

THE LAND AT LAST

Joshua
Joshua 3:1–4:18
1406 BC

OVERVIEW

BIBLE TRUTH

God keeps His promises.

BIBLE VERSE

The LORD will do the thing that He has promised.
2 Kings 20:9

LEARNER GOAL

I can share how God is faithful and always keeps His promises.

LAW & GOSPEL

We are hesitant to trust in God's promises, preferring to remain in the desert of our sins.

God keeps His promise to save us through His Son, Jesus, and leads us to our heavenly home.

SCRIPTURE SNAPSHOT

For forty years, the Israelites wandered on sandals that didn't wear out and daily doses of manna. Following Moses' death, Joshua prepares to lead a new generation into the Promised Land. This time, the floodwaters of the Jordan River stand in the way, but hearkening back to the Red Sea crossing, the people pass through on dry land and gather twelve stones as a memorial to God's faithful care for His people.

LESSON PREP

BASIC Read Joshua 3:1–4:18 and study notes in *The Lutheran Study Bible*.

MORE TIME Read "Apologetics Helps" on the back page in preparation for the "Live" section.

IN DEPTH Read pages 82–83, about the Israelites entering the Promised Land, in *Concordia's Complete Bible Handbook*.

SUPPLY LIST

FOR THIS LESSON

- Index cards
- Sticky notes

FOR EVERY LESSON

- Student copies of *Defend Journal*
- Bibles
- Pens
- Shareable images from digital resource center
- Supplies for bonus activities



BONUS ACTIVITY

Do the “Promises” activity to give learners a rock-solid reminder of God’s promises.



DEFEND JOURNAL

Hand out journals and turn to Lesson 10.



LEADER NOTE

Use the map in the back of the *Defend Journal* to point out the following: (1) the general location of the **Garden of Eden** (we don’t know exactly where it was); (2) **Haran**, where God spoke to Abraham; (3) **Bethel**, where God spoke to Jacob; and (4) **Nazareth**, where God spoke to Joseph.

LAUNCH

WALK-IN QUESTION

What’s the best promise someone ever made to you? Did the person keep the promise?

PROMISES, PROMISES

Hand each person an index card, with directions to write down on the card a promise that he or she has made. As a group, work to arrange the index cards in a row from easiest promise to keep to hardest promise to keep.

SAY When is it easy to keep your promise? When is it hard? Whom do you trust to keep their promises?

PRAY Heavenly Father, we don’t always keep the promises that we make. Thank You for always keeping Your promises, especially the promise to send us a Savior in Jesus, our Lord. In His name we pray. Amen.

LEARN

READ “THE BIG PICTURE” AND TALK IT OUT

▷ God kept His promises to His people even when they rebelled against Him. Why do you think God remained faithful to His promises?

LEARN ABOUT “THE LAND AT LAST”

Have volunteers take turns reading portions of **Joshua 3:1–4:18**.

Ask the youth to imagine that they are about to cross the Jordan River. What was it like to be a child when their family was delivered out of slavery? What was it like to wander in the desert for forty years? Ask them to share thoughts in their *Defend Journal*.

MAPPING GOD’S PROMISES

Direct youth to the map in the back of the *Defend Journal*. Point out the Jordan River. Read through these promises God made to His people. Then talk about them. **What was the promise? Whom did God make it to? How did He fulfill His promise?**

GENESIS 3:15

Location: Eden **Promise made to** Adam and Eve in Eden

Promise: Jesus will defeat the devil.

GENESIS 12:3

Location: Haran **Promise made to** Abraham

Promise: Abraham will be blessed and will bless others.

GENESIS 28:14

Location: Bethel **Promise made to** Jacob (Israel)

Promise: Jacob’s descendants will cover the earth and bless the world.

MATTHEW 1:20–21

Location: Nazareth **Promise made to** Joseph

Promise: Mary will bear a Son, Jesus, who will save His people from their sins.

▷ **How did each of these promises point to the Savior, Jesus?**

God brought the Israelites to the Promised Land. Years later, Christ was born—a descendant of Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, and David—and God’s greatest promise was fulfilled.

LIVE

DISCUSS “PROMISES”

Discuss the question below. As you lead discussion, help youth to be sensitive to those who may be hurting from broken promises. In our sinful and broken world, people sometimes break promises and trust. This can lead to great hurt. Encourage your learners with the truth of God’s unfailing love and faithfulness to them.

► **Tell about a time someone kept an important promise to you. What does it mean to you that you can rely on God to always keep His promises?**

DISCUSSION POINTS

- This is a great time to let youth share in a safe environment what is on their hearts. As you model listening and empathy, you are helping youth see how Christians care for one another and for others.
- Sin has tainted our relationships with one another. Even our best friends and our closest family members will sometimes let us down or fail to keep their promises to us. Not God. God’s promises are true. We can put all our trust and confidence in Him. Lamentations 3:22–23 says, “The steadfast love of the LORD never ceases; His mercies never come to an end; they are new every morning; great is Your faithfulness.”
- God fulfilled His greatest promise—to send a Savior. “For all the promises of God find their Yes in Him [Christ]” (2 Corinthians 1:20). We can trust all of His promises.

CONSIDER “GOD’S PROMISES TO ME”

Have students write ideas for remembering God’s promises on the stones in their journals. Or have them write ideas on sticky notes and make a “memorial” on the wall.

► **How can you remember God’s promises to you?**

DISCUSSION POINTS

- Celebrating Baptism birthdays is one way to remember the promises God makes in Baptism: the promise of forgiveness of sins for Jesus’ sake, new life in Christ, and that you are God’s child—He will never leave you or forsake you.
- Do you have a favorite Bible verse? Put it on the lock screen of your phone or print it out and hang it in your locker.

CHECK FOR UNDERSTANDING

As a check for understanding, ask this question: **How do you know that God will keep His promises to you?** Thank those who share.

LEAVE

Read the Bible Verse, written in the *Defend Journal*:

The LORD will do the thing that He has promised. 2 Kings 20:9

Ask for prayer requests. Invite a student to pray, or offer to pray for the group.



CHRIST CONNECTION

God brought the Israelites to the Promised Land, and there the people multiplied, as God had promised. Many years later, Jesus, our Savior, was born—a descendant of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob—and God’s greatest promise was fulfilled.



LEADER NOTE

Use “Apologetics Helps” on the back of this leaflet for support as you discuss this question and related topics of interest.



BONUS ACTIVITY

Use the “Tell It” activity to help youth share God’s promises with others.



SHAREABLE DOWNLOAD

Connect with youth before and after the lesson using shareable images from the digital resource center.

APOLOGETICS HELPS

DEFEND THE FAITH

The Jordan River plays an important role in many Bible narratives. The Israelites passed through the Jordan to the Promised Land; both Elijah and Elisha passed through the Jordan on dry ground, showing that the Lord was with them; Naaman was healed from leprosy in the Jordan; and the Jordan was where Jesus was baptized by John the Baptist. Many people still come to the Jordan River today to be baptized.

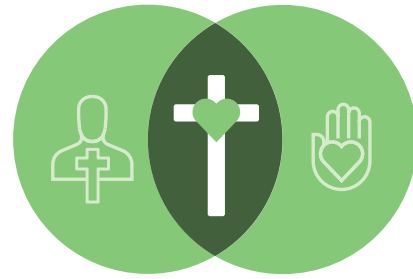
FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

► How can I forgive someone who has broken a promise to me?

It's painful when someone breaks a promise to us, especially when it is a family member or close friend. But God's will is that we forgive that person. Holding on to anger and resentment ends up hurting us just as much as it hurts those who have hurt us. God helps us to forgive others for the hurt they have caused us through broken promises. We can remember that God kept His promise to forgive us our sins by sending Jesus to pay for all those sins. God's great love for us can help us to love and forgive others, even when they disappoint us.

► What are some of God's promises to me?

- **John 3:16** For God so loved the world, that He gave His only Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have eternal life.
- **Isaiah 40:31** But they who wait for the LORD shall renew their strength; they shall mount up with wings like eagles; they shall run and not be weary; they shall walk and not faint.
- **Isaiah 54:10** For the mountains may depart and the hills be removed, but My steadfast love shall not depart from you, and My covenant of peace shall not be removed," says the LORD, who has compassion on you.



CONNECTING IDENTITY & CALLING

IDENTITY: WHO AM I?

God has found me and leads me from sin and death to new life.

CALLING: WHY AM I HERE?

I trust God's promises and daily remember and thank Him for His faithfulness to me.

GROWING IN FAITH FOR LIFE

See how this lesson builds on learning for each age.

ADULT

I can relate the narrative to how God will one day fulfill His promise to bring His redeemed people into the promised land of the new creation.

YOUTH

I can share how God is faithful and always keeps His promises.

ELEMENTARY

I understand that God is faithful and keeps His promises to His people.

EARLY CHILDHOOD

I know God keeps all His promises.

BONUS ACTIVITIES

GOD CAME DOWN

5–10 minutes

Look up and read together Matthew 3:13–17. How does this Jordan River event show how God keeps His promises? (Jesus is baptized—He is the fulfillment of God's promise to send a Savior)

PROMISES

10–15 minutes

Give each student a small stone and a permanent marker. Then read Joshua 4:1–7. What promises has God made to you? Give students five minutes to discuss, search the Bible, and write a promise of God on the stone.

TELL IT

15–20 minutes

Give each person an index card. Ask them to write what God has done for them on the card. Ask, **Why is it important to tell others about the great things that God has done for us?** Encourage them to give the card to a family member or friend.