

GENESIS 23

– SARAH DIES AND IS BURIED THEN ABRAHAM DIES AND IS BURIED. THE FINISH IS GOOD.

1. (1) The death of Sarah.

Sarah lived one hundred and twenty-seven years; these were the years of the life of Sarah.

a. **Sarah lived one hundred and twenty-seven years:** Sarah is the only woman in the Bible whose age at death is recorded. This gives us some measure of how highly she is regarded in the Bible.

b. **The life of Sarah:** Nowhere in the Bible are we told to look to Mary the mother of Jesus as an example of a godly woman. Twice we are told to look to Sarah as such an example ([Isaiah 51:1-2](#) and [1 Peter 3:3-6](#)).

Abraham mourns

So Sarah died in Kirjath Arba (that is, Hebron) in the land of Canaan, and Abraham came to mourn for Sarah and to weep for her.

a. **Abraham came to mourn for Sarah:** Abraham felt his loss of Sarah deeply and wasn't afraid to mourn, though he did not sorrow as those without hope ([1 Thessalonians 4:13](#)).

i. "That is, he set himself deliberately to all the functions of a mourner." (Boice)

b. **And to weep for her:** Abraham's mourning was demonstrated in an appropriate way. The man of great faith, the friend of God, wept for the loss of Sarah's companionship. There was nothing weak or unbelieving about the tears of this man of faith.

i. "To weep for a loved one is to show that we have been close, that the loss is keenly felt, that death is an enemy, and that sin has brought this sad punishment upon the human race." (Boice)

Get this, God promises Abraham all the land and he has to buy land for a burial plot.

Abraham speaks with the sons of Heth.

Then Abraham stood up from before his dead, and spoke to the sons of Heth, saying, "I am a foreigner and a visitor among you. Give me property for a burial place among you, that I may bury my dead out of my sight." And the sons of Heth answered Abraham, saying to him, "Hear us, my lord: You are a mighty prince among us; bury your dead in the choicest of our burial places. None of us will withhold from you his burial place, that you may bury your dead." Then Abraham

stood up and bowed himself to the people of the land, the sons of Heth. And he spoke with them, saying, "If it is your wish that I bury my dead out of my sight, hear me, and meet with Ephron the son of Zohar for me, that he may give me the cave of Machpelah which he has, which is at the end of his field. Let him give it to me at the full price, as property for a burial place among you."

a. **I am a foreigner and a sojourner among you:** Abraham did not feel this way because he came from Ur of the Chaldeans. It was because he recognized his real home was heaven. Moses knew the same, and commanded Israel to know it (Leviticus 25:23). David also knew this truth (1 Chronicles 29:14-15 and Psalms 39:12).

b. **Give me property for a burial place among you:** Abraham had a particular **property** in mind – **the cave of Machpelah**. That property was in the land of **Ephron the son of Zohar**. In his travels around Canaan, Abraham had earlier lived in this area and here built an altar to God (Genesis 13:18). He knew this **cave** and was willing to pay **the full price** for it.

Abraham negotiates with Ephron the Hittite for the land of Sarah's tomb.

Now Ephron dwelt among the sons of Heth; and Ephron the Hittite answered Abraham in the presence of the sons of Heth, all who entered at the gate of his city, saying, "No, my lord, hear me: I give you the field and the cave that is in it; I give it to you in the presence of the sons of my people. I give it to you. Bury your dead!" Then Abraham bowed himself down before the people of the land; and he spoke to Ephron in the hearing of the people of the land, saying, "If you will give it, please hear me. I will give you money for the field; take it from me and I will bury my dead there." And Ephron answered Abraham, saying to him, "My lord, listen to me; the land is worth four hundred shekels of silver. What is that between you and me? So bury your dead." And Abraham listened to Ephron; and Abraham weighed out the silver for Ephron which he had named in the hearing of the sons of Heth, four hundred shekels of silver, currency of the merchants.

a. **I give you the field and the cave:** This way of negotiating the price was typical of ancient and modern practices in that culture. As a gesture of kindness, the selling party may offer to give the property in question to the buyer, until the buyer insists on paying a price.

i. Ephron the Hittite followed the cultural customs of bargaining. First, the seller offered to *give* the item – confident that the buyer would refuse the ceremonial offer. When the buyer refused to receive it as a gift, the seller suggested a price, which he claimed was modest but was really very high. This was understood to be the starting point, and from there the bargaining began.

b. **Abraham bowed himself down to the people of the land:** Abraham showed how a follower of God should conduct business with the world: *courteously, fairly, prudently*. In not giving a counter-offer to the suggested price of **four hundred shekels of silver**, Abraham was remarkably generous in his dealings with Ephron.

i. "They who, under the sanction of religion, trample under foot the decent forms of civil respect, supposing that because they are religious, they have a right to be rude, totally mistake the spirit of Christianity." (Clarke)

The description is furthered. It is like God wants people to know where this is.

So the field of Ephron which was in Machpelah, which was before Mamre, the field and the cave which was in it, and all the trees that were in the field, which were within all the surrounding borders, were deeded to Abraham as a possession in the presence of the sons of Heth, before all who went in at the gate of his city. And after this, Abraham buried Sarah his wife in the cave of the field of Machpelah, before Mamre (that is, Hebron) in the land of Canaan. So the field and the cave that is in it were deeded to Abraham by the sons of Heth as property for a burial place.

a. **Were deeded to Abraham as a possession:** The text emphasizes this property was Abraham's land by deed, not only by the promise of God. If this was the only piece of land Abraham ever owned in the land promised to him, it showed that he was a real man of faith.

b. **Abraham buried Sarah his wife in the cave of the field of Machpelah:** This is where Isaac and Ishmael buried Abraham ([Genesis 25:9](#)). Isaac and Rebekah were both buried here ([Genesis 49:31](#)). Jacob buried Leah here ([Genesis 49:31](#)), and Joseph buried Jacob here ([Genesis 50:13](#)). The cave of **Machpelah** (near **Hebron**) was the great tomb of the Patriarchs.

There we have it Sarah's journey has ended. But Abraham keeps going. He is a tough old bloke.

GENESIS 25 – ABRAHAM'S DEATH;

HERE IS WHAT IT SAYS ABOUT ABOUT HIS LIFE AFTER SARAH'S DEATH.

1. (1-4) **Abraham marries again and has many children by Keturah.**

Abraham again took a wife, and her name was Keturah. And she bore him Zimran, Jokshan, Medan, Midian, Ishbak, and Shuah. Jokshan begot Sheba and Dedan. And the sons of Dedan were Asshurim, Letushim, and Leummim. And the sons of Midian were Ephah, Epher, Hanoch, Abidah, and Eldaah. All these were the children of Keturah.

a. **Abraham again took a wife:** This was after the death of Sarah, recorded in [Genesis 23:1-2](#) and [23:19](#). There was nothing wrong with Abraham taking another wife after Sarah's death.

b. **Here name was Keturah:** It is easy to forget that Abraham had a second wife, and he fathered six more sons through her. In total, Abraham had eight sons: Isaac through Sarah, Ishmael through Hagar, and these six through **Keturah**.

c. **She bore him Zimran, Jokshan, Medan, Midian, Ishbak, and Shuah:** These sons would themselves become the fathers of distinct peoples. For example, the Midianites came from **Midian**. These sons through Keturah were also a further demonstration that in Abraham's marriage to Sarah, whatever fertility problems that existed were on the part of Sarah, not Abraham.

2. (5-6) Next we notice that Abraham is careful to set Isaac apart as the child of promise.

And Abraham gave all that he had to Isaac. But Abraham gave gifts to the sons of the concubines which Abraham had; and while he was still living he sent them eastward, away from Isaac his son, to the country of the east.

a. **Abraham gave all that he had to Isaac:** Abraham gave his wealth to Isaac, and he gave the promise of the land God had promised to him to Isaac (**he sent them eastward, away from Isaac his son**).

b. **Abraham gave gifts to the sons of the concubines:** The only such relationship we know of in Abraham's life was with Hagar ([Genesis 16:1-4](#)). Perhaps this is also a reference to Keturah, letting us know that though she was Abraham's wife ([Genesis 25:1](#)), in regard to God's covenant promise to Abraham and his descendants, she was not on the same level as Sarah.

3. (7-11) Finally we come to Abraham's death and burial.

This is the sum of the years of Abraham's life which he lived: one hundred and seventy-five years. Then Abraham breathed his last and died in a good old age, an old man and full of years, and was gathered to his people. And his sons Isaac and Ishmael buried him in the cave of Machpelah, which is before Mamre, in the field of Ephron the son of Zohar the Hittite, the field which Abraham purchased from the sons of Heth. There Abraham was buried, and Sarah his wife. And it came to pass, after the death of Abraham, that God blessed his son Isaac. And Isaac dwelt at Beer Lahai Roi.

a. **Then Abraham breathed his last and died:** Abraham passed from the scene, being one of the most important men of the Bible. He is mentioned 70 times in the New Testament alone. Only Moses is mentioned more times in the New Testament (80 times).

b. **Died in a good old age, an old man and full of years:** Abraham lived a remarkably long life of **one hundred and seventy-five years**. By many measures his life was not perfect, but he was a man of faith, who had a real relationship with God, of remarkable obedience, and a true friend of God ([2 Chronicles 20:7](#) and [James 2:23](#)).

c. **After the death of Abraham, that God blessed his son Isaac:** Abraham was a great man, but he was only a man. God's work passed on from one generation to the next. Now, God would carry on the work of the covenant first promised to Abraham through Isaac