

Hebrews 11:17-22

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Faithful believers are able to look beyond death to resurrection and to a fulfilled promise.

God tested Abraham by asking him to offer up his *only begotten son*, Isaac. God promised Abraham that his descendants would be as numerous as the stars through his son, Isaac. Abraham had faith that God would fulfill His promises and he *considered that God is able to raise people from the dead*. Abraham was obedient in following God's instruction to sacrifice Isaac, believing God would resurrect Isaac. God stopped the obedient Abraham before he sacrificed Isaac, but in a way, Abraham *received him back* from the dead since he had decided to obey God. Abraham's obedience to God's test brought him God's blessing (Genesis 22).

Isaac also looked beyond death *by faith*. In Genesis 27, he blesses his sons, *Jacob and Esau, even regarding things* that would happen long after his death. Jacob had faith that even though he would be gone, God would work in the lives of his sons and bless them.

Jacob, Isaac's son who received a blessing, also had faith beyond death. Similar to Isaac, Jacob blessed Joseph's two sons while on his deathbed, having faith that God would work in the future. Jacob worshipped God even on his deathbed. (See Genesis 48:15-16) Jacob remained faithful until he finished his work.

Finally, when Joseph was dying he mentioned God's promise to Abraham, he said to his brothers, *I am about to die, but God will surely take care of you and bring you up from this land to the land which He promised on oath to Abraham, to Isaac and to Jacob* (Genesis 50:24). Joseph had lived in Egypt for a long time and yet he believed that one day God would fulfill his promise. He requested that his bones be taken with them to land that God had promised.

These examples show that having faith that our home is not here, but is with God in heaven, allows extraordinary faith in the face of death. Those who remained faithful to the end of their lives viewed their time here as a

pilgrimage with their final destination being eternity with God. And they also viewed God's promises to their descendants as a great blessing to them.

Biblical Text:

¹⁷ By faith Abraham, when he was tested, offered up Isaac, and he who had received the promises was offering up his only begotten *son*; ¹⁸ *it was he* to whom it was said, "In Isaac your descendants shall be called." ¹⁹ He considered that God is able to raise *people* even from the dead, from which he also received him back as a type. ²⁰ By faith Isaac blessed Jacob and Esau, even regarding things to come. ²¹ By faith Jacob, as he was dying, blessed each of the sons of Joseph, and worshiped, *leaning* on the top of his staff. ²² By faith Joseph, when he was dying, made mention of the exodus of the sons of Israel, and gave orders concerning his bones.