

Foundations of Faith (A Catechism for Today)

Lesson 12 – March 19

Question 32: How did God keep these promises?

God led the people out of exile and brought them back to their own land. A suffering and persecuted people, they looked for the coming of God's anointed one, the Messiah, to restore and renew their life and hope. His coming would continue the story of salvation, which began in creation and unfolded throughout Israel's history. The Promised One would fulfil the covenant and begin a new chapter in the story of salvation.

Ezek 37:14 I will put my spirit within you, and you shall live, and I will place you on your own soil; then you shall know that I, the Lord, have spoken and will act, says the Lord.

Isa 11:1-4 A shoot shall come out from the stump of Jesse, and a branch shall grow out of his roots. The spirit of the Lord shall rest on him... His delight shall be in the fear of the Lord. He shall judge by what his eyes see, or decide by what his ears hear; but with righteousness he shall judge the poor, and decide with equity for the meek of the earth;

Heb 8:6 But Jesus has now obtained a more excellent ministry, and to that degree he is the mediator of a better covenant, which has been enacted through better promises.

Ezek 34:11-14 "For this is what the Sovereign LORD says: I myself will search and find my sheep. 12 I will be like a shepherd looking for his scattered flock. I will find my sheep and rescue them from all the places where they were scattered on that dark and cloudy day. 13 I will bring them back home to their own land of Israel from among the peoples and nations. I will feed them on the mountains of Israel and by the rivers and in all the places where people live. 14 Yes, I will give them good pastureland on the high hills of Israel. There they will lie down in pleasant places and feed in the lush pastures of the hills.

Isa 9:2-7 The people who walk in darkness will see a great light. For those who live in a land of deep darkness, a light will shine. 3 You will enlarge the nation of Israel, and its people will rejoice. They will rejoice before you as people rejoice at the harvest and like warriors dividing the plunder. 4 For you will break the yoke of their slavery and lift the heavy burden from their shoulders. You will break the oppressor's rod, just as you did when you destroyed the army of Midian. 5 The boots of the warrior and the uniforms bloodstained by war will all be burned. They will be fuel for the fire. 6 For a child is born to us, a son is given to us. The government will rest on his shoulders. And he will be called: Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace. 7 His government and its peace will never end. He will rule with fairness and justice from the throne of his ancestor David for all eternity. The passionate commitment of the LORD of Heaven's Armies will make this happen!

Heb 7:22, 8:7-13, 10:1-18, 12:24 Because of this oath, Jesus is the one who guarantees this better covenant with God.

7 If the first covenant had been faultless, there would have been no need for a second covenant to replace it. 8 But when God found fault with the people, he said: "The day is coming, says the LORD, when I will make a new covenant with the people of Israel and Judah. 9 This covenant will not be like the one I made with their ancestors when I took them by the hand and led them out of the land of Egypt. They did not remain faithful to my covenant, so I turned my back on them, says the LORD . 10

But this is the new covenant I will make with the people of Israel on that day, says the LORD : I will put my laws in their minds, and I will write them on their hearts. I will be their God, and they will be my people. 11 And they will not need to teach their neighbors, nor will they need to teach their relatives, saying, ‘You should know the LORD .’ For everyone, from the least to the greatest, will know me already. 12 And I will forgive their wickedness, and I will never again remember their sins.” 13 When God speaks of a “new” covenant, it means he has made the first one obsolete. It is now out of date and will soon disappear.

1 The old system under the law of Moses was only a shadow, a dim preview of the good things to come, not the good things themselves. The sacrifices under that system were repeated again and again, year after year, but they were never able to provide perfect cleansing for those who came to worship. 2 If they could have provided perfect cleansing, the sacrifices would have stopped, for the worshipers would have been purified once for all time, and their feelings of guilt would have disappeared. 3 But instead, those sacrifices actually reminded them of their sins year after year. 4 For it is not possible for the blood of bulls and goats to take away sins. 5 That is why, when Christ came into the world, he said to God, “You did not want animal sacrifices or sin offerings. But you have given me a body to offer. 6 You were not pleased with burnt offerings or other offerings for sin. 7 Then I said, ‘Look, I have come to do your will, O God— as is written about me in the Scriptures.’” 8 First, Christ said, “You did not want animal sacrifices or sin offerings or burnt offerings or other offerings for sin, nor were you pleased with them” (though they are required by the law of Moses). 9 Then he said, “Look, I have come to do your will.” He cancels the first covenant in order to put the second into effect. 10 For God’s will was for us to be made holy by the sacrifice of the body of Jesus Christ, once for all time. 11 Under the old covenant, the priest stands and ministers before the altar day after day, offering the same sacrifices again and again, which can never take away sins. 12 But our High Priest offered himself to God as a single sacrifice for sins, good for all time. Then he sat down in the place of honor at God’s right hand. 13 There he waits until his enemies are humbled and made a footstool under his feet. 14 For by that one offering he forever made perfect those who are being made holy. 15 And the Holy Spirit also testifies that this is so. For he says, 16 “This is the new covenant I will make with my people on that day, says the LORD : I will put my laws in their hearts, and I will write them on their minds.” 17 Then he says, “I will never again remember their sins and lawless deeds.” 18 And when sins have been forgiven, there is no need to offer any more sacrifices.

24 You have come to Jesus, the one who mediates the new covenant between God and people, and to the sprinkled blood, which speaks of forgiveness instead of crying out for vengeance like the blood of Abel

Question 33: Whom did God send as Messiah?

God sent his only Son, Jesus of Nazareth, to be the Messiah, or Christ (both words mean ‘anointed one’), the fulfilment of God’s promise to Israel. He is the one promised by God, anointed to save us from sin and death.

Mt 1:16 And Jacob the Father of Joseph the husband of Mary, of whom Jesus was born, who is called the Messiah.

Jn 1:41 He first found his brother Simon and said to him, “We have found the Messiah” (which is translated Anointed).

Jn 3:17 “Indeed, God did not send the son into the world to condemn the world, but in order that the world might be saved through him.”

Jn 4:1-42 Jesus knew the Pharisees had heard that he was baptizing and making more disciples than John 2 (though Jesus himself didn't baptize them—his disciples did). 3 So he left Judea and returned to Galilee. 4 He had to go through Samaria on the way. 5 Eventually he came to the Samaritan village of Sychar, near the field that Jacob gave to his son Joseph. 6 Jacob's well was there; and Jesus, tired from the long walk, sat wearily beside the well about noontime. 7 Soon a Samaritan woman came to draw water, and Jesus said to her, "Please give me a drink." 8 He was alone at the time because his disciples had gone into the village to buy some food. 9 The woman was surprised, for Jews refuse to have anything to do with Samaritans. She said to Jesus, "You are a Jew, and I am a Samaritan woman. Why are you asking me for a drink?" 10 Jesus replied, "If you only knew the gift God has for you and who you are speaking to, you would ask me, and I would give you living water." 11 "But sir, you don't have a rope or a bucket," she said, "and this well is very deep. Where would you get this living water?" 12 And besides, do you think you're greater than our ancestor Jacob, who gave us this well? How can you offer better water than he and his sons and his animals enjoyed?" 13 Jesus replied, "Anyone who drinks this water will soon become thirsty again. 14 But those who drink the water I give will never be thirsty again. It becomes a fresh, bubbling spring within them, giving them eternal life." 15 "Please, sir," the woman said, "give me this water! Then I'll never be thirsty again, and I won't have to come here to get water." 16 "Go and get your husband," Jesus told her. 17 "I don't have a husband," the woman replied. Jesus said, "You're right! You don't have a husband— 18 for you have had five husbands, and you aren't even married to the man you're living with now. You certainly spoke the truth!" 19 "Sir," the woman said, "you must be a prophet. 20 So tell me, why is it that you Jews insist that Jerusalem is the only place of worship, while we Samaritans claim it is here at Mount Gerizim, where our ancestors worshiped?" 21 Jesus replied, "Believe me, dear woman, the time is coming when it will no longer matter whether you worship the Father on this mountain or in Jerusalem. 22 You Samaritans know very little about the one you worship, while we Jews know all about him, for salvation comes through the Jews. 23 But the time is coming—indeed it's here now—when true worshipers will worship the Father in spirit and in truth. The Father is looking for those who will worship him that way. 24 For God is Spirit, so those who worship him must worship in spirit and in truth." 25 The woman said, "I know the Messiah is coming—the one who is called Christ. When he comes, he will explain everything to us." 26 Then Jesus told her, "I AM the Messiah!" 27 Just then his disciples came back. They were shocked to find him talking to a woman, but none of them had the nerve to ask, "What do you want with her?" or "Why are you talking to her?" 28 The woman left her water jar beside the well and ran back to the village, telling everyone, 29 "Come and see a man who told me everything I ever did! Could he possibly be the Messiah?" 30 So the people came streaming from the village to see him. 31 Meanwhile, the disciples were urging Jesus, "Rabbi, eat something." 32 But Jesus replied, "I have a kind of food you know nothing about." 33 "Did someone bring him food while we were gone?" the disciples asked each other. 34 Then Jesus explained: "My nourishment comes from doing the will of God, who sent me, and from finishing his work. 35 You know the saying, 'Four months between planting and harvest.' But I say, wake up and look around. The fields are already ripe for harvest. 36 The harvesters are paid good wages, and the fruit they harvest is people brought to eternal life. What joy awaits both the planter and the harvester alike! 37 You know the saying, 'One plants and another harvests.' And it's true. 38 I sent you to harvest where you didn't plant; others had already done the work, and now you will get to gather the harvest." 39 Many Samaritans from the village believed in Jesus because the woman had said, "He told me everything I ever did!" 40 When they came out to see him, they begged him to stay in their village. So he stayed for two days, 41 long enough for many more to hear his message and believe. 42 Then they said to the woman, "Now we believe, not just because of what you told us, but because we have heard him ourselves. Now we know that he is indeed the Savior of the world."

Acts 10:34-43, 13:15-41, 26:2-23 Then Peter replied, “I see very clearly that God shows no favoritism. 35 In every nation he accepts those who fear him and do what is right. 36 This is the message of Good News for the people of Israel—that there is peace with God through Jesus Christ, who is Lord of all. 37 You know what happened throughout Judea, beginning in Galilee, after John began preaching his message of baptism. 38 And you know that God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Spirit and with power. Then Jesus went around doing good and healing all who were oppressed by the devil, for God was with him. 39 “And we apostles are witnesses of all he did throughout Judea and in Jerusalem. They put him to death by hanging him on a cross, 40 but God raised him to life on the third day. Then God allowed him to appear, 41 not to the general public, but to us whom God had chosen in advance to be his witnesses. We were those who ate and drank with him after he rose from the dead. 42 And he ordered us to preach everywhere and to testify that Jesus is the one appointed by God to be the judge of all—the living and the dead. 43 He is the one all the prophets testified about, saying that everyone who believes in him will have their sins forgiven through his name.”

15 After the usual readings from the books of Moses and the prophets, those in charge of the service sent them this message: “Brothers, if you have any word of encouragement for the people, come and give it.” 16 So Paul stood, lifted his hand to quiet them, and started speaking. “Men of Israel,” he said, “and you God-fearing Gentiles, listen to me. 17 “The God of this nation of Israel chose our ancestors and made them multiply and grow strong during their stay in Egypt. Then with a powerful arm he led them out of their slavery. 18 He put up with them through forty years of wandering in the wilderness. 19 Then he destroyed seven nations in Canaan and gave their land to Israel as an inheritance. 20 All this took about 450 years. “After that, God gave them judges to rule until the time of Samuel the prophet. 21 Then the people begged for a king, and God gave them Saul son of Kish, a man of the tribe of Benjamin, who reigned for forty years. 22 But God removed Saul and replaced him with David, a man about whom God said, ‘I have found David son of Jesse, a man after my own heart. He will do everything I want him to do.’ 23 “And it is one of King David’s descendants, Jesus, who is God’s promised Savior of Israel! 24 Before he came, John the Baptist preached that all the people of Israel needed to repent of their sins and turn to God and be baptized. 25 As John was finishing his ministry he asked, ‘Do you think I am the Messiah? No, I am not! But he is coming soon—and I’m not even worthy to be his slave and untie the sandals on his feet.’ 26 “Brothers—you sons of Abraham, and also you God-fearing Gentiles—this message of salvation has been sent to us! 27 The people in Jerusalem and their leaders did not recognize Jesus as the one the prophets had spoken about. Instead, they condemned him, and in doing this they fulfilled the prophets’ words that are read every Sabbath. 28 They found no legal reason to execute him, but they asked Pilate to have him killed anyway. 29 “When they had done all that the prophecies said about him, they took him down from the cross and placed him in a tomb. 30 But God raised him from the dead! 31 And over a period of many days he appeared to those who had gone with him from Galilee to Jerusalem. They are now his witnesses to the people of Israel. 32 “And now we are here to bring you this Good News. The promise was made to our ancestors, 33 and God has now fulfilled it for us, their descendants, by raising Jesus. This is what the second psalm says about Jesus: ‘You are my Son. Today I have become your Father.’ 34 For God had promised to raise him from the dead, not leaving him to rot in the grave. He said, ‘I will give you the sacred blessings I promised to David.’ 35 Another psalm explains it more fully: ‘You will not allow your Holy One to rot in the grave.’ 36 This is not a reference to David, for after David had done the will of God in his own generation, he died and was buried with his ancestors, and his body decayed. 37 No, it was a reference to someone else—someone whom God raised and whose body did not decay. 38 “Brothers, listen! We are here to proclaim that through this man Jesus there is forgiveness for your sins. 39 Everyone who believes in him is declared right with God—something the law of Moses could never do. 40 Be careful! Don’t let the prophets’ words apply to you. For they said, 41 ‘Look, you mockers, be amazed and die! For I am doing something in your own day, something you wouldn’t believe even if someone told you about it.’ ”

2 “I am fortunate, King Agrippa, that you are the one hearing my defense today against all these accusations made by the Jewish leaders, 3 for I know you are an expert on all Jewish customs and controversies. Now please listen to me patiently! 4 “As the Jewish leaders are well aware, I was given a thorough Jewish training from my earliest childhood among my own people and in Jerusalem. 5 If they would admit it, they know that I have been a member of the Pharisees, the strictest sect of our religion. 6 Now I am on trial because of my hope in the fulfillment of God’s promise made to our ancestors. 7 In fact, that is why the twelve tribes of Israel zealously worship God night and day, and they share the same hope I have. Yet, Your Majesty, they accuse me for having this hope! 8 Why does it seem incredible to any of you that God can raise the dead? 9 “I used to believe that I ought to do everything I could to oppose the very name of Jesus the Nazarene. 10 Indeed, I did just that in Jerusalem. Authorized by the leading priests, I caused many believers there to be sent to prison. And I cast my vote against them when they were condemned to death. 11 Many times I had them punished in the synagogues to get them to curse Jesus. I was so violently opposed to them that I even chased them down in foreign cities. 12 “One day I was on such a mission to Damascus, armed with the authority and commission of the leading priests. 13 About noon, Your Majesty, as I was on the road, a light from heaven brighter than the sun shone down on me and my companions. 14 We all fell down, and I heard a voice saying to me in Aramaic, ‘Saul, Saul, why are you persecuting me? It is useless for you to fight against my will.’ 15 “‘Who are you, lord?’ I asked. “And the Lord replied, ‘I am Jesus, the one you are persecuting. 16 Now get to your feet! For I have appeared to you to appoint you as my servant and witness. Tell people that you have seen me, and tell them what I will show you in the future. 17 And I will rescue you from both your own people and the Gentiles. Yes, I am sending you to the Gentiles 18 to open their eyes, so they may turn from darkness to light and from the power of Satan to God. Then they will receive forgiveness for their sins and be given a place among God’s people, who are set apart by faith in me.’ 19 “And so, King Agrippa, I obeyed that vision from heaven. 20 I preached first to those in Damascus, then in Jerusalem and throughout all Judea, and also to the Gentiles, that all must repent of their sins and turn to God—and prove they have changed by the good things they do. 21 Some Jews arrested me in the Temple for preaching this, and they tried to kill me. 22 But God has protected me right up to this present time so I can testify to everyone, from the least to the greatest. I teach nothing except what the prophets and Moses said would happen— 23 that the Messiah would suffer and be the first to rise from the dead, and in this way announce God’s light to Jews and Gentiles alike.”

1 Tim 1:15-16 This is a trustworthy saying, and everyone should accept it: “Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners”—and I am the worst of them all. 16 But God had mercy on me so that Christ Jesus could use me as a prime example of his great patience with even the worst sinners. Then others will realize that they, too, can believe in him and receive eternal life.