

# The Power of His Promise

By Jim Davis

There are many wonderful promises in the Word of God. Promises are given as an anchor in times of trouble. They are intended to help us persevere in the extremes of life with Christ-honoring stability. They give us hope to press on through the tedious and mundane daily routine. They give us strength to face the horrible and frightening things when they come. Ruth Caye Jones encompasses them all with the title words to the hymn "In Times Like These." She writes, "in times like these you need the Bible...in times like these you need a Savior." Promises are only as good as the word of the one who makes them. If the person who makes the promise does not have the power to do what he says he will do then the promise is worthless. By nature it must be redefined from a promise to a lie.

We could discuss many promises in the Bible. I would like to consider one that was made by Christ in the Gospel of John. "For this is the will of My Father, that everyone who beholds the Son and believes in Him, may have eternal life; and I Myself will raise him up on the last day" (John 6:40).

The context of this passage is the day after the miraculous feeding of five thousand people. The people were so excited about the miracle they had witnessed that they intended to take Jesus by force and make Him king. Jesus first withdrew Himself from them and when they continued to pursue Him He insulted them with the truth: "You seek Me not because you saw signs, but because you ate of the loaves, and were filled" (John 6:26). Our Lord quickly earned the reputation of one who does not have respect of persons.

When the multitude asks for another sign from Jesus, He declares to them that He is a sign. Comparing Himself to manna He proclaims that the Father has sent Him down from heaven to do His will. The Father's will is that everyone who beholds the Son and believes in Him may have eternal life. If God gives a sign it is wise to "behold" the sign. It is exactly what the multitude had failed to do. They should have observed carefully the sign that Jesus performed when he fed the five thousand. But more importantly, they should have observed carefully the Son. If we are careful to behold the signs that the Father gives we will soon perceive His purpose. We will discover the Father's will. Jesus, God's Son was sent down from heaven to communicate God's will. And further, we must not only behold but we must believe. Belief is the essential element in receiving eternal life. In fact, there are no other requirements.

The promise that Jesus makes in this verse has a present aspect and a future aspect. The present reality is that we can have eternal life now. Belief and receiving eternal life are concurrent. At the moment you believe you have eternal life. God's offer of salvation is the same today as it was recorded in the Gospel of John. God sending His Son is the ultimate sign. Behold and believe in Jesus Christ. In that moment you will have eternal life. It is the gift of God. It is given by His grace and received through faith. Jesus Christ came to pay the just penalty for your sins. The penalty is death and it required His sacrificial death on the cross of Calvary. Behold! Believe!

There is also the future aspect of Christ promise. "I Myself will raise him up on the

last day.” When we believe we at that moment receive eternal life. But there is a future promise that our bodies will be raised up on the last day. This is a remarkable boast. A person would have to have incredible power to fulfill this promise. A person that would make such a boast would either be delusional or he would have to be God Himself. Jesus Christ’s personal resurrection from the grave is the proof of His power to raise us up on the last day. His promise to us is sure and we can believe it. He has the power to do what He said He will do.