

The Death of Abraham

Genesis 25:1-11

The Death of Abraham

- “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).
- “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)
- “I look at life as a gift from God. Now that He wants it back, I have no right to complain.” (Joyce Cary)

Abraham Set His Affairs In Order

- Gen. 25:1-4 - “Abraham again took a wife, and her name was Keturah. 2 And she bore him Zimran, Jokshan, Medan, Midian, Ishbak, and Shuah. 3 Jokshan begot Sheba and Dedan. And the sons of Dedan were Asshurim, Letushim, and Leummim. 4 And the sons of Midian were Ephah, Epher, Hanoch, Abidah, and Eldaah. All these were the children of Keturah.”

Abraham Set His Affairs In Order

- Gen. 25:5-6 - “And Abraham gave all that he had to Isaac. 6 But Abraham gave gifts to the sons of the concubines which Abraham had; and while he was still living he sent them eastward, away from Isaac his son, to the country of the east.”
- He made certain to separate his son from the risk of being overthrown by his half brothers
- He made certain to separate his son from the risk of moral corruption

Abraham Willingly Laid Down His Life

- He laid it down with readiness
 - Gen. 25:8 - “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. 15:15 - “Now as for you, you shall go to your fathers in peace; you shall be buried at a good old age.”
- Why? Because he had spent his life looking for a particular city
 - Heb. 11:10 - “For he waited for the city which has foundations, whose builder and maker is God.”

Abraham Willingly Laid Down His Life

- Similar language to that of the death of Jesus
 - John 19:30 - “So when Jesus had received the sour wine, He said, It is finished! And bowing His head, He gave up His spirit.”
 - Luke 23:46 - “And when Jesus had cried out with a loud voice, He said, Father, into Your hands I commit My spirit. Having said this, He breathed His last.”
- Abraham knew that Sarah was waiting on the other side. His deathbed scene was one of peace
 - Heb. 12:2 - “Looking unto Jesus, the author and finisher of our faith, who for the joy that was set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame, and has sat down at the right hand of the throne of God.”

Abraham Willingly Laid Down His Life

- He laid it down with reassurance; he was “gathered to his people.”
- He went to that place where those died in faith were waiting for him
 - Luke 16:23 - “And being in torments in Hades, he lifted up his eyes and saw Abraham afar off, and Lazarus in his bosom.”

Abraham Willingly Laid Down His Life

- Eph. 4:8-10 - “Therefore He says: When He ascended on high, He led captivity captive, And gave gifts to men. 9 Now this, He ascended --what does it mean but that He also first descended into the lower parts of the earth? 10 He who descended is also the One who ascended far above all the heavens, that He might fill all things.”

Abraham Willingly Laid Down His Life

- A time of laying aside the temporary for the permanent
 - 2Cor. 5:1 - “For we know that if our earthly house, this tent, is destroyed, we have a building from God, a house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens.”
- A time of leaving the land of the dying to enter the land of the living
 - John 11:25-26 - “Jesus said to her, I am the resurrection and the life. He who believes in Me, though he may die, he shall live. 26 And whoever lives and believes in Me shall never die. Do you believe this?”

Abraham Willingly Laid Down His Life

- A time to stand in the presence of God
 - 2Cor. 5:8 - “We are confident, yes, well pleased rather to be absent from the body and to be present with the Lord”
- A time that is little more than a departure
 - 2Tim. 4:6 - “For I am already being poured out as a drink offering, and the time of my departure is at hand.”

Abraham Willingly Laid Down His Life

- “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)

The Righteous Were At Peace With Dying And Going Onward

- By faith, godly men and women laid aside their lives here in anticipation of the life to come.
- “Died and was gathered” implies two actions:
- The end of the body which goes to decay
 - Ecc. 3:20-21 - “All go to one place: all are from the dust, and all return to dust. 21 Who knows the spirit of the sons of men, which goes upward, and the spirit of the animal, which goes down to the earth?”
- And the departure of the spirit to the waiting place of the dead

The Righteous Were At Peace With Dying And Going Onward

- “Fathers” is from horim, or rightful ancestors
- The righteous go to their righteous forebears
- The unrighteous do not see them again
 - Job 27:19 - “The rich man will lie down, But not be gathered up; He opens his eyes, And he is no more”

The Righteous Were At Peace With Dying And Going Onward

- Isaac
 - Gen. 35:29 - “So Isaac breathed his last and died, and was gathered to his people, being old and full of days. And his sons Esau and Jacob buried him.”
- Jacob
 - Gen. 49:29, 33 - “Then he charged them and said to them: I am to be gathered to my people; bury me with my fathers in the cave that is in the field of Ephron the Hittite... 33 And when Jacob had finished commanding his sons, he drew his feet up into the bed and breathed his last, and was gathered to his people.”

The Righteous Were At Peace With Dying And Going Onward

- Job
 - Job 5:26 - “You shall come to the grave at a full age, As a sheaf of grain ripens in its season.”
- Moses
 - Num. 27:12-13 - “Now the LORD said to Moses: Go up into this Mount Abarim, and see the land which I have given to the children of Israel. 13 And when you have seen it, you also shall be gathered to your people, as Aaron your brother was gathered.”

The Righteous Were At Peace With Dying And Going Onward

- Joshua
 - Joshua 23:14 - “Behold, this day I am going the way of all the earth. And you know in all your hearts and in all your souls that not one thing has failed of all the good things which the LORD your God spoke concerning you. All have come to pass for you; not one word of them has failed.”
- Faithful Israelites
 - Judges 2:10 - “When all that generation had been gathered to their fathers, another generation arose after them who did not know the LORD nor the work which He had done for Israel.”

The Righteous Were At Peace With Dying And Going Onward

- Barzillai
 - 2Sam. 19:33-37 - “And the king said to Barzillai, Come across with me, and I will provide for you while you are with me in Jerusalem. 34 But Barzillai said to the king, How long have I to live, that I should go up with the king to Jerusalem? 35 I am today eighty years old. Can I discern between the good and bad? Can your servant taste what I eat or what I drink? Can I hear any longer the voice of singing men and singing women? Why then should your servant be a further burden to my lord the king? 36 Your servant will go a little way across the Jordan with the king. And why should the king repay me with such a reward? 37 Please let your servant turn back again, that I may die in my own city, near the grave of my father and mother. But here is your servant Chimham; let him cross over with my lord the king, and do for him what seems good to you.”

The Righteous Were At Peace With Dying And Going Onward

- David
 - 1Kings 2:1-2, 10 - “Now the days of David drew near that he should die, and he charged Solomon his son, saying: 2 I go the way of all the earth; be strong, therefore, and prove yourself a man... 10 So David rested with his fathers, and was buried in the City of David.”

The Righteous Were At Peace With Dying And Going Onward

- “The fear of death follows from the fear of life. A man who lives fully is prepared to die at any time.” (Mark Twain)
- “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)

The Righteous Were At Peace With Dying And Going Onward

- 2Tim. 4:6-8 - “For I am already being poured out as a drink offering, and the time of my departure is at hand. 7 I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith. 8 Finally, there is laid up for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, will give to me on that Day, and not to me only but also to all who have loved His appearing.”