
THE SEASON OF PROMISE

I. Expectations are a Big Part of Christmas

- a. They can be good or bad.
- b. When reality doesn't meet our expectations, disappointment derails us.
- c. That disappointment can make us feel as if God has forgotten us.

II. God's Promises

- a. God's promise to send a savior began in the Garden of Eden
 - i. **Genesis 3:15** (NIV) *"he will crush your head, and you will strike his heel."*
- b. God made promises to Abraham and Israel
 - i. God promised that Abraham's family would bless the whole world.
 - ii. **Numbers 24:17** (NIV) *"I see him, but not now; I behold him, but not near. A star will come out of Jacob; a scepter will rise out of Israel."*
- c. God made promises through the prophets
 - i. **Isaiah 9:6-7** (NIV) *"For to us a child is born, to us a son is given, and the government will be on his shoulders. And he will be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace. Of the greatness of his government and peace there will be no end. He will reign on David's throne and over his kingdom, establishing and upholding it with justice and righteousness from that time on and forever."*
 - ii. **Isaiah 62:11** (NIV) *"The Lord has made proclamation to the ends of the earth: 'Say to Daughter Zion, 'See, your Savior comes!'"*
 - iii. **Jeremiah 23:5** (NIV) *"'The days are coming,' declares the Lord, 'when I will raise up for David a righteous Branch, a King who will reign wisely and do what is just and right in the land.'"*
- d. But life did not change immediately
 - i. Constant enslavement by foreign rulers
 - ii. 400 years of silence
 - iii. The people wondered if they had been forgotten.
- e. Faith is found in the tension between what we and what we know about God.

III. Christmas is The Season of Promise

- a. Gabriel appeared to Mary with the good news.
 - i. **Luke 1:37** (NIV), *"For no word from God will ever fail."*
- b. Mary chose to believe.

i. **Luke 1:38** (NIV), *“I am the Lord’s servant,’ Mary answered. ‘May your word to me be fulfilled.’”*

c. Mary responded with worship

i. Luke 1:46-55 (NIV)

IV. God Stepped In at Christmas

a. God responded in a surprising way.

i. John 1:14 (NIV), *“The Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us.”*

1. Jesus stepped out of Heaven and into the muck of this world to show us that God had not forgotten His promise.

2. Christmas is a celebration of the fact that God acted on His word

b. Jesus is the proof that all of God’s promises have and will be kept.

i. **2 Corinthians 1:20** (NIV), *“For not matter how many promises God has made, they are ‘Yes’ in Christ. And so through him the ‘Amen’ is spoken by us to the glory of God.*

c. God is a God of kept promises

V. How Do We Respond to Christmas?

a. Acknowledge that God has kept His word in the past, and believe He will do it today and into the future.

b. Like Mary we respond with worship.

i. Psalm 100 (NIV)

ii. Praise God for His faithfulness

c. December is the perfect time to celebrate that the Lord is helping us.