other words, ***they have turned from offering of life and they’re choosing death!*** It’s strange, this is something that is expounded upon by Peter and Paul in the New Testament and we will read some of those Scriptures.

Verse 13: “Therefore, thus says the LORD, ‘Ask now among the nations; who has heard such things? The virgin of Israel has done a very horrible thing.’”

In thinking that you turn from the living God toward something that cannot save, let’s go to:

John 8:51: “Truly, truly I say to you, if anyone keeps My words, he shall not see death forever.”

It doesn’t say that one won’t die, but one won’t die *eternally!*

John 5:24: “Truly, truly I say to you, the one who hears My Word, and believes Him Who sent Me, has everlasting life and does not come into judgment; for he has passed from death into life. Truly, truly I say to you, *the* hour is coming, and now is, when the dead shall hear the voice of the Son of God; and those who hear shall live. For even as the Father has life in Himself, so also has He given to the Son to have life in Himself; and has also given Him authority to execute judgment because He is *the* Son of man” (vs 24-27). *So, we see here that there is a solution that is being presented!*

Ezekiel reminds us of the Truth revealed by Christ. A very important Truth that Christ Himself revealed.

Ezekiel 18:4: “Behold, all souls are Mine. As the soul of the father, so also the soul of the son, they *are* Mine. The soul that sins, it shall die.”

We see that the Lord God in the Garden of Eden didn’t deceive Eve, He didn’t lie to her! The soul that sins shall die!

Verse 5: “But a man who is righteous and does that which is lawful and right, and has not eaten on the mountains, nor has lifted up his eyes to the idols of the house of Israel, nor has defiled his neighbor’s wife, nor has come near a menstruating woman” (vs 5-6).

Verse 8: “He does not lend out at usury, nor has taken any increase, he has withdrawn his hand from iniquity, has executed true justice between man and man, has walked in My statutes, and has kept My ordinances to deal truly, he *is* righteous, he shall surely live,” says the Lord GOD” (vs 8-9).

Yes, God told Adam and Eve the truth, and God has revealed Himself to us and has filled us with the faith of His Son to believe the same Truth. We have these things to rely on. He has given us faithful and tenable promises that we have to hold onto.

Colossians 1:19: “For it pleased *the Father* that in Him all the fullness should dwell; and having made peace through the blood of His cross, by Him to reconcile all things to Himself; by Him, whether the things on the earth, or the things in heaven. For you *were* once alienated and enemies in *your* minds by wicked works; but now He has reconciled *you* in the body of His flesh through death, to present you Holy and unblamable and unimpeachable before Him” (vs 19-22).

God is working out a very important work in our lives.

Verse 23: “**If** indeed you continue in the faith grounded and steadfast, and are not moved

away from the hope of the Gospel, which you have heard, *and* which was proclaimed in all the creation that *is* under heaven; of which I, Paul, became a servant.”

This is echoed again and emphasizes; Ephesians 2:1: “Now, you were dead in trespasses and sins,”

This was our state prior to God’s calling, prior to Christ extending to us the life that we have access to, now.

Verse 2: “In which you walked in times past according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that is now working within the children of disobedience; among whom also we all once had our conduct in the lusts of our flesh...” (vs 2-3).

The state of the human condition blinded to the Truth, not aware of what was going on; deceived by Satan and the world. This is all of our state:

“...doing the things willed by the flesh and by the mind, and were by nature *the* children of wrath, even as the rest *of the world*” (v 3).

So, we recognize the diabolicalness of sin. James explains that this is where sin comes from, and this is the result of sin.

James 1:13: “Do not let anyone who is tempted say, ‘I am being tempted by God,’ because God is not tempted by evil, and He Himself tempts no one *with evil*.... [God is above that] ...But each one is tempted when he is drawn away and is enticed by his own lust” (vs 13-14).

Some of which was occurring in the Garden of Eden with Satan manipulating Eve and Adam.

Verse 15: “And after lust has conceived, it gives birth to sin; and sin, when it is completely finished, brings forth death.”

Now we see where death comes from! Man has not changed across time, and we need to understand that the weakness of flesh is what it is. We need to understand a real critical thing, that in the world that we see so chaotic around us what is behind the issues. The issue behind the issues is sin! We’re trapped in it; this world is completely given over to it.

God has called us out of that world! God has given us the true answer of how to overcome this condition. **The true answer is:**

- God’s Word
- God the Father
- Jesus Christ
- what They are orchestrating for us

Isa. 55—God says very clearly, and for all mankind He has preserved these words to be heard.

Isaiah 55:1: “Ho, everyone who thirsts, come to the waters; and he who *has* no money, come, buy and eat. Yea, come, buy wine and milk without money and without price. Why do you spend money for *what is* not bread? And your labor for *what* never satisfies? Hearken diligently to Me, and eat *what is* good, and let your soul delight itself in fatness. Bow down your ear, and come to Me; hear, and your soul shall live; and I will make an everlasting covenant with you, even the sure mercies of David” (vs 1-3).

We have an incredible God Who is reaching out to us across time with these words. We have answered. I often think about the world and what I see around me sometimes. I want to ask the question of the world that is engulfed in darkness: What are you getting what you need in life?

The world is very busy trying to get things. I say to them that there is a way to really have those things that are *needed* in life. I wouldn't say *what you want* our of life, because God is more focused on what we need. So, there is a way, and God has laid it out. Christ said:

John 14:5: “Thomas said to Him, ‘Lord, we do not know where You are going; how then can we know the way?’ Jesus said to him, ‘**I am the Way, and the Truth, and the Life**; no one comes to the Father except through Me” (vs 5-6).

There is understanding there, that if we want to have life, if we really want to have eternal bliss if you will, ***the Way is Christ and the Father***, very plainly stated there. Christ came so that we would have access to that way!

John 10:10: “The thief does not come except to steal and kill and destroy...”

That's Satan; that is his mode of operation! That is what he wants to do; not only to God's people, which he truly gets excited about the opportunity to destroy God's Word, but he wants to destroy mankind and every sense of hope that they may have.

“...I [Christ] have come so that they may have life, and may have *it* more abundantly” (v 10).

Within God's work there is a solution. We have to hang onto that. We have to hang onto what God has revealed to us so that life is in our grasp. We're not going to live according to the edicts of death. ***We're going to be focused on life in Christ!***

In the first chapter of a study in Peter a very important point stood out for me; It's an important spiritual fact that Peter makes very clear:

Man with all that he may be able to have or achieve is nothing without God!

This is something that we need to comprehend. The world has a tendency to think that it is indestructible, that there is nothing that they can't do. But the Bible is clear:

1-Peter 1:24: “For all flesh *is* like grass...”

I cut about three acres of grass today, and with the sun beaming down, it didn't take long for it to wither. It may grow vibrantly as the rains come, but when you cut it dries up to nothing. He says that all flesh is like that.

“...and all *the* glory of man *is* like *the* flower of *the* field; the grass has withered, and its flower has fallen away” (v 24).

Those parts of the country where we're experiencing drought, without the life-giving refreshment of water—which is a type of God's Holy Spirit, as well—it quickly dries up to nothing.

Verse 25: “But the Word of *the* Lord endures forever, and this is the message that was preached to you through the Gospel.”

We see that God has given to us eyes to see and ears to hear. He has revealed to us, His elect, *Truth* from the reading of His inspired Word! His Word reveals to us some of the most precious things in the universe.

- promises
- things about why He made man
- why He has chose or called us to His life

He's not only revealed to us the Truth, but God has given to us promises that cannot fail. We stand on those promises!

John 10:24: “Then the Jews encircled Him and said to Him, ‘How long are You going to hold us in suspense? If You are the Christ, tell us plainly.’”

I don't know how much more plainly it could have been told of the miracles, healings and the powerful works that He was doing.

Verse 25: “Jesus answered them, ‘I have told you, but you do not believe. The works that I am doing in My Father's name, these bear witness of Me. But you do not believe because you are not of My sheep, as I said to you. My sheep hear My voice, and I know them, and they follow Me. And **I give them eternal life**...’” (vs 25-28).

Promises; Christ didn't say that in isolation as to say it and not really mean it. He has give sure promises.

“...I give them eternal life and they shall never perish; and no one shall take them out of My hand” (v 28).

We read in other places the big **IF**. We have our part to play. We have a very important part to play.

Verse 29: “My Father, Who has given *them* to Me, is greater than all... [the entirety of the universe] ...and no one has the power to seize *them* from My Father’s hand.”

I say to you again, *we are in good hands!* The Father is rooting for us to be successful in this.

Verse 30: “I and the Father are one.”

This is just an incredible thing when you comprehend it to the depth that it is. Let’s look at the setting. We’ve talked about this and have had sermons given about this. The spring Holy Days emphasize this. So, when God calls us, He begins to work with us and to feed us.

Hebrews 5:12: “For truly, by this time you ought to be teachers, *but instead* you need to have *someone* teach you again what *are* the beginning principles of the oracles of God, and have become those in need of milk, and not of solid food. For everyone who is partaking of milk *is* unskilled in the Word of Righteousness because he is an infant. But solid food is for those who are fully grown, who through **repeated practice** have had their senses trained to discern between good and evil” (vs 12-14).

This “repeated practice” is a way of life for us. Daily we get up and thank God in prayer, study, and fast occasionally in order to draw closer to God, to help overcome those difficult things that we’re confronted with. We do those things that God instructs us to do in His Word. We recognize that He is there for us.

Hebrews 6:1: Therefore, advancing beyond the beginning principles of the doctrines of Christ, we should go on to perfection...”

God is working this work in us; we’re yielding to Him and we’re going onto perfection day by day, practicing these ways.

“...not laying again *the* foundation of repentance from dead works, and *of* faith in God, of *the* doctrine of baptisms, and of laying on of hands, and of *the* resurrection of *the* dead, and of eternal judgment” (vs 1-2).

We know these things and we are to be taught and reminded of them. Yes, there are studies that we do over the course of a year, a month that includes all of these things in our personal study and

we cover some of these things in sermons.

Verse 3: “And we will do this, if indeed God permits.”

This is where God wants us to be focused, and this is the reason:

Verse 4: “For *it is* impossible for those *who were* once enlightened, and who personally obtained the heavenly gift, and became partakers of *the* Holy Spirit... [called of God; the elect and firstfruits of God; in covenant with God] ...and who have tasted *the* good Word of God, and *the* powers of *the* world to come, if they have fallen away, to renew *them* again unto repentance; *seeing that* they are crucifying the Son of God for themselves, and are publicly holding *Him* in contempt” (vs 4-6).

We do not want this to be our state. So, again, we ask ourselves: God has given up precious promises!

Hebrews 9:11: “But **Christ Himself has become High Priest...**” *We ask ourselves:*

- Whose truth are we holding onto?
- Whose promises are we holding onto?

“...of the coming good things, through the greater and more perfect tabernacle, not made by *human* hands (that is, not of this *present physical* creation). Not by *the* blood of goats and calves, but by the means of His own blood, He entered once for all into the Holiest, having *by* Himself secured everlasting redemption *for us*. For if the blood of goats and bulls, and *the* ashes of a heifer sprinkled *on* those who are defiled, sanctifies to the purifying of the flesh, to a far greater degree, the blood of Christ, Who through *the* eternal Spirit offered Himself without spot to God, shall purify your conscience from dead works to serve *the* living God” (vs 11-14).

Here is our reality. We have this promise that we can stand on. ***These promises are sure, solid, founded on the a rock and are a sure foundation!*** We can upon God’s Word, His promises are sure and cannot fail.

Hebrews 6:13: “For God, **after promising Abraham, swore by Himself**, since He could swear by none greater... [there is none greater] ...saying, ‘Surely in blessing I will bless you, and in multiplying I will multiply you.’ Now, after he had patiently endured, he obtained the promise. For indeed, men swear by the greater, and confirmation by an oath *puts* an end to all disputes between them. In this *way* God, desiring more abundantly to show the heirs of the promise... [that is us] ...the unchangeable nature of His own purpose, confirmed *it* by an oath; so that by two immutable things, in which *it was* impossible *for* God to lie, we who have

fled for refuge might have strong encouragement to lay hold on the hope *that has been set before us*" (vs 13-18).

- Who are we running to?
- Who are we hoping in?

Verse 19_[transcriber's correction]: "Which *hope* we have as an anchor of the soul, both secure and steadfast, and which enters into the *sanctuary* within the veil, where Jesus has entered for us *as a forerunner*, having become a High Priest forever according to the order of Melchisedec" (vs 19-20).

Hebrews 8:1: "Now, *here is a summary* of the things being discussed: We have such a High Priest Who sat down at *the right hand* of the Throne of the Majesty in the heavens."

He is right there at the Father's right hand, orchestrating and fulfilling His purpose in our lives!

Verse 2: "A Minister of the sanctuary and of the true tabernacle, which the Lord set up, and not man."

1-Peter has given us quite a lot to hold onto. This is our encouragement; we do this because we know the Truth. We don't do it in fear and trepidation; we do it in celebration and hope. God's Word and His sacrifice and grace is meant to inspire us so we have something to aspire to.

1-Peter 2:1: "Therefore, having put away all wickedness, and all deceit, and hypocrisies and jealousies, and all slanders, as newborn babes, yearn after the pure spiritual milk, that by it you may grow, if you yourselves have indeed tasted that the Lord *is gracious*. To Whom coming, *as to a living Stone*, rejected indeed by men, but chosen by God, *and precious*, you also, as living stones, are being built up *as a spiritual house*—a Holy priesthood—to offer up spiritual sacrifices, acceptable to God through Jesus Christ" (vs 1-5).

We could go on and say so much more about what that means to be a Holy Priesthood. As God's Holy people, what are offering up? What are those spiritual sacrifices and gifts? We need to recognize that we do have them to offer.

I want to conclude with this: God holds out an incredible offering for us based on incredible promises that He has made to us. We must hold onto those with endurance. We can't let the conditions that we see around us:

- cause us to doubt or falter
- cause us to grow tired and weary

Verse 6: "For this reason it says in the Scripture, 'Behold, I place in Zion *the Cornerstone*,

chosen *and precious*; and the one who believes in Him shall never be put to shame.'.... [sure promise] ...The preciousness *is to you*, therefore, who believe; but to those who disobey, *the Stone* that the builders rejected has become *the Head of the corner*, and a Stone of stumbling and a Rock of offense; *especially* to those who stumble at the Word, being disobedient, unto which *unbelief* they also were appointed" (vs 6-8).

But not us! Not us, because we do believe His Word! The Stone is precious to us and we do not stumble at the Stone:

- we embrace it
- we stand on it
- we build on it

Verse 9: "But you... [us] ...*are a chosen stock, a royal priesthood, a Holy nation, a people for a possession of God, that you might proclaim His excellent virtues...*"—*both now and in the Millennium and throughout eternity!*

As the potter with the clay, He is creating something perfect in us!

...Who called you out of darkness into His marvelous light; who once *were* not a people, but now *are the* people of God; who had not received mercy, but now have received mercy" (vs 9-10).

God has really extended to us an incredible gift!

Romans 9:1: "I am telling you the truth in Christ, I am not lying, my own conscience in *the Holy Spirit* bears witness with me. That it is a great grief to me and an unceasing sorrow in my heart, causing me *even* to wish myself to be accursed from Christ for my brethren, my kinsmen according to *the flesh*; who are Israelites, to whom *is the sonship* and the glory, and the covenants and the giving of the Law, and the service and the promises; who are of *the fathers*, and from whom *came the Christ* according to *the flesh*, Who is over all—God blessed into the ages. Amen. However... [making a distinction between physical and spiritual] ...this does not mean that the Word of God has failed because not all of those who *descend* from Israel *are* Israel, nor because they are Abraham's seed does it mean that they *are all children of the promise*. But, 'In Isaac shall your seed be called.'" (vs 1-7).

Verse 8: "That is, those who are the children of the flesh *are not the children of God*; rather, **the children of the promise** are reckoned as *the seed*, because this *is the* word of promise... [physical and spiritual; God will keep them all] ...'According to this set time I will come, and Sarah shall have a

son.’ And not only *that*, but Rebecca also having conceived by one, Isaac our father, but before *the children* had been born, or had done anything good or evil (in order that the purpose of God according to His own selection might stand—not of works, but of Him Who calls). It was said to her, ‘The elder shall serve the younger.’ Accordingly, it is written, ‘Jacob I loved, and Esau I hated’” (vs 8-13).

Verse 14: “What then shall we say? *Is there* unrighteousness with God? MAY IT NEVER BE! For He said to Moses, ‘I will show mercy to whomever I show mercy, and I will have compassion on whomever I have compassion.’ So then, *it is* not of the one who wills, nor of the one who runs; rather, *it is* of God, Who shows mercy” (vs 14-16).

This is God’s plan in our lives. He is working out and orchestrating this incredible work that He is doing with us. We have those same promises given to us based on the blood of Christ, ***superior promises according to the New Covenant*** that we are under.

- ***let’s hold onto that***
- ***let’s walk in God’s way***
- ***let’s stay true to the path of life***

Scriptural References:

- 1) Romans 5:12-14
- 2) Genesis 2:8-9, 15-17
- 3) Genesis 3:1-9
- 4) Deuteronomy 30:10-20
- 5) Leviticus 18:1-5
- 6) Hebrews 3:7-9
- 7) Jeremiah 18:1-13
- 8) John 8:51
- 9) John 5:24-27
- 10) Ezekiel 18:4-6, 8-9
- 11) Colossians 1:19-23
- 12) Ephesians 2:1-3
- 13) James 1:13-15
- 14) Isaiah 55:1-3
- 15) John 14:5-6
- 16) John 10:10
- 17) 1 Peter 1:24-25
- 18) John 10:24-30
- 19) Hebrews 5:12-14
- 20) Hebrews 6:1-6
- 21) Hebrews 9:11-14
- 22) Hebrews 6:13-20
- 23) Hebrews 8:1-2
- 24) 1 Peter 2:1-10
- 25) Romans 9:1-16