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Sarah Died in the Land of Canaan and Abraham Went to Weep Over Her 23: 1-2

Sarah died in the land of Canaan and Abraham went to weep over her DIG: Why can Sarah be considered the mother of all believers? How old was she when she died? How old was Abraham? Isaac? Why are their ages listed at this time? What is mentioned here for the first time in the TaNaKh?

REFLECT: Why did the Torah record the account of the burial of Sarah? Is there a woman in your family history that is known for being a godly woman? Is there a godly woman in your life that you look up to and emulate? What touches you the most about Avraham's reaction to his wife's death?

Parashah 5: Chayei-Sarah (Sarah's life) 23:1-25:18

(see my commentary on Deuteronomy, to see link click [Af](#) - Parashah)

The Key People include Sarah, Abraham, the Hittites, Ephron son of Zohar, Abraham's servant, Rebecca, Laban, Isaac, Keturah, more children, and Ishmael.

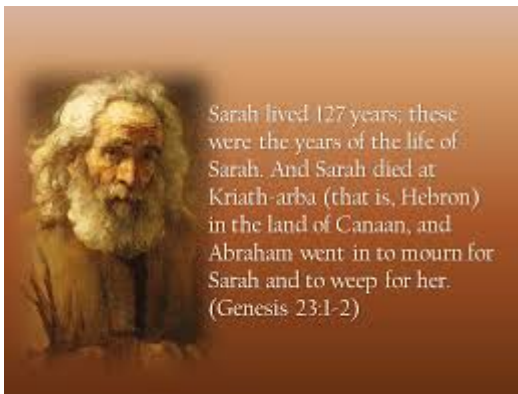
The Scenes include Hebron, the cave of Machpelah near Mamre, Efron's field, Aram Naharayim - Nachor's city, B'er Lahai Roi in the Negev, and the region of Havilah to Shur.

The Main Events include Sarah's death, the first property purchase in Isra'el (a burial cave for Sarah), a non-Canaanite bride for Isaac, marriage and comfort for Isaac, more children for Abraham through Keturah, Abraham's death and burial next to Sarah, Ishmael's descendants, and Ishmael's death.

Do you ever wonder what it must have been like to be Abraham, especially in his old age? To be sure, we know that he was a man who loved and trusted ADONAI more than anything else. We also know that he practiced typical ancient Near Eastern hospitality. He had servants and possessions. And he loved his family. That much, and a little more, perhaps, is

clear from the parashiyot that we have studied so far in **Genesis**. But what sort of personal characteristics did **he** have? What kind of man was **he**? Was **he** kind? Gentle? Quiet? Talkative?

In reality, the Torah tells us very little about his personal characteristics. In this, our last parashah dealing with **Abraham**, we will observe one very definite characteristic that **he** possessed. **Abraham had the ability to look ahead and plan for the future**. **He** did not just put the promises of **God** into a scrapbook to be looked at every so often. **He** deeply cherished those gifts that **the LORD** had given **him** to such an extent that **he** spent **his** life protecting them and doing **his** part to work for their fulfillment.



At the time of **Sarah's death**, the family had evidently moved from Beersheba back to Hebron. **She** is the only woman whose age at **death** is mentioned in both the TaNaKh and the B'rit Chadashah. This indicates that **she** has a special place in biblical history and is an example to follow (**Isaiah 51:1-2**). **She lived to be a hundred and twenty-seven years old (23:1)**. As the mother of the son of promise, **she** became the mother of all believers (**First Peter 3:6**). **Abraham** would have been a **hundred and thirty-seven years old**, and **Isaac thirty-seven years old** when **his** mother **died**.

She died at Kiriath Arba, or *the city of Arabia*, which eventually became known as **Hebron**, which means *friend*, because **Abraham** was the friend of God (**14:13, 18:1**), in the land of Canaan (**23:2a**). They had lived there many years earlier. This **Kiriath Arba/Hebron** connection is found elsewhere in the Bible (**Joshua 14:15, 15:13 and 59, 20:7, 21:11; Judges 1:10**). This parashah contains the first instance in the Bible where burial of the dead is mentioned. **Because of this many Jewish rules concerning forms of burial and the mourning period are derived from the details of this passage**. One such burial custom is **mourning**. The word translated **to mourn** is from the Hebrew root which means *to give an account*. In essence, what **Abraham** did at **Sarah's** burial was to



relate the highlights of **her** life to those in attendance. This undoubtedly helped **Abraham** through **his** own personal grief. In addition, it afforded **Abraham** an opportunity to show honor and respect to **Sarah**.

For some reason, **Abraham** was not present at the time of **her death**. **She** was in **Hebron** and **he** was in Beersheba (**21:33-34, 22:19**). **He** might have been away on business, or perhaps **they** had two residences. At any rate, when **Avraham** heard that **she** had **died**, **he went to mourn for Sarah and to weep over** the lifeless body of **his** soul mate (**23:2b**). It seems possible that **her death** was mercifully quick because if **she** had been suffering for a long time, **Avraham** most assuredly would have been at **her** side. This was the **death** of **his** friend and life-long companion. **Abraham** loved **Sarah** deeply, and it must have grieved **him** terribly not to be with **her** when **she died**. The first man found weeping in the Bible is **mourning** the loss of a woman.