

The Life of Abraham

The purpose of this lesson is to give a general overview of the entire life of Abraham. By taking some time to look at his life as a whole, we can see events in context and get a glimpse of the bigger picture. Once we understand how everything fits together it will be much easier to take an in-depth look at specific events.

In this particular study we are going to start with the birth of Abraham. We all know that he was born thousands of years ago, but it's possible to pinpoint his birth a little more closely than that. Genesis 11 contains enough genealogical data to allow us to figure out approximately when he was born. First, Arphaxad (the son of Shem and grandson of Noah) was born two years after the Flood:

Genesis 11:10: "These are the generations of Shem: Shem was an hundred years old, and begat Arphaxad two years after the flood:"

Salah was born when Arphaxad was 35, which means that Salah was born 37 years after the Flood:

Genesis 11:12: "And Arphaxad lived five and thirty years, and begat Salah:"

Eber was born when Salah was 30 years old, which means that Eber was born 67 years after the Flood:

Genesis 11:14: "And Salah lived thirty years, and begat Eber:"

Peleg was born when Eber was 34 years old, which means that Peleg was born 101 years after the Flood:

Genesis 11:16: "And Eber lived four and thirty years, and begat Peleg:"

Reu was born when Peleg was 30 years old, which means that Reu was born 131 years after the Flood:

Genesis 11:18: "And Peleg lived thirty years, and begat Reu:"

Serug was born when Reu was 32 years old, which means that Serug was born 163 years after the Flood:

Genesis 11:20: "And Reu lived two and thirty years, and begat Serug:"

Nahor was born when Serug was 30 years old, which means that Nahor was born 193 years after the Flood:

Genesis 11:22: "And Serug lived thirty years, and begat Nahor:"

Terah was born when Nahor was 29 years old, which means that Terah was born 222 years after the Flood:

Genesis 11:24: “And Nahor lived nine and twenty years, and begat Terah:”

Finally, Abraham was born when Terah was 70, which means that Abraham was born 292 years after the Flood:

Genesis 11:26: “And Terah lived seventy years, and begat Abram, Nahor, and Haran.”

The Flood occurred in approximately 2348 BC. (This is something I have talked about extensively elsewhere, so I will not repeat that discussion here.) If the Flood occurred in 2348 BC and if Abraham was born 292 years after the Flood, then Abraham would have been born sometime around 2056 BC.

As we have seen, Genesis 11 gives us quite a bit of genealogical information regarding Abraham. He had two brothers: Nahor and Haran. His father was Terah and his grandfather was Nahor. He was 10 generations removed from Noah and, like all of mankind, was in his direct line. (Everyone in the world is a descendent of Noah.) Abraham was a descendent of Noah's son Shem, as are all of the Jews. (This is why the Jews are called a Semitic people and why being against Jews is called anti-Semitism. Shem, incidentally, means “name”; the Semitic people are literally “the people of the name”).

When Abraham was born his name was Abram, and it stayed that way until shortly before Isaac was conceived, when God changed it. His two names have meanings: Abram means “exalted father” and Abraham means “father of a multitude”. He married a woman named Sarai:

Genesis 11:29: “And Abram and Nahor took them wives: the name of Abram's wife was Sarai; and the name of Nahor's wife, Milcah, the daughter of Haran, the father of Milcah, and the father of Iscah.”

God later changed Sarai's name to Sarah. Sarai means “noble woman”; Sarah means “princess”. (God changed both names to reflect the fact that a great nation was going to come from Abraham and Sarah.) What is not commonly known is that Sarah was actually Abraham's half-sister. This is what Abraham told Abimelech:

Genesis 20:12: “And yet indeed she is my sister; she is the daughter of my father, but not the daughter of my mother; and she became my wife.”

Genesis 11 tells us that when Haran (Abraham's brother) died, the family was living in the land of Ur:

Genesis 11:28: “And Haran died before his father Terah in the land of his nativity, in Ur of the Chaldees.”

After Haran died, Terah (Abraham's father) moved the family away from Ur to go to Canaan.

The family only made it as far as Haran, a city that was once located in what is now Turkey (and yes, the city had the same name as Abraham's dead brother). Terah lived there for the rest of his life, and died there:

Genesis 11:31: “And Terah took Abram his son, and Lot the son of Haran his son's son, and Sarai his daughter in law, his son Abram's wife; and they went forth with them from Ur of the Chaldees, to go into the land of Canaan; and they came unto Haran, and dwelt there.

32 And the days of Terah were two hundred and five years: and Terah died in Haran.”

While Abraham was living in Haran, the Lord came to him and told him to move:

Genesis 12:12: “Now the Lord had said unto Abram, Get thee out of thy country, and from thy kindred, and from thy father's house, unto a land that I will shew thee:

2 And I will make of thee a great nation, and I will bless thee, and make thy name great; and thou shalt be a blessing:

3 And I will bless them that bless thee, and curse him that curseth thee: and in thee shall all families of the earth be blessed.”

It's interesting to note that at this point there was nothing particularly distinguishing about Abraham. The Bible never says that God decided to call Abraham because he was an exceptionally good man. There is no evidence that Abraham had won some sort of “best person” contest, or that God picked him because he was better and more holy than everyone else. Abraham did later demonstrate faith (by believing God's promises) and obedience (by being willing to sacrifice Isaac), but when God first came to Abraham he had not done any of those things. God simply chose to give him some amazing promises: to bless him, to make him a great nation, to bless those who bless him and curse those who curse him, and to bless all families on the earth through him.

There are two important points here. First of all, God gives some people gifts that He does not give to others; that is His right as Creator. God created the world and we are His people; He is free to do to us as He pleases. If He chooses to make one person great and one person small, who are we to talk back to God? We often think that God should be “fair”, but the Lord never promised that. He does as He pleases. He chose Abraham out of everyone in the world. There are some that God blesses with great talents and riches, and there are others who are not given nearly as much. The Bible tells us that He is the potter and we are the clay. If we accept this we will find contentment; if we reject it and demand that God be “fair” then our lives will be full of trouble.

The second point is that God's promises to Abraham were *not conditional*. God did not say “As long as you continue to obey me I will do the things I have said.” The promises were not conditioned on his obedience or on the obedience of his descendents. Not all covenants are like this – for example, the Mosaic Law is a conditional covenant. God told Israel that He would bless them as long as they obeyed and He would curse them if they disobeyed. Israel would be allowed to stay in the land as long as they followed Him, but they would be evicted from the land if they left Him. The Abrahamic covenant, however, was *not* conditional. There was nothing Abraham's descendents could do to void it. The promises that God made were binding then and are still binding now.

God has kept that covenant. He did make Abraham a great nation and He did bless him and give him a great name. Through Christ, a descendent of Abraham, all families on the earth are indeed

blessed. However, there are two other aspects of the covenant that are still in force: God continues to bless those who bless Israel, and the land of Canaan still belongs to the Israelites. God promised to give the land to Abraham and to his descendents forever, and that promise is binding. There is nothing the Jews can do to forfeit their title to the land. Their disobedience has caused them to be evicted from the land on two separate occasions, but the land still belongs to them. There will come a day when their disobedience will be ended once and for all and they will accept Jesus as their Messiah; after that they will never again be evicted from the land. This, though, is something that we will talk about in a future lesson, so I will not dwell on it here.

When God told Abraham to leave the city of Haran, Abraham did so. At the age of 75 he took Lot and his family and moved to Canaan:

Genesis 12:4: "So Abram departed, as the Lord had spoken unto him; and Lot went with him: and Abram was seventy and five years old when he departed out of Haran.

5 And Abram took Sarai his wife, and Lot his brother's son, and all their substance that they had gathered, and the souls that they had gotten in Haran; and they went forth to go into the land of Canaan; and into the land of Canaan they came."

Lot was the son of Haran, the brother of Abraham who had died some time earlier. Abraham and Lot were apparently close; he went wherever Abraham went, and when he got into trouble Abraham tried to help him. It is possible that Abraham felt some measure of responsibility for his orphaned nephew.

Abraham traveled to Sichem in the plain of Moreh. God appeared to him there and promised to give that land to his descendents:

Genesis 12:6: "And Abram passed through the land unto the place of Sichem, unto the plain of Moreh. And the Canaanite was then in the land.

7 And the Lord appeared unto Abram, and said, Unto thy seed will I give this land: and there builded he an altar unto the Lord, who appeared unto him."

Notice that no conditions were placed on this promise. The Lord simply told Abraham that He was going to give the land to his descendents.

After this a famine arose, so Abraham traveled to Egypt:

Genesis 12:10: "And there was a famine in the land: and Abram went down into Egypt to sojourn there; for the famine was grievous in the land."

This has interesting parallels with what happened to Jacob, Abraham's grandson. In his days there was also a famine in the land, and Jacob and his family ended up moving to Egypt to be with Joseph. (That, however, is a story for another time.)

When Abraham moved to Egypt the Egyptians saw his wife and were taken by her beauty. Rather than being honest about who she was, Abraham had Sarah tell everyone that she was his sister. (That was actually a half-truth, since Sarah really was his half-sister. However, she was also his *wife*, which is a very relevant fact.) Since the Egyptians believed that Sarah was just Abraham's sister, they took her to Pharaoh's house. Pharaoh was pleased and gave Abraham many presents.

God, however, was *not* pleased. He cursed Pharaoh's house with “great plagues” (Genesis 12:17), which finally got Pharaoh's attention. (Is this story sounding familiar? There was another time when God cursed Egypt with great plagues...) Pharaoh found out about Abraham's deception and was quite upset. He sent Sarah back home and made Abraham leave:

Genesis 12:18: “And Pharaoh called Abram and said, What is this that thou hast done unto me? why didst thou not tell me that she was thy wife?

19 Why saidst thou, She is my sister? so I might have taken her to me to wife: now therefore behold thy wife, take her, and go thy way.

20 And Pharaoh commanded his men concerning him: and they sent him away, and his wife, and all that he had.”

Centuries later, when Israel was driven out of Egypt during the time of Moses, they plundered the Egyptians and left with great riches. Likewise, when Abraham left Egypt he left it a wealthy man:

Genesis 13:2: “And Abram was very rich in cattle, in silver, and in gold.”

In fact, Abraham was so rich that there was strife between his servants and Lot's servants because of the size of their herds. They simply had too many cattle to live together in one place. To resolve this dispute Abraham stepped in and told Lot that they need to go their separate ways. Lot decided to go to Sodom, so Abraham went the other way:

Genesis 13:10: “And Lot lifted up his eyes, and beheld all the plain of Jordan, that it was well watered every where, before the Lord destroyed Sodom and Gomorrah, even as the garden of the Lord, like the land of Egypt, as thou comest unto Zoar.

11 Then Lot chose him all the plain of Jordan; and Lot journeyed east: and they separated themselves the one from the other.

12 Abram dwelled in the land of Canaan, and Lot dwelled in the cities of the plain, and pitched his tent toward Sodom.

13 But the men of Sodom were wicked and sinners before the Lord exceedingly.”

Lot chose to live in the plain of Jordan because it was a beautiful area that was perfect for raising cattle – but there was a drawback. He chose to live in Sodom, a city full of wickedness. That choice would later cost him everything he had; at the end of his life he would find himself living in a cave. It is not a good idea to pitch your tent toward Sodom or to choose to live in the center of wickedness and depravity. Lot did not have to live in Sodom, but he chose to do so – and it cost him dearly.

After this God promised to give Abraham and his descendents “all the land which thou seest”:

Genesis 13:14: “And the Lord said unto Abram, after that Lot was separated from him, Lift up now thine eyes, and look from the place where thou art northward, and southward, and eastward, and westward:

15 For all the land which thou seest, to thee will I give it, and to thy seed for ever.

16 And I will make thy seed as the dust of the earth: so that if a man can number the dust of the earth, then shall thy seed also be numbered.

17 Arise, walk through the land in the length of it and in the breadth of it; for I will

give it unto thee."

It should be noted that the promise was not *just* to Abraham's offspring; it was also to *Abraham himself*. God specifically said "to thee will I give it, and to thy seed". This is significant because Abraham did not get any of the land during his lifetime! The fulfillment of this promise is still in the future – it is something that will happen during the Millennial Kingdom. Today that piece of land in the Middle East is hotly disputed, but it will not always be that way. The day will come when Israel will dwell securely in that land and no one will ever try to take it from her again. It will belong to Abraham and his descendents forever.

This passage has both the land promise and the promise to have many descendents. Interestingly, Abraham did not live long enough to see either of these promises come true. He died before Jacob had his twelve sons, and he died centuries before the Israelites inherited the land of Canaan – and Abraham himself never inherited any of it. God kept his promises but Abraham could only see their fulfillment far off, with the eyes of faith. To this day the land promise has only been partially fulfilled, but one day it will be wholly fulfilled. In Abraham's lifetime these two promises were tests of faith, for it seemed that God had failed – but He never fails.

After this, Abraham went to the plain of Mamre, "which is in Hebron", and built an altar to the Lord:

Genesis 13:18: "Then Abram removed his tent, and came and dwelt in the plain of Mamre, which is in Hebron, and built there an altar unto the Lord."

Some time after this, the kings of Sodom were attacked by a coalition of other kings:

Genesis 14:1: "And it came to pass in the days of Amraphel king of Shinar, Arioch king of Ellasar, Chedorlaomer king of Elam, and Tidal king of nations;
2 That these made war with Bera king of Sodom, and with Birsha king of Gomorrah, Shinab king of Admah, and Shemeber king of Zeboiim, and the king of Bela, which is Zoar."

Their attack upon Sodom was successful: the kings of Sodom were defeated, their cities were looted, and the conquerors carried off its people and its wealth – which included Lot. When Abraham heard about this he immediately put together a plan to rescue his nephew. He armed 318 of his trained servants (yes, Abraham was so wealthy that he had more than 300 servants!), then pursued the invaders to Dan and attacked them during the night:

Genesis 14:14: "And when Abram heard that his brother was taken captive, he armed his trained servants, born in his own house, three hundred and eighteen, and pursued them unto Dan.

15 And he divided himself against them, he and his servants, by night, and smote them, and pursued them unto Hobah, which is on the left hand of Damascus.

16 And he brought back all the goods, and also brought again his brother Lot, and his goods, and the women also, and the people."

God gave Abraham the victory; his tiny army of trained servants was able to defeat the

combined armies of several kings. Amazingly, Abraham returned everything that he recovered. The king of Sodom tried to get him to keep the wealth but Abraham refused:

Genesis 14:21: "And the king of Sodom said unto Abram, Give me the persons, and take the goods to thyself.

22 And Abram said to the king of Sodom, I have lift up mine hand unto the Lord, the most high God, the possessor of heaven and earth,

23 That I will not take from a thread even to a shoelatchet, and that I will not take any thing that is thine, lest thou shouldest say, I have made Abram rich:"

However, Abraham did give a tithe of everything to Melchizedek, a priest of God:

Genesis 14:18: "And Melchizedek king of Salem brought forth bread and wine: and he was the priest of the most high God.

19 And he blessed him, and said, Blessed be Abram of the most high God, possessor of heaven and earth:

20 And blessed be the most high God, which hath delivered thine enemies into thy hand. And he gave him tithes of all."

The Bible has a lot to say about Melchizedek, but since we will be discussing him in a future lesson we will not dwell on it here.

Interestingly, right after Abraham saved Lot and got nothing in return, God came to Abraham and said that He was "thy exceeding great reward":

Genesis 15:1: "After these things the word of the Lord came unto Abram in a vision, saying, Fear not, Abram: I am thy shield, and thy exceeding great reward."

He also said that He was Abraham's shield. Shields are defensive items; they are used to protect a person from attack. God essentially said that He was protecting Abraham – and He continues to watch over Abraham's children to this day.

During this encounter with God, Abraham complained that God hadn't given him any children. God reiterated His promise that his descendents would be as the stars of the sky in number:

Genesis 15:5: "And he brought him forth abroad, and said, Look now toward heaven, and tell the stars, if thou be able to number them: and he said unto him, So shall thy seed be.

6 And he believed in the Lord; and he counted it to him for righteousness."

Verse 6 is of key importance: Abraham believed God, "and he counted it to him for righteousness". Abraham's salvation was by grace through faith, not by works. He was saved because he believed God, not because of anything he had done. His faith is what saved him.

God then told Abraham that He had brought him out of Ur so that He could give him the land of Canaan. Abraham asked for a sign, and God commanded him to offer a sacrifice. When the sun was going down Abraham fell asleep, and "an horror of great darkness fell upon him". God then told Abraham that his descendents would be "a stranger in a land that is not theirs" and would be afflicted for 400 years. God would then judge the nation that afflicted them and lead them out with great wealth.

Meanwhile, Abraham would live to a ripe old age and die in peace.

God then made a covenant with Abraham. He promised to give his descendents all of the land between the Nile and the Euphrates river – a piece of territory approximately 1500 miles wide:

Genesis 15:18: “In the same day the Lord made a covenant with Abram, saying, Unto thy seed have I given this land, from the river of Egypt unto the great river, the river Euphrates:”

It should be noted that Israel has never possessed all of that land – but one day they will. God will keep the promise that He made to Abraham all those years ago. Currently Israel is a very small country, but that is going to change. Israel will reign over all of that territory during the Millennial Kingdom. God always keeps His promises.

After this, Sarah became upset that she was now old and still did not have any children. She told the 86-year-old Abraham to sleep with her maidservant Hagar:

Genesis 16:1: “Now Sarai Abram's wife bare him no children: and she had an handmaid, an Egyptian, whose name was Hagar.

2 And Sarai said unto Abram, Behold now, the Lord hath restrained me from bearing: I pray thee, go in unto my maid; it may be that I may obtain children by her. And Abram hearkened to the voice of Sarai.

3 And Sarai Abram's wife took Hagar her maid the Egyptian, after Abram had dwelt ten years in the land of Canaan, and gave her to her husband Abram to be his wife.

4 And he went in unto Hagar, and she conceived: and when she saw that she had conceived, her mistress was despised in her eyes.”

The Bible tells us that Sarah “dealt hardly with her” and Hagar ran off into the wilderness. “The angel of the Lord” (possibly a pre-incarnate appearance of Jesus, although that is a discussion for another time) came to her and told her to go back to Sarah and submit to her. He also told her that she would have a son named Ishmael, who would have many descendents; Ishmael would be a wild man, and “his hand will be against every man, and every man's hand against him”.

Hagar obeyed, went back to Sarah, and gave birth to Ishmael, who is the father of the Arab peoples. It is interesting to note that the conflict in the Middle East is between the descendents of Ishmael (the Arabs) and the descendents of Jacob (the Jews). The Middle East crisis is essentially a giant family feud.

When Abraham was 99 years old God made another covenant with him and gave him a set of promises:

Genesis 17:1: “And when Abram was ninety years old and nine, the Lord appeared to Abram, and said unto him, I am the Almighty God; walk before me, and be thou perfect.

2 And I will make my covenant between me and thee, and will multiply thee exceedingly.

3 And Abram fell on his face: and God talked with him, saying,

4 As for me, behold, my covenant is with thee, and thou shalt be a father of many nations.

5 Neither shall thy name any more be called Abram, but thy name shall be

Abraham; for a father of many nations have I made thee.

6 And I will make thee exceeding fruitful, and I will make nations of thee, and kings shall come out of thee.

7 And I will establish my covenant between me and thee and thy seed after thee in their generations for an everlasting covenant, to be a God unto thee, and to thy seed after thee.

8 And I will give unto thee, and to thy seed after thee, the land wherein thou art a stranger, all the land of Canaan, for an everlasting possession; and I will be their God."

This is the Abrahamic Covenant. In it, God changed Abram's name to Abraham (Genesis 17:5), promised to make him the father "of many nations", promised to give him "all the land of Canaan", and promised "to be a God unto thee, and to thy seed after thee". This is said to be an *everlasting* covenant – one that is not dependent upon Abraham in any way and therefore cannot be voided by him or his descendents. This means that there is nothing Abraham or his descendents could do to break this covenant and forfeit its promises.

Circumcision was instituted, and Abraham and his offspring were charged with keeping it. It was to be done on the eighth day after birth; those who did not would be cut off (but note that not keeping it would *not* void the covenant; it would simply cut off the individual breakers). God also changed Sarai's name to Sarah and said that she would have a son. Abraham asked God to bless Ishmael, and God said that He would but that He was making His covenant with Isaac.

Some time after this (but before Isaac was conceived), Abraham was visited by three men:

Genesis 18:1: "And the Lord appeared unto him in the plains of Mamre: and he sat in the tent door in the heat of the day;

2 And he lift up his eyes and looked, and, lo, three men stood by him: and when he saw them, he ran to meet them from the tent door, and bowed himself toward the ground,"

People commonly assume that these three men were angels, but that is not the case. If you read the chapter you will see that when they speak the Bible calls them Lord (see verse 13). It's quite possible that at least one of these men was a pre-incarnate appearance of Christ.

The men tell Abraham that Sarah was going to have a son. When Sarah found this impossible to believe and laughed, the Lord rebuked her. God also told Abraham that he was going to destroy Sodom. Abraham interceded on the city's behalf, and God agreed to spare it if there were just 10 righteous people there:

Genesis 18:32: "And he said, Oh let not the Lord be angry, and I will speak yet but this once: Peradventure ten shall be found there. And he said, I will not destroy it for ten's sake."

The Lord then left and Abraham returned "unto his place". The next day Abraham got up early and saw that Sodom and Gomorrah had been destroyed. However, God remembered Abraham and saved Lot:

Genesis 19:27: "And Abraham gat up early in the morning to the place where he

stood before the Lord:

28 And he looked toward Sodom and Gomorrah, and toward all the land of the plain, and beheld, and, lo, the smoke of the country went up as the smoke of a furnace.

29 And it came to pass, when God destroyed the cities of the plain, that God remembered Abraham, and sent Lot out of the midst of the overthrow, when he overthrew the cities in the which Lot dwelt."

After this Abraham moved to Gerar. Once again Abraham told everyone that Sarah was his sister, and once again this caused problems. This time the victim wasn't the Pharaoh of Egypt, but Abimelech the king. When the king took Sarah, God warned him in a dream that Sarah was Abraham's wife. Abimelech then gave Sarah back (along with some gifts), and gave Abraham a piece of his mind:

Genesis 20:9: "Then Abimelech called Abraham, and said unto him, What hast thou done unto us? and what have I offended thee, that thou hast brought on me and on my kingdom a great sin? thou hast done deeds unto me that ought not to be done."

Abraham told the king that he had made a deal with Sarah: everywhere they went she was supposed to tell people that they were brother and sister and not a married couple. In the end Abraham prayed and God healed the women of the house of the king, "for the Lord had fast closed up all the wombs of the house of Abimelech".

After this Sarah conceived and Isaac was born:

Genesis 21:1: "And the Lord visited Sarah as he had said, and the Lord did unto Sarah as he had spoken.

2 For Sarah conceived, and bare Abraham a son in his old age, at the set time of which God had spoken to him.

3 And Abraham called the name of his son that was born unto him, whom Sarah bare to him, Isaac."

Isaac (which means "laughter") was born when Abraham was 100 years old. Not everyone was happy to see him, however. When Sarah caught Hagar mocking Isaac, Sarah told Abraham to get rid of both her and Ishmael. God told Abraham to not be grieved over this:

Genesis 21:12: "And God said unto Abraham, Let it not be grievous in thy sight because of the lad, and because of thy bondwoman; in all that Sarah hath said unto thee, hearken unto her voice; for in Isaac shall thy seed be called.

13 And also of the son of the bondwoman will I make a nation, because he is thy seed."

So Abraham sent Hagar and Ishmael away. Ishmael survived and became a great nation; his descendents are the Arabs.

After this Abraham made an agreement with Abimelech (likely a different person than the one who took Sarah). Abraham was upset with him because Abimelech's servants had violently stolen one of his wells, and Abraham set aside 7 "ewe lambs" to indicate that the well belonged to him. Abraham planted a grove there and called upon the name of the Lord. He then "sojourned in the Philistines' land

many days”.

God then tested Abraham:

Genesis 22:1: “And it came to pass after these things, that God did tempt Abraham, and said unto him, Abraham: and he said, Behold, here I am.

2 And he said, Take now thy son, thine only son Isaac, whom thou lovest, and get thee into the land of Moriah; and offer him there for a burnt offering upon one of the mountains which I will tell thee of.

3 And Abraham rose up early in the morning, and saddled his ass, and took two of his young men with him, and Isaac his son, and clave the wood for the burnt offering, and rose up, and went unto the place of which God had told him.”

Abraham took his son Isaac to the place God had indicated. In fact, Abraham even got up early the next morning to do so! He did not delay or waste any time. However, when he was about to kill Isaac, God stopped him and said he had passed the test. God then supplied a ram in Isaac's place and Abraham sacrificed it instead.

There are some important parallels here that should not be overlooked. Romans tells us that the wages of sin is death; we all deserve to die. Under the Mosaic Law there was a sacrificial system where animals were offered as payment for sins (although the blood of animals never actually atoned for sin; the sacrifices were pointing to Christ). In an animal sacrifice an animal dies in place of a person. This points us to Christ, who died in our place and atoned for our sins by paying for them with His own body and His own blood. Just as the ram took Isaac's place, so Christ took our place and suffered for the sins that we committed.

Some time after this, Sarah died at the age of 127:

Genesis 23:1: “And Sarah was an hundred and seven and twenty years old: these were the years of the life of Sarah.”

One commentary noted that of all the women in the Bible, Sarah is the only one whose age at death is recorded. It is also interesting to note that, despite what Catholics claim, the Bible *never* tells us to look to Mary as an example of a godly woman. It does, however, tell us to look to *Sarah* as a godly example (Isaiah 51:1-2, 1 Peter 3:3-6).

Abraham bought the cave of Machpelah so he could bury her. The cave was purchased from Ephron the Hittite for the ludicrous price of 400 shekels of silver. This is what one commentary said about the purchase price:

By all accounts, 400 shekels of silver was an exorbitant price. "Omri paid 6,000 shekels for the whole site of Samaria, and Jeremiah gave only 17 shekels for a parcel of land probably about the size of Machpelah." (*Coffman Commentaries on the Old and New Testament*)

The Hittites really took advantage of Abraham. The only thing Abraham wanted to buy was the cave, but they forced him to buy the cave, the field, and the surrounding trees – and to pay *23 times* what it was worth. (This would be like being charged \$2.3 million for a house that was only worth \$100,000.) Abraham paid it and buried his dead.

After Sarah died, Abraham sent his "eldest servant" to go back to Abraham's homeland and get

a wife for Isaac:

Genesis 24:1: "And Abraham was old, and well stricken in age: and the Lord had blessed Abraham in all things.

2 And Abraham said unto his eldest servant of his house, that ruled over all that he had, Put, I pray thee, thy hand under my thigh:

3 And I will make thee swear by the Lord, the God of heaven, and the God of the earth, that thou shalt not take a wife unto my son of the daughters of the Canaanites, among whom I dwell:

4 But thou shalt go unto my country, and to my kindred, and take a wife unto my son Isaac."

His servant was successful and returned with Rebekah. It turns out that she was related to Abraham:

Genesis 24:24: "And she said unto him, I am the daughter of Bethuel the son of Milcah, which she bare unto Nahor."

Her grandfather Nahor was Abraham's brother (Genesis 11:26).

After finding a wife for Isaac, Abraham married a woman named Keturah. He had numerous children with her but he still left everything that he had to Isaac:

Genesis 25:1: "Then again Abraham took a wife, and her name was Keturah.

2 And she bare him Zimran, and Jokshan, and Medan, and Midian, and Ishbak, and Shuah.

3 And Jokshan begat Sheba, and Dedan. And the sons of Dedan were Asshurim, and Letushim, and Leummim.

4 And the sons of Midian; Ephah, and Ephher, and Hanoah, and Abidah, and Eldaah. All these were the children of Keturah.

5 And Abraham gave all that he had unto Isaac.

6 But unto the sons of the concubines, which Abraham had, Abraham gave gifts, and sent them away from Isaac his son, while he yet lived, eastward, unto the east country."

Abraham lived to be 175 years old and then died:

Genesis 25:7: "And these are the days of the years of Abraham's life which he lived, an hundred threescore and fifteen years.

8 Then Abraham gave up the ghost, and died in a good old age, an old man, and full of years; and was gathered to his people."

His sons Isaac and Ishmael buried him in the same cave where Sarah was buried:

Genesis 25:9: "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;

10 The field which Abraham purchased of the sons of Heth: there was Abraham

buried, and Sarah his wife.”

Thus God fulfilled His promise to Abraham – he lived a long life and died in peace, exactly as God had said.