

GENESIS 23:1-20 (THE DEATH OF THE PRINCESS)

Text Verse: The voice said, “Cry out!” And he said, “What shall I cry?” “All flesh *is* grass, And all its loveliness *is* like the flower of the field. ⁷ The grass withers, the flower fades, Because the breath of the LORD blows upon it; Surely the people *are* grass. ⁸ The grass withers, the flower fades, But the word of our God stands forever.” Isaiah 40:6-8

God is the Creator and we are His creatures. Some of us are faithful and some lack faith, but no matter what, we are still just flesh and we will all wither like the grass and fade like the flower. We have one chance to get things right in this life and so we should be attentive to the word of our God now while we have the chance. And so... May God speak to us through His word today and may His glorious name ever be praised.

I. The Death of the Princess

¹ Sarah lived one hundred and twenty-seven years; *these were* the years of the life of Sarah.

Sarah is the only woman in the Bible whose age at death and specific place of burial is recorded. She lived to the age of 127 and died 37 years after Isaac was born.

She is the first woman who is actually noted since Eve who was in the line of the Messiah. From the Bible, we can infer other women who are in His line, but Sarah is explicitly mentioned as bearing the son of promise, through whom God’s plans would be realized.

And so from Sarah, there is a connection directly linking her to Mary, the mother of Jesus – both physically and spiritually. Through her came the otherwise impossible birth of Isaac, who is a picture of Christ, and through both her and Mary came the Messiah Himself. The patterns of the life of Sarah are deep and rich.

In Hebrews 11, she is noted for her life of faith –

“By 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. ¹² Therefore from one man, and him as good as dead, were born *as many* as the stars of the sky in multitude—innumerable as the sand which is by the seashore.” Hebrews 11:11,12

In Galatians 4, Paul shows her to be a type of the Church which exists by the grace of Christ rather than the bondage of the law, and in 1 Peter 3, she is noted as the mother of all believers. This great woman of God is so noted throughout the pages of the Bible.

² So Sarah died in Kirjath Arba (that is, Hebron) in the land of Canaan,

This place, Kirjath Arba, now known as Hebron, is still a city in Israel. It’s in a valley which is surrounded by seven mountains. The Arabs call it el Khalil which means “the friend,” a title which refers all the way back to Abraham and his friendship with God.

It says that Hebron is “in the land of Canaan.” This is in contrast to Beersheba where they lived before which was “the land of the Philistines.” In other words, Sarah died in the land of promise.

^{2 (con’t)} and Abraham came to mourn for Sarah and to weep for her.

There are some Jewish traditions that you will hear, even in synagogues today, which say that Abraham and Sarah never spoke again after Abraham went to offer up Isaac at Mount Moriah. They say that what Abraham did was disobedient and sinful and that is why Sarah is never mentioned from that time until now – she disagreed with Abraham.

There are numerous things wrong with that and there is actually evil intent behind it too. I’m being as honest as I can because this is such a serious matter. First, Abraham did what God asked and the Bible, from then on, speaks of him as the epitome of faith and obedience.

Secondly, Sarah isn’t mentioned again because she is no longer relevant to the story. The son of promise is born and the narrative moves on. This is

exactly the same as Mary. She is mentioned only once after the resurrection of Jesus and it isn't any more than a fleeting cameo.

Mary is not the source of our faith and she has nothing further to do with the unfolding story. Sarah was noted when she played her role and then she was given the quiet respect of a woman who had done her service. Only at her death is she mentioned.

And finally, the reason "why" there is an attempt to malign Abraham in this way is because the story so clearly and concisely points to the life of Jesus. The only way to get around this is to diminish the magnitude of Abraham and his life.

Having said that, Abraham had his tent and Sarah had her tent. This is the way families worked and we know this from Genesis 24:67 where Isaac takes his new wife to Sarah's tent after they were married; it is now her tent. They each had their own space.

When Sarah died, Abraham "came to mourn for Sarah and weep for her." The two words in Hebrew for "mourn" and "weep" indicate true sadness and great sorrow. They're combined to show the magnitude of the loss to Abraham after 127 years of life together and most of that time as husband and wife.

Abraham was truly mournful. However, a secret is found in the original text of the Hebrew Scriptures. It is something extremely rare in the Bible and it shows us of the Abraham's continued faith. The word for "weep" is *libkhotah* and the middle letter of *libkhotah* is the letter kaph.

It is the 11th letter of the Hebrew aleph-bet and it is symbolized by an open palm. It has four possible meanings "bend, open, allow, or tame" – all things which occur with an open hand. In the Hebrew of this word in this verse, this letter kaph is smaller than the other letters, a writing tool known as miniscule.

The question is, "Why did God choose this one letter to be made smaller than the rest?" I believe the answer is that as Abraham wept, he opened his

hand as a gesture of offering. When he did, he was saying what Job said at his own loss,

“Naked I came from my mother’s womb, And naked shall I return there. The LORD gave, and the LORD has taken away; Blessed be the name of the LORD.” Job 1:21

Abraham is demonstrating faith that what the Lord had taken would be returned through the Seed of promise whom he had seen on Mount Moriah when he was given a ram in place of Isaac. Abraham, in other words, is demonstrating faith in the resurrection of the dead.

This is only the third time so far in the Bible that a letter is made larger or smaller than the text around it. The first was in Genesis 1:1 and the second was in Genesis 2:4, both of which are speaking of the creation of the heavens and earth.

In all, there will be very few times in the entire Bible that such rare letters will be used – only 17 in the five books of Moses and a few others after them. God is giving us clues about Himself and His plan of redemption in these unusual sized letters.

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.”

When it says he “stood up from before his dead” it notes the type of mourning seen elsewhere in the Bible. In the book of Job, it says when his friends came to mourn with him they “sat down with him on the ground seven days and seven nights.” 2:13

It’s a common description in the Bible and is simply the way they did things and probably still do in many Mid-East nations. When he had poured out his heart and his tears, he stood and spoke to the sons of Heth. These people, the sons of Heth, were first mentioned in the Table of Nations in Genesis 10:15.

Eventually, king David's wife Bathsheba will come from them and she will be an ancestor of Jesus. When Abraham spoke, he noted his lack of property, stating he was a foreigner and a visitor in the land. This is true, because the land belonged to the Canaanites until God determined they were to be removed, 400 years later.

It's also something Abraham and others were noted as being faithful for in Hebrews 11. They acknowledged that they were pilgrims in the land and that God had something better prepared for them. Peter writes in the New Testament that this is still true among believers – this is not our home and we should recognize that. God has something better for us.

God is preparing a city for His people where there will be only joy, contentment, and an eternal filling of life. We will live in the presence of God and He will be pleased to dwell with His people.

**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."**

The terms "sons of Heth" and "hear us" doesn't mean everyone said this, but just a leader speaking for the people. It would be like someone interrupting us out here on the beach and me saying, "Leave us alone;" one speaking for the whole.

When he addresses Abraham it's in a very respectful way. "Hear us my lord: You are a mighty prince among us." The term he uses is *nesi elohim* or a prince of God. They understand Abraham's favor with the Lord and mention it now.

Although the word is different than the name of Sarah, it could be that they are using this term to tie him directly to Sarah. Her name means "princess" and by calling him *nesi elohim* or prince of God, the Bible is directly connecting the two as noble people.

In his address to Abraham, and speaking on behalf of the people, he offers a resting place for Sarah freely and without condition.

II. The Cave of Machpelah

⁷Then Abraham stood up and bowed himself to the people of the land, the sons of Heth.

Starting with this verse, and going through verse 18, there is a treasure which was hidden until I found it preparing for this sermon. It's a literary form of writing known as a chiasm. I've found about twenty of them, some spanning many chapters and even entire books of the Bible.

There are hundreds, if not thousands of them in the Bible and people, as they find them, publish them for others to see. I did a search on line and there is no record of this one, so you are probably the very first people since Genesis was written to see this.

I'll pass it around for you and I'll try to remember to post it on the video as well. A chiasm says something in order and then turns around and says it in the opposite order, making an X. The Greek letter for X is called chi and so these are called "chiasms." I hope you enjoy this one.

Genesis 23:10-18 – Abraham Buries His Dead

A Purchase of Land (10/15/2012)

a (7) sons of Heth

b (9) the cave of Machpelah which he has, which *is* at the end of his field

c (10) - in the presence of the sons of Heth, all who entered at the gate of his city

d (11) - the field and the cave that *is* in it

e (11) - in the presence of the sons of my people

f (11) - Bury your dead!"

g (12, 13) - Abraham spoke to Ephron

x (13) "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."

g (14) Ephron answered Abraham
f (15) - So bury your dead."
e (16) - in the hearing of the sons of Heth
d (17) - the field and the cave which *was* in it
c (18) - in the presence of the sons of Heth, before all who entered
at the gate of his city
b (19) the cave of the field of Machpelah
a (20) sons of Heth

There is a second chiasm that I found in this chapter as well which we'll get to later. Wonderful treasures hidden in God's word! Anyway, Abraham gets up and bows to the people as a sign of respect and thanks and then he makes his desire known...

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.

Abraham repeats what he said earlier and adds to it. His statement, "If it is your wish" acknowledges their agreement. He will be allowed to bury his beautiful wife who is now returning to the dust. This verse is basically saying, "Because you agree, please meet with Ephron on my behalf as I'd like to buy the cave of Machpelah."

This name of this cave means "double" and its probably a cave within a cave or a cave linked to another cave and is something that he's both aware of and wants. The Bible doesn't tell why he wanted it, but being "double" means it would have enough room for others. Isaac, Rebekah, Jacob, and Leah will all be buried there, along with Abraham.

^{9 (con't)} Let him give it to me at the full price, as property for a burial place among you."

Abraham has already been offered any place among the people, and without cost, but that isn't how the world works and Abraham knows it. To accept a gift like this would be rude and the offer was one of respect, but shouldn't really be considered as a freebie.

Understanding this, he asks for it using the term mah-lay kesef or at full money or full weight. Silver was the mode of money and it would have been weighed out to the required weight. “I want this and I will pay what it is worth.”

This is similar to what he did when he defeated the four kings and returned all the booty to the king of Sodom in Genesis 14 –

²¹ Now the king of Sodom said to Abram, “Give me the persons, and take the goods for yourself.” ²² But Abram said to the king of Sodom, “I have raised my hand to the LORD, God Most High, the Possessor of heaven and earth, ²³ that I *will take* nothing, from a thread to a sandal strap, and that I will not take anything that *is* yours, lest you should say, ‘I have made Abram rich.’

Abraham didn’t want anything later to interfere with what he was buying now. Instead of being a leech on those around him, he wanted to be a man who paid his bills and owed no one. What he wanted would be paid for free and clear. Paul tells us in the New Testament to live our lives in the same way –

Owe no one anything except to love one another, for he who loves another has fulfilled the law. Romans 13:8

We’re asked to not get ourselves into debt because when we do, we’re in bondage to the lender. Unfortunately, both as individuals and especially as a society, we’ve rejected this principle. The Bible asks us to correct it because when we don’t, we only become enslaved to someone other than our rightful Master.

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!”

In what may seem to us as a complicated ritual, this is simply the way these things were done and still are done in many areas of the world. Abraham asks for a place to bury his dead and the leader offers a place freely. Then Abraham offers to pay for a specific location which he has actually been freely offered.

Then Ephron the owner speaks up, in the presence of “all who entered at the gate of his city.” “No my lord, I have given you (past tense) the field and the cave... It’s yours and that’s it.” Ephron notes that his gracious offer is in the people’s presence. But it’s also done in the gate of the city.

This is the place where legal transactions occur and everyone there is either a judge or a witness. Abraham could, right at this point, say “Ok, thank you” and it would be his, but the customs and propriety would never allow that. An offer of free land isn’t free.

**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.”**

Abraham, following what to us is a confusing ritual, bows in gratitude that the offer has been made and now he leaves himself just as open to being cheated as Ephron just did for him. In the “hearing of the people” meaning in full view of judges and witnesses, He basically says, “Seeing as you will *give it to me*, then you will also let me *pay for it*.”

But here is the part that we shouldn’t miss. Abraham asked for the cave. Ephron offered the field and the cave, even though the field was never mentioned by Abraham. This means if Abraham wants the cave, the field has to go with it.

Ephron wants to retire from this deal. Even though he offered them for free, he knows Abraham will counteroffer with payment. But Abraham only mentions the *field* in the counter offer, *not the cave*. There is much more going on here than you may imagine.

He is buying both, but he is allowing Ephron to appear noble by selling the field and giving the cave as a bonus. What is happening here is wheeling and dealing at its best and yet it's done in a way that no one will really be a loser – even if Ephron is dishonest in the field's price.

Ephron gets rich off a field that's not worth whatever he asks and Abraham gets a cave as a gift when he pays too much for a field that he doesn't need.... All very simple, right? Wait till you see what all of this symbolically represents.

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.”

The Hebrew doesn't say “the land is worth four hundred shekels.” Ephron uses an idiom that needs to be translated this way for us to understand. And we should understand... “Listen Abe, a land of four hundred shekels, pshaw, what is that between good friends like you and me. Just bury your dead and forget about the money.”

Abraham was offered the land for free, knowing it wasn't really free. Then he offers to pay full value – *whatever it is*, knowing that payment is necessary, but setting himself up for any amount by not giving an advanced amount... which he could have done.

Now Ephron pulls a figure out of the sky... somewhere way up by the North Star, but he says, “Gee, that field is worth sooo much, but that enormous price doesn't matter to me – just bury your dead.”

Abraham now has one more chance to take the field for free. If he does, he'd look like a scab for not paying. If he turns it down, then he'd look like a poor wheeler-dealer. And so there is but one option...pay the high cost and receive the cave that went along with the expensive field.

What is even more important in this confusing story is what this purchase points to. Ask yourself, “Why is this story here at all? Why did God include all of these complicated details about a land purchase?” People die all the

time and land is bought all the time, but they're not in the Bible. Why is this one?

I had to ask myself this too and it wasn't until a day later as I was completing the sermon that I realized it. Before we finish today, you will know too.

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.

Four hundred shekels of silver go to Ephron at the gate of the city where the judges preside. Ephron has a lot of money, and Abraham has a field and a cave. But before we get to our last thought of the day, I'd like to remind you about what happened in chapter 20.

Abraham received Sarah back from Abimelech the King of Gerar, and when he did the king gave him 1000 weight of silver to cover the matter of what happened. God not only watched over Sarah then, He also ensured the right place would be there in her death.

And Abraham had 600 of silver left over as a blessing from the Lord. This is what God does. When Sarah was taken by the king, it was probably a very stressful time for them. But God turned it around for good. And not only that, He gave them a blessing for later.

And this is exactly what He will do for each of us. When something bad happens in our lives, we have to trust that not only will it turn out for good, but God will actually bless us abundantly in the process.

Of all the people you will ever meet, I am the most opposed of all to the "prosperity gospel" which says we will get rich and have a lot of stuff if we give to the church. And yet I am completely convinced that in the end, a faithful life will receive more blessings than any of us could possibly imagine... and I can imagine a lot.

III. Permanent Ownership of the Land

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.

The purchase is complete and everything is restated to ensure it is completely understood by us. Who the owner was, who the buyer and new owner is, what the price was, and that everything – every single thing – including the field, cave, borders, and even the trees are included. Nothing has been left unattended to.

This was in the presence of the sons of Heth and in the place of legal transactions – the city gates. All of this detail. Are you wondering why?

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.

Abraham asked for this spot to bury his dead. Now he buries his princess. Undisputed right and title to the land and cave is acknowledged by this verse. Her burial is noted to confirm this. Her presence is the formal title deed of the transaction.

Just so you know, this chapter contains the first biblical record of mourning for the dead, of burial, of owned land property, of purchased land property, and that silver is used for a land purchase.

It's also laid out in a special structure, given to us by God to show us what He is doing and why. Chiasms aren't just a mere curiosity of literature to God. They are placed in the Bible to reveal His mind.

In addition to the chiasm is the introduction of the small letter kaph in the middle of a particular word for a particular reason. And all of it ... all of it, points to Christ. Stand by for the explanation of why this chapter records such minute detail and what it means to you.

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.

This final verse of the chapter is a shortened repetition of verses 17 and 18. One must ask, why? Why is this repeated? The answer is that this forms another mini chiasm. And we have to note that this chiasm centers on the burial of Sarah, just as the previous one did.

- a. so the field of Machpelah... before Mamre...the field and the cave in it... were deeded to Abraham by the sons of Heth
 - x. And after this, Abraham buried Sarah his wife in the cave of the field of Machpelah
- a. so the field of Machpelah... before Mamre...the field and the cave in it... were deeded to Abraham by the sons of Heth

This is no mistake, it isn't arbitrary, and God is trying to tell us something if we will just open our thick skulls. What we need to do is to determine what it is. So let's take a few minutes and look at details that we could actually talk about for several more hours.

I can only give you an overview of how important this story is and how it points to God's love for you. And as far as I know, you are the first people in history to hear this...

Abraham's bride is dead, but she is the mother of the promised son. In last week's sermon, he was given a preview of substitution for atonement and the resurrection when he was on Mount Moriah.

In today's chapter, he becomes a picture of Christ. He has no title deed to the land and so he must make a purchase. In this story Abraham was called *nesi elohim* or a prince of God. Jesus is noted as God's Prince in both Isaiah and Acts.

He wants a place to bury his dead in anticipation of the resurrection, and in order to get it, he must take the land with the cave. And in actuality, it is the land which is being purchased; the cave is given as a part of the deal. Are you seeing it yet?

You see, back in Genesis 3, the devil obtained the title deed to the earth. This is proven in Matthew 4 where the Bible says – “Again, the devil took Him up on an exceedingly high mountain, and showed Him all the kingdoms of the world and their glory. ⁹ And he said to Him, “All these things I will give You if You will fall down and worship me.”

More to the point though, the earth is the repository for the human soul. This is noted time and time again in the Bible. Let’s go through and see how the land deal went –

Abraham wants the cave, the repository for his dead, and asks the sons of Heth to go to Ephron and sell it.

Ephron means “of the dust” and he is a picture of Adam, who was created from the dust (see 1 Corinthians 15:48) and thus he represents all of us. Adam, the man of the dust, was deceived and now belongs to the devil (see 1 John 3). The name of Ephron’s father is Zohar which means “brightness” or “shining.”

Zohar then is a picture of Satan, the ruler and title owner of the world. Paul writes this about Satan, “And no wonder! For Satan himself transforms himself into an angel of light.” 2 Corinthians 11:14

This story is a picture of our redemption. Adam gave up the title to the earth when he sinned. Jesus came to buy it back.

Heth means “terror” and is a picture of all the people of the world who live in fear of death because they cannot meet God’s law. When it was given at Mount Sinai, the people trembled and asked not to hear God speak to them directly again.

Since the law was given, men have lived in terror because there is no way we can meet it as Paul clearly explains in Galatians 3. It condemns all to death. These sons of Heth, or “sons of terror” are witnesses of what will transpire.

Hebrews 2 explains this – “Inasmuch then as the children have partaken of flesh and blood, He Himself likewise shared in the same, that through death He might destroy him who had the power of death, that is, the devil, ¹⁵ and release those who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage.”

“Through death He might destroy him who had the power of death...”
Sarah’s death and burial is a picture of this!

The sons of Heth first offer any place Abraham chooses. But not any place will do. Abraham specifically asks for the cave of Ephron, the son of Zohar, and offers the full price for it.

Jesus asks specifically for the cave of Adam and his seed. The people of the world have many choices of religion, but only one will do. Jesus has come to buy the place where his bride will lie in repose awaiting what He knows will be the resurrection. But Satan doesn’t know this.

Ephron the son of Zohar, picturing Adam son of the devil, willingly offers the field and the cave for free in the presence of witnesses and Abraham declines stating that payment will be made for the field. Jesus determines, like Abraham, that the full price for the title deed to the earth will be paid. There will be no later claims against his ownership.

The devil offers the title deed to Jesus for a mere act of worship as we saw in Matthew 4, but Jesus denied the devil. The devil next tries to stop Jesus when he indicates that what He is proposing will involve His death. When did this occur? It was when Peter tried to stop Jesus in Matthew 16 –

²¹ “From that time Jesus began to show to His disciples that He must go to Jerusalem, and suffer many things from the elders and chief priests and scribes, and be killed, and be raised the third day. ²² Then Peter took Him aside and began to rebuke Him, saying, “Far be it from You, Lord; this shall not happen to You!” ²³ But He turned and said to Peter, “Get behind Me, Satan! You are an offense to Me, for you are not mindful of the things of God, but the things of men.”

The devil has lost out a second time to Jesus, just as Abraham declines free land for the second time.

Ephron then says the land is very expensive – 400 shekels – a high price indeed. He notes that Abraham doesn't need to pay such a high price – "You don't need the land, just bury your dead." Abraham declines again and offers the full price.

The devil freely offers Jesus to bury his wife, His redeemed, because the title deed to the world is an exceedingly high price. "You don't need the title deed to the land. It is too high a price. Just bury your dead."

This is the third time Ephron freely offers the land. And when was the third time the devil tried to stop Jesus? It's recorded in Matthew 27 –

While he was sitting on the judgment seat, his wife sent to him, saying, "Have nothing to do with that just Man, for I have suffered many things today in a dream because of Him."

The devil finding no other way to stop what is happening goes back to his very first trick in the Bible, deceiving man by going through his wife. Eve was deceived and then got Adam to sin and now he is trying it again through the wife of Pilate. But it doesn't work.

Abraham weighs out the money in silver. The four hundred shekels of silver represent a period of divine completion. God noted in Genesis 15 that the affliction of Abraham's descendants would be 400 years until their freedom from bondage.

This amount of four hundred shekels for payment is symbolic of the full price being paid for our bondage and also that there is both a guarantee of an end to it, and a set time of redemption.

Jesus accepts the offer of the payment price for the land and understands that the cave – the tomb, is a part of the deal. Jesus pays the price at the cross of Calvary. The title deed is transferred, the right to the world is His, and the tomb is His reward.

These dealings between Ephron and Abraham were in the presence of witnesses at the city gate where legal transactions occurred. Jesus completed His work in the presence of witnesses in fulfillment of the Law of Moses, which is the legal transaction necessary to fulfill the contract.

As He Himself said, “Do not think that I came to destroy the Law or the Prophets. I did not come to destroy but to fulfill.”

This still leaves one detail missing, why this particular cave –Machpelah? The name of the cave means “double” and it therefore signifies the double delivery from death. Jesus didn’t come to just purchase the title deed to the world for Jews, but He did it for gentiles as well. His death filled this double role.

Ephesians 2 – ¹¹ Therefore remember that you, once Gentiles in the flesh—who are called Uncircumcision by what is called the Circumcision made in the flesh by hands— ¹² that at that time you were without Christ, being aliens from the commonwealth of Israel and strangers from the covenants of promise, having no hope and without God in the world. ¹³ But now in Christ Jesus you who once were far off have been brought near by the blood of Christ. ¹⁴ For He Himself is our peace, who has made both one, and has broken down the middle wall of separation, ¹⁵ having abolished in His flesh the enmity, *that is*, the law of commandments *contained* in ordinances, so as to create in Himself one new man *from* the two, *thus* making peace, ¹⁶ and that He might reconcile them both to God in one body through the cross, thereby putting to death the enmity. ¹⁷ And He came and preached peace to you who were afar off and to those who were near. ¹⁸ For through Him we both have access by one Spirit to the Father.

All of this took place in a town called Kirjath Arba. This name means “City of the Four” and is a picture of the world which Jesus is reclaiming. The number four consistently designates the earth in the Bible – four corners or directions of the earth – “north, south, east, west;” the four elements – “earth, air, fire, water;” the four seasons – “spring, summer, autumn, winter;” etc.

Kirjath Arba however is also called Hebron in this chapter. This means “conjunction” or “joining” and takes us right back to Ephesians 2 where Christ made one bride out of two – Jew and Gentile.

Do you remember what I said a while ago about the money Abraham received from Abimelech? He gave Abraham 1000 weight of silver for a covering of what had happened to Sarah. Now Sarah is being buried in land that was paid for with that money.

Abimelech means “Father of the King.” The Father of King Jesus orchestrated all of this in the pages of His word to show us the marvel of what He would do through His own Son 1800 years later. Remember, Sarah means “princess.” She is a picture of us.

Jesus secured the right to the earth where His princess, His bride lies – waiting for the day when He will come again for her. Every story in Genesis is given in order and with specific details to show us this marvelous unfolding story of God’s love.

And as a last note, in verse 17, the word for “deeded” as in the title deed, is the word v’yakham. This word means “rose” or “stood up.” The selection of this word has mystified scholars throughout the ages. One Jewish scholar named Jarchi came rather close to why it was used.

He said that the reason for this particular phrase is that this field, with all belonging to it, came into the hands of a greater person; out of the hands of a private man into the hands of a king. And so, without even realizing what he had written, he clearly identified what had happened.

The King of the Universe bought back the title deed to the earth from the common man, Adam – symbolized by Ephron – “of the dust.” The transfer was from the lesser to the greater; from Adam to Jesus; from death to life. Jesus now has both the title deed and, because of the resurrection, the power over the tomb as well.

I should note to you that the term “sons of Heth” – symbolizing those who are in terror because of the demands of the law which condemns all to

death, is used 8 times in this story. Eight is the number of “new beginnings” in the Bible. We, the sons of terror, are now free from the terror of death because of the high price Jesus paid on our behalf.

One more thing – silver was used for this land purchase. In reality, Jesus death was a result of a transaction in silver and that money was used to buy a field as well... a field known as Akel Dama, the Field of Blood.

So why is this story given? It is because this woman of God, Sarah, was the mother of the promised Seed who would destroy the works of the devil by paying a debt He didn't owe to save the likes of you and me. And His reward was a tomb, a double tomb. The first half of the tomb was where He lay; the other half is where we will lay.

He was victorious over His half of the tomb and He is also victorious over our half if we simply accept the payment. Let me tell you how to...

Closing Verse: Indeed it was for my own peace That I had great bitterness;
But You have lovingly delivered my soul from the pit of corruption, For You
have cast all my sins behind Your back. Isaiah 38:17

Next week – Genesis 24:1-11 (To Find a Wife)

Buried but not Forgotten

Sarah lived one hundred and twenty-seven years
These were the years of Sarah's life
So Sarah died and Abraham came to shed tears
It was in Hebron of Canaan that he mourned for his wife
Then Abraham stood up from before his dead
And spoke to the sons of Heth saying
I am a foreigner here, wherever I lay, that is my bed
And now for a burial place from you I am praying

Give me property for a burial place among you
That I may bury my dead out of the place of my view
And the sons of Heth answered Abraham from their faces

“Here us my lord, you are a mighty prince among us
Bury your dead in the choicest of places
None of us will withhold from you a place, it is decreed thus

Then Abraham stood and bowed himself low
To the people of the land, the sons of Heth
And he spoke with them saying that if this is so
He desired a special cave for Sarah to rest in her death

“If you wish that I bury my dead out of my sight
Hear me and meet with Ephron the son of Zohar for me
That he may give me the cave of Machpelah, it is just right
It is at the end of his field, go look and see
Let him give it to me at the full price
As a property for a burial place among you
The one I want is suitable and nice
The one belonging to Ephron, it’s true

Of the sons of Heth, Ephron was one
And Ephron the Hittite answered Abraham
In the presence of all of them, not just one
Who entered at the gate of the city with an ox or a lamb

“No my lord, instead please hear me
I give you the field and the cave that is in it
I give it to you in the presence of my people, it’s free
I give it to you, bury your dead, this I permit
Then Abraham bowed himself down before the people of the land
And he spoke to Ephron as a wish, not a command

If you will give it, please hear me
I will give you money for the field
Take it from me, I will pay what you ask, you see
And I will bury my dead there, for this I have appealed
And Ephron answered Abraham, to him saying
“My lord listen, the land is worth four hundred shekels of silver
What is that between you and me, I am praying

So bury your dead, this message I deliver

And Abraham listened to Ephron and weighed the silver
Which Ephron had named in the hearing of the sons of Heth
Four hundred shekels of silver he did deliver
Currency of the merchants, to purchase a place for resting in death
So the field of Ephron which was in Machpelah
Which was before Mamre, the field and the cave
And the all the trees that in the field he saw
Which were within the borders for silver he gave

These were deeded to Abraham as a possession
In the presence of the sons of Heth
Before the gate of the city, its thronging procession
Abraham purchased the place for resting in death
And after this Abraham buried Sarah his wife in...
The cave of the field of Machpelah before Mamre
Which is in Hebron in the land of Canaan
Because the field and the cave now were his, you see

They were deeded to Abraham by the sons of Heth
For property as a burial place for resting in death

But death isn't the end for Sarah that faithful soul
Because the story continues on and it is glorious indeed
There is One who came from her who would open the scroll
And restore eternal life to Adam's fallen seed

Jesus is the Promised One
Born of a woman and yet God's own Son
And through His obedient life
He has purchased for Himself a spotless wife
These things are pictured in the Bible's holy pages
And they have been loved and cherished for ages and ages

Take time each day to read this beautiful word
And take it to heart each and every day

It tells us of this wonderful Lord
Who prevailed over the devil and so let us say
Great and awesome God, in your light we shall trod
And so for all of our days, let us give You all of our praise

Hallelujah and Amen...