



JESUS CHRIST - THE PROMISE FULFILLED



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In the beginning, God created everything through His Divine Word, the Second Person of the Trinity. As the Gospel of John declares: *"In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was in the beginning with God. All things came to be through him, and without him nothing came to be"* (John 1:1-4, NABRE). God created Adam and Eve in His image (Genesis 1:27), and after their fall, He initiated His plan of salvation, giving humanity the hope of reconciliation with Him.

God has always cared for humanity. Even after Adam and Eve sinned, breaking their friendship with Him, He continued to call mankind to live in peace and happiness, as He originally intended. Throughout history, God revealed His plan for salvation, leading to its perfect fulfillment in Jesus Christ, the Son of God.

God's Promise of Salvation

God's promise of salvation unfolded over many centuries. He revealed His love and mercy through the covenants He made with Noah, Abraham, and Moses, and through the Law given to Israel. Each of these covenants, along with the Law, foreshadowed the coming of Jesus, who would fully reveal God's saving plan. God prepared His chosen people, Israel, by teaching them to worship and serve Him so they could enter into the relationship for which mankind was created. God also sent prophets throughout the Old Testament to announce the coming of the Messiah and prepare the people for his arrival.

Jesus Christ is the ultimate fulfillment of the promises and covenants God made throughout salvation history, especially those made to Abraham, Moses, and David. Each of these covenants built upon one another, revealing more about God's plan for humanity, and each pointed towards its perfect fulfillment in Jesus Christ.

The Covenant with Noah

God made a covenant with Noah after the flood, promising to preserve life on earth and never again destroy it by floodwaters. This covenant had two key elements:

- **Preservation of Creation:** God promised to preserve life and never again destroy the earth by flood (Genesis 9:11).
- **A Sign for All Generations:** God gave the rainbow as the sign of His covenant with Noah and all living creatures (Genesis 9:13-17).

These promises were fulfilled and elevated in Christ:

- **Preservation of Creation:** While God's covenant with Noah ensured the physical preservation of the earth, Christ fulfills this on a spiritual level. Through his death and resurrection, Jesus offers the ultimate salvation, not just for earthly life, but for eternal life. The preservation of life is now perfected in the promise of eternal life through Christ (John 3:16).
- **A Sign for All Generations:** Just as the rainbow was the sign of God's mercy in Noah's time, Christ's sacrificial death and resurrection are the ultimate sign of God's covenant with humanity. The waters of the flood prefigure the waters of baptism, where we are spiritually cleansed and reborn in Christ (1 Peter 3:20-21). Through this sacrament, believers are brought into the new covenant of grace, sealed by the blood of Christ.

Thus, while the covenant with Noah preserved physical life, its ultimate fulfillment comes through Christ, who brings spiritual renewal and eternal life to all humanity.

The Promise to Abraham

God made three key promises to Abraham:

- **A Land:** God promised to give Abraham's descendants a land (Genesis 12:1).
- **A Great Nation:** God promised that Abraham's descendants would become a great nation (Genesis 12:2).
- **Blessing for All Nations:** Through Abraham, all the families of the earth would be blessed (Genesis 12:3).

These promises were foundational to God's covenant with Abraham and played a crucial role in God's overall plan of salvation, with their fulfillment occurring progressively, culminating in Jesus Christ.

- **Land:** This promise began to be fulfilled when Moses led the Israelites out of Egypt and into the Promised Land. However, the true and eternal fulfillment of this promise comes through Jesus Christ, who opens the way to the eternal "Promised Land" of heaven.
- **Great Nation:** Israel became a great nation during the reign of King David and King Solomon. But Christ fulfilled this promise in a greater way by establishing a new people of God, the Church, which is open to all nations and peoples. As St. Paul says, through Christ, "*there is neither Jew nor Greek*" (Galatians 3:28), as all who believe in Him become part of the "*new Israel.*"
- **Blessing for All Nations:** This is most perfectly fulfilled in Christ. Jesus, through his death and resurrection, brings salvation, not only to Israel but to all nations. He is the ultimate blessing promised to Abraham, through whom all people, not just the Jews, receive the opportunity for eternal life (Galatians 3:14).

The Covenant with Moses

The covenant God made with Moses focused on the Law and the establishment of Israel as God's chosen people. God gave the Israelites the Ten Commandments as the moral code by which they were to live and remain faithful to their covenant with Him (Exodus 19-24).

Jesus fulfilled the Mosaic covenant in several ways:

- **The Law:** Jesus did not abolish the Law but fulfilled it (Matthew 5:17). He perfectly observed the Law and taught its deeper spiritual meaning. For example, in His Sermon on the Mount, He elevated the Law, emphasizing not just external observance but internal conversion of heart (Matthew 5-7).
- **The Sacrifice:** In the Old Covenant, the Israelites offered sacrifices for the atonement of sin. Jesus became the perfect and final sacrifice. His sacrificial death on the Cross fulfilled the need for continual sacrifices (Hebrews 10:10). Through his sacrifice, Jesus accomplished what the sacrifices of the Old Testament could only prefigure—true reconciliation between God and humanity.
- **The New Exodus:** Just as Moses led the Israelites out of slavery in Egypt, Jesus leads us out of the slavery of sin (Luke 9:31) and into the freedom of the children of God (Romans 8:21). Through his death and resurrection, Jesus accomplished a new and greater Exodus, freeing all who believe in him from the bondage of sin and death and leading them to eternal life.

The Promise to David

God promised David that his throne would be established forever (2 Samuel 7:12-16). This covenant had a dual meaning:

- **Immediate Fulfillment:** The promise was partially fulfilled through Solomon, David's son, who built the Temple and ruled after David.

- **Ultimate Fulfillment in Jesus:** The eternal aspect of this promise was fulfilled in Jesus Christ, who is a descendant of David (Matthew 1:1). Jesus is the "Son of David," the true King whose reign will never end. While Solomon built the earthly Temple, Jesus' kingdom is not of this world (John 18:36). Jesus established the true and eternal dwelling place of God with humanity.

Jesus fulfills the Davidic covenant (2 Samuel 7:12-16) by establishing his eternal Kingdom through the Church and his reign as the King of Kings (Revelation 19:16). His kingdom is not confined to a single geographic location, like the kingdom of Israel, but extends over all creation, transcending time and space.

The Church, as the visible manifestation of Christ's kingdom on earth, participates in this divine kingship, with Christ reigning as the Head. His kingdom is spiritual in nature, yet it is also rooted in history and extends beyond time, leading ultimately to the final fulfillment at the end of the age when Christ's reign will be fully realized in the new heaven and new earth (Revelation 21:1-4).

The Incarnation

The Incarnation is the key event in God's plan, as it marks the moment when God became man in the person of Jesus Christ (John 1:14). The Incarnation is central to understanding how Jesus could fulfill the covenants and promises. By becoming fully human, Jesus was able to act as the perfect mediator between God and humanity, bridging the gap caused by sin. Without the Incarnation, Jesus could not have accomplished the redemption of humanity, as it required both his divine nature and his humanity to offer the perfect sacrifice for sin (Hebrews 2:14-17).

Jesus' Mission and Teachings

Jesus came to reveal God's love and to invite humanity into communion with him. His teachings, miracles, and actions demonstrate his divine authority and mission to fulfill God's promises, especially those made through the prophets. The fulfillment of the promises made to Abraham, Moses, and David is manifested in Jesus' proclamation of the Kingdom of God, his works of mercy, and his ultimate sacrifice on the cross. These elements point to Jesus as the one who brings about the new covenant, opening the way for eternal life.

The Paschal Mystery

The Paschal Mystery is the heart of salvation history. Jesus' suffering, death, resurrection, and ascension are the culmination of all the promises made by God. His sacrifice on the cross is the perfect fulfillment of the sacrificial system established in the Old Testament, particularly the Passover Lamb. Jesus, the Lamb of God, offers the ultimate sacrifice that takes away the sins of the world (John 1:29). By rising from the dead, he conquers sin and death, offering eternal life to all who believe in Him. The Paschal Mystery is the key to understanding how Jesus fulfilled the covenantal promises by restoring humanity's relationship with God.

The New Covenant

The culmination of all the previous covenants is the **New Covenant** established by Jesus Christ. At the Last Supper, Jesus proclaimed, *"This cup is the new covenant in my blood, which will be shed for you"* (Luke 22:20, NABRE). In this New Covenant, Jesus offers himself as the perfect sacrifice, and through his death and resurrection, he seals an eternal bond between God and humanity. Unlike the earlier covenants, which were limited in scope, this covenant is universal, extending to all people and offering the promise of eternal life with God.

As the prophet Jeremiah foretold, the New Covenant would not be written on stone tablets, but in the hearts of the people (Jeremiah 31:31-34). Jesus' coming fulfilled this prophecy, as through His grace and the gift of the Holy Spirit, believers are given new hearts, enabling them to live according to God's will.

Through His life, death, and resurrection, Jesus Christ fulfilled the promises God made to Abraham, Moses, David, and all the other covenants made throughout salvation history. He is the "*Lamb of God*" who takes away the sins of the world (John 1:29), the eternal King in the line of David, and the perfect fulfillment of the Law given to Moses. In Christ, all of God's promises are brought to their full realization, offering salvation to all people and the gift of eternal life in the Kingdom of God.

The Dignity of Human Life

Jesus' life and death teach us about the dignity of every human being. We are made in the image and likeness of God, and through Jesus, we learn how to live as children of God. Jesus taught us to love one another, to care for the poor and suffering, and to live in a way that honors God.

As followers of Christ, we are called to live in a way that reflects our dignity as children of God. We should reject things that harm our relationship with God or others, such as violence, injustice, or anything that devalues human life.

Jesus Christ is the fulfillment of all God's promises. Through him, we are invited into a relationship with God, and through his death and resurrection, we are offered eternal life. As we journey in faith, we are called to live in a way that reflects God's love and to share this good news with others. Let us remember that Jesus is our Savior, our Redeemer, and the fulfillment of God's plan for all humanity.