

“Here is a truly remarkable little booklet that takes on the toughest, most revolutionary problem in contemporary understanding of the Bible, namely, the profoundly mysterious relationship between the Great Commission of the New Testament and the Abrahamic Covenant of the Old—the very backbone of the Bible. Furthermore, all of this comes home to the reader in a strikingly personal manner.” Dr. Ralph D. Winter - United States Center for World Mission

## *Claiming the Promise*

Doug Sparks – The Navigators Asian Ministries  
NavPress – 1991 (A ministry of The Navigators)

My wife, Leila, and I had just returned from five exhausting but fruitful years in Taiwan. We were looking forward to a rest—a time alone together away from the rush of ministry, a time of spiritual and marital renewal. Most of all we were looking forward to the birth of our first child, whom we were calling “the tiny world traveler.” He was conceived in Taiwan and “traveled” through Southeast Asia, India, the Middle East, Europe, and back to the United States before his birth. We were finally settled in beautiful Colorado Springs. Each day was marked by the exhilarating anticipation of becoming a family together!

Excitement was also in the air at The Navigators International Headquarters, where a missionary team was being formed to minister among the Mau Mau terrorists in British detention centers. The Mau Mau had terrorized the countryside of Kenya, torturing and murdering fellow Kenyans who would not take the Mau Mau oaths and help them overthrow the British colonials. The rebellion had been broken, and the Mau Mau were rounded up and imprisoned by the tens of thousands. The church council of Kenya had invited The Navigators to preach and start Bible studies in the prison camps.

As I prayed about this I sensed that God was asking me to go with the team. Yet I protested in my heart. Leila was expecting; I wanted and needed to be at her side and share the miracle of birth with her. I wanted to be the first to behold our baby—to hold, to cuddle, to kiss him.

I shared the dilemma with Leila. We prayed, we surrendered. We asked God to let me stay, but we made ourselves available to Him and His perfect will. We decided not to mention this to anyone but God. Asking that, if it was His will, the Navigator leadership would ask me to join the Kenya team, and we could both know His peace in my going. And indeed, a few weeks later I was invited to go to Africa, and with His accompanying peace, both Leila and I began making the necessary preparations. It was a tearful departure at the airport. What a surrendered, courageous, loving wife God had given me!

Our missionary team flew to London and the next day to Nairobi, Kenya. The continent of Africa was before us. The Mau Mau terrorists provided our beachhead—a cruel, degenerate, murderous lot whom God loved, whom He wanted to forgive and transform into the beauty of Jesus.

What a response we witnessed to the gospel of Jesus Christ! In the first weeks, hundreds responded to the Savior, who gave them life and hope where before there was emptiness and despair. While in Africa, about a week before Leila was due to have our baby, I went out for a long walk and talk with God. I prayed over every detail I could imagine concerning the birth of our child, not knowing that at that very moment our son, Kent, was being born!

The prayer time felt inspired; God speaking things into existence through human lips. From praying for Leila and the baby, God led me to pray for Africa. The sky was filled with sparkling stars, shining brightly in a jet-black sky. They seemed to light up the earth. It was these stars, shining in the darkness, that reminded me as I prayed of God's promise to Abraham in Genesis 22:17-18:

Indeed I will greatly bless you, and I will greatly multiply your seed as the stars of the heavens, and as the sand which is on the seashore; and your seed shall possess the gate of their enemies. And in your seed all the nations of the earth shall be blessed, because you have obeyed My voice. (NASB)

As I was reviewing this promise in my mind, I began claiming it in prayer: "Oh, Lord, give us African disciples of Christ who will shine as lights throughout this dark continent. May they bless every tribe with the knowledge of Christ. May they conquer and possess the strongholds of Satan until the peoples of Africa experience the blessing of God."

God is true to His promise, and He is answering that prayer. Through the ministry of many Navigator missionaries and Africans, God is raising up disciples all over Africa who are blessed and multiplying.

So often we focus our prayers merely on ourselves and our circle of experience. We are like spiritual shut-ins in a world where God is actually doing great and mighty things to fulfill His promise. We tend to stand on the sidelines, asking God for peanuts when we could be asking for continents. The purpose of this booklet is to demonstrate how to claim the promise of God in prayer. To effectively claim the promise we should understand the answers to each of the following questions:

1. What is the meaning of the promise?
2. To whom is the promise given?
3. How does the promise work?
4. Who is the God of the promise?
5. How certain is the promise?
6. What is the need for the promise?
7. How do we claim the promise?

## **What Is the Meaning of the Promise?**

In Genesis 12:1-3 we read,

The Lord had said to Abram, “Leave your country, your people and your father’s household and go to the land I will show you. I will make you into a great nation and I will bless you; I will make your name great, and you will be a blessing. I will bless those who bless you, and whoever curses you I will curse; and all peoples on earth will be blessed through you.”

It is encouraging to our faith to see that God *has* fulfilled a large part of His promise to Abraham. From Abraham *has* come a great nation and a great name—he is the father of all believers (Romans 4:11). The nation of Israel did possess the land and under kings David and Solomon became a mighty empire. Today, God is fulfilling the universal promise made to Abraham to bless all the peoples of the world through Christ.

John R. W. Stott, British theologian, Bible expositor, and author, said, “God made a promise to Abraham. And an understanding of that promise is indispensable to an understanding of the Bible and of the Christian mission. . . The whole of God’s purpose is encapsulated here.”<sup>1</sup>

*The blessing in this promise is salvation in all of its ramifications for every people on earth.* Our common English use for the word *blessing*, “to confer well being, happiness or prosperity on,” is totally inadequate and degrading if applied to this scripture.

The word *blessing* here means divine favor in its ultimate sense. According to Dr. Ralph Winter, it means to “reinherit.” To be blessed of God in this passage is to become a child of God with all its privileges and responsibilities. It is re inheriting that lost position of sonship. It is becoming a joint heir with Christ. It is also being involved in and committed to the family business to bless all peoples of the earth.

The Apostle Paul gives us the New Testament commentary on this promise in Romans 4 and Galatians 3. He expounds on the blessing: It is righteousness by faith, right-standing with a Holy God, without works. It is the blessedness of complete forgiveness. It is justification through faith for everyone who believes in Jesus Christ. It is being indwelt by the Holy Spirit and receiving the divine nature. Christ in us becomes our hope of glory. The Spirit recreates us with the nature and presence of Christ in our lives.

## **To Whom Is the Promise Given?**

God wants all of His children involved in His plan for the whole world through the promise to Abraham.

*Are we as Christians presumptuous in claiming this promise?* No. The promise is for all believers. It is our privilege and right to claim it in prayer for ourselves and for all the peoples on earth.

Notice how the New Testament affirms this: “So those who have faith are blessed along with Abraham, the man of faith” (Galatians 3:9); “If you belong to Christ, then you are Abraham’s seed, and heirs according to the promise” (Galatians 3:29); and “Now you, brothers, like Isaac, are children of promise” (Galatians 4:28).

We are children and heirs who can claim the blessing of Abraham in prayer and by faith. John R. W. Stott said, “Who then are the true descendants of Abraham, the true beneficiaries of God’s promise to him? Paul does not leave us in any doubt. They are the believers in Christ of whatever race.”<sup>2</sup>

God is no respecter of persons. He loves each one infinitely, tenderly, and compassionately. He delights to bless each people, each believer. It is His nature to do so. He is the Father and originator of loving-kindness, graciousness, mercy, and generosity. He is the very essence of “I will bless you”. The Father’s purpose is not just to bless you but to extend the blessing through you to the peoples of the earth. The other side of the coin in blessing is sharing. After the promise “I will bless you” comes the divine imperative “You will be a blessing.”

In God’s creation, He generates seed - bearing plants, fish, birds, animals, humans—all with their own unique seed to reproduce after their kind. God commands them in Genesis 1 to be fruitful and multiply and fill the earth.

God’s plan in re-creation is similar. In Genesis 22:18 God tells Abraham, “In thy seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed” (KJV). Paul points out that this *seed* is Jesus Christ (Galatians 3:16).

So each believer is carrying about the seed of Jesus Christ to reproduce in another. God promises, “I will greatly bless you. I will greatly multiply you.”

After rising from the dead, Jesus gathered His disciples and opened their minds to the Scriptures. They saw how He fulfilled the promises and the prophecies (Luke 24:44-47). Jesus then commanded His disciples to be His witnesses to the uttermost part of the earth (Acts 1:8). In the Great Commission He commands, “Go and make disciples of all nations” (Matthew 28:19). What He commands, He enables us to do. He promises His presence and His power to disciple among all peoples. Having fulfilled the promise Himself, He is able to command us to fulfill it with His power.

Ralph Winter, founder and director for the U.S. Center for World Mission, marries the promise of Genesis 12 with the Great Commission: “There is formidable scholarship that understands the mandate of Genesis 12:1-3, 26:4-5, and 28:14-15 as the first appearance of the Great Commission, pointing, as these verses do, to all the nations of the world, to a spiritual ‘blessing’ involving sonship, and to a mechanism consisting of human intermediaries. Thus, these are the foundation verses linking the whole Bible to the redemptive work of Jesus Christ and His mission to the nations.”<sup>3</sup>

## How Does the Promise Work?

The promise is claimed by faith. The Great Commission is obeyed by faith. The Apostle Paul described the underlying principle: “Therefore, the promise comes by faith, so that it may be by grace and may be guaranteed to all Abraham’s offspring” (Romans 4:16). *The operating principle of the promise is faith, that it may be by grace.*

Abraham believed God and it was credited to him as righteousness. This came *before* circumcision, *before* the Law was given. But some would say, “Didn’t Abraham’s obedience prompt God’s fullest blessing?”

Yes, Abraham left his country and his household, but he didn’t go out “by his own works” but “by faith, responding in obedience,” according to Hebrews 11. Later, when God commanded Abraham to offer his son Isaac as a sacrifice, we see that the motivation and power for obedience came from faith. “By faith Abraham, when God tested him, offered Isaac as a sacrifice” (verse 17). Obedience was the result, the demonstration, of Abraham’s faith. The condition of the promise is a live faith that responds in obedience.

Believing is actually responding to the faith God gives. It accepts righteousness as a gift, and therefore is not consumed with weighing our works to see if we are good enough for God to fulfill His promise to us. One of the great problems within evangelical Christianity is that we receive the promise of Christ’s blessing and salvation by faith, then lapse into trying to propagate this promise by our own works and worthiness. The world task before us requires far more than human effort. It requires a miraculous working of God in fulfillment of His impossible promise!

The key question we have to ask ourselves is, “What principle are we going to operate on in claiming this promise?” The principle of works? In other words, if I will do this, God will do that? The characteristic here is obligation. The result is that I get the credit. I can boast; I can find fulfillment in myself, in what I do. But I can never be sure I have done enough.

Or, are we going to operate on the basis of faith by grace? This focuses on what God says *He will do*, because He is gracious and fully able. I simply act accordingly. I step out in faith believing God will do what He says. The result is that God gets the credit, and I find my fulfillment in God and what He has done according to His promise.

Somewhere along the way, each believer must make a choice. Will it be works, or grace through faith? Which principle are you choosing? It is impossible for these contrary principles to co-exist. Paul pointed this out: “And if [it be] by grace, then it is no longer by works; if it were, grace would no longer be grace” (Romans 11:6).

This indelible lesson was brought home to me when I was working in Europe. One day a young, newly married friend came into my office in London. She was in tears. Repeatedly she had gone to the embassy to get a visa so she could join her missionary husband in Africa, but the official was very rude to her and didn’t want to be bothered.

We decided to pray together on the basis of Christ's worthiness and just because of His grace. When my friend returned to the embassy that same day, the same official cordially granted her visa. He even offered to call the airport for her!

It is by *His grace* that we have boldness and access to God to receive help for every need. We are confident, free, and motivated, then, to do the work of prayer—both for ourselves and for the unreached peoples of the world.

Never mind that we find our faith small compared to Abraham's. The criterion is not the strength of our faith but the focus of it. For our faith to grow we must grow in the knowledge of the object of our faith God Himself.

### **Who Is the God of the Promise?**

In the promise of Genesis 12:1-3, either directly expressed or indirectly, God the Father says seven times, "I will." Who is this God who says, "I will"?

To Abram God reveals Himself as *El Shaddai*, the God "I will" in Genesis 17:1. At this point, Abram was ninety-nine years old. According to Scripture, Sarai's womb was dead. It was physically impossible for Abram and Sarai to have a son. But it is when we humans are hopeless that we can best see who the God of promise really is and what He can do for us. *El Shaddai* means "the Lord Almighty," "the Lord All-Sufficient," the God of infinite power and supply. The object of our faith and prayer is God. What we ask for—how we pray—is determined by our concept of who He is. To pray in truth we must know the promise. To pray in power we must know the God of promise.

Paul gives us some rich insights into the implications of *El Shaddai* in Romans 4:17 — "God, who gives life to the dead and calls into being that which does not exist" (NASB). And in verses 18-21 we see Abraham's response in faith to that revelation of God: "Against all hope, Abraham in hope believed...just as it had been said to him. . . . He faced the fact that his body was as good as dead. . . . He did not waver through unbelief regarding the promise of God, but was strengthened in his faith and gave glory to God, being fully persuaded that God [*El Shaddai*] had power to do what he had promised."

Imagine an old man of ninety-nine having his name changed from Abram, meaning "Barren Exalted One" (which certainly described him), to Abraham, "the Father of a Multitude" and "the Father of Many Nations"! His friends must have thought he had gone senile! But from Abraham's point of view, God had said it and Abraham was ready to "go public" with it. Abraham believed that God *had* made him a father of many nations. And, because he knew the One who had made the promise, he gave glory to God as though it were already true.

We need to see God as *El Shaddai* "the Lord Almighty," "the Lord sufficient," the God of infinite power and supply who hears and answers prayer. This is the nature of the Promiser.

## **How Certain Is the Promise?**

In claiming the promise we must be utterly convinced of its certainty. God has said it. Christ has fulfilled it by becoming a man, dying to purchase our salvation, and rising again. Now He sits at the right hand of God to see the promise become a reality among the peoples of the earth. The promise is fulfilled already in the heavens. We need only to pray it down to earth.

The certainty of the promise is based on the integrity and power of the One giving it. God's promise in Genesis 12 was enough, but for our sakes He confirmed it with an oath in Genesis 22:16 to clarify its certainty: "By Myself I have sworn, declares the LORD" (NASB). The promise had already been given. It was true. God didn't have to give it again to make it true. He didn't have to use an oath to bind Himself to it. But the writer of Hebrews told us, "Because God wanted to make the unchanging nature of his purpose very clear to the heirs of what was promised, he confirmed it with an oath" (Hebrews 6:17).

An oath is like a contract. When you sign a contract you are taking an oath that you will do certain things. This is a long-standing, universal practice. God gave this oath (and He could swear by no greater One than Himself) to let us know He meant it.

In the book of Revelation we see a multitude that no man can number, from all the tribes and peoples and kindreds and tongues. They are standing before the throne of God, worshiping Him and praising Him. His Kingdom has come, the promise is sure; in God's sight it is already done.

The key to certainty, then, is to ask God for what He has already said He wants to do! R. A. Torrey, internationally known preacher and author, has written, "Here is one of the greatest secrets of prevailing prayer: to study the Word to find what God's will is as revealed there in the promises, and then simply take these promises and spread them out before God in prayer with the absolutely unwavering expectation that He will do what He has promised in His Word."<sup>4</sup> Now we know with certainty that it is the Father's will to bless or reinstate us and the peoples of all the earth as His heirs through Christ, so we may ask for it with confidence.

## **What Is the Need for the Promise?**

God's love for those who have never heard is unfailing. He sees and cares about the peoples of the world, their temporal needs, their poverty, hunger, injustice, and suffering. He is deeply compassionate and desires to help them right now, where they are. He also sees beyond the temporal into the eternal. His love is an everlasting love, and He desires that each person on earth be in His family and Kingdom now and forever.

God's approach to the peoples of the world is not a Band-Aid approach. It involves all the means of a holy, just, and loving God forgiving and justifying those who have both willfully and blindly gone their own way. He wants to transform them into Christlikeness and to make them all they were created to be. And so God gives a promise for such a blessing and through Christ provides the means to fulfilling the promise. He gives us in turn the command to act on it:

- “Go ... and preach the gospel to every creature” (Mark 16:15, KJV).
- “Go and make disciples of all nations” (Matthew 28:19).

God’s promise announces His *purpose* to bless all peoples of the world. Christ’s Great Commission announces God’s *program* for doing that today.

Over half of the 5.3 billion people who occupy our planet today live in Asia. China is the first country with a population of over a billion people. Some estimate that by the year 2000 India will have a billion people. But more formidable than the numbers are the thousands of ethnic languages and cultures that separate these peoples from each other and from the gospel.

Politically, 85 percent of Asians (2.3 billion) live in nations where missionaries are banned. Christians can enter these nations only as business and professional people, sharing their lives and witnessing for Christ on a personal basis. Christian ministries are suppressed. The vast majority of the peoples of Asia have never clearly heard the gospel of Jesus Christ.

We don’t have the ability to reach the masses, to penetrate these cultures, languages, and deeply rooted ideologies. We don’t have the army of disciplers to send to them. We don’t have the power to overcome Satan’s influence over these peoples. The task of evangelizing Asia is simply impossible for men.

Jesus said, “But what is impossible with men is possible with God” (Luke 18:27). The One who made the promise “to bless all the peoples of the earth” is the One who has the power to do it. God’s promise and God’s power are working today in remarkable ways through God’s people to accomplish this task. Today Christianity worldwide is growing at a rate of 70,000 people daily.<sup>5</sup>

When the communists took over China in 1949, about 3 million claimed to be Christians. Today, conservative estimates indicate there are 40 to 50 million Christians in China! Africa, too, has seen a phenomenal turning to Christ. Estimates are that by the year 2000 there will be 350 million African Christians in only 120 years of missionary effort.<sup>6</sup>

God is on the move. He is implementing His plan for the earth. We must look to Him and the power of His promise to reach the remaining peoples of every tongue and tribe and nation who have yet to hear of Jesus Christ and the salvation He freely offers.

This missionary task can only be accomplished as we do these things:

- Believe the promise of God.
- Pray over the promise.
- Act on the promise.



## **How Do We Claim the Promise?**

Seeing then that the promise is so certain and so needed, how can we be partakers of it? Our part in the promise to bless the nations is directly proportionate to our faith and our prayers. What petitions should we bring to God? How should we pray the promise into being?

### *In Our Personal Lives*

The Lord promises, “I will bless you.” We need to pray, “Lord, El Shaddai, You say You will pour forth Your life into me. I want to claim Your love in all my relationships. Pour forth Your love. When I’m tempted, pour forth Your holiness. When I’m anxious, pour forth Your peace. When there is injustice, pour forth Your justice. In my business dealings, pour forth Your integrity. When I’m wrong, pour forth Your mercy. When I’m disappointed and discouraged or depressed, pour forth Your joy.”

When we pray and claim “I will bless you,” we remember that we inherit this blessing because God is our Father and Christ’s nature is alive in us by the power of the Holy Spirit. We believe it, ask it, expect it, act on it. We have the promise. We should pray in the manner of Ephesians 3:20, “Now to Him who is able to do exceedingly abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that works in us” (NKJV).

### *In Our Direct Personal Relationships*

The Lord promises, “You will be a blessing.” When Christ becomes a reality in our life, it will affect our relationships. His life will pour over and bless other people. God calls that multiplying! “I will greatly multiply you.” “I will surely multiply you. In order to multiply, we have to let people into our lives to see the difference Christ makes—not a pseudodifference, not a way to act, but reality. They need to see Christ incarnated in us. That incarnation presses us into acting on their behalf. As we build bridges of mutual love, respect, and trust, the gospel message we declare will ring true.

I don’t believe I would have ever come to Christ through talk, argument, or preaching. Over a period of months I saw the tremendous change and blessing Christ made in an old high school buddy of mine. His faith was real, his love for me genuine. That is what made me want Christ’s blessing, too, and I received Him into my life.

In fulfillment of the promise, the divine life is so poured into our lives by El Shaddai that it overflows and blesses others.

### *For the World*

The Lord promises, “All peoples will be blessed through you.” Our praying for the peoples of the world should reflect both the size of the promise and the greatness of the Promiser. The world is small, but God is big. He invites us, “Call to Me, and I will answer you, and show you great and mighty things, which you do not know” (Jeremiah 33:3 NKJV).

In praying for the peoples of the world, we wrestle with the powers of darkness. Satan is called “the ruler of this world” and he has far too long possessed and ruled over these peoples.

The powers of Satan must be defeated in prayer, and laborers with the good news of Jesus Christ must go to these people. This is why Jesus said, “The harvest is plentiful but the workers are few. Ask [beseech] the Lord of the harvest, therefore, to send out workers into his harvest field” (Matthew 9:37-38).

S. D. Gordon, theologian and prolific writer of the early twentieth century, said, “The greatest thing each one of us can do is to pray. If we go personally to some distant land, still we have gone to only one place. Prayer puts us into direct dynamic touch with the world. A man may go aside today and shut the door and as really spend a half hour of his life in India (or Lebanon or China) as though he were there in person. Surely you and I must get more half hours for this secret service.”<sup>7</sup>

Many years ago there was a very dedicated young Christian girl in the eastern United States. She was of poor health and could not be very active for the Lord, so she took upon herself a ministry of prayer. She became burdened for a little-known tribe of African pygmies and “adopted” them as her prayer target. She wrote many missionaries in the region to find out more about this tribe. The pygmies were nomads, constantly roaming to new areas. They were very difficult to reach and evangelize, but she claimed them as “her people.”

She prayed faithfully day after day, week after week, year after year. Eventually her health worsened and she died. Twenty years later, Gospel Recordings, a specialized mission agency, rediscovered this tribe. Using interpreters, their missionaries recorded the gospel in the language of the pygmies. Hundreds of records were made and played to this tribe. The response was extraordinary. These nomadic people heard the good news in their own language, the Holy Spirit worked, and they were wonderfully converted.

The degree of commitment and faith in this tribe was so unusual that Gospel Recordings decided to do some research. What had brought about such a response? Certainly it wasn’t just the recordings. When they discovered how this sickly young girl had prayed in faith for so many years, they concluded this had to be the reason. Her prayers had advanced the gospel among these pygmies twenty years after her death. In God’s time the answer had come down to earth. She had prayed for what was on God’s heart and He had brought it into being.<sup>8</sup>

When we pray, some answers come immediately. Others require waiting on our part, especially when we are praying for ourselves or the unreached peoples of the world. Changed lives require time—that is the way God works.

Jesus taught His disciples the importance of perseverance in Luke 18:1: “that they should always pray and not give up.”

Adoniram Judson was a man who prayed and persevered and labored in Burma. He went to Burma in 1824 at twenty-four years of age. He prayed day after day for God to change the course of that nation. He vowed he would not leave until the cross was planted there forever.

He persisted in prayer. After seven years one man became a disciple. After ten years Judson was mistreated, tortured, and imprisoned. His wife and child died. After sixteen years he had baptized over 100 converts. His second wife died, more children died, he nearly died. He continued to give much time to prayer. After forty years he died in Burma. At his death there were 63 churches, 163 missionaries and workers, and over 7,000 converts in Burma. Judson had planted the cross in Burma forever. He claimed God's promise.<sup>9</sup>

Do you have this promise of God? Yes, you assuredly have it. Whether you neglect it or not, it is yours. Every believer has this promise.

But that's not the question to ask. The more pertinent question is, "Does the promise have you?" When the promise possesses you, Christ possesses you, and you will go anywhere, you will do anything, you will sacrifice, you will endure suffering, you will even die if necessary to spread the blessing to the peoples of the earth—and you will persevere in prayer to that end.

The promise possessed Christ. It drove Him to the cross. His last words before dying were "It is finished." He had fulfilled the promise. His last words on earth were "But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth" (Acts 1:8). The promise possessed Him, and by the power of the Holy Spirit it would possess the apostles and Christians following them until they witnessed to the salvation of Christ to all peoples—to the ends of the earth.

You can be part of that mighty succession and plant the cross forever among a people—like Adoniram Judson or the young girl who prayed and prayed for the pygmies. She didn't go anywhere, but her prayers did, and for all eternity she can rejoice before God with the "little people" she prayed into His Kingdom.

Through believing and persevering prayer you can have a significant part in multiplying the joint heirs with Christ among the peoples of the earth. That is the challenge of Christ's Great Commission. As someone has put it—"This is not the Great *Suggestion*." It is the last and most demanding mandate from our Savior King—that we go and make disciples among all peoples.

Whatever you decide to do with your life from here on, be sure it includes claiming the promise of God . . . which puts you into the world-blessing business. It is yours to experience personally and to use in extending God's Kingdom globally. Those who are claimed by the promise claim the promise most effectively.

## **For Reflection and Action**

You can start right now to claim God's promise in prayer!

1-a With what one specific characteristic of Christ (His mercy, love, courage, etc.) would you like God to strengthen you?

1-b Ask God to strengthen you with this characteristic, so that you can be a blessing to the people in your local world.

2-a What blessing from the life of Christ is already a strength in your life?

2-b How could you apply this blessing to influence someone else this week? Talk with God about this.

3. Ask God which of the peoples of the world you could begin praying for this week. For whom would He like you to start claiming His promise? How can you start finding out about some nation in the world so that you can pray with wisdom?

4. Finally, ask the Lord to write His promise on your heart until it grips you.

If you are interested in a prayer ministry for the unreached peoples of Asia, please write to:

The Navigators  
Prayer Ministry  
P.O. Box 6000  
Colorado Springs, CO 80934

## Notes

1. John R. W. Stott, "The Living God Is a Missionary God," in *You Can Tell the World*, ed. James Berney (Downers Grove, IL: Inter-Varsity Press, 1979), page 11.
2. Stott, page 16.
3. Dr. Ralph Winter, letter to author, July 18, 1990.
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9. Edward Judson, *The Life of Adoniram Judson* (New York: Randolph & Co., 1883).