

the Purpose *and* Promises of God

The Promises and Purpose of God in the Lives of Abraham and Sarah

⁸ By faith Abraham obeyed when he was called to go out to a place that he was to receive as an inheritance. And he went out, not knowing where he was going. ⁹ By faith he went to live in the land of promise, as in a foreign land, living in tents with Isaac and Jacob, heirs with him of the same promise. ¹⁰ For he was looking forward to the city that has foundations, whose designer and builder is God. ¹¹ By faith Sarah herself received power to conceive, even when she was past the age, since she considered him faithful who had promised. ¹² Therefore from one man, and him as good as dead, were born descendants as many as the stars of heaven and as many as the innumerable grains of sand by the seashore. ¹³ These all died in faith, not having received the things promised, but having seen them and greeted them from afar, and having acknowledged that they were strangers and exiles on the earth. ¹⁴ For people who speak thus make it clear that they are seeking a homeland. ¹⁵ If they had been thinking of that land from which they had gone out, they would have had opportunity to return. ¹⁶ But as it is, they desire a better country, that is, a heavenly one. Therefore God is not ashamed to be called their God, for he has prepared for them a city.

Summary

The name of Abraham appears in numerous places throughout the Bible. Without question, as evidenced by the space dedicated to his life and the number of times and places his name appears, Abraham is the quintessential example of faith in the Scriptures. However, there should be no mistaking that the life of Abraham teaches us, God's people, about the promises and the purpose of God through the study of his life of faith.

Introduction

The Bible is a collection of books about God and His plan to redeem a people for Himself for His glory. In the Bible we find many precious promises. (Galatians 3:16) These promises are precious because they reveal to us the character and trustworthy nature of our Creator God..

We are moving into a series on Genesis 12-36, looking at the Promises and Purpose of God as seen through God's interaction with Abraham, his son, Isaac and his grandson, Jacob. While we will be following the unfolding of the lives of these individuals, we don't want to lose sight of the Promises Made by God and the Purpose fulfilled by God in the life events of these people. After all, that IS how God works...through the making of promises and through keeping them, according to his character and what he desires to accomplish in his world in the lives of his people.

That is why we can assert with great authority, because it stands on the sure and certain Word of God, that the Bible is a book which teaches us living in the 21st century about Who God is and What God desires from His people.even though more than 3500 years separates our lives from the lives of Abraham and Sarah

1. The Promises of God believed
 - a. Faith Obeys, v. 8
 - b. Faith Occupies, v. 9
 - c. Faith Observes, v. 11

2. The Purpose of God brought about
 - a. God intends to make himself known to Abraham and to his people who follow, (11:1-3, 6)
 - b. God intends to demonstrate His All-Knowing, All-Powerful, Ever-Present nature through the weakness of his people, v. 12
 - c. God intends to create a people for his name, v. 12.
 - d. God intends to be inseparably linked to His people, v. 16
 - e. God has prepared a city for these, his people, Revelation 21:1-4

3. The Promises and Purpose of God bring:
 - a. Identity, v. 13
 - b. Certainty, v. 13
 - c. Activity, v. 14

1. From today's study of Hebrews 11:8-16, what aspect of Abraham's life challenged you the most? Why? As a result, by God's grace, what should be your response?
2. What did you learn about faith (or what truth was reinforced) today from the study of Abraham's life? To what areas of your own life do you need to apply this new (or renewed) learning?
3. What are the greatest obstacles for you to exercise the kind of faith that Abraham lived? What are some ways that you, with God's help, can be working to overcome these obstacles?
4. How does what you think and what you say (Hebrews 11:13-14):influence the faith you live?
5. Do you live with a God-informed, forward-looking orientation of life? How would your family and friends answer this question about you? What concrete steps will you take in the days ahead to position yourself to grow in this area?
6. What did you learn about character of God from today's study of Hebrews 11:8-16? What did you learn about how God acts from today's study? What practical applications are there for your own life from these truths about God's character and His actions?