

Tusculum Hills Baptist Church  
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ABRAHAM: EVERY JOURNEY HAS AN ENDING POINT

Genesis 25

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I have two points for my message today, and then I'll conclude with a few things we can learn from the life of Abraham.

- Abraham had a life after Sarah died.
- Abraham's life of faith ended well.

We've been on a long journey with Abraham, and the study of his life has been so challenging at times that I've felt that I've been on a journey too. I've felt Abraham's up and downs. I've felt the scripture come alive as if I were standing on the sidelines of his life watching it unfold. I hope your imagination has been as strong as mine on this!

Let me review where we've been with Abraham and Sarah.

The Man with No Plan

The Man with a Faulty Compass

Family Feud: Abraham and Lot Part Ways

The Unlikely General

God's Reassurances to Abraham

Sarah's Short-Sighted Long-Range Plans

The Three Visitors

Abraham's Pleas For God's Mercy

Lot's Many Messy Mistakes

Not Your Average Father-Son Camping Trip

Sarah, Gone But not Forgotten

Surprise! Sometimes Things Go Smoothly

So today is the 13<sup>th</sup> message in this series about Abraham, and the first thing we see is:

## **ABRAHAM HAD A LIFE AFTER SARAH DIED**

We tend to think of Abraham and Sarah, and we don't think about Abraham outside of that construct. But Abraham moved on after she passed and lived a long time.

**SCRIPTURE:** Genesis 25:1

*Abraham had taken another wife, whose name was Keturah.*

Keturah gave birth to six sons. What's interesting here is that the scripture tells us before Isaac was born that Abraham's body was as good as dead. Sarah's pregnancy with Isaac wasn't about Abraham being able to have intercourse one time with Sarah in order to have a child and thereby fulfill God's promise. Abraham's youthful vigor was restored. Although Abraham had the son of promise with Sarah, after many years of waiting, Abraham was reminded of God's renewal of his strength at least six more times by fathering six more sons.

**SCRIPTURE:** Genesis 25:5-6

*Abraham left everything he owned to Isaac. <sup>6</sup> But while he was still living, he gave gifts to the sons of his concubines and sent them away from his son Isaac to the land of the east.*

**EXPLANATION:** I spent a lot of time reading about verse six. What does it mean, concubines? I do not, for one minute, believe that Abraham had a harem. At first, I thought it meant concubines he may have had before God called him, but the Hebrew language does not read that way. I consulted several commentators who all believe this means Hagar and his second wife, Keturah. Hagar, as you know, was Sarah's servant who had a child with Abraham. Keturah was his second wife, so why would she be called a wife and a few verses later be lumped together with a concubine? I don't really have the answer for you on that. I hope you appreciate a preacher saying he doesn't have all the answers. After reading quite a lot on this subject, we don't have any evidence that there were any other women in Abraham's life other than Sarah, Hagar, and Keturah.

**APPLICATION:** As you may remember from a previous message, Abraham was struck with grief over the loss of Sarah, as any person would be over the loss of a spouse. Grief is very real. Many of you have experienced grief on different levels. Grieving means that person was loved.

If you are grieving, you may not be able to see beyond today. I'd say that's normal. But healing does come. It takes time, and eventually, at least hopefully, you'll move on. You may even have flashbacks of grief from time to time.

The scripture tells us that as believers in Jesus Christ, we don't grieve as others who have no hope, because the resurrection gives us hope. Abraham had reasoned God could raise Isaac from the dead although he had never seen it done. He didn't have the scripture like we have with the records of Jesus' resurrection and others as well. But Abraham was a smart man, full of faith in God in his old age. He knew God had his best interests in mind, and he entrusted Sarah to the arms of God.

## **ABRAHAM'S JOURNEY OF FAITH ENDED WELL**

**SCRIPTURE:** Genesis 25:7-11

*Abraham lived a hundred and seventy-five years. <sup>8</sup> Then Abraham breathed his last and died at a good old age, an old man and full of years; and he was gathered to his people. <sup>9</sup> His sons Isaac and Ishmael buried him in the cave of Machpelah near Mamre, in the field of Ephron son of Zohar the Hittite, <sup>10</sup> the field Abraham had bought from the Hittites. There Abraham was buried with his wife Sarah. <sup>11</sup> After Abraham's death, God blessed his son Isaac, who then lived near Beer Lah.*

A skeptic may read the story of Abraham and say, "Hey wait a minute. God promised Abraham a country that he never owned himself. He lived there as a sojourner, a foreigner only. What kind of promise is that?" I can see where someone would say that.

I consulted some old commentators to see what men of yesteryear said about Abraham. One writer named Joseph Parker from the mid-1800s used the following illustration to help explain Abraham's life:

**ILLUSTRATION:** A little boy is five years old. You promise him that if he does well in school, you'll buy him the finest rocking horse in the world when he is fifteen. At five, a rocking horse seems the finest of prizes; the child works, reads, and learns (the figure of a rocking-horse still being before his imagination), but five grows into seven, and seven grows into nine, and nine enlarges to twelve. The mind strengthens and brightens by the very work which was to bring the prize, the rocking-horse goes down in value, until at fifteen, the intelligent, well-trained, glad-hearted youth declines the very Canaan which he so eagerly started to win, and is almost insulted if you name to him the promised prize.

Why does he decline it? Because he has something so much better: he has information, culture, discipline, habits of reading and observation, and these things which he had no idea of getting when he started have actually wrought him a proper contempt for the very prize he was promised.

You can substitute the rocking chair for anything and of course update the language in Parker's story, but the point remains. We begin with the end in mind, but along the way, our desires might change.

**SCRIPTURE:** Hebrews 11:8-16

*By faith Abraham, when called to go to a place he would later receive as his inheritance, obeyed and went, even though he did not know where he was going.*

*<sup>9</sup> By faith he made his home in the promised land like a stranger in a foreign country; he lived in tents, as did Isaac and Jacob, who were heirs with him of the same promise. <sup>10</sup> For he was looking forward to the city with foundations, whose architect and builder is God. <sup>11</sup> And by faith even Sarah, who was past childbearing age, was enabled to bear children because she considered him faithful who had made the promise. <sup>12</sup> And so from this one man, and he as good as dead, came descendants as numerous as the stars in the sky and as countless as the sand on the seashore.*

*<sup>13</sup> All these people were still living by faith when they died. They did not receive the things promised; they only saw them and welcomed them from a distance, admitting that they were foreigners and strangers on earth. <sup>14</sup> People who say such things show that they are looking for a country of their own. <sup>15</sup> If they had been thinking of the country they had left, they would have had opportunity to return. <sup>16</sup> Instead, they*

*were longing for a better country—a heavenly one. Therefore God is not ashamed to be called their God, for he has prepared a city for them.*

**ILLUSTRATION:** When I've asked my kids about their favorite times as a family, they will often talk about traveling in the car. The trip itself sometimes is more memorable than the destination.

**APPLICATION:** Sometimes the journey is the destination. I've learned through the years how to enjoy the journey, and I am still learning that. Are you the type that makes everyone miserable on every trip, refusing to stop so others can use the restroom and take a break, only to arrive at your destination with everyone irritated? Then maybe you command everyone to get out of the car and have a good time? If that's you, slow down. Read about Abraham and realize that the journey is part of it all.

**EXPLANATION:** Abraham had seen God like no other person in history had. Sure, Adam experienced the forgiveness of God. Sure, Noah experienced the protection of God and many other things, but Abraham was the first to experience God on such an intimate level.

So, if you are one of those skeptics who says, "God promised land but didn't deliver in Abraham's lifetime, so what kind of promise is that?" you'll have to consider Abraham's opinion. Hebrews 11:16 tells us Abraham and the others mentioned in the faith chapter were looking for something better. Abraham didn't want the rocking horse that once sounded so exciting. Abraham had witnessed the all-powerful hand of God time and again. As an old man, he had time to reflect on all God had done for him. Being a foreigner in a foreign land, he could have merely returned to his original home and not been a foreigner. He could have said, "Hey wait a minute, God, what kind of crummy offer was it for you to promise something and then give something else?" If we could hear Abraham speak for a minute, he would say that the journey was good and made him long for more than just a bunch of land.

**APPLICATION:** I hope all Christians are longing for more than just what we have on this earth. I hope all Christians are longing for more than what we envision heaven to be. We all have our images of heaven. People will post on Facebook

Happy Birthday to someone in heaven. That's a nice thought, but I seriously doubt there are any birthday parties in heaven. We're not going to miss this earth or our earthly traditions. We are terribly limited in our understanding of heaven. The Bible gives us glimpses only. The reason we don't know more is because we wouldn't be able to handle it if it were revealed to us.

I'm afraid too many people's images of heaven are rather static. We have earthly ideas of heaven, like assuming the weather is good, because we don't know any different. We won't think about the weather in heaven.

I hope you are longing for a better country, a heavenly one, like Abraham. If you are not, then your faith needs to be strengthened.

Yes, Abraham would say to us that the journey of faith with God was more valuable than a piece of earth. He was a completely different person than he was when he set out on that first day to follow God's call.

## **CONCLUSION:**

So what's the takeaway from all this study about Abraham?

1. It's very clear that God honors faith.
2. There's a fine line between having faith and trying to help God.
3. Abraham wandered a few times, but he got back on course.
4. God did not work on Abraham's timetable.

The title of this message is "Every Journey Has An Ending Point". We just heard on the news this morning that the ISIS leader Baghdadi was killed today. We just had 13 weeks of study on Abraham, a traveling man from the Middle East, and today we learned of the death of the leader of ISIS, another traveling man from the Middle East.

Hebrews 9:27 tells us we all have an appointment with death. "*Just as people are destined to die once, and after that to face judgment.*" Both Abraham and Baghdadi will face the judgement. The scripture rings true for us as well. That verse should make us all shiver. With Jesus, however, there is hope!

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I use the NIV translation of scripture because of its conversational nature. Feel free to go to Bible Gateway and copy and paste whichever translation you want to use. This transcript has been edited to an outline format that improves readability and therefore may not exactly follow the video edition.

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