

Torah: B'resheet (Genesis) 23:1-25:18 Haftarah: Malakhim Alef (1 Kings) 1:1-31 B'rit Hadashah: Galatians 4:21-31		<i>year 1</i> 23:1-24:9	<i>year 2</i> 24:10-52	<i>year 3</i> 24:53-25:18
	1	23:1 – 4	24:10 – 14	24:53 – 58
	2	23:5 – 7	24:15 – 20	24:59 – 61
	3	23:8 – 12	24:21 – 26	24:62 – 67
	4	23:13 – 16	24:27 – 33	25:1 – 6
	5	23:17 – 20	24:34 – 41	25:7 – 11
	6	24:1 – 4	24:42 – 49	25:12 – 15
	7	24:5 – 9	24:50 – 52	25:16 – 18

and they were the life of Sarah / one hundred years and twenty years and seven years / the years of the life of Sarah	<i>va'yihyu khayey Saráh / me'ah shana ve'esriym shanah ve'shéva shanim / sh'néy khayey Saráh</i>	וַיְהִי חַיֵּי שָׂרָה מֵאָה שָׁנָה וְעֶשְׂרִים שָׁנָה וְשִׁבְעַת שָׁנִים שָׁנֵי חַיֵּי שָׂרָה:
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This is a Parashah of transition, and love. Avraham's life experiences climaxed with the binding of Yitz'khak (The Akedah). We never hear of God speaking to Avraham for the rest of his life. All of Avraham's tests are now behind him... except two: 1) purchasing a burial place for his wife Sarah, and, 2) finding a bride for his son, Yitz'khaq. These two tasks will secure his posterity through 1) **land** (Part 1) and through 2) **descendants** (Part 2).

These are two of the promises God gave him. These two actions manifest in the burial of Sarah at Machpelah and the story of Rivkah (the union of Rivkah and Yitzchak) which now frame the narrative.

The haftarah tells the parallel story of King David's old age.

Aliyah Summaries

- Gen. 23:1-4 Part 1: Land - Securing Real Estate through a family Burial Site** - Sarah dies in Hebron at 127 years old. Sarah was 90 when she bore Yitz'khak (Ge. 17:17, 21:5), dying three years before his marriage to Rivkah at age 40 (Ge. 24:67, 25:20). Avraham comes from Be'er-Sheva to mourn her and rises (*yáqam* – יָקַם) to obtain an inheritable burial site (*akhuzat-qéver* – אֲחֻזַּת-קֶבֶר). But he is a self-described “alien resident” (*ger-v'tosav* – גֵּר-וְתוֹשָׁב), unable to purchase land. The word “give/grant” (*natan* – נָתַן) means “to sell” in this context (Ge. 23:4). It appears seven times in this formal, delicate negotiation.
- Gen. 23:5-7** Avraham is treated respectfully, called a “prince of God” (*nesiy' Elohiym* – נְסִיאַ אֱלֹהִים) and given permission to bury his dead in Hebron. He responds respectfully with dignity and gratitude.
- Gen. 23:8-12** Avraham addresses the land-owner indirectly, through the people of the land as if they must first support his name-your-price legal proposal. When negotiations become direct, they remain fully in public view. The owner, Ephron counters with his “free” offer, to which Avraham responds with a respectful bow. The name *Mak'pelah* (מַכְפֶּלֶה) may mean “double” – referring to chambers in the cave.
- Gen. 23:13-16** Avraham wisely refuses Ephron's “free” gift, urging him to name his price, which he does. Avraham immediately and publicly pays the price.
- Gen. 23:17-20** Escrow is closed – identity of both parties, location of property and contents are deeded over. Avraham buries Sarah in the cave in simplicity, completing the transaction in good faith before the sons of Het.
- Gen. 24:1-4 Part 2: Securing a Legacy - A Wife for Yitz'khak** – with the needs of dead addressed, Avraham now turns to the needs of the living. The anonymous trusted servant (Eliezer? Ge. 15:2)

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takes a unique oath (deathbed? Ge. 47:29) to find a wife for Yitz'khak. This woman will have to be willing to make the same sacrifices as Avraham (compare Ge. 12:1-3 with Ge. 24:3-8, 35, 41, 58)

7. **Gen. 24:5-9** Here are the last recorded words of Avraham. He has grown much since his early doubts (Ge. 15:2, 8). Isaac's presence in the land is the fulfilment of God's promise of legacy and land – and the reason he cannot leave the land (Ge. 24:6).

Thought Focus

Faith, Land, People – Avraham's faith walk with God reached its climax with the binding of Yitz'khak. But there remained two important issues: the promise of The Land, and the promise of a people. These two issues are addressed in the acquisition of *Mak'pelah*, and finding a bride for Yitz'khak.

Uniting Time and Space: Rashi: When Sarah was 100 she was as pure as she was when she was 20 and at 20 she was as innocent and beautiful as she was when she was 7. She was a princess (Sarai/שָׂרַי -> Sarah/שָׂרָה - Ge. 17:15) uniting the moments of her 127-year life to become greater than the sum of their parts, setting the pattern of queenship to come – a ruler of nations (e.g. Esther ruled “127” provinces) uniting *time* and *space*. (Is. 51:2)

Non-miraculous Intervention: God does not miraculously intervene in the unfolding events in this parashah. Yet his guiding hand is evident from start to finish. We can be absolutely confident that he is at work accomplishing his plan in the natural, commonplace events in our daily lives.

Daily Devotional questions for reflection and application

1. (23:1) Life is short. The years pass by. How are you spending them? Are you making the most of each and every day? (Mat 6:34, Jam 4:13, Pro 3:5-6, Heb 11:13-16)
2. (23:17) God gave the land to Avraham through a covenant, yet he purchases Efron's field. We were bought with a price (1Co 6:20) and belong to God. Are you claiming more of “the land” every day?
3. (24:10) Avraham's servant held “all of his master's goods in hand.” Likewise, we are fully authorized to represent our Master. Are you moving in power and boldness with all of His goods in your hands? (Act 4:23-31, Mar 16:14-18, Heb 2:3-4)
4. (24:27) Avraham's servant thanked and credited Adonai with leading him in “the way.” Are you walking in the way He has prepared for you, or your own way? (Amo 7:14-15, 2Sa 7:8-16, 2Sa18-29)
5. (24:53) Eliezer paid a “bride price” to Rivkah's family, but also gave gifts specifically to her. As the bride of Messiah, what does that mean to you? (1Co 2:9, Rom 8:32)
6. (25:5) Avraham gave all he had to Yitz'chak. In who are you investing all you have? (Zec 8:13)
7. (25:16) God fulfilled his promise to Yishma'el. How have his descendants responded? (Rom 1:18-21)