

When God's Promises Seem to Fail – July 6 & 7, 2019
Follow-up Bible Studies

Written by Maggie Baxter

Day One: Genesis 15

- Describe “the word of the Lord” and how it once again came to Abram (1). What problem did Abram perceive (2-3)? What words and visuals did God use to further reassure him (4-5)? How did Abram respond (6)? When you need reassurance, what are some ways God offers it to you? What reassurance do you need now? Read Hebrews 7:25 alongside verse 1 and ask the Holy Spirit to testify to your heart about God’s faithfulness. Respond to the Lord.
- God goes even further to reassure Abram and seal his covenantal promise; summarize the scene (7-21). Re-read verses 12 and 17-18. As a unilateral covenant, the Lord alone is the one who will completely uphold it. Read Hebrews 7:26-28 to see the perfect upgrade of this covenant. God’s faithfulness, found in Jesus, is what saves the day. What does this mean for you? Instead of striving and fretting, allow Jesus alone to truly meet your needs.

Day Two: Genesis 21:1-7

- How did God fulfill his promise to Sarah (1-2)? Consider these phrases - gracious, “what he had promised” and “at the very time God had promised” – in light of your own worries that God will fail you in some way. You don’t have to hide these worries from the Lord. What is he speaking to your heart about them?
- What name did Abram, now called Abraham, give to his long-awaited son (3)? What other details are included in this story of Isaac’s birth (4-5)? Describe the meaning behind Isaac’s name (6-7). After decades of waiting, sometimes in despair, Sarah laughed! How does this make you feel?
- How do you think it felt for Abraham to finally have a child? And what about in the very next chapter, referenced in Hebrews 6:14, when he thinks this finally-fulfilled promise will be yanked away from him? In a world where nothing but Jesus is forever-guaranteed to us, how do you keep on?

Day Three: Isaiah 9:2-7

- What has changed for those living in darkness (2)? What does the light of Jesus chase away? How does this trajectory help you maintain hope for current hardships, both personal and global?
- What picture of change does the prophet paint (3-5)? Visualize these scenes. What details do you see? Hear? Feel? What is Jesus up to? Should this picture influence how we live as residents of this nation and this world? If so, how?
- Exactly how will all of this goodness invade the earth (6)? Summarize Isaiah’s description of this child (6-7). While Hebrews 7 speaks of Jesus as a permanent high priest, this prophecy speaks of him as a perfect and eternal king. No one else is faithful enough or safe enough to fulfill both of these offices. Pray your trust in Jesus’ ability to both save you and lead you would grow.

Day Four: John 19:28-30

- In his very last moments on the cross, what was on Jesus’ mind (28)? What did he say (28)? How did people respond to this statement (29)? In the midst of unthinkable and prolonged physical agony, how do you think it felt for Jesus to know the big story and why he was being crucified?

- What happened next (30)? What do you make of the phrase “he gave up his spirit”? What thoughts and emotions come to mind as you consider the idea that Jesus willingly submitted to a gruesome death? The “high priest forever” described in Hebrews 6:20 gave himself up to be publicly executed. How can this be part of God’s plan to fulfill his promises to us? Speak to the Lord about this.
- Note that the word “finished” appears twice in this text: once in the narrative and once in Jesus’ final words. By offering himself, Jesus saves completely. There’s no more work to do; “it is finished.” May you live by this truth.

Day Five: 1 John 2:12-14

- What is the first reason John gives for writing this letter (12)? Meditate on the idea that the forgiven need assurance. What is his second reason for writing (13)? What do you think it means “to know him who is from the beginning”?
- What is John’s third reason for writing the letter (13)? What evidence in your life points to “overcoming the evil one”? How do you overcome evil in the face of extreme disappointment? What is John’s fourth reason for writing (14)? What distinguishes knowing “the Father” from knowing “him who is from the beginning,” a descriptor he repeats in this same verse?
- What are John’s final “reasons for writing” (14)? Which resonates with you the most? Why? Why do you think the author addresses his readers as “dear children,” “fathers” and “young men”? Conclude by writing a brief letter of your own, one full of truths that encourage you and others to never give up.