

With the 8th commandment, the Lord protects our good reputation. One's reputation is something that is very valuable — the Bible says it is even more valuable than silver and gold. A person's position and reputation do affect the way that people trust you, both for good and for bad. When a person has a good reputation, people will still offer respect and honor even during difficult times. If you have a bad reputation, people will not trust you no matter what you say or do. In the Word of God before us, the Lord God is pointing the eyes of the Israelites to His reputation, and asking them to trust Him because of it. He says the same thing to us today. He says, I AM THE LORD! In saying that, He is reminding all that I. He is the One Who established His covenant with us, and II. He is the One Who fulfills His covenant with His children.

The Lord had called Moses to lead His people out of slavery in Egypt to the promised land in Palestine. But when Moses went before pharaoh to demand that he let the Israelites go, pharaoh responded, not only by refusing to let them go, but also by making their work as slaves even harder. This really disheartened the Israelites because what they had expected to happen did not happen. For this reason, the Lord spoke again through Moses, reminding the people, **“I am the Lord. I appeared to Abraham, to Isaac and to Jacob as God Almighty, but by my name the Lord I did not make myself known to them. I also established my covenant with them to give them the land of Canaan, where they lived as aliens.”** (3-4) Here the Lord was referring back to His name or His whole reputation. He asked them to remember what all He had promised the patriarchs, and how He had shown His almighty power in protecting and preserving them. He had called Abraham out of his homeland, and protected and prospered him as he wandered throughout the land that the Lord had promised that one day would be his. He had shown Himself to be the almighty God as He watched over them in the land in which they lived as strangers.

But the Lord had also given greater promises — promises that He would send a Savior through Whom the whole world would be blessed. These promises of what God said He would do form the covenant of love and forgiveness which He made with His people. And this covenant, or the promises which He made, are the reason that He is called the Lord. You see, the name “LORD” is God's special name for Himself that reminds us whenever we hear it of His faithful love which He has for us. Whenever we hear the name, LORD, we are to think of the promise which He made from the very beginning to send a Savior to redeem fallen mankind. We are to think of the promises which He made to Abraham, not just in giving him the land, but also of making him the father of a great nation of believers. All of these were promises which God, the Lord, had made, but which were not yet fulfilled. That is why He says that by His name “the Lord” He did not make Himself known to them yet. They were all promises yet to be fulfilled, so they could not look back and see that He had been faithful to all of those promises.

But all of that was about to change. Even though the Lord had not yet fulfilled all of His promises, that did not mean He was not vitally concerned about His people. He heard their groanings and cries for help. He knew the troubles they were in because of the slave bondage the pharaoh had put them under. And He was about to do something about all of it. That is why He had called Moses to come and lead them to the promised land. The promises which He had made to them through their forefathers were about to be fulfilled. How could they know that would happen? Because He is the Lord. He is the faithful God Who loved them and was taking care of them through everything. He had not forgotten them or His promises. It was just that the time had not yet been right. But now it was, and they were going to see with their own eyes that the Lord was the faithful God Who bound Himself to fulfill all of the promises which He had made to His people.

We are used to having people make promises to us. We are often told by politicians what wonderful things they will accomplish, if only they are elected. But, most often, they have to renege on many of those promises for various different reasons. Or we are promised by a repairman that he will be at our door at such and such a time, but often he is not able to keep his word because of problems which he ran into at his previous appointment. Even in our relationships with one another we cannot always carry out

those things which we promised we would do. So we are used to having our hopes built up through promises, but then also to have them dashed because those promises cannot be carried through. So when we hear the Lord our God make promises to us, promises of things which are far better than anything we could ever have hoped to ask for, our sinful nature probably has a little bit of pessimism built in, maybe even expecting God not to be able to grant all that He has promised. How often have we not doubted that the Lord would grant us the things for which we have prayed?

But that is not the way the Lord does things. When He makes promises, He will always be true to His Word. He will never renege on anything that He has said He will do for us. Of course, He may not do it according to our timetable, or exactly like we might think He ought to do it. But He will always be faithful to His Word. At times we may have to wait for Him to grant what He has promised, but He will never abandon us as though He did not care for us.

Not only has the Lord made promises to us, thus establishing His covenant with us, but He is the One Who will fulfill everything that He has promised. He spoke to the Israelites, **“I am the Lord and I will bring you out from under the yoke of the Egyptians. I will free you from being slaves to them and will redeem you with an outstretched arm and with mighty acts of judgment. I will take you as my own people, and I will be your God. Then you will know that I am the Lord your God.”** (6-7) We know how the account in Exodus continues. Through ten plagues, the Lord did free Israel from the land of slavery, and made them His own special people. With mighty acts of judgment, the Lord was faithful to all of His promises. He brought them to the land which He had promised. The Lord was true to every promise which He had made. That is how He keeps His reputation of being the Lord, the faithful God Who is true to His Word.

But more important than all of these outward promises which He kept for the children of Israel are the promises which He kept in sending His own Son into this world to redeem all mankind from the guilt of their sins, and to make each one of us His holy child. We have been made that great nation which was promised to Abraham, being made a part of it through faith in Jesus. Those are the promises which He has also been faithful to, and which make Him our faithful Lord.

You see, in order to keep His reputation intact, the Lord must always remain faithful to all of the promises which He has made to us. He has bound Himself to keeping them, and He will never go back on a single one of them. We can trust Him to keep all of His promises. Our sinful nature at times may begin to doubt the Lord’s ability, or maybe even His desire, to help us. Those feelings arise only because of the doubts, or faithlessness which still clings to us. So we also need to hear Him say to us, **“I am the Lord.”** Just as we trust Him to wash away the guilt of all of our sins, so we also are to trust that He will be true to each of the promises which He has made to us.

God always remains faithful to us and all of His promises. How can we be sure of that? Because He is the Lord. He has always been faithful to all that He has said He would do for us. And that gives us the confidence that He will continue to do everything He has promised in all of the things yet to come. We have His reputation of being faithful to help us through any doubts which may arise within us. He has made these promises to us, and therefore we can be sure that He will be faithful to all of them. He is the Lord, the faithful God.