

**A. Occasion for the Sepulcher (1-2)**

**The Time of Sarah's Death**

**-The Measuring of Sarah's Years**

\*Abraham would be 137 and Isaac 37 (Gen 17:17)

\*Sarah was 65 when they left Haran (Gen 12:4)

**B. Obtaining of a Sepulcher (3-20)**

**Confession of Abraham (4)**

"I am a sojourner and foreigner..."

\*Heb 11:13-14 - This statement is a strong confession of faith

\*Acts 7:5 - Abraham had no inheritance in the land of Canaan.

**Concern of Abraham (4)**

**-Sorrow** - While she was in his sight, it renewed his grief.

**-Soul** - Abraham was not concerned about finding an extravagant tomb. He knew the soul was the key.

**Compliments of Abraham (6)**

**-The Title They Gave Him**

"[P]rince of God" - Abraham obviously continually demonstrated his faith in God.

**-The Offer They Made Him**

"[C]hoicest of our tombs"

Why does scripture have such a detailed account of Sarah's death and burial?

<sup>1</sup>**Sarah** lived *127 years*; these were the years of the life of **Sarah**.

<sup>2</sup>And Sarah died at **Kiriath-arba** (that is, **Hebron**) in the land of **Canaan**, and **Abraham** went in to mourn for **Sarah** and to *weep for her*.

Abraham had previously been in Beersheba (Gen 22:19)

<sup>3</sup>And **Abraham** rose up from before his dead and said to the **Hittites**,

<sup>4</sup>"*I am a sojourner and foreigner among you; give me property among you for a burying place, that I may bury my dead out of my sight.*"

<sup>5</sup>The **Hittites** answered Abraham,

<sup>6</sup>"Hear us, my lord; you are a *prince of God* among us. Bury your dead in the *choicest of our tombs*. None of us will withhold from you his tomb to hinder you from burying your dead."

<sup>7</sup>Abraham rose and *bowed to the Hittites*, the people of the land.

<sup>8</sup>And he said to them, "If you are willing that I should bury my dead out of my sight, hear me and *entreat for me Ephron the son of Zohar*,

<sup>9</sup>that he may give me the *cave of Machpelah*, which he owns; it is at the end of his field. For the *full price* let him give it to me *in your presence* as property for a burying place."

<sup>10</sup>Now **Ephron** was sitting among the Hittites, and **Ephron** the Hittite answered Abraham *in the hearing of the Hittites*, of all who went in at the gate of his city,

**-The Mention of Sarah's Years**

Sarah is the only woman outside of Jairus' daughter who has her age revealed in Scripture.  
\*Luke 8:41-42

**-The Manner of Sarah's Years**

\*One of only 2 women mentioned in Hebrews 11 - Hall of fame of the faithful (Heb 11:11)

**The Town of Sarah's Death**

\*Kiriath-arba (Hebron)

\*Abraham first moved to Hebron after splitting from Lot (Gen 13:18)

\*This town was named "Hebron" in Judges 1:10

\*Genesis use of both names likely represents an updating by a later scribe

**The Tears over Sarah's Death**

"[W]ent in to mourn...and to weep for her."

**Courtesy of Abraham (7-9)**

"[B]owed to the Hittites"

Abraham does not yet directly negotiate with the landowner. First, he must negotiate with the wider citizenry, perhaps at a town council or tribal council.

**Compensation from Abraham**

\***Cave of Machpelah**  
Abraham, Isaac, Rebekah, Jacob, and Leah were buried in this cave  
-Gen 25:9; 49:30-31; 50:13

-Abraham offers Ephron "full price" for the cave.

Consistency of Abraham

-Abraham made the same offer regarding "the price" when dealing directly with Ephron

-Ephron offered to give Abraham the cave and field as a gift. Abraham would not accept it.

-Compare this to the offer from the King of Sodom in Gen 14:21-24.

Currency of Abraham

-Abraham dealt honestly and fairly with Ephron. He repeatedly said he would pay "full price" and that is exactly what he did (v. 15-16)

"...according to the weights current among the merchants" (v. 16)

"Owe no one anything..."  
Romans 13:8

Commitment of Abraham

-Burying Sarah in Canaan was another demonstration of Abraham's faith in the promise of God:

Gen 15:7 "I am the Lord who brought you out from Ur of the Chaldeans to give you this land to possess."

<sup>11</sup>"No, my lord, hear me: *I give you the field*, and I *give you the cave* that is in it. *In the sight of the sons of my people* I give it to you. Bury your dead."

<sup>12</sup>Then Abraham bowed down *before the people of the land*.

<sup>13</sup>And he said to Ephron *in the hearing of the people of the land*, "But if you will, hear me: *I give the price of the field. Accept it from me*, that I may bury my dead there."

<sup>14</sup>Ephron answered Abraham,

<sup>15</sup>"My lord, listen to me: a piece of land *worth four hundred shekels of silver*, what is that between you and me? Bury your dead."

<sup>16</sup>Abraham listened to Ephron, and Abraham *weighed out for Ephron the silver that he had named in the hearing of the Hittites*, four hundred shekels of silver, according to the weights current among the merchants.

<sup>17</sup>So the field of Ephron in Machpelah, which was to the east of Mamre, the field with the cave that was in it and all the trees that were in the field, throughout its whole area, was made over

<sup>18</sup>to Abraham as a possession *in the presence of the Hittites*, before all who went in at the gate of his city.

<sup>19</sup>After this, Abraham buried Sarah his wife in the cave of the field of Machpelah east of Mamre (that is, Hebron) in the land of Canaan.

<sup>20</sup>The *field and the cave* that is in it were made over to Abraham as *property* for a burying place by the Hittites.

Certification of Abraham

-Consider how many times in this account there is reference to Abraham making sure his business dealings were completed in front of witnesses:

(3) "Said to the Hittites"

(5) "The Hittites"

(7) "to the Hittites"

(9) "in your presence"

(10) "in the hearing of the Hittites"

(11) "in the sight of the sons of my people"

(12) "before the people"

(13) "in the hearing of the people"

(14) "in the hearing of the Hittites"

(16) "in the hearing of the Hittites"

(18) "in the presence of the Hittites, before all"

### The Time of Sarah's Death

#### **Genesis 17:17 (ESV)**

<sup>17</sup> Then Abraham fell on his face and laughed and said to himself, "Shall a child be born to a man who is a hundred years old? Shall Sarah, who is ninety years old, bear a child?"

#### **Genesis 12:4 (ESV)**

<sup>4</sup> So Abram went, as the LORD had told him, and Lot went with him. Abram was seventy-five years old when he departed from Haran.

#### **Luke 8:41–42 (ESV)**

<sup>41</sup> And there came a man named Jairus, who was a ruler of the synagogue. And falling at Jesus' feet, he implored him to come to his house, <sup>42</sup> for he had an only daughter, about twelve years of age, and she was dying.

As Jesus went, the people pressed around him.

### The Manner of Sarah's Years

#### **Hebrews 11:11 (ESV)**

<sup>11</sup> By faith Sarah herself received power to conceive, even when she was past the age, since she considered him faithful who had promised.

### The Town of Sarah's Death

Abraham had previously been in Beersheba (Gen 22:19)

#### **Genesis 22:19 (ESV)**

<sup>19</sup> So Abraham returned to his young men, and they arose and went together to Beersheba. And Abraham lived at Beersheba.

### Kiriath-arba

**KIRIATH-ARBA** (Heb. *qiryat 'arba'*, 'city of four', *i.e.* 'tetrapolis'), an earlier name of \*Hebron. According to Jos. 14:15, it was 'the metropolis of the Anakim' (so lxx; *MT* makes the numeral '*arba'*, 'four', into a personal name). The name Kiriath-arba occurs once in the story of Abraham (Gn. 23:2) and a few times in the narrative of the Conquest (Jos. 14:15; 15:54; 20:7; Jdg. 1:10); thereafter it evidently fell into disuse. Some attempt may have been made to revive it in the post-exilic age (Ne. 11:25), but with the Idumaeen occupation of the place soon afterwards the old name was completely discontinued.

F. F. Bruce<sup>1</sup>

---

<sup>1</sup> Bruce, F. F. (1996). Kiriath-Arba. In (D. R. W. Wood, I. H. Marshall, A. R. Millard, J. I. Packer, & D. J. Wiseman, Eds.) *New Bible dictionary*. Leicester, England; Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press.

**Kirjath-arba**—city of Arba, the original name of Hebron (q.v.), so called from the name of its founder, one of the Anakim (Gen. 23:2; 35:27; Josh. 15:13). It was given to Caleb by Joshua as his portion. The Jews interpret the name as meaning “the city of the four”, i.e., of Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, and Adam, who were all, as they allege, buried there.<sup>2</sup>

**Genesis 13:18 (ESV)**

<sup>18</sup> So Abram moved his tent and came and settled by the oaks of Mamre, which are at Hebron, and there he built an altar to the LORD.

**Judges 1:10 (ESV)**

<sup>10</sup> And Judah went against the Canaanites who lived in Hebron (now the name of Hebron was formerly Kiriath-arba), and they defeated Sheshai and Ahiman and Talmai.

**Confession of Abraham (4)**

**Hebrews 11:13–14 (ESV)**

<sup>13</sup> These all died in faith, not having received the things promised, but having seen them and greeted them from afar, and having acknowledged that they were strangers and exiles on the earth. <sup>14</sup> For people who speak thus make it clear that they are seeking a homeland.

**Acts 7:5 (ESV)**

<sup>5</sup> Yet he gave him no inheritance in it, not even a foot’s length, but promised to give it to him as a possession and to his offspring after him, though he had no child.

**Compensation from Abraham**

**Genesis 25:9 (ESV)**

<sup>9</sup> Isaac and Ishmael his sons buried him in the cave of Machpelah, in the field of Ephron the son of Zohar the Hittite, east of Mamre,

**Genesis 49:30–31 (ESV)**

<sup>30</sup> in the cave that is in the field at Machpelah, to the east of Mamre, in the land of Canaan, which Abraham bought with the field from Ephron the Hittite to possess as a burying place. <sup>31</sup> There they buried Abraham and Sarah his wife. There they buried Isaac and Rebekah his wife, and there I buried Leah—

**Genesis 50:13 (ESV)**

<sup>13</sup> for his sons carried him to the land of Canaan and buried him in the cave of the field at Machpelah, to the east of Mamre, which Abraham bought with the field from Ephron the Hittite to possess as a burying place.

---

<sup>2</sup> Easton, M. G. (1893). In *Easton’s Bible dictionary*. New York: Harper & Brothers.

### Consistency of Abraham

#### **Genesis 14:21–24 (ESV)**

<sup>21</sup> And the king of Sodom said to Abram, “Give me the persons, but take the goods for yourself.” <sup>22</sup> But Abram said to the king of Sodom, “I have lifted my hand to the LORD, God Most High, Possessor of heaven and earth, <sup>23</sup> that I would not take a thread or a sandal strap or anything that is yours, lest you should say, ‘I have made Abram rich.’ <sup>24</sup> I will take nothing but what the young men have eaten, and the share of the men who went with me. Let Aner, Eshcol, and Mamre take their share.”

### Currency of Abraham

#### **Romans 13:8 (ESV)**

<sup>8</sup> Owe no one anything, except to love each other, for the one who loves another has fulfilled the law.

### Commitment of Abraham

#### **Genesis 15:7 (ESV)**

<sup>7</sup> And he said to him, “I am the LORD who brought you out from Ur of the Chaldeans to give you this land to possess.”

### Hittites

**HITTITES** (Heb. *ḥittîm*, *b<sup>e</sup>nê ḥēt*). In the OT the Hittites are, firstly, a great nation which gave its name to the whole region of Syria, ‘from the wilderness and this Lebanon as far as the great river, the river Euphrates, all the land of the Hittites to the Great Sea toward the going down of the sun’ (Jos. 1:4); and secondly, an ethnic group living in Canaan from patriarchal times until after the Israelite settlement (Gn. 15:20; Dt. 7:1; Jdg. 3:5), called literally ‘the children of Heth’ (Gn. 23:3, *etc.*) after their eponymous ancestor Heth, a son of Canaan (Gn. 10:15).

#### **I. The Hittite empire**

The Hittite empire was founded c. 1800 BC by an Indo-European nation which had settled in Asia Minor in city-states some two centuries before. They derived the name ‘Hittite’ from the Hatti, the earlier inhabitants of the area where they settled, whose legacy is clearly traceable in Hittite art and religion and in divine and royal names and titles. With the spread of the Hittite empire the designation ‘Hittites’ was extended to the peoples and lands which it incorporated.

An early Hittite king, Tudhaliyas I (c. 1720 BC), has been identified (precariously) with ‘Tidal king of nations’ of Gn. 14:1. About 1600 BC Hattusilis I extended his rule over parts of N Syria. His successor Mursilis I established a new capital at Hattusas (modern *Boğaz-*

*köy*), E of the Halys; it is largely to the archives uncovered there since 1906 that we owe our knowledge of Hittite history and literature. Mursilis I captured Aleppo and subsequently (c. 1560 BC) raided Babylon—an event which precipitated the fall of the 1st Babylonian Dynasty.

King Telepinus (c. 1480 BC) was the great Hittite legislator. There are some striking affinities between the Hittite law-codes and those of the Pentateuch, although affinities are found in matters of detail and arrangement rather than in general conception. Whereas the Pentateuchal codes resemble the great Semitic law-codes of the ancient Near East in employing the *lex talionis* as a basic principle, the Hittite laws are dominated by the distinctively Indo-European principle of compensation (*Wergeld*). Some analogy has also been discerned between Hittite treaty forms and OT covenant terms. Other notable points of contact are found in the levirate marriage and in the procedures for ascertaining the divine will or the unknown future by means of teraphim and *'ōbôṭ* ('familiar spirits').

The Hittite empire reached the peak of its power under Suppiluliumas I (c. 1380–1350 BC). It was in his province of Kizzuwatna, in SE Asia Minor, that iron was first smelted in the Near East on a scale which justifies one in speaking of the beginning of the Iron Age. He extended his empire over Upper Mesopotamia and over Syria as far S as the Lebanon. The Hittites thus collided with the N thrust of the Egyptian empire in Asia, and hostilities continued between the two powers until 1284 BC, when a non-aggression pact between Hattusilis III and Rameses II recognized the Orontes as their common frontier.

The Hittite empire collapsed around 1200 BC as the result of blows from western enemies.

## II. The Hittite kingdoms

With the fall of the Hittite empire, 24 city-states of the Tabali ('Tubal' in the OT) became heirs to the Hittite home territory N of the Taurus range. In Syria seven city-states which had belonged to the Hittite empire perpetuated the name 'Hittite' for several centuries; their rulers were called 'the kings of the Hittites'. Hamath on the Orontes and Carchemish on the Euphrates were among the most important of the seven. Hamath was allied with David (2 Sa. 8:9ff.), whose kingdom bordered on 'Kadesh in the land of the Hittites' (2 Sa. 24:6; \*TAHTIM-HODSHI). Solomon traded and intermarried with these 'kings of the Hittites' (1 Ki. 10:28f.; 11:1). In the 9th century BC their military reputation could throw the army of Damascus into panic (2 Ki. 7:6). But in the following century they were reduced one by one by the Assyrians; Hamath fell in 720 BC and Carchemish in 717 (cf. 2 Ki. 18:34; 19:13; Is. 10:9).

The Assyrian and Babylonian records of the period (as late as the Chaldean dynasty) regularly refer to the whole of Syria (including Palestine) as the 'Hatti-land'; Sargon II in 711 BC can speak of the people of Ashdod as 'the faithless Hatti'.

The language of the seven Hittite kingdoms is known from hieroglyphic texts which have been deciphered in recent years; bilingual inscriptions in hieroglyphic Hittite and

Phoenician, discovered at Karatepe in Cilicia (1946–7), have helped considerably in their decipherment. The language of these texts is not identical with the official language of the earlier Hittite empire, which was written in cuneiform script and identified as an Indo-European language in 1917; it resembles rather a neighbouring Indo-European language called Luvian.

### III. The Hittites of Canaan

The Hittites of Canaan in patriarchal times appear as inhabiting the central ridge of Judah, especially the Hebron district. It has been surmised that they were a branch of the pre-Indo-European Hatti, or early migrants from some part of the Hittite empire; the Hittite empire itself never extended so far S. They may, on the other hand, have had nothing in common with the N Hittites but their similar (though not completely identical) name. In Gn. 23 the Hittites are the resident population of Hebron ('the people of the land') among whom Abraham lives as 'a stranger and a sojourner' and from whom he buys the field of Machpelah, with its cave, as a family burying-ground. The record of the purchase is said to be 'permeated with intricate subtleties of Hittite laws and customs, correctly corresponding to the time of Abraham' (M. R. Lehmann, *BASOR* 129, 1953, p. 18; but see for another opinion G. M. Tucker, *JBL* 85, 1966, pp. 77ff). Esau grieved his parents by marrying two 'Hittite women ... women of the land' (Gn. 27:46; cf. 26:34f.)—apparently in the Beersheba region. Jerusalem, according to Ezk. 16:3, 45, had a mixed Hittite and Amorite foundation. The name of \*ARAUNAH the Jebusite (2 Sa. 24:16ff.) has been thought to be Hittite, and Uriah the Hittite, evidently a Jerusalemite, was one of David's mighty men (2 Sa. 23:39). Ahimelech, one of David's companions in the days of his outlawry, is called a Hittite (1 Sa. 26:6).

The last reference to the Hittites of Canaan is in Solomon's reign (2 Ch. 8:7); thereafter they were merged in the general population of the land.

BIBLIOGRAPHY. O. R. Gurney, *The Hittites*<sup>2</sup>, 1966; *idem*, *Some Aspects of Hittite religion*, 1976; O. R. Gurney and J. Garstang, *The Geography of the Hittite Empire*, 1959; S. Lloyd, *Early Anatolia*, 1956; L. Woolley, *A Forgotten Kingdom*, 1953; E. Neufeld, *The Hittite Laws*, 1951; E. Akurgal, *The Art of the Hittites*, 1962; G. Walser (ed.), *Neuere Hethiterforschung*, 1964; H. A. Hoffner, 'Some Contributions of Hittitology to OT Study', *TynB* 20, 1969, pp. 29ff.; *idem*, 'The Hittites and Hurrians' in *POTT* pp. 197ff.; F. Cornelius, *Geschichte der Hethiter* 1973; J. Lehmann, *The Hittites* 1977.

F. F. BRUCE.<sup>3</sup>

---

<sup>3</sup> Bruce, F. F. (1996). Hittites. In (D. R. W. Wood, I. H. Marshall, A. R. Millard, J. I. Packer, & D. J. Wiseman, Eds.) *New Bible dictionary*. Leicester, England; Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press.

**HITTITES**—Palestine and Syria appear to have been originally inhabited by three different tribes. (1.) The Semites, living on the east of the isthmus of Suez. They were nomadic and pastoral tribes. (2.) The Phoenicians, who were merchants and traders; and (3.) the Hittites, who were the warlike element of this confederation of tribes. They inhabited the whole region between the Euphrates and Damascus, their chief cities being Carchemish on the Euphrates, and Kadesh, now Tell Neby Mendeh, in the Orontes valley, about six miles south of the Lake of Homs. These Hittites seem to have risen to great power as a nation, as for a long time they were formidable rivals of the Egyptian and Assyrian empires. In the book of Joshua they always appear as the dominant race to the north of Galilee.

Somewhere about the twenty-third century B.C. the Syrian confederation, led probably by the Hittites, marched against Lower Egypt, which they took possession of, making Zoan their capital. Their rulers were the Hyksos, or shepherd kings. They were at length finally driven out of Egypt. Rameses II. sought vengeance against the “vile Kheta,” as he called them, and encountered and defeated them in the great battle of Kadesh, four centuries after Abraham. (See JOSHUA.)

They are first referred to in Scripture in the history of Abraham, who bought from Ephron the Hittite the field and the cave of Machpelah (Gen. 15:20; 23:3–18). They were then settled at Kirjath-arba. From this tribe Esau took his first two wives (26:34; 36:2).

They are afterwards mentioned in the usual way among the inhabitants of the Promised Land (Ex. 23:28). They were closely allied to the Amorites, and are frequently mentioned along with them as inhabiting the mountains of Palestine. When the spies entered the land they seem to have occupied with the Amorites the mountain region of Judah (Num. 13:29). They took part with the other Canaanites against the Israelites (Josh. 9:1; 11:3).

After this there are few references to them in Scripture. Mention is made of “Ahimelech the Hittite” (1 Sam. 26:6), and of “Uriah the Hittite,” one of David’s chief officers (2 Sam. 23:39; 1 Chr. 11:41). In the days of Solomon they were a powerful confederation in the north of Syria, and were ruled by “kings.” They are met with after the Exile still a distinct people (Ezra 9:1; comp. Neh. 13:23–28).

The Hebrew merchants exported horses from Egypt not only for the kings of Israel, but also for the Hittites (1 Kings 10:28, 29). From the Egyptian monuments we learn that “the Hittites were a people with yellow skins and ‘Mongoloid’ features, whose receding foreheads, oblique eyes, and protruding upper jaws are represented as faithfully on their own monuments as they are on those of Egypt, so that we cannot accuse the Egyptian artists of caricaturing their enemies. The Amorites, on the contrary, were a tall and handsome people. They are depicted with white skins, blue eyes, and reddish hair, all the characteristics, in fact, of the white race” (Sayce’s *The Hittites*). The original seat of the Hittite tribes was the mountain ranges of Taurus. They belonged to Asia Minor, and not to Syria.<sup>4</sup>

---

<sup>4</sup> Easton, M. G. (1893). In *Easton’s Bible dictionary*. New York: Harper & Brothers.