

The Death of Abraham

25: 7-11

DIG: Through Abraham's experience with God, what do you learn about the way the LORD treats us when we are obedient? When we are fearful? When we are wayward?

Altogether, Avraham lived a hundred and seventy-five years (25:7). This was the fulfillment of ADONAI's promise to him that he would be buried at a good old age (15:15). Isaac (Hebrew: Yitz'chak) was then seventy-five years old, and his grandchildren Jacob and Esau were fifteen years old. So he was able to see his grandchildren grow up. This shows that Genesis was not written in strict chronological order. It is basically chronological, but not strictly so. Sometimes when a story comes to an end, it goes back and picks up a new story line, as is the case with Jacob and Esau coming up shortly.

It is one thing to live a long life. But it is quite another to live a long life that is also content. Then Abraham breathed his last and died at a good old age, an old man and full of years literally satisfied. He saw all the desires of his heart fulfilled. This is the first indication we have in Genesis that there is life beyond the grave. Avraham was living by faith when he died (Hebrews 11:13-16). He was gathered to his people (25:8). This is the first occurrence of this phrase in the Bible and it means *to go to the realm of the dead, referring to the destiny of the spirit, not the body* (James 2:26). The word in the TaNaKh for the realm of the dead is *Sheol* and the New Covenant equivalent is *Hades*.³⁹⁹ It was a temporary place for the spirits while awaiting the resurrection. Since his people were in Mesopotamia and since none of his ancestors were buried in the cave of Machpelah, this can only refer to life after death. In other words, he was with those before him who had died in faith. Nineteen hundred years later, the location of such departed spirits was actually called *Sheol*, or **Abraham's side** (Luke 16:22 NIV).⁴⁰⁰

His sons Isaac and Ishmael buried him in the cave of Machpelah near Mamre, in the field of Ephron son of Zohar the Hittite, the field Abraham had bought from the Hittites. There Abraham was buried with his wife Sarah (25:9-10).

After Abraham's death, God blessed his son Yitz'chak, who then lived near Beer Lahai Roi (25:11). When Abraham by faith sent away all his other sons, he provided for transferring his blessing to Isaac who waited on the LORD. Abraham would be gone, but ADONAI's program would continue; no leader of the covenant is indispensable, for His program to bless the world will continue to grow and expand from generation to generation. Each of the LORD's servants must do all they can to ensure the ongoing of God's work, but the work is bigger than any individual.⁴⁰¹