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TITUS 1:1-3

THE GOD WHO CANNOT LIE

Paul, a bondservant of God and an apostle of Jesus Christ, according to the faith of God's elect and the acknowledgment of the truth which accords with godliness, in hope of eternal life which God, who cannot lie, promised before time began, 3 but has in due time manifested His word through preaching, which was committed to me according to the commandment of God our Savior; (Titus 1:1-3 NKJV)

Is God a liar? Are all those Bible promises just there to lead you up the garden path, to deceive and disappoint you and mock you? Are all your hopes and dreams and callings just a fantasy? May it never be! God cannot lie – and he keeps His promises and executes His plans from long ago.

Sometime before time began (verse 2) God promised eternal life to humanity and it has been in our hearts ever since. (Ecclesiastes 3:11 NLT) 11 God has made everything beautiful for its own time. He has planted eternity in the human heart, but even so, people cannot see the whole scope of God's work from beginning to end.

The promise of eternal life is planted very deeply in the human spirit and underlies human hopes and fears, and appears in numerous myths and legends. There is a realm “somewhere over the rainbow” where there is no more curse, or sickness or crying or pain. A world where evil and injustice have lost their power completely and where there is no misery – just joy and an incredible sense of being truly alive as you were meant to be alive. A place where you say: “Aha, I am finally at home.”

This sense of the promise of eternal life is either a great big lie, or the real truth. Each of us senses the promise and hears its call, but the bitterness and hopelessness in us squashes it flat. We say it’s a rumor – not a promise, but we KNOW it’s a promise; it’s the one spiritual promise we come hard-wired with as human beings.

And we have to make a decision – is it true or false? Is that promise in our heart the truth – or a cunning fantasy designed to destroy us with hope? In other words is God a liar and is His Spirit a deceiver of men? The answer is no – God cannot lie. Heaven is there and eternal life awaits us and we glimpse it in Jesus.

Either there actually is an eternal city - or we are stuck with earthly cities like Manila and New York. The writer to the Hebrews catches this dilemma and the universal, hopeful choice of men and women of faith:
(Hebrews 11:13-16) 13 These all died in faith, not having received the promises, but having seen

them afar off *were assured of them, embraced *them* and confessed that they were strangers and pilgrims on the earth. 14 For those who say such things declare plainly that they seek a homeland. 15 And truly if they had called to mind that *country* from which they had come out, they would have had opportunity to return. 16 But now they desire a better, that is, a heavenly *country.* Therefore God is not ashamed to be called their God, for He has prepared a city for them.

That huge hope in your heart is not a lie; rather it is the truth. It is the truth that God has put there, it is the true hope that God has placed in all human hearts to make us long for him and for eternity - so that He can fulfill that hope. And hope in God does not disappoint. (Romans 5:5)

For many people this is an important question. Christianity seems not to work for long patches of time. We feel like Joseph in the dungeon or Jacob working for Laban. God's goodness seems remote and His promises rather elusive and disappointing. A televangelist may raise our hopes to fever pitch – only for life to dash them to the ground. You may safely ignore the false promises of some charlatans but you must not ignore the deep promise written in your own heart – the promise of a better world - the hope of an eternal home.

God cannot lie. He is the Truth, in Him the whole world holds together –the whole ancient cosmos, in a constant and lawful order. The creation tells us that the Creator is not a God of sudden changes of mind. His Word stands forever, His decrees and laws are unaltered for thousands of years and the natural order is precise in its seasons and rotations. This deep constancy of the ways of God assures us that He is no liar. The Sun does not suddenly change; the constants of physics are not varying day after day. The Universe is reliable and so is God.

For a long while God's promise was hidden in the hearts of men and women of faith – then it appeared, in Christ, in flesh and blood and was made manifest. As it says above: " in hope of eternal life which God, who cannot lie, promised before time began, 3 but has in due time manifested His word through preaching,".

The people in Crete never got to see Jesus in the flesh, to them He was "manifested through preaching", the good news of Jesus came to them in an apostolic proclamation which connected with the hope of eternal life planted deeply in their hearts by God. Thus true gospel preaching manifests Jesus, as the solution to the promise of God, who cannot lie. Jesus is the Tree of Life in the Garden of Eden for which we long. We cannot return to Eden, but we can believe in Christ and have eternal life – both now and in the Ages To Come.

This gospel is given to Paul as a trust, committed to the apostle by the commandment of God our Savior – that is Jesus. (This is one of those passages where Jesus is called God.) The message cannot be changed – it is as eternal as the realms it comes from, it can only be passed on as a trust.

Lastly this word is the "truth that accords with godliness". Heaven is for those who want to be like God in moral perfection – that is according to god-likeness or godliness. Heaven is not run by dark, pragmatic "realpolitik", for the evil will be totally cast out. Heaven is ruled by love and truth and light. Eternity is a place where only goodness reigns – and where only the godly and truthful can reign. Thus godliness will prepare us to live there where True Quality dwells in Glory. The gospel does not prepare us for the stock market; it prepares us for the Kingdom and for the world of Real And Lasting Things – that is for eternal life.

And that is the Promise of the God who cannot lie.

Blessings,

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