

# CHAYEL SARAH - GENESIS

*- The Life of Sarah -*

Dan Stolebarger - Holy Ground Explorations

Chapter 23 - 25:18

# INTRODUCTION



**CHAYEI SARAH** - It means 'The Life of Sarah'

# INTRO

As the Israel Bible notes, this portion, which both opens and closes with the Cave of Machpelah, has spawned a popular custom in Israel of traveling to Hebron on the week in which it is read to hear it recited at the very site of the Cave. Around the world, this Sabbath is known as *Shabbat Chevron*, and special blessings and prayers are recited in synagogues everywhere for the holy city. Ultimately, Isaac, Rebecca, Jacob and Leah are buried there, too, and according to tradition, so were Adam and Eve.



<sup>17</sup> So the field of Ephron, which was in Machpelah (the second most sacred site in the world, after the Temple Mount.), which was before Mamre, the field, the cave which was in it, and all the trees that were in the field, that were in all of its borders, were deeded <sup>18</sup> to Abraham for a possession in the presence of the children of Heth, before all who went in at the gate of his city. <sup>19</sup> 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.

**Dan** - I think it is noteworthy how the Torah goes to great lengths to show that Abraham PURCHASED this site and that it was deeded to him! The cave of Machpelah is still on my list, a few years back my friend Andrew and I were on our way but ... before we boarded the bus there was an incident and they closed entry to Hebron down. But ... one day I will go into this cave and fondly remember the story of Abraham and his beloved Sarah!

This was the end of a love story! Oh, the memories the good ol' Abe shared with his beloved Sarah! (Just a side note ... creating memories is really what life is all about! I love recounting all the memories that Sharon and I have created with one another, with our boys and YES with our GRANDIES!)

13 And he said to Ephron in the hearing of the people of the land, "But if you will, hear me: I give the price of the field. Accept it from me, that I may bury my dead there."

**Sharon** - Why would Abraham insist on paying for the field? I can see two reasons - one personal and one practical.

Personal: Having just "lost" a son (he's not lost - he's in heaven), there are so many emotions involved. I remembered the "practical" things of his dying, the mortuary, the memorial service, etc. There was no way anyone was going to pay for this except for Dan and I. It was the last thing we could do for our beloved. So it was with Abraham. He loved Sarah dearly - and he wanted her "final resting place" to be his gift to her.

Practical: The tomb of Machpelah is located in Hebron - a very controversial piece of land today. One cannot easily visit this tomb as Hebron is also an area that can be very volatile. With Abraham purchasing the tomb, it is his and cannot be taken away by others who would want to claim the land as their rightful piece of real estate.

# 23

<sup>2</sup> Sarah died in Kiriath Arba (also called Hebron), in the land of Canaan.

Abraham came to mourn for Sarah, and to weep for her.

Sages ... At the age of one hundred she was like twenty in beauty, and at twenty she was like seven in piety. She dies at the age of 127.

Jewish tradition ... told by Satan that Abraham had actually slaughtered Isaac, she cried out in grief, and died. This explains why Abraham and Isaac were not present at her death.

The only land that Abraham ever possessed was a burial spot for his wife.

[Sarah is the only woman in Scripture whose age, death, and burial are mentioned, probably to do honor to the venerable mother of the Hebrew people.]

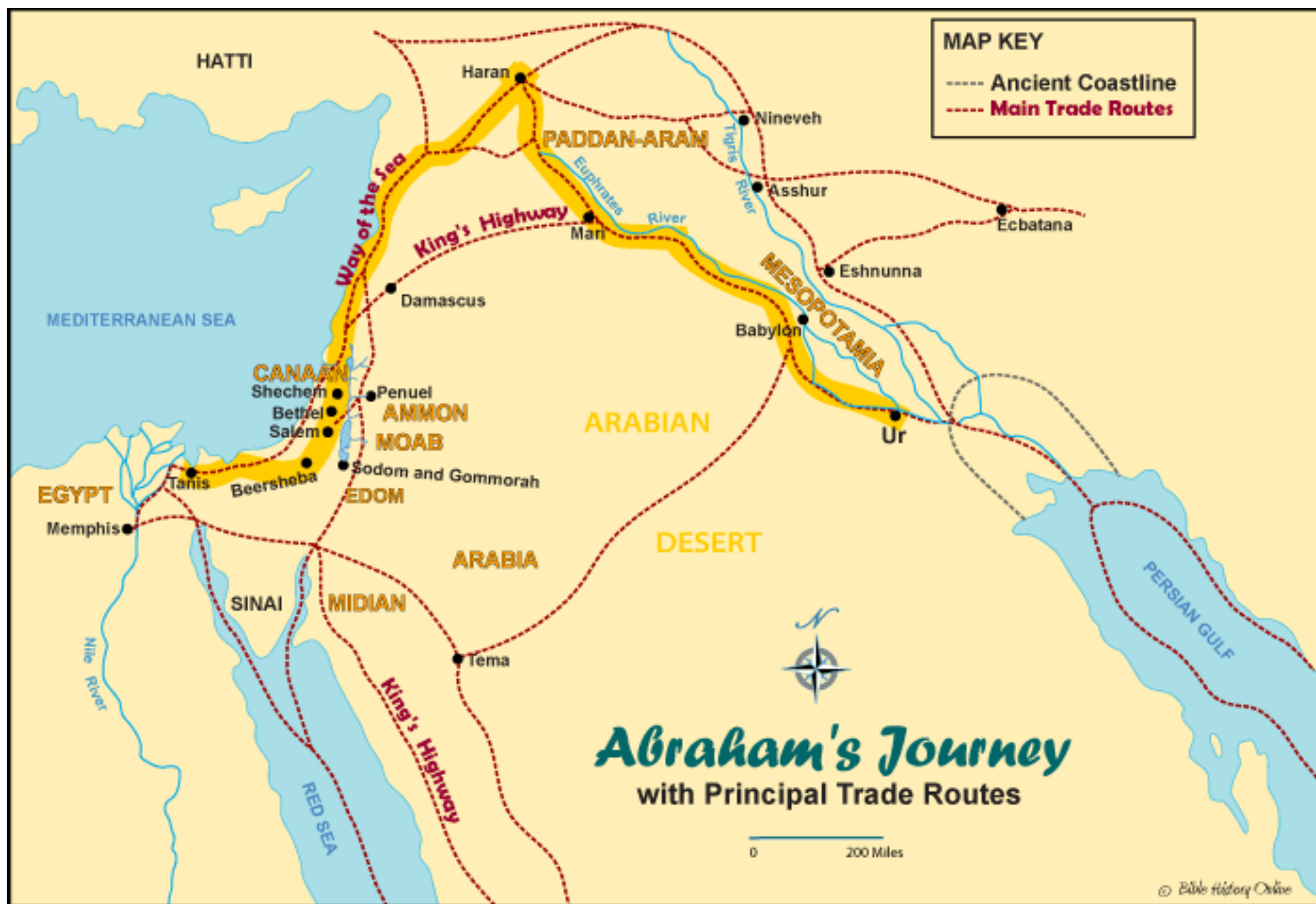
400 shekels of silver ... For comparison (all centuries later), in the desert census each Israelite paid a half-shekel (Exodus 30), the compensation for a slave gored by an ox was 30 shekels (Exodus 21:32), people (as part of vows) were valued at between 5 and 50 shekels (Leviticus 27), and a man who violates a virgin pays 100 shekels (Deuteronomy 22). Jeremiah bought a field for 17 shekels (Yirmiyahu 32:9)

Abraham was old, and well advanced in age. Yahweh had blessed Abraham in all things. <sup>2</sup> Abraham said to his servant, the elder of his house, who ruled over all that he had, "Please put your hand under my thigh. <sup>3</sup> I will make you swear by Yahweh, the God of heaven and the God of the earth, **that you shall not take a wife for my son of the daughters of the Canaanites**, among whom I live. <sup>4</sup> **But you shall go to my country**, and to my relatives, and take a wife for my son Isaac."

<sup>5</sup> The servant said to him, "What if the woman isn't willing to follow me to this land? Must I bring your son again to the land you came from?"

<sup>6</sup> Abraham said to him, "Beware that you don't bring my son there again. <sup>7</sup> Yahweh, the God of heaven—who took me from my father's house, and from the land of my birth, who spoke to me, and who swore to me, saying, 'I will give this land to your offspring—he will send his angel before you, and you shall take a wife for my son from there.

[Paddan Aram, that is, NW Mesopotamia \(SE Turkey / NW Syria\)](#)



<sup>12</sup> He said, "Yahweh, the God of my master Abraham, please give me success today, and show kindness to my master Abraham.

<sup>15</sup> Before he had finished speaking, behold, Rebekah came out, who was born to Bethuel the son of Milcah, the wife of Nahor, Abraham's brother, with her pitcher on her shoulder. <sup>16</sup> The young lady was very beautiful to look at, a virgin. No man had known her. She went down to the spring, filled her pitcher, and came up.

<sup>17</sup> The servant ran to meet her, and said, "Please give me a drink, a little water from your pitcher."

<sup>18</sup> She said, "Drink, my lord." She hurried, and let down her pitcher on her hand, and gave him a drink. <sup>19</sup> When she had finished giving him a drink, she said, "I will also draw for your camels, until they have finished drinking." <sup>20</sup> She hurried, and emptied her pitcher into the trough, and ran again to the well to draw, and drew for all his camels.

Eliezer asked that when he asked for water, the girl would offer to bring him water for his ten camels, too. If a camel would drink about 14 gallons of water, and there were ten camels, then she would have drawn up 140 gallons of water from the well – a significant amount of labor done out of kindness for the stranger...

In other words, if the prospective woman showed *chesed* (ds,x,) – lovingkindness – to a complete stranger, then he would take it as a sign that she was God's chosen bride. Note that this test concerned the *inward* character of the woman, not her status or beauty or other worldly factors.

<sup>28</sup> The young lady ran, and told her mother's house about these words. <sup>29</sup> Rebekah had a brother, and his name was Laban. Laban ran out to the man, to the spring. <sup>30</sup> **When he saw** the ring, and the bracelets on his sister's hands, and when he heard the words of Rebekah his sister, saying, "This is what the man said to me," he came to the man. Behold, he was standing by the camels at the spring. <sup>31</sup> He said, "Come in, you blessed of Yahweh. Why do you stand outside? For I have prepared the house, and room for the camels."

Ding Ding Ding ... Bling Bling Bling - Remember Laban's nature ...

Because of his later persecution of Jacob, Laban is regarded as Israel's first enemy.

He was a practitioner of the occult whose grandson was none other than the wicked sorcerer Balaam who recommended that Pharaoh enslave the Jews.

<sup>50</sup> Then Laban and Bethuel answered, "The thing proceeds from Yahweh. We can't speak to you bad or good. <sup>51</sup> Behold, Rebekah is before you. Take her, and go, and let her be your master's son's wife, as Yahweh has spoken."

<sup>52</sup> When Abraham's servant heard their words, he bowed himself down to the earth to Yahweh. <sup>53</sup> The servant brought out jewels of silver, and jewels of gold, and clothing, and gave them to Rebekah. He also gave precious things to her brother and her mother. <sup>54</sup> They ate and drank, he and the men who were with him, and stayed all night. They rose up in the morning, and he said, "Send me away to my master."

<sup>55</sup> Her brother and her mother said, "Let the young lady stay with us a few days, at least ten. After that she will go."

<sup>56</sup> He said to them, "Don't hinder me, since Yahweh has prospered my way. Send me away that I may go to my master."

<sup>57</sup> They said, "We will call the young lady, and ask her." <sup>58</sup> They called Rebekah, and said to her, **"Will you go with this man?"**

**She said, "I will go."**

In that society a woman's brother gave his sister in marriage, which explains why Laban, Rebekah's brother, was the negotiator in this marriage contract.

# TYPOLGY

More of the Gospel in Genesis

Abraham commissions Eleazar to gather a bride for Isaac.

Eleazar qualifies her by a well; she agrees to marry the bridegroom;  
he gives her gifts...she joins her bridegroom at the well of Lahai-Roi.

Abraham = The Father

Isaac = The Son

Eleazar = The Holy Spirit... sent to gather the Bride for the Son

6-7 Abraham said to him, "See to it that you do not take my son back there. The Lord, the God of heaven, who took me from my father's house and from the land of my kindred, and who spoke to me and swore to me, 'To your offspring I will give this land,' he will send his angel before you, and you shall take a wife for my son from there.

**Andrew Suedkamp** - I love seeing the depth of the faith that Abraham exhibits in these few words. He learned to trust God, and knew that God was faithful. Where human intellect might dictate that it makes more sense for his servant to take Isaac back, Abraham knew that God could be trusted and that He would fulfill His promises. When we are at a crossroads in life, we need to rely not on what we believe makes sense, but trust in the promises that He has made to us.

5 Abraham gave all that he had to Isaac, 6 but Abraham gave gifts to the sons of Abraham's concubines. While he still lived, he sent them away from Isaac his son, eastward, to the east country. 7 These are the days of the years of Abraham's life which he lived: one hundred seventy-five years. 8 Abraham gave up his spirit, and died at a good old age, an old man, and full of years, and was gathered to his people. 9 Isaac and Ishmael, his sons, buried him in the cave of Machpelah, in the field of Ephron, the son of Zohar the Hittite, which is near Mamre, 10 the field which Abraham purchased from the children of Heth. Abraham was buried there with Sarah, his wife. 11 After the death of Abraham, God blessed Isaac, his son. Isaac lived by Beer Lahai Roi.

About Isaac - He never leaves the Land of Israel / He only has one wife and only fathers children with one woman and He never has His Name changed

7-11 - Then Abraham breathed his last and died in a good old age, old and full of days and was added to his people. So his sons Isaac and Ishmael buried him in the cave of Machpelah, opposite Mamre, in the field of Ephron, the son of Zohar the Hittite, the field and the cave Abraham purchased from the sons of Heth. There they buried Abraham and Sarah his wife.

Glen - What struck me in this passage is that Abraham's death brought Isaac and Ishmael together after being apart for decades. Other than wondering how their reunion went after so much time had passed, it also brings to mind that like Abraham's death bringing enemies who are brothers together, Christ's death and resurrection also bring us together. Although Isaac was chosen by God to be the son of promise, Abraham is still the father of many nations (Genesis 17). Paul states in Galatians 3:29 that "if ye be Christ's, then are ye Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise."

Today, there is obviously a lot of tension between Islam and Israel just as I'm sure there was tension between Ishmael and Isaac at Abraham's burial. If there is to be peace, it is only going to be through Christ and New Birth through His atonement. Outside of Christ, people are loyal to their tribes, whether that is their nation or their ideology. It's only through Christ that there will be peace.

# SUMMARY

While Abraham and Jacob reflect what will become the tradition of the "Wandering Jew" that has characterized so much of our history, Isaac can be viewed as the Jew who will not need to wander from place to place, but will be able to call one place home. That place is Israel, which makes him a role model for Zionists.

Isaac, represents the ideal: a person (people) with a place to call home; the ability to be true to oneself (ourselves) and not need to reinvent oneself (ourselves) because of circumstances beyond our control; the ability to remain faithful and loyal to one person.

In the midst of all the challenges of the Israelites in the ancient world, and in the midst of the all too real challenging stories of Abraham and Jacob, the Torah offers a glimpse of what it will be like some day when we have mastered the challenges we face to be able to live where we want to live and be true to who we are.

Rabbi Bruce Kadden

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