

Genesis Chapter 23 - Commentary By Mike Wells

Chapter 23 Overview:

In Chapter 23, we see the death and burial of Sarah. It is basically divided into two sections. (1) Abraham negotiates for a burial place for Sarah in verses 1-13. (2) The procurement of the burial place for Sarah and her burial are found in verses 14-20.

Genesis 23 : 1-2 – *1 And Sarah was an hundred and seven and twenty years old: these were the years of the life of Sarah. 2 And Sarah died in Kirjatharba; the same is Hebron in the land of Canaan: and Abraham came to mourn for Sarah, and to weep for her.*

- Thirty-seven years after bearing Isaac, Sarah died at the age of 127.
- **Kirjatharba** was also known as Hebron.

Genesis 23 : 3-16 - *3 And Abraham stood up from before his dead, and spake unto the sons of Heth, saying, 4 I am a stranger and a sojourner with you: give me a possession of a burying place with you, that I may bury my dead out of my sight. 5 And the children of Heth answered Abraham, saying unto him, 6 Hear us, my lord: thou art a mighty prince among us: in the choice of our sepulchers bury thy dead; none of us shall withhold from thee his sepulcher, but that thou mayest bury thy dead. 7 And Abraham stood up, and bowed himself to the people of the land, even to the children of Heth. 8 And he communed with them, saying, If it be your mind that I should bury my dead out of my sight; hear me, and entreat for me to Ephron the son of Zoar, 9 That he may give me the cave of Machpelah, which he hath, which is in the end of his field; for as much money as it is worth he shall give it me for a possession of a burying place amongst you. 10 And Ephron dwelt among the children of Heth: and Ephron the Hittite answered Abraham in the audience of the children of Heth, even of all that went in at the gate of his city, saying, 11 Nay, my lord, hear me: the field give I thee, and the cave that is therein, I give it thee; in the presence of the sons of my people give I it thee: bury thy dead. 12 And Abraham bowed down himself before the people of the land. 13 And he spake unto Ephron in the audience of the people of the land, saying, But if thou wilt give it, I pray thee, hear me: I will give thee money for the field; take it of me, and I will bury my dead there. 14 And Ephron answered Abraham, saying unto him, 15 My lord, hearken unto me: the land is worth four hundred shekels of silver; what is that betwixt me and thee? bury therefore thy dead. 16 And Abraham hearkened unto Ephron; and Abraham weighed to Ephron the silver, which he had named in the audience of the sons of Heth, four hundred shekels of silver, current money with the merchant.*

- Abraham negotiated with the local Canaanites for a burial place for Sarah.
- Notice that even after all the years that he had lived in Canaan (approximately 62 years), he still viewed himself as a “stranger and sojourner.”
- Though he lived there, he knew, this world was not his home.
- He just was passing through.
- If you are a saved, born again child of God, then you too are a stranger and sojourner in this world.
- We too like Abraham are just passing through.
- The Canaanites offered Abraham the choice of their grave sites.

- This speaks to the testimony Abraham had maintained amongst the people of the world with which he had lived all those years.
- He was so respected that they offered him his choice of grave sites for his wife.
- Abraham requested the cave of Machpelah which was owned by Ephron the son of Zoar.
- Ephron also respect Abraham and offered to give the land to Abraham.
- However, Abraham insisted on paying for it.
- So, Ephron told him the land was worth four-hundred shekels of silver.

Genesis 23 : 17-20 - 17 *And the field of Ephron, which was in Machpelah, which was before Mamre, the field, and the cave which was therein, and all the trees that were in the field, that were in all the borders round about, were made sure. 18 Unto Abraham for a possession in the presence of the children of Heth, before all that went in at the gate of his city. 19 And after this, Abraham buried Sarah his wife in the cave of the field of Machpelah before Mamre: the same is Hebron in the land of Canaan. 20 And the field, and the cave that is therein, were made sure unto Abraham for a possession of a burying place by the sons of Heth. The site evidently was near where Abraham had lived for years at Mamre.*

- Abraham purchased the “*field, and the cave which was therein, and all the trees that were in the field, that were in all the borders round about.*”
- The sons of Heth were witnesses to the deal or transaction.
- Abraham buried his wife Sarah of many years at this place.