

THE END OF THE LIFE OF ABRAHAM

Genesis 25:1-11

INTRODUCTION

The *toledoth* of Terah is the longest literary section in Genesis →
The life of Abraham.

Gen 25:1-11 is the end of the life of Abraham

Reminded of the the hymn “Bless The Lord (10,000 Reasons)”:

*“And on that day when my strength is failing
The end draws near and my time has come
Still my soul will sing Your praise unending
Ten thousand years and then forevermore”*

That needs to be our heart cry always.

Legacy of Abraham → Called the Friend of God three times in
Scripture (1 Chronicles, Isaiah and James).

READ Gen 25:1-11

Proposition: 3 Closing Movements in the Life and Death of
Abraham

- I. Fulfilling** the Promise (1-4)
- II. Protecting** the Promise (5-6)
- III. Continuing** the Promise (7-11)

1st Closing Movement in the Life and Death of Abraham...

- I. Fulfilling** the Promise **Gen 25:1-4**

Point – God always fulfills His promises. All of them. All the
time.

Gen 17:4-5 – “As for Me, behold, My covenant is with you, And
you shall be the father of a multitude of nations. ⁵No longer shall
your name be called Abram, But your name shall be Abraham; for
I will make you the father of a multitude of nations.”

We know from Gen 17:20 that Ishmael will “become the father of twelve princes” and God “will make him a great nation.”

Proof – “¹**Now Abraham took another wife, whose name was Keturah.**”

Keturah – only mentioned in Gen 25 and 1 Chr 1

- her name means ‘covered in incense’
- called “**wife**” here;
- called “**concubine**” in 1 Chr 1:32
- God wants us to understand she is not the mother of the Promise

Point – **Hagar** has 1 son, **Sarah** has 1 son but obscure **Keturah** has **6 Sons!** Even though she is obscure in Scripture, there is honor given to her by God.

“²**And she bore to him Zimran and Jokshan and Medan and Midian and Ishbak and Shuah.**”

All of these, except for one, are mentioned only here and in 1 Chr 1.

Midian – NW Arabia

Turn to Gen 37: 25-28

Midianites became famous merchants and traders who moved between Gilead and Egypt outside the promised land. Jacob’s sons sold their brother Joseph to Midianite traders who took him to Egypt.

Hundreds of years later, in Exod 2:15, **Moses** will flee from Egypt to **Midian**, and marry a Midianite woman, **Zipporah**.

Moses’ father-in-law, **Jethro**, was a “priest of **Midian**,” - Exodus 18:1

Midian will partner with **Moab** against Israel - Numbers 22.

Gideon will defeat **Midian** with not 22, 000 soldiers, not the 10,000 soldiers, but only 300 of his choice men - Judges 6-8

“³And Jokshan became the father of Sheba and Dedan. And the sons of Dedan were Asshurim and Letushim and Leummim.”

Sheba – the Queen of **Sheba** – 1 Kgs 10; 2 Chr 9 - Sheba became a land known for wealth and power

Also a **Sheba** and **Dedan** in Gen 10 – in the line of Ham

The “**sons of Dedan**” – appear only here in Bible

“⁴And the sons of Midian were Ephah and Epher and Hanoch and Abida and Eldaah. All these were the sons of Keturah.”

Point - Nations and Kings come from “**the sons of Keturah**”

They are the fathers of Arab tribes who leave the southern portion of the Promised Land and migrate East, NE, and SE

From “**the sons of Keturah,**” **Ishmael, Lot, Edom,** mixed in with some others from **Ham** and **Shem** → modern Arabian peoples

Most of these people are generally recorded in Scripture as being enemies of Israel. But even among the national enemies of Israel, God’s arm is not too short that it does not save. We have many examples of godly people - for example, Ruth - who will in essence say “your God will be my God”.

Isa 60:6 – “A multitude of camels will cover you, The young camels of **Midian** and **Ephah**; All those from **Sheba** will come; They will bring gold and frankincense, And will bear good news of the praises of the LORD.”

- looking forward to the first coming of Christ
- looking past to even the second coming of Christ
- all under the umbrella of God fulfilling His promise.

2nd Closing Movement in the Life and Death of Abraham...

II. Protecting the Promise Gen 25:5-6

Point – We have continued to see through these first 24 chapters of Genesis that God makes good on His promises and that He uses the actions and work of fallible men and women.

We have also seen that we have the responsibility to protect the Promise.

Proof – **“⁵Now Abraham gave all that he had to Isaac; ⁶but to the sons of his concubines, Abraham gave gifts while he was still living, and sent them away from his son Isaac eastward, to the land of the east.”**

“⁵Now Abraham gave all that he had to Isaac;” – 24:36

- unnamed servant says to Laban’s family
- all the inheritance
- The Land of Promise belongs to the Son of Promise... and ONLY to the Son of Promise, Isaac.

Point – We see the Particular Grace of God.
And then we see Common Mercy of God...

“^{6a}but to the sons of his concubines, Abraham gave gifts while he was still living” “his concubines” – Hagar and Keturah

Abraham did not send his other sons away destitute. He was an incredibly rich man. They each likely went away with flocks of sheep, camels, servants, silver, gold ... with everything they needed.

Illustration – 1986 *Fortune* magazine article on Warren Buffet – *“the perfect amount to leave children is ‘enough money so they could do something, but not so much they could do nothing.’”*

“^{6b}and sent them away from his son Isaac eastward, to the land of the east.”

This is the next of many references in Genesis of people being banished to the East, threats from the East, etc.

Illustration – Rebekah asked me yesterday, “Where is West Point?” I answered “New York” Then she asked “Why do they call it ‘West Point’ if it’s in the East?”

Similarly, the “West Bank.” is on the east side of Israel - it isn’t the west bank of Israel. It is called the West Bank because Jordan calls it that and it is on the west side of Jordan.

Adam and Eve go east of Eden; Cain moved east; the people of Babel under God’s judgment moved east. Eastward was away from God, but Abraham through God’s grace had been brought from the east, from Ur.

In Gen 24: 6-8, Abraham warned the unnamed servant in no uncertain terms that he was absolutely forbidden to take Isaac back to the east. Isaac belongs here in the center of God’s will in the Promised Land.

The others were sent away. They will be ‘outside’, strangers to the covenant and promises, but Isaac is in the will of God and in the inheritance of God. He receives all his father’s possessions.

“**away from his son Isaac**” – Key to understanding! →**21:12-13**
→God is Protecting His Promise

Point – Here, **Abraham** is protecting the Promise.

He is ensuring **Isaac** will inherit the Promise.

The protection of the line of Promise. →**Separation**

God’s Commandment of **Separation** in Gen 21 was not abandonment of **Ishmael**. It was protection of the Promise.

In the same way, Abraham sending away the **sons of Keturah** is not abandonment of them. It is protection of the Promise.

Illustration – What a sharp contrast with a scene that occurred in 1964 on a New York street. Kitty Genovese was slowly and brutally stabbed to death. At least thirty-eight of her neighbors witnessed the attack and heard her screams. In the course of the

90-minute episode, her attacker was actually frightened away, then he returned to finish her off. Yet not once during that period did any neighbors assist her or even call the police.

The implications of this tragic event shocked America, and it stimulated two young psychologists, Darly and Latane, to study the conditions under which people are or are not willing to help others in an emergency. In essence, they concluded that responsibility is diffused. The more people present in an emergency situation, the less likely it is that any one of them will offer help. This is popularly called the “bystander effect.” In the actual experiment, when one bystander was present, 85% offered help. When two were present, 62% offered help. When five were present, then it decreased to 31%.

Application – Easy in the body of Christ to succumb to “the bystander effect”. We all have responsibility to protect the Promise.

In Galatians 1, Paul rebuked the entire congregation for their tolerance of heresy. In 1 Corinthians 5, God rebuked the entire body for their toleration of impurity. Not just the elders, but the entire congregations were rebuked.

Parents, we have a responsibility to take the Promise of God and protect the integrity of the Promise of God and pass it on to future generations.

3rd Closing Movement in the Life and Death of Abraham...

III. Continuing the Promise Gen 25:7-11

Point – Expanded Obituary – the formula we see in Genesis – “So all the days of --- were --- years, and he died.” (Gen 5). But here we have an incredibly expanded obituary for Abraham.

Proof – “⁷**And these are all the years of Abraham's life that he lived, one hundred and seventy-five years.** ^{8a}**And Abraham breathed his last**”

Noah (lived 950 years), **Shem** (600), **Arpachshad** (438), **Shelah** (433), **Eber** (464), **Peleg** (239), **Reu** (239), **Serug** (230), **Nahor**

(148), **Terah** (205), **Abram** (175), **Isaac** (180), **Jacob**, (147), **Joseph** (110)

Abraham died 38 years after his beloved **Sarah's** death.

Abraham was 100 when **Isaac** was born. **Isaac** was 60 when **Jacob** and **Esau** were born so **Jacob** and **Esau** were 15 years old when their grandfather **Abraham** died.

“breathed his last” – 4 times in OT, only 4 times for **Abraham, Ishmael, Isaac, and Jacob**

Illustration– The average respiratory rate for a person at rest is 16 breaths a minute, 960 an hour, 23,040 a day. If you live until you are 80 years of age you will take over 672,000,000 breaths.

→ Abraham breathed almost 1,500,000,000 breaths in his lifetime.

We are using our breaths up almost 1000 each hour, 1500 less by the end of this service. ☺

The time will come when each of us will have 10,000 breaths left, and then 1000, and then 10, 9, 8, 7, 6, 5, 4, 3, 2 and then what happened to **Abraham** will happen to us.

→ We will breathe our very last breath.

Each breath is in God's hands →

“Plagues and deaths around me fly;

Till he bid I cannot die;

Not a single shaft can hit

Till the God of love see fit.” (John Ryland, 1753-1825).

^{8b}**and died in a ripe old age, an old man and satisfied *with life*”**

“satisfied” – sated, fullness – filled up - a rich, long, full life
Abraham died as a man at peace with himself and at peace with the world because he was at peace with God.

All wants and expectations were satisfied. Inner shalom fulfillment → **15:15** – “And as for you, you shall go to your fathers in peace; you shall be buried at a good old age.”

Application – Ligon Duncan - *“Friendship with God produces fullness of life.”*

“^{8c}**and he was gathered to his people.**” – At his death, **Abraham** joined his family in the faith who had died before him, and those who will follow him, the household of faith and the people of God.

This does not mean at the family plot → 1000 miles away in Ur.

Abraham was gathered to **Enoch**, and to **Noah** and to his beloved wife, **Sarah**.

Abraham was gathered by the **great Shepherd** who gathers all of His sheep into his heavenly home forever. Those who know and love the Lord in this life will go on knowing and loving him in death and will be known and loved by him. He loses none.

Matthew Henry – *“Death gathers us to our people. Those that are our people while we lived, whether the children of God or the children of this world, are the people to whom death will gather us.*

“Whom will you be joining? The thieves and violent men and women? The blasphemers? The sex-addicts? The foul mouthed people of this world in their anger and greed and lust and hatred of what is pure and good? The men and women who lived for money? Will you be gathered to them, your people? Are you going to live in the company of God haters forever?”

“Or will you be gathered to God’s people, sinners who have been washed and cleansed, purified and forgiven people who love the God who saved them, who have been transformed from their blame and shame into the image of the Lord Christ?”

“⁹**Then his sons Isaac and Ishmael buried him in the cave of Machpelah, in the field of Ephron the son of Zohar the Hittite, facing Mamre,**”

I like that both **Isaac** and **Ishmael** are present.
Who is the elder? **Ishmael**.

Who does Moses, inspired by God, list first? **Isaac**. The Son of the Promise.

Application - As Christians, as students of the Word, let's rescue the biblical Ishmael from his descendants and especially from the wretched savage religion of Islam.

Jacob and **Esau** will do the same for **Isaac**

No mention of the sons of **Keturah**

“¹⁰**the field which Abraham purchased from the sons of Heth; there Abraham was buried with Sarah his wife.**”

Where his beloved wife **Sarah** is buried is far more than a matter of sentiment. Burying his beloved (23) was a statement of faith.

Even death will not separate them from God's promises!

Spurgeon – *“It is a sweet and blessed event which will occur to all believers in God's own time—the going home to be with Jesus. In a few more years the Lord's soldiers, who are now fighting ‘the good fight of faith’ will be done with conflict, and enter into the joy of their Lord.”*

“Although Christ prays that His people may eventually be with Him where He is, He does not ask that they may be taken at once from this world to heaven. He wishes us to stay here. Christ leaves us in His Father's hands, until, like shocks of corn fully ripe, we shall each be gathered into our Master's [harvest]. Jesus...asks that we may be kept from evil, but He never asks for us to be admitted to the inheritance in glory until we are of full age.”

“¹¹**And it came about after the death of Abraham, that God blessed his son Isaac; and Isaac lived by Beer-lahai-roi.**”

This is the continuation of the Blessing!

“**blessed**” – 5 times in 12:1-3; 13:15-16; 15:5, 18; 17:6-8; 22:17-18; 25:11; 26:2-4; 27:27-29; 49:28

“**Beer-lahai-roi**” – the well of the living One who sees me

The longest *toledoth* of Genesis is immediately followed by the shortest *toledoth*, 7 verses – The Life of Ishmael - vv. 12-18.

Terah (Abram) **11:27–25:11**
Ishmael **25:12–18**

God’s favor is on Ishmael ... But make no mistake about it ...
Isaac is the son of Promise! →Redemption!

What about us? What about our responsibility?

Illustration – There was an author who wrote about how he studied the Amish people in preparation to write an article about them. In his observation at the school yard, he noted the children never screamed or yelled. This amazed him. He spoke to the schoolmaster and asked why the schoolmaster thought this was so. The schoolmaster replied, “Well, have you ever heard an Amish adult yell?”

Application – Your children will imitate you. They will follow your pattern.

Proverbs →10 Lessons to Teach Your Children. We need to teach our children to:

- fear God
- guard their mind
- obey their parents
- select their companions well
- control their body in purity
- be faithful to their spouse
- to watch their words
- to pursue their work
- to manage their money
- to serve others.

These are the kind of responsibilities we have as parents. As believers, this is the legacy we want to leave in our church. As believers, this is the legacy we want to leave in our families.

CONCLUSION