

Gen 22^{.20} -25^{.18}

Covenant ...to be continued!

1. births...

read Genesis 22.20-24:

What is out of place in this family tree?

What do you think is the purpose of this family tree?

read Genesis 25.12-18:

Why is the record of Ishmael's death out of place here?

What do you think is the purpose of this family tree?

Two family trees bookend the final chapters of the Abraham story, one introduces Rebekah and the other ties up the loose end of Ishmael. This starts to set the scene for the next generation, something made necessary by another pair of events, the deaths of Sarah and Abraham.

2. deaths...

read Genesis 23:

What does the record of the death of Sarah tell you about the relationship between Abraham and Sarah?

What does verse 6 tell you about Abraham? Why is this significant for God's promises to Abraham?

The record of the death of Sarah is dominated by Abraham purchasing land as a burial place. What do you think is the purpose of this?

read Genesis 25.1-11:

What do verses 1-4 tell you about Abraham? Why is this significant for God's promises to Abraham?

What do verses 5 & 11 tell you about Isaac? Why is this significant for God's promises to Abraham?

What does verse 8 tell you about Abraham? Why is this significant for God's promises to Abraham?

What does verse 10 again underline? Why is this significant for God's promises to Abraham?

Although the explicit mention of God is almost completely absent (only in 25.11) do you read these accounts seeing God at work in the background? Why is that?

Seeing God as the ever present and active force behind the visible events of life and death for Abraham is based on knowing God's promises (his word) to Abraham. **Discuss** how life is like that for you today, i.e. seeing God at work in the everyday because you know his word:

Chapter 24 is the central episode of the story of the last days of Abraham. This episode says God's covenant did not end with Abraham but the story is 'to be continued...' The 'faith-hero' baton is handed down from father to son, and a wedding marks the beginning of the story of the next generation.

3. here comes the bride...

read Genesis 24.1-9; 24.52-67

What elements of the beginning and end of this episode cast Rebekah and Isaac as replacements for Sarah and Abraham?

read Genesis 24.10-33 (24.34-49)

How would you describe the servant?

For you as a reader the heavy repetition of the same story in 24.34-49 should make you impatient for the answer to the servant's quest. It serves to build tension as the story comes to a climax and so makes verses 50-1 the focus of this whole story...

read Genesis 24.50-1

Chapter 24.50-51 provides the key to understanding not only this Abraham story but indeed the whole Abraham story. What is the key?

The Abraham story ends but it is far from finished. Abraham died with a foretaste of all of God's promises but most are not fulfilled. The Abraham story has to be continued and so we anticipate the beginning of the Isaac story. What do you expect the Isaac story to be like? What do you expect will be the key to the Isaac story?

God's story is a ...to be continued kind of story. We live in the last of God's story on earth. It's the story of God's worldwide people who gather (church) to serve and proclaim Jesus as God's forever king.

read Hebrews 1.1-3; 11.1-3; 11.8-16; 11.39-12.3

Does this witness of people of faith spur you on to persevere in faith and good deeds now? How? Why?

God's story is ...to be continued! What are you expecting the rest of the story to be like?