

"A Future in the Promised Land"

Genesis 23:1-20

CONTEXT IN GENESIS

1. Foundations of the world in which we live. Gen 1-11
2. The calling and sanctification of Abraham. Gen 12-21
3. The fruit of God at work in Abraham's life. Gen 22-25
 - Faith shown in God's promise to provide a sacrifice. Gen 22
 - Faith shown in the God who resurrects. Gen 23
 - Faith shown in the God who will provide believers for your children. Gen 24

THE DEATH OF SARAH. v.1-2

1. Sarah died at the age of 127 at Hebron in the land of Canaan. v.1-2a
 - Sarah... the mother of the Hebrews, the matriarch of Israel...
2. Abraham mourned and wept for Sarah his wife. v.2b
 - This is the first example of mourning for the dead in the Bible. Ref. 1 Thes 4:13; Eccl. 3:4
→ The issue... Where should Sarah be buried?

PURCHASING A PLACE IN THE PROMISED LAND. v.3-16

1. Abraham requested a burial place from the Hittites. v.3-9
 - The Hittites responded favorably. v.5-6
 - Abraham requested a property that belonged to Ephron, son of Zohar: the cave of Machpelah. v.7-9
2. Ephron offered to give Abraham not only the cave, but the land around it. v.10-11
 - Abraham respectfully turned down the gift—and insisted upon paying for it. v.12-13
 - Ephron named the price of 400 shekels of silver. v.14-15
 - Abraham listened to Ephron and paid the full price. v.16

THE PROPERTY BECAME ABRAHAM'S POSSESSION. v.17-20

1. The whole property was given to Abraham. v.17-18
 - The field, the cave, all the trees, the whole area was "made over" to Abraham.
2. It became the property of Abraham and his offspring. v.19-20
 - 'made over' v.17, 20 = Heb. term for "deeded" – legally and legitimately given to
 - Sarah was buried there—as were Abraham, Isaac, Rebekah, Leah, and Jacob.

→ WHY WOULD GOD INCLUDE THIS STORY IN GENESIS?

1. To show the continuing reality of death as the result of man's sin. "dead" 9 x's; "bury" or "tomb" 12 x's
 - Death entered the world through sin. Genesis 3 (sin); Genesis 4 (murder); Genesis 5 (and he died, etc...)
 - 1 Cor 15:56: The sting of death is sin, and the power of sin is the law.
2. To demonstrate that Abraham (and Sarah) acquired property in the Promised Land by faith.
→ Original audience... Where is our home? Egypt? ...the desert? ...or Canaan?
3. To reflect the reality of redemption (to purchase with money the freedom of another).
→ This purchase was legitimate. You are the beneficiaries of Abraham's purchase 600 years ago.
 - It was a courteous and respectful sale. (Can't say Abraham forced or manipulated the agreement.)
 - It was a legitimate sale—sojourners had no right to property. (Can't say Abraham had no right to the land.)
 - It was a full-price sale—400 shekels of silver. If it was a "gift" (and not paid for) it could be taken back.
 - It was a willing sale. Abraham did not do it begrudgingly.
→ Christ's redemption on the cross was legitimate as well. It cannot be revoked or lost.

Isaiah 35:8-10: And a highway shall be there,
and it shall be called the Way of Holiness;
the unclean shall not pass over it.

It shall belong to those who walk on the way;
even if they are fools, they shall not go astray.^[a]

⁹ No lion shall be there,
nor shall any ravenous beast come up on it;
they shall not be found there,
but the redeemed shall walk there.

¹⁰ And the ransomed of the Lord shall return
and come to Zion with singing;
everlasting joy shall be upon their heads;
they shall obtain gladness and joy,
and sorrow and sighing shall flee away.

Hebrews 11:9-10: By faith he went to live in the land of promise, as in a foreign land, living in tents with Isaac and Jacob, heirs with him of the same promise. ¹⁰ For he was looking forward to the city that has foundations, whose designer and builder is God.

Hebrews 11:13-16: These all died in faith, not having received the things promised, but having seen them and greeted them from afar, and having acknowledged that they were strangers and exiles on the earth. ¹⁴ For people who speak thus make it clear that they are seeking a homeland. ¹⁵ If they had been thinking of that land from which they had gone out, they would have had opportunity to return. ¹⁶ But as it is, they desire a better country, that is, a heavenly one. Therefore God is not ashamed to be called their God, for he has prepared for them a city.

