



Leaving a Legacy of Faith

(Genesis 25:1-18)

It is a great thing to start well; it is even better to finish well.¹

Abraham's **Family** (25:1-6)

“Problem: Genesis 25:1 says, “Abraham again took a wife, and her name was Keturah.” However, 1 Chronicles 1:32 states, “Now the sons of Keturah, Abraham’s concubine.” Was Keturah Abraham’s wife, or was she merely one of his concubines?

“First, although in Genesis 25:1 the normal Hebrew word for wife (*ishshah*) is used, it is also the normal word for woman. It is not necessary to take the word in this case to mean wife, especially in light of verse 6 and the statement in 1 Chronicles 1:32 that Keturah was his concubine. Genesis 25:1 can be read simply as, “And Abraham took another woman” as his concubine.

“Second, although 1 Chronicles employs the Hebrew word for concubine (*pilegesh*) in reference to Keturah, Genesis 25:6 uses the same word when referring to the mothers of all his other sons apart from Isaac. This would obviously include Keturah as one of his concubines. Additionally, Genesis 25:1 begins with a Hebrew word (*vayoseph*) which can be translated, “And adding” or “And in addition to.” Since Genesis 24:67 clearly states that Sarah, Abraham’s wife, had died, verse 1 of chapter 25 could not mean that Abraham was adding to his number of wives. It is more reasonable to take this word as indicating that Abraham was adding to his number of concubines by taking another woman (*ishshah*).²

25:5-6 - He was good to all of his sons but gave his greatest inheritance to Isaac.

Abraham's **Fullness** (25:7-11)

“And these are the days of the years of Abraham’s life which he lived, an hundred threescore and fifteen years” (25:7). At that time Isaac was seventy-five, Jacob was fifteen, Esau was fifteen, Eber, the grandson of Shem, was four hundred sixty. Abraham had been born only two years after the death of Noah. He had outlived his

¹ John Phillips, *Exploring Genesis: An Expository Commentary* (Kregel Publications; WORDsearch Corp., 2009), Genesis 25:1–11.

² Norman Geisler and Thomas Howe, *The Big Book of Bible Difficulties: Clear and Concise Answers from Genesis to Revelation* (Baker Publishing Group, 2014), 53–54.

beloved Sarah by nearly half a century. He had been called to the pilgrim pathway when he was seventy-five, and had walked the straight and narrow way for a hundred years.³

Moreover, he died full. The King James Version says that he died “full of years,” but the text really says that he died full. He died satisfied, or better still, satiated. He had lived life to the full. He was replete. He had all that he could take, not just of life’s richest blessings, but of life itself. He was ready to die. A person sits down to his Christmas dinner and at last he pushes away from the table—full! He cannot eat another thing, not so much as a crumb. Abraham was full, full of living, satisfied and more than satisfied.⁴

So teach us to number our days that we may get a heart of wisdom. (Psalm 90:12)

O Lord, make me know my end and what is the measure of my days; let me know how fleeting I am! (Psalm 39:4)

Ishmael’s Fulfillment (25:12-18)

Genesis 16:12 states that Ishmael would live in hostility with his brothers. Genesis 25:18 expresses the fulfillment of this prophetic word. In Genesis 21:18 the angel tells Hagar that Ishmael would become a great nation, which is indicated in Genesis 25:13-16.⁵

What did Abraham leave us, as children of promise (see Galatians 4:28)?⁶

- 1) *A clear witness of salvation through faith alone.* (Rom. 4:1-5; Gen. 15; Gal. 3; Heb. 11).
- 2) *An example of a faithful life.* James used him to illustrate the importance of proving our faith by our works (James 2:14–26).
- 3) *How to walk by faith.* “By faith Abraham ... obeyed” (Heb. 11:8). “The pith, the essence of faith,” said Charles Spurgeon, “lies in this: a casting oneself on the promises.”
- 4) *The gift of the Jewish nation;* and it is through the Jews that we have the knowledge of the true God plus the Word of God and the salvation of God (John 4:22).
- 5) *[The] Savior.* (Matt. 1:1), Abraham’s name is joined with the names of David and Jesus Christ! God promised Abraham that through him all the world would be blessed (Gen. 12:1–3).

Applications:

- 1) Believers should strive to pass on to their children and grandchildren a spiritual inheritance. (See Ps 78:1-8)
- 2) Even the finest Christians have an expiration date. We should strive to finish well. (See 2 Timothy 4:7-8)
- 3) Just because your parents faithfully passed to you a spiritual inheritance does not mean that you received it. Ishmael knew what God wanted but rebelled against it. We are responsible for the light we have.
- 4) The secret to a full life is enjoying that which God gives not in how much one has. Abraham began his journey of faith being promised a land, which at death, he still had not received. Yet, he died “full”.

³ Phillips, Genesis 25:7.

⁴ Phillips, Genesis 25:8.

⁵ John Walton, *Genesis: The NIV Application Commentary* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2001), 533.

⁶ Warren Wiersbe, *Be Obedient*, “Be” Commentary Series (Wheaton, IL: Victor Books, 1991), 135–137.