

Promise or Punishment?

Do you ever wonder if you're doing the right thing? Do you ever think that even though you are striving to walk in HIS ways that He is punishing you? Are you asking and getting no answers? Are you knocking, yet no doors are opening? What happened to all of the promises of G-D for your life? Did all of those things spoken about you or over you, just disappear? What the Word of G-D? What about the blessings He promised? What about all you've done for HIM? What about...? Etc, etc, etc...

Let's look at the promises of G-D made in HIS word to "two" individuals: Abraham and Israel. G-D called Abraham out of his comfort zone and made him some pretty hefty promises. Abraham picked up and moved out as soon as G-D said "GO". Throughout the narration of Abraham's life, recounted in Genesis, G-D gives promise after promise to Abraham. Let's look at these promises a little more in depth.

- Genesis 12
- Genesis 13:14-17
- Genesis 14:19-24
- Genesis 15:1-6
- Genesis 17:1-13
- Genesis 22

Abraham trusted, relied upon, believed, had faith in, and knew that G-D's promises were true and reliable. They were worth their weight in gold. When G-D promised, Abraham believed.

Now let's look at the second person: Israel. G-D promised the children of Israel that HE would bring them out of Egypt and that HE would provide and care for them. G-D's ultimate purpose in bringing the children of Israel out of Egypt was to fulfill HIS covenant with Abraham. They were to be a blessed, prosperous, healthy, feared, peaceful, and righteous nation. We saw G-D's promises to Israel through Abraham, but let's look at the difference between the handling of G-D's promises by Israel compared to Abraham.

- Exodus 15:22-27
- Exodus 17:7
- Exodus 32
- Deuteronomy 28

Israel knew that G-D had brought her out of Egypt to prosper her. They knew the promises that G-D had made to Moses on her behalf. Yet every time they grumbled and complained about the promise; whether it was food, water, shelter, protection, etc..., G-D mercifully fulfilled the promise by providing. Yet as soon as the promise was fulfilled, the people forgot G-D's power, ability, strength, and desire for them. They turned to their own strength and pride. You see Abraham wondered just as Israel did. Abraham was

tested, he waited patiently, and he understood that his fulfillment was in G-D alone. He had nothing of his own and because of that he received the completion of the promise through the birth of his son Isaac. Where do we fall in all of this?

- Hebrews 6

Are we more like Abraham or Israel? What are our attitudes like when the promise of G-D is fulfilled in HIS time instead of our own? Do we say “Yes L-RD I will slay even my only child,” or do we say “but G-D you promised and I want it now?” Israel should have learned from their father Abraham. Because of Abraham’s patient faith the children of Israel were born and the Messiah was brought forth, but as soon as the children of Israel received their inheritance, they left the G-D of their father Abraham. G-D wasn’t punishing Abraham because he wasn’t perfect; G-d was perfecting Abraham’s faith so that he would cherish the fulfillment of the promise and look to up instead of within.

Oftentimes we think that we are in trouble with G-D because He is not bringing forth all of the promises He has spoken in OUR time. We think that somehow we missed it somewhere, and while sometimes this is the case, more often than not G-D is preparing that promise for a perfect delivery. If He gives it to fast we will look at ourselves and feel as though we did it, when in fact this is not the case. When patient faith is worked in us by G-D’s timing in delivering a promise, it is not just for our benefit when it is fulfilled; as Abraham, we are leaving a legacy for the generations after us.

So, punishment or promise? Which is it in your life? Hold onto the promises of G-D with patient faith, leave a legacy, and know that G-D’s timing is perfect.