

***And the life of Sarah was a hundred and twenty-seven years: these were the years of the life of Sarah.***  
**- Gen. 23:1**

This Lesson Outline was prepared by John M. Wharton May 24, 2009

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**Sources -**

All bible text, unless otherwise indicated, is the Darby Translation. ASV indicates the American Standard Version, with KJV indicating the King James Version. Quotations are often included from various classic Christian commentaries such as John Gill's Expositor, Jamieson, Fausset and Brown, Robertson's New Testament Word Pictures, and others. Greek and Hebrew word definitions are often included which are from the Strong's Concordance, unless otherwise indicated. All of these sources, both the bible texts, commentaries, and word definition's are taken from the excellent source, the e-Sword Bible computer program found at <http://www.e-sword.net/index.html> unless otherwise indicated. Clipart in this lesson is courtesy of ChristiansUnite.com site at <http://clipart.christiansunite.com>

**Introduction -**

In this chapter Sarah dies at a very good age. We see that she, and Abraham appear to have been living apart for some time. Perhaps there was some stress between them. Abraham goes north to Hebron, and buys a cave, and the field around it, where he buries his wife Sarah.

**Lesson Text - Genesis 23 -**

Gen 23:1 And the life of Sarah was a hundred and twenty-seven years: these were the years of the life of Sarah.

Gen 23:2 And 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.

**Adam Clarke's Comentary on the Bible from the e-Sword Bible program -**

**Gen 23:2**

**Sarah died in Kirjath-arba** - Literally in the city of the four. Some suppose this place was called the city of the four because it was the burial place of Adam, Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob; others, because according to the opinion of the rabbins, Eve was buried there. with Sarah, Rebekah, and Leah. But it seems

evidently to have had its name from a Canaanite, one of the Anakim, probably called Arba (for the text, [Jos 14:14](#), does not actually say this was his name), who was the chief of the four brothers who dwelt there; the names of the others being Sheshai, Ahiman, and Talmi. See [Jdg 1:10](#). These three were destroyed by the tribe of Judah; probably the other had been previously dead.

**Abraham came to mourn for Sarah** - From [Gen 22:19](#) of the preceding chapter it appears that Abraham had settled at Beer-sheba; and here we find that Sarah died at Hebron, which was about twenty-four miles distant from Beersheba. For the convenience of feeding his numerous flocks, Abraham had probably several places of temporary residence, and particularly one at Beer-sheba, and another at Hebron; and it is likely that while he sojourned at Beersheba, Sarah died at Hebron; and his coming to mourn and weep for her signifies his coming from the former to the latter place on the news of her death.

#### **Comments** -

**According to the previous chapter, Abraham had settled in Beer-sheba, South of where Sarah has been living.**

*Gen 22:19 And Abraham returned to his young men, and they rose up and went together to Beer-sheba. **And Abraham dwelt at Beer-sheba.***

**Sarah was living a short distance away to the north in Kirjath-arba.**

**It's a fair question to ask why they were living in different locations at this time., because we have not seen them do it before. Many commentators conclude that Abraham was in Beer-Sheba solely to handle his business, while Sarah lived further north in their main settlement, or perhaps in the area because she liked it better. And that is all very possible. But it is strange that we have not seen them apart before in all of the years of their life that we are shown in the Bible. And now Sarah is very advanced in age, and we would expect to see Abraham staying much closer to her. As to the family business, surely he could let the head servants handle much of it for him, and his son Isaac must be old enough at this time that he should be gaining experience handling such family matters for his father.**

**Is anything mentioned before this time, that could have caused a strain between Abraham, and Sarah. There may be such an event mentioned in Chapter 21. There we are told that Jehovah God commanded Abraham to take his only son Isaac to a far mountain where he is to sacrifice him to God. Considering what we know of Sarah's temper, and protective concern toward Isaac, it seems very doubtful that Abraham would tell Sarah about such a plan as he, Isaac, and the servants left the following morning. Remember that Sarah had ordered him to cast Hagar, and his first son Ishmael out into the wilderness, where they were likely to die. And she did this because she saw Ishmael teasing, or threatening her son Isaac in some manner.**

*Gen. 21:9 And Sarah saw the son of Hagar the Egyptian, whom she had borne to Abraham, mocking.*

*Gen. 21:10 And she said to Abraham, **Cast out this handmaid and her son; for the son of this handmaid shall not inherit with my son -- with Isaac.***

**From that, it seems unimaginable that Sarah would have accepted the idea to sacrifice her only son, whom she'd waited all her life to bear, regardless of what Abraham said. And Abraham would be very aware of her temper, and determination. He had already faced that determination in regard to his first son, Ishmael, and had lost the test of wills. But when they returned from that mountain, and the word spread about what almost happened to Isaac out there, would her response have been much better? Then at the end of chapter 22 we are told that "Abraham dwelt at Beer-sheba". The next thing we read in Genesis 23:1 is that Sarah has been dwelling in "Kirjath-Arba: that is Hebron..." a little distance to the**

north of where Abraham has been. Abraham is the father of our faith in many respects, and he believed God's promises. Remember that both he, and Sarah were human, and they had the same frailties that we do. That is what gives meaning to the test of Abraham's faith.

Gen 23:3 And Abraham rose up from before his dead, and spoke to the sons of Heth, saying,

Gen 23:4 I am a stranger and a sojourner with you; give me a possession of a sepulchre with you, that I may bury my dead from before me.

Gen 23:5 And the sons of Heth answered Abraham, saying to him,

Gen 23:6 Hear us, my lord: **thou art a prince of God among us:** in the choicest of our sepulchres bury thy dead: none of us shall withhold from thee his sepulchre for burying thy dead.

**God** - H430 אלהים 'elôhîm *el-o-heem*' Plural of H433; **gods in the ordinary sense**; but specifically used (in the plural thus, especially with the article) of the supreme *God*; occasionally applied by way of deference to *magistrates*; and sometimes as a superlative: - angels, X exceeding, God (gods) (-dess, -ly), X (very) great, judges, X mighty.

**Adam Clarke's Commentary on the Bible from the e-Sword Bible program -**

**Gen 23:6**

**Thou art a mighty prince** - נשיא אלהים nesi Elohim, a prince of God - a person whom we know to be Divinely favored, and whom, in consequence, we deeply respect and reverence.

**Comments -**

**They realized that Abraham was especially blessed, and protected by God, and they respected him for it. They may have even feared his power to some degree.**

Gen 23:7 And Abraham rose up, and bowed down to the people of the land, to the sons of Heth,

Gen 23:8 and spoke to them, saying, If it be your will that I should bury my dead from before me, hear me, and entreat for me Ephron the son of Zohar,

Gen 23:9 that he may give me the cave of Machpelah, which is his, which is at the end of his field; for the full money let him give it to me amongst you for a possession of a sepulchre.

**Comments -**

**We can see that Abraham was very powerful, and highly respected by the people as a prince of God. Yet he showed respect, and courtesy to them, following the standards of that time. And he did this though he knew that God had promised his descendent's ultimate control of all the land.**

Gen 23:10 And Ephron was dwelling among the sons of Heth. And Ephron the Hittite answered Abraham, in the ears of the sons of Heth, even of all that went in at the gate of his city, saying,

Gen 23:11 No, my lord: hear me. The field give I thee; and the cave that is in it,

to thee I give it; before the eyes of the sons of my people give I it thee: bury thy dead.

**Jamieson, Fausset, and Brown Commentary from the e-Sword Bible program -**

**Gen 23:11-15**

**Ephron answered, Nay, my lord, etc.** — Here is a great show of generosity, but it was only a show; for while Abraham wanted only the cave, he joins “the field and the cave”; and though he offered them both as free gifts, he, of course, expected some costly presents in return, without which, he would not have been satisfied. The patriarch, knowing this, wished to make a purchase and asked the terms.

**Comments –**

**It might seem like Ephron was giving Abraham a wonderful gift. But the commentators say this was the normal pattern of their business. If Ephron had given it as a gift he'd expect an equally valuable gift from Abraham. Jamieson, Fausset, and Brown say that Ephron, while giving this gift, attached the ground around the cave. That raised the value of the deal. A shrewd gift. Maybe that helped Abraham who didn't own any land in Canaan yet.**

Gen 23:12 And Abraham bowed down before the people of the land;

Gen 23:13 and he spoke to Ephron, in the ears of the people of the land, saying, But if only thou wouldst listen to me, I give the money for the field: take it of me, and I will bury my dead there.

Gen 23:14 And Ephron answered Abraham, saying to him,

Gen 23:15 My lord, hearken to me. A field of four hundred shekels of silver, what is that between me and thee? bury therefore thy dead.

**Comments –**

**Now Ephron has told Abraham what the going price is for the land. And Abraham buys his first piece of ground in the promised land.**

Gen 23:16 And Abraham hearkened to Ephron; and Abraham weighed to Ephron the money that he had named in the ears of the sons of Heth--four hundred shekels of silver, current with the merchant.

Gen 23:17 So the field of Ephron, which was at Machpelah, which was before Mamre, the field, and the cave that was in it, and all the trees that were in the field, that were in all its borders round about,

Gen 23:18 were assured to Abraham for a possession before the eyes of the sons of Heth, before all who went in at the gate of his city.

Gen 23:19 And after this, Abraham buried Sarah his wife in the cave of the field at Machpelah, opposite to Mamre: that is Hebron, in the land of Canaan.

Gen 23:20 And the field and the cave that was in it were assured to Abraham for a possession of a sepulchre by the sons of Heth.

**Comments –**

**Abraham has bought the cave and field at Machpelah from Ephron, and there buried his deceased wife Sarah. This is the first piece of land in the land of Canaan, that is said to actually belong to Abraham.**

**Conclusion -**

**We have seen In chapter 23, that Sarah died at an old. Abraham came north to Hebron, where she was living, to attend to her funeral arrangements. He buys a cave, and the field around it, from a man named Ephron, and there buries his wife Sarah.**