

The Death of Abraham

(Compiled by Paul R. Blake)

Introduction:

- A. Gen. 25:1-11 - How can one pass with grace and not end his days grasping at the minutes filled with regrets over undone deeds and unsaid words? Not passing despising this world and in despair longing for it to end, but instead, living life full of days and content with their pilgrimage in this life, looking forward to the next leg of the journey.
- B. One of my favorite eulogies is 25 words long and was written at Abraham's passing: "Then Abraham breathed his last and died in a good old age, an old man and full of years, and was gathered to his people" (Gen. 25:8).
- C. "Death can be sweet if we answer it in the affirmative, if we accept it as one of the great eternal forms of life and transformation." (Herman Hesse)
- D. "I look at life as a gift of God. Now that he wants it back, I have no right to complain." (Joyce Cary)

I. ABRAHAM SET HIS HOUSEHOLD AFFAIRS IN ORDER

- A. Gen. 25:1-4 - Abraham married again and had many children by Keturah.
- B. Gen. 25:5-6 - He was careful to set Isaac apart as the child of promise.
 - 1. He gave his primary inheritance to Isaac, but only gave gifts to the sons of his concubines
 - 2. While he was still living, he sent them away from Isaac his son of promise, to the countries of the east.
 - 3. He made certain to separate his son from the risk of being overthrown by his half brothers
 - 4. He made certain to separate his son from the risk of moral corruption

II. ABRAHAM WILLINGLY LAID DOWN HIS LIFE

- A. He laid it down with readiness - Gen. 25:8, 15:15
 - 1. There was no struggling to stay, but a simple releasing of life when it came time to go. He had lived a full and long life, 175 years, but when the time came to make the crossing out of this life into the next, Abraham did so with grace and serenity. Why? Because he had spent his life looking for a particular city - Heb. 11:10
 - a. Similar language to the death of Jesus - John 19:30; Luke 23:46
 - b. Abraham knew that Sarah was waiting on the other side. His deathbed scene was one of peace - Heb. 12:2
- B. He laid it down with reassurance; he was "gathered to his people."
 - 1. He went to that place where those died in faith were waiting for him - Luke 16:23; Eph. 4:8-10
 - 2. A time of laying aside the temporary for the permanent - 2Cor. 5:1
 - 3. A time of leaving the land of the dying to enter the land of the living - John 11:25-26
 - 4. A time to stand in the presence of God - 2Cor. 5:8
 - 5. A time that is little more than a departure - 2Tim. 4:6

C. "Above all as a man of God, he stands unrivaled; so that under the most exalted and perfect of all dispensations, the Gospel of Jesus Christ, he is proposed and recommended as the model and pattern according to which the faith, obedience, and perseverance of the followers of the Messiah are to be formed. Reader, while you admire the man, do not forget the God that made him so great, so good, and so useful. Even Abraham had nothing but what he had received; from the free unmerited mercy of God proceeded all his excellences; but he was a worker together with God, and therefore did not receive the grace of God in vain. Go thou, believe, love, obey, and persevere in like manner." (Adam Clarke, A Eulogy for Abraham)

III. THE RIGHTEOUS WERE AT PEACE WITH DEATH

A. By faith, godly men and women laid aside their lives here in anticipation of the life to come.

1. "Died and was gathered" implies two actions:
 - a. The end of the body which goes to decay - Ecc. 3:20-21
 - b. And the departure of the spirit to the waiting place of the dead
2. "Fathers" is from horim, or "rightful ancestors"
 - a. The righteous go to their righteous forebears
 - b. The unrighteous do not see them again - Job 27:19

B. The righteous were at peace with dying and going onward

1. Isaac - Gen. 35:29
2. Jacob - Gen. 49:29, 33
3. Job - Job 5:26
4. Moses - Num. 27:12-13
5. Joshua - Joshua 23:14
6. Faithful Israelites - Judges 2:10
7. Barzillai - 2Sam. 19:33-37
8. David - 1Kings 2:1-2, 10

Conclusion:

- A. "The fear of death follows from the fear of life. A man who lives fully is prepared to die at any time." (Mark Twain)
- B. "When you were born, you cried and the world rejoiced. Live your life so that when you die, the world cries and you rejoice." (Cherokee Proverb)
- C. 2Tim. 4:6-8