

The Importance of God's 'Unpopular' Promises

by Bob Hoekstra

The sermon emphasizes the significance of God's unpopular promises, particularly the warning of spiritual death due to sin and the necessity of faith in Jesus for salvation.

Scripture: Genesis 2:16

Topics: "Divine Salvation", "Spiritual Death"

Description

Bob Hoekstra emphasizes the importance of believing in Jesus as the divine Savior to escape the inevitable consequences of sin. While popular promises of God bring comfort and encouragement, the promise of dying in sin due to unbelief may be unpopular but holds great significance in God's plan. Sin leads to spiritual death, a truth reiterated throughout the Bible, and the only way to be saved from this fate is through faith in Jesus, who declared His deity and role as the Savior.

Transcript

Therefore I said to you that you will die in your sins; for if you do not believe that I am He, you will die in your sins. (John 8:24)

Generally speaking, God's promises are "popular" with many people. When most of the Lord's promises are read or taught, people are delighted. "Therefore if the Son makes you free, you shall be free indeed... Come to Me, all you who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest... Follow Me, and I will make you fishers of men." (John 8:36; Matthew 11:28; and Matthew 4:19). Promises like these are so often received with favor, because they are so encouraging. They are embraced with approval, because they are so comforting. On the other hand, some of God's promises are definitely "unpopular" with certain segments of humanity. This type of promise is scorned or rejected, because of its convicting or sobering character. Nevertheless, these promises that are not always well-received have great importance in God's plan.

One such promise is given two-fold in our present verse. "You will die in your sins... you will die in your sins." In a tolerant world that wants to deny the reality of sin and its consequences, this is an unpopular promise. Yet, the promise is true nonetheless. Sin brings spiritual death. From the beginning, this has been the case. "And the LORD God commanded the man, saying, 'Of every tree of the garden you may freely eat; but of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil you shall not eat, for in the day that you eat of it you shall surely die' " (Genesis 2:16-17). This truth was restated by the prophets of Israel. "The soul who sins shall die" (Ezekiel 18:20). It was also repeated by the apostles in the early church. "For the wages of

sin is death" (Romans 6:23). Since everyone has sinned, this warning by promise that Jesus gave applies to us all. "For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God" (Romans 3:23).

To escape the inevitable consequences of sin, one must trust in Jesus as the promised, divine Savior. "If you do not believe that I am He, you will die in your sins." This statement ("I am He") hints of Jesus' deity. Shortly thereafter, He openly declares that he is God, the Son. "Most assuredly, I say to you, before Abraham was, I AM" (John 8:58). Here, Jesus applies to Himself the same name that God revealed to Moses. "Thus you shall say to the children of Israel, 'I AM has sent me to you' " (Exodus 3:14). Thus, this important promise by Jesus warns that only faith in Him as the divine Savior will deliver a person from the certain consequences of sin.

Lord Jesus, I thank You for this important warning given by promise. I am delighted to have yielded to its truth and certainty. I rejoice that my sins are forgiven. Use me to pass on this promise to others who need to respond to it, in Jesus name, Amen.

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