

Genesis Chapter 23 Commentary

1 And Sarah was an hundred and seven and twenty years old: these were the years of the life of Sarah. 2 And Sarah died in Kirjatharba; the same is Hebron in the land of Canaan: and Abraham came to mourn for Sarah, and to weep for her. 3 And Abraham stood up from before his dead, and spake unto the sons of Heth, saying, 4 I am a stranger and a sojourner with you: give me a possession of a burying place with you, that I may bury my dead out of my sight.

If you wonder, if it is okay to mourn and weep the death of your loved ones, you have here a scripture supporting that thought. Abraham mourned and wept over the loss of his Sarah. However, notice that he only mourned a certain amount of time; and then he moved on with his life. We have to do the same. We should not waste away our lives over the loss of loved ones, but carry on with being salt and light to the world.

Why would Abraham say that he was a stranger and a sojourner in this place? God has given this land to Abraham and his seed after him, seen in:

- ***Ge 12:1-7; 1 "Now the LORD had said unto Abram, Get thee out of thy country, and from thy kindred, and from thy father's house, unto a land that I will shew thee: 2 And I will make of thee a great nation, and I will bless thee, and make thy name great; and thou shalt be a blessing: 3 And I will bless them that bless thee, and curse him that curseth thee: and in thee shall all families of the earth be blessed. 4 So Abram departed, as the LORD had spoken unto him; and Lot went with him: and Abram was seventy and five years old when he departed out of Haran. 5 And Abram took Sarai his wife, and Lot his brother's son, and all their substance that they had gathered, and the souls that they had gotten in Haran; and they went forth to go into the land of Canaan; and into the land of Canaan they came. 6 And Abram passed through the land unto the place of Sichem, unto the plain of Moreh. And the Canaanite was then in the land. 7 And the LORD appeared unto Abram, and said, Unto thy seed will I give this land: and there builded he an altar unto the LORD, who appeared unto him."***
- ***Ps 105:8-15; 8 "He hath remembered his covenant forever, the word which he commanded to a thousand generations. 9 Which covenant he made with Abraham, and his oath unto Isaac; 10 And confirmed the same unto Jacob for a law, and to Israel for an everlasting covenant: 11 Saying, Unto thee will I give the land of Canaan, the lot of your inheritance: 12 When they were but a few men in number; yea, very few, and strangers in it. 13 When they went from one nation to another, from one kingdom to another people; 14 He suffered no man to do them wrong: yea, he reproveth kings for their sakes; 15 Saying, Touch not mine anointed, and do my prophets no harm."***

We see, in these references, the confirmation that Abraham, and his children, were for many years dwelling in the land of promise with an expectation of this being their permanent home. In Abraham's time, they were small in number, and they did not yet possess the land as a nation. Thus, they were strangers in it, as seen in: ***Heb 11:8-10; 8 "By faith Abraham, when he was called to go out into a place which he should after receive for an inheritance, obeyed; and he went out, not knowing whither he went. 9 By faith he sojourned in the land of promise, as in a strange country, dwelling in tabernacles with Isaac and Jacob, the heirs with him of the same promise: 10 For he looked for a city which hath foundations, whose builder and maker is God."***

Since, Abraham is not the current possessor of the land; he must purchase the burying place from the current owner of the property.

Adam Clarke has some commentary notes on these verses that I wish to share with you: *Adam Clarke's Commentary: It is worthy of remark that Sarah is the only woman in the sacred writings whose age, death, and burial are distinctly noted.* (That women' ages, deaths, and burials were not mentioned of other women)

*And she has been deemed worthy of higher honour, for St. Paul, **Ga 4:22,23**, makes her a type of the Church of Christ; and her faith in the accomplishment of God's promise, that she should have a son, when all natural probabilities were against it, is particularly celebrated in the Epistle to the Hebrews, **Heb 11:11**. Sarah was about ninety-one years old when Isaac was born, and she lived thirty-six years after, and saw him grown up to man's estate. With SARAH the promise of the incarnation of Christ commenced, though a comparatively obscure prophecy of it had been delivered to Eve, **Ge 3:15**; and with MARY it terminated, having had its exact completion. Thus God put more honour upon these two women than upon all the daughters of Eve besides. Sarah's conception of Isaac was supernatural; she had passed the age and circumstances in which it was possible, naturally speaking, to have a child; therefore she laughed when the promise was given, knowing that the thing was impossible, because it had ceased to be with her after the manner of women. God allows this natural impossibility, and grants that the thing must be the effect of Divine interposition; and therefore asks, Is anything too hard for God? The physical impossibility was increased in the case of Mary, she having no connection with man; but the same power interposed as in the case of Sarah: and we find that when all aptitude for natural procreation was gone, Sarah received strength to conceive seed, and bore a son, from whom, in a direct line, the Messiah, the Saviour of the world, was to descend; and through this same power we find a virgin conceiving and bearing a son against all natural impossibilities. Everything is supernatural in the births both of the type and antitype; can it be wondered at then, if the spiritual offspring of the Messiah must have a supernatural birth likewise? hence the propriety of that saying, Unless a man be born again-born from above-born, not only of water, but of the Holy Ghost, he cannot see the kingdom of God. These may appear hard sayings, and those who are little in the habit of considering spiritual things may exclaim, It is enthusiasm! Who can bear it? Such things cannot possibly be." To such persons I have only to say, God hath spoken. This is sufficient for those who credit his being and his Bible; nor is there anything too hard for him. He, by whose almighty power, Sarah had strength to conceive and bear a son in her old age, and by whose miraculous interference a virgin conceived, and the man Christ Jesus was born of her, can by the same power transform the sinful soul, and cause it to bear the image of the heavenly as it has borne the image of the earthly. (Much of what is mentioned here; we have addressed in our earlier studies)*

5 And the children of Heth answered Abraham, saying unto him, 6 Hear us, my lord: thou art a mighty prince among us: in the choice of our sepulchres bury thy dead; none of us shall withhold from thee his sepulchre, but that thou mayest bury thy dead.

Notice; Abraham was in good standing with the people of this place. This is a good lesson for us; demonstrating that we should be good citizens wherever we live, work, and worship.

7 And Abraham stood up, and bowed himself to the people of the land, even to the children of Heth. 8 And he communed with them, saying, If it be your mind that I should bury my dead out of my sight; hear me, and intreat for me to Ephron the son of Zohar, 9 That he may give me the cave of

Machpelah, which he hath, which is in the end of his field; for as much money as it is worth he shall give it me for a possession of a burying place amongst you. 10 And Ephron dwelt among the children of Heth: and Ephron the Hittite answered Abraham in the audience of the children of Heth, even of all that went in at the gate of his city, saying, 11 Nay, my lord, hear me: the field give I thee, and the cave that is therein, I give it thee; in the presence of the sons of my people give I it thee: bury thy dead. 12 And Abraham bowed down himself before the people of the land. 13 And he spake unto Ephron in the audience of the people of the land, saying, But if thou wilt give it, I pray thee, hear me: I will give thee money for the field; take it of me, and I will bury my dead there. 14 And Ephron answered Abraham, saying unto him, 15 My lord, hearken unto me: the land is worth four hundred shekels of silver; what is that betwixt me and thee? bury therefore thy dead. 16 And Abraham hearkened unto Ephron; and Abraham weighed to Ephron the silver, which he had named in the audience of the sons of Heth, four hundred shekels of silver, current money with the merchant. 17 And the field of Ephron, which was in Machpelah, which was before Mamre, the field, and the cave which was therein, and all the trees that were in the field, that were in all the borders round about, were made sure 18 Unto Abraham for a possession in the presence of the children of Heth, before all that 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: the same is Hebron in the land of Canaan. 20 And the field, and the cave that is therein, were made sure unto Abraham for a possession of a burying place by the sons of Heth.

This scripture gives us the history of how they did business in this time. Also, did you notice how mannerly they were in doing business? Did you notice that all the business was done out in the open with a multitude of witnesses? We can all learn some good life lessons, of doing business, from these actions.

We see that Abraham felt obligated to be possessor of the burying place. Why is it important to Abraham, that he be the possessor of the burying place? Because this land is a land of promise to Abraham and his seed from back in: ***Ge 15:18-21; 18 "In the same day the LORD made a covenant with Abram, saying, Unto thy seed have I given this land, from the river of Egypt unto the great river, the river Euphrates: 19 The Kenites, and the Kenizzites, and the Kadmonites, 20 And the Hittites, and the Perizzites, and the Rephaims; 21 And the Amorites, and the Canaanites, and the Girgashites, and the Jebusites."*** and he expects to die there, be buried there, and be resurrected there, and dwell in that place forever. They, Israel, shall be possessors of this land, but the time of their possession is not yet come, so Abraham must purchase this property.

The national possession will come later on. At that time, it shall be a gift from God unto them as a nation. We have this confirmation in the New Testament that Abraham was a stranger in a land that was to be given unto his heirs, but he himself was a stranger, seen in: ***Ac 7:5 "And he gave him none inheritance in it, no, not so much as to set his foot on: yet he promised that he would give it to him for a possession, and to his seed after him, when as yet he had no child."***

Herein, we see a prophetic picture that is the same for us. How? We too have the promise of a home that is eternal, and we are just strangers and sojourners in the earthly possession we have here. We must work and toil and purchase our properties here, but there it will be the free gift of God unto us. Our eternal home is in the heavens. We shall abide in a land of promise, the new heaven and earth, we find recorded in: ***Re 21:1 "And I saw a new heaven and a new earth: for the first heaven and the***

first earth were passed away; and there was no more sea." Praise the Lord, for the revelation of our eternal home!