



When God makes a promise...

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God makes promises to us. As we attempt to interpret His promise, we may do so with our own understanding, just as Abraham and Sarah did. They devised their own way for God's promise of a child to be fulfilled (Genesis 16:1-3, 17:17-18).

The fulfillment of God's promises are usually in ways quite different than expected or planned for. This is illustrated in the framework of Israel's history.

1. **God's Old Testament promise of a Messiah** – Here are only a few of the over 500 prophecies...

- The coming Messiah would be born of a woman (Genesis 3:15; Matthew 1:20; Galatians 4:4).
- The Messiah would be born in Bethlehem (Micah 5:2; Matthew 2:1; Luke 2:4-6).
- The Messiah would be born of a virgin (Isaiah 7:14; Matthew 1:22-23; Luke 1:26-31).
- The Messiah would enter Jerusalem on a donkey (Zechariah 9:9; Matthew 21:4-5).
- The Messiah would be crucified for our sins (Isaiah 53:4-11; Philippians 2:6-8; Hebrews 12:2).
- The Messiah would resurrect from the dead (Psalm 16:10, 49:15; Matthew 28:2-7; Acts 2:22-32).

2. **The wait** – The 400 “silent,” intertestamental years.

- This was a period of time between the last of the Old Testament prophets and the arrival of Jesus in the New Testament. It began with Malachi's prediction of Elijah's return (Malachi 4:5-6) around 430 BC and

ended with the coming of John the Baptist (John 1:19-27).

- Although God was silent to Israel, many social and political events took place. This season was a necessary preparation for the coming of the Messiah.

Galatians 4:4-5 But when the fullness of the time had come, God sent forth His Son, born of a woman, born under the law, to redeem those who were under the law, that we might receive the adoption as sons.

3. **The fulfillment** — Christ was born as a baby and was unrecognizable as the fulfillment. Many felt the Messiah would come from David's line, the tribe of Judah, and be a conquering king. Others like Maccabees, with their Levitical heritage, favored a Levitical priest king.

4. **The battle** – Our enemy, the devil, had also been waiting and developed a strategy to eliminate the Promised Messiah, just as he wants to sabotage the hope of God's promise in your life! (Matthew 2:16-18)

5. **Characteristics of God's promises.**

- There are two basic types of promises, one He gives to us individually and the other He promises to do independent of us (Ezekiel 36:26). Discernment is key.
- His promises are realized as we cleanse ourselves of sin (2 Corinthians 7:1).
- God ALWAYS keeps His promises (Joshua 21:43-45).
- Only God can fulfill His promise (Romans 4:18-22).
- God's promises are ultimately fulfilled in Heaven (1 Peter 1:3-5; 2 Peter 1:4).

6. **Prayer** – *Father, thank you for Your promises and for Your great faithfulness. Help us to see Your promises for the next season through Your eyes and give us the power to wait patiently for Your plan to be fulfilled in Your way.*