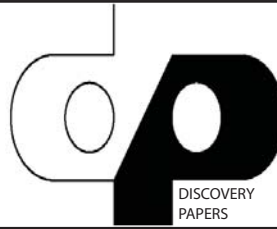


# WHEN PROMISES ARE PROLONGED

SERIES: WHEN KINGDOMS COLLIDE



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*Daniel 9:1–27*

I promise... I'll be there on time.  
I promise... not to do that ever again.  
I promise... there will be enough food for everyone.  
I promise... I promise... I promise...

Promises are powerful things. There is something significant about saying that you promise something. It's a way of saying that this thing will happen. For sure. No question. Whatever else comes up, this thing will stay true.

Unless something else comes up. Or I change my mind. Or I forget.

What do promises mean? Do we keep the promises we make? Has anyone ever broken a promise made to you? How did it feel?

I surveyed a few opinions about promises and found some differing views. Napoleon Bonaparte, the 19th century French emperor, said this, "If you wish to be a success in the world, promise everything, deliver nothing." Alexander Hamilton, one of America's founding fathers, had a different idea. He said, "A promise must never be broken." Niccolo Machiavelli, the 15th century Renaissance author, was more in line with Napoleon. He argued that "A prince never lacks legitimate reasons to break his promise." You can always count on Mark Twain to offer an opinion. He suggests, "Better a broken promise than none at all." And finally, there is the anonymous proverb, "Promises are like babies: easy to make, hard to deliver."

What do we do with all the promises in our lives? In particular, what do we do when it looks like a promise will be broken? How do we react? It's a serious thing for someone to break a promise. I've known people that have carried the memory of a broken promise with them for years, even decades. A broken promise can hurt more than anything else.

Today we are continuing our series in the book of Daniel called *When Kingdoms Collide*. A few weeks ago we picked up the latter half of this book as

a way to invite us into the celebration of Advent. This section contains four different visions given to Daniel that each have to do with the end of the world. They describe a time when the kingdom of God and the kingdom of man will collide once and for all. They describe the return of Jesus.

I've suggested that these are good chapters to consider during the season of Advent because this is a time to anticipate the return of Jesus. During this time of the year, we look forward to Jesus returning. The focus on Christmas is a reminder about the first coming of Jesus. But the fact that Jesus came once is something that gives us hope to believe that he will come again.

In the New Testament we have a promise that Jesus will come again. After Jesus' whole life: his birth in a manger, his life as a child, three years of ministry, his death, resurrection, and appearances afterward, Jesus left this earth. He went up on a hill with his disciples. While they watched, he ascended into heaven. But then two angels appeared and said this in Acts 1:11—

**Men of Galilee, why do you stand looking into heaven? This Jesus, who was taken up from you into heaven, will come in the same way as you saw him go into heaven.**

"This Jesus will come in the same way that you saw him go." Jesus will come back. That is what we've been told. This is what we have been promised. But that was a long time ago. Almost two thousand years ago. I don't think the disciples expected it to take that long. I don't think the early church expected it to take this long. But it has.

Sometimes promises take longer than we think. Today we're talking about what happens when promises are prolonged

This is exactly what happens in chapter 9 of the book of Daniel. Remember that Daniel is a Jew living in exile in Babylon. While he's there, he remembers a promise that God made to his people. So he asks God about it. Most of this chapter is a prayer in which

Daniel reminds God of his promise and asks him to fulfill it. But then Daniel gets an answer. In that answer, God resets some of Daniel's expectations. He gives him a new way to think about his promise and how it will be fulfilled.

So as we look at this prayer and vision, we'll think about the ways that we understand God's promises. How do we understand his return? How do we understand what life is supposed to look like as we wait? Do we really understand what God has promised? Do we sometimes feel like he has broken his promises? What do we do then?

We want to better understand what exactly God has promised and what it means when it doesn't look like what we expected. Only then can we really have hope that Jesus will return.

## The Promise of Seventy Years

The passage begins by describing something Daniel is doing. Here is Daniel 9:1–2.

**In the first year of Darius the son of Ahasuerus, by descent a Mede, who was made king over the realm of the Chaldeans—<sup>2</sup>in the first year of his reign, I, Daniel, perceived in the books the number of years that, according to the word of the LORD to Jeremiah the prophet, must pass before the end of the desolations of Jerusalem, namely, seventy years.**

We are told that these events happen during the first year of the reign of Darius. Darius is the Persian king that led the defeat of the Babylonians. His reign marked the end of the Babylonian empire. So whatever Daniel does is precipitated by a very significant historical event. The Babylonians had conquered Jerusalem and sent God's people into exile. Now the Babylonians themselves had been defeated.

Daniel must be wondering whether this has any implications for the Israelites. So he goes to the Scriptures to find out if they reveal anything. He sees something significant in the book of Jeremiah. Incidentally, this is one of the very few places where the Bible references itself. For students of the Bible, it's fascinating to see one biblical author reading another.

We aren't told exactly what parts of Jeremiah Daniel is reading from, but based on what he finds out, we have a pretty good idea. In two places, Jeremiah refers to the fact that God's people will spend seventy years in exile. Let's read just one of them, from Jeremiah 29:10:

**For thus says the LORD: When seventy years are completed for Babylon, I will visit you, and I will fulfill to you my promise and bring you back to this place.**

You can see how this passage might have been particularly interesting for Daniel to notice after Babylon had been defeated. The first year of Darius would have been 539 BC. That was about 66 years after Daniel had been deported to Babylon in 605 BC. So Daniel notices that Babylon has been defeated. He realizes that God said something about the exile lasting seventy years. He puts the pieces together and he figures that something important is happening.

Daniel found a promise that God made that seems to have something to do with his current situation. He wonders whether this promise might be about to come true.

The precise number mentioned here of seventy years is very interesting. There are several theories about what this actually refers to. It clearly refers to the exile, but it is unclear whether that number is meant to be taken mathematically or metaphorically. Other places in the Old Testament refer to these seventy years, but it seems like they might have different starting and ending points.

2 Chronicles 36:20–23 refers to the seventy years of exile beginning with the destruction of the temple in 586 BC. That passage seems to put the end of that period in 539 BC when Cyrus, also known as Darius, issued a decree that God's people could return to Jerusalem and rebuild it. If you do the math, that only comes out to about 47 years. So it seems like the author of Chronicles is taking the concept of 70 years metaphorically rather than literally.

The seventy years is also mentioned in Zechariah 1:12. Those words claim that the 70 years ends in 519 BC. That's pretty close to 70 years after the destruction of the temple in 586, but not exactly.

It's possible that these numbers are meant literally. Some people point out that you could begin counting when the Babylonians came to power around 609 BC. If you do that, seventy years later gets to the date of 539 BC when the Babylonian empire was defeated. That seems to make the most sense of Jeremiah's statement that seventy years must be completed for Babylon. So perhaps the 70 years refers to the length of Babylon's rule of world dominance.

Other people say we should begin counting when Daniel was deported from Jerusalem in 605 BC. Seventy years later arrives at around 536 BC.

This was three years after Cyrus allowed Jews to return. But it could have been the first year that Jews were reasonably well established back in the land. So perhaps the 70 years refers to the length of time from the first deportation to some group being resettled in the land.

Another theory begins counting when the temple was destroyed, as the author of Chronicles seems to do. Seventy years after that date gets us to 516 BC. This is the date that the second temple was completed in Jerusalem. So perhaps the 70 years refers to the length of time from the destruction of the temple to the completion of the replacement temple.

Any of these theories are possible. Any one of them might be what the 70 years actually refers to. But it's also possible that 70 years refers to a symbolic amount of time. After all, there are other places in the Bible when round numbers are used to refer to periods of time. The books of the Kings often list the reigns of kings at precise numbers. But the book of Judges often refers to periods of forty years. Forty is a special number in the Old Testament that likely has symbolic meaning rather than literal meaning.

We also find places such as Matthew's genealogy that list three sets of fourteen generations. It is unlikely that only fourteen generations pass in each time period. However, fourteen is used as a symbolic number to help us understand the theological meaning behind history.

Regardless of whether the seventy years are taken precisely or as a metaphor, the point is the same. What occurs in history has theological meaning. Things don't just happen. God presides over things happening. Daniel notices that God has said something about the length of the exile. Daniel notices a promise that God has made. And he looks around at his situation and concludes that this promise might have something to do with him.

This is what we are taught to do. We believe that the Bible is God's revelation to us, helping us to make sense of our lives and see God's work in it. God gave us promises and he means for us to rely on them. This is how we ought to approach God. We should look for his promises. Anticipate God's promises.

The problem comes when we think we have reason to doubt those promises. We look around and conclude that life doesn't look like what we think the Bible says it is supposed to look like. This is some of what Daniel is facing. Babylon has been destroyed. It

has been about 70 years. But so far, the exile doesn't seem to be over. What is happening?

Sometimes we look at what we think God promised us and don't see it coming true. Or we think about what we used to believe as a kid and think that it doesn't make sense anymore. We think life isn't living up to what God promised. So we become disillusioned.

Disillusionment can be defined as "the act of freeing from illusion." If there is a common condition of people living today, this is it. We live in a culture that is dominated by disillusionment. People are disillusioned with government. They are disillusioned with institutions. They are disillusioned with organized religion. And they are disillusioned with God.

It happens when you change your mind about something that you used to think was true or you used to think mattered. There are two steps in the process of disillusionment. The first step is to conclude that something you thought was true is really only an illusion. I thought government was trustworthy; I thought leaders were noble; I thought God cared about me. You take that thought and you reclassify it as an illusion. It is false. It is a lie.

The second step is to discard it. Because it is false, you walk away. Now that I know government isn't trustworthy, I'm no longer going to give it any credit. Now that I know that leaders are selfish, I won't trust them anymore. Now that I know God doesn't really care about me, I'll stop believing in him.

When you become disillusioned, you start out by changing your mind and you finish by walking away.

A lot of people have changed their mind about God and walked away. Maybe some of you have. I'm sure some have been tempted. There are a lot of things that cause this. It comes from a whole bunch of different sources. For some it's personal tragedy. For others, it's the way Christians have acted in the political arena. For others, it's positions taken on cultural issues. We are surrounded by people who have concluded that anything having to do with God is an illusion. And they have walked away.

Disillusionment makes it really hard to anticipate God's promises. It's hard to look forward to something that you aren't sure is real. Let's see what Daniel does. How does he manage to fit God's promise into his present circumstances?



## Daniel's Prayer

Most of this chapter is taken up by Daniel's prayer to God in response to this promise. We aren't going to read all of it. Instead we're going to read the beginning and the end as a way of noticing two major themes in this prayer. We'll look at Daniel's attitude and his request.

Daniel begins his prayer in humility. Here is Daniel 9:3–5.

**Then I turned my face to the Lord God, seeking him by prayer and pleas for mercy with fasting and sackcloth and ashes. <sup>4</sup>I prayed to the Lord my God and made confession, saying, "O Lord, the great and awesome God, who keeps covenant and steadfast love with those who love him and keep his commandments, <sup>5</sup>we have sinned and done wrong and acted wickedly and rebelled, turning aside from your commandments and rules.**

Let's suppose I told that I would give you \$10 tomorrow. Tomorrow you would come to my office and you would hold out your hand and say, "OK—here I am. Where's my \$10?" This is the kind of attitude that we might expect Daniel to have with God. We might think that he would say, "OK, God. You said it the exile would only last this long. It's getting close to that. Let's wrap this whole thing up now. C'mon—you said you would."

Isn't this the way we get with our bosses or our parents or our friends? You said this or that would happen. Now let's see it. Our tendency is to demand that promises be fulfilled. Most of the time, we think that a promise gives us the right to insist on something.

But Daniel's prayer has none of that. In fact, the whole first half is dominated by a sense of repentance. He begins by saying, "we have sinned and done wrong and acted wickedly and rebelled." He continues throughout the rest of the prayer to outline the ways that God's people have fallen short, going all the way back to the Exodus to recount how the Israelites have not kept up the covenant that God made with them.

Daniel begins his prayer by repenting, not by demanding. In effect, Daniel is saying, "I know that you are God. Everything that you do is just. Even though you have made this promise, we do not deserve anything and we have no right to insist on anything from you." That is Daniel's starting point.

That should make us think about our own attitudes toward God. Are we entitled? Do we come to God, angry that he didn't do things the way that we think things ought to be done? Are we disillusioned only because we think God owes us something and hasn't delivered?

If so, we need to check ourselves. There's a fine line that we walk here. We have the incredible privilege of being invited into the presence of God because of his forgiveness and mercy. But that doesn't mean that we march into his office smacking our gum and rolling our eyes. We need to remember who is God.

Daniel begins with an attitude of repentance and humility. But then he makes his request. Listen to his plea at the end of his prayer in Daniel 9:17–19.

**Now therefore, O our God, listen to the prayer of your servant and to his pleas for mercy, and for your own sake, O Lord, make your face to shine upon your sanctuary, which is desolate. <sup>18</sup>O my God, incline your ear and hear. Open your eyes and see our desolations, and the city that is called by your name. For we do not present our pleas before you because of our righteousness, but because of your great mercy. <sup>19</sup>O Lord, hear; O Lord, forgive. O Lord, pay attention and act. Delay not, for your own sake, O my God, because your city and your people are called by your name.**

Daniel is humble, but he is bold. He asks God for what he wants. Not because he has a right to insist on it. Only because of who God is. Over and over again, he points out that his request is based on the character of God. "According to your righteous acts," "for your own sake," "called by your name," "because of your great mercy."

This is not flattery or Daniel trying to earn favor with God. It's simply him acknowledging that it is the character of God that allows him to make his request. His request is based on the fact that God is good. Not that we deserve it. Daniel asks God, but he does so in humility. This is the example that he offers us. Ask in humility.

You may have heard the joke about cats and dogs. A dog looks at its owner and thinks, "You feed me. You take care of me. You protect me. You must be a god." A cat looks at its owner and thinks, "You feed me. You take care of me. You protect me. I must be a god." We have two cats in our household and one dog. I can tell that you this distinction is completely accurate. Our cats live outside. But as soon as we started letting them

inside, even for a few minutes, they acted like being inside was their right. One of them will sit on our front doorstep and just meow endlessly, waiting for us to let him inside.

When we relate to God, we need to be dogs, not cats. God takes care of us because he is God, not because we are gods.

So Daniel does make a request. He pleads with God, “O Lord, hear; O Lord, forgive. O Lord, pay attention and act.” This is the incredible mystery of God’s relationship with us. We don’t deserve anything. We aren’t cats. But God invites us to bring him our requests. It’s OK to ask God to pay attention to us.

Daniel walks this line perfectly. He begins in repentance. But he asks God to notice him and his people.

This is where disillusionment comes in. Maybe you’ve asked God for something in the past and he has disappointed you. Maybe life hasn’t worked out the way you thought it was supposed to. Maybe you thought God would give you a certain kind of life and now that he hasn’t, you don’t want to ask him for anything else.

Are you afraid to ask God about his promises to you? You can ask him for what you want.

It’s funny the way life turns out. My wife and I have often marveled that in the big things God seems to have given us pretty much what we asked for. I wanted to be a pastor. She wanted to marry one. We wanted five kids and wanted some of them to be adopted. That’s what God gave us. I wanted to settle in this area and God called me to pastor here in Palo Alto. In a lot of ways, life has turned out to be what we asked for.

But in so many other ways, it has been completely different from what we expected. We’ve faced health problems. Marriage conflict. Disappointment. Frustration. Life as a pastor and a parent and a husband isn’t at all what I thought it would be. I feel incredibly blessed for what God has given me, but the joy has come with more pain than I anticipated. There were times that I thought maybe God had tricked me. How did I end up here? This isn’t what I thought I signed up for.

It can be hard to keep coming back to God. To keep asking him about his promises when we’ve been confused and hurt in the past. But Daniel does. And he gets an answer. He gets an answer that helps him to better understand God’s promise.

## The Angel Responds

After he prays, something incredible happens. An angel appears and responds to him. The angel is identified as Gabriel. The same angel that helped Daniel to understand the vision in the previous chapter. The same angel that appeared to Elizabeth, the mother of John the Baptist. The same angel that appeared to Mary, the mother of Jesus. Gabriel is sent to answer Daniel’s question about the seventy years of exile.

Here is what he says in Daniel 9:24—

**Seventy weeks are decreed about your people and your holy city, to finish the transgression, to put an end to sin, and to atone for iniquity, to bring in everlasting righteousness, to seal both vision and prophet, and to anoint a most holy place.**

Daniel has asked about a promise that God made. The angel comes to help him understand that promise. He says, in effect, “you don’t quite understand what was meant by that—let me explain it to you.” The angel is helping Daniel to re-interpret his understanding of the Bible so that he has a clearer picture.

He says that instead of just thinking about seventy years, there is another time period. The phrase literally reads “seventy sevens.” Many Bibles translate it along with the ESV as “seventy weeks.” That’s a good translation because in most of the places that word is used to refer to time, it means a week: seven days. But here, the concept of a week is being used to loosely refer to seven periods of time. Most interpreters understand that to refer to years: seventy periods of seven years.

The angel is reinterpreting Jeremiah’s prophecy according to an earlier part of the Bible. Before that nation of Israel even existed, God predicted that his people would have a hard time following him. In Leviticus 26, there are detailed instructions as to what would happen to God’s people when they are faithful to God, and what would happen when they disobey. Leviticus 26:18 says that when God’s people are unfaithful, God will “discipline [them] sevenfold for [their] sins.”

The angel is helping Daniel to see that the seventy years of exile are actually way longer than that. They are being enacted according to Leviticus 26.

It’s an interesting answer because shortly after Cyrus became king and Babylon was defeated, the Jews were allowed to return to Jerusalem. They were

sent back with a blank check to rebuild the temple. After a couple of fits and starts, they did eventually resettle in their land, rebuild the temple, and raise the city walls of Jerusalem. So in one sense, the seventy years of exile were completed.

But in another sense, they weren't. They rebuilt the temple, but it never approached the glory of the original temple. They rebuilt the walls of Jerusalem, but the city was never really free. They were back in their land, but they never achieved independence. There was always a foreign ruler over them: Persian or Greek or Roman.

That's what this prophecy refers to. In some ways the exile will end. In other ways it will keep on going. In fact, what the angel says is that in some ways, the rest of history will be like an exile. One kind of exile will end, but another kind will keep on going for a much longer period of time. To help Daniel see what he's talking about, the angel goes into more detail about how this exile will actually end. He breaks up the seventy weeks into three different categories.

Daniel 9:25–27:

**Know therefore and understand that from the going out of the word to restore and build Jerusalem to the coming of an anointed one, a prince, there shall be seven weeks. Then for sixty-two weeks it shall be built again with squares and moat, but in a troubled time. <sup>26</sup>And after the sixty-two weeks, an anointed one shall be cut off and shall have nothing. And the people of the prince who is to come shall destroy the city and the sanctuary. Its end shall come with a flood, and to the end there shall be war. Desolations are decreed. <sup>27</sup>And he shall make a strong covenant with many for one week, and for half of the week he shall put an end to sacrifice and offering. And on the wing of abominations shall come one who makes desolate, until the decreed end is poured out on the desolator.**

There are three distinct units of time. First come 6 units of 7. Then 62 units of 7. Then the final period of 7, which is also cut in half to reference two different sections. What do we make of this?

Once again, this is where a lot of interpretations have been offered. There are two very popular interpretations. They differ based on how you understand "the going out of the word" in verse 25. One theory suggests that Jeremiah's prophecy is the word. That puts the beginning of this period in 605 BC. The first period of 42 years (six sevens) gets you to the accession of Cyrus, who would eventually issue

the decree allowing Jews to return to their land.

The Hebrew grammar in this passage is a bit ambiguous as to whether these periods are necessarily subsequent to each other. If they aren't, and the second period also begins at 605 BC, the next period of 434 years (sixty-two sevens) gets you to the time when the temple is rededicated after Antiochus Epiphanes is defeated. So that is one possible understanding of the 6 sevens and the 62 sevens.

The other very popular view begins counting the seventy sevens with the period of Nehemiah, who rebuilt the walls of Jerusalem. In this case, the word mentioned in verse 25 would be a decree that the Persian king Artaxerxes made in 457 BC. This decree allowed the Israelites to rebuild the city wall. If you combine the first two periods into one long period of 69 sevens, that equals 483 years. Assuming that the years are solar years of 360 days, that time period ends around AD 32. This is a possible date for the crucifixion and resurrection of Jesus.

As we've seen with numbers and kingdoms and horns and many kinds of prophetic details throughout Daniel, they can be made to fit some historical circumstances. However, the particular circumstances that they are meant to refer to is at best unclear and it's difficult to know which specific interpretation is correct and what difference it makes.

For that reason, it seems best once again, to understand these periods of time in a more broad and general term. So what does this mean for us if we understand these numbers in a general sense? How does this help us deal with our disappointments and our disillusionment? How does it help us to understand the nature of God's promises to us?

This is one of the most complicated passages of prophecy in the entire Bible. We don't have time to investigate everything that it says, so let's make sure to understand the big picture.

This passage describes one period of time lasting about a generation. Then a very long period of time – over 10 generations. Then a final relatively short period of time. Most interpreters understand the first two periods of time as having been fulfilled: either in the time leading up to the second century BC, or the time leading up to the death and resurrection of Christ. It is the last period of time—Daniel's seventieth week—that is the most interesting.

In some ways, the events described during that period match up with a conflict that happened in



Jerusalem during the second century BC. This was when Antiochus Epiphanes, a Syrian king, lashed out in anger against God's people. He could be described as a desolator. He fits many of these descriptions. He came to an end. Eventually the temple was restored.

But we can hardly claim that everything described here has been completed. The angel says that after the seventy sevens have passed, several significant things will have occurred. Sin will have ended. Iniquity will be atoned for. Everlasting righteousness will begin.

Look around. These things clearly have not yet come to pass. What the angel describes here is the final period before the end of life in exile. The way it is described helps us to understand why life can be so difficult. This period will be a chaotic time. It is described as troubled. Desolations are decreed during that time.

The time before the end will be even harder than normal. Things will get worse before they get better. But eventually that difficulty will pass. Eventually, the exile will end for good.

Here lies the answer to our feeling of disillusionment. Do you feel like life isn't fair? Have things not turned out the way you wanted them to? Did you think life would be so much better? Of course all these things are true. We are living in exile. The world isn't as it is meant to be. But it will end. Life doesn't look like it should, but that won't last forever. Right now we wait for exile to end.

When the angel speaks of this time of the end, he talks about "an anointed one" which is the Hebrew word for "messiah." He says this messiah will be cut off. But the desolator will eventually meet his end. The trouble will stop.

Chapter 7 spoke of a Messiah who will come in glory and power. The Son of Man arrived to receive the kingdom from the Ancient of Days and the terrifying beasts were destroyed. That Messiah brought justice and defeated evil. But here in chapter 9, we see a messiah that suffers and atones for sin. He is cut off. For a while, the forces against him seem to be winning. During Daniel's day, this combination would have been a mystery. How can a messiah come in glory and power, but also suffer and atone for sin.

It isn't until the New Testament that we get the answer. The messiah will come twice. He will come first to suffer and atone for sin. But he will return in glory and power. Daniel describes the coming of the messiah and the arrival of the kingdom of God. He

doesn't realize that the arrival of the Messiah will be a process. But this answer helps us because we have the same question.

Jesus has come. That's what we are looking forward to celebrating in 11 days. The Messiah was born. And he has made atonement. He has set us free from sin and death.

But life still doesn't look like we want it to. Sometimes we experience the peace and joy of Christ. But sometimes we don't. Sometimes we wonder whether God forgot his promise. Or whether there ever was a God to make a promise.

A lot of the Christian life is spent bouncing back and forth between these two realities. This is how Daniel helps us. He guides us when the promises don't seem real. He gives us something to do with our disillusionment. We go to God with our questions. We can bring our disappointment and our confusion to him in prayer and by sharing with those in our community of faith. We can be honest with the ways that we are hurt and confused. Not in a brash, "how dare you, God" kind of way. But with the humility and respect that Daniel modeled for us.

And we can expect the same answer that Daniel received. We don't fully understand how this promise will play out. We can't figure out all the complexities. But we are invited to trust God with how the promise will unfold. We are assured that God has not abandoned us, that he is in charge in ways that we cannot fully comprehend. And we are asked to hang in through times of desolation, destruction, and confusion. Because we know that ultimately, God will prevail and his kingdom will arrive. Our exile will end.

## Conclusion

Promises are a powerful and dangerous thing. They can make us hopeful and eager. They can also make us disappointed and disillusioned.

During this season of Advent, we remember that something important happened in history over two thousand years ago. A Messiah was born. The authors of the New Testament are clear that Jesus changed the world. He defeated death and brought freedom to those who believe in him.

But they are also clear that there is more to come. Peter picks up on the theme of exile in his letters by referring to those who follow Jesus as sojourners and exiles (1 Peter 2:11). He encourages them to stay faithful. Don't give up on the promise. Don't get

disillusioned. Even if it doesn't seem to be happening the way you thought it should. It will still happen.

He concludes his second letter by saying this in 2 Peter 3:13—

**According to his promise we are waiting for new heavens and a new earth in which righteousness dwells.**

God is at work in our circumstances even when that doesn't seem to be the case. Even when his promises are prolonged, he is still in the process of fulfilling them. Wait for Jesus. Wait for righteousness. God will keep his promise. Not because of us. That's just who God is.