

“THE DEATH OF GOD’S FRIEND”

GENESIS 25:1-11

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INTRODUCTION

See Psalm 116:15—“Precious in the sight of the Lord is the death of His saints.”

*However, for many the end of life is tragic: e.g. King Saul, Ananias and Sapphira, etc.

But, Scripture has some examples of glorious deaths: Stephen (Acts 7), Paul (II Tim. 4:7-8), and here Abraham.

What makes the difference? How can we have a glorious death?

THE ONLY WAY TO HAVE THE KIND OF DEATH ABRAHAM HAD IS TO HAVE THE KIND OF LIFE HE HAD.

We must live in light of eternity; today could be your last day.

Plan to have no regrets!

I. THE DEATH OF ABRAHAM

A. Passing of the Heritage

- How important that our faith, service, and even our possessions pass on from generation to generation.
- Our children need a spiritual heritage
- We need to make suitable provisions for our offspring; such will also help prevent disputes

1. Sons of Keturah: the concubine (1-4, 6)

- Here we see another typical pattern of Genesis: dispensing first with those not important to the covenant plan.
- Here the sons of Keturah and then the generations of Ishmael
- Remember the promise of Abraham being the father of a multitude of nations (17:4).
- Those who do not keep faith in God’s promises become just another heathen group.
- None of these descendants are important in the history of salvation.

a. Identity of Keturah (“covered with incense”)

- Origin? Certainly not a Canaanite!
- Time of marriage—maybe loneliness after Sarah’s death.
- Not during Sarah’s lifetime.
- “Concubine”—simply regarded to be of lower rank than Sarah—not that Sarah is still alive.
- Abram’s action with Hagar was a “last resort” action.
- Here we see monogamist leanings.
- Abraham lived 38 years after Sarah—from 137-175.
- He lived 35 years after Isaac’s marriage.
- He had plenty of time to have 6 boys and send them away.
- Abraham’s body had been revitalized in fathering Isaac.
- Certainly there is no lust or levity on Abraham’s part!

b. Identity of Children: Zimran, Jokshan, Medan, Midian, Ishbak, Shuah.

Those further delineated became founders of tribes or nations.

- Jokshan—Sheba and Dedan sons
- Dedan—3 sons, Asshurim, Letushim, and Leummim; notice the –im plural ending suffix. Possibly north Arabian peoples; similar names are found there.
- Midian had 5 other sons/peoples.
- These are Arab tribes who migrated to the east, southeast, and south.
- They met with and absorbed some native Arab tribes. Compare Sheba and Dedan with the same two in Gen. 10:7.

- Likely identities: **Medan**—eastern shore of Gulf of Aquaba
 - **Midian**—NW. Arabia; eastern Sinai peninsula, east of Palestine (Leupold, 691). Allied with Ishmaelites and Moabites, Amalekites.
 - **Sheba and Dedan**: SW Arabia
 - **Ephah**: Is. 60:6—Midian’s best known son.
 - **Ephah, Epher, Hanoch** are names found among Israelites—especially families contiguous to Midianites.
- c. Identity of Inheritance (6)
- Concubines are Hagar and Keturah.
 - Gifts given to them—cattle and goods, enough for a reasonable rance to get a fresh start.
 - Sent eastward—only the 6 sons so sent away.
 - In God’s plan these sons were sent away that there might be a true home, in the end, to return to. See some of these names mentioned in Is. 60:6ff.
 - Compare Lk. 15:31-32 where the son at home, who possessed all, was jealous of the returning prodigal.
2. Isaac (5, 11)—gets all that Abraham had. He is the son of the promise.
- a. His blessing
 - b. His living place—“the well of the God who sees me”, Beer-lahai-roi (Gen. 16:14; 24:62).
- B. His Glorious death and honored burial (8-10)
1. Death
- a. Length of years—175; a “good old age”
 - b. Dignity—“an old man”; involves the idea of dignity or rank growing out of ripe experience
 - c. Satisfaction—lit “sated”; all wants and needs satisfied
 - d. Eternal life—“gathered to his people”;
 - Later called “Abraham’s bosom” in Lk. 16.
 - Distinguished from dying and being buried.
 - The expression does not mean “buried in the family sepulcher!
 - Compare Gen. 15:15—“You shall go to your fathers”, they still exist!
 - Clear evidence of belief in life after death.
 - Abraham’s faith in God’s promises had reached such an assurance—**Hebrews 11:13-16**.
2. Burial (9-10)
- a. Reconciliation between Isaac and Ishmael
 - b. Buried with his wife—not the same as being “gathered to his people.”

What a wonderful end for Abraham! **But, his glorious death is due to his faithful life!**

II. THE LIFE OF ABRAHAM

CONCLUSION

If you want his kind of death, you’d better live his kind of life!

Picture yourself in your casket! Is what you are doing now worth it? What will it mean to you then?

[Illustration—funeral I attended where the priest either did not know this person, or else he lied profusely; contrast with the funeral of a genuine Christian]

How do we judge whether one has lived a full life and has length of days? **By the marks of God’s love and grace manifest in his life and experience!!**

See Revelation 14:13—“Blessed are the dead which die in the Lord from henceforth. Yea, saith the Spirit, that they may rest from their labors and their works do follow them.”

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