

GENESIS –Lesson 42

Learn: These all died in faith, not having received the promises, but having seen them afar off, and were persuaded of them, and embraced them, and confessed that they were strangers and pilgrims on the earth. For they that say such things declare plainly that they seek a country. And truly, if they had been mindful of that country from whence they came out, they might have had opportunity to have returned. But now they desire a better country, that is an heavenly: wherefore God is not ashamed to be called their God: for he hath prepared for them a city. Hebrews 11:13-16

Read: Genesis 23:1-20

1. How old was Sarah at the time of her death? v 1
2. Where was the family of Abraham living at this time? v 2
3. Sarah died without seeing the fulfillment of the promises see Hebrews 11:13. What were those promises? Genesis 17:7, 8

Sarah had seen the fulfillment of God's promise that she would have a son. It is significant that she is the only woman in all scripture whose age at the time of death is given. By any reckoning, she is one of the outstanding women in the Bible. As Abraham is considered the father of all who believe, so likewise, Sarah was considered the mother of all believing women.

4. What does I Peter 3:3-6 tell us?

5. What did Abraham do at the death of Sarah? vv 2-4

Sarah was the first in the patriarchal family line to die in the land of Canaan. She would be buried there as a testimony to both the people of the land and their own descendants, that Canaan was to be their home from then on.

It is interesting to note, that as the Scripture records, Abraham did not own any of the land himself, and so had to purchase hurriedly a plot of ground for a burying place. The

only purchase of property he ever made in the land of Canaan was for a grave. The altars and wells which belonged to him were his by result of building them himself, and probably were on land which he was only using, or leasing. Though he had many possessions, he himself had no certain dwelling place. He lived in different places, presumably paying some form of rental for the land and pastures he used.

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6. What does Hebrews 11:9, 10 tell us about how Abraham lived and why?

7. What did the Hittites offer to Abraham? v 6

8. What was Abraham's reply to their kind offer? v 9

Abraham knew that ALL the land was his by divine promise, yet he graciously offered to purchase the plot that he needed for Sarah's grave.

While still mourning beside Sarah's body, Abraham rose and set about the task of purchasing land for his sepulcher. He knew the plot he wanted—a field containing a suitable cave, with trees around it, and within sight of their home in Mamre.

9. Who did this land that Abraham wanted for his grave belong to? v 8

In accordance with the exaggerated formalities of purchasing and selling that have been practiced in the East, Abraham asked for someone to mediate between him and Ephron, to transmit his request to be allowed to purchase the land.

Though the Hittites offered the use of their sepulchers to Abraham or to give him their land, almost certainly, these offers were merely opening gestures of politeness which they expected no one to take seriously.

10. What exactly did Abraham want to buy? v 9a

11. What was Ephron's counter offer concerning what Abraham wanted? v 11

Ephron wished to sell the field as well as the cave in which it was located. Hittite law required Ephron to be responsible for dues on the entire property if he sold Abraham only the cave, but not if he sold the entire parcel. - Ryrie commentary

12. How did the purchase of the burying ground proceed? vv 10-16

Ephron suggested a price that he wanted for the parcel of land that Abraham desired. It was, no doubt, considerably more than the field was worth. Rather than haggling, however, as soon as he had an exact price quotation from Ephron, Abraham immediately accepted the offer (no doubt surprising Ephron and all the Hittites).

Abraham weighed out the silver (evidently he had brought it with him to the city), full measure. In those days, before regular use of coins, prices were quoted and paid in terms of weights, in this case four hundred shekels of silver. The transaction was duly noted and recorded, the purchased land carefully identified and measured, and the silver acknowledged as fully negotiable with the merchants of the area.

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13. After Abraham had transacted all the necessary business concerning the burial place, what did he do? v 19

14. Was there any doubt that Abraham owned the cave and the field of Machpelah before Mamre, which today is called Hebron? v 20

15. Who else was buried in the cave of Machpelah along with Sarah? Genesis 25:8, 9; Genesis 35:27, 29; Genesis 49:29-33; Genesis 50:13

16. The Lord spends a whole chapter in Genesis carefully documenting the fact that Abraham purchased this place in Canaan, which is today in the city of Hebron, where Jewish people desire to visit. Considering the current conflict in the Middle East and the fact that the "Palestinian" people contest any tie that Israel has to the land, why is this passage so important?

17. Why are the other passages concerning who else is also buried in this cave important?

Today the site has been identified with two caves, one above the other. Above it the Muslims have built a great mosque- in the center of Hebron. The Jewish people are severely restricted in their visits to the cave that holds the remains of their ancestors; Abraham and Sarah, Isaac and Rebekah, Jacob and Leah.