

Chayai Sarah (The Life of Sarah) **Genesis 23:1-25:18**

Our Torah portion begins with an introduction to the “life” of Sarah; however by verse 2 we are quickly informed that Sarah has “died”. Consider this verse as you remember the faithful and obedient life of the matriarch and her continued “life” through her descendants:

Deuteronomy 30:19 "I call heaven and earth to witness against you today, that I have set before you life and death, the blessing and the curse. So **choose life in order that you may live, you and your descendants,**

Sarah dies in Kiriath-Arba (which is Hebron). There is quite a discussion about why Sarah is in Kiriath-Arba. Many of the rabbis teach that Sarah died from shock when she heard about the sacrifice of Isaac. Supposedly Abraham had not told her what Elohim had asked him to do with Isaac, but only that he was taking him to Shem’s Yeshiva to study. When Sarah heard what was really to happen, she hurried from their home in Be’er Sheba toward Mt. Moriah, making it as far as Hebron (mid-way point) where she died.

Let’s take a look at the name of the city where Sarah dies...Kiriath-Arba, which is Hebron. The literal meaning of Kiriath-Arba is “city of four”. Rabbinical teaching says that Adam and Eve were buried in that cave and that Abraham was aware of this. Eventually the cave would become the “city of four couples” as Adam and Eve would be joined by Abraham and Sarah, Isaac and Rebekah, Jacob and Leah. Today Kiriath-Arba is still a small, Jewish town next to Hebron.

Here’s a little more history on Hebron. This is the city Abraham had been living in when he took his 318 men to retrieve his nephew and those captured by four armies. Abraham had most likely become very famous as a result. The residents of Hebron, recognizing his strength and fame attempted to flatter him with their words:

Genesis 23:5 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 graves; none of us will refuse you his grave for burying your dead."

Now here we have Abraham, dealing with someone (Heth) whose name means “terrorist”. Though they appeared to be quite generous, Abraham knew he could not just “take” what they had offered. He also had a very particular place in mind that he wanted to buy.

Genesis 23:8 And he spoke with them, saying, "If it is your wish *for me* to bury my dead out of my sight, hear me, and approach Ephron the son of Zohar for me,⁹ that he may give me **the cave of Machpelah** which he owns, which is at the end of his field; for the full price let him give it to me in your presence for a burial site."

Machpelah means “doubles” or “pairs”. The cave is actually two caves, one on top of another. The Hebrew root of the word cave means “to expose” or “to lay bare.” A cave is a place where death is “exposed”. In Hebrew thought burial in a cave was an easy, open door **OUT** of death.

It expressed the concept of the resurrection of the dead. With Hebron being the highest elevation of any city in Israel, it was thus a picture of heaven.

Ephron, the owner of the cave repeats the “generous” offer. Abraham, however will insist on paying for the land. Abraham must pay for the land in order to have an undisputed legal deed for the property. In 23:15 Ephron will mention what he thinks the land is worth...400 shekels, a truly exorbitant price. In Jeremiah 32:9 a tract of land of much greater value was purchased for 17 shekels. In fact 400 shekels was over 50 year’s wages at that time. This is the **first** piece of land in Israel that would be purchased with a legal deed.

There are three parcels of land that were officially bought in the Promised Land:

1. The cave of Machpelal and surrounding field.
2. Jacob buys a plot of land in Shechem. Later Joseph will be buried there.
3. David buys the land which will be the site of the Temple Mount.

How interesting that these 3 locations are today some of the most hotly contested real-estate in the world! The enemy wants our connections with our ancestors!

Let’s consider some other interesting facts of this location:

Genesis 23:17 So Ephron's field, which was in Machpelah, which faced **Mamre**, the field and cave which was in it, and all the **trees** which were in the field, that were within all the confines of its border, were deeded over.

Genesis 13:18 refers to the “oaks of Mamre” as being in Hebron. Abraham had pitched his tent there and built an altar to יהוה. This is where he lived when the three messengers came and told him about Isaac’s impending birth. This is where he was when he pleaded for the righteous who lived in Sodom. Notice from the above verse that he is also purchasing the **trees**....this would include the particular tree that the messengers had eaten under in Gen. 18:8.

The main topic of this Torah portion is “finding a bride for Isaac”. The first thing we are told is that the bride must not be taken from the daughters of the Canaanites. Long ago, Sarah understood that Ishmael could not qualify as the seed of promise because he was born of a descendant of Ham. Later that son had to be cast out. יהוה would later tell Israel to make no covenant at all with the Canaanites, since they would lead Israel into following other gods, bringing about their condemnation (Deu. 7).

Abraham is a picture of our heavenly Father, who desires a bride for His Son. We will look at Isaac as a picture of Yeshua, our High Priest. The following is a Torah restriction for the High Priest and his bride:

Leviticus 21:14 'A widow, or a divorced woman, or one who is profaned by harlotry, these he may not take; but rather **he is to marry a virgin of his own people**;

Abraham sends out the servant “to his relatives” to look for the bride:

Genesis 24:4 but you shall go to my country and **to my relatives**, and take a wife for my son Isaac."

The servant who is sent to bring back a bride remains nameless in the story, but is assumed to be the trusted Eliezer. Eliezer, whose name means “God is help”, represents the Holy Spirit – our **helper** and **comforter**.

John 15:26 "When the **Helper** comes, whom I will send to you from the Father, *that is* the **Spirit of truth**, who proceeds from the Father, He will bear witness of Me,

Eliezer is a picture of the Spirit who does not glorify Himself (John 16:13), but acts on Yeshua’s behalf and in his authority. Isaac was to have a bride from his own people, a cousin.

Genesis 24:10 Then the servant took ten camels from the camels of his master, and **all the good things of his master were in his hand**; and he arose, and went to Mesopotamia, to the city of **Nahor**.

Now, how could Eliezer take all of Abraham’s riches with him in his **hand**? Abraham was probably one of the richest men of his day. Eliezer could not have taken everything with him. It is taught by the rabbis that Eliezer brought Abraham’s will with him, to show that Isaac, as sole heir would inherit all of his father’s riches. Is it not true that Yeshua, our Bridegroom has inherited all of His Father’s riches and the Kingdom?

John 3:35 "The Father loves the Son, and **has given all things into His hand**.

Nahor (brother of Abraham) means “snorting” or “snoring”. The bride is to be taken from among those who, though capable descendants of Shem, are sleeping. The city where Nahor lived was in Mesopotamia (Babylon). The bride must come out of Babylon!

Matthew 25:5 "Now while the bridegroom was delaying, they all got **drowsy** and *began* to **sleep**.

Revelation 18:2 And he cried out with a mighty voice, saying, "Fallen, fallen is **Babylon** the great! And I heard another voice from heaven, saying, "Come out of her, my people, that you may not participate in her sins and that you may not receive of her plagues;

Eliezer needs to find the bride who has **awakened** and who is willing to come out.

Genesis 24:11 And he made the camels **kneel** (בָּרַךְ) down outside the city by the **well** (בְּאֵר) of **water** at evening time, the time when women go out to **draw water**.

- To **kneel** down is the word “baruch” which also means “to bless” or “to bend the knee”.
- **Well** is from a word which means “to make plain”.
- **Water** is a picture of the Word or “יהוה’s instruction”. Notice that the servant goes to this location instead of to the city, the place where men are comfortable and rely on their security (like Lot did).
- **Drawing water** symbolizes learning the Almighty’s instruction. Wells were the locations that you would find “those thirsty for Him.” Remember that Yeshua also met such a thirsty woman at a well (John 4).

So now, what we have here is Eliezer (Holy Spirit) seeking a bride for Isaac (Messiah)... a bride who will hear the Word (draws water), and share it with others (camels) as well. Remember the kneeling (bowing) camels? They too are willing to serve or to bow to the authority of the Master. But now Eliezer’s test for the true bride was whether she would serve not only her Master, but the entire congregation. Who represents the congregation? Why it’s the camels! The 10 camels represent the 10 lost tribes, who are coming to an understanding of their Hebrew roots! The root of the word for camel means “to be ripened” or “to be weaned”. They are ready to begin to learn Torah! So here we see this picture of the bride continually meeting the needs of those willing to bow to authority, drinking in the water of the Word until they are completely refreshed!

To give you an idea of just how dedicated Rebekah (the bride) was, ten camels can easily drink 140 gallons between them. A very thirsty camel can even drink up to 35 gallons within 6 minutes. One gallon of water weights 8 pounds! This was quite an undertaking for a young girl.

Another little interesting word is the word for jar (פַּיִת). It is from a Hebrew word which means “to make deeper”. So these jars were tall....symbolizing **depth** of teaching. Rebekah lets down her pitcher to her “**hand**” symbolizing that Torah is meant to be brought forth not just by our words, but by the works of our hands. This is what gives faith in Torah life!

Genesis 24:18 And she said, "Drink, my lord"; and she quickly lowered her **jar** to her **hand**, and gave him a drink.

James 2:17 Even so faith, if it has no works, is dead, being by itself.

Are you seeing an application for this today? In these last days, there will be people who will be part of the bride of Messiah, that will come and give water to the Jews (who need Messiah) and to those of the lost tribes among the gentile nations who are eager to drink from the Torah of life!

When the camels had finished drinking, the first thing that Eliezer gave to the future bride was a **gold** nose ring that weighed a **half a shekel**. In Exodus 38:25-28 it is written that the **silver** half shekel was given to the sanctuary for everyone 20 years old and upward. The **silver** was used for casting the **sockets** that held up the boards for the earthly sanctuary. Could the **gold half shekel** be pointing to the heavenly tabernacle?

In Hebrew thought there is a connection between a wife and a house. House and wife can sometimes be synonyms. We see this in Revelation where the **bride** is identified with the New Jerusalem, which is the **house** that the **bride** will move into, together with the Messiah, after the Messianic thousand year reign.

Revelation 21:2 Then I, John, saw the holy city, New Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband.

Genesis 24:25 Again she said to him, "We have plenty of both **straw and feed**, and room to lodge in."

The bride brings the camels (hungry believers) into her house, but feeds them "straw and feed". Remember it is hay and straw that will not survive the fiery judgment. This could be a reason why the servant is in a hurry to leave with the bride.

1 Corinthians 3:12 Now if any man builds upon the foundation with gold, silver, precious stones, wood, **hay, straw**,¹³ each man's work will become evident; for the day will show it, because it is *to be* revealed with fire; and the fire itself will test the quality of each man's work.

Genesis 24:30 And it came about that when he (Laban) saw the ring, and the bracelets on his sister's wrists, and when he heard the words of Rebekah his sister, saying, "This is what the man said to me," he went to the man; and behold, he was standing by the camels at the spring.³¹ And he said, "Come in, blessed of יהוה! Why do you stand outside since I have prepared the house, and a place for the camels?"

Now Laban gets excited when he notices the gifts that the servant has given Rebekah. Laban means "**white**"....we get the word "albino" from this root. White is a symbol of righteousness, but we will see that throughout Scripture the man Laban is a picture of greed. Yeshua refers to the Pharisees and scribes when He says, "For you are like **whitewashed** tombs which indeed appear beautiful outwardly, but inside are full of dead *men's* bones and all uncleanness." Also, although we see Laban speaking the name of יהוה, we find him worshipping idols many years later.

Genesis 24:53 And the servant brought out articles of silver and articles of gold, and **garments**, and gave them to Rebekah; he also gave precious things to her brother and to her mother.

We know that as believers we are given **various gifts of the Spirit**. Notice from the above verse that just because gifts are given to someone does not make them the bride. Many believers are fooled into thinking that they are acceptable just because יהוה has given them some valuable gifts. But notice that it is **ONLY** the bride that receives the **garments**.

Revelation 3:5 He who overcomes shall thus be clothed in **white garments**; and I will not erase his name from the book of life, and I will confess his name before My Father, and before His angels.

Revelation 19:8 And it was given to her to clothe herself in fine linen, bright *and* clean; for the **fine linen** is the righteous acts of the saints.

Rebekah is given gifts more appropriate for the bride who is also to be a servant. The family has a calling, but they are not the chosen (bride). The family will still have a role to play later when Jacob needs a wife, but the family itself is never invited to live in the land. They would be a negative influence on those who would be the bearers of the Promised Seed. Remember Yeshua said that family ties must sometimes be severed if we are to follow Him completely.

Matthew 10:37 "He who loves father or mother more than Me is not worthy of Me; and he who loves son or daughter more than Me is not worthy of Me.³⁸ "And he who does not take his cross and follow after Me is not worthy of Me.

So now what do we have? We have Eliezer, representing the Spirit of Elohim, on a search for the completely devoted bride.

2 Chronicles 16:9 "For the eyes of יהוה move to and fro throughout the earth that He may strongly support those whose heart is completely His.

The bride is hidden among the tribes who are dispersed among the Gentiles. This is one area where the bride will come out of. She must be willing to leave the world and not look back. She must be willing to return to the **ancient paths**.

Jeremiah 6:16 Thus says יהוה, "Stand by the ways and see and ask for the **ancient paths**, Where the good way is, and walk in it; And you shall find rest for your souls....

In Genesis 24:59, we see that Rebekah was sent off with her nurse. Nurse comes from a verb which means "to suckle", as an infant nursing **milk** at its mother's breast. Rebekah had been given some foundational teaching from her nurse. Now we see that this nurse will be rewarded by being able to leave with the bride. In 1 Corinthians Paul tells the brethren that they must move beyond milk:

1 Corinthians 3:1 And I, brethren, could not speak to you as to spiritual men, but as to men of flesh, as to babes in Messiah.² I gave you **milk** to drink, not solid food; for you were not yet able *to receive it*. Indeed, even now you are not yet able,

Genesis 24:62 Now Isaac had come from going to **Beer-lahai-roi**; for he was living in the land of the Negev. **63** And Isaac went out to meditate **in the field toward evening**; and he **lifted up his eyes** and looked, and behold, camels were coming.

Scripture tells us that as Abraham's servant and Rebekah are beginning their 700 mile journey back to the land, Isaac is returning to **Hebron** (where his mother's tent is) after having been at **Beer-lahai-roi**. **Beer-lahai-roi** is the place where **יְהוָה** spoke to Hagar. It literally means "well where the Living One saw me". Perhaps Isaac was also hoping to "be seen" and given further direction.

Notice that Isaac is "**in the field**" and it is "**toward evening**". Now what "**field**" do you remember that is near **Hebron**? Remember earlier when we talked about Abraham buying the parcel of land that contained the **cave of Machpelah**, the **field**, and the **trees**? This is now where we find Isaac praying! Evening was nearing; that means a new Hebrew day was about to begin. This is when Yeshua meets his bride as well – just as the next millennial "day" begins. Until then Yeshua is also praying...**interceding** on our behalf!

Romans 8:34 Messiah Yeshua is He who died, yes, rather who was raised, who is at the right hand of God, **who also intercedes for us**.

"Lifted his eyes" (Gen 24:63) is an idiom for seeing as in a vision. Isaac does not actually see Rebekah coming; he sees only the camels. But the bride was hidden among them. The Father has sent for the bride when the time was right. She comes in the presence of the ten tribes (the camels), the lost sheep of the house of Israel.

Genesis 24:67 Then Isaac brought her into his mother Sarah's tent, and he took Rebekah, and she became his wife; and he loved her; thus Isaac was comforted after his mother's death.

Now Sarah was living in Hebron when she died. This would then be the location of "Sarah's tent". Remember that Hebron is Israel's highest city, and thus a picture of Heaven, where Yeshua meets His bride at first, and where David (also a picture of Messiah the King) began his reign before moving his capital to Jerusalem. The "**Jerusalem above**" is even called "our **mother**" (Gal. 4:26).

1 Thessalonians 4:17 Then we who are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet Adonai in the air, and thus we shall always be with Adonai.

Sarah's tent is the first place that the bride enters into when she steps out of the world. "The Tent" is a Hebrew idiom for where Torah is taught. In the same way that Isaac brought his bride into "his mother's tent", Yeshua will bring His bride into the tent where she will mature as she comes into a fuller understanding of Torah.

I do not believe that all believers, will be a part of the bride of Messiah. The Scriptures speak of several different kinds of people in connection with the Messiah's wedding: the bride, the virgins, and the other guests. These are three types of believers. We can find them in Matthew 5:19:

Matthew 5:19 "Whoever then annuls one of the least of these commandments, and so teaches others, shall be called least in the kingdom of heaven; but whoever keeps **and** teaches *them*, he shall be called great in the kingdom of heaven.

- The one who teaches others to **not** keep the commandments
- The one who keeps the commandments, but doesn't teach them
- The one who keeps the commandments AND teaches others to do so (bride)

Okay, now I'll try to summarize a bit. Of course it's easy to see from our story in Genesis that Rebekah is the bride...the one keeping the commandments and eager to teach others (she waters the camels). I guess that leaves the other two categories to be the rest of the believers in the world, who as Matthew 5:19 indicates will also be a part of the kingdom of heaven. I believe that as we get closer to the return of the Messiah, it will be absolutely necessary for those who are the bride to be teaching those who have humbled themselves (like the kneeling camels) that they might begin to keep the commandments. These people/camels are like the virgins at the wedding. They're not the bride, but they've been able to make themselves pure by keeping the commandments. Next we have the guests. They're still at the wedding....praise Yah....but they're guests. They have not had an intimate relationship with the bridegroom. They have not attempted to keep the commandments...worse yet, they've taught others that they have been done away with. They have not separated themselves from the world's system. Yeshua says they will be least in the kingdom. My guess is they won't be living in the Promised Land in the Millennium.

Now I'm certainly not dogmatic about any of this. It's just the way I understand the story this year. Do you want to be the bride? That position is only for those who love Him with all their heart, soul, mind and strength by keeping His commandments and by teaching others to do so. I pray that you will make every effort to reach that goal. I sure want to. Let's encourage each other!

Hebrews 3:13 But encourage one another day after day....

Shabbat Shalom!
Ardelle