

**Scripture Reading: Genesis 22**

**“19 So Abraham returned to his young men, and they rose and went together to Beersheba; and Abraham dwelt at Beersheba. 20 Now it came to pass after these things that it was told Abraham, saying, "Indeed Milcah also has borne children to your brother Nahor: 21 Huz his firstborn, Buz his brother, Kemuel the father of Aram, 22 Chesed, Hazo, Pildash, Jidlaph, and Bethuel." 23 And Bethuel begot Rebekah. These eight Milcah bore to Nahor, Abraham's brother. 24 His concubine, whose name was Reumah, also bore Tebah, Gaham, Thahash, & Maachah.”**

**Genesis 23:1 “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.”**

## **“The Death & Burial of a Princess”**

**Back in Genesis chapter seventeen we saw Abram and Sarai given new names as they were prepared to bring forth the son of promise Isaac.**

- **Abram became Abraham and Sarai’s new name was Sarah.**

**Abraham went from being an exalted father, to the father of a multitude and Sarah went from being ‘my princess’ to “princess of a multitude.”**

- **And so today our focus will be on the death and burial of a princess!**

**As I mentioned last week, our time with Abraham is drawing to a close and the attention will now turn to the life of Isaac who must in turn bring forth another child of the promise:**

- **Another younger son, in Jacob.**

**Next week we come to another of my favorite portions of the Scriptures as Abraham and his servant find a wife for Isaac and much of what we will see here today is leading up to that important event.**

**As chapter 22 comes to a close we saw Abraham receiving word about his relatives back in the land of the Chaldeans: His brother Nabor had born children including Bethuel who had Rebekah as a daughter who we will meet next week!**

**As always we see that some of those details are very important, even if we cannot discern the importance of each one... I have to be honest and say that I have no idea why we needed to know the name of his concubine & her four boys! We do know that Job was from the land of Uz and that Elihu was a Buzite. Thus we can assume that these other folks have descendants that play a role later in history: Perhaps the servant who helped Daniel or even the wise men who came from the East. I am sure there are some mysteries that we will have revealed only in eternity!**

- **What is important to see is that the Book of Beginnings is now building toward the marriage of Isaac.**

**In fact this word from the east and the death of Sarah are what motivate Abraham to send his servant searching for a suitable wife and when Isaac is finally married we will read:**

**“So Isaac was comforted after his mother's death.”**

**We have noted in our studies the prominent place that Sarah has in the Scriptures and God’s grand plan of redemption and now we find that she is the only woman whose age at her death is given...**

**We know from this that Isaac would have been around 37 at her death and he obviously mourned her passing. So word comes to Abraham that his brother has enlarged his family and then word comes about the death of Sarah when we continue on in chapter 23: Remembering that the chapter divisions are NOT part of the text!**

**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.”**

**Again we are reminded that weeping and mourning are very appropriate in our fallen world...**

**We saw this in the Book of Acts after the death of Stephen when we read, Acts 8:2 “And devout men carried Stephen to his burial, and made great lamentation over him.”**

**Even with the hope of the resurrection we are still to weep and mourn over the death of a loved one or friend... Consider Jesus who even when He knew He had come to the tomb of His friend Lazarus to demonstrate His power by raising him from the dead...**

**➤ He still stood before that tomb in the presence of death and WEEP!**

**We are to weep for those who weep and we are also to care for those who have passed before us...**

**We learn this next in our text:**

**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.”**

**Now just because Abraham is going to give us a great example here it does not mean we should put ourselves on a guilt trip or worry if things are not done just right when caring for the dead...**

**Many a sailor over the years has been lost or buried at sea...**

**➤ And yet in Revelation we are told very specifically that on the day of the great resurrection the sea will give up its dead.**

**Many bodies have been cremated or greatly damaged in accidents or natural disasters, but each and every person will be resurrected on that great day... Those details are not a problem for God!**

**However with that said, we do see down through history how great care is taken when dealing with the dead... The hope of the resurrection lies behind such care even when it is done for the wrong reasons like the mummies of ancient Egypt or the placing of people in a frozen state today.**

**It is Abraham who sets the great example for us as he seeks a burial spot for his wife... A tomb that would hold not only her body, but his and the bodies of Isaac and Rebekah as well as Jacob and Leah and possibly Joseph when his bones were brought back from Egypt hundreds of years later.**

**It is sad in some ways that the Church has lost its central role in this area where we no longer have burials near the church... [Norway’s twin Sisters]**

**However, it is still an area where we should put much thought and the appropriate resources into caring for our dead as Abraham did for Sarah.**

**It was a great blessing for the Pettyjohn family to be able to bury Abel with Isaiah’s mother even when his death was so unexpected.**

One of my best friends just lost his father and he was buried in a crept that he had prepared many years ago, again as a good example.

So as we look at the further details given for us here in chapter 23 we see not only such care for Sarah, but a reminder about how seriously Abraham now took God's promises & some reminders about how we are to faithfully carry out transactions in this life.

- What continues on for the rest of chapter 23 is an exchange that shows us not only the great faith of Abraham, but many details about property and transactions that continue down to our very day.

As we read through this account keep in mind how we have deeds to property and how they are witnessed and kept by the County recorders.

- Again we see Abraham begin to seek a burial place in verse 3:

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." We see two important things here:

- Abraham does not merely want a place to bury Sarah, he wants to own a property.

This is a foreshadowing of the full possession of the land that God has promised to Abraham's children some 400 years hence...

- And Abraham shows his faith in that promise by insisting that he and Sarah, along with their son and grandson & their wives be buried on land that they owned or possessed!

This leads to an extensive set of negotiations which are given in detail in the rest of this chapter: Reading on at verse 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."

This shows the incredible respect that Abraham had garnered over these past years as a wanderer in this land...

- Abraham had dwelt in peace, had rescued some of the people when he saved Lot, and was rightly feared as one who served the God who destroyed Sodom and Gomorrah.

Thus these men willingly offer whatever tomb or burial spot Abraham would like to have...

- But Abraham wants more than just a place to put the body of Sarah.

7 "Then Abraham stood up and bowed himself to the people of the land, the sons of Heth. *[showing proper respect]* 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."

- Abraham has a specific burial spot in mind and knows who the owner is currently and wants to make arrangements for a purchase.
- Again he is looking for a down payment of sorts on the promised possession of all the land God has promised!
- The meeting with the owner is arranged with witnesses present & then we read at verse 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!"

- Again these Sons of Heth have great respect for Abraham and are willing to give him possession of the chosen ground at no cost to Abraham: As a gift!
- Whether out of desire that he not be under any obligation to the current possessors of the land or fear that a gift can be withdrawn, Abraham will still insist on buying!

Again as he continues the negotiations he does so with great respect:

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 & I will bury my dead there.”

- This might seem a bit tedious, but it is the nature of making such negotiations & Abraham is being very careful in getting what he needs.

I think Ephron now suspects that Abraham is not going to take no for an answer and yet he still makes sure that his offer of a gift is a real offer...

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.”

- Both men understand the importance of Abraham having a proper burial place they are simply working out the details of the exchange.

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.”  
[*first mention of money!*]

Abraham has obtained the information that he needed and when he knows the proper value of Machpelah, he presents Ephron with the money... The exchange is made and again notice the details given about the land so there could be no doubt what or where it was...

- Just as a county recorder would do today with a deed to a property.

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.”

- So the transaction is completed with all the proper details before all the needed witnesses!

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.”

- The Scriptures give us none of the personal details about Abraham burying his princess, which is very appropriate.
- However as I mentioned this will become the burial location for not just Sarah but all of the early patriarchs and their wives.

As we saw over and over again the Book of Acts, God knows where history is going and He is the one who makes sure that it gets there!

**Our time with Sarah is completed and I will close with the words of the Prophet Isaiah as we reflect on the life of this faithful woman:**

**Isaiah 51: "1 "Listen to Me, you who follow after righteousness, You who seek Jehovah: Look to the rock from which you were hewn, And to the hole of the pit from which you were dug.**

**2 Look to Abraham your father, And to Sarah who bore you; For I called him alone, And blessed him and increased him."**

**3 For Jehovah will comfort Zion, He will comfort all her waste places; He will make her wilderness like Eden, And her desert like the garden of Jehovah; Joy and gladness will be found in it, Thanksgiving and the voice of melody."**

**The Lord comforted Zion when Jesus came to save His people from their sins and as he reminded the Pharisees, "Abraham rejoiced to see My day, and he saw it and was glad."**

**And of course we know now that His princess that Revelation calls the Lamb's Bride will live for all eternity!**

**Communion Meditation: Luke 22**

**"20 Then Martha, as soon as she heard that Jesus was coming, went and met Him, but Mary was sitting in the house. 21 Then Martha said to Jesus, "Lord, if You had been here, my brother would not have died. 22 But even now I know that whatever You ask of God, God will give You."**

**23 Jesus said to her, "Your brother will rise again."**

**24 Martha said to Him, "I know that he will rise again in the resurrection at the last day."**

**25 Jesus said to her, "I am the resurrection and the life. He who believes in Me, though he may die, he shall live. 26 And whoever lives and believes in Me shall never die. Do you believe this?"**

**27 She said to Him, "Yes, Lord, I believe that You are the Christ, the Son of God, who is to come into the world." "**