

CHAYEI SARAH { חַיֵּי שָׂרָה } (Life of Sarah)

Genesis 23:1-25:18, 1 Kings 1:1-31, Matthew 1:1-17



Abram's Counsel to Sarai (watercolor circa 1896–1902 by [James Tissot](#))

Shalom from the Land of Israel and welcome to this week's Torah study. May this Word out of Zion encourage, exhort, and inspire us to be all God created us to be and to do all the works He has predestined for us in Messiah Yeshua. Let's take a look at the life of Sarah, and see what lessons we can learn from this great Matriarch of our faith.

“And the life of Sarah חַיֵּי שָׂרָה was a hundred and seven and twenty years; these were the years of the life of Sarah.” (Genesis 23:1)

The title of this week's parashah, Chayei Sarah, although meaning '*Life of Sarah*', actually speaks more about her death. This corresponds with the Judaic concept that it is the awareness of death which can give more meaning to life.

Last week's parashah (Vayera) ended with Abraham's ultimate test – the binding and near sacrifice of his beloved son, Isaac (Yitzchak); but God provided the ram for a sacrifice instead. One must wonder what went through the mind of Isaac's mother, Sarah, Abraham's wife. Did she even know for what purpose Abraham departed with their son? Was she aware of the fact that her 'joy' – her reason for laughter – Yitzchak – might not return home alive?

Scripture does not make it clear; however, in the New Testament, we do read of Sarah's radical obedience to her husband as an example of faith and courage that women of God are encouraged to emulate:

“For in this way in former times the holy women also, who hoped in God, used to adorn themselves, being submissive to their own husbands; just as Sarah obeyed Abraham, calling him lord, and you have become her children if you do what is right without being frightened by any fear.” (1 Peter 3:5-6)

Sarah demonstrated radical obedience to her husband – first by leaving her home and family and everything else behind in order to follow her husband, Abraham, to a new land without even knowing where they were going. There, rather than living in a fine, fancy home, they lived in a tent in the desert like nomads and strangers in a foreign land.

Sarah even agreed to enter a foreign king’s harem where she could potentially have been greatly harmed and defiled; and yet even in this, she obeyed her husband. There is only one way that Sarah could have walked in such radical obedience – and that is through absolute faith and trust in God. She may not have trusted her imperfect husband who was willing to sacrifice his own wife to save his own skin; but she trusted God to protect and preserve her from all evil. This is what it means in saying that she did what was right *‘without being frightened by fear.’*



She did not allow fear of the consequences of the wrong decisions of her husband to

cause her to sin through disobedience. Wow! How many of us women could say the same?

Selah (pause and think about this).

to Pharaoh's Palace by [James Tissot](#).

Sarai Is Taken

God rewarded Sarah’s obedience and did indeed rescue her from King Abimilech’s harem.

Clearly it was God who did not allow the King of Gerar to touch Sarah: **“And God said to him in a dream, “Yes, I know that you did this in the integrity of your heart. For I also withheld you from sinning against Me; therefore I did not let you touch her.”** (Genesis 20:6)

We can also trust God to protect us from all harm when we place ourselves fully into His hands, obeying His word and submitting to His will rather than trying to protect ourselves by our own limited human means and methods. God is completely unlimited, all knowing and all powerful.

May our fear be of the Lord alone and not allow fear of man to dissuade us from walking in obedience to God’s word, even if it seems contrary to our natural senses.

Lechem Chayim - Living Bread

This portion of scripture begins with the death of Sarah, and continues with the death of her husband, Abraham. So comes to an end the lives of the great matriarch and patriarch of our faith.

The Prophetic portion (the haftarah) also speaks of the soon coming death of one of the greatest men of God of all times, the man after God's own heart – King David.

And so, in this portion of the Word of God, we face the reality of our own mortality. One of the writers of the New Testament, James, compares our lives to a mist - a vapor in the wind - here today and gone tomorrow. **“And they do not know what tomorrow is. What are our lives except a vapor that appears for a little while and vanishes and passes away?”** (James 4:14)

We are reminded that for each of us, there will come an end to our brief time here on this earth. **“To everything there is a season, a time for every purpose under heaven: A time to be born, and a time to die....”** (Ecclesiastes 3:1-2). It is God who numbers the days of our life.

While we are faced with the certainty of physical death, yet we can be comforted by the truth that heaven is our true home; we are only passing through this world as pilgrims and strangers.

God has promised us that whoever believes in His Son, Yeshua, will never perish but will have eternal life. (John 3:16). Yeshua boldly proclaimed Himself to be '**Lechem Chayim**' (bread of life) and promised that **whoever would eat this bread would live forever!** (John 6:58)

What a glorious revelation to receive –the assurance that death has lost its sting. **“Oh death, where is your victory? O death, where is your sting?”** (1 Corinthians 15:55)

Just as the tomb could not hold the Son of God, we will also be raised to new life in Him. Our fathers ate manna in the wilderness and are dead, but Yeshua is the bread that comes down from heaven, that one may eat of it and not die. (John 6:50)

As the Psalmist wrote, **“But God will redeem my soul from the power of the grave, for He shall receive me.”** (Psalm 49:15).

This is our hope and our assurance from God's word which removes from us the tormenting fear of death. There is a greater fear, however, than that of death and that is the fear of not truly living life! I love the line from a movie where a spunky 90 year old man said to his grandson,

“Do not fear death, my son, but rather fear the unlived life.”

The reality that Sarah gave birth to Isaac in her old age shows us that we are not resigned to mindlessly rock in our rocking chairs as we become elderly; but can remain vital and active even in our latter years, as the Word of God promises:

“They shall still bring forth fruit in old age; they shall be vigorous and flourishing.” (Psalm 92:14)

Both Abraham and Sarah achieved significant accomplishments, not in their youth; but in the last years of their life. This agrees with an old Jewish saying, *“At 40 one is fit for discernment, at 50 for counsel, at 80 for special strength.”*

Calev, one of only two men out of millions to enter the Promised Land, asked for a mountain to conquer at 85 years old!

“... and now, here I am this day, eighty-five years old. As yet I am as strong this day as on the day that Moses sent me; just as my strength was then, so now is my strength for war, both for going out and for coming in. Now therefore, give me this mountain of which the LORD spoke in that day;” (Joshua 14:10-12)

When my birthday was approaching, my daughter asked how old I am. To my reply, she said, *“Wow, Mom, I didn’t realize you’re that old!”* ☺ Although it may be considered rude in some cultures to ask a woman her age (except in Israel where it seems that no personal question is taboo), Scripture reveals not only Sarah’s age at her death but also her burial place.

The numerical value of the opening term of this parashah (vayih’yu) adds up to the sum of 37, which is the same as the difference between the age of Sarah from when she gave birth to Isaac at 90 years old and her death at 127.

These 37 years were surely some of the best years of Sarah’s life as she raised the child for which she and Abraham had hoped and prayed for most of their adult lives.

Sarah is the only woman in the Bible to have an entire parashah named after her. What an honor! All the other Biblical characters that parashot are named after are men: Balak, Pinchas, Korach, Noach and Yitro. This shows us how important this matriarch, Sarah, is to our faith.

Sarah died in Kiryat Arba and her funeral is the first to be recorded in the Torah. The Torah shows Sarah as her husband’s partner in life and his equal. She shared Abraham’s journey with God in a spirit of faith, courage and self-sacrifice when necessary.

She endured being uprooted from her native land, suffering a life of barrenness (considered a curse in Middle Eastern culture) up to the age of ninety, plus being held captive, and thereby risking the sexual advances of foreign kings (twice).

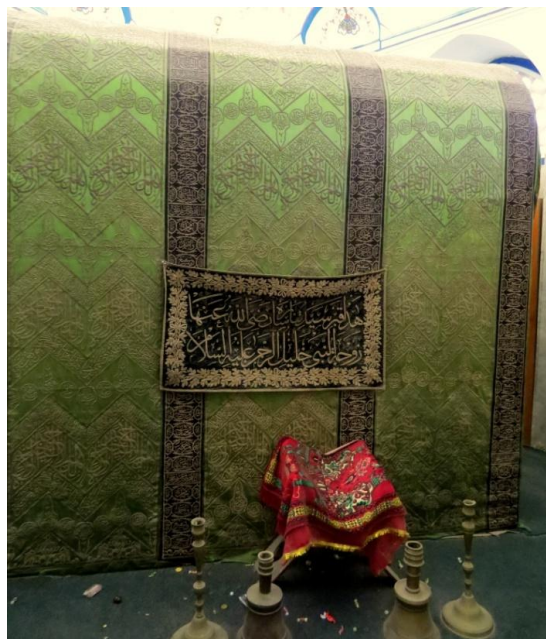
Obviously, Sarah was a beautiful woman, since Abraham resorted to calling her his sister to protect himself from the gangs of marauding soldiers who might be tempted to kill Abram in order to take his beautiful wife.

Even though Sarah was, in fact, his ‘half-sister’, this still did not justify his deception which put his wife’s honor at risk. How did Sarah endure so many difficult trials in her lifetime? It was through her optimistic approach to life, her inner tranquility that comes only with faith in God, that Sarah was able to deal with such adversity throughout her life.

The Bible tells us we have need of endurance:

“For you have need of endurance, so that when you have done the will of God you may receive what is promised.” (Hebrews 10:36)

Rav J.B. Soloveitchik wrote, *“Without Sarah, Avraham takes leave of the world stage.”* It has been often said that behind every good man is a great woman. Sarah showed herself to be the great woman who helped ensure the successful continuation of Abraham’s dynasty.



Mausoleum of Sarah, Abraham's wife in the Mosque of Abraham

Abraham’s marriage to Sarah gives us the wisdom to know that in choosing a marriage partner, it is not so much the physical attributes of the person which is primary (although beauty helps ☺); but it is their spiritual qualities which are most important.

Our choice of a life partner should be based on whether they possess the beautiful inner characteristics of chessed (mercy), grace, selflessness, kindness, and benevolence towards all.

Sarah is the Biblical model of a godly woman we may aspire to emulate – in life as in death.

“Who can find a virtuous wife (eshet chayil)? For her worth is far above rubies. The heart of her husband safely trusts her; so he will have no lack of gain.” (Proverbs 31:10-11)

Leaving a Legacy

To the Jew, one’s death is much more significant than one’s birth, as is written, **“A good name is better than precious ointment, and the day of death than the day of one’s birth;”** (Ecclesiastes 7:1)

In Judaism, the anniversary of a loved one’s death is remembered with lighting a special candle, called ‘yahrtzeit’.



Special prayers¹ are recited about the holiness of God. While ‘*Kaddish*’ is commonly called the “*mourners prayer*,” the words are not actually about death or mourning, but are instead a public proclamation of God's greatness. Even in the anguish of loss, we can rise above it by offering praise to God for who He is.

We certainly enjoy celebrating birthdays with friends and family but the day of our birth is not remembered in Judaism in the same way as we remember the day of a loved one's death.

It seems to me that when we are born, our whole life lies ahead of us like blank pages in a book. But when we die, the story of our lives has been written and comes to a conclusion. It is at death that we see whether or not our lives counted for anything or not.

Isn't it interesting then, to realize that we know the time of Yeshua's death (Passover) but are not sure of the exact time of his birth? This is a controversial issue. Most Christians celebrate Jesus' birthday on December 25th, but this date was actually a pagan celebration to honor the birth of the sun god.²

Many Biblical scholars place the time of Yeshua's birth in the Fall, probably at Sukkot – the Feast of Tabernacles. The important thing to keep in mind here, I believe, is that according to Hebraic culture, we are to remember the time of someone's death more than their birth.

Therefore, the remembrance of Yeshua's death at Passover is even more important than celebrating a man-made birthday party for Yeshua's undisclosed date of birth.³

When I consider the death of Sarah, Abraham and David, it causes me to consider my life as well – what will I leave as a legacy from my own life? Will my time here on earth have left any kind of a mark?

It seems to me that each of us wants to know that in some way, we have made a difference - that somehow our life has counted for something positive and good. We can get so caught up in the myriad cares and concerns of everyday life that we may fail to stop and think about whether or not we are living with purpose to fulfill our God-given destiny. We are to live purposefully, making the most out of our time....” (Ephesians 5:15-17)

We need to have balance. On the one hand, we can live without any direction or focus, living empty, unsatisfying lives and completely miss fulfilling our God-given destiny. On the other

¹ Kaddish – mourners prayer

² See [Messiah Revealed in Chanukah](#), book or DVD, available by post or the website: www.voiceforisrael.net

³ See Christian Remembrance Day, www.voiceforisrael.net/articles

hand, we can become so goal-oriented, so achievement focused that we may miss that which is truly most important – which is love. Loving people often means putting aside our own agendas in order to meet the needs of another. Love is kind, patient, and thinks of others, not just self.

The movie ‘*Click*’ reminded me in an entertaining way of this truth. It portrays a man - obsessed with his work to the neglect of his family - who eventually comes to see the error of his ways in a dramatic turnaround and is given a second chance. Most of us, however, will not be given a re-boot on life; this is not a dress rehearsal. We need to make the most of the gift of life each day.

The Bible says that even if we have the gift of prophecy and give all our money to the poor and even if we have faith that can move a mountain, and yet if we have not love, we are nothing. Of faith, hope and love, the greatest of these is love! (1 Corinthians 13:4,5)

When Yeshua was asked, “What is the greatest commandment in all of the Torah?” he answered – love: **“Rabbi, which is the greatest commandment in the Torah?”**

Yeshua replied: “Sh’ma Yisrael, Adonai Eloheinu, Adonai Echad: ‘Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind.’ This is the first and greatest commandment. And the second is like it: ‘Love your neighbor as yourself.’⁴⁰ All the Torah and the Prophets hang on these two commandments.” (Matthew 22:36-40)

This is the greatest commandment that Yeshua asked us to obey – simply to love one another. By our love for one another all people shall be able to see that we are His disciples.⁴

This is our greatest and most noble achievement in all of our life - greater than the greatest book ever written or the most beautiful music ever composed – it is the challenge of learning unconditional love. Even more than leaving an inheritance to my children and grandchildren, my heart’s desire is to leave a legacy of love.

Abraham and Sarah exemplified love and devotion to God, one another and love for their neighbor. Whatever we do during the span of our lifetime, may everything bring honor and glory to God and His Kingdom.



Abraham bought a piece of land with a cave on it. (1984 illustration by Jim Padgett, courtesy of Distant Shores Media/Sweet Publishing)

⁴ John 13:34-35

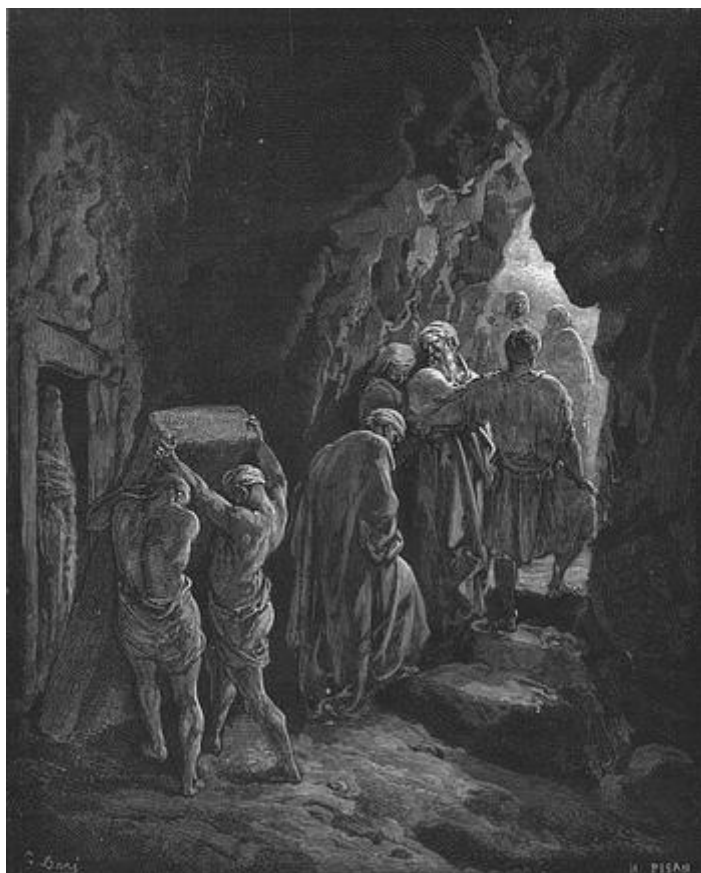
Jewish Burial Customs

“Sarah, the wife of Abraham, died in Kiryat-arba; now called Hebron, in the land of Canaan and Abraham came to mourn for Sarah, and to weep for her.” (Genesis 23:2)

Sarah’s is the first account of a burial in the Bible. It is also the first mention of a commercial transaction when Abraham purchased the burial site from Ephron the Hittite. The title deed to this land was part of the inheritance that was passed on to Abraham’s son, Isaac in Genesis 25:5-6.

Legend has it that Sarah’s death was directly related to her grief over the attempted sacrifice of Isaac by her husband, Abraham.

Abraham was the next to be buried by his sons, Isaac and Ishmael, in the cave of Machpelah.



Burial of Sarah (engraving by [Gustave Doré](#) from the 1865 *La Sainte Bible*)

“And his sons Isaac and Ishmael buried him in the cave of Machpelah, in the field of Ephron the son of Zohar the Hittite, which is before Mamre; The field which Abraham purchased of the sons of Heth: there was Abraham buried, and Sarah his wife.” (Genesis 25:9-10)

In the end, it was the death of their father, Abraham, that brought reconciliation between the two feuding brothers: Isaac and Ishmael. It was the sad task of burying their father that brought the estranged men together and caused them to lay aside their long-held grudges. Let us hope that, should there be a long-standing family feud between brothers or sisters that it would not take the death of a parent to bring peace, harmony and reconciliation.



Isaac and Ishmael Bury Abraham (illustration from the 1728 *Figures de la Bible*)

Tomb of the Patriarchs

The tomb where both Sarah and Abraham were buried in the cave of the field of Machpelah (which is in Hebron), is an area now pre-dominantly Muslim. Their tombs have been covered by a large mosque and access given to Jews is limited. On October 15th, 2015, Palestinians set fire to the tomb of Joseph in Nablus. Hundreds of Arab youth threw Molotov cocktails at the compound, thereby desecrating this holy site.⁵



Joseph's Tomb in Nablus ablaze in the early hours of 16.10.15 Credit: Screen grab

The Tomb of the Patriarchs is, in Judaism, the second most sacred site in the world, after the Temple Mount. In total, three biblical couples are believed to be buried there:

- Abraham and Sarah (Genesis 23:1-20; Genesis 49:31)
- Isaac and Rebekah (Genesis 35:29; Genesis 49:31)
- Jacob and Leah (Genesis 49:28-33; Genesis 50:4-5; Genesis 50:12-13)

⁵ read more: <http://www.haaretz.com/israel-news/1.680740>

Dust to Dust

Jewish people observe a prompt burial of the dead and abhor cremation.

"Earth you are, and to earth you will return," were God's words to Adam, the first human being (Genesis 3:19).

In fact, the Hebrew name, Adam, **אדם** comes from the word Adamah, **אדמה** meaning earth or ground.

In the words of King Solomon, "**And the earth returns to the land as it was, and the spirit returns to God, who gave it.**" (Ecclesiastes 12:7).



Tomb of Abraham (Wikipedia)

The next stage in the continuing saga of a human life is that the body should return to the earth, the source of all physical life, and be reunited with it, just as the soul returns to its divine root. It is, therefore, of utmost importance to preserve the integrity of the body, and to allow the burial to occur as soon as possible.

Sitting Shiva – Jewish Mourning Customs

Most observant Jews keep the custom of *'sitting shivah'* (from the Hebrew word shiv'ah – seven) when a member of their family dies. This requires a mourning period of one week during which the mourners (first – degree relatives such as mother, father, spouse, brother or sister) sit in their home and allow other to come and minister food and comfort to them. It is a wonderful way in which the Jewish community pulls together to let the grieving person know they are not alone in their sorrow.

This tradition was developed in response to the story in Genesis 50:1-14 in which Joseph mourns the death of his father Jacob (Israel) for seven days.

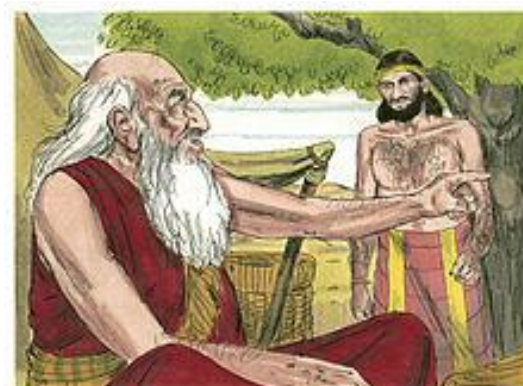
The world was created with humanity as its focus. This took a full cycle of time: seven days. When creation is reversed and the human soul returns to its source, that too is marked with a week's cycle - the *Shivah* - seven days during which the closest relatives devote themselves exclusively to mourning the soul's departure; and the extended family, friends and community comfort them with their presence, their empathy, and their words of consolation.

The traditional words spoken to the mourner during *Shivah* are: ⁶ *"May Adonai console you, together with all mourners of Zion and Jerusalem."*

Seeking the Bride

Before Abraham died, however, he knew that he must find a suitable bride for his son, Isaac. He therefore sent his servant, *Eli-Ezer*, on a mission to find a suitable help meet.

This whole story of finding a bride for Isaac is so interesting in its deeper, prophetic implications. ⁷



Abraham ordered his servant to get a wife for Isaac. (1984 illustration by Jim Padgett, courtesy of Distant Shores Media/Sweet Publishing)

Abraham symbolically represents *'The Father'*, Isaac represents *'The Son'*, and Eli-ezer's name means *'My God helps'*. Therefore Abraham's servant represents the Holy Spirit, who is also called *'The Helper'*: **"And I will ask the Father, and he will give you another Helper, to be with you forever,"** (John 14:16)

The Father sends out the Holy Spirit to find a suitable Bride for the Son of God, Yeshua. The Spirit of God is searching to and fro over all the earth to find the Bride of Messiah. How was she chosen?

What are the characteristics of the Bride?

1. The bride must be of Abraham's kin.⁸ Abraham made Eliezer swear by the Lord God of heaven and earth that he would not take a bride for Isaac from among the daughters of the Canaanites. The Bride of Messiah must be chosen from amongst the seed of Abraham, those who are of faith in the Messiah. (Galatians 3:29) We also are warned not to be unequally yoked with non-Believers.⁹

We must do what we can to provide environments that make it easier for our children to find believing mates and spouses to raise Godly seed. I'm not saying we should go back to arranged marriages, but it is a sacred duty to help our children marry within our faith.

⁶ Chabad.org lifecycles

⁷ I am thankful to Eddie Chumney for his book, Bride out of Babylon, which helps bring this to light.

⁸ Gen. 24:3,4

⁹ 2 Cor. 6:14

2. The bride has been living in Babylon (Mesopotamia – city of Nahor)¹⁰ from where God called Abraham to leave. A great portion of the Christian Church is still living, by their adoption of pagan customs, in spiritual Babylon.¹¹ The Holy Spirit beckons for them to leave Babylon and to come back to the biblical path of truth and holiness.
3. The bride is known by her diligence and willingness to ‘go the extra mile’. Eliezer prays to God that he will know the bride if she not only agrees to give him a drink but also offers, of her own initiative, to water his camels. I don’t know about you, but I can’t imagine the time and effort it took to draw enough water from the well to water ten camels! Obviously the bride is not adverse to hard work or sacrificial giving. She looks for ways to be even more of a blessing than what is required of her. She does all things without arguing, grumbling or complaining. Wow!



Rebecca and Eliezer by [Bartolomé Esteban Murillo](#), 17th century. Wikipedia

4. The bride is compassionate and kind-hearted, especially towards animals, the weak and defenseless in life. The Torah says that a righteous man is kind to his animals.¹² Rebekkah’s outward physical beauty only reflects her inner beauty of character. It is this gentle and quiet spirit that is precious in the sight of God.¹³
5. The bride is very beautiful and a virgin. I don’t think this means that the Bride of Messiah needs to be physically beautiful and a physical virgin but she surely has the beauty of the Lord upon her and walks in sexual purity. Paul says he labored to present us a ‘*virgin, spotless Bride without spot or blemish.*’¹⁴ We can be so thankful that though our sins may be as scarlet, yet through the blood of Yeshua we can be white as snow.¹⁵

¹⁰ Gen. 24:10

¹¹ See book, [Come out of Her My People, Flee Babylon](#) or [Jewish Roots of the Christian Faith](#) DVD, available by post or through our website: www.voiceforisrael.net

¹² Prov. 12:10

¹³ 1 Peter 3:4

¹⁴ Eph. 5:27

¹⁵ Isaiah 1:18, See article, ‘I’m sorry but....’ www.voiceforisrael.net/articles

The Hebrew name of Rebekkah, Rivkah, means the most desirable ewe out of the entire flock – the one chosen by the head sheep to be his mate.

6. The bride is willing to follow the servant out of Babylon and into unknown territory in order to marry the son. They personally asked the young woman, “*Will you go with this man?*” And she said, “*I will go.*”¹⁶ Disciples of Yeshua must make the decision within their own heart whether they are willing to follow where the Spirit leads or not. Sometimes the Holy Spirit will take us out of our comfort zone, our familiar home, and ask us to follow to a place that he will show us.



Rebecca at the Well by [Giovanni Antonio Pellegrini](#) Wikipedia

We don't always see the whole plan or the big picture and this can be scary. The bride does not shrink back in fear, but is bold and courageous, possessing a faith that the journey into the unknown will be safe because the ‘servant’ of the Father is with her. We do not travel alone. God promises to be with us wherever we go; He upholds us with His righteous right hand and will never leave or forsake us.¹⁷

“So do not fear, for I am with you; do not be dismayed, for I am your God. I will strengthen you and help you; I will uphold you with my righteous right hand.” (Isaiah 41:10)

7. Lastly, the Bride brings comfort to others by her love and devotion: **“So Isaac was comforted after his mother’s death.”** (Genesis 24:67)

May we each embody the diligence, servant’s heart, beauty, purity, willingness, kindness, courage and faith of our mother, Rivkah, in order to be that Bride of Messiah the Servant of the Father is seeking.



Rebecca Meets Isaac by the Way (watercolor circa 1896–1902 by [James Tissot](#))

¹⁶ Genesis 24:58

¹⁷ Deuteronomy 31:6, Hebrew 13:5

Battle for the Throne of David

The haftorah portion for this Shabbat shows a contrast between the son of Abraham and the son of David. Abraham's son, Isaac, so respected and trusted his father that he was willing to receive his direction and guidance even with something as important as the choice of a wife – and this at forty years old!

On the other hand, David's son, Adoniyah, showed himself to be willful, proud, disobedient, disrespectful of his father, and rebellious towards his authority. He doesn't even wait for his father's death before he exalts himself, saying, **"I will be king!"**¹⁸



Abishag at the bed of David, with Bathsheba, Solomon, and Nathan (from a Dutch Bible circa 1435)

David's son was a man full of himself - full of pride and selfish ambition. Why? I think we can see the answer in 1Kings 1:6: **"And his father had not grieved him all his life in saying: 'Why have you done this?' and he was also a very handsome man."**

There is something very important for us to grasp here – and that is the importance of disciplining our children. I think we have come to a dangerous and misguided notion that the goal of parenting is to keep our children happy (and I may be the chief sinner in this regard).

Biblically, however, our goal is to raise godly seed; and this will necessitate times of 'grieving' our children with appropriate discipline.

"Do not withhold correction from a child, for if you beat him with a rod, he will not die. You shall beat him with a rod, and deliver his soul from hell." (Proverbs 23:13)

I realize that this is not a politically correct viewpoint today but it is still the truth. Obviously David did not take heed to the duty of disciplining his son, Adoniyah, but let him follow his headstrong ways.

It can be difficult (understatement) to deal with a strong-willed child. I know what it feels like to want to just give up, throw in the towel, and let them have their way. But this is counterproductive; in the end a child left to himself brings shame to his mother. (Proverbs 29:15)

We need to accept this as a sacred duty or calling to train up our children in the way they should go.¹⁹ And when they are so good looking, like Adoniyah, it makes the job even harder. They can

¹⁸ 1 Kings 1:5

be so cute and /or charming that the temptation is to overlook their demonstrations of rebellion, disobedience and selfishness.

I need to remember that if I don't grieve my children at times with appropriate discipline, it can lead to their complete ruin, if not eternal damnation. A sobering thought.

Abraham, on the other hand, took his role as a Godly father very seriously. It was one of the reasons why God chose him to be the father of our faith.²⁰ My children and I watched an episode of 'Supernanny' one evening. It always helps to strengthen my resolve to stay diligent in disciplining my own children when I see the results of the lack of it in some of these extreme cases.

In this particular episode, the Supernanny really nailed Dad. She confronted him with his lack of commitment to raising his boys, his withdrawal from the family, his passivity and apathy and his plain old selfishness that kept him working 60-70 hours a week in his studio instead of spending time with his sons. Once the Dad got on board and got involved, even without Biblical chastisement, the situation in the family drastically improved.

Other men of God failed with regards to training up their children in the ways of the Lord: Eli and even Samuel did not have sons who followed the Lord. Success in the world or even success in ministry is one thing – but to raise Godly seed – that is what is truly desired by the Lord.

I will never forget the story that Dr. James Dobson of 'Focus on the Family' tells about when his father, a travelling preacher/evangelist, gave up what looked like a promising ministry in order to stay at home more with his son. It was when Dr. Dobson was in his teenage years and he began to show signs of rebellion – nothing major, but enough to be a little concerned. He says he will always be grateful for the sacrifice his father made for him. His father never recovered in terms of ministry success; but his son, Jim, went on to found the ministry of 'Focus on the Family', which has touched so many people's lives all over the world!

I suppose the question I'm asking myself is whether or not we (myself included) are willing to lay down our selfish ambition on the altar for the sake of our children? Perhaps we want to do great things with our lives, but who knows if our purpose may be to be the best Mom or Dad to our children or even children's children who may do great and mighty exploits for the Kingdom with our help and encouragement.

I think this helps me to put the mundane tasks that I do as a stay-at-home mom in perspective; and I encourage all the Dads out there to really invest in your children – and this takes time – but it's well worth it.

¹⁹ Proverbs 22:6

²⁰ Gen. 18:19

The conclusion of today's (once again) full and rich study of the Torah is a prophetic parallel that we can see between the battle for the rightful heir to take his place on his father David's throne, and the coming end-time battle between the Messiah and the man of lawlessness over *who will reign on the throne of David.*

“Let no one deceive you by any means, for that Day will not come unless the falling away comes first, and the man of sin is revealed, the son of perdition, who opposes and exalts himself above all that is called God or that is worshiped, so that he sits as God in the temple of God, showing himself that he is God.” (2 Thess. 2:3-4)

The anti-Christ exalts himself and proclaims himself King just as Adoniyah exalted himself and proclaimed his own illegitimate Kingship. We must beware of trying to exalt ourselves but be willing to humble ourselves, knowing that, **“God opposes the proud but those who humble themselves, God will exalt in due time.”** (James 4:6)

The prophet Isaiah foretold that the son born to a Jewish virgin would sit upon the throne of His father, David. This rightful ruler would reign over the Kingdom forever with justice and perfect righteousness.²¹

When the angel visited Miryam to tell her that she will conceive and bring forth a Son, Yeshua, he also promised, **“He will be great, and will be called the Son of the Highest; and the Lord God will give Him the throne of His father David. And he will reign over the house of Jacob forever, and of His kingdom there will be no end.”** (Luke 1:31-33)

Halleluyah! Yeshua is the rightful King to rule on the throne of His father David. Come Lord Yeshua.... Amen.

About the Author:

Hannah Nesher grew up in an Orthodox Jewish home and received her education in a religious Hebrew school in Canada. During a crisis pregnancy, she came to know Jesus (Yeshua) as her Messiah and Savior. She now lives in Israel with her children and grandchildren, teaching Christians about the Jewish roots of their faith.

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²¹ Isaiah 7:14, 9:6-7

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(Isaiah 2:3)**

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