

The Death and Burial of Sarah

Gen 23¹ Sarah lived one hundred and twenty-seven years; these were the years of the life of Sarah. ² 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. ³ Then Abraham stood up from before his dead, and spoke to the sons of Heth, saying, ⁴ "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." ⁵ And the sons of Heth answered Abraham, saying to him, ⁶ "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." ⁷ Then Abraham stood up and bowed himself to the people of the land, the sons of Heth. ⁸ 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, ⁹ 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." ¹⁰ 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, ¹¹ "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!" ¹² Then Abraham bowed himself down before the people of the land; ¹³ 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." ¹⁴ And Ephron answered Abraham, saying to him, ¹⁵ "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." ¹⁶ 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. ¹⁷ 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 ¹⁸ to Abraham as a possession in the presence of the sons of Heth, before all who went in at the gate of his city. ¹⁹ 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. ²⁰ 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.

► What were some of the experiences of Sarah during her marriage with Abraham and her walk with God?

► As Abraham was Father, not only of Israel, but of Believers, so Sarah was _____.

Gal 4 ²⁴ For these are the two covenants: the one from Mount Sinai which gives birth to bondage, which is Hagar—²⁵ for this Hagar is Mount Sinai in Arabia, and corresponds to Jerusalem which now is, and is in bondage with her children—²⁶ but the Jerusalem above is free, which is the mother of us all.

► We are told nothing of how Abraham or Isaac felt about the death of Sarah. We are only told what Abraham _____, mostly in securing a burial site, which almost seems off topic. In truth, God is telling us much more here, if only we have the _____ to see.

► About _____ years and a change of locale have occurred since the events of ch22.

► What are some of the things that happened when Abraham and Sarah were living in Hebron previously?

– Gn13.18

– Gn14.13-16

– Gn15.1, 5-6, 7-21

– Gn17.15-21

– Gn18.1, 9-15, 16-33

► What is Abraham determined to do now in Hebron? Who will be buried there? (Gn49.29-32)

► Why does Abraham address the “people of the land” (7, 12-13), the “sons of Heth ... who entered at the gate of his city” (3, 10, 18)?

► Why doesn't Abraham accept the offer to use a burial space of his choice?

► Why does Abraham bow before the people and leaders, and ask them to intercede with Ephron? (7-9)

► It seems that Ephron is offering to give the cave and field to Abraham, but what is he really doing? (11)

► How does Abraham respond? (12-13)

► Ephron again responds as though he isn't interested in money, but what is he really doing? (15)

► How does Abraham respond? (16)

► Why does it describe the land in detail? (17-18)

► What lies behind Abraham's determination here?

Heb 11 ⁸By faith Abraham obeyed when he was called to go out to the place which he would receive as an inheritance. And he went out, not knowing where he was going. ⁹By faith he dwelt in the land of promise as in a foreign country, dwelling in tents with Isaac and Jacob, the heirs with him of the same promise; ¹⁰for he waited for the city which has foundations, whose builder and maker is God. ¹¹By faith Sarah herself also received strength to conceive seed, and she bore a child when she was past the age, because she judged Him faithful who had promised ... ¹³These all died in faith, not having received the promises, but having seen them afar off were assured of them, embraced them and confessed that they were strangers and pilgrims on the earth. ¹⁴For those who say such things declare plainly that they seek a homeland. ¹⁵And truly if they had called to mind that country from which they had come out, they would have had opportunity to return. ¹⁶But now they desire a better, that is, a heavenly country. Therefore God is not ashamed to be called their God, for He has prepared a city for them.

Rom 4 ¹³For the promise that he would be the heir of the world was not to Abraham or to his seed through the law, but through the righteousness of faith.

Heb 12 ²²But you have come to Mount Zion and to the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem ..., ²³to the general assembly and church of the firstborn who are registered in heaven, to God the Judge of all, to the spirits of just men made perfect, ²⁴to Jesus the Mediator of the new covenant

1Chr 29 ¹¹Yours, O LORD, is the greatness, The power and the glory, The victory and the majesty; For all that is in heaven and in earth is Yours; Yours is the kingdom, O LORD, And You are exalted as head over all ... ¹⁴But who am I, and who are my people, That we should be able to offer so willingly as this? For all things come from You, And of Your own we have given You. ¹⁵For we are aliens and pilgrims before You, As were all our fathers; Our days on earth are as a shadow, And without hope.

Rom 8 ¹¹He who raised Christ from the dead will also give life to your mortal bodies through His Spirit who dwells in you ... ¹⁸For I consider that the sufferings of the present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us. ¹⁹For the earnest expectation of the creation eagerly waits for the revealing of the sons of God ... ²¹because the creation itself also will be delivered from the bondage of corruption into the glorious liberty of the children of God.