

Possible “People of Promise”

Below are some names I gathered from a cursory survey of Scripture (I probably missed some). In choosing the final names, the following would have to be decided:

1. What constitutes a “person of promise?” Is it a person to whom a specific promise was made—as a promise—or someone that just had a lot of interaction with God and to whom promises are implied? That is, in the PSB itself (the 260 devos), probably the majority of the verses we used were not promises in their original context. But we assumed that if God said it, it could be depended on, and therefore could be considered a promise. Do we do the same thing with the “People of Promise?”
2. Do we include any negative promises, i.e., promises of judgment, or do we want to stay with positive examples? (We did use some negative promises in the PSB in the category on the future of non-believers.)
3. Do we want to include promises to non-believers, e.g., Nebuchadnezzar, Pharaoh (I didn’t included them in the list below)?
4. Do we want to go as much as possible with well-known figures, or can we use lesser known figures, e.g., Simeon had been promised that he wouldn’t die before he saw the Messiah (although that’s a hard one to apply to today’s believer).
5. What ratio of men to women should we shoot for? Half and half? Or perhaps something more along the line of the distribution in Scripture, say 2/3 men and 1/3 women? (There are 16 women below in the initial list.)
6. The biggest challenge I see is finding 20 people with promises that have a “hook” in them like:

Sarah - an “unbelievable” promise (child in old age)

Joseph - a promise fulfilled out of seeming disaster

Simeon - when the fulfillment of a promise is delayed

Abraham - a promise that you don’t live to see the fulfillment of

I’m sure there are 20 such people in Scripture, but I haven’t done the research to identify the 20 best. I have suggested a broad list of names below, then a further list of 20, but I haven’t identified whether all 20 of those in the second list have a great hook or not.

This issue of a “hook” raises another thorny question: If we take promises made to individuals in the Bible, then we seem to be suggesting that God makes specific promises to us as individuals today. That is, God made Simeon a personal promise that he wouldn’t die before he saw the Messiah, and we can learn from his faithfulness in not giving up that hope. But I can’t think of any specific promise that God has made to me that I am in danger of losing hope on. The only promises I have from Him are the general promises that every believer has, and I don’t lack faith that they will come to pass. I don’t have a

specific promise, e.g., that I won't die before I see the salvation of a "lost loved one." So how does Simeon's endurance in believing God apply to me? I'm going to try in the prototype I write to work this out -- and we'll see what happens!

7. The list below is a general survey of names. I don't know if "promises" were made to all these people. Following this list (below) I have narrowed it down and proposed 20 that you all can consider and make changes to:

Men

Women

Old Testament

Adam

Eve

Noah

Abraham

Sarah

Hagar

Lot

Melchizedek

Ishmael

Isaac

Rebekah

Jacob

Esau

Joseph

Moses

Aaron

Miriam

Jethro

Balaam

Joshua

Caleb

Rahab

Deborah

Gideon

Samson

Ruth

Naomi

Samuel

Saul

David

Jonathan

Nathan

Mephibosheth

Solomon

Elijah

Elisha

Ahab

Jezebel (negative; promises of judgment)

Jehoshaphat
Hezekiah
Josiah
Ezra
Nehemiah

Esther

Job
Isaiah
Jeremiah
Ezekiel
Daniel
Shadrach, Meshach, Abednego
Hosea

Jonah (I'm not sure of others of the Minor Prophets to whom God spoke "to" instead of "through" as He did with Jonah; perhaps Zechariah and Malachi?)

New Testament

Joseph
Zechariah
John the Baptist
Simeon
The Disciples
Nicodemus

Mary
Elizabeth

"Countless" individuals to whom Jesus made promises (health, eternal life, etc) in the Gospels

Mary
Martha
The Samaritan Woman

Peter
Ananias and
Stephen
Philip
Paul
Cornelius
Timothy
Apostle John

Sapphira

Perhaps other less-mentioned figures to whom some promises were made (e.g., Apollos, Priscilla and Aquila, Titus, Tychicus, Epaphroditus, etc.).

First pass at a list of 20 possibilities: (14 men, 7 women [used a married couple as one, thus the total of 21])

Men

Women

Old Testament

- | | |
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| 1. Adam | |
| 2. Noah (being singled out to be spared) | |
| 3. Abraham (because of the covenant promises) | 4. Sarah (because of the promise of a child in her old age) |
| | 5. Hagar (because of God's promise of care for her at a vulnerable time) |
| 6. Isaac (because of the Jacob/Esau choice) | |
| 7. Joseph (promises in the dreams) | |
| 8. Moses (promise for support in a difficult task) | |
| 9. Joshua (promise for guidance) | |
| 11. Gideon (promise of victory) | 10. Rahab |
| | 12. Ruth (God's promise fulfilled through another person [Boaz]) |
| 13. David (lots of choices) | |
| 14. Solomon (promise of wisdom?) | |
| | 15. Esther ("you have come for such a time as this" -- a providential promise, except it's not from God. This is a good example of a great principle, but a promise. How do we handle?) |
| 16. Zechariah and Elizabeth (promise about their child John the Baptist. Do them as a couple; two for the price of one.) | |
| 17. Simeon (a promise-fulfillment delayed) | |

18. The Samaritan Woman (a promise that radically alters your whole lifestyle: “worship in spirit and truth”)

19. Nicodemus (a surprising promise -- “you must be born again”)

20. Paul (promise of ministry)

Mike had mentioned including a few “surprises” like Jonah -- but I couldn’t see a “promise” from God to Jonah. There were instructions which ended up being fulfilled in a surprising way, but not a promise (?).