

Parashah #5

(Updated for 10.30.10)

Chayei-Sarah ~ חיי שרה ~ Sarah's life

Torah: B'resheet/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

Writer's note: I have learned most Christian commentators and Rabbis agree the complete plan of HaShem is in Torah and specifically in (say-fer B'reh-sheet) *Sefer B'resheet/Book of Genesis*. Most readers of scripture have not been taught to look for the Heavenly Father's plan and consequently miss what they are not looking for. With what is happening in the world, it is time for us to really pay attention!!!

As I began to study the Parashah for this week, I had to look at the calendar to see if there was supposed to be a double reading because this one seemed so short. After I started digging I started saying *todah HaShem/thank you, L~rd* 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 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 this 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'resheet/Genesis 22:23**, which occurred before the death of Sarah. Hebrew tradition teaches 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 about her life. However, the first verse 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 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 Rabbis commented, 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 Sarah's death was a direct result of the (Ah-key-dah) *Akeidah/Binding of Isaac*. Satan told her Avraham had actually slaughtered (Yitz-kahk) *Yitz'chak/Isaac*; she cried out in grief and died. This 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 Sarah died in *Chevron/Hebron*, also known as *Kiriath-arbah*, literally *City of Four*. It is believed the name of the city was given prophetically because four very important couples would be buried there: Adam and *Chaya/Eve*, *Avraham/Abraham* and Sarah, *Yitz'chak/Isaac* and *Rivkah/Rebecca* and *Ya'akov/Jacob* and Leah.

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

From time to time, you will hear me say I believe it is important to "walk Torah". I certainly had the opportunity to do so a couple of years ago as my husband and I were in Israel. It was during **THIS** Torah portion when 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 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. By the way, we traveled by armored bus to get to Hebron since it is considered to be in Palestinian territory.

In The Complete Jewish Bible, **verse 4** says, "I am a foreigner, living as an alien with you . . ." Five other translations have "I am a stranger and sojourner among you . . ." and other translations are similar. However, Rabbi Ya'akov Youlus shares with us the following:

"In verse 4, he says, literally, "I am here temporarily, but I am also a permanent resident." The two Hebrew words used are 'ger' which means 'temporary resident' and the word toshav which means 'dweller or resident'. This verse is usually mistranslated into English with Abraham saying, "I am a foreigner and a visitor . . ."

Avraham has a rather lengthy diatribe, in **verses 3-20**, with the sons of Het, specifically, (Ehfrone ~ 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 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 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. Avraham understood the dual nature of a promise. On one hand, once HaShem had 'given it' to him, Avraham knew in his heart the Land was his. On the other hand, Avraham had the wisdom to recognize HaShem had not told him WHEN he would inherit all the Land, only that he would. Therefore, embracing the promise was his act of faith but recognizing the Land was still in the possession of the children of Het was an act of humility. I believe Avraham's attitude was, "it is mine by promise; it will be mine in actuality in HaShem's perfect timing." This is a very important principle. All too often, we confuse PROMISE with POSSESSION. A promise from the Almighty is to be embraced with all our heart. Its possession is in the Hands of the One Who promised and our responsibility is, like Avraham, to walk in perfect faith toward the day of possession.

According to the Stone Edition of the Artscroll Chumash, this is one of three places where Scripture attests to 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 HaShem had this detailed information about the purchase of these locations recorded in the Tanakh (Bible) in order to provide proof to the world these places, as well as the rest of the Holy Land, absolutely are the national inheritance of the Hebrew people. I'm sure 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 I love (eve-reet) **Ivrit** which is Hebrew for **Hebrew** and (eve-ream) **Ivrim** is Hebrew for **Hebrews**. So, here is your Ivrit lesson for the day (keh-vehr ah-vote) **kever avot/grave of our fathers**.

Before we leave this chapter, it is good to acknowledge this is the first instance in scripture where burial of the dead is mentioned. According to Brother Lynn Greuter . . . **“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 meaning *to tell a story*. Actually, what Avraham did at Sarah’s burial was relate the highlights of her life to those attending. I’m sure this helped Avraham work through his personal grief as well as affording him the opportunity to show his deep love, honor and respect for Sarah.

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, from these passages, we find it originated with our Hebrew father, Avraham. The purpose is to help preserve the 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 Hebrew burial” and now we learn about the “first Hebrew wedding”! After the mourning period for Sarah, Avraham turns his thoughts to life. For HaShem’s promises to be fulfilled, Avraham must find 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 Hebrew people, a woman who would be a wife, a mother, and most of all, a Matriarch. To find such a woman, Avraham turned his thoughts to his and Sarah’s ancestral home.

Verse 2 says “Avraham said to the servant who had served him the longest . . .” Did you notice a name for this servant was not mentioned in this entire portion? I believe Avraham 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 Eliezer was the (roesh yeh-sheve-ah) *rosh yeshivah* of Avraham’s household. He was *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. A person sent on a mission is called a (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”. He, 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 and Avraham’s people. However, in **verse 6** and again in **verse 8**, there was an additional mandate to make sure Yitz’chak did **NOT** go back to Haran.

With this 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 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. In the telling of these events, I believe . . .
 - Avraham, the Father, represents HaShem
 - Eliezer, the Servant/Helper, represents the Holy Spirit
 - Yitz'chak, the Son, represents Yeshua

Notice 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 we should do no less. First Fruits of Zion has interesting commentary concerning this matter: “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.” I concur with their comments!

- 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.”

While studying the above verses and comparing the triune nature of HaShem with Avraham, Yitz'chak and Eliezer, my mind was drawn to “Fiddler On The Roof” and the song, “Matchmaker, Matchmaker”. Isn’t this the role 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 pursuant, and recognize the facts . . .

- Yeshua was born a Jew
- Yeshua walked Torah (that’s the only scripture at that time!)
- Yeshua taught Torah (for the same reason above)
- Yeshua died a Jew
- Yeshua rose from the dead as a Jew.

In **verses 12-14**, we find Eliezer has the FIRST recorded prayer in scripture. It is important to realize any time a subject is mentioned first in scripture, it sets the standard for all related subject matter which follows. In this case, the prayer was by a righteous servant on behalf of his master's will. We should apply this to our prayer life, just as Yeshua did in His . . . “not as I will but as thou will.” (**Mattit'yahu/Matthew 26:39**) Since this is the first recorded prayer, it is also the first recorded answer to prayer. In fact, the answer came before the prayer was even finished (**verse 15**). Our Heavenly Father is faithful to answer the prayers of His righteous servants.

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

We all know the story how **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 this task. Eliezer had several other men with him and a train of 10 camels. It is reported each camel is capable of consuming a minimum of 14 gallons of water . . . Hmmmm, this 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 she didn't take her good, sweet, southern time in this mission. This 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**. Rivkah certainly demonstrated the heart of a “servant”.

We know Avraham entrusted Eliezer to find a wife for Yitz'chak without any specific criteria other than she was not to be a Canaanite. Avraham knew the Canaanites were destined to be ejected from The Land and erased from history. It was impossible for his seed, to whom The Land was promised, should intermarry with a race from whom The Land was to be taken. Additionally, the Canaanite religion would, in later years, prove to be a toxic poison for the children of Israel, seducing them into idolatry and syncretism.

It seems Eliezer shared Avraham's trust in HaShem. So what criteria did Eliezer choose for Yitz'chak's wife? There are some hints in **verses 12, 21, 26, 27**, etc. 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 Aram Naharayim, Nahor's city. The amazing thing about this prayer was HaShem was beginning to answer it while Eliezer was talking to Him. This reminds me of **Yesha'yahu/Isaiah 65:24** “Before they call I will answer; while they are still speaking I will hear.”

Verses 22 & 23 indicate Eliezer was so sure HaShem had provided Yitz'chak's future bride 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 them.

There is great Hebraic symbolism in the gifts which were given . . .

- The ring, whether for finger, nose or ear, weighed 1/5 ounce or a (beh-kah) **beka** equivalent to a **half shekel**, which symbolized the amount every Hebrew would contribute for the Sanctuary every year.
- The two bracelets symbolized the two Tablets of the Law
- The weight of four ounces equaled ten shekels symbolizing the Ten Commandments.

Eliezer “bowed his head and prostrated himself before Adonai. Then he said, ‘Blessed be Adonai, G~d of my master Avraham, who has not abandoned his faithful love for my master; because Adonai has guided me to the house of my master's kinsmen.’” (**verses 26 & 27**). Did you notice Eliezer didn't wait until he went to bed to render thanks for answered prayer? He did it on the spot! So, when Adonai responds to our requests, let us be faithful to Him in return. Certainly, bowing in worship and glorifying Him with praise isn't too much to give to a G~d who answers our prayers.

Verses 28-31 bring brother (Lah-vahn) **Lavan/Laban** into the picture. **Lavan/Laban** seems to take a primary role in this family. This is someone we need to pay attention to and watch out for. Time will tell us he doesn't possess the good qualities which Avraham and Eliezer have. He represents hypocrisy. Even by his name he tries to disguise himself. Rabbi Ya'akov helps us with our Hebrew again, telling us the word **Lavan/Laban** means **white**, which is a beautiful name. **BUT**, the man Lavan is not white; he is actually ‘black’.

In those days, women had separate houses where they did their work and Rivkah runs to tell her mother and the others there about the encounter at the well.

But first, . . . 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 with whom she is currently living. He establishes 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 most of us have been taught 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 and were the community leaders) normally give ear to one of ill repute? I don't think so! Consider this: In that day, 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 this woman was a good person whose husbands all predeceased her? And could she, perhaps, 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 the 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 **Lavan/Laban** is motivated by greed, which we certainly know from later scriptures involving Ya'akov, Leah and Rachel. Since Rivkah, a young woman, had received such extravagant gifts, he believed similar 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. He hopes to convince them 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 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 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. (And I might add, there have been **way too many** mistranslations from the original Hebrew!!!)

As Rivkah’s family sent her off to Canaan, they offered her a blessing. “May you, our sister, become thousands of ten thousands, and may your seed possess the gates of those who hate them. (**verse 60**). This blessing seems closely connected to the blessing offered to Avraham after the binding of Yitz’chak. HaShem said, “I will greatly bless you and I will greatly multiply your seed as the stars of the heavens and as the sand which is on the seashore; and your seed shall possess the gate of their enemies” (**B’resheet/Genesis 22:17**). Possessing the gates of one’s enemies is a Hebrew idiom and speaks to the art of ancient warfare. A walled city was most vulnerable at its gates. To possess the gates of one’s enemies means to defeat one’s enemies. Similarly, in **Mattit’yahu/Matthew 16:18** Yeshua tells us the Gates of Hades will not overcome his Assembly/Community.

Hades is a Greek term for a mythological underworld of the dead. It is being used as a Greek translation for the Hebrew **שְׁאוֹל**, Sheol. When we think in terms of Hades or Hell as the capital city of satan’s empire where his demons live and torture the souls of the deceased, we have accidentally borrowed the Greek mythological meaning. The Hebrew Sheol does not have satanic connotations at all. It is a term for the place of the dead, used interchangeably with “the grave”. It is not the place from which satan operates. Contrary to Dante, Hell is not satan’s realm, it is his destiny. From a Hebrew perspective, Sheol is simply the grave and the place of the dead. For example, consider **Yasha’yahu/Isaiah 38:10** where **Hizkiyahu/Hezekiah** begs HaShem to spare his life when he prays, “Must I go through the gates of sheol and be robbed of the rest of my years?” The Gates of Sheol are the gates of the grave. They are the gates which keep the dead dead.

Getting back to Rivkah’s trip to Canaan . . . we all know about the return trip and how Yitz’chak was in the field and saw them approaching. Rivkah saw a man in the distance and dismounted from the camel. When she learned it was Yitz’chak, she veiled herself. I believe

this gesture was one of respect and modesty, much as some use prayer scarves of today. This is probably where the tradition of the wedding veil originated.

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. First, we have seen neither hide nor hair of Yitz'chak since the *Akeidah/binding*. One explanation is . . . "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 reminds me of another biblical character who had a similar experience 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 this way with some of the religious Hebrews to this very day. It is one thing to be married, but quite another if your spouse truly loves you to the extent 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 first went to Israel, 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".

It is told 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.

The pages of this story have been turning rather rapidly. So, too, the pages of our lives! Lately, we have seen much “**change**” but not necessarily the kind we would “**hope**” for. However, we are seeing prophecy fulfilled before our very eyes. The coming of the Messiah is getting closer and we can’t help but wonder if this will be the year. Will **we** be the ones to see the “restoration of all things”? Will **we** see the Kingdom of G~d ushered in? I think we will BUT what if **we** are not? Are **we** preparing our children, grandchildren, friends to continue turning the pages of life should **we** not be here?

CHAPTER 25

Verses 1-4 tell us Avraham remarries, this time to Keturah and has six additional children. Upon deeper study in the Chumash, we learn Keturah was actually Hagar. The name change indicates 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.

Of **GREAT** importance are **verses 5 & 6**! The important part is where it says Avraham gave everything which belonged to him to *Yitz’chak/Isaac*. This extremely important verse says, in BLACK AND WHITE, Avraham’s possessions and twofold blessing about the future of the physical land of *Kena’an/Canaan* and the spiritual leadership of the world will not go to *Yishma’el/Ishmael* or Avraham’s other children but to *Yitz’chak/Isaac*. Further more, **verse 6** tells us Avraham sent his other children away, just as he did Yishma’el, while he was still alive to another land. Bottom line, all of Avraham’s children with the exception of Yitz’chak were separated from the land of Kena’an and sent to the east. “East” is a word which refers to people who are going away from HaShem. Obviously, Yitz’chak was brought up in a different environment than the rest of Avraham’s children.

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 ~ **חיי 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, 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 which later grew into a most troublesome thorny-weed in his kingdom. This weed would seek to choke him until he went down into the grave. The internal family feuding, 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 lustful appetite.

The opening verses 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. Notice the fact the father (Dah-veed) is making sure his son inherits the kingdom after him. Dah-vid swears to his wife this would be the case. In doing so, he invokes the name of HaShem to strengthen the validity of his oath. This ancient custom means 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 right up to the last years of Dah-vid's life.

I see Dah-vid as a type of Avraham, caring and providing for his immediate family; seeing to it the promises given to him by HaShem are handed down to his offspring. HaShem had promised Dah-vid one of his heirs would always sit on his throne. HaShem had promised Avraham 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 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 his first born son, Avraham knew it was Yitz'chak who would inherit the promise given by HaShem. We see, in a moment of weakness, both men created a situation which eventually expanded into devastating consequences for their families.

Today, our loving **Abba/Father** has promised 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 and made their fair share of mistakes like the rest of us, the power and forgiveness of HaShem saw to it the promises made to them came to pass anyway. What this means to us, is 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 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 *El-Shaddai/Almighty One*, and His power is 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 (talmid) *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 mourning for seven days.

Mattityahu/Matthew 27:3-10 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 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 Hebrew 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 Hebrew 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
(By the descendants of Korach ~ a love song ~ a Messianic wedding song)

Next week’s lesson: Parashah #6

Tol’dot ~ תולדות ~ History or Generations

Torah: B’resheet/Genesis 25:19-28:9

Haftarah: Mal’akhi/Malachi 1:1-2:7

B’rit Hadashah: Romans 9:6-16; Ivrim/Hebrews 11:20; 12:14-17

Shavuah Tov (Have a good week)!!!

Who fills his mind with Torah clears it of fear and folly.

Rabbi Chanina Sgan HaKohanim