

# The Awesome, Awful Promises of God

The Bible is a book that's full of promises, and its main character is a promise-maker. Almost nine thousand promises are made in Scripture, and eighty-five percent of them are promises that God made to human beings. Many of God's promises are hopeful and optimistic, like when He pledged to love us, to save us, and to give us eternal life. But some of His promises in the Bible seem hopeless and grim, such as His repeated vows to punish sins and destroy the world as we know it.

So how should we interpret and understand the full range of God's promises in the Bible? Do God's positive promises contradict with His unpleasant ones, or is there a way to reconcile them? And how do the promises that God made thousands of years ago apply to our lives today? In January and February at The Story, we'll explore these questions and more throughout this series by taking a closer look at the specific promises that God made through the Old Testament prophet Isaiah.

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## **January 5, 2025 - Part 1 - Judgment Is Coming**

**Opening Question:** Off the top of your head, what promises do you remember God making in the Bible?

Who made most (85%) of the 7,487 promises in the Bible, and to whom did he make these promises?

How do most people think of the promises that God made in the Bible - as positive or negative? Why is this view only partially correct?

Do you agree that modern, American Christians are at risk of being too soft? What societal factors might be contributing to this "softening"?

**Isaiah 13:1-2, 6-8, 11** - A prophecy against Babylon that Isaiah son of Amoz saw: "Raise a banner on a bare hilltop, shout to them; beckon them to enter the gates of the nobles... Wail, for the day of the Lord is near; it will come like destruction from the Almighty. Because of this, all hands will go limp, every heart will melt with fear. Terror will seize them, pain and anguish will grip them; they will writhe like a woman in labor. They will look aghast at each other, their faces aflame... I will punish the world for its evil, the wicked for their sins. I will put an end to the arrogance of the haughty and will humble the pride of the ruthless."

How were Isaiah's prophecies about Babylon both **specific** and **symbolic**?

What are the two ways that people tend to interpret difficult Bible passages like Isaiah 13, and why is neither approach very helpful?

## 3 Things to Know About the “AWFUL” Promises of God

### 1. God’s \_\_\_\_\_ Doesn’t \_\_\_\_\_

See *Malachi 3:6* and *James 1:17*

Why is it false to suggest that “Old Testament God” was angry and vengeful while “New Testament God” was kind and merciful? (See *Isaiah 61:1* and *Matthew 18:2-6*)

### 2. God Is \_\_\_\_\_ to \_\_\_\_\_

See *Psalms 33:5* and *Isaiah 61:8*

Why is God uniquely entitled to render judgment on the world?

### 3. God’s \_\_\_\_\_ is \_\_\_\_\_

See *Isaiah 13:11* and *2 Corinthians 1:20*

What would the world look like without God’s righteous judgment?

How do God’s “awful” promises in the Bible actually point to His tender mercy and grace?

Your Notes:



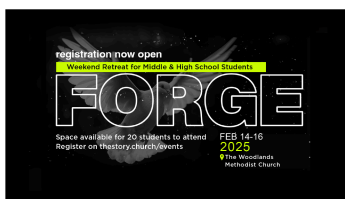
#### Registration OPEN for Spring Groups

Registration for all of our Spring groups opens TODAY! Stop by our registration table by the front entrance on Sundays to learn more about our Group offerings in-person or sign up online via our website page: [thestory.church/groups](https://thestory.church/groups)



#### The Worry-Free Parent with Sissy Goff

We're giving our Story community first access to a special presentation and book signing with author and podcast host Sissy Goff! Purchase tickets here to join us on Saturday, February 8 from 10-11:30am: [thestory.church/events](https://thestory.church/events)



#### FORGE Weekend for Students

All middle and high school students are invited to join us the weekend of February 14-16 for FORGE in The Woodlands! Visit our website to learn more and register your student today. Spots are limited so complete your registration soon!