

## How Long Can You Trust God?

One year? Then we get a review to see if God wants to keep us around? Until we make what we think is a colossal mistake? Until He gets tired of us? Is God only God to us for 3-5 years, then we have to go to arbitration with Him to get Him to continue His contract with us?

Malachi 3:6a For I am the LORD, I change not...

Good start! God does not change. His nature of light and love are as true today as when they were written down.

I John 1:5 This then is the message which we have heard of him, and declare unto you, that God is light, and in him is no darkness at all.

God is light; there is no darkness at all in Him.

James 1:17 Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, and cometh down from the Father of lights, with whom is no variableness, neither shadow of turning [change].

Weymouth: ...Who is the source of all light. In Him there is no variation nor the shadow of change.

God gives good and perfect gifts. There isn't even a hint of darkness in Him. But can He be trusted for any length of time? Let's explore God's track record.

Genesis 1:27 So God created man in his own image, in the image of God created he him; male and female created he them.

28 And God blessed them, and God said unto them, Be fruitful, and multiply, and replenish the earth, and subdue it: and have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over every living thing that moveth upon the earth.

29 And God said, Behold, I have given you every herb bearing seed, which is upon the face of all the earth, and every tree, in the which is the fruit of a tree yielding seed; to you it shall be for meat.

30 And to every beast of the earth, and to every fowl of the air, and to every thing that creepeth upon the earth, wherein there is life, I have given every green herb for meat: and it was so.

31 And God saw every thing that he had made, and, behold, it was very good...

God giving mankind dominion was part of everything being made by God, as very good. The only constraint was that He demanded obedience.

Genesis 2:16 And the LORD God commanded the man, saying, Of every tree of the garden thou mayest freely eat:

17 But of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, thou shalt not eat of it: for in the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die.

Was there a time frame given by God that if they hadn't eaten the fruit in one year or 90 days that He was going to arbitrarily hold them responsible anyway? No. All God asked for was obedience. Enjoy the food, the animals, the water, the garden, just do not eat of that one tree. His only request was obedience. God did not keep changing the rules to keep them guessing.

Even when man disobeyed this direct commandment from Him, God was immediately there with a plan to help redeem mankind.

Genesis 3:15 And I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed; it shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise his heel.

Let's consider the relationship God had with Abraham.

Genesis 17:1 And when Abram was ninety years old and nine, the LORD appeared to Abram, and said unto him, I am the Almighty God [El Shaddai]; walk before me, and be thou perfect.

The Torah: ...Walk in my ways and be blameless.

Moffat: ...Live ever mindful of my presence.

2 And I will make my covenant between me and thee, and will multiply thee exceedingly.

3 And Abram fell on his face: and God talked with him, saying,

4 As for me, behold, my covenant is with thee, and thou shalt be a father of many nations.

5 Neither shall thy name any more be called Abram, but thy name shall be Abraham; for a father of many nations have I made thee.

6 And I will make thee exceeding fruitful, and I will make nations of thee, and kings shall come out of thee.

7 And I will establish my covenant between me and thee and thy seed after thee in their generations for an everlasting covenant, to be a God unto thee, and to thy seed after thee.

8 And I will give unto thee, and to thy seed after thee, the land wherein thou art a stranger, all the land of Canaan, for an everlasting possession; and I will be their God.

9 And God said unto Abraham, Thou shalt keep my covenant therefore [obey me], thou, and thy seed after thee in their generations.

10 This is my covenant, which ye shall keep [be obedient to], between me and you and thy seed after thee; Every man child among you shall be circumcised. [That's it?]

God initiated an offer to take care of Abraham and his seed. There was no time limit to it. The only condition was that they obeyed Him. He asked for a physical sign to seal the contract, something that would remind the people daily what God had offered and would not renege on. The sign of circumcision, like manna in the desert, would be a constant reminder of God's goodness.

Genesis 17:26 In the selfsame day was Abraham circumcised, and Ishmael his son.

27 And all the men of his house, born in the house, and bought with money of the stranger, were circumcised with him.

Abraham agreed to this covenant with God. God would defend, support, and supply Abraham and his descendants, as long as they obeyed him.

Genesis 24:1 And Abraham was old, and well stricken in age: and the LORD had blessed Abraham in all things.

Do you think Abraham obeyed God? Was Abraham perfect? No. But he did believe God and act on the promises of God. He worshipped and served only one God.

Genesis 25:7 And these are the days of the years of Abraham's life which he lived, an hundred threescore and fifteen years.

From the age of 70 to the age of 175, God took care of Abraham in every situation, no matter how extreme. God took care of him when he listened and obeyed.

He left his family in Ur of the Chaldees, and journeyed to a land he did not know. Through famines, during an ill-fated trip to Egypt, having his wife taken by Pharaoh and again later by Abimelech, God helped him through these situations.

He nearly goes to war striving over water rights with Lot, his brother-in-law and later with the ruler of Gerar, Abimelech. [title, like Pharaoh, or Caesar]

God was with Abraham when he rescues Lot and his belongings from the powerful coalition of four kings, led by Chedorlaomer. God saved his son from being sacrificed. In fact, having a son in the first place was a miracle. As he grew older, God was there helping him. His wife Sarah dies when he is 137 years of age. Not only does he remarry, but has several children with his new wife.

God was with Abraham throughout all of these trials of life. Even during perhaps the greatest challenge of his elder years, finding the perfect wife for his son Isaac, who is in the Christ-line.

Romans 4:20 He staggered not at the promise of God through unbelief; but was strong in faith, giving glory to God;

21 And being fully persuaded that, what he had promised, he was able also to perform.

The context of these verses deal with having a male heir in the Christ-line. However, they are indicative of how he lived his life. He gave God the glory. He knew that it was God who prospered him and it was God who protected him.

Abraham got to the place where he trusted that God would take care of him in every detail of his life all his life.

Maybe God put a time limit on the blessings he gave to Moses?

Deuteronomy 8:1 All the commandments which I command thee this day shall ye observe to do, that ye may live, and multiply, and go in and possess the land which the LORD sware unto your fathers.

2 And thou shalt remember all the way which the LORD thy God led thee these forty years in the wilderness, to humble thee, and to prove thee, to know what was in thine heart, whether thou wouldest keep his commandments, or no.

Maybe God's time limit is 40 years? No. Qualification was time spent in the wilderness.

3 And he humbled thee...

Moffat: So he made you feel your need of Him...

After all you are in a desert, a wilderness where there is no food or water or supermarkets to replenish supplies.

3 And he humbled thee, and suffered thee to hunger, and fed thee with manna, which thou knewest not, neither did thy fathers know; that he might make thee know that man doth not live by bread only, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of the LORD doth man live.

Jesus Christ learned this lesson too.

4 Thy raiment waxed not old upon thee, neither did thy foot swell, these forty years.

How much have you spent for clothing in the last 40 years? God took care of all the physical needs of His people so they could concentrate on every word that proceeds out of the mouth of God.

5 Thou shalt also consider in thine heart, that, as a man chasteneth [disciplines] his son, so the LORD thy God chasteneth [disciplines] thee.

New English: Take this lesson to heart: that the Lord your God was disciplining you as a father disciplines his son.

[key] 6 Therefore thou shalt keep the commandments of the LORD thy God, to walk in his ways, and to fear him.

God wants obedience. Then He is going to describe what they get in return.

7 For the LORD thy God bringeth thee into a good land [God description of a good piece of property], a land of brooks of water, of fountains and depths that spring out of valleys and hills;

8 A land of wheat, and barley, and vines, and fig trees, and pomegranates; a land of oil olive, and honey;

9 A land wherein thou shalt eat bread without scarceness, thou shalt not lack any thing in it; a land whose stones are iron, and out of whose hills thou mayest dig brass.

Brass is copper; or bronze which is copper and tin. About a thousand years later zinc was added to make brass.

10 When thou hast eaten and art full, then thou shalt bless the LORD thy God for the good land which he hath given thee.

Be thankful for what God had given them.

11 Beware that thou forget not the LORD thy God, in not keeping his commandments, and his judgments, and his statutes, which I command thee this day:

12 Lest when thou hast eaten and art full, and hast built goodly houses, and dwelt therein;

13 And when thy herds and thy flocks multiply, and thy silver and thy gold is multiplied, and all that thou hast is multiplied;

Natural progression when one keeps God first. God first adds, then multiplies abundance.

14 [Don't let ego creep in] Then thine heart be lifted up, and thou forget the LORD thy God, which brought thee forth out of the land of Egypt, from the house of bondage;

15 Who led thee through that great and terrible wilderness, wherein were fiery serpents, and scorpions, and drought, where there was no water; who brought thee forth water out of the rock of flint; [Flint is representative of extremely hard rock.]

16 Who fed thee in the wilderness with manna, which thy fathers knew not, that he might humble thee, and that he might prove thee, to do thee good at thy latter end;

17 And thou say in thine heart, My power and the might of mine hand hath gotten me this wealth. [I did it myself]

18 But thou shalt remember the LORD thy God: for it is he that giveth thee power to get wealth, that he may establish his covenant which he sware unto thy fathers, as it is this day.

Keep God in the picture. Remember Him. He is the one who gives you the power to get wealth.

19 And it shall be, if thou do at all forget the LORD thy God, and walk after other gods, and serve them, and worship them, I testify against you this day that ye shall surely perish.

20 As the nations which the LORD destroyeth before your face, so shall ye perish; because ye would not be obedient unto the voice of the LORD your God.

If, they do not remember the true God, then they will go after other gods, and stop being obedient to the one true God who has the power to get them wealth.

In the wilderness it was pretty simple, obey God, live. Disobey God, die. But once they get into the promise land the contrast is not as stark, the consequences are not as evident. This truth is the same today. We need God in the good times, as well as the not so good times.

There was no time limit established by God but rather obedience to Him, and Him alone and you shall prosper.

In Psalm 18 we see what God is willing to do on behalf of David, His servant. You see the power of prayer in this Psalm. God will move anything to help His praying, needful children.

Psalm 18:1 I will love thee, O LORD, my strength.

2 The LORD is my rock, and my fortress, and my deliverer; my God, my strength, in whom I will trust; my buckler, and the horn of my salvation, and my high tower.

3 I will call upon the LORD, who is worthy to be praised: so shall I be saved from mine enemies.

God was a personal God to David; a real, personal, living entity. Consider all the I's and the my's. David's early adulthood was not too pleasant, but God protected him.

4 The sorrows [cords] of death compassed [entangled] me, and the floods of ungodly men made me afraid [overwhelmed me].

5 The sorrows of hell compassed me about: the snares of death prevented [confronted] me.

6 In my distress I called upon the LORD, and cried unto my God: he heard my voice out of his temple, and my cry came before him, even into his ears.

NIV: The cords of the grave coiled around me.

7 Then the earth shook and trembled; the foundations also of the hills moved and were shaken, because he was wroth.

8 There went up a smoke out of his nostrils, and fire out of his mouth devoured: coals were kindled by it.

9 He bowed the heavens also, and came down: and darkness was under his feet.

New English: He swept the skies aside as he descended, thick darkness lay under his feet.

10 And he rode upon a cherub, and did fly: yea, he did fly [swooped down] upon the wings of the wind.

11 He made darkness his secret place [covering]; his pavilion [canopy] round about him were dark waters [dense vapor] and thick clouds of the skies.

12 At the brightness that was before him his thick clouds passed, hail stones and coals of fire.

NIV: Out of the brightness of his presence clouds advanced, with hailstones and bolts of lightening.

13 The LORD also thundered in the heavens, and the Highest gave his voice; hail stones and coals of fire.

14 Yea, he sent out his arrows, and scattered them; and he shot out [bolts of] lightnings, and discomfited [routed] them.

15 Then the channels [valleys] of waters [the sea] were seen, and the foundations of the world were discovered [laid bare] at thy rebuke, O LORD, at the blast of the breath of thy nostrils.

16 He sent from above [He reached down from on high], he took me, he drew me out of many [deep] waters.

17 He delivered [rescued] me from my strong [powerful] enemy, and from them which hated me: for they were too strong for me.

18 They prevented [confronted] me in the day of my calamity [disaster]: but the LORD was my stay support].

19 He brought me forth also into a large [open] place; he delivered [rescued] me, because he delighted in me.

20 The LORD rewarded me according to my righteousness; according to the cleanness of my hands hath he recompensed me.

21 For I have kept the ways of the LORD, and have not wickedly departed from my God.

I have not done evil by turning from my God. David did not chase other gods. He kept the ways of the Lord. He took the time to understand them, then he made a decision to obey what God wanted. Then God rescued him and rewarded him accordingly.

Do you think God will act this way for you? Why not? We are His children.

God does not change. The way He communicates or can work with people in different administrations changes, but there is no time limit on the goodness of God. It only expires when we expire.

1 John 3:1 Behold, what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called the sons of God: therefore the world knoweth us not, because it knew him not.

2 Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that, when he shall appear, we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is.

A key word is NOW. What can God do for us NOW? In today's world of what have you done for me lately, what is God doing for us NOW. Here He calls us His children.

Did we read any time limit in this verse? As His son no, but with a future reality, yes. God says, "Now you are My child, but later you will be like My only begotten son Jesus Christ, who was the first fruits out from among the dead." We will be like him, with a new spiritual body that never comes into condemnation again.

Today, now, what are we to do? Obey God, love God, worship God, stand for God, believe regarding His son Jesus Christ, witness His power, and reconcile men and women back to God. How's that for starters? Get born again and learn to walk by the spirit. Listen to God via His Word and obey.

1 John 2:15 Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world. If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him.

16 For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world.

17 And the world passeth away, and the lust thereof: but he that doeth the will of God abideth for ever.

Love and obey God not the world. This world and its deception passes away.

18 My little children, let us not love in word, neither in tongue; but in deed and in truth.

19 And hereby we know that we are of the truth, and shall assure our hearts before him.

20 For if our heart condemn us, God is greater than our heart, and knoweth all things.

21 Beloved, if our heart condemn us not, then have we confidence toward God.

22 And whatsoever we ask, we receive of him, because we keep his commandments, and do those things that are pleasing in his sight.

23 And this is his commandment, That we should believe on the name of his Son Jesus Christ, and love one another, as he gave us commandment.

Love in action. Love is in vogue all the time.

II Corinthians 6:1 We then, as workers together with him, beseech you also that ye receive not the grace of God in vain.

2 (For he saith, I have heard thee in a time accepted, and in the day of salvation have I succoured thee: behold, now is the accepted time; behold, now is the day of salvation.)

Now is the time to do something for God. Now is the day of salvation. Today is our time in the Body of Christ. God could have had the entire Body of Christ alive at one time. Instead He chose to have it stretch out over 2000 plus years. Today, now, it is our turn. What is your part in the Body of Christ and what are you doing about it?

As you read God's Word, you see the time of Enoch, of Noah, of Moses, of Joshua, of Samuel, of David, of Malachi, of John the Baptist, of Peter, of Paul, of Timothy. All of these great men died. They cannot physically help the body of Christ today. Only by inspiration.

Hebrews 11:13 These all [OT believers] died in faith, not having received the promises, but having seen them afar off, and were persuaded of them, and embraced them, and confessed that they were strangers and pilgrims on the earth.

14 For they that say such things declare plainly that they seek a country.

15 And truly, if they had been mindful of that country from whence they came out, they might have had opportunity to have returned.

16 But now they desire a better country, that is, an heavenly: wherefore God is not ashamed to be called their God: for he hath prepared for them a city.

This was their hope. Ours is the second coming of Jesus Christ. It is promised with absolute certainty. Until he returns, what are we doing?

Today, December 2003, it is our time. Put your name into the book with plenty of rewards next to it. Collect rewards daily. It is up to us to make God's Word living and real to the world today. It is our time. Make something of yourself now, because the days are rapidly passing. We are one day closer to the return of Christ. We must all stand before the judgment seat of Christ.

II Corinthians 5:10 For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ; that every one may receive the things done in his body, according to that he hath done, whether it be good or bad.

This is a judgment of rewards because Jesus Christ paid the price for all of our sins, our shortcomings.

Romans 13:11 And that, knowing the time, that now it is high time to awake out of sleep: for now is our salvation nearer than when we believed.

Salvation through Jesus Christ is physical, mental, and spiritual. It begins with the new birth, is manifested in our walks here on earth, reaches it's fullness with the return, and extends throughout all eternity.

II Timothy 3:14 But continue thou in the things which thou hast learned and hast been assured of, knowing of whom thou hast learned them;

Now, we need to continue in the rightly divided Word of God. Stay focused on the things of God.

II Timothy 4:1 I charge thee therefore before God, and the Lord Jesus Christ, who shall judge the quick and the dead at his appearing and his kingdom;

2 Preach the word; be instant in season, out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort with all longsuffering and doctrine.

Our lives are short. Make the most of each day.

Psalm 103:14 For he knoweth our frame; he remembereth that we are dust.  
15 As for man, his days are as grass: as a flower of the field, so he flourisheth.

16 For the wind passeth over it, and it is gone; and the place thereof shall know it no more.

17 But the mercy of the LORD is from everlasting to everlasting upon them that fear him, and his righteousness unto children's children;

18 To such as keep his covenant, and to those that remember his commandments to do them.

God will take care of us for our whole life. We can trust God every day and in every situation.

Psalm 37:25 I have been young, and now am old; yet have I not seen the righteous forsaken, nor his seed begging bread.

Ecclesiastes 12 is a chapter that deals with old age and death.

Ecclesiastes 12:1 Remember now thy Creator in the days of thy youth, [don't wait until you are old to concern yourself with your eternal future] while the evil days come not, nor the years draw nigh, when thou shalt say, I have no pleasure in them;

Few old people still have pleasure in life.

2 While the sun, or the light, or the moon, or the stars, be not darkened, nor the clouds return after the rain:

3 In the day when the keepers of the house shall tremble [feet], and the strong men shall bow themselves [knees], and the grinders cease because they are few [teeth], and those that look out of the windows be darkened [eyes],

4 And the doors shall be shut in the streets [ears], when the sound of the grinding is low [not much grain to grind for meals], and he shall rise up at the voice of the bird [even a bird call frightens you], and all the daughters of musick shall be brought low [voice not strong];

5 Also when they shall be afraid of that which is high [afraid of high places], and fears shall be in the way, and the almond tree shall flourish [an almond tree in blossom resembles an old person], and the grasshopper shall be a burden [weak], and desire shall fail [no appetite]: because man goeth to his long home [the grave], and the mourners go about the streets:

The whole town attends a funeral. Shops close. Even the mayor attends, no matter if the person was poor.

6 Or ever the silver cord be loosed, or the golden bowl be broken, or the pitcher be broken at the fountain, or the wheel broken at the cistern.

The wheel is the stretcher-like bier that you carry the body on. It is burnt at the grave site.

The only woman who goes to the grave site is the widow. She goes to loosen the silver cord she received as a bride and to put it in the grave with the body. She then immediately leaves to go home to wash herself.

The pall-bearers decontaminate themselves from the dead person by washing at the gravesite and by breaking the water pitchers that they used.

The golden bowl is a clay pot overlaid with gold that has coals of fire in it. It is carried by the eldest son and is broken at the head of the grave to symbolize the soul leaving the body.

7 Then shall the dust return to the earth as it was: and the spirit shall return unto God who gave it.

8 Vanity of vanities, saith the preacher; all is vanity.

9 And moreover, because the preacher was wise, he still taught the people knowledge; yea, he gave good heed, and sought out, and set in order many proverbs.

10 The preacher sought to find out acceptable words: and that which was written was upright, even words of truth.

11 The words of the wise are as goads [They keep us sharp.], and as nails [spears] fastened by the masters of assemblies [where the judges sit], which are given from one shepherd.

Each male of the village was to bring a spear to where the judges assemble and leave it there. This is saying that only one shepherd provided the spears for the whole village.

12 And further, by these, my son, be admonished: of making many books there is no end; and much study is a weariness of the flesh.

13 Let us hear the conclusion of the whole matter: Fear God, and keep his commandments: for this is the whole *duty* of man.

14 For God shall bring every work into judgment, with every secret thing, whether it be good, or whether it be evil.

The point is, we are not getting any younger. We cannot do anything about the past. Today we are ambassadors. Today we are children of God. Now is our salvation, the

return of Christ, nearer. What are you doing to gain eternal rewards now, today? Live today for eternal rewards.

God does not change. What changes is our rewards when we obey or disobey Him.

### DO IT NOW

If with pleasure you are viewing  
Any work a man is doing,  
If you like him or you love him, tell him now.  
Don't withhold your approbation  
Till the parson makes oration  
And he lies with snowy lilies o'er his brow.  
For no matter how you shout it,  
He won't really care about it,  
He won't know how many tear drops you have shed.  
If you think some praise is due him  
Now's the time to slip it to him;  
For he cannot read his tombstone when he's dead.  
More that fame and more than money  
Is the comment kind and sunny;  
And the hearty warm approval of a friend.  
For it gives to life a saviour,  
And it makes you stronger, braver,  
And it gives you heart and spirit to the end.  
If he's earned your praise bestow it.  
If you like him let him know it.  
Let the words of true encouragement be said.  
Do not wait till life is over,  
And he's underneath the clover;  
For he cannot read his tombstone when he's dead.