

# Genesis

## Chapter 23:1-20

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✠ **Gen 23:1-2** <sup>1</sup> *Sarah lived one hundred and twenty-seven years; these were the years of the life of Sarah.* <sup>2</sup> *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.*

Sarah was 120 years old when she died. Remember last week when we read about Abraham with Isaac being offered to God on the altar. Just think, when Sarah died Isaac was 37 years old. We know this because it says that Abraham was 100 when Isaac was born and Sarah was 10 years younger than Abraham.

The reason I bring this up is, once again Isaac was not a little baby or young child when Abraham offered him on the Altar to the Lord. No, he was a teenager or in his 20's.

Death is never a happy occasion. As Christians we say that we should be happy and rejoice when another believer dies. And this is true, because we know that person is in heaven with Jesus, no longer suffering, no more tears, and no more pain.

But we are also human, and our human side misses that person. This is not a sin, it's not wrong to cry or miss the person who died. Even when Lazarus died Jesus wept. Why, because Jesus loved him and part of His human nature was to grieve or hurt inside, even though Jesus knew He would raise Lazarus from the dead, there was still that sudden loss which God has put in us to miss that person.

It's also a reminder of what sin has done to us. Remember at the beginning of Genesis when God created Adam and Eve. They were created to live forever and never die.

✠ **Gen 2:17** *"but of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil you shall not eat, for in the day that you eat of it you shall surely die."*

But because of their disobedience to God, Adam and Eve fell into sin, and the result was death.

✠ **Gen 3:19** *In the sweat of your face you shall eat bread Till you return to the ground, For out of it you were taken; For dust you are, And to dust you shall return.*

Abraham knew he would see Sarah again in heaven. Even when he was to offer Isaac he knew he would see his son again, either with God raising him from the dead or in heaven. We need to remember this same thing when we lose a loved one or friend who is a believer. We will see them again in heaven! And just think, your loved one or friend is right now at this very moment with Jesus. He or she is not sad or hurting, but rather they are having the time of their life (eternal life that is.)

Remember last week, and the last thing we read about Abraham was that he was in Beersheba.

† **Gen 22:19** *So Abraham returned to his young men, and they rose and went together to Beersheba; and Abraham dwelt at Beersheba.*

And as we read this week Sarah died in Hebron.

✚ **Gen 23:2a** *So Sarah died in Kirjath Arba (that is, Hebron) in the land of Canaan.*

If you look in the maps in the back of your bible you should find Beersheba and Hebron and you will notice that they are about 40 miles apart.

What was Sarah doing in Hebron? I don't know. She may have been visiting one of her relatives, or buying things for her household, or even taking a summer vacation. But still Abraham and Sarah were within the boundaries (so to speak) of God's Promise Land to them. It would be like being in your state, just a different city. You're still in your state, just a part of it.

Abraham mourned for his wife Sarah and that's where we pick up the story.

✚ **Gen 23:3-4** <sup>3</sup> *Then Abraham stood up from before his dead, and spoke to the sons of Heth, saying,* <sup>4</sup> *"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."*

Why would Abraham need to purchase this land to bury his wife?

† **Gen 17:8** *"Also I give to you and your descendants after you the land in which you are a stranger, all the land of Canaan, as an everlasting possession; and I will be their God."*

† **Acts 7:5** *"And God gave him no inheritance in it, not even enough to set his foot on. But even when Abraham had no child, He promised to give it to him for a possession, and to his descendants after him."*

Abraham was in a land that did not belong to him. Once again it would be like you visiting a city and buying land there. Originally it wasn't yours but now it is because you purchased it. That is what Abraham needed to do to bury Sarah. But not only Sarah, Abraham would also be buried there along with his family, which we will see in coming teachings. Or you could read ahead in Genesis and see this for yourself.

The son's of Heth responded with:

✧ **Gen 23:5-6** <sup>5</sup> *And the sons of Heth answered Abraham, saying to him,* <sup>6</sup> *"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."*

The first question is, who are the sons of Heth?

You have to go back to Genesis Chapter 10 starting in verse 6 to see.

✧ **Gen 10:6, 15** <sup>6</sup> *The sons of Ham were Cush, Mizraim, Put, and Canaan.* <sup>15</sup> *Canaan begot Sidon his firstborn, and Heth;*

Ham was one of Noah's sons, and one of Ham's sons was Canaan, and one of his sons was Heth. So Heth was Ham's grandson, or Noah's great grandson. Does this mean that these sons of Heth were Ham's great-grandsons?

Yes and no. When it speaks of the sons of Heth it is referring to a race or nation of people. Just like your nationality based on your parents and their parents and so on. Also when you read the word Hittites, this is referring to the sons of Heth also. You need to remember this through this week's study because God speaks of the Hittites to Moses.

✧ **Deut 7:1** *"When the LORD your God brings you into the land which you go to possess, and has cast out many nations before you, the Hittites and the Girgashites and the Amorites and the Canaanites and the Perizzites and the Hivites and the Jebusites, seven nations greater and mightier than you,*

*"Mightier than you?"* I thought we just read that Abraham was mightier than them?

Verse 6 *"Hear us, my lord: You are a mighty prince among us;*

Abraham was a mighty man among the people there. But also as we will see at the end of Genesis, the children of Israel will leave and be captives in Egypt for 400 years just as the Lord told Abraham.

✧ **Gen 15:13** *Then He said to Abram: "Know certainly that your descendants will be strangers in a land that is not theirs, and will serve them, and they will afflict them four hundred years."*

Also the sons of Heth were offering this burial place to Abraham for free, kind of like a gift so to speak. But Abraham did not want this place for free; he wanted a place that he owned so it could not be taken by anyone. We see this same thing with Jesus, although He rightly owned us because He created us, we were given over to Satan during the fall of Adam.

✧ **Gen 2:7** *And the LORD God formed man of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living being.*

✧ **Romans 5:12 (NLT)** *When Adam sinned, sin entered the entire human race. Adam's sin brought death, so death spread to everyone, for everyone sinned.*

Satan offered it to Jesus, kind of like the gift here or an alternative to going to the cross.

✝ **Matt 4:9-10** <sup>9</sup> *And he said to Him, "All these things I will give You if You will fall down and worship me."* <sup>10</sup> *Then Jesus said to him, "Away with you, Satan! For it is written, 'You shall worship the LORD your God, and Him only you shall serve.'"*

Jesus wasn't taking a free ride; even though He knew how much pain He would have to endure on the cross for us. Jesus paid the price in full and no one can say that our eternal life was given to Jesus, because He paid the price for sin, which is death.

✝ **Col 1:14 (NLT)** *God has purchased our freedom with his blood and has forgiven all our sins.*

✝ **1 Peter 1:19 (NLT)** *He paid for you with the precious lifeblood of Christ, the sinless, spotless Lamb of God.*

So Abraham's response was:

☞ **Gen 23:7-9** <sup>7</sup> *Then Abraham stood up and bowed himself to the people of the land, the sons of Heth. <sup>8</sup> 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, <sup>9</sup> "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."*

Graciously Abraham refused the gift and once again offered to purchase the land, this time being more specific as to what part of land and who owned it at the time.

This may all seem a little strange to us, because if something is offered to us we will most likely accept it. But this was a bargaining custom, and is even still today. If Abraham had taken the land then it would have been taken back and not offered to Abraham again. It does sound strange but then we are not from the Middle East and we don't understand their customs or ways.

So the men Abraham was talking to went and told Ephron that Abraham was interested in buying the field from him, so Ephron returns to them and now he is speaking to Abraham.

☞ **Gen 23:10-11** <sup>10</sup> *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, <sup>11</sup> "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!"*

We see the bargaining getting more exciting here; Abraham didn't mention the cave before but Ephron knew that Abraham wanted the cave to bury Sarah in. Can you see Ephron's strategy here, like he is saying, "Come on Abraham, I know you want the cave, what's it worth to you?" And Abraham responded with:

✚ **Gen 23:12-13** <sup>12</sup> *Then Abraham bowed himself down before the people of the land; <sup>13</sup> 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."*

Or in the NLT it reads:

✚ **Gen 23:13 (NLT)** *and he replied to Ephron as everyone listened. "No, listen to me," he insisted. "I will buy it from you. Let me pay the full price for the field so I can bury my dead there."*

Ephron's response to this is:

✚ **Gen 23:14-15** <sup>14</sup> *And Ephron answered Abraham, saying to him, <sup>15</sup> "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."*

Finally we have a price of 400 shekels, which is about 10 pounds of silver.

✚ **Gen 23:16** <sup>16</sup> *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.*

We finally have a buyer; I just couldn't stand the suspense any longer. Also this whole bargaining was done in the presence of others so no one could say that he was taken advantage of.

✚ **Gen 23:17-20** <sup>17</sup> *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 <sup>18</sup> to Abraham as a possession in the presence of the sons of Heth, before all who went in at the gate of his city. <sup>19</sup> 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. <sup>20</sup> 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.*

Abraham takes possession of the land and the cave and buries Sarah there. Throughout the bible it refers to this land as, the land that Abraham purchased from Ephron.

† **Gen 25:9-10** <sup>9</sup> *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, <sup>10</sup> the field which Abraham purchased from the sons of Heth. There Abraham was buried, and Sarah his wife.*

† **Gen 50:13** *For his sons carried him to the land of Canaan, and buried him in the cave of the field of Machpelah, before Mamre, which Abraham bought with the field from Ephron the Hittite as property for a burial place.*

Next week we will see Abraham as the caring father who finds a bride for his son Isaac.