

## THEY MAY FORGET

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Ten years ago, one Jesse Dimmick murdered a man, and stole his wallet and drugs. Two days later, law enforcement officers spotted him, and gave chase. Dimmick stole a car, but the tires were punctured by a police tire-deflation device. Dimmick made off on foot and came to the home of Jared and Lindsay Rowley. Dimmick entered their home, and held them at knifepoint. When Dimmick fell asleep, the Rowleys fled their home, and police entered to arrest Dimmick. During the arrest, one officer accidentally discharged his weapon, and shot Dimmick in the back. The Rowleys later sued Dimmick for damages, so Dimmick counter-sued for breach of contract, claiming that the Rowleys had agreed to hide him for a fee, and then broke the contract. Dimmick's suit was dismissed. The Rowleys denied making such an agreement, and, if they had one, it would not have been legally binding, as they would have made it under duress. Not all claims of 'breach of contract' are ridiculous. Walgreens sued a medical company for one-hundred forty million dollars. Macy's sued Martha Stewart Living for an undisclosed amount of money. Church Norris sued CBS and Sony TV for thirty-million dollars. People often make contracts, and they sometimes break them. People can be dishonest and duplicitous. People break faith with each other. God, however, is perfectly faithful. He is the God who keeps covenant

When God called Abraham, He made him a promise. He promised that He would make of Abraham a great nation, and that in him all the nations of the world would be blessed. (Genesis 12:1-3) Sometime later, when Abraham asked God for reassurance, God confirmed His promise with an oath. He cut a covenant, not with Abraham, but with Himself, because He could swear by none greater. (Genesis 15:1-21; Hebrews 6:13-18) God repeated the covenant with Abraham's son Isaac, and with Isaac's son Jacob. (Genesis 26:1-5; 35:9-12)

God, because of His promise to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, delivered the children of Israel from their bondage in Egypt. After their exodus, God led them to Mount Sinai, and there He made a covenant with them, a covenant with both promise and obligation. Through Moses, God said to them, "Now therefore, if ye will obey my voice indeed, and keep my covenant, then ye shall be a peculiar treasure unto me above all people: for all the earth is mine: And ye shall be unto me a kingdom of priests, and an holy nation." (Exodus 19:5, 6) The people replied, "All that the LORD hath spoken we will do." (Exodus 19:8) .

After the children of Israel wandered in the wilderness for forty years, they finally came to the border of the promised land. There God renewed His covenant with them. He told them that He did not choose them as His people because they were a great nation; they were, in fact, not a great nation. He chose them because of the promise He had made to the patriarchs. (Deuteronomy 7:7, 8) He reminded the people of His nature, and of the nature of His covenant with them. He said to:

Know therefore that the LORD thy God, he is God, the faithful God, which keepeth covenant and mercy with them that love him and keep his commandments to a thousand generations; And repayeth them that hate him to their face, to destroy them: he will not be slack to him that hateth him, he will repay him to his face. Thou shalt therefore keep the commandments, and the statutes, and the judgments, which I command thee this day, to do them. (Deuteronomy 7:9-11)

The children of Israel had agreed to the terms of the Mosaic covenant. Tragically, however, they many times broke covenant with God. In the days of the divided kingdom of Israel, the people were especially rebellious. Through Isaiah the prophet, God told them that Assyria would conquer the northern kingdom, and then Babylon would conquer the southern kingdom. The suffering would be great. Many would die, and those remaining would be carried away into exile. The city of Jerusalem and the temple would be destroyed.

God promised to restore Israel, however. He promised to restore Israel, and to bring peace and prosperity to the world. Through Isaiah the prophet He said:

And it shall come to pass in the last days, that the mountain of the LORD'S house shall be established in the top of the mountains, and shall be exalted above the hills; and all nations shall flow unto it. And many people shall go and say, Come ye, and let us go up to the mountain of the LORD, to the house of the God of Jacob; and he will teach us of his ways, and we will walk in his paths: for out of Zion shall go forth the law, and the word of the LORD from Jerusalem. And he shall judge among the nations, and shall rebuke many people: and they shall beat their swords into plowshares, and their spears into pruninghooks: nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war any more. (Isaiah 2:2-4)

Some in Israel would doubt, however. They would doubt, and they would despair. They would say, "The LORD hath forsaken me, and my Lord hath forgotten me." (Isaiah 49:14) God would answer them, "Can a woman forget her sucking child, that she should not have compassion on the son of her womb? yea, they may forget, yet will I not forget thee." (Isaiah 49:15) It is the nature of a woman, even of a sinful woman, to care for her child. She does not neglect him. Some women do neglect their children, but they are the exception, not the rule. God, however, never forgets His people. He never neglects them. He is always faithful to His covenant promises.

God cannot lie, and His word was sufficient assurance for Abraham. Yet, God did condescend to make a covenant with him, so that, Saint Paul explained, "That by two immutable things, in which it was impossible for God to lie, we might have a strong consolation, who have fled for refuge to lay hold upon the hope set before us." (Hebrews 6:18) God will fulfill His promise. He is even now making a new heavens and a new earth. Christ, by His body, the Church, is discipling the nations.

God is faithful to His promises. Saint John wrote in his epistle, "If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness." (1 John 1:9) Every Christian must keep covenant with God. He must be faithful. If he falters in some way, and repents, then He can rely upon God faithfully to forgive Him.

Let us, by God's grace, keep covenant with Him. Let us faithfully obey Him. If we sin, then let us confess our sins, for He is faithful and just to forgive.

Now unto the God of all grace, who hath called us unto His eternal glory by Christ Jesus, be glory and dominion for ever and ever. *Amen.*