God's Promises Through the Son by-St. Augustine

God decreed a time for making promises and a time for the promises to be fulfilled. The time for making promises was the time of the prophets, ending with John the Baptist, the last prophet. From then until the end is the time for the fulfillment of promises.

God is faithful. He promised us eternal salvation and an unending life of blessedness with the angels, and an imperishable inheritance, the joy of seeing his face, a dwelling-place with him in heaven, and the fear of death removed from us through the resurrection. This is, if you like, his ultimate promise.

He has promised to men that they will be like God; to mortals he has promised immortality; to sinners, righteousness; to the lowly, glory.

Indeed, brethren, because what God promised seemed incredible to men – that they should become equals of the angels of God – he did not only sign a contract with them to convince them, but sent, not just any prince, not just any angel or archangel, but his only Son. Even so, it was not enough for God to send his Son to point out the way – he *made* his Son the way itself, so that we can go on our journey guided by him as he walks along his own way.

So the only Son of God was to come to men, to take on humanity, and thus to die, to ascend to heaven and sit at the right hand of the Father. After that promise to the nations had been fulfilled, he would fulfill his other promise, to come, to demand the return of what he had given, to separate the vessels of anger from the vessels of mercy, to give the wicked what he had threatened and the righteous what he had promised.

All this had to be prophesied and foretold. It could not come suddenly and unexpectedly, causing terror and alarm: people had to be awaiting it with faith.