

Section 3, Promises About Provision
Introductory Article
531 words

Promises About God's Provision: Introduction

An astounding event in the life of Christ illustrates the importance of the promises of God you will study in this section of the Promises Study Bible. This event shows that God is aware of who we are and what we need. Naturally speaking, humans are here-and-now, hands-on people, for whom walking by faith is a huge leap—a stretch for our comprehension. Yet much of God's kingdom is about invisible and future things which cannot be verified by our five senses. Therefore, God provided concrete examples of his goodness in order that we might learn to trust those things that must ultimately be taken by faith.

Jesus was in a house in Capernaum teaching, and the crowd was so great that the door of the house was blocked—no one could get in or out. A group of men had brought their friend, paralyzed on a stretcher, in hopes that Jesus might heal him. Since they could not get their friend into Jesus' presence through the door, they went up on the roof of the house and began to remove the tiles, creating an opening through which they could see Jesus below. They lowered their friend through the opening right into Jesus' presence: "When Jesus saw their faith, he said to the paralytic, 'Son, your sins are forgiven'" (Mark 2:5).

The Jewish teachers who witnessed this event and heard Jesus' words (men who had been raised on a sense-based religious experience of hands-on activities, sights, and sounds) were shocked when Jesus said the man's sins were forgiven. From their perspective, there had to be fire on the altar, the smoke of sacrifices billowing into heaven, and blood poured on the ark of the covenant—and then, it was only God's high priest who could declare sins forgiven. Forgiveness is an "invisible" event—you can't see sins being washed away with your eyes—and they didn't believe Jesus could do that. So Jesus stooped down to where they were spiritually. If they only had physical eyes with which to see, then he would give them something to believe in until they could see with spiritual eyes: ". . . that you may know that the Son of Man has authority on earth to forgive sins . . . 'I tell you [he said to the paralytic], get up, take your mat and go home'" (Mark 2:10-11). The formerly packed crowd in the doorway suddenly parted like the Red Sea as the formerly paralyzed man walked home.

Jesus wanted the Jews to "see" many spiritual things, but he showed them a physical thing first. And so God does with us. You will discover in this section that God has promised to provide for us in many ways. Some of his promises are for spiritual provisions like forgiveness and salvation. But many of his promises are for other provisions like material needs, victory over temptation, guidance, and wisdom. Because we have seen the evidence of God's faithfulness day after day in meeting our "physical" needs, we know he can be trusted to meet our spiritual needs as well. He is patient with us as we learn to walk by faith, not by sight.