

Keturah

(Heb. Keturah', קֶטוּרָה , girdled, otherwise incense; Sept. Χεττούρα), " the second wife, or, as she is called in **1 Chronicles 1:32**, the concubine of Abraham; by her he had six sons, whom he lived to see grow to man's estate, and whom. he established 'in the east country,' that they might not interfere with Isaac (**Genesis 25:1-6**). B.C. cir., 1997 et post. As Abraham was 100 years old when Isaac was born, who was given to him by the special bounty of Providence when 'he was as good as dead' (**Hebrews 11:12**); as he was 140 years old when Sarah died; and as he himself died at the age of 175 years, it has seemed improbable that these six sons should have been born to Abraham by one woman .after he was 140 years old, and that he should have seen them all grow up to adult age, and have sent them forth to form independent settlements in that last and feeble period of his life. It has therefore been suggested that, as Keturah is called Abraham's ' concubine' in Chronicles, and as she and Hagar are probably indicated as his 'concubines' in **Genesis 25:6**, Keturah had in fact been taken by Abraham as his secondary or concubine wife before the death of Sarah, although the historian relates the incident after that event, that his leading narrative might not be interrupted. According to the standard of morality then acknowledged, Abraham might quite as properly have taken Keturah before as after Sarah's death" (Kitto); although, it is true, this would hardly have been in keeping with his usual regard for Sarah's feelings, and would have been likely to introduce into the family another scene of discord such as he had seen with Hagar. In opposition to these and similar arguments, however, which are maintained by Prof. Bush (Note on **Genesis 25:1**), Dr. Turner justly urges (Companion to Genesis, p. 293 sq.) the evident order of the narrative, the occasion offered by the death of Sarah, which preceded Abraham's demise thirty-six years, and the emphatic manner in which Keturah is introduced as a full wife, with lawful heirs, although of less esteem than Sarah. As to the objection drawn from the impotence of Abraham in consequence of advanced age, it is readily removed by the implied renewal of his vigor at the promise of an heir by Sarah (compare **Hebrews 11:11**); and, if

sound, it would prove too much, for it would require the birth of all the six sons by Keturah to be dated before that of Isaac. (See ABRAHAM).

On the Arabian. affinities of Keturah, see the *Journal Asiatique*, Aug. 1838, p. 197 sq. "Her sons were 'Zimran, and Jokshan, and Medan, and Midian, and Ishbak, and Shuah' ([Genesis 25:2](#)); besides the sons and grandsons of Jokshan, and the sons of Midian. They evidently crossed the desert to the Persian Gulf, and occupied the whole intermediate country, where traces of their names are frequent, while Midian extended south into the peninsula of Arabia Proper. In searching the works of Arab writers for any information respecting these tribes, we must be contented to find them named as Abrahamic, or even Ishmaelitish, for under the latter appellation almost all the former are confounded by their descendants. Keturah herself is by them mentioned very rarely and vaguely, and evidently only in quoting from a rabbinical writer. (In the *Kdmus* the name is said to be that of the Turks, and that of a young girl [or slave] of Abraham; and, it is added, her descendants are the Turks!) M. Caussin de Perceval (*Essai*. i, 179) has endeavored to identify her with the name of a tribe of the Amalekites (the 1st Amalek) called Katura., but his arguments are not of any weight. They rest on a weak etymology, and are contradicted by the statements of Arab authors, as well as by the fact that the early tribes of Arabia (of which is Katfira) have not, with the single exception of Amalek. been identified with any historical names; while the exception of Amalek is that of an apparently aboriginal people whose name is recorded in the Bible; and there are reasons for supposing that these early tribes were aboriginal" (Smith). (See ARABIA).

McClintock, John. Strong, James. *Cyclopedia of Biblical, Theological and Ecclesiastical Literature*, Harper & Brothers. New York. 1870.