

A Burial Place for Sarah

Key Verses: *“And [Abraham] communed with them, saying, If it be your mind that I should bury my dead out of my sight; hear me, and intreat for me to Ephron the son of Zohar, 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 buryingplace amongst you.”*
—Genesis 23:8,9

Selected Scripture:
Genesis 23:1-20

THE FAITH OF ABRAHAM

is a central theme in the plan of God. Throughout his life and his many demonstrations of faith, Sarah was by Abraham's side. Therefore, Jehovah changed their original names, Abram and Sarai, to new ones befitting their faithfulness. “Neither shall thy name any more be called Abram, but thy name shall be Abraham; for a father of many nations have I made thee. And I will make thee exceeding fruitful, and I will make nations of thee, and kings shall come out of thee. ... And God said unto Abraham, as for Sarai thy wife, thou shalt not call her name Sarai, but Sarah shall her name be. And I will bless her and give thee a son also of her: yea, I will bless her, and she shall be a mother of nations; kings of people shall be of her.”—Gen. 17:5,6,15,16

Such testimony from the Almighty speaks volumes

concerning the character of these two foundations of a great nation. “Listen to me, all who hope for deliverance—all who seek the LORD! Consider the rock from which you were cut, the quarry from which you were mined. Yes, think about Abraham, your ancestor, and Sarah, who gave birth to your nation. Abraham was only one man when I called him. But when I blessed him, he became a great nation.”—Isa. 51:1,2, *New Living Translation*

The Apostle Paul declares that we are the spiritual children of Abraham if we have strong faith such as his: “Does he who supplies the Spirit to you and works miracles among you do so by works of the law, or by hearing with faith—just as Abraham believed God, and it was counted to him as righteousness? Know then that it is those of faith who are the sons of Abraham.”—Gal. 3:5-7, *English Standard Version*

One of Abraham’s final acts of faith is shown in today’s lesson in the acquisition of a burial place for Sarah. We read of his respectful negotiation with the Hittites: “I am a foreigner and stranger among you. Sell me some property for a burial site here so I can bury my dead. The Hittites replied to Abraham, Sir, listen to us. You are a mighty prince among us. Bury your dead in the choicest of our tombs. None of us will refuse you his tomb for burying your dead.”—Gen. 23:4-6, *New International Version*

Here were two tests of Abraham’s faith—an appeal to pride as a mighty prince, and an offer of the choicest of the tombs of the Hittites for no charge. Even though God said that all the land would be given to him and his descendants, he did not take it by force. Honorably, Abraham purchased, at full price, the cave of Machpelah, which would be the burial place for Abraham, Sarah, Isaac, Rebekah, Jacob, and Leah. (Gen. 49:29-32) Thus, in one cave lies the forerunners of the “seed” which will bless all mankind in the Messianic kingdom.—Gal. 3:16,26-29 ■