

I. Bewitched

- A. Sometimes a Bible verse I have looked at many times jumps up and hits me between the eyes. That happened with this week with this verse:
 - 1. Galatians 3:1 (NASB) *You foolish Galatians, who has bewitched you, before whose eyes Jesus Christ was publicly portrayed as crucified?*
- B. It's that word *bewitched* that woke me up. These were Christians in the city called Galatia. They were stuck in a huge tug of war between grace vs works, the Cross of Christ vs rituals of religion.
- C. That was obvious. But wasn't obvious was the tug of war between God's truth and the demonic lies.
- D. Bewitched.
- E. You have a lot of choices to make. I believe in human free will—your power to choose and how you use it—is one of the central issues in the whole universe.
- F. In that free will, you have a wide ranges of options. Which direction will you choose for your life? Who will you turn to? Which way will you go?
- G. God wants you to know that in this world with all its philosophies, and theologies, and opinions, and belief-systems, and world views... God wants you to know that many of these options are *bewitching*. God wants you to know that preachers and authors and teachers and yes pastors—when they do not derive their teachings from the written words and phrases and verses and paragraphs and books of Scripture—they are bewitchers. If we do not keep linking back to the Bible, the demonic realm will happily feed us lies.
 - 1. The word used here (*baskaino*) is an ancient word, going back to Aristotle and Plutarch. *Baskaino* means to cast a spell over someone. It means to curse someone with sorcery or to give them the evil eye. It is the manipulation of demonic powers, luciferian powers, evil powers to cause harm.
 - 2. The great pastor and missionary asks them, "Who has bewitched you?"
 - 3. Here is Jesus Christ, crucified—your salvation, your forgiveness, your redemption, your comfort—the living dying breathing incarnation of true love... and by what sorcery would you be so spellbound that you would ever minimize him.
- H. And there are three sure signs this has happened to a culture, or a church, or a person.
 - 1. **They turn their focus away from Jesus Christ and his Cross. (Galatians 6:14, 1 Corinthians 2:2)** Instead, they focus on the kingdom, or the Holy Spirit, or social justice, or signs and wonders, or a thousand other distraction. Anything but Christ Crucified and what that means.
 - 2. **They create an alternate utopia based on human philosophy. (Col 2:8, 1 Tim 4:1, 1 John 5:19)** Human philosophy is infected by "the doctrines of demons" (1 Tim 4:1) and is under the sway of the Wicked One, Satan (1 John 5:19).
 - a) The only Kingdom of God, the only heaven on earth, the only New World Order that I want is the one Jesus Christ personally creates at his glorious second coming. Anything else is an alternate utopia and is leaping headlong into Satan's bewitching and dystopian nightmare.
 - 3. **They entangle the human heart in a state of fear, anger, or depression. (Galatians 5:1, John 10:10).** The Kingdom of God is righteousness, joy, and peace, and the kingdoms of humankind are the opposite. God frees you. Satan traps you.
- I. O America, who has bewitched you? O Church in America, who has bewitched you? Who has put you under such a spell? Who has conned you into believing you can create the kingdom of Christ apart from Christ? Who has fascinated you with theories and philosophies that run so counter to Christ that they sound like fingernails on a chalkboard?
 - 1. It's so simple. You will find your comfort in the Lord or you will not find it anywhere.
- J. We will come back to this bewitchment.

II. Series Intro

- A. My message today is part two in our series Comfort from Above. If you have Jesus Christ, you have a place to turn that the world can never know. You have an omnipotent, omnipresent, compassionate, supernatural, and transcendent source of comfort and peace far beyond the reach the ragings of earth and the powers of hell.
 - 1. In part one, we considered The God of Comfort.
 - 2. Today, I invite you to consider with me **The Promise of Comfort.**
- B. Here is our key Bible verse for today:
 - 1. *For He remembered His holy promise, And Abraham His servant. (Psalm 105:42)*
- C. Today, I want to do a deep dive with you into the Promise of God's Comfort, probably deeper than you've ever gone before.
- D. This 105th Psalm is a song and poem about a Promise Keeping God.
- E. The Psalm opens with a call to worship:
 - 1. *Oh, give thanks to the LORD! Call upon His name; Make known His deeds among the peoples! Sing to Him, sing psalms to Him; Talk of all His wondrous works! (Psalms 105:1, 2, NKJV).*
- F. And then the psalmist proceeds to talk about God's wondrous works. In each wondrous work, God was fulfilling a promise. This psalm is 45 verses long, and most of the verses list specific promises kept by God. Here's a sample...
 - 1. *He sent Moses His servant, And Aaron whom He had chosen. They performed His signs among them, And wonders in the land of Ham. He sent darkness, and made it dark; And they did not rebel against His word. He turned their waters into blood, And killed their fish. Their land abounded with frogs, Even in the chambers of their kings. He spoke, and there came swarms of flies, And lice in all their territory. He gave them hail for rain, And flaming fire in their land. (Psalms 105:26-32, NKJV).*
- G. This goes on and on for most of the chapter, until you get to verse 42 which is our verse:
 - 1. **For He remembered His holy promise, And Abraham His servant. (Psalm 105:42)**
- H. What I want to show you today is that this one verse, as simple as it is, is a doorway to what just might be the deepest, most reassuring, most comforting truth in the whole Bible.

- I. The Promise of Comfort that comes from God is actually one of the Deep Structures of the Bible.
- III. The Promise of Comfort

A. ORIGIN

The Promise of Comfort originates in eternity past, in a promise from God the Son to the Father and the Spirit.

1. Before the worlds were created, before the cosmos and the stars, before Lucifer fell, before the angels were made, before time itself even existed... there was God.
2. Just God only. The Father, Son, and Holy Spirit—the three persons of the Godhead—existed co-equal, co-infinite and co-eternal, in perfect harmony, intimate fellowship, and infinite love.
3. One God eternally existing in three divine Persons.
 - a) Our human minds are too small to comprehend the Trinity. If God were small enough to be fully understood by us, he wouldn't be big enough to be our God.
4. In that ancient moment, the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit made a sovereign choice to create this universe and everything in it. That includes us—the human race. God planned it all out. This does not make us puppets and God the puppet master, but that's for another sermon.
5. In his plan, God knew that we would sin, we would fall. So God incorporated the Plan of Redemption into his decree of creation.
6. In the Plan of redemption... each person of the Godhead volunteered to fulfill specific roles.
 - a) **God the Father initiated and designed the Plan. God the Son executed and implemented the Plan. God the Holy Spirit energized and revealed the Plan.**
7. **The focus would be God the Son**, the second person of the Godhead. Here's where the promise of comfort begins.
 - a) God the Son promised he would effect salvation for all who would believe. He promised the Father. He promised the Spirit.
 - (1) God would become human without ceasing to be God. He did this in the person of the Lord Jesus Christ.
 - (2) He shed his blood and died to reconcile sinners back to God.
8. All of this was planned before God created even one thing:
 - a) That's why Jesus is called "the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world" (Rev. 13:8).
9. If you think about the *weight* of the plan of redemption, the heaviest, costliest, and most painful bulk of it fell on the shoulders of the Son, the second person of the Trinity.
 - a) He's the one who condescended from heaven to earth. He's the one who traded a crown of glory for a crown of thorns. He's the one who embraced the full weight of human corruption and sin. He's the one offered himself up in suffering and death. He's the one who absorbed the punishment for the sin of the world.
 - (1) The weight, the pain, the suffering, the death, fell on him, willingly and by choice.
10. The Son of God didn't HAVE to do this. He chose to do it and his motivation was his love. Christ came into the world and redeemed you because he loves you.
11. So God the Son promised God the Father and God the Holy Spirit to be our redeemer. That's the origin of promise.

B. CONTINUATION

The Promise of Comfort continues in eternity past when the Father and Holy Spirit promised to bless the Son to the highest conceivable degree.

1. We Christians focus too much on ourselves and too little on God.
2. Let's just take ourselves out of the picture for a couple of minutes. Just look at God. Just look at God who has revealed himself in Scripture.
 - a) **Most of the accomplishment of your salvation was the creation of a covenant between the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit from before the world began.**
3. One of the most overlooked teachings in the Bible are the verses in which God is talking to God and God is blessing God... One member of the Trinity talks to another member of the Trinity and one member of the Trinity brings glory and honor to another.
 - a) God glorifies God. God blesses God. God promises God and speaks to God.
 - b) And the supreme blessing is poured out on Jesus Christ for the marvelous work of our salvation.
4. Let me just show you one central Scripture on this. You might have read this verse a lot of times, but now, notice how the Father is blessing the son and the son is glorifying the Father.
 - a) *Philippians 2:8-11 And being found in appearance as a man, He humbled Himself and became obedient to the point of death, even the death of the cross. 9 Therefore God also has highly exalted Him and given Him the name which is above every name, 10 that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of those in heaven, and of those on earth, and of those under the earth, 11 and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.*
5. God promises to bless Jesus. God promises to exalt Jesus. To bring glory to him; honor, power, dominion. All creation for all eternity be found giving glory to Jesus.
6. Now, that is going to happen. It's already started.
 - a) Ladies and gentlemen... you are going to bow the knee to Jesus and confess he is Lord.
 - b) Teachers and lawyers... you are going to bow the knee to Jesus and confess he is Lord.
 - c) Presidents and Politicians and dictators... you are going to bow the knee to Jesus and confess he is Lord.
 - d) Every student, every man, every woman, every sinner, every saint, every angel, every demon, even Satan himself... you are going to bow the knee to King Jesus and confess he is Lord because that day is a promise from God to God and it cannot be broken.

7. But that coronation day of honor and glory is just one of many promises the Father has made to Christ. Here is a sampling of some more.
 - a) **God promises him glory.**
 Joh 17:5, 22 *And now, O Father, glorify Me together with Yourself, with the glory which I had with You before the world was. And the glory which You gave Me I have given them, that they may be one just as We are one:*
 - b) **God promises him fatherly provision.**
 Heb 1:5 *For to which of the angels did He ever say: "YOU ARE MY SON, TODAY I HAVE BEGOTTEN YOU"? And again: "I WILL BE TO HIM A FATHER, AND HE SHALL BE TO ME A SON"?*
 - c) **God promises him victory.**
 Heb 1:13 *But to which of the angels has He ever said: "SIT AT MY RIGHT HAND, TILL I MAKE YOUR ENEMIES YOUR FOOTSTOOL"?*
 - d) **God promises him the adoration of the mighty angels.**
 Heb 1:6 *But when He again brings the firstborn into the world, He says: "LET ALL THE ANGELS OF GOD WORSHIP HIM."*
 - e) **God promises him a tribe.**
 Joh 17:6 *"I have manifested Your name to the men whom You have given Me out of the world. They were Yours, You gave them to Me, and they have kept Your word."*
 - f) **God promises him an inheritance (the whole cosmos and its riches).**
 Heb 1:2 *has in these last days spoken to us by His Son, whom He has appointed heir of all things, through whom also He made the worlds;*
 Joh 3:35 *The Father loves the Son, and has given all things into His hand.*
8. Let me back up a bit and make sure we are all together.
 - a) I am talking about Comfort in this series.
 - b) And today, I am talking about the Promise of Comfort.
 - c) And what I am saying is that more than anything else, the Promise of Comfort is a promise that God made to God...
9. God promised God an infinity of comfort and blessing that the human mind can never fully understand.
 - a) The word blessing isn't enough to encompass all the wonderful, marvelous, magnificent, superb, sublime, spectacular, amazing, stunning, incredible, stellar, heavenly, divine, awesome, and brilliant, goodness in the Promise of God to the Lord Jesus Christ.

IV. Abraham

- A. Now, let me go back to Abraham.
- B. The deep structure of the gospel is that God will bless one man. That is a promise that God made to Jesus.
 1. Now, how can God teach us this before the One Man actually enters the world?
- C. Enter Abraham. Out of all the people of earth, God picked a man named Abraham. We are talking about 2,000 b.c.
- D. God picked Abraham, not because he was better than anybody else, but just out of sheer Grace. God picked Abraham and made him a promise.
 1. **Genesis 12:2-3 I will make you a great nation; I will bless you And make your name great; And you shall be a blessing. [3] I will bless those who bless you, And I will curse him who curses you; And in you all the families of the earth shall be blessed."**
- E. Over the years, I've done over 500 weddings (not any more, however). Almost always, somebody comes late to the wedding rehearsal... and sometimes it's the groom. So, I pick a stand in. I ask him to stand in for the groom, so we can get this rehearsal going.
- F. Abraham was a stand-in for Christ. Christ wasn't late in coming, but it would be a long time. And God wanted earth to understand his great plan of salvation.
 1. **So God set up on earth the exact same promise he set up with Christ in heaven: I will BLESS one man and through him bless the world.**
- G. **Abraham was the primary stand-in for Christ (Gal 3:16)** until the Savior came.
- H. Now, if you're Abraham, this is awesome. I will be the father of many nations. God will bless me. God will bless those who bless me and curse those who curse me. Yes! Great plan God. I like it.
- I. But then Abraham has a problem. If he is going to be the father of many nations, he needs to be the father of somebody, but he isn't. Abraham and Sarah can't conceive. So no kid.
 1. Question: God, when you made me a promise did you mean it?
- J. Abraham thought NO. So he did the biggest mistake of his life. He got his wife's servant pregnant and sired a son named Ishmael (Gen 16). And he said, here God. Here's the son who will be the father of many nations, just like you promised.
 1. I. Helped. You. Out.
 - a) God said, Abraham, I will build you a realm of freedom and comfort if only you walk in my paths and believe my promises.
 2. Abraham said I will scheme to create my own realm of freedom and comfort by walking in my own paths and manipulating my world to make it happen.
- K. Do you know what just happened?
 1. Abraham got bewitched.
 - a) Abraham turned his focus away from Jesus Christ and his saving work—the very Savior he was meant to represent.
 - b) He created an alternate utopia based on human thinking contrary to truth.
 - c) He entangled his own heart in state of fear, anger, and depression.

- L. He wouldn't wait for the Kingdom God promised, so he built one himself, and Satan raised a cheer.
- M. Satan conned him. He was fooled. He was seduced. He was bewitched. And history shows his alternate utopia has vomited forth hatred and war for four thousand years, even to today.
- N. I won't go into how God fixed everything, and gave him another son through his actual wife...
 - 1. **Any new world order of human origin will always become a demon-infested dystopian nightmare.**
 - a) Ask Abraham and how his the descendants of Isaac get along with the descendants of Ishmael.
 - b) The good news is that even though he failed, God's promise never wavered.
- O. But let's go back to our key verse:
 - 1. *For He remembered His holy promise, And Abraham His servant.* (Psalm 105:42)
- P. Here is all God's comfort for all God's people in trouble. They are slaves in Egypt. They need comfort, and God gives comfort.
 - 1. Why? Why would God comfort them? They were disobedient. Why would God do all the wondrous works of this chapter to bring his people comfort.
- Q. Because he remembered his holy promise to Abraham... which is a profoundly theological way of saying this:

V. **Promise**

A. **EXPANDS**

The Promise of Comfort expands from Jesus to every believer connected to him by faith.

- 1. The structure of the whole Bible is that God promised to bless One Man and through him to bless the world.
- 2. The One Man is Jesus.
 - a) If you are in his tribe, you share his blessings. If you are not in his tribe, you are cut off from his blessings.
- 3. This is astounding. It means is that all of the blessings that belong to Jesus Christ belong to you too, if you are saved.
 - a) His glory is your glory. His provision is your provision. His victory is your victory. His inheritance is your inheritance.

B. **The blessings of the singular Promise to Jesus flow to his whole tribe as the innumerable promises of God.**

- 1. *2 Peter 1:4 by which have been given to us exceedingly great and precious promises, that through these you may be partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust.*
- 2. God made promises for every moment, for every situation, for every circumstance — good and bad — of your life.
 - a) You say, I'm too tired. The promise says, Come to Me, all you who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. (Matt 11:28)
 - b) You say, I'm so lonely. The promise says, I will never leave you or forsake you. (Heb 13:5)
 - c) You say, I'm so confused. The promise says, Trust in the Lord with all your heart. In all your ways acknowledge him and he shall direct your paths. (Prov 3:5)
 - d) You say, this world is so dangerous. The promise says, "If God be for me, who can be against me." (Romans 8:31)
 - e) You say, I can't handle this. The promise says, I can do all things through Christ who gives me strength. (Phil 4:13)
 - f) You say, God has forgotten me. The promise says, "His eye is on the sparrow and I know he watches me" (Luke 12:7).
 - g) You say, My problem is impossible. The promise says, For with God, nothing will be impossible (Luke 1:37)
 - (a) These are the promises of God
 - h) You say, Life's not worth living. The promise says, God causes all things to work together for good to those who love him (Rom 8:28).
 - i) You say, I can't forgive myself. The promise says, There is therefore no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus. (Rom 8:1)
 - j) You say, I can't go on. The promise says, "My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is perfected in weakness." (2Co 12:9)
 - k) You say, I am poor and needy. The promise says, My God will supply all your need according to His riches in glory in Christ Jesus. (Phil 4:19)
 - l) You say, I am afraid. The promise says, "Fear not, for I am with you; Be not dismayed, for I am your God. I will strengthen you, Yes, I will help you, I will uphold you with My righteous right hand." (Isa 41:10).
 - m) You say, nobody loves me, nobody cares. The promise says, "For God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believes in him shall no perish but have everlasting life." (John 3:16)
- 3. And all of these promises and so many more, belong to you because they belonged to Jesus first.
- 4. **For God to ever break one of his promises to you, he would have to break his Promise to Jesus first.**
- 5. And that simply can never happen.

VI. You can trust him.

- A. You can trust him when you're tired. You can trust him when you're afraid. You can trust him when you are lost, confused, frustrated, broken, sad, stuck, addicted, defeated, or depressed. You can trust him in good times and bad times. He is a promise keeping God because Jesus Christ is worthy of every promise.
- B. Consider the cross and see how deep and wide is his love for you. Don't be pulled away. Don't be bewitched. Come to Jesus again and again, just as you are... love and mercy is waiting for every broken heart. And comfort for every day from now to the end of time. That's my Jesus.