

## Hayei Sarah

### "Sarah's Life"

Torah Reading: Genesis (Bereshit) 23:1 – 25:18

Haftarah Reading: I Kings 1:1-31

### Study Questions

1. Give a little history of the Hittite people as discussed in the notes.
2. Why did Abraham insist on purchasing the burial spot for Sarah as opposed to receiving it as a gift? What significance does this transaction have for Israel today?
3. What other parts of the land of Canaan were purchased by Israelites?
4. Why did Abraham seek a wife for Isaac?
5. Why did he send his servant back to Mesopotamia to find a wife, instead of to the Canaanites?
6. Why did Abraham prohibit Isaac from going on the journey with Eliezer?
7. Explain the place of prayer in the wife-finding endeavor.
8. What characteristics was Eliezer looking for in a wife for Isaac?
9. Describe the marriage between Rebekah and Isaac according to the text.
10. Why did the parasha record the information about the rest of Abraham's descendants?
11. Why do you think Abraham died a contented person?

### Memory Verse

"Abraham left everything he owned to Isaac." Bereshit 25:5

### Study Notes

#### Outline

- Abraham Purchased Land
- Abraham Procures a Wife
- The Aftermath

#### Death of Sarah

- First mention in the Bible of burial of the dead.
- Many of the rules concerning forms of burial and the mourning period are derived from this passage.
- The Hebrew word for "eulogize" (23:2) means "to tell a story". Abraham was showing his love and respect for Sarah.
- Abraham also wept over her. He did not hide his emotions.

## The Hittites

- Descendants of Heth who was a son of Canaan (son of Ham) (Bereshit 10:15).
- Invaded the heartland of Canaan after 1400 BC but there were scattered settlements before that time.
- Ezekiel 16:3 refers to Jerusalem "your father was an Amorite and your mother was a Hittite"

## "Thanks, But No Thanks!"

- Ephron was not trying to give away his field. This was just part of the Near Eastern bargaining process.
- Abraham could not just accept the gift as his ownership could be subject to question in future generations.
- The whole process reflects Hittite law including mentioning the trees which is characteristic of Hittite land transactions which were careful to specify them. (23:17)

## A Jewish Claim

- The buying of the field and cave is more than an interesting story. It gives validity to the Jewish claim to the holy land.
- There are two other significant land purchases in Scriptures: 1) The tomb of Joseph, acquired by Shechem and 2) David's site of the temple.
- All were purchased and paid for with legal tender.

## Matchmaker

- The value of a matchmaker, "Shadham" in Hebrew, "a third party with the advantage of experience, age and wisdom."
- Abraham had Eliezer take an oath and had him place his hand "under my thigh" (24:2).
- The commentary says this is an allusion to the circumcised organ. Before the Torah circumcised organ was their sole sacred object since it carried the sign of the covenant.

## Check out the Family

- Abraham told him where to look for a wife. In other words, family background of our children's potential spouses should be taken into consideration. (24:3-4)
- Even though Abraham's family were idol worshippers (Joshua 24:2) it seems that they were not as evil as the Canaanites.
- The Canaanites were notorious for their abominable customs in their idol worship.

## What was Eliezer Looking For?

- Hospitality
- Cooperative
- Industrious
- Considerate
- Beauty (24:16)
- Chastity (24:16)
- Willingness (24:57)

## Prayer

- Abraham had obviously prayed for this situation (24:7)
- Eliezer prayed for direction (24:12)
- God was answering while Eliezer was praying (24:15). See Isaiah 65:24.
- Bathe all things in prayer

## The Aftermath

- Isaac and Rebekah are married.
- "he loved her; and thus was Isaac consoled after his mother's death" (24:67).
- They loved one another and their relationship provided for Isaac's emotional needs.

## Type/Pattern of the Holy Spirit

- Eliezer finding Isaac's bride could be a type/pattern for the bride of Christ.

## Abraham's Other Descendants

- Keturah was a concubine of Abraham (1 Chron. 1:32)
- The text shows that Abraham was the father of many nations thus fulfilling God's promise (17:4)
- Abraham provided for all his children but Isaac was the chief heir (25:6)
- One of these son's is Midian the father of the Midianites. Moshe would find a wife and a wise father-in-law among them.

## Abraham's Death

- Ishmael attended the funeral implying a reconciliation with Abraham (25:9)
- "was gathered to his people" (25:8) – an indication that those who had died were regarded as people still existing. This is an early testimony to belief in life after death.