

Faith Looks to the Future (The Death of Sarah)

Genesis 22.20-23.20

Abraham demonstrated great faith in sacrificing his son Isaac, but it wasn't his final act of faith. God's promises to Abraham looked far beyond his life. When Sarah died, he put his faith into action again. His faith in God's promises guided him even at the end of life.

Pointing to the future: The descendants of Nahor (22.20-24)

Purpose: To introduce Rebekah (see chapter 24)

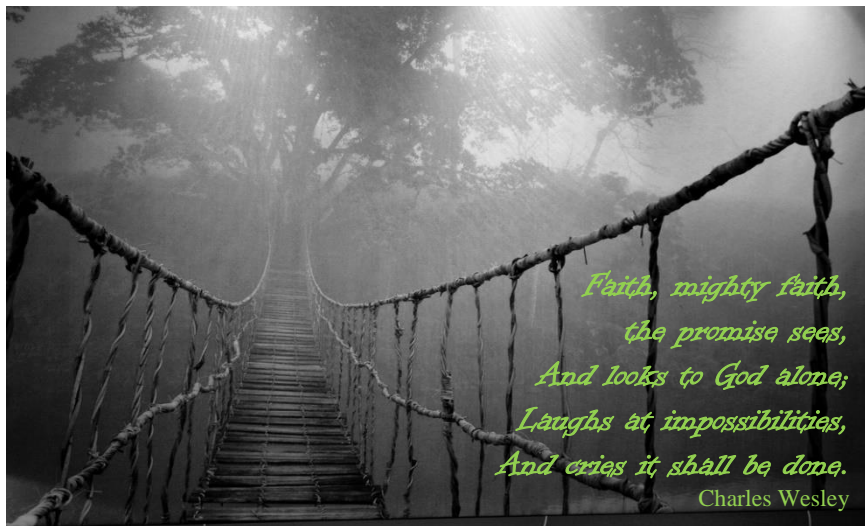
Abraham has proven his faith; it's on to the next generation!

The death of Sarah: Abraham demonstrates his faith (23.1-20)

Purpose: Show Abraham's confidence in God's promises.

Abraham's faith sees the future, even after he is gone.

Life Lesson: Faith looks to the future – beyond this life.



1. Genesis 22.20-24 is a seemingly misplaced genealogical detour from the narrative of Abraham's life, but it's here for a purpose. What do these verses show about the historicity of Genesis? As you think ahead to events in the life of Isaac, what name jumps out at you from these verses? Why do you think the author put this information in here?
2. How old was Sarah when she died (23.1)? How old was Isaac? Abraham? (Do the math!) Obviously, this is not an exhaustive account of Abraham's life! Instead, the inspired author has left us the pertinent information. Why does Abraham call himself a *stranger* and a *sojourner* in v4? Where was Hebron? What does this reveal about the fulfillment of God's promises to Abraham concerning the land (see Gen. 12.7; 13.14-15, 17; 15.7; 17.8)?
3. When Sarah dies, Abraham realizes that God's promise that he and his descendants will possess the land won't be fulfilled in his lifetime. But by this time, on his 'journey of faith,' he has learned not to doubt God *ever* – even in the face of death (the episode with Isaac on Mt. Moriah confirmed that). What did the *purchase* of the gravesite in Machpelah (Hebron) indicate about his faith in God's promise?
4. Great men and women of faith are listed in Hebrews 11. None get more attention than Abraham and Sarah (see Heb 11.8-12). What was Abraham's status in the land God promised to him (v9)? Where were his eyes fixed (v10)? What does the author of Hebrews conclude about this in v13?
5. What promises has God made to us in this life that last into the future beyond this life? Ask yourself: Do I really believe God's promises about the future? What different promises about the future can you articulate? Are all the promises about 'heaven'? (Where does Scripture say Christ will reign?) How does your faith in God's promises affect the way you live today?