

Genesis 22:15–23:20

God renews his promise to Abraham; Sarah is laid to rest

(The People's Bible, Genesis, pages 186-193)

Look

- 22:16 *“Because you have done this”*—The Lord’s statement here may sound like a contradiction of God’s promise to bless Abraham and of the fact that Abraham was justified by faith. Read James 2:21-26. There James explains that Abraham’s obedience fulfilled the Scripture passage that said Abraham was justified by faith. In sacrificing Isaac, Abraham’s faith was put on display to the world and to God. God certainly knew beforehand that Abraham believed him, but in verse 12 God was speaking to Abraham as one person would speak to another when he said, “Now I know that you fear God.” God ratified his promise to Abraham on the basis of Abraham’s obedience. But we must understand this properly, as James does, and see obedience as a sign and fulfillment of faith. This is not work-righteousness, any more than Jesus’ statement in Matthew chapter 25 where he invites the believers into heaven on the basis of their deeds of love to fellow Christians.
- 22:20 *“Abraham was told.”* This news came from 500 miles to the north, from Haran. This is where Abraham’s family lived. And here we see the partial genealogy of the family of Rebekah, through whom the messianic line would flow.
- 22:23 *“Bethuel”*—This name is important. Bethuel was the father of Rebekah and Laban. Rebekah would marry Isaac, and Laban would have a major role in the life of Abraham’s grandson Jacob.
- 23:19 Thirty-eight years later, Abraham would be buried next to his wife in this same burial cave. This cave came to be a little shrine, a place where even after they died, the patriarchs confessed their faith in God’s promise to give them the land.

Discuss

1. God said to Abraham, “I will surely bless you . . . because you have obeyed me.” In your own words, reconcile this statement with Genesis 15:6, that Abraham’s faith was credited to him as righteousness. Explain how God would say the same thing about us.
2. Why is the purchase of a burial ground for Sarah a testimony to Abraham’s faith in God and his promises?

God blessed Abraham because Abraham obeyed him. Abraham showed his faith by burying Sarah in Canaan.

Genesis 24

God unites Isaac and Rebekah

(The People's Bible, Genesis, pages 193-204)

Look

Verse 2 *“Under my thigh”*—This was the origin of Abraham’s procreative powers. The oath Abraham wanted his servant to swear had a direct connection with his offspring, specifically the Savior. The success of the steward’s journey, and how faithfully he carried out Abraham’s instructions, would have a direct bearing on the fulfillment of the promise.

Discuss

1. What were the two things the servant was not to do in finding a wife for Isaac? Why was each prohibition important?
2. Describe the wisdom of Abraham’s servant
 - in how he began his quest. (verses 12)
 - in the “condition” that had to be met by the woman. (verse 14)
 - in how he responded when God blessed his mission. (verse 26)
 - in how he reported the matter to Rebekah’s family. (verses 34-49, especially 49)
3. Describe how God, for the sake of his promise, showed Abraham and Isaac mercy
 - in how he met the servant’s condition. (verse 15)
 - in how he opened the hearts of Bethuel’s family. (verses 25-31)
 - in how he opened Rebekah’s heart. (verse 58)

Apply

4. Evaluate: This account gives us all a person needs to know to find a spouse.

The Lord blessed Isaac with a believing wife.