

# PROMISE KEPT

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## CONNECT *BREAK THE ICE AND GET PEOPLE TALKING*

- What are some of your favorite Christmastime... foods / music / movies / traditions / memories?
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## TRUTH *UNDERSTAND AND DISCUSS THE SCRIPTURE'S MEANING*

Maybe you enjoy Christmas movies, maybe you don't. Maybe you used to set out cookies and milk for Santa as a kid, maybe you didn't. Whatever your affinity or dislike for traditions around Christmas might be, for a Christian, Christmas is about celebrating the long-awaited arrival of one person—Jesus Christ. God had promised to send a Savior, and in Jesus he did. His promise, however, didn't just involve Jesus. It involves you and I as well. In Jeremiah, we find out that God promised to send Jesus and to make priests of those who would follow him.

### What is a Priest?

**READ:** Jeremiah 33:19-21

**DISCUSS:** What picture comes to mind when you hear the word "priest"?

Some Levitical priests were responsible for folding up the curtains of the tabernacle when Israel moved to another settlement in the wilderness. The high priest was responsible for going into the most holy place to offer atonement for the people's sins. Priests had many different functions, but the focus was all on one thing—the presence of God. The priests did what they were responsible to do, then the presence of God would fall from heaven and fill the temple.

### Who Are the Priests?

**READ:** Jeremiah 33:22

**DISCUSS:** Given what you understand about what Levitical priests used to do, what do you think it means for you to be a priest?

Because we have the rest of the Bible, we know that "the offspring of David" refers to those who put their faith in Jesus—his disciples. Disciples might not carry the giant pillars of the tabernacle around the desert, or offer animal sacrifices, or go into the most holy place, but we still prepare the way for God's presence. When we live our lives for his glory, with the power of his Spirit at work inside us, we are bringing his presence wherever we go, and the whole world gets to see it.

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## GRACE SEE HOW THE PASSAGE CONNECTS TO JESUS

### Who Is This Priest?

**READ:** Jeremiah 33:14-18

**DISCUSS:** Jesus is the "Branch" referred to here. What do you think is significant about that image?

In verses 17 and 18 we get an idea of how exactly the Branch would save Judah. He becomes the man who offers perpetual sacrifices in God's presence, bringing a never-ending flow of God's presence to his people. Only in Jesus do we see how this becomes a reality. When Jesus had grown up, he would become the sacrifice to end all animal sacrifices. And after dying, he ascended into heaven at the right hand of God, where he is our once-for-all sacrifice. Those who put their faith in him receive God's very presence in the person of the Holy Spirit, and they now bring God's presence to the world as his redeemed priests.

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## CHANGE APPLY THE PASSAGE TO OUR THOUGHTS, FEELINGS, AND ACTIONS

- If everything God gives us to do is a way we minister to him and bring his presence, that means everything we do, no matter how small, is very important. In what ways has God called you to minister to him at this point in your life?
- In order to be a priest you have to be reborn into God's family (v. 22). Have you been reborn by his grace through faith? Would you like to today?
- Read vv. 20-21 again. How does the certainty of God's promise impact you?

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## PRAYER RESPOND TO THE PASSAGE IN PRAYER

- Jesus told us to pray God's kingdom come and his will be done on earth as it is in heaven. As his priests who minister to him, pray this promise over your life and your city.

### Discipleship Check-In

- Have you read your Bible consistently the past week?
- Who is someone you're praying to share Jesus with this week, and what's one way you can love them well?