

# Genesis 25:1-4

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*Abraham marries his concubine Keturah. They have six sons. One son, Jokshan, has two sons. One of his sons, Dedan, has three sons. Abraham's son Midian has five sons.*

In the previous chapter, a bride was found for Abraham's son, Isaac. It was also stated multiple times how old Abraham was. In this chapter, he will die. We are first given a summary of how great his family grew before he passed on. First, *Abraham took another wife, whose name was Keturah* (vs 1). Like Hagar, Keturah had the status of a concubine (1 Chronicles 1:32), although in this verse she is identified as Abraham's wife. She is again referred to as a concubine in v. 6. Similarly, Bilhah is called both Jacob's concubine (Genesis 35:22) and Jacob's wife (Genesis 30:4).

Abraham and Keturah had six sons, *Zimran, Jokshan, Medan, Midian, Ishbak, and Shuah* (vs 2).

Abraham's children by Keturah are also listed in 1 Chronicles 1:32-33.

Nothing further is known about *Zimran, Ishba, or Medan*. They are not mentioned elsewhere in the Bible or other texts. They dwelt east of Canaan and were likely absorbed into the tribes of their brothers, or perhaps further information about them was simply lost, to the time of this writing.

Job's friend "Bildad the Shuhite" was possibly a descendent of *Shuah* (Job 2:11).

We are told more about some of Abraham's sons by Keturah and their own children: *Jokshan became the father of Sheba and Dedan. Dedan had sons named Asshurim, Letushim, and Leummim* (vs 3).

Jokshan's sons *Sheba and Dedan* probably settled in the regions which became identified by their names. The location of Sheba is still debated; some believe it was in modern-day Yemen, others believe it was Ethiopia. Famously, the Queen of Sheba visited King Solomon to test his wisdom (1 Kings 10:1-29). Sheba is also mentioned as trading spices such as frankincense (Jeremiah 6:20; Ezekiel 27:22).

*Midian* had sons named *Ephah, Epher, Hanoah, Abida, and Eldaah* (vs 4). *Ephah* is also mentioned in Isaiah 60:6. Midian's descendants became a tribe called the Midianites. They primarily lived east of Canaan in the Arabian desert (Genesis 25:6; Judges 6:3, 6:33, 7:12). Abraham's great-grandson Joseph would be sold to Midian traders by his brothers (Genesis 37:28). Hundreds of years later, Moses would marry a Midianite woman, Zipporah (Exodus 2:16-21).

Eventually, when Israel conquered Canaan and was ruled by judges, the Israelites would commit such sin that God delivered them into the hands of the Midianites for a time of judgment (Judges 6:1).

The creation of these nations partially fulfilled God's promises to Abraham that he would be a father of many nations (Genesis 17:4). Israel was to be the chosen nation (singular) that descended from Abraham through Isaac the Son of Promise (Genesis 12:2). However, God had declared that Abraham would father many nations, in plural (Genesis 17:4). God gave Abraham a new name, changing it from Abram ("exalted father") to Abraham, which means "father of a multitude." God promised him that He would "make nations of you, and kings will come forth from you" (Genesis 17:6). This was fulfilled through many of his sons—Ishmael, Isaac, Midian, etc.

**Biblical Text:**

**<sup>1</sup> Now Abraham took another wife, whose name was Keturah. <sup>2</sup> She bore to him Zimran and Jokshan and Medan and Midian and Ishbak and Shuah. <sup>3</sup> Jokshan became the father of Sheba and Dedan. And the sons of Dedan were Asshurim and Letushim and Leummim. <sup>4</sup> The sons of Midian were Ephah and Epher and Hanoch and Abida and Eldaah. All these were the sons of Keturah.**