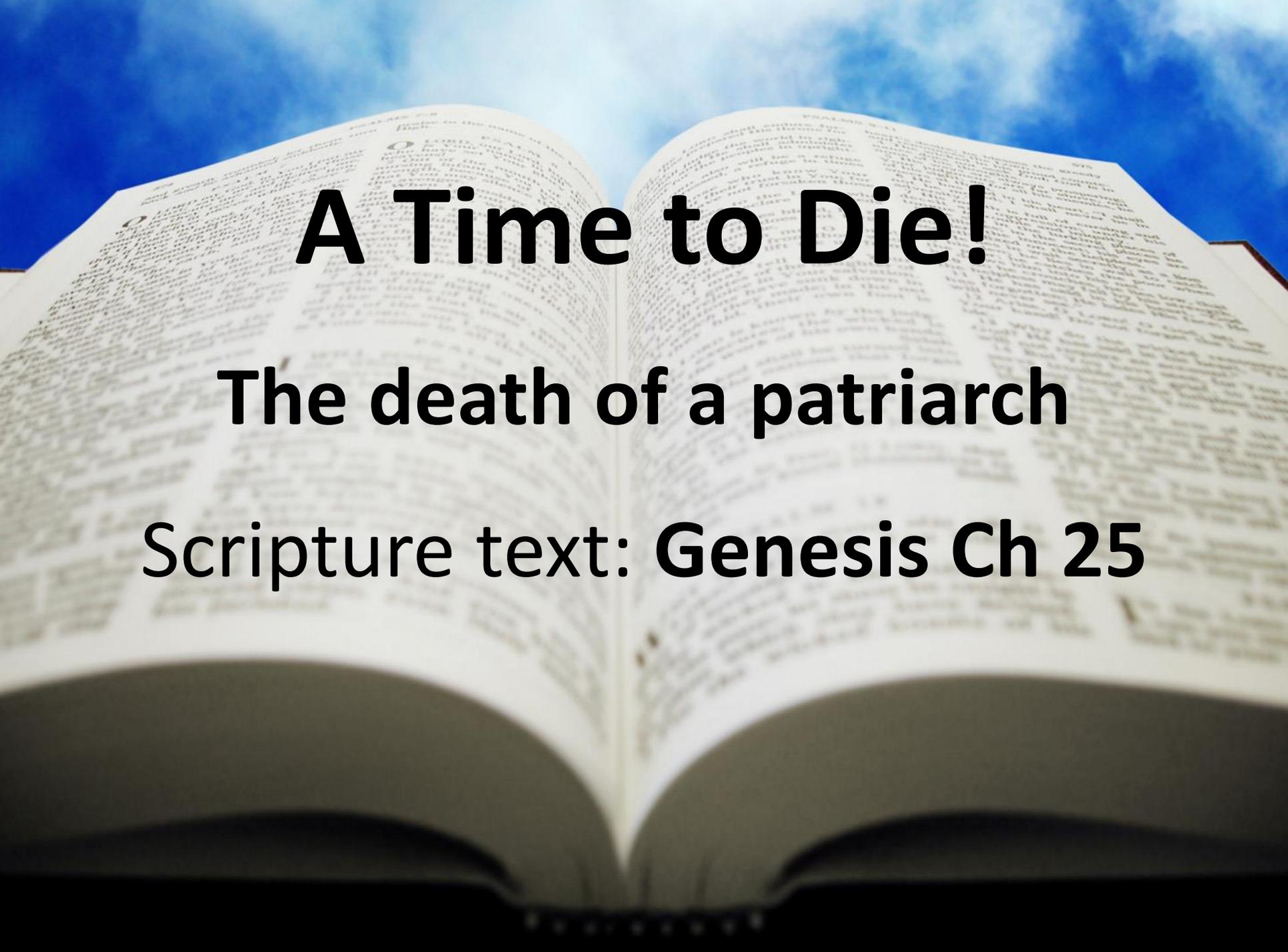


Welcome to Promise Land Bible Church  
We're glad you're here!



An open Bible is shown from a low angle, looking up at the pages. The pages are filled with text, and the background is a bright blue sky with wispy white clouds. The text is overlaid in a large, bold, black font.

# **A Time to Die!**

**The death of a patriarch**

Scripture text: **Genesis Ch 25**

King Solomon said, “*A good name is better than precious ointment; and the day of death, than the day of one’s birth*” (Ecc. 7:1). He did not say that death is better than birth; for, after all, we must be born before we can die.

Solomon’s point was that the name given you at birth is like fragrant ointment, and **you must keep it that way until you die**. When you received your name at birth, nobody knew what you would make out of it; **but at death, that name is either fragrant or putrid**.

If it is fragrant at death, **then people can rejoice**; for after death, nothing can change it. So, **for a person with a good name**, the day of death is better than the day of birth.

The names of Abraham and Sarah were fragrant in life and in death and are still fragrant today. As we have seen in our reading, we meet Abraham at the end of life's road, and **we can learn from him what it means to die in faith.**

## **The death of a patriarch (Gen. 25:1–11)**

After a person dies, **we read the obituary**; and after the burial, **we read the will**. Let's do that with Abraham.

**Abraham's obituary** (Gen. 25:7–8). He died “in a good old age” as the Lord had promised him (15:15). **He had walked with the Lord for a century** (12:4) and had been “**the friend of God**” (James 2:23). Old age is “**good**” if you have the blessing of the Lord on your life (Prov. 16:31).

**Genesis 25:7-8** These are the days of the years of Abraham's life, **175 years**. Abraham breathed his last and died **in a good old age, an old man and full of years**, and was gathered to his people.

**Genesis 15:15** As for yourself, you shall go to your fathers in peace; **you shall be buried in a good old age**.

**Genesis 12:4** So Abram went, as the LORD had told him, and Lot went with him. **Abram was seventy-five years old** when he departed from Haran.

**Proverb 16:31** Gray hair is a crown of glory; **it is gained in a righteous life.**

In spite of physical deterioration and weakness, you can enjoy His presence and do His will until the very end (2 Cor. 4:16–5:8).

Are you ever too old, to do the Will of God?

Does not the wisdom gained by a long life, still apply today, as it did when you were younger?

**2 Corinthians 4:16-5:1** So we do not lose heart. **Though our outer self is wasting away, our inner self is being renewed day by day.** For this light momentary affliction **is preparing for us an eternal weight of glory** beyond all comparison, as we look not to the things that are seen but to the things that are unseen. For the things that are seen are transient, but **the things that are unseen are eternal.** For we know that if the tent that is our earthly home is destroyed, **we have a building from God, a house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens.**

**2 Corinthians 5:2-8** For in this tent we groan, **longing to put on our heavenly dwelling**, if indeed by putting it on we may not be found naked. For while we are still in this tent, we groan, being burdened--not that we would be unclothed, **but that we would be further clothed**, so that what is mortal may be swallowed up by life. He who has prepared us for this very thing is God, **who has given us the Spirit as a guarantee. So we are always of good courage.** We know that while we are at home in the body we are away from the Lord, for **we walk by faith, not by sight.** Yes, we are of good courage, and **we would rather be away from the body and at home with the Lord.**

Like Sarah before him, Abraham **“died in faith.”** **For 100 years, he had been a stranger and a pilgrim on the earth,** seeking a heavenly country; and now his desires were fulfilled (Heb. 11:13–16).

His life had not been an easy one; but he had **walked by faith a day at a time,** and the Lord had brought him through. **Whenever Abraham failed the Lord, he returned to Him and started over again; and the Lord gave him a new beginning.**

**Hebrews 11:13-16** These all **died in faith**, not having received the things promised, but having seen them and greeted them from afar, and having **acknowledged that they were strangers and exiles on the earth**. For people who speak thus **make it clear that they are seeking a homeland**. If they had been thinking of that land from which they had gone out, they would have had opportunity to return. But as it is, **they desire a better country, that is, a heavenly one**. Therefore God is not ashamed to be called their God, **for he has prepared for them a city**.

**He also died “full of years” (Gen. 25:8).** This suggests more than a quantity of time; it suggests a **quality of life.** James Strahan translates it **“satisfied with life”** (Hebrew Ideals, p. 197). Abraham, who was flourishing and fruitful to the very end, fulfilled the picture of old age given in Psalm 92:12–15. How few people really experience joy and satisfaction when they reach old age! **When they look back, it is with regret; when they look ahead, it is with fear; and when they look around, it is with complaint.**

**Genesis 25:8** Abraham breathed his last and died in a good old age, an old man and **full of years**, and was gathered to his people.

**Psalms 92:12-15** The righteous flourish like the palm tree and grow like a cedar in Lebanon. **They are planted in the house of the LORD;** they flourish in the courts of our God. **They still bear fruit in old age;** they are ever full of sap and green, **to declare that the LORD is upright; he is my rock, and there is no unrighteousness in him.**

An anonymous wit claimed that he would rather be “over the hill” than under it.

**But death is not a threat to the person who trusts Jesus Christ and lives by His Word.**

Old age can be a time of rich experience in the Lord and **wonderful opportunities to share Him with the next generation** (Pss. 48:13–14; 78:5–7). Then, **when death comes, you go to meet the Lord with joyful confidence.**

**Psalm 48:12-14** Walk about Zion, go around her, number her towers, consider well her ramparts, go through her citadels, **that you may tell the next generation that this is God, our God forever and ever. He will guide us forever.**

**Psalm 78:5-7** He established a testimony in Jacob and appointed a law in Israel, **which he commanded our fathers to teach to their children, that the next generation might know them, the children yet unborn, and arise and tell them to their children, so that they should set their hope in God and not forget the works of God, but keep his commandments;**

**God promised that Abraham would die “in peace”** (Gen. 15:15), and he did. Welsh poet Dylan Thomas wrote that “old age should burn and rave at close of day”; but that is not the Christian approach to old age or death.

Abraham was **saved by faith** (Gen. 15:6), so he had “**peace with God**” (Rom. 5:1). He had **walked in the way of righteousness, so he experienced the peace of God** (Isa. 32:17). The God who had guided him **for a century would not forsake him at the very end** (Gen. 46:4).

**Genesis 46:4** I myself will go down with you to Egypt, and I will also bring you up again, and Joseph's hand shall close your eyes."

**Isaiah 32:16-18** Then justice will dwell in the wilderness, and righteousness abide in the fruitful field. **And the effect of righteousness will be peace, and the result of righteousness, quietness and trust forever.** My people will abide in a peaceful habitation, in secure dwellings, and in quiet resting places.

Like everything else in life, **to be successful in old age, you must start working at it very young.** That is the counsel Solomon gives in Ecclesiastes 12.

The chapter describes some of the inevitable physical problems of old age, but **it also emphasizes that a godly life beginning in one's youth is an investment that pays rich dividends when life draws to a close.**

**Ecclesiastes 12:1** Remember also your **Creator** in the days of your youth, before the evil days come and the years draw near of which you will say, "I have no pleasure in them";

**Ecclesiastes 12:13-14** The end of the matter; all has been heard. **Fear God and keep his commandments, for this is the whole duty of man.** For God will bring every deed into judgment, with every secret thing, whether good or evil.

**The phrase “gathered to his people” (Gen. 25:8) does not mean “buried with the family”; for Sarah’s body was the only one in the family tomb. 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 Old Testament word for the realm of the dead is **sheol**; the New Testament equivalent is **hades**. It is the **temporary “home” of the spirits of the dead awaiting the resurrection (Rev. 20:11–15).****

**Genesis 44:30-32** "Now therefore, as soon as I come to your servant my father, and the boy is not with us, then, **as his life is bound up in the boy's life**, as soon as he sees that the boy is not with us, he will die, and your servants **will bring down the gray hairs of your servant our father with sorrow to Sheol**. For your servant became a pledge of safety for the boy to my father, saying, 'If I do not bring him back to you, then I shall bear the blame before my father all my life.'

**Genesis 25:8** Abraham breathed his last and died in a good old age, an old man and full of years, and **was gathered to his people.**

**James 2:26** For as **the body apart from the spirit is dead**, so also faith apart from works is dead.

**Luke 16:22-24** The poor man died and was carried by the angels **to Abraham's side**. The rich man also died and was buried, and **in Hades**, being in torment, he lifted up his eyes and **saw Abraham far off and Lazarus at his side**. And he called out, 'Father Abraham, have mercy on me, and send Lazarus to dip the end of his finger in water and cool my tongue, for I am in anguish in this flame.'

**Luke 16:25-26** But Abraham said, 'Child, remember that you in your lifetime received your good things, and Lazarus in like manner bad things; but now he is comforted here, and you are in anguish. And besides all this, **between us and you a great chasm has been fixed, in order that those who would pass from here to you may not be able, and none may cross from there to us.**'

**Luke 16:30-31** And he said, 'No, father Abraham, but if someone goes to them from the dead, they will repent.' He said to him, '**If they do not hear Moses and the Prophets, neither will they be convinced if someone should rise from the dead.**'"

**Luke 23:39-43** One of the criminals who were hanged railed at him, saying, "Are you not the Christ? Save yourself and us!" But the other rebuked him, saying, "**Do you not fear God**, since you are under the same sentence of condemnation? And we indeed justly, for we are receiving the due reward of our deeds; but this man has done nothing wrong." And he said, "**Jesus, remember me when you come into your kingdom.**" And he said to him, "**Truly, I say to you, today you will be with me in Paradise.**"

**Revelation 20:11-15** Then I saw a **great white throne** and him who was seated on it. From his presence earth and sky fled away, and no place was found for them. And I **saw the dead, great and small, standing before the throne, and books were opened.** Then another book was opened, which is the **book of life.** And the dead were judged by what was written in the books, according to what they had done. And the **sea gave up the dead** who were in it, **Death and Hades gave up the dead** who were in them, and **they were judged,** each one of them, **according to what they had done.** Then Death and Hades were thrown into the lake of fire. **This is the second death, the lake of fire.** And if anyone's name was not found written in the book of life, he was thrown into the lake of fire.

**The permanent home for the saved is heaven;** and for the lost, it is hell. Luke 16:19–31 indicates that **sheol-hades has two sections to it**, separated by a great gulf; and that the saved are in a place of blessing while the lost are in a place of pain. **It is likely that Jesus emptied the paradise portion** of sheol-hades when He returned to heaven in glory (Eph. 4:8–10). The punishment portion of hades will be emptied at the resurrection that precedes the judgment of the Great White Throne (Rev. 20:11–15). **For the lost, hades is the jail, while hell is the penitentiary.**

**Matthew 27:51-54** And behold, the curtain of the temple was torn in two, from top to bottom. And the earth shook, and the rocks were split. The tombs also were opened. And many bodies of the saints who had fallen asleep were raised, and coming out of the tombs after his resurrection they went into the holy city and appeared to many. When the centurion and those who were with him, keeping watch over Jesus, saw the earthquake and what took place, they were filled with awe and said, "Truly this was the Son of God!"

**1 Thessalonians 4:13-15** But we do not want you to be uninformed, brothers, about those who are asleep, that you may not grieve as others do who have no hope. For since **we believe that Jesus died and rose again**, even so, through Jesus, God will bring with him those who have fallen asleep. **For this we declare to you by a word from the Lord, that we who are alive, who are left until the coming of the Lord, will not precede those who have fallen asleep.**

**Ephesians 4:7-10** But grace was given to each one of us according to the measure of Christ's gift. Therefore it says, "**When he ascended on high he led a host of captives, and he gave gifts to men.**" (In saying, "He ascended," **what does it mean but that he had also descended into the lower regions, the earth?** He who descended is the one who also ascended far above all the heavens, **that he might fill all things.**)