

## Genesis 23

### Scriptures:

Romans 3:23 - ...for all  
have sinned and fall short of  
the glory of God...

Romans 6:23 - For the  
wages of sin is death, but  
the gift of God is eternal  
life in Christ Jesus our  
Lord.

### Notes:

Genesis 23 is about a funeral.

Scriptures:  
 Hebrews 11:11 - 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.

<sup>1</sup> Sarah lived one hundred and twenty-seven years;

Notes:  
 That means Abraham and Sarah had  
 probably been married for over 100  
 years. Isaac would be thirty-seven.

Sarah had been with Abraham  
 through all his wanderings, his  
 successes, his failures. She had made  
 some mistakes of her own, with the  
 Hagar incident, and then going along  
 with Abraham's deception about  
 their relationship. But all-in-all,  
 Sarah was a woman of faith ([Heb.  
 11:11](#)).

Sarah is the only woman in the Bible  
 whose age at the time of death is  
 mentioned.

*these were* the years of the life of Sarah.

Scriptures:  
 Hebrews 11:13 - These 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.

<sup>2</sup> So Sarah died in Kirjath Arba (that is, Hebron)

Notes:  
 Sarah died in the Promised Land  
 without having received the  
 Promised land. She was the first of  
 many generations who would die  
 without receiving the Promise of the  
 Land ([Heb. 11:13](#)).

"There is nothing wrong with a  
 believer shedding tears over the  
 tragedies and heartaches of life."  
 (Phillips, 1980)

Sorrow is the right response when we  
 lose someone we love. And the more  
 deeply we love them, the deeper is  
 the pain of their loss. A believer's  
 sadness is different from someone  
 who doesn't believe ([1 Thess. 4:13](#)).

We sorrow in hope! We have sorrow  
 because of the temporal loss of  
 relationship and intimacy but we do  
 so with the hope of being reunited  
 with them in heaven.

It is by hope that we look up with  
 tear-filled eyes and look into the  
 heavenlies for our beloved one who  
 have gone before us.

'to weep for her' – first occurrence of  
 the word 'weep'

1 Thessalonians 4:13 - But I  
 do not want you to be  
 ignorant, brethren,  
 concerning those who have  
 fallen asleep, lest you  
 sorrow as others who have  
 no hope.

in the land of Canaan, and Abraham came to

Psalms 56:8 -  
 You number my  
 wanderings;  
 Put my tears into Your  
 bottle;  
 Are they not in Your  
 book?

mourn for Sarah and to weep for her.

Ecclesiastes 3:4 - A time  
 to weep,  
 And a time to laugh;  
 A time to mourn,  
 And a time to dance;

Scriptures:

Genesis 12:7 - Then the LORD appeared to Abram and said, "To your descendants I will give this land." And there he built an altar to the LORD, who had appeared to him.

Genesis 13:14-15 - And the LORD said to Abram, after Lot had separated from him: "Lift your eyes now and look from the place where you are—northward, southward, eastward, and westward; 15 for all the land which you see I give to you and your descendants forever.

Genesis 15:18 - To your descendants I have given this land, from the river of Egypt to the great river, the River Euphrates...

Genesis 17:8 - Also I give to you and your descendants after you the land in which you are a stranger, all the land of Canaan, as an everlasting possession; and I will be their God.

<sup>3</sup> Then Abraham stood up from before his dead,

and spoke to the sons of Heth, saying,

Notes:

Abraham believed God's promise of the Land ([Gen. 12:7](#), [13:15](#); [15:18](#); [17:8](#)). But he did not possess it yet.

Scriptures:  
Hebrews 11:9-10 - By 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; 10 for he waited for the city which has foundations, whose builder and maker is God.

Philippians 3:20-21 - For our citizenship is in heaven, from which we also eagerly wait for the Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ, 21 who will transform our lowly body that it may be conformed to His glorious body, according to the working by which He is able even to subdue all things to Himself.

Ecclesiastes 3:11 - He has made everything beautiful in its time. Also He has put eternity in their hearts, except that no one can find out the work that God does from beginning to end.

4 “<sup>A</sup>I <sup>am</sup> a foreigner and a visitor among you<sup>H</sup>. Give

1616 -

8453 - a  
temporary  
resident

me property for a burial place among you<sup>H</sup>, that I<sup>A</sup>

6913 -

may bury my<sup>A</sup> dead<sup>D</sup> out of my<sup>A</sup> sight.”<sup>oo</sup>

Notes:  
Abraham believed the promises of God, but they had not been fulfilled yet. Much of life can be described by what we do as we wait for God's promises to be fulfilled. As we wait, life will happen. Our decisions on how we respond should reflect our faith in God's promises.

Abraham is living as 'foreigner and a visitor' in the land that God has promised him. By asking for a place to bury Sarah, he is staking a claim within the Promised Land.

Abraham had been dwelling in Hebron for a long time, but he still sees himself as a 'foreigner and a visitor'. God had not given him the land yet.

Abraham is looking past his current circumstances and into a future God promised (Heb 11:9-10). This is how we are also called to live (Phil. 3:20). This world is not our home and we should live as 'foreigners and a visitor' in this world.

“The deaths that touch our lives, especially those that are close to us, are meant to make us look by faith beyond the present material world to the architectures of Heaven, to the eternal foundations laid by God.” (Hughes, 2004) page 309

The death of someone close tests the power of what you believe. Faith is what we believe to be true.

“If there is one time when the believer's testimony should shine out strongly in a dark world of sin, it is when death visits the home.” (Phillips, 1980) page 186

This world is not our home. At some point in life, we learn that life is not forever – that death comes to all living things. But there is something in us that tells us that death is not the end (Eccles. 3:11). When we are saved, the Holy Spirit comes to dwell in our heart, and to develop a yearning for our eternal home in heaven and a growing uneasiness with this world.

Fascinating phrase 'out of my sight' - Place of burial will not be a monument - Not a memorial - Out of sight

Our hope is that our loved ones are not gone, just out of sight for a time.

Scriptures:

<sup>5</sup> And the sons of Heth answered Abraham, saying

Notes:

to him,

Scriptures:

<sup>6</sup> “Hear us, my lord: You are a mighty prince

113 – ‘adoni’

430 – ‘elohim’ –  
sometimes used  
as a superlative

5387 –  
exalted one

Notes:

‘mighty prince’= prince of God

‘None of us will withhold’ – does not mean they will give it to him for free. This is the opening of negotiations.

Even though Abraham had been living around them for decades, he never became one of them. He acted as a ‘foreigner and a visitor’ but their impression of him was of a ‘mighty prince’. Contrast Abraham to Lot who had no witness with his family or the people of Sodom because he ‘sat in the gate of Sodom’ as one of them.

Abraham’s witness to the ‘sons of Heth’ was lived in righteousness before God in the presence of the Canaanites.

As Christians, we are not of this world though we live in it. We live among the unbelievers in this world, but we are called to live apart from them spiritually and with holiness and righteousness.

There are many calling for social justice and some think it is the place of the church to lead the charge for social justice. Throughout history, social change has not come through the church but as a result of revival of faith in Jesus Christ. If we want to see real change take place, we need to pray for God’s Holy Spirit to sweep through this land and call people to God and real faith in Christ. The Welsh Revival is an example of that.

among us; bury your dead in the choicest of our

4005 -

burial places. None of us will withhold from you

his burial place, that you may bury your dead.”

Scriptures:

<sup>7</sup> Then Abraham<sup>A</sup> stood up and bowed himself to<sup>A</sup>

Notes:  
Only occurrence of Abraham bowing  
to anyone(??)

the people of the land, the sons of Heth<sup>H</sup>.

Scriptures:

<sup>8</sup> And he<sup>A</sup> spoke with them<sup>H</sup>, saying, “If it is your<sup>H</sup>

Notes:

wish that I<sup>A</sup> bury<sup>A</sup> my dead<sup>A</sup> out of my sight<sup>A</sup>, hear me,<sup>so</sup>

and meet with Ephron<sup>E</sup> the son of Zohar for me<sup>A</sup>,

Scriptures:

<sup>9</sup> that he <sup>E</sup> may give <sup>A</sup> me the cave of Machpelah

Notes:  
'cave of Machpelah' = Cave of the Patriarchs in Hebron – part of the West Bank in Israel.

Considered holy site by Jews and Muslims.

Abraham asks for the cave only.

which he <sup>E</sup> has, which <sup>E</sup> is at the end of his <sup>E</sup> field. Let

him <sup>E</sup> give it to <sup>A</sup> me at the full price, as property for a

4392 - entire      3701 - value      272 -

burial place among <sup>H</sup> you.”

Scriptures:

<sup>10</sup> Now E<sup>E</sup>phron dwelt among the sons of H<sup>E</sup>th; and Notes:

E<sup>E</sup>phron the H<sup>E</sup>ttite answered A<sup>A</sup>braham in the

presence of the sons of H<sup>H</sup>eth, all who entered at

the gate of his c<sup>E</sup>ity, saying,



Scriptures:

11 “No, my lord, hear me: I give you the field and

Notes:  
Ephron adds the field which is more  
valuable than the cave.

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!”

Scriptures:

12 Then Abraham bowed himself down before the

Notes:

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.”

Scriptures:

14 And Ephron answered Abraham, saying to him,

Notes:

Scriptures:

15 “My lord, listen to me; the land *is worth* four

Notes:

This is a high price for this field and cave. Ephron expects Abraham to haggle for a lower price.

hundred shekels of silver. What *is* that between

*you and me?* So bury your dead.”

16 And Abraham<sup>A</sup> listened to Ephron<sup>E</sup>; and Abraham<sup>A</sup>

Notes:

No price was too high to secure a final resting place for his 'princess' – Sarah means princess.

weighed out the silver for Ephron<sup>E</sup> which he<sup>E</sup> had

named in the hearing of the sons of Heth<sup>H</sup>, four

hundred shekels of silver, currency of the

merchants.

<sup>17</sup> So the field of Ephron which *was* in Machpelah, Notes:

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

6965 -

Scriptures:

<sup>18</sup> to Abraham as a possession in the presence of

Notes:

4736 -

the sons of Heth, before all who went in at the

gate of his city.

Scriptures:

<sup>19</sup> And after this, Abraham buried Sarah his wife

Notes:

in the cave of the field of Machpelah, before

Mamre (that is, Hebron) in the land of Canaan.

Scriptures:

Job 19:25-27 - For I know that my Redeemer lives,

And He shall stand at last on the earth;

26 And after my skin is destroyed, this I know,

That in my flesh I shall see God,

27 Whom I shall see for myself,

And my eyes shall behold, and not another.

How my heart yearns within me!

<sup>20</sup> 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.

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Notes:

“Longing for Heaven is the signature of the believing soul.” (Hughes, 2004) page 313

“The time of death (when the natural inclination is to mourn as the world mourns) should be the time of our greatest demonstration of faith, for the recipient of God’s promises has a hope beyond the grave.” Allen Ross (Hughes, 2004) page 313

Abraham would later be buried in this cave, and then Isaac and Rachel, and then Jacob’s wife Leah. Jacob and his twelve sons end up in Egypt where he makes them promise to bring him back and bury him in this cave.

Genesis ends with this cave being filled. Our hope is not in the Cave of the Patriarchs, but the empty tomb in the garden outside of Jerusalem.