

**LET  
GOD  
ARISE!**

*The Battle Belongs to the Lord  
Prayer Guide #1*

*Rev. Dr. Don L. Davis*



**God's Covenant Faithfulness**  
Deuteronomy 7.8-9

**Great Is Thy Faithfulness**

*Thomas O. Chisholm and William M. Runyan*

Great is Thy faithfulness, O God my Father!  
There is no shadow of turning with Thee;  
Thou changest not, Thy compassions they fail not.  
As Thou hast been Thou forever wilt be.

Great is Thy faithfulness! Great is Thy faithfulness!  
Morning by morning new mercies I see;  
All I have needed Thy hand hath provided.  
Great is Thy faithfulness, Lord, unto me.

Summer and winter and springtime and harvest.  
Sun, moon, and stars in their courses above.  
Join with all nature in manifold witness  
To Thy great faithfulness, mercy and love.

Pardon for sin and a peace that endureth.  
Thine own dear presence to cheer and to guide;  
Strength for today and bright hope for tomorrow,  
Blessings all mine, with ten thousand beside!

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**Yahweh God swears by an oath that he will fulfill his word to his own**

Gen. 22.16-18 - and said, “By myself I have sworn, declares the Lord, because you have done this and have not withheld your son, your only son, [17]I will surely bless you, and I will surely multiply your offspring as the stars of heaven and as the sand that is on the seashore. And your offspring shall possess the gate of his enemies, [18] and in your offspring shall all the nations of the earth be blessed, because you have obeyed my voice.”

Gen. 26.3 - Sojourn in this land, and I will be with you and will bless you, for to you and to your offspring I will give all these lands, and I will establish the oath that I swore to Abraham your father.

Gen. 50.24 - And Joseph said to his brothers, “I am about to die, but God will visit you and bring you up out of this land to the land that he swore to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob.”

Ps. 89.35 - Once for all I have sworn by my holiness; I will not lie to David.

Ps. 105.6-9 - O offspring of Abraham, his servant, children of Jacob, his chosen ones! [7] He is the Lord our God; his judgments are in all the earth. [8] He remembers his covenant forever, the word that he commanded, for a thousand generations, [9] the covenant that he made with Abraham, his sworn promise to Isaac.

Luke 1.68-75 - Blessed be the Lord God of Israel, for he has visited and redeemed his people [69] and has raised up a horn of salvation for us in the house of his servant David, [70] as he spoke by the mouth of his holy prophets from of old, [71] that we should be saved from our enemies and from the hand of all who hate us; [72] to show the mercy promised to our fathers and to remember his holy covenant, [73] the oath that he swore to our father Abraham, to grant us [74] that we, being delivered from the hand of our enemies, might serve him without fear, [75] in holiness and righteousness before him all our days.



*Unless otherwise noted, all Scriptures are taken from the English Standard Version (ESV)*

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Heb. 6.13 - For when God made a promise to Abraham, since he had no one greater by whom to swear, he swore by himself. Heb. 6.17-18 - So when God desired to show more convincingly to the heirs of the promise the unchangeable character of his purpose, he guaranteed it with an oath, [18] so that by two unchangeable things, in which it is impossible for God to lie, we who have fled for refuge might have strong encouragement to hold fast to the hope set before us.

**God is faithful in fulfilling every promise of his covenant**

Lev. 26.44-45 - Yet for all that, when they are in the land of their enemies, I will not spurn them, neither will I abhor them so as to destroy them utterly and break my covenant with them, for I am the Lord their God. [45] But I will for their sake remember the covenant with their forefathers, whom I brought out of the land of Egypt in the sight of the nations, that I might be their God: I am the Lord.

Deut. 4.31 - For the Lord your God is a merciful God. He will not leave you or destroy you or forget the covenant with your fathers that he swore to them.

Deut. 7.8-9 - but it is because the Lord loves you and is keeping the oath that he swore to your fathers, that the Lord has brought you out with a mighty hand and redeemed you from the house of slavery, from the hand of Pharaoh king of Egypt. [9] Know therefore that the Lord your God is God, the faithful God who keeps covenant and steadfast love with those who love him and keep his commandments, to a thousand generations.

Judg. 2.1 - Now the angel of the Lord went up from Gilgal to Bochim. And he said, "I brought you up from Egypt and brought you into the land that I swore to give to your fathers. I said, 'I will never break my covenant with you.'"



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1 Kings 8.23 - and said, “O Lord, God of Israel, there is no God like you, in heaven above or on earth beneath, keeping covenant and showing steadfast love to your servants who walk before you with all their heart.”

Ps. 105.8-11 - He remembers his covenant forever, the word that he commanded, for a thousand generations, [9] the covenant that he made with Abraham, his sworn promise to Isaac, [10] which he confirmed to Jacob as a statute, to Israel as an everlasting covenant, [11] saying, “To you I will give the land of Canaan as your portion for an inheritance.”Ps. 106.45 - For their sake he remembered his covenant, and relented according to the abundance of his steadfast love.

Ps. 111.5 - He provides food for those who fear him; he remembers his covenant forever.

Mic. 7.20 - You will show faithfulness to Jacob and steadfast love to Abraham, as you have sworn to our fathers from the days of old.

**Due to our inability to keep his covenant, God has established a second, eternal covenant through the blood of Jesus on behalf of all humankind**

Jer. 31.31-34 - “Behold, the days are coming, declares the Lord, when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and the house of Judah, [32] not like the covenant that I made with their fathers on the day when I took them by the hand to bring them out of the land of Egypt, my covenant that they broke, though I was their husband, declares the Lord. [33] But this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, declares the Lord: I will put my law within them, and I will write it on their hearts. And I will be their God, and they shall be my people. [34] And no longer shall each one teach his neighbor and each his brother, saying, 'Know the Lord,' for they shall all know me, from the least of them to the greatest, declares the Lord. For I will forgive their iniquity, and I will remember their sin no more.”



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Heb. 8.4-13 - Now if he were on earth, he would not be a priest at all, since there are priests who offer gifts according to the law. [5] They serve a copy and shadow of the heavenly things. For when Moses was about to erect the tent, he was instructed by God, saying, “See that you make everything according to the pattern that was shown you on the mountain.” [6] But as it is, Christ has obtained a ministry that is as much more excellent than the old as the covenant he mediates is better, since it is enacted on better promises. [7] For if that first covenant had been faultless, there would have been no occasion to look for a second. [8] For he finds fault with them when he says: “Behold, the days are coming, declares the Lord, when I will establish a new covenant with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah, [9] not like the covenant that I made with their fathers on the day when I took them by the hand to bring them out of the land of Egypt. For they did not continue in my covenant, and so I showed no concern for them, declares the Lord. [10] For this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, declares the Lord: I will put my laws into their minds, and write them on their hearts, and I will be their God, and they shall be my people. [11] And they shall not teach, each one his neighbor and each one his brother, saying, ‘Know the Lord,’ for they shall all know me, from the least of them to the greatest. [12] For I will be merciful toward their iniquities, and I will remember their sins no more.” [13] In speaking of a new covenant, he makes the first one obsolete. And what is becoming obsolete and growing old is ready to vanish away.

Heb. 12.18-24 - For you have not come to what may be touched, a blazing fire and darkness and gloom and a tempest [19] and the sound of a trumpet and a voice whose words made the hearers beg that no further messages be spoken to them. [20] For they could not endure the order that was given, “If even a beast touches the mountain, it shall be stoned.” [21] Indeed, so terrifying was the sight that Moses said, “I tremble with fear.” [22] But you have come to Mount Zion and to the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and to innumerable angels in festal gathering, [23] and to the



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assembly of the firstborn who are enrolled in heaven, and to God, the judge of all, and to the spirits of the righteous made perfect, [24] and to Jesus, the mediator of a new covenant, and to the sprinkled blood that speaks a better word than the blood of Abel.

Heb. 13.20-21 - Now may the God of peace who brought again from the dead our Lord Jesus, the great shepherd of the sheep, by the blood of the eternal covenant, [21] equip you with everything good that you may do his will, working in us that which is pleasing in his sight, through Jesus Christ, to whom be glory forever and ever. Amen.

#### **God never forgets his covenant promise**

Ps. 89.34 - I will not violate my covenant or alter the word that went forth from my lips.

Ps. 105.8 - He remembers his covenant forever, the word that he commanded, for a thousand generations.

Ps. 106.45 - For their sake he remembered his covenant, and relented according to the abundance of his steadfast love. Dan. 9.4 - I prayed to the Lord my God and made confession, saying, “O Lord, the great and awesome God, who keeps covenant and steadfast love with those who love him and keep his commandments.”

#### **The hope of restoration lies in God's covenant faithfulness**

Lam. 5.19-21 - But you, O Lord, reign forever; your throne endures to all generations. [20] Why do you forget us forever, why do you forsake us for so many days? [21] Restore us to yourself, O Lord, that we may be restored! Renew our days as of old.



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**God is merciful to us, which is the underlying motive of his goodness to us in his covenant faithfulness**

Exod. 34.6 - The Lord passed before him and proclaimed, “The Lord, the Lord, a God merciful and gracious, slow to anger, and abounding in steadfast love and faithfulness.”

Lev. 26.44-45 - Yet for all that, when they are in the land of their enemies, I will not spurn them, neither will I abhor them so as to destroy them utterly and break my covenant with them, for I am the Lord their God. [45] But I will for their sake remember the covenant with their forefathers, whom I brought out of the land of Egypt in the sight of the nations, that I might be their God: I am the Lord.

Deut. 4.31 - For the Lord your God is a merciful God. He will not leave you or destroy you or forget the covenant with your fathers that he swore to them.

Deut. 7.8-9 - but it is because the Lord loves you and is keeping the oath that he swore to your fathers, that the Lord has brought you out with a mighty hand and redeemed you from the house of slavery, from the hand of Pharaoh king of Egypt. [9] Know therefore that the Lord your God is God, the faithful God who keeps covenant and steadfast love with those who love him and keep his commandments, to a thousand generations.

Deut. 9.5 - Not because of your righteousness or the uprightness of your heart are you going in to possess their land, but because of the wickedness of these nations the Lord your God is driving them out from before you, and that he may confirm the word that the Lord swore to your fathers, to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob. Not a single word of his promise goes unfulfilled to his own.

Deut. 32.4 - The Rock, his work is perfect, for all his ways are justice. A God of faithfulness and without iniquity, just and upright is he.



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Josh. 21.45 - Not one word of all the good promises that the Lord had made to the house of Israel had failed; all came to pass.

1 Sam. 12.22 - For the Lord will not forsake his people, for his great name's sake, because it has pleased the Lord to make you a people for himself.

2 Sam. 7.14-15 - I will be to him a father, and he shall be to me a son. When he commits iniquity, I will discipline him with the rod of men, with the stripes of the sons of men, [15] but my steadfast love will not depart from him, as I took it from Saul, whom I put away from before you.

1 Kings 8.23-24 - and said, "O Lord, God of Israel, there is no God like you, in heaven above or on earth beneath, keeping covenant and showing steadfast love to your servants who walk before you with all their heart, [24] who have kept with your servant David my father what you declared to him. You spoke with your mouth, and with your hand have fulfilled it this day."

2 Kings 13.23 - But the Lord was gracious to them and had compassion on them, and he turned toward them, because of his covenant with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, and would not destroy them, nor has he cast them from his presence until now.

Neh. 9.7-8 - You are the LORD, the God who chose Abram and brought him out of Ur of the Chaldeans and gave him the name Abraham. [8] You found his heart faithful before you, and made with him the covenant to give to his offspring the land of the Canaanite, the Hittite, the Amorite, the Perizzite, the Jebusite, and the Girgashite. And you have kept your promise, for you are righteous.



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**His covenant faithfulness endures forever, for unending days**

Ps. 18.30 - This God—his way is perfect; the word of the Lord proves true; he is a shield for all those who take refuge in him. Ps. 37.28 - For the Lord loves justice; he will not forsake his saints. They are preserved forever, but the children of the wicked shall be cut off.

Ps. 89.1-2 - I will sing of the steadfast love of the Lord, forever; with my mouth I will make known your faithfulness to all generations. [2] For I said, “Steadfast love will be built up forever; in the heavens you will establish your faithfulness.”

Ps. 100.5 - For the Lord is good; his steadfast love endures forever, and his faithfulness to all generations.

Ps. 103.17 - But the steadfast love of the Lord is from everlasting to everlasting on those who fear him, and his righteousness to children's children.

Ps. 105.8 - He remembers his covenant forever, the word that he commanded, for a thousand generations.

Ps. 111.7-9 - The works of his hands are faithful and just; all his precepts are trustworthy; [8] they are established forever and ever, to be performed with faithfulness and uprightness. [9] He sent redemption to his people; he has commanded his covenant forever. Holy and awesome is his name!

Isa. 54.9-10 - “This is like the days of Noah to me: as I swore that the waters of Noah should no more go over the earth, so I have sworn that I will not be angry with you, and will not rebuke you. [10] For the mountains may depart and the hills be removed, but my steadfast love shall not depart from you, and my covenant of peace shall not be removed,” says the Lord, who has compassion on you.



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Jer. 31.36-37 - “If this fixed order departs from before me, declares the Lord, then shall the offspring of Israel cease from being a nation before me forever.” [37] Thus says the Lord: “If the heavens above can be measured, and the foundations of the earth below can be explored, then I will cast off all the offspring of Israel for all that they have done, declares the Lord.”

Jer. 32.40 - I will make with them an everlasting covenant, that I will not turn away from doing good to them. And I will put the fear of me in their hearts, that they may not turn from me. Jer. 33.20-21 - Thus says the Lord: If you can break my covenant with the day and my covenant with the night, so that day and night will not come at their appointed time, [21] then also my covenant with David my servant may be broken, so that he shall not have a son to reign on his throne, and my covenant with the Levitical priests my ministers.

Jer. 33.25-26 - Thus says the Lord: If I have not established my covenant with day and night and the fixed order of heaven and earth, [26] then I will reject the offspring of Jacob and David my servant and will not choose one of his offspring to rule over the offspring of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. For I will restore their fortunes and will have mercy on them.

Hos. 2.19-20 - And I will betroth you to me forever. I will betroth you to me in righteousness and in justice, in steadfast love and in mercy. [20] I will betroth you to me in faithfulness. And you shall know the Lord.

**Let us, then, draw near to God with a heart of assurance that he will not fail us, regardless of what we face or encounter**

Mic. 7.20 - You will show faithfulness to Jacob and steadfast love to Abraham, as you have sworn to our fathers from the days of old.

Luke 1.68-70 - Blessed be the Lord God of Israel, for he has visited and redeemed his people [69] and has raised up a horn of salvation for us in the



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house of his servant David, [70] as he spoke by the mouth of his holy prophets from of old.

Rom. 11.1-2 - I ask, then, has God rejected his people? By no means! For I myself am an Israelite, a descendant of Abraham, a member of the tribe of Benjamin. [2] God has not rejected his people whom he foreknew. Do you not know what the Scripture says of Elijah, how he appeals to God against Israel?

2 Cor. 1.20 - For all the promises of God find their Yes in him. That is why it is through him that we utter our Amen to God for his glory.

1 Thess. 5.24 - He who calls you is faithful; he will surely do it.

2 Tim. 2.13 - if we are faithless, he remains faithful—for he cannot deny himself. 2 Tim. 2.19 - But God's firm foundation stands, bearing this seal: “The Lord knows those who are his,” and, “Let everyone who names the name of the Lord depart from iniquity.”

Heb. 10.22-23 - let us draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith, with our hearts sprinkled clean from an evil conscience and our bodies washed with pure water. [23] Let us hold fast the confession of our hope without wavering, for he who promised is faithful.

1 John 1.9 - If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.

Rev. 15.3 - And they sing the song of Moses, the servant of God, and the song of the Lamb, saying, "Great and amazing are your deeds, O Lord God the Almighty! Just and true are your ways, O King of the nations! ■



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ACCORDING TO Scripture, the triune invisible God made a covenant promise to fight his enemies, the ancient foes of humankind and the universe. This Church Year we reflect on the work of God in Christ through the lens of the ancient battle God is waging on behalf of his creation. This Advent season, a time of preparation and waiting, we who love the city and the Gospel turn our hearts to the one who swore by himself that he would rescue his world through his own royal Son, who is also Messiah and Lord.

What, however, is the difference (if one actually exists) between a contract and a covenant? Bruce Shelly offers one interpretation:

*In modern times we define a host of relations by contracts. These are usually for goods or services and for hard cash. The contract, formal or informal, helps to specify failure in these relationships. The Lord did not establish a contract with Israel or with the church. He created a covenant. There is a difference. Contracts are broken when one of the parties fails to keep his promise. If, let us say, a patient fails to keep an appointment with a doctor, the doctor is not obligated to call the house and inquire, "Where were you? Why didn't you show up for your appointment?" He simply goes on to his next patient and has his appointment secretary take note of the patient who failed to keep the appointment. The patient may find it harder the next time to see the doctor. He broke an informal contract. According to the Bible, however, the Lord asks: "Can a mother forget the baby at her breast and have no compassion on the child she has borne? Though she may forget, I will not forget you!" (Isaiah 49.15). The Bible indicates the covenant is more like the ties of a parent to her child than it is a doctor's appointment. If a child fails to show up for dinner, the parent's obligation, unlike the doctor's, isn't canceled. The parent finds out where the child is and makes sure he's cared for. One member's failure does not destroy the relationship. A covenant puts no conditions on faithfulness. It is the unconditional commitment to love and serve.*



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The God of Scripture, the God of covenant faithfulness with the power and desire to back up his promise, is the one who has sworn to defeat our enemies, to bring an end to war and pain, to restore creation, and to establish a new humanity that will serve him forever in a new heavens and earth. The God of covenant faithfulness is a “Man of War”: “The Lord is a man of war; the Lord is his name” (Exod. 15.3). This entire year we will focus on Yahweh’s commitment to fight, against Israel’s enemies, against chaos and evil, against death and hell, against the curse and the grave, against the devil and his minions. Our awesome God has not abandoned his people or his creation, but has sworn by covenant that he will triumph over his enemies, for his own glory and name’s sake.

Every epoch of God’s salvation history in Scripture provides clear testimony of God’s intent to rescue humankind from its tragic rebellion. Yes, from the beginning, even in the perfect environment of the Garden of Eden, humankind turned its back on the good and perfect will of God. Filled with lust, pride, and greed, we renounced the reign of God over us and were thrown into the chaos of our own foolishness. We were consigned to the curse, enslaved by our own Adam-inherited natures, and tragically became victims to satanic opposition and oppression. Filled with malice and hate, we ruined our relationships with one another, abused creation, oppressed the poor, and pretended God did not exist. We were lost, condemned, alienated from his good will.

Even in the midst of our sin, God did not forget us. He swore to the recipients of his covenant promise that the seed of the woman would crush the head of our most ancient foe (Gen. 3.15). Through the years he renewed his covenant through Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Judah, and David, and as the faithful God of Israel he never forgot his pledge to save the world through the One who would bring his victory back to us. Finally, to a young virgin daughter of Israel, God confirmed through the word of an angel that the One who would be born to her would be the Warrior Prince, the King who



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would rule in righteousness, with the government on his shoulders, who would restore creation and inaugurate the reclamation of the rule of God in the earth (cf. Isa. 9.6-7; 11, etc.). Born for our release and joy, the Messiah has come to the earth, and now, in his name alone, all who believe can be brought again under the government of the Lord God.

Listen to the good tidings given to Mary by Gabriel as he announced to her the glorious birth she would have for the world:

*Luke 1.30-33 - And the angel said to her, "Do not be afraid, Mary, for you have found favor with God. [31] And behold, you will conceive in your womb and bear a son, and you shall call his name Jesus. [32] He will be great and will be called the Son of the Most High. And the Lord God will give to him the throne of his father David, [33] and he will reign over the house of Jacob forever, and of his kingdom there will be no end."*

"And he will reign over the house of Jacob forever, and of his kingdom there will be no end." The coming of Jesus of Nazareth into the world signals the final end of all shadows and darkness, the destruction of death itself, the crushing of chaos and evil, and the defeat of the devil and his minions. In Jesus, God himself has come to the earth, the Kingdom of God has been inaugurated, and the hope of humankind has been made present. And what is the certainty of this great work of the *Christus Victor* whom we adore during this season of Advent? *The covenant faithfulness of God.*

Isn't it wonderful that the completion of God's plan of salvation is not dependent on our feeble sincerity, strength, and good will? Aren't you glad that God swore by himself that he would fulfill his promise to end the rebellion of the devil and stamp out sin and its effects forever? Don't you think we ought to be grateful for a God who would give up his only Son for us to redeem us from the penalty of our sin, to put down the power of the devil, and to rescind the curse for us and all those who call on his name?



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Truly, nothing in life is as precious or valuable as the knowledge that God was in Christ, the humble virgin-born Savior, whom we know to be the valiant Champion of the world, who is our life and our heart. This month we celebrate the coming of the Christ into the world, the promise and hope of his second Coming to make an end of sin and war, and the mind-boggling hope of never ending life in his presence in a new heavens and earth. As those committed to gathering the final numbers of the redeemed into the Church before that ancient door of grace closes, let us fervently pray for a new emergence of spiritual fervor, a deep confidence in the covenant goodness of a God who has never lied, and the sure and certain hope of eternal life through the shed blood of Christ. Let us mourn, pine, beg, and cry to God for a new move of his Spirit on the world, that the cities of America and the world can come to know personally of the grace that was born on Christmas day in the Lord Jesus Christ. For through the humble sacrifice of that Babe do we live, and in his passion and resurrection alone do we have hope.

Thanks be to God for his covenant faithfulness to us shown through the story of his love in the person of his Son, Jesus of Nazareth. “Now may the God of peace who brought again from the dead our Lord Jesus, the great shepherd of the sheep, by the blood of the eternal covenant, [21] equip you with everything good that you may do his will, working in us that which is pleasing in his sight, through Jesus Christ, to whom be glory forever and ever. Amen” (Heb. 13.20-21). ■

### **The Season of Advent: The Covenant Faithfulness of God**

*Luke 1.68-75 - Blessed be the Lord God of Israel, for he has visited and redeemed his people [69] and has raised up a horn of salvation for us in the house of his servant David, [70] as he spoke by the mouth of his holy prophets from of old, [71] that we should be saved from our enemies and from the hand of all who hate us; [72] to show the mercy promised to our fathers and to remember his holy covenant, [73] the oath that he swore to*



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*our father Abraham, to grant us [74] that we, being delivered from the hand of our enemies, might serve him without fear, [75] in holiness and righteousness before him all our days.*

### **Biblical Principle of the Month**

During this Season of Advent, let us prepare ourselves for the coming the risen Lord and Messiah, Jesus of Nazareth. Now exalted and glorified at the Father's right hand, soon he will return in glory to establish the reign of God in the earth and destroy the enemies of God. With time so short and so much at stake, let us pray fervently for a new move of the Spirit in the cities of the world. Only God can draw the nations to himself, and he will, for he has promised to draw out a people who will serve him forever.

*Jer. 33.20-21 - Thus says the Lord: If you can break my covenant with the day and my covenant with the night, so that day and night will not come at their appointed time, [21] then also my covenant with David my servant may be broken, so that he shall not have a son to reign on his throne, and my covenant with the Levitical priests my ministers.*

*Jer. 33.25-26 - Thus says the Lord: If I have not established my covenant with day and night and the fixed order of heaven and earth, [26] then I will reject the offspring of Jacob and David my servant and will not choose one of his offspring to rule over the offspring of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. For I will restore their fortunes and will have mercy on them.*



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