

Promises Kept – Lesson #1

From Promise to Possession

Lesson Overview and Main Theme:

This lesson explores the progression of God’s promise from Abraham to Joshua and helps to understand how God’s faithfulness encourages us today.

God’s promises move from calling → waiting → obedience → fulfillment.

Opening Prayer and Warm up Question:

Begin with a welcome and brief prayer.

A warm-up question, like:

“Have you ever waited a long time for something important? How did that process shape you?”

Reading the Scriptures:

Have group members read aloud each passage:

- **Genesis 12:1–9**
- **Genesis 15:12–16**
- **Joshua 1:1–9**
- **Joshua 11:16–23**

Lesson and Discussion questions:

A. Genesis 12:1–9 — The Promise Given

Leader Notes:

- God’s relationship with Abram begins with a **call**.
- Abram must leave what is familiar before seeing the promise manifest.

- God promises land, descendants, and global blessing.

Key truth: God initiates His promises and invites us into trust.

Discussion Questions:

1. What stands out to you about Abram’s initial call?
 2. What might God be asking you to “leave behind” in order to trust Him more?
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B. Genesis 15:12–16 — The Promise Clarified

Leader Notes:

- God seals His covenant with a formal ceremony—He alone passes between the pieces (unilateral covenant).
- God gives Abram the timeline: 400 years of affliction before the promise is fulfilled.
- Delay serves both **divine timing** and **divine justice**.

Key truth: God’s promises can involve long waiting and deep challenges, but His timing is always purposeful.

Discussion Questions:

1. Why do you think God revealed the long waiting period to Abram?
 2. How do you handle seasons when God’s promises seem delayed?
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C. Joshua 1:1–9 — The Promise Reaffirmed to a New Generation

Leader Notes:

- After Moses’ death, God charges Joshua to lead Israel into Canaan.
- God restates the boundaries promised to Abraham.

- Strength and courage come through **God's presence** and **obedience to His Word**.

Key truth: When God brings us to the edge of fulfillment, He calls us to courageous obedience.

Discussion Questions:

1. What does courage look like in practical terms for a believer today?
 2. How can God's Word help us remain strong and faithful during uncertain seasons?
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D. Joshua 11:16–23 — The Promise Fulfilled

Leader Notes:

- Joshua leads Israel to take control of the major areas of the land.
- This required years of persistence.
- God gives rest in the land—fulfillment of what began in Genesis 12.

Key truth: God is faithful—His promises are kept even across generations.

Discussion Questions:

1. Why is it important that fulfillment took time, effort, and partnership with God?
 2. Where can you see evidence of God fulfilling promises in your life or community?
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Application of Lesson:

Encourage participants to consider one concrete step this week:

If you're in a "call" season:

- Ask God where He is inviting you to trust Him more.

If you're in a "waiting" season:

- Practice thankfulness daily; list ways God is still at work.

If you're in an "obedience" season:

- Identify one area where God's Word is urging a specific action, and commit to follow through.

If you're in a "fulfillment" season:

- Share a testimony with someone to encourage their faith.
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Closing:

Invite the group to pray through these themes:

- **Trust** when God calls us into the unknown
- **Patience** in seasons of waiting
- **Strength & courage** to obey God's Word
- **Gratitude** for God's faithfulness across generations

Closing Thought

God's timeline may stretch beyond our expectations, but His faithfulness never wavers. What He begins, He completes.

Promises Kept – Lesson #2

Earthly Kings vs Christ the King

Lesson Overview and Main Theme:

This lesson explores the contrast between human kingship and Christ's kingship by examining Israel's desire for a king, God's choice of that king, and the revelation of Jesus as the true King.

Main Idea

Earthly kings embody human desire, fear, and limitation.
Christ embodies God's heart, purpose, and salvation.

Opening Prayer and Warm up Question:

Welcome the group and say a brief prayer.

A warm-up question, like:

“Can you think of a time people wanted a certain kind of leader—but it didn't turn out as expected?”

(This can be historical, personal, or general—keep it light.)

Reading the Scriptures:

Have group members read aloud each passage:

- **1 Samuel 8:4–9, 19–22**
- **1 Samuel 16:1–13**
- **Matthew 2:1–12**

Encourage listeners to notice contrasts between earthly kings and God's chosen King.

Lesson and Discussion questions:

A. 1 Samuel 8:4–9, 19–22 — Israel Demands an Earthly King

Leader Notes:

- Israel wants a king "*like all the other nations.*"
- Their request is rooted in **fear, comparison, and distrust of God.**
- God reveals the deeper issue:
 "They have rejected Me as their king."
- God grants their request—even though it's not His best for them.

Characteristics of an earthly king:

- Driven by human desires
- Reflects cultural pressure
- Represents human strength and human limits
- Often brings burden rather than blessing

Key Truth:

When we chase human solutions over God's leadership, we always settle for less.

Discussion Questions:

1. Why did Israel want a king "like the other nations"?
 2. Where do we see similar pressures in our lives today—wanting what others have rather than trusting God?
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B. 1 Samuel 16:1–13 — God Chooses His King

Leader Notes:

- God first chooses **the people’s King**, Saul
- After Saul fails, God sends Samuel to choose the next king.
- Samuel assumes the impressive older brother is God’s choice, but God corrects him:
“Man looks at outward appearance, but the Lord looks at the heart.”
- David, the youngest and least likely, is God’s choice.
- The Spirit of the Lord comes upon David, empowering him for his calling.

Characteristics of God’s chosen king:

- Selected by God, not human preference
- Chosen for **heart**, not appearance
- Marked by humility
- Empowered by the Holy Spirit

Key Truth:

God’s leadership flows from His heart, not human expectations.

Discussion Questions:

1. How does the phrase *“the Lord looks at the heart”* challenge the way we evaluate leaders or people?
 2. Why do you think God often chooses unexpected people to accomplish His purposes?
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C. Matthew 2:1–12 — Christ, the True and Eternal King

Leader Notes:

- Jesus is born King—not appointed or elected.
- Gentile wise men recognize His kingship; Jerusalem’s leaders do not.
- King Herod represents earthly rulers who protect power through fear.
- The wise men worship Jesus, offering gifts symbolizing His royalty, deity, and sacrifice.
- God guides and protects His true King through divine means (the star; a dream; Angels).

Characteristics of Christ the King:

- Born by divine promise
- Rules with eternal authority
- Welcomed with worship
- Brings salvation, not oppression
- Reigns in justice, humility, and peace

Key Truth:

Christ is the King every human heart truly needs.

Discussion Questions:

1. What stands out to you about the way Jesus is recognized—and opposed—as King?
2. What do the wise men’s gifts reveal about Jesus’ identity and mission?

Application of Lesson:

Encourage the group to choose **one** practical step:

A. Examine Your Allegiances

Identify an area where you rely more on human strength, systems, or leaders than on Christ.

B. Cultivate the Heart God Values

Pray for a heart like David's—humble, obedient, trusting.

C. Worship Like the Wise Men

Spend intentional time worshiping Jesus as King this week—through prayer, song, or surrender.

D. Follow the True King

Ask:

“What decision am I facing where I need to follow Christ’s leadership instead of my own desires?”

Closing:

Prayer Time

Guide the group in a closing prayer focusing on:

- Trusting God’s leadership
- Developing hearts that reflect His values
- Worshiping Christ as the true King
- Wisdom in choosing God’s way over human ways

Closing Thought

Earthly kings rise and fall, but Christ's kingdom is eternal, unshakeable, and perfect. He is the King who leads with truth, humility, and love.

Promises Kept – Lesson #3

God with Us – From the Temple to the Incarnation

Lesson Overview and Main Theme:

Throughout Scripture, God continually reveals His desire to dwell with His people. In the Old Testament, His presence was centered in the Tabernacle and the Temple—holy places where heaven and earth met. In the New Testament, God’s presence becomes personal and embodied in Jesus Christ, “Immanuel,” God with us. This study explores the shift from a place to a Person, and what that means for believers today.

Opening Prayer and Warm up Question:

Welcome the group and say a brief prayer.

A warm-up question, like:

Is it more important to worship God in a specific location or will any place do?

OR

Can you feel God’s presence better in certain locations?

Reading the Scriptures:

Have a person in the group read the Scripture:

Matthew 1:18-25

Lesson and Discussion questions:

1. The Old Testament: God With Us through the Temple

A. God Desires to Dwell with His People

- From the Garden of Eden forward, Scripture shows God’s intent to be near His people.

- After the Exodus, God commands the construction of the Tabernacle: *“Let them make Me a sanctuary, that I may dwell among them”* (Exod. 25:8).

B. The Temple as the Center of God’s Presence

- The permanent Temple in Jerusalem replaced the portable Tabernacle as the symbol of God’s dwelling.
- God’s glory filled the Temple (1 Kings 8:10–11), confirming His nearness.
- Yet access was limited:
 - Only priests could enter the Holy Place.
 - Only the high priest could enter the Holy of Holies—and only once a year.

C. The Temple as a Picture of God’s Holiness

- The Temple system revealed God’s desire to be with His people **and** the reality that sin separated them from His presence.
- Sacrifices, priests, and rituals were necessary to maintain fellowship.

Leader Note:

Draw out the tension—God wants to be with His people, but human sin requires mediation. The Temple allowed closeness, but it was not complete closeness.

2. The New Testament: God With Us through Christ (Matthew 1:18–25)

A. The Announcement of Jesus’ Birth

Read Matthew 1:18–25 aloud.

Matthew reveals something radical: God is coming not **to a building**, but **as a person**.

B. “Immanuel” — God With Us

- Matthew identifies Jesus as the fulfillment of Isaiah 7:14.
- “*Immanuel*” is not just a title; it is a declaration of a new reality.
- God’s presence is no longer confined to the Temple but is **now embodied in Jesus**.

C. The Incarnation Changes Everything

In Christ:

- God is approachable (John 1:14).
- God is physically present with His people.
- God’s presence is not restricted to one place or one people but is available to all who believe.

D. Jesus as the True and Better Temple

Throughout the New Testament, Jesus replaces the Temple as the place where God meets humanity:

- He forgives sins directly (Mark 2:5).
- He declares His body the true Temple (John 2:19–21).
- At His death, the Temple veil is torn, symbolizing open access to God (Matt. 27:51).

Leader Note:

Help participants see how Jesus fulfills everything the Temple symbolized—sacrifice, mediation, and God’s presence.

3. God With Us Today

A. Christ's Presence through the Holy Spirit

After Jesus' resurrection and ascension, God's presence continues through the Spirit dwelling in believers (John 14:16–17; 1 Cor. 3:16).

B. We Become the Temple

- Believers now collectively and individually serve as God's dwelling place.
- God is not distant. He is not confined to buildings. He lives with and within His people.

C. The Practical Implications

Because God is with us:

- We are never abandoned.
- We can approach God confidently.
- We are called to reflect His presence to the world.

Leader Suggestion:

Invite the group to share moments when they felt God's nearness or needed the assurance of His presence.

Discussion Questions:

1. In the Old Testament system, what did the Temple communicate about God's holiness and accessibility?
2. How does Jesus being "Immanuel" reshape our understanding of God's nearness?
3. What differences do you see between God dwelling in the Temple and God dwelling in Christ?

4. How does the reality of God's presence through the Holy Spirit comfort or challenge you today?
5. What changes when we understand ourselves as the "temple" of God's presence?

Closing:

Prayer Time

Guide the group in a closing prayer, asking for the class to feel His presence.

Closing Thought

In Jesus, God moved from dwelling in a building to dwelling among—and ultimately within—His people. Christ, our Immanuel, assures us that God is not distant but forever present with us.

Promises Kept – Lesson #4

The Long Road to the Messiah and His Kingdom

Lesson Overview and Main Theme:

This lesson helps participants grasp the significance of the centuries-long wait for the Messiah, Jesus Christ, and sees how His arrival, anointing, and commissioning establishes a Kingdom that continues through His disciples today. Many people live in a “right now” culture; this lesson helps them appreciate God’s long, intentional timeline.

Opening Prayer and Warm up Question:

Welcome the group and say a brief prayer.

A warm-up question, like:

What is something you waited a long time for?

OR

How did that waiting shape your appreciation when it finally came?

Reading the Scriptures:

Have group members read aloud each passage:

- Matthew 1:1-17
- Matthew 3:13-17
- Matthew 28:16-20

Lesson and Discussion questions:

3. MATTHEW 1:1–17

THE PROMISE PRESERVED OVER CENTURIES

Leader Summary

- Matthew's genealogy traces God's promise from Abraham through David to Jesus.
- It represents roughly **2,000 years of waiting**—through exile, kingship, collapse, rebuilding, silence.
- Every name is a reminder that God's plan never stops, even when it looks like nothing is happening.

Discussion Questions

1. What stands out to you in this genealogy?
2. What does this long list of generations reveal about God's faithfulness?
3. How do you respond to the idea that God works through long periods of seeming silence?

Key Takeaway

Jesus didn't appear suddenly—He arrived at the perfect time after centuries of preparation. God's promises may take time, but they never fail.

4. MATTHEW 3:13–17

THE MESSIAH REVEALED AND ANOINTED

Leader Summary

- Jesus is baptized not because He needed repentance but to fulfill righteousness and identify with His people.
- God publicly affirms Him:
 - **Heaven opens**

- **The Spirit descends**
- **The Father speaks:** *“This is my beloved Son, with whom I am well pleased.”*
- After centuries of waiting, God unmistakably reveals the Messiah.

Discussion Questions

1. Why do you think God chose this moment to reveal Jesus so clearly?
2. What does the Father’s declaration tell us about Jesus’ identity and mission?
3. How does this moment connect the Old Testament promises to Jesus’ ministry?

Key Takeaway

God’s long-awaited Messiah is publicly revealed and empowered—the promise has become a person.

5. MATTHEW 28:16–20

THE KINGDOM COMMISSIONED

Leader Summary

- The resurrected Jesus declares: *“All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to Me.”*
This is the language of kingship.
- After thousands of years of waiting for the Messiah, His Kingdom is now advancing through His disciples.
- Jesus promises His presence: *“I am with you always.”*

Discussion Questions

1. What does Jesus' claim of "all authority" reveal about His kingship?
2. How does the Great Commission show the global nature of Jesus' Kingdom?
3. Why is His promise to be with us essential for fulfilling this mission?

Key Takeaway

The promised Messiah now reigns as King, and His followers continue the mission of expanding His Kingdom.

6. BRINGING IT ALL TOGETHER

Leader Summary

- God promised a Messiah across thousands of years.
- Jesus arrives exactly when God determined (Galatians 4:4).
- His baptism reveals Him publicly.
- His resurrection and commission establish His Kingdom through His people.
- The long wait leads to a global mission that is still unfolding today.

Group Reflection Questions

1. How does understanding the long wait for Christ deepen your appreciation of His Kingdom?
 2. Where do you see yourself participating in the ongoing mission of Christ's Kingdom?
 3. What promise of God are you currently waiting on? How does this study encourage you?
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PRAYER

Invite members to share something they are waiting on from God.
Pray with a focus on **patience**, **trust**, and **courage** to participate in Christ's ongoing Kingdom work.

Closing Thought

God's promise of the Messiah took centuries to unfold, reminding us that His timing is perfect. As we wait on His promises, we can trust that the same faithful God is still at work in us today.