

## Chapter 17: The Commerce of Abraham

*Genesis 23:1–20*

Death was not a feature of God’s original design for creation. Instead, death entered the world through the sin of Adam (1 Cor. 15:21–22). Death rips apart our everlasting souls from our perishable bodies, preventing us from continuing to enjoy God’s creation in this life. In Genesis 23, we come to the death of Sarah, Abraham’s wife. Death is always tragic, but Sarah’s death represents a unique problem: Sarah dies before she sees the fulfillment of God’s promises to her and to Abraham. She will not live to see her son become a great nation, and she will never personally possess any part of the land that God promised to give to Abraham and to Abraham’s offspring forever. In the eyes of the world, Sarah’s death marks the expiration of God’s opportunity to fulfill his promises to her.

God has a different perspective, however. In God’s perspective, Sarah’s life and death is simply the first installment of his interactions with her. God intends to fulfill his promises to her, and not even death can prevent the fulfillment of his promises. Abraham, then, acts in faith following the death of his wife. He insists on burying her, and specifically on burying her in a piece of land that he purchases for an extravagant sum. Abraham will never acquire much property, but he will eventually be buried on the property that he does own, alongside his wife (Gen. 25:9–10). Abraham’s actions reflect his faith not only that his offspring will inherit all the land of Canaan, but that his body should participate in the firstfruits of that inheritance at burial. In Genesis 23, we learn something important from Abraham: *When we bury believers, God plants resurrection seeds.*

### Exposing the Reality of Death (Gen. 23:1–9)

In Genesis 21, Abraham endured the pain of sending away his beloved son Ishmael. In Genesis 22, Abraham did not spare his own son Isaac, but obeyed God’s command of sacrificing his son, right up until the moment that the angel of Yahweh intervened to stop him. Now in Genesis 23, Abraham must deal with the pain of loss once again, but this time in the death of his wife and life companion, Sarah:<sup>1</sup> “[1] Sarah lived 127 years; these were the years of the life of Sarah. [2] And Sarah died at Kiriath-arba (that is, Hebron) in the land of Canaan, and Abraham went in to mourn for Sarah and to weep for her” (Gen. 23:1–2). At Sarah’s death, Abraham is one hundred thirty-seven (Gen. 17:17), Isaac is thirty-seven (Gen. 21:5), and Abraham and Sarah have lived together in the land of Canaan for sixty-two years (Gen. 12:4).<sup>2</sup> Fittingly, Abraham mourns and weeps for his lifelong companion at her death (Gen. 23:2).

In the face of Sarah’s death, Abraham faces a major theological challenge. Why didn’t Sarah live to see the fulfillment of God’s promises? Why won’t *he* live to see the fulfillment of God’s promises? Sarah enjoyed thirty-seven years with her son, Isaac, but Isaac is not even married yet, so much less has he been multiplied into a great nation. Furthermore, while Abraham has secured a perpetual lease to a well in Gerar (Gen. 21:30–32), Abraham and Sarah have not come into possession of any land in

Canaan. As Sarah dies—with Abraham soon to follow (Gen. 25:7–8)—what will become of the promises?<sup>3</sup> Genesis 23 provides two general answers to that question. First, the narrative portrays Sarah as the first example of a believer dying in faith (cf. Heb. 11:13), without receiving the fulfillment of the things promised.<sup>4</sup> Second, Abraham’s act of burying his wife in the land of Canaan expresses his continuing faith that God will still fulfill the promises, even if not in his own lifetime.<sup>5</sup> Abraham only comes into possession of land when he purchases it for a burial ground first for Sarah, and later for his own tomb as well (Gen. 25:9–10). Nevertheless, the burial of believers in the Promised Land becomes a triumphant announcement of their faith in the promises: “For while they themselves were silent and speechless, the sepulcher cried aloud, that death formed no obstacle to their entering on the possession of it.” Even though Abraham is only buying a plot of land for their tomb, he and Sarah enter into real possession of God’s promises at their deaths.

### Securing a Burial Plot

After grieving for his wife, then, Abraham arises to secure a burial plot for his wife:

[3] And Abraham rose up from before his dead and said to the Hittites, [4] “I am a sojourner and foreigner among you; give me property among you for a burying place, that I may bury my dead out of my sight.” [5] The Hittites answered Abraham, [6] “Hear us, my lord; you are a prince of God among us. Bury your dead in the choicest of our tombs. None of us will withhold from you his tomb to hinder you from burying your dead.” (Gen. 23:3–6)

Abraham negotiates with the Hittites for a burial plot in three stages: (1) Abraham asks for a place to bury Sarah (Gen. 23:4–6); (2) Abraham asks to buy the cave of Machpelah (Gen. 23:7–9); and (3) Abraham purchases the cave from Ephron for four hundred shekels of silver (Gen. 23:10–18).<sup>7</sup> Each section of the narrative is marked off by the word “arise” (Gen. 23:3, 7, 17, 20), although the final two instances of the word “arise” mean something more like “establish” or “make sure” (ESV: “made over”).<sup>8</sup> Here in Genesis 23:3, we see the first instance, as Abraham *rises up* from before his dead to inquire among the Hittites for a burial plot. We do not know much about the Hittites, except that these are the sons of Heth, the son of Canaan (Gen. 10:15).<sup>9</sup>

Abraham identifies himself as a “sojourner” and a “foreigner.” The first word, *sojourner*, simply means that Abraham is an immigrant from another land, while the word *foreigner* adds an “element of socioeconomic dependence.”<sup>10</sup> Within the nation of Israel, the words *sojourners* and *foreigners* were often used more or less synonymously; however, sojourners were somewhat more permanent, so that (for example), sojourners could eat the Passover, while foreigners could not (Ex. 12:19, 45–49).<sup>11</sup> By using both of these terms to describe himself, Abraham is acknowledging that he has no property and no rights, and he is asking the Hittites to take mercy on him in his grief. Abraham is careful to clarify that he seeks property only “for a burying place, that I may bury my dead out of my sight” (Gen. 23:4)—that is, only “as a sepulcher, not a homestead.”<sup>12</sup> Abraham avoids any hint that he might be seeking to become a rival to the Hittites by buying up their property, since his only desire is to bury his dead wife.<sup>13</sup> Nevertheless, the specific word for “plot” or “holding” or “possession” (ESV: “place”; Gen. 23:4) also appears in Genesis 17:8 and Genesis 48:4 to describe “Israel’s eternal possession of Canaan.”<sup>14</sup> A marvelous irony hangs over this whole passage, as Abraham must negotiate to purchase a plot of land to bury his wife in the land that God has

promised to give to his offspring as an everlasting possession.<sup>15</sup>

### Gift vs. Property

The Hittites respond to Abraham’s request with deference toward Abraham. Rather than treating Abraham as a sojourner or a foreigner, they call him a “prince of God,” and they adjust Abraham’s “with you” (ESV: “among you”) into the more familiar phrase, “in our midst” (ESV: “among us”), which “suggests Abraham is almost one of them.”<sup>16</sup> Abraham is a man who deals directly with Pharaoh in Egypt (Gen. 12:10–20) and Abimelech, king of Gerar (Gen. 20, 21:22–34), so the Hittites do have some reason to describe Abraham in princely terms.<sup>17</sup> Even so, the warm words of the Hittites have a specific purpose as they offer to lend Abraham their tombs, while still retaining ownership: “None of us will withhold from you *his* tomb to hinder you from burying your dead” (Gen. 23:6; my emphasis). That is, Abraham may use *their* tombs to bury Sarah, but they would still remain in the possession of the Hittites. Abraham, however, has asked for a burial “possession” (ESV: “place”), and not simply to borrow a tomb.<sup>18</sup> Their primary desire is for Abraham to remain a landless, unpropertied sojourner in their midst.<sup>19</sup>

Therefore, Abraham enters the next phase of the negotiations as he once again “arises” and then bows before the Hittites (Gen. 23:7):

[7] Abraham rose and bowed to the Hittites, the people of the land. [8] And he said to them, “If you are willing that I should bury my dead out of my sight, hear me and entreat for me Ephron the son of Zohar, [9] that he may give me the cave of Machpelah, which he owns; it is at the end of his field. For the full price let him give it to me in your presence as property for a burying place.” (Gen. 23:7–9)

In this second phrase, Abraham asks specifically to buy the cave of Machpelah, which Ephron, the son of Zohar, currently owns. Once again, Abraham approaches his task with humility, so that he bows to the Hittites. This chapter (Gen. 23:7, 12) is the only place in Genesis that Abraham bows to the inhabitants of Canaan.<sup>20</sup> In principle, the Hittites have already stated that none of them would withhold his tomb from them, so that Abraham builds on their response by asking about purchasing a piece of property.<sup>21</sup> Kidner remarks on Abraham’s shrewdness in asking to purchase a specific piece of property from a specific person: “while a group tends to resent an intruder, the owner of an asset may welcome a customer.”<sup>22</sup>

Abraham’s negotiations demonstrate that it is not enough for him to bury Sarah in a borrowed tomb. Because he believes that the entire land of Canaan will eventually become the possession of his descendants, he wants a burial plot as a firstfruits of that promise. Furthermore, the fact that Abraham has not sought to purchase property to use during his lifetime, but only during his (and his wife’s) death, also demonstrates an important principle. Abraham believes that by burying Sarah and himself in property that they own, they *do* come into possession of the promises. Or, more precisely, they believe that they *will* come into possession of the full promises one day. That is, Abraham takes such care to bury the body of his wife in his own property because of his faith that their bodies will one day be raised up from the dead. John Calvin writes this:

This also, finally deserves to be noticed; that Abraham often declares that he was buying the

field for a place of sepulture. And Moses is the more minute in this matter, that we may learn, with our father Abraham, to raise our minds to the hope of the resurrection. He saw the half of himself taken away; but because he was certain that his wife was not exiled from the kingdom of God, he hides her dead body in the tomb, until he and she should be gathered together.<sup>23</sup>

The death of Sarah does not invalidate God's promises to her. Rather, Abraham is taking care for Sarah to participate in the enjoyment of the promises when their bodies will be raised up and glorified at the resurrection of the dead.

### Investing in What Will Endure

Abraham acts this way because he believes two things about death: (1) death comes for us all; but (2) death is not the end. While the death of Sarah grieves Abraham, her death does not surprise him. Even in the earliest days of human history, God's people have come to recognize the largely (cf. Gen. 5:24) unwavering pattern of death: "...and he died..." (Gen. 5:5, 8, 11, 14, 17, 20, 27, 31). Nevertheless, Abraham does not believe that death marks the end of God's opportunity to fulfill his promises to his people. Therefore, he invests his resources to take possession of what can be established (ESV: "made over"; Gen. 23:17, 20) beyond death. In the same way, the Apostle Paul encourages Christians to take stock of how they are building on the foundation of the Lord Jesus Christ:

[10] According to the grace of God given to me, like a skilled master builder I laid a foundation, and someone else is building upon it. Let each one take care how he builds upon it. [11] For no one can lay a foundation other than that which is laid, which is Jesus Christ. [12] Now if anyone builds on the foundation with gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, straw—[13] each one's work will become manifest, for the Day will disclose it, because it will be revealed by fire, and the fire will test what sort of work each one has done. [14] If the work that anyone has built on the foundation survives, he will receive a reward. [15] If anyone's work is burned up, he will suffer loss, though he himself will be saved, but only as through fire. (1 Cor. 3:10–15)

Some of what we do in this life has no eternal value, so it will be burned up like wood, hay, and straw. Paul exhorts us to direct our attention instead to what *will* endure into eternity as gold, silver, and precious stones. If we recognize that death is coming for *us*, and if we recognize that death is *not* the end, then we should invest everything we have in this world for the sake of the world to come. In the next section of Genesis 23, though, Abraham shows us just how much investing in the world-to-come can cost us.

### Exchanging our Resources for Inheritance (Gen. 23:10–16)

Initially, Ephron the Hittite follows the general approach of the Hittites by sidestepping Abraham's question about *purchasing* his property:

[10] Now Ephron was sitting among the Hittites, and Ephron the Hittite answered Abraham in the hearing of the Hittites, of all who went in at the gate of his city, [11] “No, my lord, hear me: I give you the field, and I give you the cave that is in it. In the sight of the sons of my people I give it to you. Bury your dead.” (Gen. 23:10–11)

Ephron offers simply to “give” Abraham the field, along with the cave in the field. To be sure, this is a generous offer, but with two catches that Abraham will find unacceptable. First, a “gift, as opposed to a sale, places the recipient under obligation to the donor.”<sup>24</sup> Earlier, Abraham refused to take the spoils of Sodom which belonged to him by right, vowing, “[22] I have lifted my hand to the LORD, God Most High, Possessor of heaven and earth, [23] that I would not take a thread or a sandal strap or anything that is yours, lest you should say, ‘I have made Abram rich’” (Gen. 14:22–23). For the same reasons, Abraham refuses to take this field as a gift, since it would mean that the *Canaanites* rather than God have enriched him in the land.<sup>25</sup> Second, land “merely ‘given’ is land on loan.”<sup>26</sup> After Ephron’s death, Ephron’s heirs would regain possession of the land, along with possession of Sarah’s bones which will be *in* that land.<sup>27</sup>

### Public Price

For both of these reasons, Abraham presses forward toward purchasing the land:

[12] Then Abraham bowed down before the people of the land. [13] And he said to Ephron in the hearing of the people of the land, “But if you will, hear me: I give the price of the field. Accept it from me, that I may bury my dead there.” [14] Ephron answered Abraham, [15] “My lord, listen to me: a piece of land worth four hundred shekels of silver, what is that between you and me? Bury your dead.” [16] Abraham listened to Ephron, and Abraham weighed out for Ephron the silver that he had named in the hearing of the Hittites, four hundred shekels of silver, according to the weights current among the merchants. (Gen. 23:12–16)

Once again, Abraham demonstrates great respect for the “people of the land” by bowing down before them. Then, he asks Ephron directly to tell him the price of the land so that he may buy it from him to bury his dead there (Gen. 23:13). Ephron seems to know that he can charge whatever he wants in this transaction, since the supply of land is low, while Abraham’s demand is high.<sup>28</sup> Victor Hamilton puts the price of four hundred shekels (Gen. 23:15) in perspective from other prices for real estate in the Old Testament:

The piece of property was no bargain for Abraham; 400 *shekels* would be more than a hundred pounds of silver. David paid only one-eighth that amount—50 shekels of silver—for the purchase of the temple site from Araunah (2 Sam. 24:24). Jeremiah paid 17 shekels for silver for his cousin’s field in Anathoth (Jer. 32:9). Omri paid fifteen times as much as Abraham—two talents of silver (6,000 shekels)—for the large hill of Samaria (1 K. 16:24).<sup>29</sup>

It is difficult to know how exactly how to adjust property values across those various times, but when we compare the price of this piece of land with other purchases in the Bible, we are almost certainly

supposed to understand that Abraham pays a very high price for this land.

### Public Purchase

While the text does not pay too much attention to the high purchase price for this land, the text goes out of its way to describe the public nature of this transaction. Abraham asks Ephron “in the hearing of the people of the land” for the purchase price of the land (Gen. 23:13). Then, the text notes that Ephron names his price “in the hearing of the Hittites” (Gen. 23:16). Just as the story of the naming of the well of Beersheba provided a public memory of the water rights that Abimelech *swore* to Abraham by taking *seven* ewe lambs (Gen. 21:28–32), so Abraham now carefully makes this transaction in public so ensure that there will be no dispute over the property down the road. For Abraham, possession of the land of Canaan is deeply theological, so he makes certain that his burial site will be publicly recorded as his possession forever.

### Shrewdly Managing our Resources

From one perspective, Abraham got ripped off in this transaction. Ephron knows that Abraham has no leverage in this deal, and Ephron asks for a premium price to sell off this piece of land that Abraham so desperately wants. Abraham, however, believes that *he* gets the better deal. In this way, Abraham illustrates the principle that Jesus taught in his parable of the dishonest manager in Luke 16:1–9. In the parable, a manager learns that his position of managing the possessions of his rich master will soon be terminated, so that he will be left destitute. Before losing his job, he summons his master’s debtors to discount what they owed his master. In this way, he put his master’s debtors in *his* debt while he still retained management of his master’s possessions.

Jesus does not hold out the dishonesty and fraud of the manager as worthy of imitation. Nevertheless, Jesus encourages us to follow the example of the manager’s *shrewdness*:

[8] “The master commended the dishonest manager for his shrewdness. For the sons of this world are more shrewd in dealing with their own generation than the sons of light. [9] And I tell you, make friends for yourselves by means of unrighteous wealth, so that when it fails they may receive you into the eternal dwellings.” (Luke 16:8–9)

Jesus’ point is that we should recognize that the “unrighteous wealth” of this world will eventually fail us. Death will come for us too, and when we die, our worldly resources of time, talents, and treasures can no longer help us. So, Jesus encourages us to use our resources as shrewdly as we can in this life for the sake of the next. This is the same point that Paul made earlier when he encouraged us to take care how we build upon the foundation of the gospel of Jesus Christ (1 Cor. 3:10). Iain Duguid summarizes this point well: “Ephron walked away with a pocket full of silver that he couldn’t take with him when he died, but Abraham obtained in symbolic form an inheritance that he could not lose.”<sup>30</sup>

### Expecting the Resurrection by Faith (Gen. 23:17–20)

After Abraham pays for the property, he officially takes possession of the land:

[17] So the field of Ephron in Machpelah, which was to the east of Mamre, the field with the cave that was in it and all the trees that were in the field, throughout its whole area, was made over [18] to Abraham as a possession in the presence of the Hittites, before all who went in at the gate of his city. [19] After this, Abraham buried Sarah his wife in the cave of the field of Machpelah east of Mamre (that is, Hebron) in the land of Canaan. [20] The field and the cave that is in it were made over to Abraham as property for a burying place by the Hittites. (Gen. 23:17–20)

Only at this point in the narrative do we learn of the location of the property (“to the east of Mamre”) and the fact that there were trees in the field (Gen. 23:17). The oaks of Mamre was the place where Abraham and Sarah settled after parting ways with Lot (Gen. 13:18), and it was by the oaks of Mamre that Yahweh promised Sarah that she would give birth to a son (Gen. 18:1–15), so that Mamre was “a place associated with some of her [Sarah’s] happiest memories.”<sup>31</sup> Here we see the third use of the word “arise” in this passage as “deeded over” (ESV: “made over”), “a commercial sense, meaning ‘to transfer property obligated to someone’ (e.g., Lev 25:30; 27:19).”<sup>32</sup>

Twice, Abraham “rose up” to do business with the Hittites (Gen. 23:3, 7), and now the narrative tells us twice that the property deed “arises” (ESV: “is made over”) into Abraham’s ownership (Gen. 23:17, 20). Furthermore, this transaction takes place publicly and indisputably “in the presence of the Hittites, before all who went in at the gate of the city” (Gen. 23:18).<sup>33</sup> Abraham has unassailable property rights over this land into perpetuity. After the business is completed, Abraham buries his wife, just as he said (Gen. 23:19). In addition to Abraham and Sarah, Isaac (35:27–29) and Jacob (49:30; 50:13) will also be buried in this tomb.<sup>34</sup> The patriarchs will not see the fulfillment of God’s promises, but their burial in the land of Canaan gives them a foothold claim to the promises that will be fulfilled after their deaths.

Admittedly, this passage does not rank among the most beloved passages in the Bible. It has nowhere near the poignancy of the sacrifice of Isaac in the previous chapter, nor does it contain promises that God’s people have treasured, as in many of the previous chapters of Abraham’s life. Nevertheless, this is written down for our advantage (1 Cor. 10:11), and God has three important lessons he intends for us to learn from Abraham’s real estate negotiations here.

### Confident Faith

First, the primary purpose of this passage is to teach us about Abraham’s confident faith in God’s promises, even when his own wife dies without seeing the fulfillment of those promises. Abraham will die without owning more of the land of Canaan than this field and the cave, but he has no doubt that his offspring will inherit the whole land of Canaan, just as God has spoken. There is a parallel passage to this in the book of Jeremiah. John Sailhamer writes this:

In Jeremiah 32:6–15, on the eve of the Babylonian captivity, Jeremiah’s trust in God’s promise of the land was expressed in his purchase of a parcel of land. Though the people would soon be removed from the land in captivity, Jeremiah purchased a plot of ground because he was confident that they would one day return and enjoy the good land God had given them. The writer of Genesis appears to have a similar idea in mind in the picture of Abraham in chapter 23. He purchased only a portion of the land which would some day

belong to his seed. In this small purchase was embodied the hope in God's promise that one day in the future it would all belong to him and his seed.<sup>35</sup>

Abraham's purchase of real estate is a confident act of faith.

### Costly Faith

Second, the inflated price of this land suggests that Israel's taking of the Promised Land will also be "costly," as Victor Hamilton observes: "Nothing will come easily or automatically. Israel taking over Canaanite land will be as difficult as Abraham taking over Ephron's land. But the cost will be moral, not monetary. Abraham's descendants will gain possession of the land not by putting up a large amount of silver shekels, but by obeying Yahweh and his decrees."<sup>36</sup> God will give the land freely to his people, and yet coming into the Lord's inheritance will cost his people everything. In the same way, the New Testament calls us to manage our resources shrewdly, giving away what the world hoards in order to gain what God freely gives. We can pour our every last resource of our lives into the next out of our confidence in the coming resurrection. As Paul encourages us at the very end of his extensive chapter about the resurrection, "Therefore, my beloved brothers, be steadfast, immovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, knowing that in the Lord your labor is not in vain" (1 Cor. 15:58). Because we believe in the resurrection, we should be steadfast and immovable, like Abraham. Whatever our faith costs us in this life will not be in vain for the benefit of the next.

### Resurrection Faith

Third, this passage teaches profound truths about the hope of believers concerning the coming resurrection. Our Lord calls us to the costliest sacrifice of all when he commands us to take up our crosses as we follow him (Matt. 10:38; 16:24; Mark 8:34; Luke 9:34; 14:27). Nevertheless, we live and die in the hope of the bodily resurrection of the dead (1 Cor. 15). Indeed, Christianity is nothing without the hope of the resurrection, for if "in this life only we have hoped in Christ, we are of all people most to be pitied" (1 Cor. 15:19). But indeed, our hope is solid because we have already seen the first demonstration of God's promises to raise his people through the death and resurrection of Jesus. Iain Duguid writes this:

Because Jesus has died for us, and was laid in another cave, we have hope. His tomb was borrowed, not purchased, because he wouldn't be needing it long. On the third day, he rose again as the firstfruits of all those who trust in him. Because of that, death is now the door through which those who believe in Jesus enter life. That reality was still far in the future for Abraham. But by buying this piece of land, Abraham was testifying to his faith in the enduring power of the promises of God. He had faith that not even death could separate him from the love of God.<sup>37</sup>

Like Abraham, God calls us not only to live in faith, but to die in faith. Unless Jesus returns first, we will die without seeing the fulfillment of God's promises. Nevertheless, we may go to our graves with confidence that God will not abandon our bodies forever, but will raise us up in the glorious resurrection bodies that Jesus himself pioneered for us (1 Cor. 15:35–49; 1 John 3:2). Every time we



bury believers, we should remind ourselves that death is also coming for us, but death is not the end. When we bury believers, God is sowing resurrection seeds that he will transform from perishable to imperishable, from dishonor to glory, from weakness to power, and from natural to spiritual (1 Cor. 15:42–44).

Therefore, let us take care how we build on the foundation of Jesus Christ (1 Cor. 3:10–15). Let us be shrewd in how we use our resources (Luke 16:8–9). Let us “be steadfast, immovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, knowing that in the Lord your labor is not in vain” (1 Cor. 15:58). Today, let us live for tomorrow. Following Abraham in his footsteps of faith will lead us both *into* the grave and *out* of the grave through our resurrection faith in the resurrected Jesus Christ.

## Discussion Questions

1. How does our culture seek to avoid, minimize, hide, and ignore the reality of death? What do you think is behind this desire? How does the Bible reorient us toward the cold reality of death? What does the Bible teach about life after death? Why is this important? What does Genesis 23 teach about how should we live today under the realization that one day we too will die?
2. What is our inheritance? How does the land of Canaan symbolize and foreshadow our greater inheritance in Christ? How is the land of Canaan different from our greater inheritance in Christ? How do we pursue this inheritance? How should our promised inheritance affect our day-to-day lives? How should our promised inheritance affect the way we approach death?
3. What resources does Abraham exchange for a possession of land? Why does Abraham insist on paying such a high price for a burial plot for his wife? What does it look like under the new covenant to exchange our own resources for an eternal inheritance (cf. Luke 16:1–13)? Why is this a wise investment? What resources is God calling you to exchange for your eternal inheritance?
4. What place does the resurrection of the body play in Christian theology? How does the resurrection of the body affect the way that we treat our own bodies and the rest of creation today? How does the resurrection of the body affect the way we understand the life to come? How does the resurrection of the body affect the way that we approach death?

## Notes

1. “Both the preceding chapter and this one are concerned with the death of a person very close to Abraham—Isaac’s potential death (ch. 22) and Sarah’s actual death (ch. 23). Sarah is conspicuously absent from the events surrounding Isaac, and Isaac is not mentioned as being present with his father at Sarah’s death. In both cases, then, Abraham endures the heartache alone. The trip from Beer-sheba to Moriah was a wrenching one for Abraham, but so was the trip from Beer-sheba to Hebron.” (Hamilton, *The Book of Genesis: Chapters 18–50*, 125.)

2. Mathews, *Genesis 11:27–50:26*, 314.

3. Ross, *Creation and Blessing*, 407.

4. Kidner, *Genesis*, 155.
5. Ross, *Creation and Blessing*, 409.
6. Calvin, *Genesis*, 579. Available online: <<http://www.ccel.org/ccel/calvin/calcom01.xxix.i.html>>
7. Wenham, *Genesis 16–50, Volume 2*, 126.
8. Ross, *Creation and Blessing*, 409.
9. Wenham, *Genesis 16–50, Volume 2*, 126.
10. Hamilton, *The Book of Genesis: Chapters 18–50*, 128–29.
11. Wenham, *Genesis 16–50, Volume 2*, 126–27.
12. Mathews, *Genesis 11:27–50:26*, 317.
13. Calvin, *Genesis*, 580. Available online: <<http://www.ccel.org/ccel/calvin/calcom01.xxix.i.html>>
14. Wenham, *Genesis 16–50, Volume 2*, 127.
15. Hamilton, *The Book of Genesis: Chapters 18–50*, 128–29.
16. Wenham, *Genesis 16–50, Volume 2*, 127.
17. Hamilton, *The Book of Genesis: Chapters 18–50*, 129.
18. Wenham, *Genesis 16–50, Volume 2*, 127.
19. Kidner, *Genesis*, 156.
20. Mathews, *Genesis 11:27–50:26*, 318.
21. Wenham, *Genesis 16–50, Volume 2*, 127.
22. Kidner, *Genesis*, 156.
23. Calvin, *Genesis*, 582–83. Available online: <<http://www.ccel.org/ccel/calvin/calcom01.xxix.i.html>>
24. Wenham, *Genesis 16–50, Volume 2*, 128.
25. Sailhamer, *The Pentateuch as Narrative*, 180.
26. Wenham, *Genesis 16–50, Volume 2*, 128.
27. Walton, *Genesis*, 528.
28. Kidner, *Genesis*, 156.
29. Hamilton, *The Book of Genesis: Chapters 18–50*, 135.
30. Duguid, *Living in the Gap Between Promise and Reality*, 145.
31. Wenham, *Genesis 16–50, Volume 2*, 130.
32. Mathews, *Genesis 11:27–50:26*, 321.
33. Wenham, *Genesis 16–50, Volume 2*, 129.
34. Hamilton, *The Book of Genesis: Chapters 18–50*, 136.
35. Sailhamer, *The Pentateuch as Narrative*, 180.
36. Hamilton, *The Book of Genesis: Chapters 18–50*, 136.
37. Duguid, *Living in the Gap Between Promise and Reality*, 146.