

# The Life of Sarah

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The video version is at: <https://youtu.be/JKLSxBVI9Mo>

The scripture reading is Genesis 23:1-24:67

The Torah portion for this week is called “Chayai Sarah,” meaning “Life of Sarah.” This portion begins with the numbering of Sarah’s years at her death detailing the purchase of a burial cave for her. It goes on to describe finding a bride for Isaac with whom he finds comfort when he brings her into Sarah’s tent.

Genesis 23:1-2 NKJV 1 Sarah lived one hundred and twenty-seven years; these were the years of the life of Sarah. 2 So Sarah died in Kirjath Arba (that is, Hebron) in the land of Canaan, and Abraham came to mourn for Sarah and to weep for her.

Both Abraham and Isaac are heartbroken at Sarah’s death but they find comfort when Isaac takes a bride. What does any of this have to do with foreshadowing the coming of Messiah?

The title of this Torah portion, “Chayai Sarah,” takes us back to the creation. On the sixth day, God created man. We know Adam’s name from the beginning but we don’t learn Eve’s name until the moment they are being exiled from the Garden of Eden.

Genesis 3:20 NKJV 20 And Adam called his wife's name Eve, because she was the mother of all living.

It’s in just one verse seemingly recorded as “by the way the woman’s name was Eve.” However, no statement in the Bible is insignificant; the woman’s name is important. Also, the woman’s name is not Eve; it’s Chavvah. The name “Chavvah” number 2332 in Strong’s Concordance means “life-giver.” The name is from the Hebrew word “Chayai,” number 2421 meaning “to live.”

It’s ironic that we are told Chavvah’s name, meaning life-giver right when Adam and Eve are prohibited from accessing the tree of life.

Genesis 3:22-23 NKJV 22 Then the LORD God said, "Behold, the man has become like one of Us, to know good and evil. And now, lest he put out his hand and take also of the tree of life, and eat, and live forever" - 23 therefore the LORD God sent him out of the garden of Eden to till the ground from which he was taken.

Once exiled from the Garden, Adam and Chavvah have children and begin the process of populating the Earth. Adam and Chavvah know that through one of these children, God will fulfill His promise to crush the head of the serpent that deceived them.

Genesis 3:14-15 NKJV 14 So the LORD God said to the serpent: "Because you have done this, You are cursed more than all cattle, And more than every beast of the field; On your belly you shall go, And you shall eat dust All the days of your life. 15 And I will put enmity Between you and the woman, And between your seed and her Seed; He shall bruise your head, And you shall bruise His heel."

The one who bruises the head of the serpent will come from a seed of Chavvah, the mother of all living! By starting this week’s Torah portion with “the Life of Sarah,” we are reminded of this promise! The prophet Isaiah tells the children of Israel to remember their father Abraham and their mother Sarah.

Isaiah 51:1-3 NKJV 1 "Listen to Me, you who follow after righteousness, You who seek the LORD: Look to the rock from which you were hewn, And to the hole of the pit from which you were dug. 2 Look to Abraham your father, And to Sarah who bore you; For I called him alone, And blessed him and increased him." 3 For the LORD will comfort Zion, He will comfort all her waste places; He will make her wilderness like Eden, And her desert like the garden of the LORD; Joy and gladness will be found in it, Thanksgiving and the voice of melody.

This passage is written in Hebraic poetic form. Verses one and two are parallel statements. The rock refers to Abraham their father. The pit from which they were dug is parallel to Sarah who bore them. The children of Israel were hewn from Abraham. The quarry or pit from which they were taken is that of Sarah's womb who gave birth to them. Those who follow after righteousness are the true offspring of both Abraham and Sarah.

John the Baptist uses a similar metaphor or perhaps refers directly to this one when He declares that the Pharisees and Sadducees are not the righteous examples they think they are!

Matthew 3:7-9 NKJV 7 But when he saw many of the Pharisees and Sadducees coming to his baptism, he said to them, "Brood of vipers! Who warned you to flee from the wrath to come? 8 "Therefore bear fruits worthy of repentance, 9 "and do not think to say to yourselves, 'We have Abraham as our father.' For I say to you that God is able to raise up children to Abraham from these stones.

Isaiah goes on to say that Abraham is the only one God called who would bring comfort to Zion. The poetic form of verse three equates Zion with the Garden of Eden. When God brings comfort to Zion, Zion will be like the Garden of Eden. It will be a place of joy and gladness. We see that through Abraham and those born of Sarah, God will make Zion like the Garden of Eden. This is a further extension of the promise that through a seed of Eve, the head of the serpent will be crushed. It envisions a reversal of the curse on the ground to bring thorns and thistles. It shows a way back to the Garden of Eden.

When Sarah died, Abraham realized that he didn't have any place to bury Sarah. The sons of Heth from the line of Canaan offered to let Abraham bury Sarah in their own tombs.

Genesis 23:4-6 NKJV 4 "I am a foreigner and a visitor among you. Give me property for a burial place among you, that I may bury my dead out of my sight." 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 burial places. None of us will withhold from you his burial place, that you may bury your dead."

Although the offer was generous, this would not be acceptable. Abraham knew that eventually the Canaanites would be driven out of the land and his seed would inherit the land. Abraham and his descendants wouldn't have the right of access to the burial place unless Abraham purchased the site. Abraham negotiated with the Hittite Ephron to purchase a burial cave and the land surrounding it.

Genesis 23:16-18 NKJV 16 And Abraham listened to Ephron; and Abraham weighed out the silver for Ephron which he had named in the hearing of the sons of Heth, four hundred shekels of silver, currency of the merchants. 17 So the field of Ephron which was in Machpelah, which was before Mamre, the field and the cave which was in it, and all the trees that were in the field, which were within all the surrounding borders, were deeded 18 to Abraham as a possession in the presence of the sons of Heth, before all who went in at the gate of his city.

The eighteenth century theologian Thomas Scott commented on Abraham's purchase of the cave in Machpelah for the burial site.

“Abraham would have a separate burying-place; perhaps intimating, that though the righteous live intermingled with the ungodly in this world, there will be a separation after death.”<sup>i</sup>

The name Machpelah, number 4375 in Strong’s Concordance means a fold or double. It comes from the word “kaphal,” number 3717 meaning to fold together, repeat or double. The Jewish Encyclopedia comments on the meaning of the name.

“The meaning of the name, which always occurs with the definite article is not clear; according to the Targumim and the Septuagint it means “the double,” while Gesenius, with more reason, connects it with the Ethiopic for “the portion.”<sup>ii</sup>

Abraham purchased “the Machpelah” which is twice referred to as the cave and other times referred to as the cave of the field of Machpelah. He purchased the field, the trees and the cave all of which are the Machpelah or “the portion” in the Promised Land. This portion is in the tribal lands of Judah which God says is His portion in the land.

Zechariah 2:12 NKJV 12 "And the LORD will take possession of Judah as His inheritance in the Holy Land, and will again choose Jerusalem.

This burial cave will eventually contain the remains of both Sarah and Abraham, as well as Isaac and Rebecca, and Jacob and Leah. Jacob made sure that his remains would be taken out of Egypt when he died and buried with his fathers in the Machpelah.

Genesis 49:29-30 NKJV 29 Then he charged them and said to them: "I am to be gathered to my people; bury me with my fathers in the cave that is in the field of Ephron the Hittite, 30 "in the cave that is in the field of Machpelah, which is before Mamre in the land of Canaan, which Abraham bought with the field of Ephron the Hittite as a possession for a burial place.

The cave is outside the city of Hebron which is also called Kirjath Arba in the region called Mamre. The name Hebron, number 2275, means the place of association. The name Kirjath Arba, number 7153 means the city of the four. There were four giants associated with the city of Hebron who were the sons and grandsons of Arba. However, the Jewish Encyclopedia relates another explanation for the name. The rabbis explain that it is called the city of the four because of the four couples buried there: Adam and Eve, Abraham and Sarah, Isaac and Rebecca, and Jacob and Leah. The author of Hebrews tells us that all these died in faith waiting to receive the promise.

Hebrews 11:9, 16 NKJV 9 By faith he dwelt in the land of promise as in a foreign country, dwelling in tents with Isaac and Jacob, the heirs with him of the same promise;...16 But now they desire a better, that is, a heavenly country. Therefore God is not ashamed to be called their God, for He has prepared a city for them.

First Fruits of Zion in Shadows of the Messiah quote the Jewish writings that say that the resurrection of the dead will begin at Hebron.

In that hour, [Messiah] goes up and brings glad tidings to those who sleep in Machpelah, and says to them: Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, rise! Enough have you slept!" and they reply and say: "Who is this who removes the dust from over us?" and he says to them: "I am Messiah of the LORD. Salvation is near, the hour is near." And they answer: "If that is so, go and bring the tidings to Adam the first man, so that he should rise first." In that hour they say to Adam the first man: "Enough have you slept!" (*Pirkei Mashiach*, Beit HaMidrash 3:73-74)

The name of the area in which the Machpelah is located is Mamre. Mamre, number 4471, means vigor or lusty. The word vigor means strength or healthy. Sarah, the mother of the righteous, is buried in a cave located in a region of strength and good health in the city associated with the four. Whether the association is with the four giants or the four couples buried at Machpelah is up to the individual. When God took the children of Israel into the Promised Land, Moses sent out twelve men to look over the land. Ten of the men saw only the giants in the land.

Numbers 13:32-33 NKJV 32 And they gave the children of Israel a bad report of the land which they had spied out, saying, "The land through which we have gone as spies is a land that devours its inhabitants, and all the people whom we saw in it are men of great stature. 33 "There we saw the giants (the descendants of Anak came from the giants); and we were like grasshoppers in our own sight, and so we were in their sight."

However, Joshua and Caleb saw that God had prepared the land for them and urged the children of Israel to take the land. Caleb would eventually win Hebron as his portion in the Promised Land and drive out the four giants of the land.

Isaiah said that those who sought after righteousness were true sons of Abraham and Sarah. Caleb was a true son of Abraham and Sarah. He won the right to receive Hebron and the surrounding fields as his inheritance because he fully followed the LORD.

Joshua 14:14 NKJV 14 Hebron therefore became the inheritance of Caleb the son of Jephunneh the Kenizzite to this day, because he wholly followed the LORD God of Israel.

Sarah was the first to be buried at the cave in Machpelah. After her burial, Abraham decided it was time to find a bride for Isaac. Not just any bride would do; Abraham was not to take a bride for Isaac from among the Canaanites. He sent his servant, probably Eleazar who was formerly Abraham's heir apparent, back to Haran to find a bride from among his family who had journeyed with him from Ur as far as Haran.

Genesis 24:2-4 NKJV 2 So Abraham said to the oldest servant of his house, who ruled over all that he had, "Please, put your hand under my thigh, 3 "and I will make you swear by the LORD, the God of heaven and the God of the earth, that you will not take a wife for my son from the daughters of the Canaanites, among whom I dwell; 4 "but you shall go to my country and to my family, and take a wife for my son Isaac."

Abraham told his servant that God would send an angel to prepare the way and to guide him in his choice of a bride.

Genesis 24:7 NKJV 7 "The LORD God of heaven, who took me from my father's house and from the land of my family, and who spoke to me and swore to me, saying, 'To your descendants I give this land,' He will send His angel before you, and you shall take a wife for my son from there.

Abraham cautioned that whoever Eleazar chose as a bride for Isaac must be willing to leave her home and travel back to the Promised Land.

Genesis 24:8 NKJV 8 "And if the woman is not willing to follow you, then you will be released from this oath; only do not take my son back there."

The future of Abraham's seed was not in Haran in the kingdom of Babylon; it was in the Promised Land. This was the place that God called Abraham to leave his home and family for. When the ten spies saw only the giants in the land, they wanted to select new leaders and go back to Egypt.

Numbers 14:3 NKJV 3 "Why has the LORD brought us to this land to fall by the sword, that our wives and children should become victims? Would it not be better for us to return to Egypt?"

It was at that point, that God said they would never enter the Promised Land.

When Yeshua was on His way to Jerusalem for the Passover that would result in His death on the cross, He encountered a rich man who would not give up his riches to follow Yeshua. Peter declared that he and the other apostles had left all to follow him.

Luke 18:28-30 NKJV 28 Then Peter said, "See, we have left all and followed You." 29 So He said to them, "Assuredly, I say to you, there is no one who has left house or parents or brothers or wife or children, for the sake of the kingdom of God, 30 "who shall not receive many times more in this present time, and in the age to come eternal life."

Rebecca was one who left all to follow Abraham's servant to the Promised Land to receive Isaac as her husband.

Yeshua said that the only ones who can come to Him are those drawn by the Father.

John 6:44 NKJV 44 "No one can come to Me unless the Father who sent Me draws him; and I will raise him up at the last day.

Paul tells us that we, like Abraham, are called out from the world around us to be separate.

2 Corinthians 6:17-18 NKJV 17 Therefore "Come out from among them And be separate, says the Lord. Do not touch what is unclean, And I will receive you." 18 "I will be a Father to you, And you shall be My sons and daughters, Says the LORD Almighty."

When Eleazar arrives in Haran, he finds Rebecca near a well and asks her for a drink of water. When she readily gives him a drink, Eleazar knew she was the one selected for Isaac and he offered her gifts.

Genesis 24:22 NKJV 22 So it was, when the camels had finished drinking, that the man took a golden nose ring weighing half a shekel, and two bracelets for her wrists weighing ten shekels of gold,

Yeshua offers us gifts if we decide to follow Him. Peter explains that both the gift of the Holy Spirit and the inheritance of the promise of Abraham are available to all who believe.

Acts 2:38-39 NKJV 38 Then Peter said to them, "Repent, and let every one of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins; and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. 39 "For the promise is to you and to your children, and to all who are afar off, as many as the Lord our God will call."

Rebecca chooses to leave her old life behind and immediately follow Eleazar to the Promised Land to meet Isaac her bridegroom! They meet at the place where Isaac is dwelling in the south at Beer Lahai Roi.

Genesis 24:62-64 NKJV 62 Now Isaac came from the way of Beer Lahai Roi, for he dwelt in the South. 63 And Isaac went out to meditate in the field in the evening; and he lifted his eyes and looked, and there, the camels were coming. 64 Then Rebekah lifted her eyes, and when she saw Isaac she dismounted from her camel;

The name “Beer Lahai Roi,” number 883, means the “Well of the Living One Who Sees Me.” Isaac and Rebecca lifted their eyes and saw each other at the place of the living one. Isaac immediately loved her and brought her into Sarah’s tent.

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

Abraham and Isaac receive hope and comfort after the death of Sarah. Her burial place at the Machpelah points to the hope of resurrection. Rebecca takes on the mantle of Sarah and becomes the life-giver. She will give birth to Jacob to whom the promise of Abraham will pass. As the bride of Isaac, she represents the bride of Christ who leaves all behind to become worthy to be the beloved bride.

Study Questions:

1. Who are the women in the line of Messiah and what is their role or importance?
2. The word “pit” in Isaiah 51:3 is “bore,” number 953 in Strong’s Concordance. It is the same word used for the pit that Joseph was thrown into by his brothers and, later, by Pharaoh’s captain of the guard. Compare the usage of the word “pit” in these three situations.
3. How could the “stone the builders rejected” in Psalm 118:22 and the “stumbling stone” in Isaiah 8:14 apply to Abraham as well as Yeshua?
4. In the allotment of the land in the Promised Land, the only personal allotments the Bible mentions is that of Caleb (Josh 14:6-15) and Joshua (Josh 19:45). Of these two, only the account of the taking of Hebron by Caleb is included in the Bible. Why is this important?
5. How is the selection of Rebecca as Isaac’s bride a foreshadowing of the selection of the bride of Messiah?
6. What new insight did you gain from this teaching? How do you respond to this new insight? How will you realign your life based on this new understanding?

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<sup>i</sup> Commentary on the Whole Bible. Rev. Thomas Scott. 1788.

<sup>ii</sup> Jewish Encyclopedia. *Machpelah*. Emil G. Hirsch, M. Seligsohn, Solomon Schechter. 1906  
<http://www.jewishencyclopedia.com/articles/10248-machpelah>