

Parashah #5

(Updated 11.22.08)

Chayei-Sarah ~ חיי שרה ~ Sarah's life

Torah: B'reshheet/Genesis 23:1-25:18

Haftarah: M'lakhim Alef/1st Kings 1:1-31

B'rit Hadashah: Mattityahu/Matthew 8:19-22; 27:3-10; Luke 9:57-62

As I began to study the Parashah for this week, I had to look on the calendar to see if there was supposed to be a double reading because this one seemed so short. Only after I started digging did I start saying **todah HaShem/thank you, L~rd** that it isn't any longer than it is. This has so much meat in it; we can't begin to cover it all in our allotted time!!!

Before I go further, I want to share something that I read the other day. It is **SO** good and it is **SO** true. **“When we pray, we talk to G~d; and when we study, G~d talks to us.”** Let's not lose sight of that and allow Him time to talk to us.

The end of last week's Parashah recorded the birth of (Reev-kah) **Rivkah/Rebecca** in **B'reshheet/Genesis 22:23**, which occurred before the death of Sarah. Jewish tradition teaches that a righteous person is not taken from the world until his or her successor has been born.

CHAPTER 23

Although this Parashah is entitled “life of Sarah” or “Sarah's life”, it actually talks about her death and burial more than it talks about her life. However in the first two verses it says “Sarah lived to be 127 years old; these were the years of Sarah's life.” How does your Torah/Bible read in **verse 1**? Six different translations read “127 years old”; however the King James Version, The American Standard, the Chumash and the Tanakh read “Sarah's lifetime was one hundred years, twenty years and seven years”. SO? You might ask, what's the difference? The Sages explain that Sarah's life was divided into three unique periods. At one hundred, she was as sinless as a twenty year old and at twenty she still had the wholesome beauty of a seven year old. One of the Rabbi's commented that a child's beauty is pure and isn't ever used to tempt others to go astray. Part of Sarah's greatness was, despite her beauty as an adult, all who saw her recognized her purity and innocence. Wow! What a testimony!!!

Many believe that Sarah's death was a direct result of the (Ah-key-dah) **Akeidah/Binding of Isaac**. Satan told her that Avraham had actually slaughtered (Yitz-kahk) **Yitz'chak/Isaac**; she cried out in grief and died which explains why Avraham and Yitz'chak were not present at her death. Some commentators say she breathed her last breath with pride, knowing she had succeeded in raising a son, willing to give up even his life in the service of HaShem. A foreshadow, I believe, of **Yeshua, Ha Mashiach/Jesus, The Messiah**.

Verse 2 tells us that Sarah died in **Chevron/Hebron**, also known as **Kiriath-arbah**, literally **City of Four**. It is believed that the name of the city was given prophetically because four very important couples would be buried there: Adam and Eve, Avraham and Sarah, **Yitz'chak/Isaac** and **Rivkah/Rebecca** and **Ya'akov/Jacob** and Leah.

We learn about the Cave of Machpelah (say Mahk pay-lah) in **verse 9**. The word **machpelah** means **double**. There are a couple of thoughts concerning this. One, being that it had two chambers, one upper and one lower. However, I tend to ascribe to the one that supports the idea that it was for the **couples** who would be buried there.

You will hear me say, from time to time, that I believe it is important to “walk Torah” and I certainly had that opportunity during the past three weeks my husband and I were in Israel. It was during this week, we had the opportunity to go to **Chevron/Hebron** to visit the tombs of Avraham and Sarah. Also, not far away is the burial place of **Rut/Ruth**, the Moabite daughter-in-law of Naomi who ultimately married Boaz and was the great-grandmother of **Melekh Daveed/King David**. King David's father, (Yeh-shy) **Yishai/Jesse** is buried in **Chevron/Hebron**, as well.

Interestingly, the modern state of Israel has given Hebron, the burial place of the Hebrew Patriarchs, to the Palestinians, supposedly for peace. Have the leaders of Israel, who have done this, lost their connection to the past as recorded in the Tanach? In my opinion, too many people in this day and age focus solely on the future and have lost sight of the past. While it is important not to **live** in the past, it **IS** important for us to **learn** from the past.

Avraham has a rather lengthy diatribe, in **verses 3-20**, with the sons of Het, specifically, (Eh-frone ~ rhymes with phone) **'Efron/Ephron**, concerning a proper burial site for his beloved, Sarah. Avraham makes his initial request from the Hittites council, who in turn treated him with utmost respect and offered to **give** him one of their personal burial places but Avraham indicated the specific plot he desired which belonged to **'Efron/Ephron**, one of their more rich and

distinguished council members. **'Efron/Ephron** indicated that he would give the entire field as a "gift" but Avraham was interested in the cave only. Long story short . . . **'Efron/Ephron** states it is worth 400 shekels but says **"between me and you ~ what's 400 shekels?"** indicating that he would GIVE it but, in reality, had no intention of doing so. In the finality, **'Efron/Ephron** charged Avraham 4 times over and commentary says Avraham paid the equivalent of one million ordinary shekels for the cave.

At this juncture, although Avraham's descendents have been promised the entire land of **Kena'an/Canaan**, he did not own one piece of land on which to bury Sarah. According to the Stone Edition of the Artscroll Chumash, this is one of three places where Scripture attests to the Israel's "uncontestable possession of the Holy Land".

- The Cave of Machpelah,
- The site of the Temple and
- The Tomb of **Yosef/Joseph**

. . . were all purchased without bargaining and paid for with legal tender.

It seems to me that HaShem had this detailed information about the purchase of these locations recorded in the Tanakh (Bible) in order to provide proof to the world that these places, as well as the rest of the Holy Land, absolutely are the national inheritance of the Jewish people. I'm sure that our Abba Father was well pleased with Avraham, who was in great grief over the loss of his beloved Sarah, when he had the foresight to purchase the land in **Kiriath-arbah/Hebron** for his people as a lasting legal inheritance.

For those of you who know me, you know that I love (eve-reet) **Ivrit** which is Hebrew for **Hebrew** and (eve-reem) **Ivrim** is Hebrew for **Hebrews**. Now that we have that out of the way, here is your Ivrit lesson for the day . . . (keh-vehr ah-vote) **kever avot** is Hebrew for **grave of our fathers**.

Before we leave this chapter, it is good to acknowledge that this is the first instance in scripture where burial of the dead is mentioned. As Brother Lynn Greuter has mentioned, "Burial is Biblical; cremation is not. Burial is the standard set in the Word of G~d, here as well as other places." Actually, many rules concerning burial and the period of mourning are taken from the details of this Parashah. One of these customs is the eulogy. The word translated **eulogize** is from a Hebrew root word which means **to tell a story**. Actually, what Avraham did at Sarah's burial was to relate the highlights of her life to those who were attending. I'm sure this helped Avraham work through his own personal grief as well as affording him the opportunity to show honor and respect to Sarah, whom he loved very deeply.

In today's culture, at more and more funerals, we see a portion of the service being set aside for those who want to come forward to say a few words about the deceased. Of course, it is considered a "Christian thing". However, here we find that it originated with our Jewish father, Avraham, from these passages. The purpose of this tradition is to help preserve the good memory of the one who died, as well as help the mourners in the grief process.

CHAPTER 24

In the last chapter, we were introduced to the "first Jewish burial" and in this chapter we learn about the "first Jewish wedding"! After the mourning period for Sarah was over, Avraham now takes it upon himself to provide for the future by finding a wife for **Yitz'chak/Isaac**. However, Yitz'chak's mate had to be a worthy successor to Sarah. She had to be the next Sarah of the Jewish people, a woman who would be a wife, a mother and most of all, a Matriarch. To find such a woman, Avraham turned to his and Sarah's ancestral home, to make such a selection.

Verse 2 says that "Avraham said to the servant who had served him the longest . . ." Did you notice that a name for this servant was not mentioned in this entire portion? I believe that Abraham summoned (Eh-lee-ay-zer) Eliezer. So to simplify matters, I will be using the name Eliezer for the remainder of this study. The Chumash tells us that Eliezer was the (roesh yeh-sheve-ah) **rosh yeshivah** of Avraham's household; **the one who taught** and exemplified Avraham's way of life. In Hebrew, **rosh** means **head** and **yeshivah** is a **school of higher learning**.

First Fruits of Zion provided some additional Hebrew for me. I learned that a person sent on a mission is called a (say shah-lee-ahk) **Shaliach**, Hebrew for **sent one**. This word was translated into Greek as "apostolos" which became "apostle" in English. Consequently, Eliezer is an apostle of and is sent on a mission by Avraham. Gosh, then this could translate into Yeshua being "**The** Shaliach", who in turn had apostles who were each a shaliach and each one of us is a shaliach too!

Eliezer (אלעזר) means **G~d of Help** and Avraham gave him instructions to find a suitable mate for Yitz'chak by going back to Haran to Avraham's people. However, in **verse 6** and again in **verse 8**, there was an additional mandate to make sure that Yitz'chak did **NOT** go back to Haran. So with that in mind, Eliezer takes 10 camels and begins his journey toward Haran. Eliezer was not interested in a wealthy girl for Yitz'chak. He was more interested in someone of modest means; one who would draw water herself instead of having a servant do so.

I need to mention a couple of things here . . .

- One is just a reminder that in the telling of these events, I believe . . .
 - Avraham, the Father, represents HaShem;
 - Yitz'chak, the Son, represents Yeshua and
 - Eliezer, the Servant/Helper, represents the Holy Spirit.

Notice that the Father sends his servant back to **His** people (so much for replacement theology!) to get a bride for His Son. I believe it is incumbent on us as believers in Yeshua to truly become "grafted-in" to the vine and take up His ways (WWJD). We serve a Jewish Messiah who honored His Father's (mo-eh-deem) **moedim/appointed times** and I believe we should do no less. First Fruits of Zion has interesting commentary concerning this matter and I must say I concur with their comments, which I quote here: "Sadly, historical Christianity, within a few short centuries, incorporated a whole host of pagan elements into the church. Some of the more obvious concessions are the adoration of idols and the honoring of pagan feast days."

- The second occurs in **verses 2 and 9**. What's with this "hand under the thigh"? I found an answer! According to commentary in the Chumash, "Thigh is a euphemism for the male organ." According to Rashi, the reason Avraham chose it to certify the oath has to do with placing one's hand on some sacred object, such as a Torah scroll or tefillin. "Because circumcision was the first precept given to Avraham, and because he fulfilled it through much pain, it was particularly precious to him, so Avraham asked Eliezer to take his oath upon it."

As I was studying the above verses and comparing the triune nature of HaShem with Avraham, Yitz'chak and Eliezer, my mind was drawn to the movie "Fiddler On The Roof" and the song, "Matchmaker, Matchmaker". Isn't that in essence the role that Eliezer was to play? Wouldn't it be great if the Ruach HaKodesh was allowed to be the "Matchmaker" for most individuals?! I know, I know, my mind travels down some strange trails but it is, nonetheless, how my Father communicates with me. Truly, the (Rue-ahk Ha Koe-desh) Ruach HaKodesh is THE Matchmaker for those of us who have chosen to study Torah, become Torah observant and recognize the fact that Yeshua was born a Jew, walked Torah and taught as a Jew, died a Jew and rose again from the dead as a Jew.

In **verse 15**, we read that **Rivkah/Rebekah** is the daughter of B'tu'el, son of Milkah, the wife of Nachor, Avraham's brother. This means that she is a great niece to Avraham and a niece to Sarah. Given these facts, it's a pretty sure sign that Rivkah inherited the character traits of Avraham's family.

We all know the story how (Reev-kah) **Rivkah/Rebecca** came, retrieved water from the well, gave Eliezer a drink and further offered to water his camels. I think one of the things we often fail to consider is the enormity of the task she undertook. Eliezer had several other men with him and a train of 10 camels. It is reported that each camel is capable of consuming a minimum of 14 gallons of water . . . that computes to 140 gallons!!!! **Verse 20** says she "kept running to the well to draw water and she drew for all his camels". This paints a picture for me that the trough was not right next to the well and that she didn't take her good, sweet, southern time in this mission. This picture reminds me of Avraham "running to greet the visitors" the third day after his (Breet Mee-lah) **B'rit Milah/circumcision** from last week's parashah. Truly, Rivkah was eager to perform (keh-sehd) **chessed**, Hebrew for **kindness**, with no regard for self. A more literal and perhaps better translation of **chessed** is **covenant devotion**.

We know that Avraham entrusted Eliezer to find a wife for Yitz'chak without any specific criteria other than she was not to be a Canaanite. However, there are some hints in **verses 12, 21, 26, 27**, etc. It seems that Eliezer shared Avraham's trust in HaShem, so what criteria did Eliezer choose for Yitz'chak's wife? I believe he used the following criteria, which would be well for anyone to consider when choosing a spouse.

- Hospitable
- Cooperative
- Industrious
- Considerate

- Beauty (in Rivkah's case)
- Chastity
- Willingness

Those are several things, from this story, one should consider in a marriage partner in addition to the consideration of The Matchmaker, the Ruach HaKodesh. Family background should be taken into consideration as well. Even (Rahv Shah-ool) **Rav Sha'ul/Rabbi Paul** encourages us in **2nd Corinthians 6:14** “. . . do not be unequally yoked”. Most importantly however, is for the entire matter to be bathed in prayer. Avraham prayed for the angel of HaShem to go before Eliezer in his search for the bride (**B' resheet/Genesis 24:7**). In addition to Avraham, Eliezer was praying about the situation as he arrived in Nahor. The amazing thing about this prayer was HaShem was beginning to answer it while Eliezer was talking to Him. That reminds me of “Before they call I will answer; while they are still speaking I will hear.” **Yesha'yahu/Isaiah 65:24**.

Verses 22 & 23 indicate that Eliezer was so sure that HaShem had provided Yitz'chak's future bride that he gave her lavish gifts of a _____.

- Three translations rendered it “nose ring”;
- Four translated it as “earring”
- Still four others as “ring” and
- Two as bracelets

He gave her these gifts before he even knew who she was. Also without knowing her family, he asked if he could lodge with her family.

There is great Jewish symbolism in the gifts that were given. The ring, whether for finger, nose or ear, weighed 1/5 ounce or a (beh-kah) **beka** which is equivalent to a **half shekel**, which symbolized the amount that every Jew would contribute for the Sanctuary every year. The two bracelets symbolized the two Tablets of the Law and the weight of four ounces equaled ten shekels symbolizing the Ten Commandments.

Verses 28-31 bring brother (Lah-vahn) **Lavan/Laban** into the picture. **Lavan/Laban** seems to take a primary role in this family. In those days, women had separate houses where they did their work and Rivkah runs to tell her mother and others there about the encounter at the well.

Another woman at a well . . . goes to tell . . .

In **Yochanan/John 4** Yeshua encounters the Samaritan woman at the well. There is the ensuing conversation in which Yeshua tells her she has been married 5 times and she's not married to the one she is currently living with, thereby establishing credibility, for Himself, since she had never met Him before. Because most of us have grown up with a Western culture mentality I want us to consider something. A few verses later, in **Yochanan/John 4:29**, she goes back to the city and she tells the people/men about the man with whom she spoke and they go to see Him. Okay, I dare say that most of us have been taught that this woman was of ill repute since she had 5 husbands and was living with another one. Right? Tell me, would the people (or the men who sat at the gate of the city, who were the community leaders) normally give ear to one of ill repute? I don't think so! Consider this: In that day and age, if a woman's husband died or was killed in battle, leaving her childless, the next closest relative was to be her kinsman redeemer i.e. marry her. Could it be that this woman was a good person whose husbands all predeceased her and perhaps, could she have been caring for a male relative, living with him but not co-habiting with him? Sometimes, when studying scripture, it helps to know the culture and customs of that time.

Sorry that was so lengthy but it's another parallel, which I felt needed an explanation. Both women had an encounter at the well; both went back to tell others about “the man”.

Okay, back to **Lavan/Laban**. Upon hearing the report, **Lavan/Laban**, being either the only son or the eldest son, took charge. Reports indicate that **Lavan/Laban** is motivated by greed, which we certainly know from later scriptures involving the episode concerning Ya'akov, Leah and Rachel. He believed since Rivkah had received such extravagant gifts, as a young woman; just imagine what lay in store for him! So out the door he runs to try to make a good impression on the wealthy and generous Eliezer.

Verse 32 states “so the man entered the house and unmuzzled the camels”. This is just another hidden indicator pointing to the humble and considerate Avraham. His livestock were always muzzled when they were away from their own pastures so they could not graze in other’s fields.

Okay, enough of rabbit trails . . . back to **Rivkah/Rebecca** (**verses 42-50**) Now Eliezer tells the entire story of being sent to find a suitable spouse for Yitz’chak and doesn’t leave out any details, in hopes of convincing them that it is okay for him to take Rivkah to Yitz’chak. The gifts at the well were meant as a betrothal. Since everything seems to go well Eliezer now gives additional gifts to Rivkah which, in those days, served as the customary ring does today. Then, in **verse 55** her mother and brother try to renege, requesting she stay an additional year or 10 months, at least. Normally this is not an unusual request because ordinarily it was appropriate for a young bride to have approximately a year to prepare for her marriage. However Eliezer insists that they not delay as he needs to return to his master.

Another interjection here; I checked 11 different translations and **verse 55** is rendered as “Let the girl stay with us **a few days, at least 10.**” The Chumash and Tanakh renders it as “**an additional year or 10 (months)**”. Given the explanation above, we can see, again, the importance of knowing the culture and custom of the time and how lack of that knowledge can lead to mistranslations.

“So they sent their sister Rivkah away, with her nurse . . .” (**verse 59**) and in **verse 61** “Then Rivkah and her maids . . .” Although Rivkah was leaving her family and homeland, it is apparent that she is not going alone to a land and people whom she does not know. Another tradition to consider here: It was customary for a girl’s nurse to remain with her as her servant throughout her life.

We all know about the return trip and how Yitz’chak was in the field and saw them approaching and how Rivkah saw a man in the distance and dismounted from the camel. When she learned that it was Yitz’chak, she veiled herself. I believe this gesture was one of respect and modesty, much like some use prayer scarves of today. This is probably where the tradition of the wedding veil came from.

In **verse 64**, when Rivkah saw Yitz’chak, the literal Hebrew says “she fell from the camel.” The Hebrew word used for **fell** is (nah-fall) **naphal** (נָפַל). Most translators smooth that out to say “she dismounted from the camel”. However, there is interesting commentary from the Sages concerning this matter and, “just for grins”; I want to share it with you. First of all, we need to acknowledge the fact that we have seen neither hide nor hair of Yitz’chak since the **Akeidah/binding**. One of the explanations is that . . . “After the sacrifice on Mount Moriah, Abraham returned to Beer-Sheba, the scene of so many of his joys. Isaac was carried to Paradise by angels, and there he sojourned for three years.” (Legends of the Jews by Louis Ginzberg) “And Isaac went out . . .” From where did he go out? From Paradise. No wonder Rebekah lost her equilibrium as it says “and she fell from the camel” – for what she perceived was Isaac coming down from Paradise . . .”

As preposterous as this may seem, it does remind me of another biblical character who had a similar happenstance in Salem (Jerusalem). He was bound, sacrificed, resurrected and ascended to Paradise. It’s a remarkable parallel to our Messiah. I can see how Rebekah represents the bride of Messiah, gathered by the apostles and prepared for the Master’s return. She does not see her husband until she perceives him descending from the heavens. We, too, await Messiah’s return from the heavens, because we are told in **Acts 1:11**, “This Yeshua, who has been taken up from you into heaven, will come in just the same way as you have watched Him go into heaven.”

“And Isaac brought her into the tent of Sarah his mother; he married Rebecca, she became his wife and he loved her; and thus was Isaac consoled after his mother.” (**Verse 67**) Notice the progression . . . he married her, then they consummated their marriage and he loved her. And it is still that way with some of the religious Jews to this very day. It is one thing to be married, but quite another that your spouse truly loves you to the extent that all emotional needs are fulfilled by that precious relationship. This was the case with **Yitz’chak/Isaac** and his bride, **Rivkah/Rebekah**.

This week’s and next week’s Parashah reading is particularly personal to some of us and to my friend, Deborah, in particular. When several of us went to Israel, the first time, we were “walking Torah” and it was during this time of Parashot. We had an encounter in the park, near The Great Synagogue in Jerusalem, where **Yitz’chak/Isaac** proposed to Deborah. When Deborah said she didn’t know him, one of his comments was, “marry first, love come later” and, as we will see next week, Yitz’chak was forty (both of them; the one in Torah and the one in Jerusalem)!!!

It is told that as long as Sarah was living, a lamp burned in her tent from one Sabbath eve to the next, her bread was blessed and a cloud, signifying the (Sheh-kee-nah) **Shekinah/Divine Presence**, hung over her tent. (No, it isn’t pronounced sheh-ki-nah!!) When Sarah died, these blessings stopped but when Rebekah entered the tent, they began again.

CHAPTER 25

Verses 1-4 tell us that Avraham remarries, this time to Keturah and has six additional children. Upon deeper study in the Chumash, we learn that Keturah was actually Hagar. The name change indicates that her deeds had become as beautiful as (key-tore-ehs) *ketores/incense* and because she remained chaste. *Keturah* in Aramaic means *restrained* because she chose to do so from the time she was separated from Avraham. Avraham dies when he is 175 years old and is buried, by his sons, *Yitz'chak/Isaac* and *Yishma'el/Ishmael*, in the cave of Machpelah with his wife, Sarah.

Verses 12-18 give the genealogy of Ishmael, which were twelve tribal rulers. Then he dies at 137 years of age. His sons settled near all his kinsmen, near Egypt.

Chayei-Sarah ~ תיי שרה ~ Sarah's life Haftarah: M'lakhim Alef/1st Kings 1:1-31

Our haftarah portion tells the story of *Melekh Dah-vid/King David* and his promise to make his son *Sh'lomo/Solomon* king after him. According to the account in the first chapter of the book of Kings, Dah-vid's son Adoniyah was doing his best to prevent the king's promise to make Sh'lomo the next king after Dah-vid's rule ended. To prevent a mistake from happening, Sh'lomo's mother, (Baht Sheh-vah) *Bat-Shevah/Bathsheba* was warned by the prophet (Nah-tahn) *Natan/Nathan* to inform the aging king of this insurrection. In the end, she alerts her husband, Natan confirms the warning, and Dah-vid swears an oath to her that their son Sh'lomo would indeed succeed him upon the throne, and that in this way, she would be taken care of.

The complicated details, surrounding the divided household of Isra'el's most famous and loved king, are indeed tragic. Dah-vid's weakness involving other women had sown the seed that later grew into a most troublesome thorny-weed in his kingdom, a weed that would seek to choke him until he went down into the grave. The internal family feuding that he experienced, no doubt, weakened this once strong "boy who slew the giant". He was still a man after G~d's own heart, but in his latter old age, he was reaping the consequences of his own lustful appetite.

The opening verses of this haftarah make the connection to our parashah, Chayyei-Sarah. A young virgin, of beauty and servitude was chosen (by his servants) to tend to the physical needs of the aging king. She would come to keep him warm, without fulfilling any sexual obligation to him. I want to draw your attention to the fact that the father (Dah-vid) is making sure that his son would inherit the kingdom after him. Dah-vid swears an oath to his wife that this would be the case. In doing so, he invokes the name of HaShem to strengthen the validity of his oath. This was an ancient custom that meant that what was promised would surely come to pass. His heartfelt concern for the provision of his son, and the well being of his wife, can be seen even up until these last few years of Dah-vid's life.

I see Dah-vid as a type of Avraham, caring and providing for the needs of his immediate family; seeing to it that the promises given to him by HaShem, are handed down to his offspring. HaShem had promised Dah-vid that one of his heirs would always sit on his throne. HaShem had promised Avraham that his seed would possess the Land of Promise. Even though Adoniyah was physically from the loins of Dah-vid, the king knew in his heart that it was Sh'lomo who would be the rightful king of Isra'el after him (**1 Chronicles 22:6-10**). This is also similar to our father Avraham, and his dealings with the handmaid Hagar and her son Yishma'el. Even though Yishma'el was a physical son of his, Avraham knew that it was Yitz'chak that would inherit the promise given to him by HaShem. We see that in a brief moment of weakness, both men created a situation that eventually expanded into devastating consequences for their families following after them.

Today, our loving *Abba/Father* has promised that we will someday inherit an eternal life of righteousness, forever to dwell with the Ultimate Son of Promise, our husband, Yeshua HaMashiach. If we will continue in trusting faithfulness to Him, through His Son, and through the power of another promise, the *Ruach HaKodesh/Holy Spirit*, we will indeed see the throne of the King of Kings with our own eyes!

Even though the two earthly fathers mentioned in this commentary were faulty human beings, making their fair share of mistakes like the rest of us, the power and forgiveness of HaShem, saw to it that the promises made to them came to pass anyway. What this means to us is that when HaShem makes a promise to His children He can be trusted to bring to pass what He has said! Bat-Sheva was worried about her position in the kingdom, in the event that Adoniyah ever made it to the throne. But we don't need to worry about any wannabe ruler trying to dethrone our King! He is *EI-Shaddai/Almighty One*, and His power lies in His Word!

Chayei-Sarah ~ חיי שרה ~ Sarah's life

B'rit Hadashah: Mattityahu/Matthew 8:19-22; 27:3-10; Luke 9:57-62

Mattityahu/Matthew 8:19-22 David Stern's Jewish New Testament Commentary is very interesting concerning **verses 21-22** and I quote . . . "Don't suppose this would-be (tahl-meed) **talmid/student** is traveling around with Yeshua while his father's corpse is waiting at home, stinking in the sun. The father is not dead yet!!! If he had been, the son would have been at home, sitting (shee-vah) shiv'ah. The son wishes to go home, live in comfort with his father till his death perhaps years hence, collect his inheritance and then, at his leisure, become a disciple. On this and other excuses see **Luke 9:57-62**. Let the spiritually dead, those concerned with the benefits of this world, including inheritances, remain with each other in life and eventually bury their own physically dead. The true talmid must get his priorities straight."

Regarding "sitting shiv'ah", **shivah** is Hebrew for **seven** and sitting shivah is the tradition of literally sitting in morning for seven days.

Mattityahu/Matthew 27:3-10 Then when Y'hudah, who had betrayed Him, saw that Yeshua had been condemned, he was seized with remorse and returned the thirty silver coins to the (co-hah-neem) **cohanim/priests** and elders, **4** saying, "I sinned in betraying an innocent man to death." "What is that to us?" they answered. That's your problem." **5** Hurling the pieces of silver into the sanctuary, he left; then he went off and hanged himself. **6** The head cohanim took the coins and said, "It is prohibited to put this into the Temple treasury, because it is blood money." **7** So they decided to use it to buy the potter's field as a cemetery for foreigners. **8** This is how it came to be called the Field of Blood, a name it still bears. **9** Then what (Year-me-yah-who) **Yirmeyahu/Jeremiah** the prophet spoke was fulfilled, "And they took the thirty silver coins, which was the price the people of Isra'el had agreed to pay for him, **10** and used them to buy the potter's field, just as the Lord directed me." (**Zechariah 11:12-13**)

When I read this passage concerning **Y'hudah/Judas** and his betrayal of **Yeshua/Jesus**, I am not struck as much by what Judas has done, as bad as it was, but by the hypocrisy of the chief priests and elders. Judas, in a moment of regret, wanted to give back the thirty pieces of silver he had been paid for betraying Yeshua. The chief priests and elders did not want the money back. Judas threw the money into the Temple, left, and hung himself for what he had done to his Master. The chief priests and elders did not want to put the money they had given to Judas back into the Temple treasury because it was money they had paid to purchase the betrayal of an innocent.

I find it amazing that the chief priests and elders were concerned about what the money they had paid to Judas had been used for rather than for what they had done to Yeshua. Of course, we know this was all part of G~d's plan for the salvation of mankind. Had this not happened where would mankind have wound up? Some in the Church use this as an example to paint the Jewish people as unredeemable but the Word of G~d says otherwise.

Luke 9:57-62 Here again, David Stern has some interesting comments from a Jewish perspective.

- Yeshua challenges the excuses of those whose commitment is weak.
- To the excuses of those who reject him altogether, he responds with fury and withdraws his offer.

To put this in perspective, either kind of excuse seems foolish, like the excuses people put forth today:

- "I can't believe in Yeshua because I'm Jewish" – but all the early believers were Jewish, as well as many since.
- "I'll have to give up too much" – yet far less than what is to be gained. The Bible has answers to all the excuses but there is no guarantee people will accept them.

The corresponding Psalm for this Torah portion is: Psalm 45