

PARASHAT CHAYEI SARAH

(SARAH'S LIFE)

GENESIS 23:1–25:18

ETZ CHAYEEM HOO (HE IS A TREE OF LIFE)

Yeshua is a tree of life to those who take hold of Him, and those who support Him are praiseworthy. His ways are ways of pleasantness and all of His paths are shalom. Bring us back YHVH to You, and we shall come, renew our days as of old.

As we begin to study the Torah let us never forget that YESHUA THE MESSIAH is the Living Torah, the Torah-Word of Elohim made flesh. He is the way, the truth and the life — the Living Manna sent from heaven. Without Him living in our lives through the indwelling Presence of his Set-Apart/Kadosh Spirit (Who leads us into all truth and revelation) the Written Torah can become the dead letter of the law!

Haftorah Reading

1 Kings 1:1-31

B'rit Chadashah

On Sarah's Faith: Hebrews 11:11–16

Outline of This Week's Parashah (Torah Portion):

- 23:1 Sarah Dies and Abraham Purchases a Burial Site
- 24:1 The Mission to Find a Wife for Isaac
- 24:11 Eliezer's Prayer and Test
- 24:17 Rebecca Passes the Test
- 24:28 Eliezer Meets Laban; Eliezer Invited to Laban's Home
- 24:34 Eliezer Retells His Story
- 24:62 Isaac and Rebecca Meet
- 25:1 Abraham Remarries; The Death of Abraham
- 25:12 Ishmael's Genealogy

Study Questions For This Week's Midrash (Torah Discussion):

1 23:3ff, According to the covenantal promises of YHVH, Abraham was the rightful owner of the land of Canaan, not the Children of Heth (the Hittites), yet how did Abraham treat the ruling Canaanite "squatters?" With impudence and arrogance or with honor and respect? How does Scripture enjoin us to treat human authorities? Can we respect their positions of authority without flattering them or condoning their wickedness? Ponder the demeanor of other biblical personages in their dealings with earthly, pagan authorities: Moses, Nehemiah, Daniel, Yeshua, and Paul, for example.

2 23:15, *Four hundred shekels of silver.* Abraham paid a full and even inflated price for the cave of Machpelah without balking. In so doing, he no doubt maintained a good reputation among the heathen. Matthew Henry in his commentary on this passage states, "The religion of the Bible enjoins [us] to pay due respect to all in authority, without flattering their persons, or countenancing their crimes if they are unworthy characters." Do you have a good reputation with those who are outside the spiritual body of the redeemed believers (1 Tim 3:7)? Do you treat them with honor and respect, especially in your community and place of work?

- 3** **24:6, 8**, *Beware that you bring not my son there again.* Why was Abraham insistent that Isaac not be exposed to Babylon? What was there to beware of (*shamar/שמר/shin-mem-resh*, Strong's H8104 meaning "to guard against, protect from, keep watch and ward, preserve, keep oneself from")? The key is verse seven. What does this teach us about protecting our children and loved ones from corrupting influences? We must be ever vigilant like a soldier on guard duty to preserve and protect our children from those things that could lead to their spiritual ruination. YHVH had led Abraham out of the spiritual filth of Babylon. In no way did he want Isaac to go back to what he had left behind. Are we investing the necessary time and energy into our physical and spiritual children to insure that they do not return to the spiritual Babylon from which we fled prior to our conversion?
- 4** **24:12**, Scripture directs us to, "Trust in YHVH with all your heart and lean not unto your own understandings, but in all your ways acknowledge him and he shall direct your paths" (Prov 3:5–6). Explain how Eliezer, Abraham's servant, did this in executing his responsibilities in finding Isaac a wife.
- 5** Abraham was a man of faith—even the father of the faithful (Rom 4:12,16). Eliezer was likewise a man of faith. Abraham had taught him well, just like a son. How does Eliezer evidence faith? For example, he blesses Rebecca even before he knows who she really is (24:22) all on the basis of an answered prayer. Do we walk in such trusting faith, day-by-day, moment-by-moment? Are we teaching the little ones under our charge these same attributes as Abraham taught his dependents?
- 6** **24:45**, Obviously, Eliezer was in constant communications with YHVH through prayer. Is this not a character trait of a righteous person? 1 Thessalonians 5:17 says to pray without ceasing. In Luke 18:1–7, Yeshua teaches about the benefits of righteous and prevailing prayer. How often do you pray? Once a day? When you pray, is it merely a morning and/or evening ritual that leaves your soul (mind, will and emotions) untouched and unchanged? Is this the kind of relationship the Father is seeking with you? A mighty man of Elohim when asked the question, "How long do you pray each day?" replied, "Seldom do I pray more than one-half hour, but seldom do I go more than a half hour without praying." Could this be said of you?
- 7** **24:58**, *I will go.* Rebecca demonstrated unusual faith. She, like her Uncle Abraham and Aunt Sarah before her, was willing to leave the comforts and security of Babylon and to go with a stranger to a strange place and to live as a nomad. When asked, "Will you go with this man?" she replied quickly and to the point, "I will go." Do you have such unreserved devotion to Yeshua, the Lover of your soul and your Betrothed, that you will go **WHEREVER** he leads no matter how difficult or uncomfortable the way? Or have you placed restrictions and qualifications on him? Compare your faith on a scale of one to ten with that of Abraham, Eliezer and Rebecca.
- 8** **24:63**, *Went out to meditate.* What does this one verse tell us about the kind of man Isaac was? Do you have moments each day where you turn off the world to connect with and listen to YHVH, to reflect before YHVH on the past day, and to meditate, pray and supplicate? Can you think of any other great biblical personages who would slip away from the press and exigencies of life to spend time alone with their Heavenly Father?

A BRIEF CHARACTER SKETCH: SARAH & REBECCA

By Ya'acov Natan Lawrence

Sarah: A Few of Her Character Qualities

☞ **She was very beautiful in character and physical appearance.**

These two qualities are related. (Gen 12:10–20). A person with an ugly, angry, bitter disposition will not have a beautiful and attractive countenance.

At age 90, she was still youthfully beautiful. Why else would King Abimelech have abducted her and wanted to marry her? (20:2). Sarah was of such honorable character, demeanor and bearing that she was viewed as being suitable as a king's consort.

☞ **She was co-equal in the covenantal promises.**

Previous to Genesis 17:15–22, the covenant was solely with Abraham. Here Sarah was made an equal party in this covenantal promise. And just as Abraham's new role was signified by a change of name, so was Sarah's. The word *Sarai*, means “my princess,” implying that she owed her greatness to her status as Abraham's wife. Henceforth she would be called only *Sarah*, which signifies that she is a “princess to all the nations of the world.” Prior to the covenant, Sarai's personal majesty made her the princess of Abraham (and his country Aram). Now, however, all limitations were removed. She was princess “par excellence”—to all mankind (*ArtScroll Stone Edition Chumash*, p. 75).

☞ **She protected the spiritual atmosphere of her home.**

She was guarding her righteous son, Isaac, from the profaneness and mockery of the unrighteous Ishmael. She was concerned that Ishmael's behavior toward Isaac would impede or prevent Isaac from fulfillment of his godly mission. Any relationship with wicked people would have been harmful to Isaac and his children as Abraham recognized when he decided that he could not remain together with Lot. This is why Sarah demanded that Abraham drive Ishmael and Hagar away, and why YHVH ratified Sarah's righteous request (*ArtScroll Stone Edition Chumash*, p. 97, Gen 21:10–11). Scripture says, “Bad company corrupts good morals” (1 Cor 15:33, NAS).

☞ **She respected her husband's authority.**

“Likewise, you wives, be in subjection to your own husbands; that, if any obey not the word, they also may without the word be won by the conversation of the wives; while they behold your chaste conversation coupled with fear. Whose adorning let it not be that outward adorning of plaiting the hair, and of wearing of gold, or of putting on of apparel; but let it be the hidden man of the heart, in that which is not corruptible, even the ornament of a meek and quiet spirit, which is in the sight of Elohim of great price. For after this manner in the old time the holy women also, who trusted in Elohim, adorned themselves, being in subjection unto their own husbands: **even as Sarah obeyed** [to listen, to hearken to a command, be obedient, to submit to] **Abraham, calling him lord** [lord in Greek is kurios meaning “master, sir; a title of honor expressive of respect and reverence”]: **whose daughters you are, as long as you do well, and are not afraid with any amazement.** Likewise, you husbands, dwell with them according to knowledge, giving honor unto the wife, as unto the weaker vessel, and as being heirs together of the grace of life; that your prayers be not hindered.” (1 Pet 3:1–7, emphasis added)

☞ **Like her husband Abraham, Sarah possessed great faith in the Word and promises of Elohim.**

“Through faith also Sarah herself received strength to conceive seed, and was delivered of a child when she was past age, because she judged him faithful who had promised. Therefore sprang there even of one, and him as good as dead, so many as the stars of the sky in multitude, and as the sand which is by the sea shore innumerable.” (Heb 11:11–12)

Rebecca: A Few of Her Character Qualities

☞ **She was modest and had a servant's heart; she was selfless and kind.**

Genesis 24:11–21 recounts Eliezer's encounter with Rebecca at the well. He was not interested in a wealthy girl for Isaac. He preferred someone of modest means—the kind who would draw water for herself instead of having servants do it for her. Eliezer wanted to see how the girl would behave away from her home atmosphere, so that he would have a better perspective on her character. At a well, for example, the girl would be natural and act in accordance with her own character. At home, however, her behavior might well reflect the constraints of her family's orders or expectations. She passed the test, for she spoke only about bringing water for him, and then went ahead and drew water for the camels. The selfless heart of a servant was second nature to Rebecca. She put the needs of another above her own. That his camels had to be watered was so obvious that she saw no need to say she would do it. Unlike the other girls at the well, who wasted their time in idle chatter and gossip, Rebecca did her task quickly and without delay. Rebecca acted in a most exalted manner: she lowered the jug herself to spare Eliezer the effort and then actually brought the jug near his mouth, so he would not even have to hold it. Furthermore, she drew all the water for the camels through

sheer physical exertion, and this was the great proof of her kindness (kindness denotes an intention to do something that is not obligated). In their first drink, ten camels would consume 140 gallons of water! That Rebecca would undertake such a strenuous task so eagerly for a total stranger is a supreme indication of her sterling character (*ArtScroll Stone Edition Chumash*, pp. 111–113).

☞ **She was modest, dignified, and possessed *savoir-faire*.**

In Genesis 24:62–67, we see that Rebecca displayed the personal modesty that has always been one of the glories of Jewish women, and she recognized intuitively that the stranger she had just encountered was a holy person. Finally, Isaac brought her to his mother's tent, and there it became apparent that she was fitting successor to Sarah, for the holy presence of Sarah returned to the tent of her son. It was then that Isaac loved her, for the Jewish home is a temple and its priestess is the wife and mother whose spirit infuses it. Isaac could love only a mate who could be his companion in creating the Chosen People. In Rebecca he found her (*ArtScroll Stone Edition Chumash*, p. 119).

☞ **She was a praying woman.**

(Gen 25:21–22) She was able to hear the voice of YHVH and believe his Word.

☞ **She was a discerner of character.**

(Gen 27:1ff) To guard the Word of YHVH that had been given to her earlier that the older son would serve the younger, to insure that the birthright would go to Jacob, and to keep the birthright promises and blessings from going to Esau, a wicked and profane individual who had no interest in perpetuating the Abrahamic Covenant, Rebecca took to scheming. She knew that Esau was not worthy of such a divine mission and destiny.

☞ **Patriarchs were incomplete without matriarchs.**

“The Patriarchs did not function as individuals; their mission in life required the partnership of a wife worthy to be a Jewish matriarch. This is clear in the relationship of Abraham and Sarah. So, too, only after Isaac married Rebecca did Abraham give him ‘everything’ he had, which included all his blessings. Only now, therefore, when Jacob was going to find his proper match, could Isaac confer upon him the blessing of Abraham.” (*ArtScroll Stone Edition Chumash*, p. 143, comment on Gen 28:1–5).

HAFTORAH—1 KINGS 1:1–31

The Passing of the Baton From One Generation to Another

Introduction

The link between the Parashah and Haftorah portion is clear. Both Abraham and David were elderly and arrangements needed to be made for their succession. Both men were righteous, and both desired to see YHVH's promises made to them carried out in future generations. In both cases, there were those who could have vied for the status of primogeniture, yet YHVH had other plans. The firstborn was not the one to carry forth the family's spiritual inheritance of either family. Some contrasts should be noted between these two accounts. Abraham lived in a tent in the wilderness with Isaac, his shepherd son. David's sons lived in a palace and lived a privileged lifestyle. Isaac was righteous and eager to do the will of his father, while Adonijah, was self-absorbed, imperious and cared only for his own carnal purposes. Regardless, the will of YHVH prevailed and the right man, Solomon, became David's heir.

1 Both were princes, yet Adonijah was pampered and poorly parented, while Isaac lived a rugged life and was well-disciplined. One had a heart for YHVH and the other did not. What can we learn from these two examples about the physical and spiritual environment in which children are raised?

2 Abraham's heir was apparent, while David had not made clear to those around him who should be his heir. As parents, especially as we get older, have we instilled in our children a sense of their spiritual destiny? Have we planted in them a vision for the future as to who they are to become as they carry on the physical, ethical, cultural and spiritual heritage of both our physical and spiritual family? How are we preparing our children now for carrying on the spiritual mission and destiny that YHVH has given to us?

- 3** 1:6, Here we find the classic ingredient to producing a spoiled, self-indulged child. David had never corrected him and in failing to do so the selfish and carnal ways of Adonijah were never refined out of him. What were the results of his permissive upbringing when he became a man? Discuss the concept of “tough love” when it comes to disciplining children. Discuss the difference between *discipline* and *punishment*. What is the root word of *discipline*? How does that bear upon raising children correctly? (Read Heb 12:1–11 and Prov 22:6.)
- 4** 1:7–8, Let’s discuss Abiathar the priest versus Zadok the priest. These two men were co-priests in David’s royal court and proved loyal to David throughout his reign. Yet at the very end, Abiathar did not discern the will of YHVH resulting in his supporting Adonijah, while Zadok did in supporting Solomon. Abiathar was banished from Jerusalem in disgrace (1 Kgs 2:22–35), while either Zadok or a son by the same name became high priest in Solomon’s temple. What can we learn from the stories of these two men? Both had faithfully served YHVH, but at the end, due to spiritual discernment issues, one fell from grace and one was promoted. Can even great and notable men grow lax spiritually and fall from greatness? What happens when one places one’s confidence in such individuals? And if you are a great and notable person what can happen to you if you don’t stay close to YHVH to hear his voice correctly? (Read 1 Cor 10:12 and Prov 16:18.) Those who align themselves with the proud may also fall when the proud fall. Perhaps this was the case with Abiathar. He had been co-priest with Zadok for many years, and perhaps he saw this as his opportunity to become chief priest by casting in his lot with Adonijah. If so, was this presumptuous sin?
- 5** Politics can be a dirty rotten business, but sometimes it is necessary to play its game to insure that YHVH’s will is accomplished. How did Nathan the Prophet conduct himself and maneuver things in order to see that YHVH’s purposes were fulfilled? Is there such a thing as righteous politics versus unrighteous politics? What did Yeshua mean when he told his disciples to be wise like serpents, yet harmless as doves (Matt 10:16)? Compare this with what Yeshua said in Luke 16:8.
- 6** David was blessed to be surrounded with several wise counselors during his lifetime, including Nathan the Prophet. We must never underestimate the value of those who may be wiser, if not older, whom YHVH has graciously placed in our lives to help guide us into his perfect will. Do you have such counselors? It may be a spiritual mentor, an older elder-type person or a cherished family member. For husbands it should include their wives and vice versa. Often we may be blessed to have several such people who are there to guide us in various areas of our lives. Can you identify such people and then begin to foster a loving and respectful relationship with them? Be thankful that YHVH has given you such people. You will be wiser and more blessed for it. What are some prime examples of counselors or mentors in Scriptures to whom wise individuals attached themselves and as a result rose to great prominence?
- 7** King David was old and stricken with the ravages of age, yet he summoned his remaining strength, rose to the occasion in the face of a national crisis, and proclaimed Solomon to be his successor and king of Israel. What can we learn from this? David no doubt preferred that matters would take care of themselves, and that he could rest in peace during his remaining time on earth. How often do we find ourselves shirking our responsibilities hoping that the difficulties in life will quietly pass away? Can we, like David, rise to the occasion, when duty calls, gird up our loins and take care of business, whether we feel like it or not? Yeshua faced times in his ministry where he was beyond tired from ministering to the multitudes all day, yet he dug deep from within himself to always go beyond the call of duty, to walk the extra mile to fulfill YHVH’s purposes for his life. Let us never grow weary in well-doing, and may our eyes be so singularly focused on seeking first the kingdom of Elohim and his righteousness. May we literally lose ourselves in fulfilling YHVH’s will, and in so doing we find the deep inner waters of his strength and divine enablement to do that which otherwise would seem humanly impossible to do, all for YHVH’s glory.

