

Abraham Took Another Wife, Whose Name Was Keturah

25: 1-6

DIG: What can you make of Abraham's new family? What promise was fulfilled as a result of his second family? Did Avraham force everyone to get along? Did he play favorites? Why or why not?

REFLECT: Do you have your personal belongings in order so that there will be no disputes after your passing?

Abraham was one hundred and thirty-seven years old when Sarah died, so **he** still had thirty-eight years to live. When **Isaac** (Hebrew: **Yitz'chak**) married, **he** and **Rebekah** moved south to Lahai-Roi. **Abraham** was left alone, and no doubt became lonely. After some time **he** decided it was **not good for him to be alone**, and **he** needed a suitable helper (2:18). Finally, **he** decided to remarry. Good memories of his first marriage gave **him** the courage to do it again. Some people are content to remain widowed the rest of their lives, and that is all right - but **Abraham** was not one of them. And for all we know, his second marriage was a good one and blessed by God.³⁹⁷

ADONAI had supernaturally reestablished the virility of **Avraham** and **he** took another wife, whose name was **Keturah** meaning *covered with perfume or incense* (25:1). As **Yitz'chak** was the son of promise, Sarah was **the wife** of promise. Therefore, **Keturah** is listed as a concubine elsewhere in the Bible to distinguish **her** from **the** primary wife Sarah (**First Chronicles 1:32**). We have no knowledge of **her** background. However, we can say **she** was probably not a Canaanite woman, because **Abraham** would not allow **Isaac** to marry one. However, **she** did understand that although **she** and **her** children would be taken care of, probably each having a reasonable start with **his** own flocks and herds, the bulk of **Avraham's** inheritance would go to **Isaac**.

She bore him six sons and probably many daughters. **Proper Jewish genealogies traditionally listed only men**. When we get to the genealogy in **Matthew 1:1-16**, **he** breaks with Jewish tradition and lists women and skips names. The purpose of **his** genealogy is to show that if Jesus really was Joseph's son, He could not be king. At any rate, the names of **Abraham's** sons with **Keturah** were **Zimran, Jokshan, Medan, Midian**, who will play an important part in Jewish history (**Genesis 35:36, 37:28; Exodus 2:15 to 3:1, 18:1; Numbers 25:16-18; Joshua 13:21 and Judges 6:1 to 7:25**), **Ishbak and Shuah** (25:2).

Jokshan was the father of Sheba; this Semitic Sheba replaced the Hamitic Sheba of 10:7. These are the Sabians of Job 1:15, and the traveling merchants of Sheba of Job 6:19. The second son was Dedan, who replaced the Hamitic Dedan of 10:7 (They are also mentioned in Isaiah 21:13, Jeremiah 25:23, 49:8 and Ezekiel 25:13). The descendants of Dedan were the Asshurites, the Letushites and the Leummites (25:3). Sheba and Dedan are mentioned together in Ezekiel 38:13 where they refuse to participate in Russia's attack on Israel. Then five of Abraham's grandchildren through his son Midian are mentioned; they were Ephah (Isaiah 60:6), Ephraim, Hanoch, Abida and Eldaah. All these were descendants of Keturah (25:4). This list is parallel to the one in First Chronicles 1:32-33. This is the fulfillment of one of the promises that God made to Abraham back in 17:4 where He said: You will be the father of many nations. These six sons fathered six tribes or nations and some of his grandchildren fathered others. These tribes are mostly Bedouin and range in the desert areas in Sinai, Arabia and Syria.³⁹⁸

However, in contrast to the sons of Keturah, Abraham left everything he owned to Isaac (25:5). Avraham loved all his boys, but Yitz'chak was the son of promise, so he inherited everything. So while Abraham was still living, he gave gifts to the sons of his two concubines, Hagar and Keturah (First Chronicles 1:32). These gifts were probably one-time, sizably wealthy gifts of herds and flocks in place of the ongoing inheritance that was given to Isaac. They were not lacking for anything. He set them up pretty well. But he deliberately sent them away as he had done with Ishmael because they and their descendants could have been a threat to Isaac. They were sent away from the Promised Land to the land of the east, to the Saudi Arabia area (25:6). He makes sure that there is distance between Isaac and his other sons because they are not part of the covenant. Wisely, he did all this while he was still living so there would be no disputes after his death.