

**Welcome back!**

- Moving forward from Abraham into the lives of the other ***patriarchs***.
- These are the founding fathers of the Israelite, or Jewish people.
  - Abraham, his son Isaac, and Isaac’s son Jacob (Israel)
  - Jacob, in turn, had 12 sons. Genesis focuses mostly on Joseph.
- Genesis is about the early history of the human race, as well as the covenants God made with Abraham and his descendants.
- God called out a people through whom He could work.
  - God called Israel to be a witness.
  - He called them to demonstrate the holiness of God to the world.
  - He chose them to be a vehicle to bring Messiah into the world.
- As we move into Chapter 23, the focus starts to shift towards Isaac.

**Sarah Dies (Gen. 23:1-5)**

*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.”*

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- Sarah is the only woman whose age at death is given to us.
- It was common in that part of the world to mourn in a very demonstrative way.
- Sarah died in the pivotal city of Hebron, a spiritual gateway to the land of Israel.
- Hebron was previously named Kiryat Arba, “Village of Arba.” Arba was one of the giants. Hebron means something like friendship or alliance, and so this name may go back to the time of Abraham, who had an alliance with the people there. The Arabs call it Al-Khalil, which means “the friend.”
- Hebron was also the beginning of permanent Jewish ownership of the land.

### **The Cave of Machpelah (Gen. 23:7-16)**

*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.”*

*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!”*

*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.”*

*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?”*

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*So bury your dead.” 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.*

- The wisdom of Abraham: already planning for his family.
- Machpelah means that something is double, a double portion. And so the idea may be that he was planning to be buried there also.
- The Hittites seem to be offering him a valuable property for free. Abraham wants everything to be above board, and he wants this to be legitimate in every way, and without any appearance of bribery or somebody doing a favor for him.
- How do we as Christians conduct our business?
- Ephron says in essence to Abraham, “Oh no, my Lord (see the flattery), it’s only worth 400 shekels.”
- There weren’t coins yet, so they used to weigh the silver or the gold.
- We can’t be sure of the true value of this money involved, but the price of a slave under the Law of Moses, later on, was 30 shekels. Joseph was sold by his brothers for 20 shekels. Was this an expensive property?

**Sarah Is Buried (Gen. 23:17-20)**

*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. 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.*

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- The property is sold in the presence of witnesses at the gate of the city. This was how they transacted business. This was the first permanently owned piece of land by Abraham and his descendants in the Land of Promise. This is also the first business transaction mentioned in the Bible.
- This is also the first burial mentioned in the Bible. This became the family tomb: Abraham would be buried there, and so would Isaac, Rebekah, Leah, and Jacob.
- Rachel is buried at Bethlehem.
- The place of this tomb is still honored by Jews and Muslims. Known as the Tomb of the Patriarchs, it is extremely holy to Jews, second only to the Temple Mount.
- There is a lot of political controversy about who should control the site and who can go where, etc.

*(See photo of The Tomb of Isaac on the last page.)*

### **The Faith of Abraham and Sarah**

We can admit the faith of Abraham and Sarah here again in this story. (Sixty-two years is a long time to make your wife live in a tent!) They refused to fully embrace the comforts of this world, in order that they might live the way God intended.

*9 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. 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. 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.*

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*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. 14 For those who say such things declare plainly that they seek a homeland. 15 And truly if they had called to mind that country from which they had come out, they would have had opportunity to return. 16 But now they desire a better, that is, a heavenly country. Therefore God is not ashamed to be called their God, for He has prepared a city for them. (Hebrews 11:13–16)*

Their ongoing lifestyle of “just passing through” was a confession that they were only pilgrims in this life. They were looking for a better country.

- By faith they also allowed their bodies to be planted in the soil that God would give to their descendants.
- This is also a testimony that they expected God to raise them there in that land, and that it would belong to God’s people at the time of the resurrection.

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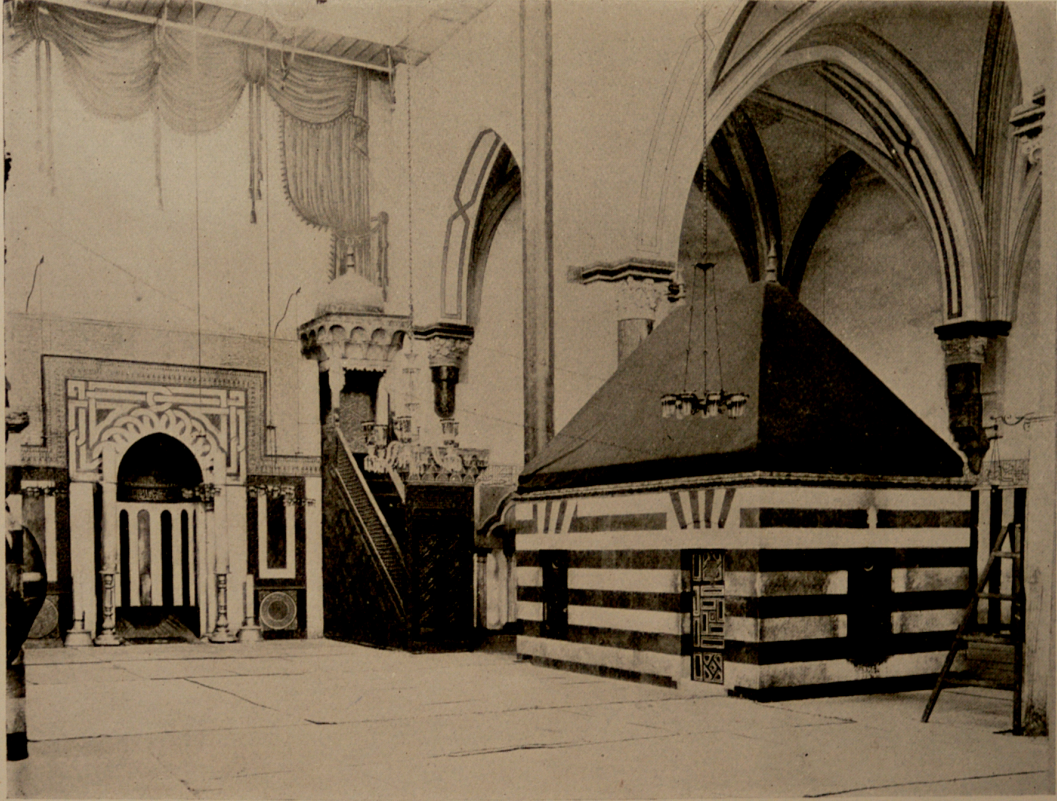
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THE TOMB OF ISAAC.  
CAVE OF MACHPELAH, HEBRON, PALESTINE.