



Luke 1:37

37 For no word from God will ever fail.'

Reflection

Today's passage is one of those verses of Scripture that strikes you like a hammer on an anvil. Such is its power. It represents the highest truth in the Bible, the truth on which all truths stand. Scripture says a lot about itself but nothing higher than this. God's word is living and active, sharper

than a two-edged sword, it penetrates us, dividing soul and spirit, joints and marrow; it judges the thoughts and attitudes of our heart. God's word is a lamp to our feet, a light for our path (Ps 119:105), it is like fire and like a hammer that breaks rocks to pieces (Jeremiah 23:29). As the rain and the snow come down from heaven, and do not return to it without watering the earth and making it bud and flourish, so that it yields seed for the sower and bread for the eater, so is God's word. God's word is sweeter than honey (Ps 119:103), more precious than pure gold (Ps 19:10), those who recognize God's words for what they are rejoice in them like one who finds the greatest of treasure (Ps 119:162). Scripture says a lot about itself, but there is no higher truth than the one we receive today from Luke 1:37 because on this truth

all the others stand. Today's passage, just one single verse, Luke 1:37

37 For no word from God will ever fail.'

No word from God will ever fail. Not one of them. Ever. And these words are spoken by one who would know; one who has the highest of pedigrees. These words are spoken by the angel Gabriel; an eternal being who stands in the presence of God. He isn't one to waste words, and he's been at God's side since the very beginning. He's seen it all. And after making the stupendous claim that an early teen peasant girl from a small town of even smaller regard would give birth to the Son of God, the Saviour of the World, and the long-promised Messiah who would reign on the throne

of David forever, his kingdom having no end; Gabriel seals his message with the truth on which all Scripture stands, Luke 1:37

37 For no word from God will ever fail.'

And Gabriel would know. Because he's been there right from the beginning watching in breathtaking awe as God's miraculous plan of salvation unfolds. He was there when Satan fell and began to roam to and fro upon the earth. Gabriel was there when humankind followed Satan, peering down out of heaven in horror when Adam and Eve first sinned. He watched on when God covered their nakedness and while listing the consequences of their sin promised one who would one day crush

the Satan (Gen 3:15; Rom 16:20). Gabriel was there when God chose Abraham and his wife Sarah, an elderly couple well passed childbearing years and promised that he would make them into a great nation, as numerous as the stars in the sky, a nation through whom all nations would be blessed. Just as he was there when God delivered that nation, numbering in the millions out of slavery in Egypt. Gabriel looked on in awe as God made a covenant with that nation, a binding contract of relationship, at Mount Sinai, taking a people for himself and dwelling amongst them in the tabernacle, his presence overshadowing it in the form of a cloud much as the Holy Spirit will overshadow Mary and God's presence dwell in her womb. Gabriel heard God promise Moses that he would send a prophet like him, and tell king Da-

vid that one from his line would reign on his throne forever; when he spoke similar words to Daniel about his authority, glory and power, his everlasting dominion that will never pass away (Dan 7:13–14). Gabriel heard God speak to Isaiah, ‘Behold, the virgin will conceive and give birth to a Son!’ (Isa 7:14), to Micah that he will be born in Bethlehem (Micah 5:2), to Ruth that he would be a kinsman-redeemer to the Jewish people (Ruth 4:4-9), to Abraham that he would bring blessing to all the nations (Gen 12:3), to Jeremiah that he would be the object of a murderous plot (Jer 31:15) and to Zechariah that he would be betrayed for 30 pieces of silver (Zech 11:12–13). Gabriel was there when God spoke to Isaiah that this one would be ‘pierced for our transgressions, wounded for our iniquities’; ‘his appearance so dis-

figured beyond that of any human being, his form marred beyond human likeness'; that he would be 'despised and rejected by mankind, a man of suffering, and familiar with pain', that the punishment that would bring us peace would be put upon him and that by his wounds we would be healed', that he would be 'cut off from the land of the living,' that he would die, 'be assigned a grave with the wicked but be buried with the rich in his death' (Isa 52:14; 53:3, 5, 8–9). Gabriel heard God tell David that he would not abandon him to the realm of the dead or let his body see decay (Ps 16:10), that we would be terribly forsaken, then powerfully vindicated, with people from every nation proclaiming his righteousness and declaring to generation after generation of people yet unborn that he has done it! (Psalm 22).

Gabriel has been there from start to finish, see God's promises fulfilled time and time again. He's an eternal being who stands in the presence of God, he's seen God at work in all of human history relentlessly bringing about his plan of salvation. Not one of God's words has ever failed and not one of God's words will ever fail as much because Gabriel knows the character of the one who speaks. He is a promise making promise keep God and the whole universe turns on the reliability of his word and so Gabriel can say with confidence and finality to Mary and to us, Luke 1:37,

no word from God will ever fail.'

Just as the rain and the snow come down from heaven and do not return to it with-

out watering the earth and making it bud and flourish, so that it yields seed for the sower and bread for the eater, so is God's word. It will not return to him empty, but will accomplish what he desires and achieve the purposes for which he sent it (Isa 55:10–11). God's word, Jesus' words never fail. God's promises always come true – which has wonderful and terrifying implications. By them Jesus can say,

My Father's house has many rooms;
... [and] I am going there to prepare
a place for you. John 14:2

But also,

The angels will come and separate
the wicked from the righteous 50
and throw them into the blazing fur-

nace, where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth. Matt 13:49–50

46 ‘Then they will go away to eternal punishment, but the righteous to eternal life.’ Matt 25:46

Think & Pray

No word from God will ever fail. Every single word in the Bible is true. Consider the ramifications of this statement today. What does it mean to you that through your faith in Jesus Christ you will live for all eternity with him living the fullest of lives possible in the new heavens and the new earth? A new body, a renewed world, living for all eternity in the highest expression of what it is to be human, living as God intended

our world to be? And what does it mean to you that those who die outside of Christ will go away to eternal punishment? How do realities like these challenge the way you spend your day to day? The way you feel about your lot in life day to day?

Thank God this today that his word will never fail. Thank God that he is a promise making, promise keeping God who right now upholds the universe with his word of power. And above all, thank God today that all his promises find their 'yes' in Jesus Christ (2 Cor 1:20).