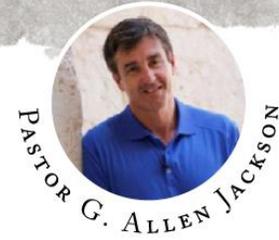


Christmas, A Promise Fulfilled

The Love of God

Intend



I. Unwrapping God's Best

A. God's Love Expressed

John 3:16-17 (NIV®)

¹⁶ "For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life. ¹⁷ For God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but to save the world through him.

B. Christmas Provision

C. Observation

If you will follow God, God will lead you towards His best!

D. For Example

Proverbs 3:1-10 (NIV®)

¹ My son, do not forget my teaching, but keep my commands in your heart, ² for they will prolong your life many years and bring you prosperity. ³ Let love and faithfulness never leave you; bind them around your neck, write them on the tablet of your heart. ⁴ Then you will win favor and a good name in the sight of God and man. ⁵ Trust in the Lord with all your heart and lean not on your own understanding; ⁶ in all your ways acknowledge him, and he will make your paths straight. ⁷ Do not be wise in your own eyes; fear the Lord and shun evil. ⁸ This will bring health to your body and nourishment to your bones. ⁹ Honor the Lord with your wealth, with the firstfruits of all your crops; ¹⁰ then your barns will be filled to overflowing, and your vats will brim over with new wine.

Counsel: do not forget teaching, keep commands in your heart

Promise: prolong life & bring prosperity

Counsel: let love and faithfulness never leave you

Promise: win favor & a good name in sight of God and man

Counsel: trust in Lord with all your heart and lean not on your own understanding

Promise: he will make your paths straight

Counsel: do not be wise in your own eyes, fear the Lord, shun evil

Promise: will bring health to your body and nourishment to your bones

Counsel: honor the Lord with your wealth, with first fruits of your crops

Promise: God will provide abundance ---barns filled to overflowing & your vats brim over with new wine

II. Following God is Not Easy

Matthew 2:1-3 (NIV[®])

After Jesus was born in Bethlehem in Judea, during the time of King Herod, Magi from the east came to Jerusalem ² and asked, "**Where is the one who has been born king of the Jews?** We saw his star in the east and have come to worship him." ³ When **King Herod heard this he was disturbed, and all Jerusalem with him.**

Luke 1:18-19 (NIV[®])

Zechariah asked the angel, "**How can I be sure of this? I am an old man and my wife is well along in years.**" ¹⁹ The angel answered, "I am Gabriel. I stand in the presence of God, and I have been sent to speak to you and to tell you this good news.

Luke 1:28-29 (NIV[®])

The angel went to her and said, "Greetings, you who are highly favored! The Lord is with you." ²⁹ **Mary was greatly troubled at his words** and wondered what kind of greeting this might be.

Luke 1:34-35 (NIV[®])

"**How will this be,**" Mary asked the angel, "since I am a virgin?"

³⁵ The angel answered, "The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you. So the holy one to be born will be called the Son of God.

III. Making Room for a Miracle . . .

A. Know how to RESPOND — when God offers miracles.

Luke 1:38 (NIV[®])

"I am the Lord's servant," Mary answered. "May it be to me as you have said." Then the angel left her.

B. Know how to THINK — when people give prophecies about your life.

Luke 2:18-19 (NIV[®])

and all who heard it were amazed at what the shepherds said to them. ¹⁹ But Mary treasured up all these things and pondered them in her heart.

When God Speaks None of the Following Are Present:

- ❖ Silly Notions
- ❖ Deception

We only need to remember 3 things: If God's voice to me is true,

1. I don't need to announce it to others.
2. I'm not required to prove it by loveless words or deeds.
3. It isn't mine to fulfill.

- ❖ Mysticism
- ❖ Fear
- ❖ Self-Importance

God's gracious workings in your life will never confuse you about who the "great one" is, if you keep focused on Him.

C. Know what to SAY — when you don't understand what God is doing.

Luke 2:49-51 (NIV®)

"Why were you searching for me?" he asked. "Didn't you know I had to be in my Father's house?"⁵⁰ But they did not understand what he was saying to them. 51 Then he went down to Nazareth with them and was obedient to them. But his mother treasured all these things in her heart.

PRAYER

Heavenly Father, I choose your best for my life. May Your word come alive within me. I put my faith and trust in You, the creator of all things. May Your provision fill my life. Deliver me from anything which would diminish your purposes for me. I choose life and godliness. May my life bring glory and honor to Jesus as Lord, amen.