

# GENESIS 23

Written and compiled by Gary Kukis

**Genesis 23:1–20**

**Abraham Purchases a Burial Plot for Sarah**

These studies are designed for believers in Jesus Christ only. If you have exercised faith in Christ, then you are in the right place. If you have not, then you need to heed the words of our Lord, Who said, “For God so loved the world that He gave His only-begotten [or, uniquely-born] Son, so that every [one] believing [or, trusting] in Him shall not perish, but shall be have eternal life! For God did not send His Son into the world so that He should judge the world, but so that the world shall be saved through Him. The one believing [or, trusting] in Him is not judged, but the one not believing has already been judged, because he has not believed in the Name of the only-begotten [or, uniquely-born] Son of God.” (John 3:16–18). “I am the Way and the Truth and the Life! No one comes to the Father except through [or, by means of] Me!” (John 14:6).

Every study of the Word of God ought to be preceded by a naming of your sins to God. This restores you to fellowship with God (1John 1:8–10). If there are people around, you would name these sins silently. If there is no one around, then it does not matter if you name them silently or whether you speak aloud.

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Links to the [word-by-word](#), [verse-by-verse studies](#) of **Genesis** ([HTML](#)) ([PDF](#)) (that is what this document is). This incorporates 2 previous studies done in the book of Genesis. However, much of this material was thrown together without careful editing. Therefore, from time to time, there will be concepts and exegetical material which will be repeated, because there was no overall editing done once all of this material was combined.

There is a second, less complete set of weekly lessons of Genesis ([HTML](#)) ([PDF](#)). Every word of that study can be found in the word-by-word, verse-by-verse studies.

This study makes reference to a wide-range of sources. There are quotations from doctrinal teachers, of course; but from Catholic commentaries and from other sources as well. Wherever I found relevant truth, I quoted from it or was inspired by it. Even though it is clear that some churches have a better concept of our reason for being here, that does not mean that there is no truth to be found anywhere else. So, from time to time, I will quote from John Calvin, even though I do not subscribe to 5-point Calvinism; I will quote from some Catholic sources, even though I believe that they are very wrong regarding Mary, the pope, apostolic succession and other such doctrines. The intention is for this to be the most thorough and accurate study of Genesis available anywhere.

Also, **it is not necessary that you read the grey Hebrew exegesis tables.** They are set apart from the rest of the study so that you can easily skip over them (based upon the suggestion of a friend). However, if you ever doubt the translation of a word, phrase or a verse, these translation tables are then available.

**Preface:** Sarah, Abraham's wife, passes away. Abraham looks to purchase land from the Hittites where she might be buried.

In Genesis 23, Sarah, wife of Abraham, passes from life to death. Most of this chapter concentrates on Abraham purchasing her burial plot in Hittite territory.

This should be the most extensive examination of Genesis 23 available, where you will be able to see every word of the original text.

#### Quotations:

Eccles. 3:1–2 [For everything there is a season, and a time for every matter under heaven: a time to be born, and a time to die; a time to plant, and a time to pluck up what is planted.](#) (ESV)

God (speaking to Adam): ["You are dust, and to dust you shall return."](#) (Genesis 3:19b; ESV)

Ayn Rand: *Love should be treated like a business deal, but every business deal has its own terms and its own currency. And in love, the currency is virtue. You love people not for what you do for them or what they do for you. You love them for the values, the virtues, which they have achieved in their own character.*<sup>1</sup>

Preacher's Complete Homiletical Commentary: *Here we have the first record of property in land, of purchase, of silver employed as money, and of mourning for the dead, and of burial.*<sup>2</sup>

Kukis: Genesis 23 is one of the most enigmatic chapters of the Bible. This entire chapter seems to deal with relatively trivial information, and could be summed up in one verse: *Sarah died at age 127, so Abraham purchased a plot of land with a cave from the Hittites for her grave site.* There are details about Abraham's interactions with some of the prominent Hittite men which seem excessive, to say the least. You may not realize this the first time you read this chapter; but when you read it a second time, and ask yourself, *why is this chapter in the Word of God*; you might find yourself hard-pressed to answer that question.

Maya Angelou: *I answer the heroic question "Death, where is they sting?" with "It is here in my heart and mind and memories."*<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> From <http://www.goodreads.com/quotes/tag/business?page=2> accessed December 14, 2014.

<sup>2</sup> From <http://www.studylight.org/commentaries/phc/view.cgi?bk=0&ch=22> accessed December 7, 2014.

<sup>3</sup> From <http://www.corsinet.com/braincandy/qdeath.html> accessed December 14, 2014.

**Outline of Chapter 23:****Introduction**

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| <a href="http://www.kukis.org">www.kukis.org</a> | <a href="#">Exegetical Studies in Genesis</a>        |                                        |

| Doctrines Covered or Alluded To                                                        |  |                        |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--|------------------------|
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| Chapters of the Bible Alluded To and/or Appropriately Exegeted with this Chapter |  |  |
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Many who read and study this chapter are 1<sup>st</sup> or 2<sup>nd</sup> generation students of R. B. Thieme, Jr., so that much of this vocabulary is second nature. One of Bob's contributions to theology is a fresh vocabulary along with a number of concepts which are theologically new or reworked, yet still orthodox. Therefore, if you are unfamiliar with his work, the definitions below will help you to fully understand all that is being said. Also, I have developed a few new terms and concepts which require definition as well.

In addition, there are other more traditional yet technical theological terms which will be used and therefore defined as well.

Sometimes the terms in the exegesis of this chapter are simply alluded to, without any in-depth explanation of them. Sometimes, these terms are explained in detail and illustrated. A collection of all these terms is found here: ([HTML](#)) ([PDF](#)) ([WPD](#)).

| Definition of Terms                                                |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <a href="#">Gloss</a>                                              | A gloss is simply taking the name of a place in one era and identifying it with the same place under a new name in a later era, so that the reader knows where the area is. This would have been done by a later writer or copyist.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     |
| <a href="#">The History of God and Man</a>                         | This would be the first 10 or 11 chapters of Genesis; and perhaps the book of Job. This would be the <i>Bible</i> that Abraham had access to. It may or may not have been in written form. The Jews who were slaves in Egypt also had a rudimentary understanding of their relationship to God, suggesting that they may be in possession of the books of Genesis and Job, to which I have given the title, <i>The History of God and Man</i> .                         |
| <a href="#">Jews</a>                                               | Genetically, those with the genes of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. Religiously, those who follow the faith of Abraham (and today, those who follow a distorted version of the faith of Moses). See <a href="#">Jews, Gentiles and Christians</a> ; <a href="#">Jewish Civilization</a> ; <a href="#">The Jewish Religious Systems</a> ; <a href="#">The Jews and Hellenism</a> ; <a href="#">Jews and Judaism</a> ; and <a href="#">Jews and Gentiles in Bible Times</a> . |
| <a href="#">JEPD Theory (also known as Documentary Hypothesis)</a> | Documentary Hypothesis simply asserts that the Pentateuch was not authored by Moses but written 1000 years after Moses by several authors who wrote portions here and there and then other men have performed extensive revisions, colating and editing after them. See <a href="#">Documentary Hypothesis</a> ( <a href="#">HTML</a> ) ( <a href="#">PDF</a> ) ( <a href="#">WPD</a> ).                                                                                |

Some of these definitions are taken from

[http://gracebiblechurchwichita.org/?page\\_id=1556](http://gracebiblechurchwichita.org/?page_id=1556)

<http://www.bibledoctrinechurch.org/?subpages/GLOSSARY.shtml>

<http://rickhughesministries.org/content/Biblical-Terms.pdf>

<http://www.gbible.org/index.php?proc=d4d>

<http://www.wordoftruthministries.org/termsanddefs.htm>

<http://www.realtime.net/~wdoud/topics.html>

<http://www.theopedia.com/>

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## An Introduction to Genesis 23

**Introduction:** Genesis 23 is one of the most enigmatic chapters of the Bible. This entire chapter seems to deal with relatively trivial information, and could be summed up in one verse: *Sarah died at age 127, so Abraham purchased a plot of land with a cave from the Hittites for her grave site.* There are details about Abraham's interactions with some of the prominent Hittite men which seem excessive, to say the least. You may not realize this the first time you read this chapter; but when you read it a second time, and ask yourself, *why is this chapter in the Word of God;* you might find yourself hard-pressed to answer that question.

It is possible that the previous chapter was so intense and so filled with information, that this chapter cleanses the pallet, so to speak. Our mind is given some time to absorb and digest all that has come before.

There is no illogic to the subject matter. That is, it would make sense that, Abraham, as an old man, would recognize the importance of recording the events of Genesis 22 (where he offers up his son to God) and this chapter, where Abraham buries his wife of many, many decades. See **Genesis 22** ([HTML](#)) ([PDF](#)) ([WPD](#)).

In Genesis 23, we come to the end of Sarah's life. She is 127 years old. This would make Abraham 137 years old and their son Isaac would be 37. I believe that Sarah is the only woman in the Bible whose age is given at her death. No other woman's death is given this much attention—but, the attention is mostly upon the legal purchase of a plot of land that Abraham makes.

In Genesis 23, Abraham will purchase the first plot of land that he will clearly own in the Land of Promise. We do not know about his ranch, whether he leased land or owned it; but he seemed to move around quite a bit—and he may have had several established compounds. This is the first time the Bible speaks of him actually owning a plot of ground.

The content of this chapter argues strongly for Abrahamic authorship.<sup>4</sup> Most of this chapter is about Abraham choosing a plot of land and working out a deal with a group of Hittites to purchase the land. From an historical perspective, this appears to be a very inconsequential chapter. We might wonder, why don't we have the verse, *And Sarah died at age 127, and Abraham purchased a plot of land from the Hittites and buried her there.* This should be the verse that we find here rather than 20 verses of a chapter, which goes into this transaction in detail. This is important to Abraham; and since Abraham is a friend of God, this information is important to God. And so it is recorded. Had a later author been in charge of gathering these records and recording the history, this chapter would have been summed up with one verse.

You may wonder, *why is Abraham buying this land? Has not God given him and his seed this land?* Abraham is going to buy a small portion of this land. Just as he and his wife will be seeds, so to speak, planted to be raised up later, so it would be for his son, his daughter-in-law, and for his grandson and his wife. Even Joseph will ask that his bones be carried back into the Land of Promise when the children of Israel return from Egypt to the land.

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<sup>4</sup> Or, we could speculate that Isaac joined him and wrote these events down.

What Abraham is doing is claiming a small plot of ground, a little portion of land; and he and the patriarchs would rise up from the dead in the Land of Promise, the land that God had promised to him. They will all rise up in a burial cave which Abraham has legally purchased from the people who live there, the sons of Heth.

There is a blurring of events here. Does this actually take place in Kiriath-arba? Regarding the purchase of this plot of land, how many meetings and where do these meetings occur? We will determine that somewhere between 2 and 4 meetings took place—the first may have occurred at Sarah's compound and one of them definitely occurred at the gate of the city (v. 10). What is happening is, these details—some of them—are very clear to Abraham, as this is the last day he spends with his wife. However, given the fact that Sarah has died, some of these things are blurred together, as one would expect in the final days of the burial of a loved one. The things which we remember are often odd, often blurred, but some specific memories are very distinct. That describes the style and memories noted in this chapter exactly. Abraham remembers exactly what was said—what he said, what the Hittites said. Except for Ephron, the owner of the land, Abraham does not recall which Hittite said what—but he remembered specific things that were said. If you have not lost a loved one—someone as close to Abraham as Sarah was—you may not have experienced this. However, when this happens, you will remember specific events, specific things which were spoken, but you might jumble up portions of it in your mind.

So that there is no confusion—none of this chapter is incorrectly recalled—there are no misstatements in here. But, as we examine this chapter carefully, it will become clear that there are minor things which are left out, which would have given us a better handle on the narrative. There is nothing left out that we desperately need to know, and that we will crowd around Abraham in heaven and ask him about—but there are some narrative gaps, nevertheless, easily explained by Abraham's state of mind at the time.

There is also a contrast that we ought to note as we study this chapter; the contrast between Abraham and his relationship to the people of the land; and Lot and his relationship to the people of the land where he lived. Abraham had spiritual power; Lot had political power. Abraham knew the Word of God; Lot was a moral man. Both men were saved, but Abraham had a vibrant spiritual life; and Lot had none. Lot's spiritual life was so sorry that, when he had gone to his own sons-in-law and warned them of the coming judgment, they laughed at him like some crazy old man.

Barnes notes many of the *firsts* found in this chapter: *This chapter is interesting as containing the first record of mourning for the dead, of burial, of property in land, of purchase of land, of silver as a medium of purchase, and of a standard of weight.*<sup>5</sup>

These things named by Barnes are not found in human history here for the first time; they are presented in this chapter as being commonplace events.

Monson makes the observation: *It should be stressed here that the world of the patriarchs was that of a developed and organized society and not what is usually regarded as a simple pastoral-bedouin existence. Throughout Genesis 12-50 there are connections to Mesopotamia and to Egypt as well as negotiations with local political centers (Shechem, Salem and Hebron) as well as Gerar in the Western Negev on a branch of the Coastal Highway. Much of the theological relevance of the patriarchs is based upon the fact that there were other more attractive lifestyles available to these early Biblical figures. The option they chose gave them few of the advantages they could have enjoyed elsewhere, especially in Mesopotamia where their family was established. In light of this fact and the great promises made to Abraham during his lifetime, his remark to the leaders of Hebron after the death of his wife, Sarah, takes on new meaning.*<sup>6</sup>

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It is important to understand what has gone before.

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<sup>5</sup> Albert Barnes, *Barnes' Notes on the Old Testament*; from e-Sword, Genesis 23:17–20.

<sup>6</sup> From <http://www.studylight.org/commentaries/dcc/view.cgi?bk=0&ch=23> accessed December 9, 2014; Constable cites Monson, pp. 153–154.

## The Prequel of Genesis 23

Abraham and his wife Sarah have lived in the land of Canaan for 62 years. They left for a very short time to go to Egypt; but have spent most of that time in the land. God told Abraham to travel the land, and he has done that, primarily in the southern area.

In this chapter, we come to the death of Sarah, when she is in Kiriath-arba (Hebron). It is not clear if she and Abraham were living there now or why she is there.

Genesis 23 will begin with the death of Sarah.

[Chapter Outline](#)

[Charts, Graphics and Short Doctrines](#)

We need to know who the people are who populate this chapter.

## The Principals of Genesis 23

| Characters                 | Commentary                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  |
|----------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Abraham                    | Abraham is the man called by God to move to the Land of Promise. In this chapter, he is buying a burial plot for his wife, Sarah (and eventually for himself).                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                              |
| Sarah                      | The chapter begins with Abraham's wife, Sarah, having died at age 127.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      |
| The elders of Kiriath-arba | There are two assumptions being made here. First is, that this chapter takes place in Kiriath-arba. That is not really confirmed. Sarah dies in Kiriath-arba and Abraham has several meetings with the men who are identified as the sons of Heth. Although these meetings probably take place in Kiriath-arba, this is not confirmed to us; and this could be a nearby unnamed Hittite settlement. Secondly, these men are not identified as <i>elders</i> ; I suggest that they are elders, property owners, and businessmen. This is also an assumption. |
| Ephron                     | Ephron is the actual owner of the plot of land that Abraham wants to purchase.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                              |

[Chapter Outline](#)

[Charts, Graphics and Short Doctrines](#)

We need to know where this chapter takes place.

## The Places of Genesis 23

| Place              | Description                                                                                                                                                                                                                                              |
|--------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Kiriath-arba       | This is where Sarah appears to be living. She dies here. It appears that the city meetings take place in Kiriath-arba proper, although that is an assumption I am making (v. 19 appears to confirm this assumption). Kiriath-arba is later named Hebron. |
| The cave of Ephron | Abraham knows of a cave that he would like to purchase as a burial plot for Sarah. Ephron, the owner, sells Abraham a larger plot of land than he originally asks for. This is the first plot of land that Abraham owns within the Land of Promise.      |
| Machpelah          | The entire tract of land that Abraham purchases is called <i>Machpelah</i> . This includes the cave of Ephron.                                                                                                                                           |

It would appear that these places are all very close together.

[Chapter Outline](#)

[Charts, Graphics and Short Doctrines](#)

### The Patriarchal Timeline for Genesis 23

| Legend                                                                                                                                                                                                                             |                         |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------|
| Birth or death                                                                                                                                                                                                                     | God speaks with Abraham |
| Historical incidents (most of which are related to Abraham)                                                                                                                                                                        |                         |
| Parenthetical dates (2065 B.C.) simply refer to taking the date assigned by the chronologist and using Scripture to determine the next date.                                                                                       |                         |
| The entire <b>Abrahamic Timeline</b> ( <a href="#">HTML</a> ) ( <a href="#">PDF</a> ) ( <a href="#">WPD</a> ).<br>The entire <b>Patriarchal Timeline</b> ( <a href="#">HTML</a> ) ( <a href="#">PDF</a> ) ( <a href="#">WPD</a> ). |                         |

| Brent MacDonald                                                                                               | Age of Abraham | Reese's Chronology Bible            | Scripture         | Event/Description                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------|-------------------------------------|-------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 2234 B.C.                                                                                                     |                | 2097 B.C.                           | Genesis 11:24     | Terah, Abram's father, is born. Gen 11:24–26 Nahor lived 29 years and fathered Terah. After he fathered Terah, Nahor lived 119 years and fathered other sons and daughters. Terah lived 70 years and fathered Abram, Nahor, and Haran.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   |
| 2164 B.C.                                                                                                     | 0              | 1967 B.C.                           | Genesis 11:26–27  | Abraham (Terah's son) and Lot (Haran's son) born in Ur of the Chaldeans. Abram would be the 43 <sup>rd</sup> generation from Adam. Gen 11:26 Terah lived 70 years and fathered Abram, Nahor, and Haran.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  |
| Reese occasionally supplies 2 dates in his Chronological Bible; the first is his and the second is Klassen's. |                |                                     |                   |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          |
|                                                                                                               |                | 1957 B.C.                           |                   | Birth of Sarai                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           |
|                                                                                                               |                | 1927 B.C.                           | Genesis 11:29–30  | Marriage of Abram to Sarai                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               |
|                                                                                                               |                | 1907 B.C.<br>1927 B.C.<br>(Klassen) | Genesis 11:28, 23 | Abram's family travel from <b>Ur to Haran</b> , although their original intention had been to go to the land of <b>Canaan</b> . Gen 11:28, 23 Haran died in his native land, in Ur of the Chaldeans, during his father Terah's lifetime. Terah took his son Abram, his grandson Lot (Haran's son), and his daughter-in-law Sarai, his son Abram's wife, and they set out together from Ur of the Chaldeans to go to the land of Canaan. But when they came to Haran, they settled there. |
| 2089 B.C.                                                                                                     | 75             | 1892 B.C.                           | Genesis 12:1–4    | Abraham leaves for <b>Promised Land</b> from <b>Haran</b> , after being so instructed by God. Gen 12:4 So Abram went, as the LORD had told him, and Lot went with him. Abram was 75 years old when he left Haran.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        |



| Brent MacDonald                                                                                                                  | Age of Abraham | Reese's Chronology Bible            | Scripture                          | Event/Description                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------|-------------------------------------|------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Reese actually gives the date of Terah's death as April 1–4, 1892 B.C. and the date of Abram leaving Haran as April 5, 1892 B.C. |                |                                     |                                    |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                              |
|                                                                                                                                  |                | 1891 B.C.<br>1892 B.C.<br>(Klassen) | Genesis 12:10–20                   | Abraham & Sarah in <b>Egypt</b> (Goshen, Memphis), return to the <b>Land of Promise</b> (Genesis 12:10-23:1)                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 |
| (2065 B.C.)                                                                                                                      | 99             | (1868 B.C.)                         | Genesis 17:15–19                   | Sarai's name is changed to Sarah and Isaac, a future son, is promised the Abraham and Sarah. Gen 17:17 <b>Abraham fell to the ground, laughed, and thought in his heart, "Can a child be born to a hundred-year-old man? Can Sarah, a ninety-year-old woman, give birth?"</b>                                                                                                                                                                |
| (2065 B.C.)                                                                                                                      | 99             | (1868 B.C.)                         | Genesis 17:21–22                   | The time that Sarah would give birth is revealed; at a set time in the next year. Gen 17:21 <b>But I will confirm My covenant with Isaac, whom Sarah will bear to you at a set time next year."</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          |
| (2065 B.C.)                                                                                                                      |                | (1867 B.C.)                         | Genesis 18:1–15                    | Jehovah and two angels come to Abraham and promise that Sarah would have a child in a year's time. Gen 18:10, 14 <b>The LORD said, "I will certainly come back to you in about a year's time, and your wife Sarah will have a son!"</b> Now Sarah was listening at the entrance of the tent behind him. <b>Is anything impossible for the LORD? At the appointed time I will come back to you, and in about a year she will have a son."</b> |
|                                                                                                                                  |                |                                     | Genesis 20:1–18                    | Abraham lies again about his wife to King Abimelech in <b>Gerar</b> , in southern Judah. Although some believe that this chapter is placed here in Genesis due to thematic elements rather than because it belongs here chronologically, we find Abraham in <b>Gerar</b> in the next chapter, which suggests that this chapter is correctly placed.                                                                                          |
| 2064 B.C.                                                                                                                        | 100            |                                     | Genesis 21:1–7<br>1Chronicles 1:34 | Isaac born to Abraham. Isaac would be the 44 <sup>th</sup> generation from Adam. Gen 21:5 <b>Abraham was 100 years old when his son Isaac was born to him.</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               |

| Brent MacDonald | Age of Abraham | Reese's Chronology Bible | Scripture       | Event/Description                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   |
|-----------------|----------------|--------------------------|-----------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
|                 | 137            | 1830 B.C.                | Genesis 23:1–20 | The death of Sarah. She dies in <b>Kirjatharba</b> , it is <b>Hebron</b> , in the <b>land of Canaan</b> . Gen 23:1 <b>Now Sarah lived 127 years; these were all the years of her life.</b> She is buried in a cave of the field of Machpelah before <b>Mamre</b> ; it is <b>Hebron</b> , in the <b>land of Canaan</b> , purchased by Abraham from the sons of Heth. |

### Bibliography

MacDonald's timeline is from: <http://www.bibleistrue.com/qna/qna63.htm> accessed October 11, 2011.

See <http://www.bibleistrue.com/qna/qna63dating.htm> for his justification of his timeline.

From: [http://www.christianshepherd.org/bible\\_study\\_guides/abram\\_to\\_the\\_exodus.pdf](http://www.christianshepherd.org/bible_study_guides/abram_to_the_exodus.pdf) (Christian shepherd)

*The Reese Chronological Bible*; KJV translation; Editor: Edward Reese; ©1977 by Edward Reese and Klassen's dating system ©1975 by Frank R. Klassen; ©1980 by Bethany House Publishers, South Minneapolis, MN; pp. 18–19, 54–74.

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Here is what to expect from Genesis 23:

### A Synopsis of Genesis 23

This chapter is easily summed up to: Sarah dies and Abraham negotiates a plot of land for her body to be placed.

There are 2–4 meetings which take place between Abraham and the elders of Kiriath-arba (we are assuming that these are the elders and that it is Kiriath-arba proper where Abraham has gone to).

Abraham tells the Hittites that he would like to purchase a piece of property from them in which to bury his wife's body. They agree; and Abraham specifies a particular property which belongs to Ephron. Ephron is brought into the discussion and he first offers the property to Abraham as a gift, and when Abraham insists on paying, Ephron asks for 400 shekels of silver. That is the agreed upon price.

Abraham exchanges the silver for what appears to be a public verbal deed, and he buries Sarah there.

Like all chapters of the Word of God, you need more than just the simple plot outline to understand what God wants us to know.

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Thomas Coke: *Sarah dies. Abraham agrees with the children of Heth for the possession of a burying-place; and buries Sarah in a cave of the field of Machpelah.*<sup>7</sup>

This outline approach is reasonable.

<sup>7</sup> From <http://www.studydrive.org/commentaries/tcc/view.cgi?bk=0&ch=23> accessed December 10, 2014.

## Matthew Henry's Alternate Outline of Genesis 23

- I. Abraham a mourner for the death of Sarah (Genesis 23:1, Genesis 23:2).
- II. Abraham a purchaser of a burying-place for Sarah.
  1. The purchase humbly proposed by Abraham (Genesis 23:3, Genesis 23:4).
  2. Fairly treated of, and agreed to, with a great deal of mutual civility and respect (Genesis 23:5–16).
  3. The purchase—money paid (Genesis 23:16).
  4. The premises conveyed and secured to Abraham (Genesis 23:17, Genesis 23:18, Genesis 23:20).
  5. Sarah's funeral (Genesis 23:19).

Matthew Henry, *Commentary on the Whole Bible*; from e-Sword, Genesis 23 chapter comments.

### Chapter Outline

### Charts, Graphics and Short Doctrines

Peter Pett: *This chapter...is the record of the business transaction between Abraham and Ephron the Hittite and bears the marks of a typical Hittite contract. But as far as the compiler is concerned in it we learn of the first piece of the land which comes permanently into the possession of the family of Abraham. It is the firstfruits, the earnest (visible and tangible guarantee) of his inheritance. Thus Isaac's beginnings are founded in a solemn occasion, first ownership of the land.*<sup>8</sup>

Pett continues: *So while it is at first sight the record of the closing of an era (the death of Sarah) it is actually the depiction of the beginning of a new era, the commencement of the possession of the land. Genesis 22:20-24 has begun the preparation for the new era, and this continues it. The emphasis of the compiler is on the fact that 'the field and the cave that is in it were made sure to Abraham for a possession of a buryingplace by the children of Heth' (Genesis 23:20). It is a proof of permanence in the land.*<sup>9</sup>

As a technical note, I should have combined several verses here, but did not think to do so until I was about  $\frac{3}{4}$ <sup>ths</sup> through. These verses were broken up in very unusual ways, where often a portion of a verse without much meat in it would be separated out from the rest. Bear in mind that the chapter divisions and the verses are not inspired; however, the text itself is inspired by God the Holy Spirit.

### Chapter Updates:

I will use this space to indicate any format changes.

Every verse will be hyperlinked from the first page, so that you can easily go to a specific verse in this chapter.

At the end of the exegesis of every verse, I will make certain that there is a Kukis mostly literal translation and a Kukis paraphrase, both of them marked as such.

I have decided to add spacing between the translation and the commentary.

In the future, I would really like to add a few translations, fill in the translation of this chapter (at the end of this document); and provide additional sources at the end of this document.

<sup>8</sup> From <http://www.studylight.org/commentaries/pet/view.cgi?bk=0&ch=22> accessed December 8, 2014.

<sup>9</sup> From <http://www.studylight.org/commentaries/pet/view.cgi?bk=0&ch=22> accessed December 8, 2014.

## Sarah's Death

Slavishly literal:

Moderately literal:

**And so are lives of Sarah a hundred a year and twenty a year and seven years; years of lives of Sarah.**

Genesis  
23:1

**And Sarah's life was 127 years; the years of the life of Sarah.**

Paraphrase:

**And Sarah lives until she was 127.**

Here is how others have translated this verse:

### Ancient texts:

Note: I compare the Hebrew text to English translations of the Latin, Syriac and Greek texts, using the Douay-Rheims translation<sup>10</sup>; George Lamsa's translation, and Sir Lancelot Charles Lee Brenton's translation as revised and edited by Paul W. Esposito, respectively. I often update these texts with non-substantive changes (e.g., *you* for *thou*, etc.). I often use the text of the Complete Apostles' Bible instead of Brenton's translation, because it updates the English text.

The Septuagint was the earliest known translation of a book (circa 200 B.C.). Since this translation was made before the textual criticism had been developed into a science and because different books appear to be translated by different men, the Greek translation can sometimes be very uneven.

When there are serious disparities between my translation and Brenton's (or the text of the Complete Apostles' Bible), I look at the Greek text of the Septuagint (the LXX) to see if a substantive difference actually exists (and I reflect these changes in the English rendering of the Greek text). I use the Greek LXX with Strong's numbers and morphology available for e-sword. The only problem with this resource (which is a problem for similar resources) is, there is no way to further explore Greek verbs which are not found in the New Testament. Although I usually quote the Complete Apostles' Bible here, I have begun to make changes in the translation when their translation conflicts with the Greek and note what those changes are.

The Masoretic text is the Hebrew text with all of the vowels (vowel points) inserted (the original Hebrew text lacked vowels). We take the Masoretic text to be the text closest to the original. However, differences between the Masoretic text and the Greek, Latin and Syriac are worth noting and, once in a great while, represent a more accurate text possessed by those other ancient translators.

In general, the Latin text is an outstanding translation from the Hebrew text into Latin and very trustworthy (I say this as a non-Catholic). Unfortunately, I do not read Latin—apart from some very obvious words—so I am dependent upon the English translation of the Latin (principally, the Douay-Rheims translation).

Underlined words indicate differences in the text.

<sup>10</sup> I have begun to doubt my e-sword Douay-Rheims version, so I now use [www.latinvulgate.com](http://www.latinvulgate.com).

Bracketed portions of the Dead Sea Scrolls are words, letters and phrases lost in the scroll due to various types of damage. Underlined words or phrases are those in the Dead Sea Scrolls but not in the Masoretic text.

The Targum of Onkelos is actually the Pentateuchal Targumim, which are The Targums of Onkelos and Jonathan Ben Uzziel. On the Pentateuch With The Fragments of the Jerusalem Targum From the Chaldee by J. W. Etheridge, M.A. Taken from <http://targum.info/targumic-texts/pentateuchal-targumim/> and first published in 1862.

|                          |                                                                                                                                                               |
|--------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Masoretic Text (Hebrew)  | And so are lives of Sarah a hundred a year and twenty a year and seven years; years of lives of Sarah.                                                        |
| Targum of Onkelos        | And the <u>days of the</u> life of Sarah were an hundred and twenty and seven years, the years of the life of Sarah.                                          |
| Latin Vulgate            | And Sara lived a hundred and twenty-seven years.                                                                                                              |
| Peshitta (Syriac)        | AND Sarah was a hundred and twenty-seven years old; these were the years of the life of Sarah.                                                                |
| Septuagint (Greek)       | And the life of Sarah was one hundred and twenty-seven years.                                                                                                 |
| Brenton's Septuagint     | And the life of Sarrha was an hundred and twenty-seven years.                                                                                                 |
| Significant differences: | The targum adds <i>days of the</i> . The Hebrew refers twice to the <i>lives of Sarah</i> ; this is not found at all in the Latin and only once in the Greek. |

#### Thought-for-thought translations; paraphrases:

|                                         |                                                                                                                                                                 |
|-----------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Common English Bible                    | <b>Sarah's death and burial site</b><br>Sarah lived to be 127 years old; this was how long she lived.                                                           |
| Contemporary English V.<br>Easy English | When Sarah was one hundred twenty-seven years old,...<br><b>Sarah dies and Abraham buries her</b><br>Sarah lived for 127 years. That was her age when she died. |
| Easy-to-Read Version                    | Sarah lived to be 127 years old.                                                                                                                                |
| New Berkeley Version                    | SARAH'S LENGTH OF LIFE WAS 127 years;...                                                                                                                        |
| New Living Translation                  | <b>The Burial of Sarah</b><br>When Sarah was 127 years old,...                                                                                                  |

#### Partially literal and partially paraphrased translations:

|                                                           |                                                                                                                                                                      |
|-----------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| American English Bible<br><i>God's Word</i> <sup>TM</sup> | Well, SarAh lived a hundred and twenty-seven years,...                                                                                                               |
| International Standard V                                  | Sarah lived to be 127 years old. This was the length of her life.<br><b>A Burial Place for Sarah</b><br>Sarah lived for 127 years. That's how long Sarah's life was. |

#### Mostly literal renderings (with some occasional paraphrasing):

|                                                                           |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Ancient Roots Translinear<br>Bible in Basic English<br>Ferar-Fenton Bible | Sarah had lived a hundred and twenty seven years, the years of the life of Sarah.<br>Now the years of Sarah's life were a hundred and twenty-seven.<br><del>The Death of Sarah</del><br>Now the life of Sarah was one hundred and twenty-seven years, the whole life of Sarah;... |
| HCSB                                                                      | Now Sarah lived 127 years; <i>these were all</i> the years of her life.                                                                                                                                                                                                           |

#### Catholic Bibles (those having the imprimatur):

|                     |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           |
|---------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| The Heritage Bible  | And the life of Sarah was one hundred and twenty-seven years, the years of the life of Sarah.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             |
| New American Bible  | <i>Purchase of a Burial Plot.*</i> [23:1-20] The occasion for purchasing the land is the need for a burial site for Sarah, for it would be unthinkable to bury Sarah outside of the promised land. One of the two great promises to Abraham, that of progeny, has been fulfilled (21:1-7). And now the promise of land is to be fulfilled, through a kind of down payment on the full possession that will take place only with the conquest under Joshua and during the reign of David. This purchase has been prepared for by Abimelech's recognition of Abraham's claim to the well at Beer-sheba (21:22-34). Among the ancestral stories this narrative is one of two that are entirely from the P source <sup>11</sup> (chap. 17 being the other). The Priestly writers may have intended to encourage the generation of the exile to a renewed hope of repossessing their land.<br>The span of Sarah's life was one hundred and twenty-seven years. |
| New Jerusalem Bible | The length of Sarah's life was a hundred and twenty-seven years.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          |

### Jewish/Hebrew Names Bibles:

|                          |                                                                                                                                                    |
|--------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| exeGeser companion Bible | <b><u>THE DEATH OF SARAH</u></b><br>And the life of Sarah is a hundred years and seven years and twenty years - the years of the life of Sarah:... |
| JPS (Tanakh—1985)        | Sarah's lifetime—the span of Sarah's life—came to one hundred and twenty-seven years.                                                              |
| Kaplan Translation       | <i>Sarah Dies</i><br>Sarah had lived [Literally, 'The life of Sarah was....'] to be 127 years old. [These were] the years of Sarah's life.         |

### Expanded/Embellished Bibles:

|                             |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  |
|-----------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Kretzmann's Commentary      | The Death of Sarah<br>And Sarah was an hundred and seven and twenty years old; these were the years of the life of Sarah. She thus lived to a ripe old age and saw her son Isaac grow up to full manhood, for the latter was now thirty-seven years old. Meanwhile Abraham had moved back to Hebron.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             |
| Lexham English Bible        | <b>Sarah's Death and Burial</b><br>And {Sarah lived} one hundred and twenty-seven years; [these were] the years of the life of Sarah.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            |
| NET Bible®                  | <b><i>The Death of Sarah</i></b><br>Sarah lived 127 years [Heb "And the years of Sarah were one hundred years and twenty years and seven years, the years of the life of Sarah."]. When it comes to making an actual material change to the text, the NET Bible® is pretty good about indicating this. Since most of these corrections will be clear in the more literal translations below and within the Hebrew exegesis itself, I will not continue to list every NET Bible® footnote. Some of their notes will be reproduced in the exegesis of the chapter. |
| Translation for Translators | <b>After Sarah died, Abraham bought a burial place for her</b><br>When Sarah was 127 years old, she died at Kiriath-Arba, which is now called Hebron city, in Canaan land. V. 2 is included for context.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         |
| The Voice                   | When Sarah reached the end of her life, she was 127 years old.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   |

### Literal, almost word-for-word, renderings:

<sup>11</sup> I included the notes from the NAB. However, I do not endorse all of them, such as the idea that the Pentateuch was written by several unnamed men, known as the Priest (s), the Elohimist, the Yawist, etc.

|                             |                                                                                                         |
|-----------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Concordant Literal Version  | And coming is the life of Sarah to be a hundred and twenty seven years--the years of the life of Sarah. |
| Emphasized Bible            | And the life of Sarah came to be, a hundred and twenty-seven years,—the years of the life of Sarah.     |
| English Standard Version    | Sarah lived 127 years; these were the years of the life of Sarah.                                       |
| A Voice in the Wilderness   | Sarah lived one hundred and twenty-seven years; these were the years of the life of Sarah.              |
| Young's Literal Translation | And the life of Sarah is a hundred and twenty and seven years—years of the life of Sarah.               |

**The gist of this verse:** Sarah lived to the age of 127.

### Genesis 23:1a

| Hebrew/Pronunciation                                                        | Common English Meanings                                                                                                                                                                       | Notes/Morphology                                       | BDB and Strong's #          |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------|
| wa (or va) (ו) [pronounced <i>wah</i> ]                                     | <i>and so, and then, then, and; so, that, yet, therefore, consequently; because</i>                                                                                                           | wâw consecutive                                        | No Strong's #<br>BDB #253   |
| hâyâh (הָיָה) [pronounced <i>haw-YAW</i> ]                                  | <i>to be, is, was, are; to become, to come into being; to come to pass</i>                                                                                                                    | 3 <sup>rd</sup> person masculine plural, Qal imperfect | Strong's #1961<br>BDB #224  |
| chayyîym (חַיִּים) [pronounced <i>khay-YEEM</i> ]                           | <i>life, lives, living, being alive, having life, immortality, a long life, sustenance, sustaining life; refreshment; being vigorous; prosperity, welfare, happiness, living prosperously</i> | masculine plural substantive; construct form           | Strong's #2416<br>BDB #313  |
| Sârâh (סָרָה) [pronounced <i>saw-RAW</i> ]                                  | <i>princess, noble woman; transliterated Sarah</i>                                                                                                                                            | proper noun; feminine singular                         | Strong's #8283<br>BDB #979  |
| mê'âh (מֵאָה) [pronounced <i>may-AW</i> ]                                   | <i>one hundred, a hundred, hundred</i>                                                                                                                                                        | feminine singular numeral                              | Strong's #3967<br>BDB #547  |
| shânâh (שָׁנָה) [pronounced <i>shaw-NAW</i> ]                               | <i>year</i>                                                                                                                                                                                   | feminine singular noun                                 | Strong's #8141<br>BDB #1040 |
| w <sup>e</sup> (or v <sup>e</sup> ) (וּ, or ו) [pronounced <i>weh</i> ]     | <i>and, even, then; namely; when; since, that; though</i>                                                                                                                                     | simple wâw conjunction                                 | No Strong's #<br>BDB #251   |
| 'es <sup>e</sup> rîym (עֶשְׂרִים) [pronounced <i>ges<sup>e</sup>-REEM</i> ] | <i>twenty</i>                                                                                                                                                                                 | plural numeral adjective                               | Strong's #6242<br>BDB #797  |
| shânâh (שָׁנָה) [pronounced <i>shaw-NAW</i> ]                               | <i>year</i>                                                                                                                                                                                   | feminine singular noun                                 | Strong's #8141<br>BDB #1040 |
| w <sup>e</sup> (or v <sup>e</sup> ) (וּ, or ו) [pronounced <i>weh</i> ]     | <i>and, even, then; namely; when; since, that; though</i>                                                                                                                                     | simple wâw conjunction                                 | No Strong's #<br>BDB #251   |
| sheba' (עֶבְרַת) [pronounced <i>she<sup>b</sup>-VAHG</i> ] <sup>1</sup>     | <i>seven</i>                                                                                                                                                                                  | numeral masculine construct                            | Strong's #7651<br>BDB #987  |

## Genesis 23:1a

| Hebrew/Pronunciation                             | Common English Meanings | Notes/Morphology     | BDB and Strong's #          |
|--------------------------------------------------|-------------------------|----------------------|-----------------------------|
| shânîym (שָׁנַיִם)<br>[pronounced shaw-<br>NEEM] | years                   | feminine plural noun | Strong's #8141<br>BDB #1040 |

**Translation:** And Sarah's life was 127 years;...

A word-for-word translation would be quite cumbersome here; suffice it to say, she was 127 years old. There is somewhat more flare in her age being named here than in previous ages of others.

In chapter 22, Abraham was approximately 115 years old and he was 9 years older than Sarah. This would make him 136 years old, so over 20 years have passed between these two chapters. Abraham lived a long time and we only touch on the spiritual high and low points in his life and on the things which touched him.

These are only a few points on the life of Sarah—concentrating mostly on where she is mentioned retrospectively in the Word of God.

## Sarah's Life

1. There are a number of prominent women in Scripture; but only Sarah has her age and death recorded.
2. When she gives birth to Isaac, she begins to fulfill the promises made by God—not just to her and Abraham but made many years previous to Eve, the first woman (and to Satan).
3. Gen 3:14–16 **The LORD God said to the serpent, "Because you have done this, cursed are you above all livestock and above all beasts of the field; on your belly you shall go, and dust you shall eat all the days of your life. I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your offspring and her offspring; he shall bruise your head, and you shall bruise his heel." To the woman he said, "I will surely multiply your pain in childbearing; in pain you shall bring forth children. Your desire shall be for your husband, and he shall rule over you."** (ESV). There would be something special about the *Seed of the Woman*, which is, in itself, a misnomer—as the woman does not have a seed.
4. There was a long period of time between God's promises to Abraham and the birth of Isaac. This is to parallel the long period of time between God's promise concerning the *Seed of the Woman* and that birth coming to pass.
5. Furthermore, there is only one child. Sarah did not have 2 children. This was to parallel the Lord Jesus Christ (God only has One Son).
6. Isaiah speaks of Sarah and Abraham as people to look towards and learn from. **"Listen to Me, you who pursue righteousness, you who seek the LORD: look to the rock from which you were hewn, and to the quarry from which you were dug. Look to Abraham your father and to Sarah who bore you; for he was but one when I called him, that I might bless him and multiply him."** (Isa 51:1; ESV; capitalized)
7. The writer of Hebrews speaks of Sarah in the great chapter of faith. Heb 11:11–12 **By faith Sarah herself received power to conceive, even when she was past the age, since she considered Him faithful Who had promised. Therefore from one man, and him as good as dead, were born descendants as many as the stars of heaven and as many as the innumerable grains of sand by the seashore.** (ESV; capitalized). So, even though Sarah laughed when she heard that she would definitely give birth to a child herself, she apparently believed that this would occur. My guess is, she may not have had faith when she first heard God tell her this, but there was a particular night when her faith increased greatly.
8. Peter uses Sarah and Abraham as examples of the emphasis of life in 1Peter 3:3–6 **Do not let your adorning be external—the braiding of hair and the putting on of gold jewelry, or the clothing you wear—but let your adorning be the hidden person of the heart with the imperishable beauty of a gentle and quiet spirit, which in God's sight is very precious. For this is how the holy women who hoped in God used to adorn themselves, by submitting to their own husbands, as Sarah obeyed Abraham, calling him lord. And you are her children, if you do good and do not fear anything that is frightening.** (ESV; capitalized)



This tells us that God held Sarah in high regard.

[Chapter Outline](#)

[Charts, Graphics and Short Doctrines](#)

### Genesis 23:1b

| Hebrew/Pronunciation                         | Common English Meanings                                                                                                                                                                               | Notes/Morphology                                   | BDB and Strong's #          |
|----------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------|
| shânîym (שָׁנַיִם)<br>[pronounced shaw-NEEM] | years                                                                                                                                                                                                 | feminine plural noun;<br>construct form            | Strong's #8141<br>BDB #1040 |
| chayyîym (חַיִּים)<br>[pronounced khay-YEEM] | life, lives, living, being alive,<br>having life, immortality, a long<br>life, sustenance, sustaining life;<br>refreshment; being vigorous;<br>prosperity, welfare, happiness,<br>living prosperously | masculine plural<br>substantive; construct<br>form | Strong's #2416<br>BDB #313  |
| Sârâh (סָרָה)<br>[pronounced saw-RAW]        | princess, noble<br>woman; transliterated Sarah                                                                                                                                                        | proper noun; feminine<br>singular                  | Strong's #8283<br>BDB #979  |

The Latin and Greek leave this phrase out altogether.

**Translation:** ...the years of the life of Sarah.

This is somewhat of an odd phrase, *the years of the life of Sarah*, and it is the first time in the Bible that we have this particular phrase; however, it will be repeated in Genesis 25:7, 17 47:9 Exodus 6:16, 18, 20 and it is apparently one way of indicating a person's age.

These last few words are somewhat odd here. Two are repeated exactly as they are at the beginning of this verse, but the *years of* is the first time this noun is used as a construct. What I tried to do was to set up a title first, and then lead this into: *and the years of the lives of Sarah were 127*. However, the verb in this verse is placed in such a way so that cannot be done. Perhaps these last 3 words are somewhat of a title for the remainder of this chapter; or an epilogue for what has gone before.

This does not appear to be a common copyist error, because of the addition of the construct of *years*. However, the Greek and Latin just leave this phrase out. However, it is possible that they did not know what to do with this phrase. The Dead Sea Scrolls do not help us, as there are no Dead Sea manuscripts which exist that contain Genesis 23:1. However, we do find this in the targum, which suggests that they are a part of the original text.<sup>12</sup>

I have a few possible explanations: one or two words were dropped out early in the text; or the verb *to be* was misplaced, and, without that verb, we have a title, and it belongs with the second half of this verse. Or, this could be an example of a Hebraism with which I am not acquainted (nor anyone else, insofar as I can tell).

Perhaps the best translation was: **And the life of Sarah was 127. [These were] the years of the life of Sarah.** And, perhaps the explanation is, Abraham or Isaac wrote this, and it was difficult for them to let go, so what is written is repetitive. As if, between these two phrases, the writer pauses and thinks about his memories of Sarah (whether written by Abraham or Isaac)—this thinking might go on for several minutes—and then adds, **The years of the life of Sarah.**

Interestingly enough, Sarah is the only woman whose age is recorded in Scripture.

<sup>12</sup> The targum does embellish text, but the translation seems to bear witness to the difficulty of dealing with this final phrase.

Some of Sarah's life is described in Heb. 11:11–16 **By faith Sarah herself received power to conceive, even when she was past the age, since she considered him faithful who had promised. Therefore from one man, and him as good as dead, were born descendants as many as the stars of heaven and as many as the innumerable grains of sand by the seashore. 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. For people who speak thus make it clear that they are seeking a homeland. If they had been thinking of that land from which they had gone out, they would have had opportunity to return. But as it is, they desire a better country, that is, a heavenly one. Therefore God is not ashamed to be called their God, for He has prepared for them a city.** (ESV; capitalized) In some ways, Abraham and Sarah coming to Canaan originally is metaphorical, for their heavenly inheritance, for the city that God would later provide for them in eternity.<sup>13</sup>

Genesis 23:1 **And Sarah's life was 127 years; the years of the life of Sarah.** (Kukis mostly literal translation)

Genesis 23:1 **And Sarah lives until she was 127.** (Kukis paraphrase)

Even though this verse sounds like a title, this chapter will have little to do with Sarah directly and will examine the business of buying a burial plot in the ancient world.

Nearly every commentator says that Moses wrote Genesis, and leaves it at that. Although I believe that it is possible that Moses edited Genesis, I do not believe that he wrote it; and I certainly do not believe that God dictated it to him. God may have dictated the first two chapters to Adam (or to Seth); but the rest became a family history, which was repeated from generation to generation (not in every generation, obviously). There are at least two intensely personal verses in the book of Genesis, things that God would not dictate, but that God the Holy Spirit would allow the inclusion of: this verse and Genesis 29:20 (something only a man in love would write).

This chapter that we are studying is not something that an historian would seize upon and record. The detail is simple too minute.

Abraham wrote this, and likely Moses, a great student of history and geography, added the information that this was now Hebron. It would be likely that Abraham wrote this portion of Scripture and that it was Moses and not an intervening person who copied it, adding brief bits of geographical information (which would have been a part of his training when a young man destined for the throne of Egypt).

That Moses added in the name *Hebron* helps to explain many potential contradictions. There are several passages in Genesis, such as when the land of Abraham is spoken of as being Ur of the Chaldees (or, *Chaldeans*). The Chaldeans did not exist when Abraham lived there (insofar as we know). However, since this material was occasionally updated, with an updated reference to a region or a place, we understand that Ur of the \_\_\_\_ was later changed to Ur of the Chaldees, because the people did not know where \_\_\_\_ was; but they did know where the Chaldeans were.

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Sarah died in Kirjatharba (later known as Hebron). Hebron is 25 miles S-SW of Jerusalem, having been rebuilt around 1728 B.C. (as per Numbers), but archeology has shown it to be consistently occupied back as far as 3300 B.C.

**And so dies Sarah in Kiriath-arba (that [is] Hebron) in the land of Canaan. And so goes Abraham to grieve for Sarah and to weep for her.**

Genesis  
23:2

**Sarah died in Kiriath-arba (that [is], Hebron) in the land of Canaan. Consequently, Abraham went to grieve for Sarah and to weep for her.**

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<sup>13</sup> The Millennium will take place on this earth, with its curse lifted. However, God will create a new heavens and earth after that.

**When Sarah died in Kiriath-arba (later known as Hebron) in the land of Canaan, Abraham went to grieve for Sarah and to weep for her.**

Here is how others have translated this verse:

**Ancient texts:**

|                         |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         |
|-------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Masoretic Text (Hebrew) | And so dies Sarah in Kiriath-arba (that [is] Hebron) in the land of Canaan. And so goes Abraham to grieve for Sarah and to weep for her.                                                                                                |
| Targum of Onkelos       | And Sarah died in Kiryath Arba, which is Hebron. [JERUSALEM. And Sarah died in the city of the giants.] And Abraham came from the mountain of worship, and found that she was dead; and he sat to mourn for Sarah, and to weep for her. |
| Latin Vulgate           | And she died in the city of Arbee which is Hebron, in the land of Chanaan: and Abraham came to mourn and weep for her.                                                                                                                  |
| Peshitta (Syriac)       | And Sarah died at Koriath Gabarey ( <u>the Town of the Giants</u> ); that is Hebron in the land of Canaan; and Abraham came to mourn for Sarah and to weep for her.                                                                     |
| Septuagint (Greek)      | And Sarah died in Kirjath Arba, which is in the valley, this is Hebron in the land of Canaan; and Abraham came to lament for Sarah and to mourn.                                                                                        |
| Brenton's Septuagint    | And Sarrha died in the city of Arboc, which is in the valley, this is Chebron in the land of Chanaan; and Abraam came to lament for Sarrha and to mourn.                                                                                |

Significant differences: The Syriac adds that this is the *Town of the Giants*.

**Thought-for-thought translations; paraphrases:**

|                         |                                                                                                                                                                                                                  |
|-------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Common English Bible    | She died in Kiriath-arba, that is, in Hebron, in the land of Canaan; and Abraham cried out in grief and wept for Sarah.                                                                                          |
| Contemporary English V. | ...she died in Kiriath-Arba, better known as Hebron, in the land of Canaan. After Abraham had mourned for her,...                                                                                                |
| Easy English            | Sarah died in Kiriath-Arba. (That is, Hebron.) It is in that country called Canaan. Abraham went to weep about her. And he expressed that he was very sad because of her death.                                  |
| Easy-to-Read Version    | She died in the city of Kiriath Arba (Hebron) in the land of Canaan. Abraham was very sad and cried for her there.                                                                                               |
| Good News Bible (TEV)   | She died in Hebron in the land of Canaan, and Abraham mourned her death.                                                                                                                                         |
| New Berkeley Version    | ...she died at Kiriath-Arba, which is Hebron, in the land of Canaan. Abraham [Abraham had moved back to Mamre. Sarah had her own tent; which Abraham entered for the mourning.] came to lament and weep for her. |
| New Century Version     | She died in Kiriath Arba (that is, Hebron) in the land of Canaan. Abraham was very sad and cried because of her.                                                                                                 |
| New Life Bible          | Then Sarah died in Kiriath-arba (that is, Hebron) in the land of Canaan. And Abraham had sorrow for Sarah and cried for her.                                                                                     |
| New Living Translation  | ...she died at Kiriath-arba (now called Hebron) in the land of Canaan. There Abraham mourned and wept for her.                                                                                                   |

**Partially literal and partially paraphrased translations:**

|                          |                                                                                                                                                       |
|--------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| American English Bible   | ...and then [she] died in the city of ArBoc (Hebron in the land of CanaAn), which is located in a valley. So, AbraHam went to SarAh to mourn for her. |
| God's Word™              | She died in Kiriath Arba (that is, Hebron) in Canaan. Abraham went to mourn for Sarah and to cry about her death.                                     |
| International Standard V | She died in Kiriath-arba (that is, in Hebron) in the land of Canaan. Abraham went in [i.e. into Sarah's tent] to mourn for Sarah and to weep for her. |

NIRV She died at Kiriath Arba. Kiriath Arba is also called Hebron. It's in the land of Canaan.  
Sarah's death filled Abraham with sorrow. He went to the place where her body was lying. There he sobbed over her.

### Mostly literal renderings (with some occasional paraphrasing):

Ancient Roots Translinear Sarah died in the town of Arba (it's Hebron in the land of Canaan). Abraham came to eulogize Sarah and to weep for her.  
Bible in Basic English And Sarah's death took place in Kiriath-arba, that is, Hebron, in the land of Canaan: and Abraham went into his house, weeping and sorrowing for Sarah.  
Ferar-Fenton Bible ...and Sarah died in Kiriath-Arba ["Now Hebron" is also an ancient explanatory note—F. F.], in the land of Canan; and Abraham came to mourn and Lament for Sarah.  
New Advent Bible And she died in the city of Arbee which is Hebron, in the land of Chanaan: and Abraham came to mourn and weep for her.

### Catholic Bibles (those having the imprimatur):

The Heritage Bible And Sarah died in Kiriath Arba, which is Hebron, in the land of Canaan, and Abraham came to mourn [**mourn**, *caphad*. The main meaning of *caphad* is to beat the breast in lamentation and grief. This is the first occurrence of *caphad* in the Bible.] for Sarah, and to weep for her.  
New American Bible She died in Kiriath-arba-now Hebron-in the land of Canaan, and Abraham proceeded to mourn and weep for her.  
New Jerusalem Bible She died at Kiriath-Arba -- now Hebron -- in the land of Canaan, and Abraham proceeded to mourn and bewail her.

### Jewish/Hebrew Names Bibles:

exeGesés companion Bible ...and Sarah dies in Qiryath Arba;  
- Hebron in the land of Kenaan:  
and Abraham comes to chop and to weep for Sarah:...

Hebrew Names Version Sarah died in Kiryat-Arba (the same is Chevron), in the land of Kena`an. Avraham came to mourn for Sarah, and to weep for her.

Judaica Press Complete T. And Sarah died in Kiriath arba, which is Hebron, in the land of Canaan, and Abraham came to eulogize Sarah and to bewail her.

Kaplan Translation Sarah died in Kiryath Arba [See Genesis 35:27. This was the original name for Hebron; see Joshua 14:15, Judges 1:10. Also see Joshua 15:54, 20:7. The name Kiryath Arba literally means 'City of the Four,' or 'City of Arba.' Some say that Arba was the father of a number of giants who lived there (Joshua 15:13, 21:11), and according to this, Arba was the greatest of the Anak-giants (Ibn Ezra here; Joshua 14:15, Rashi ad loc.). It also could have been called 'City of the Four' because four giants lived there, Sheshai, Achiman, Talmi, and their father (Rashi here; Numbers 13:22, Joshua 15:14, Judges 1:10. See Artscroll commentary). Others say that it was given this name because of the four pairs buried there: Adam and Eve, Abraham and Sarah, Isaac and Rebecca, and Jacob and Leah (Bereshith Rabbah 58; Rashi). According to the Talmud, the giant mentioned in Joshua 14:15 is Abraham (Yerushalmi, Shabbath 16:1), and hence 'City of the Four' might have referred to the four allies, Abraham, Aner, Eshkol and Mamre (Genesis 14:13, 14:24; Bereshith Rabbah 58). This name was still retained in later times; Nehemiah 11:25.], **also known as Hebron** [This would appear to indicate that they lived in Hebron at the time. According to Talmudic tradition, Sarah died right after the Test (chapter 22), and they had lived in Hebron for the past 12 years. Thus, on the way

back from Moriah, Abraham only stopped in Beer-sheba for a short while (see note on Genesis 22:19). According to other sources, they lived in Beer-sheba at this time, but Sarah was heading north toward Jerusalem to inquire about her husband and son when she died in Hebron (Sefer HaYashar, p.64)], [in the land of Canaan. Abraham came to eulogize Sarah and to weep for her.](#)

### Expanded/Embellished Bibles:

|                                 |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        |
|---------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Kretzmann's Commentary          | <a href="#">And Sarah died in Kirjath-arba; the same is Hebron in the land of Canaan; and Abraham came to mourn for Sarah and to weep for her.</a> It appears from Joshua 14:15 and Judges 1:10 that Hebron, one of the very oldest settlements in Canaan, for a while bore the name of its conqueror, Arba of the Anakims, but the original name was restored by the children of Israel. Here Sarah died. And Abraham came, that is, he went about, he made preparations for the customary period of mourning, the lament for the dead.                                                                               |
| Lexham English Bible NET Bible® | <a href="#">And Sarah died in Kiriath Arba; that [is] Hebron, in the land of Canaan. Then she [Heb "Sarah." The proper name has been replaced in the translation by the pronoun ("she") for stylistic reasons.] died in Kiriath Arba (that is, Hebron) in the land of Canaan. Abraham went to mourn for Sarah and to weep for her [Mourn...weep. The description here is of standard mourning rites (see K. A. Kitchen, NBD3 149-50). They would have been carried out in the presence of the corpse, probably in Sarah's tent. So Abraham came in to mourn; then he rose up to go and bury his dead (Gen. 23:3)].</a> |
| The Voice                       | <a href="#">She died at Kiriath-arba (a city now known as Hebron) in Canaan. Abraham went in where her body was laid out to mourn and weep over her.</a>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               |

### Literal, almost word-for-word, renderings:

|                            |                                                                                                                                                                             |
|----------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Concordant Literal Version | <a href="#">And dying is Sarah in the town of Arba, in the vale. (It is Hebron, in the land of Canaan.) And coming is Abraham to wail over Sarah and to lament for her.</a> |
| English Standard Version   | <a href="#">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.</a>                         |
| World English Bible        | <a href="#">Sarah died in Kiriath Arba (the same is Hebron), in the land of Canaan. Abraham came to mourn for Sarah, and to weep for her.</a>                               |
| Young's Updated LT         | <a href="#">And Sarah dies in Kirjath-Arba, which is Hebron, in the land of Caanan, and Abraham goes in to mourn for Sarah, and to bewail her.</a>                          |

**The gist of this verse:** Sarah died in Kiriath-arba, which is later known as Hebron, and Abraham mourns her death.

### Genesis 23:2a

| Hebrew/Pronunciation                        | Common English Meanings                                                             | Notes/Morphology                                         | BDB and Strong's #         |
|---------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------|
| wa (or va) (ו) [pronounced <i>wah</i> ]     | <i>and so, and then, then, and; so, that, yet, therefore, consequently; because</i> | wâw consecutive                                          | No Strong's #<br>BDB #253  |
| mûwth (תומ) [pronounced <i>mooth</i> ]      | <i>to die; to perish, to be destroyed</i>                                           | 3 <sup>rd</sup> person masculine singular, Qal imperfect | Strong's #4191<br>BDB #559 |
| Sârâh (שָׂרָה) [pronounced <i>saw-RAW</i> ] | <i>princess, noble woman; transliterated Sarah</i>                                  | proper noun; feminine singular                           | Strong's #8283<br>BDB #979 |

## Genesis 23:2a

| Hebrew/Pronunciation                                                | Common English Meanings                                                                                                                     | Notes/Morphology            | BDB and Strong's #         |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------|----------------------------|
| b <sup>e</sup> (ב) [pronounced b <sup>eh</sup> ]                    | <i>in, into, through; at, by, near, on, upon; with, before, against; by means of; among; within</i>                                         | a preposition of proximity  | No Strong's #<br>BDB #88   |
| Qir <sup>e</sup> yâth (תִּירָפ) [pronounced kir-YAWTH]              | <i>city, town</i>                                                                                                                           | feminine singular construct | Strong's #7151<br>BDB #900 |
| ʾAr <sup>e</sup> bbāʿ (עִבְרָא) [pronounced ah <sup>eh</sup> -BAHG] | related to the Hebrew word <i>to lie in wait, to ambush</i> (Strong's #693 BDB #70); or to the numeral <i>four</i> (Strong's #702 BDB #916) | Proper noun; location       | Strong's #none<br>BDB #916 |

Together, these are transliterated *Kiriath-arba*, *Kirjatharba* and the word probably means *city of Arba; city of the four (giants?); the four-fold city*. Strong's #7153 BDB #900.

**Translation:** Sarah died in Kiriath-arba...

All people must die; it is only a matter of time. Sarah's death is the first death of a woman that we have in Scripture (possibly the only one).

**Application:** All believers, no matter how favored by God, will die—this includes you and I. We will all grow old and we will all breathe our last. This is the fate of all mankind. For some, pondering death is key to understanding life and the importance of our choices and actions in this life.

This doctrine is put together from two other doctrines from three doctrinal internet sites. The bulk of this doctrine no doubt was the work of R. B. Thieme, Jr.

### The Doctrine of Physical Death

1. Physical death for all mankind:
  - 1) We will all die. Hebrews 9:27 reads: **It is appointed** [or, *destined, ordained*] **for man to die once...** Ray Pritchard said, *If you are like me, your days are filled with one meeting or phone call after another. Sometimes we may be late for an appointment or we may miss it altogether. Sometimes we even forget we have an appointment. Things like that happen in a fallen world. But there is one appointment you will never miss-your appointment with death.*<sup>1</sup>
  - 2) As Eccles. 3:1–2 puts it: **For everything there is a season, and a time for every matter under heaven: a time to be born, and a time to die; a time to plant, and a time to pluck up what is planted.** (ESV)
  - 3) Although death is the end of our physical life, it is not the end of our existence. We will inhabit some sort of physical body in the future, and either be in some form of paradise or some form of torments. Luke 16:19–31
2. Physical death for the unbeliever:
  - 1) The soul leaving the body (Lk.16:22) and:
  - 2) Torment in hell (Lk.16:23,24).
  - 3) Remembrance of life on earth (Lk.16:25).
  - 4) Desire not to see earthly loved ones (Lk.16:27,28).
  - 5) Is permanent (Lk.16:26).
  - 6) Occurs in the midst of temporal pursuits and is unexpected (Lk.12:16-21).
  - 7) Principle: Mk.8:36,37 **"For what does it profit a man to gain the whole world and forfeit his own soul? For what shall a man give in exchange for his soul?"**

## The Doctrine of Physical Death

- 8) Apply Mt.10:28 "And do not fear those who can kill the body, but are unable to kill the soul; but rather fear Him who is able to destroy both soul and body in hell."
3. For the believer,
  - 1) Physical death does not separate the believer from God. Romans 8:38-39
  - 2) Physical death means no appointment with judgment. Hebrews 9:27.
  - 3) Physical death means that the believer is face to face with the Lord. 2Corinthians 5:8
  - 4) Physical death involves the separation of soul and spirit from the body (Eccl.12:7 "Then the dust will return to the earth as it was and the spirit will return to God who gave it"; Jn.2:26; Acts.5:10),
  - 5) Waiting for the resurrection body while in an interim body, John 11:25 1Thesolonians 4:13-18 Job 19:25-26 Philippians 3:21 1Co 5:51-57
  - 6) And includes conscious existence in heaven (Lk.16:25, Abraham & Lazarus; Phil.1:21 2Cor.5:8 Ps.72:24).
  - 7) Bliss (Lk.23:43 cp. 2Cor.12:4 Rev.2:7, as implied in the term "Paradise").
  - 8) No judgment, only an eternal reward (or inheritance) for the worthy believer. Rom.8:1 1Pet.1:4,5
  - 9) No sin.
  - 10) No more pain, death, or sorrow (Rev.21:4).
  - 11) A new home. John 14:1-6
  - 12) Full realization of spiritual maturity blessing (2Cor.4:16-18).
  - 13) Realizing what eternal life is all about. John 11:25 10:28 20:31 1John 5:11-12
  - 14) In the case of martyrdom: Rev.14:13; cp. 12:11.
4. Divine regulating principles.
  - 1) God is the ultimate cause (directive and permissive; Acts.17:28 Ps.66:9 Job.34:14,15).
  - 2) Protection against death lies with God (overruling will Pss.30:3 118:18).
  - 3) Physical death is a matter of the sovereign decision of God based on His perfect knowledge and perfect timing. Psalm 68:19-20
  - 4) He determines the time and manner (Eccl.3:2 7:17 "Do not be very wicked and do not be a fool. Why should you die before your time?"; Rom.14:8).
  - 5) It has an end (Rev.20:14 21:4 1Cor.15:26).
5. As applied to the believer.
  - 1) Bible Doctrine removes the fear of death (Ps.23:4).
  - 2) The positive believer is kept alive by grace to attain maturity (Ps.119, esp. vs.17).
  - 3) The reversionistic believer dies the sin unto death (Prov.5:23 8:36 10:21 12:28 13:14 14:12 15:10 19:16 23:13,14 Deut.30:15 cp. Jer.21:8 Jn.5:19,20 1Jn.5:16).
  - 4) There is dying grace for the positive believer (Ps.116:15 Phil.1:21).
  - 5) Church Age believers ("dead in Christ", 1Thess.4:13-18) are promised resurrection.
  - 6) The Rapture generation will not experience it (1Cor.15:51ff; 1Thess.4:15-18; cp. Mt.16:28; Mk.9:1; Lk.9:27; cp. Heb.11:5,6).
  - 7) Christ died physically and Faith-Rested His resurrection (Ps.22:15 Isa.53:9 Mt.27:50 1Pet.3:18 cp. Acts.2:22-28 Heb.5:7).
  - 8) Physical death secures a great victory and that is how it should be viewed. The sting of death has been removed by our Lord Jesus Christ (1Corinthians 15:55- 57). If you understand what heaven is all about, what eternity holds and what the word of God promises you will not live in fear of death.

From: <http://www.versebyverse.org/doctrine/deaths.html> accessed June 13, 2013.

Identical to [http://gracebiblechurchwichita.org/?page\\_id=54](http://gracebiblechurchwichita.org/?page_id=54) accessed June 13, 2013 (which suggests that this doctrine in its entirety original was put together by R. B. Thieme, Jr.).

Some material from <http://dikaosune.com/documents/Doctrineofdeath.pdf> accessed June 13, 2013.

Some material is from <http://www.keepbelieving.com/sermon/1996-07-07-Death-of-a-Princess/> accessed December 13, 2014.

These sites go further and examine in depth the other kinds of deaths found in the Bible.

<sup>1</sup> From <http://www.keepbelieving.com/sermon/1996-07-07-Death-of-a-Princess/> accessed December 13, 2014.

## Chapter Outline

## Charts, Graphics and Short Doctrines

We do not know the reason why Sarah is in Kiriath-arba. The last that we heard, in Genesis 22:19, Abraham was living in Beersheba. However, that would have been as much as 20 years earlier. So, Abraham and Sarah could have both been living in Kiriath-arba; they may have been living in different places; and Abraham may have been seeing to his herds at this time, and not in Kiriath-arba. Sarah may have lived here and she may have been visiting here.

Kiriath-arba is the original name for the city of Hebron. Although this name is only found in Genesis, Joshua, and Judges, it makes an odd reappearance many centuries later in Nehemiah 11:25.

Kiriath-arba means *the city of Arba; the city of the Four [Giants?]; the four-fold city*. The Jerusalem targum and the Syriac both record that this refers to *giants*. The Kaplan translation above states who these giants are (I assume by tradition).

Driver suggests<sup>14</sup> that this could be called a *Tetrapolis*, which is formed from four confederate tribes.

Barnes: *Arba is called the father of Anak (Joshua 15:13; Joshua 21:11); that is, of the Anakim or Bene Anak, a tall or gigantic tribe (Num. 13:22; 28; 33), who were subsequently dispossessed by Kaleb. The Anakim were probably Hittites.*<sup>15</sup>

Clarke suggests<sup>16</sup> that this may have been called the *City of the Four* because *it was the burial place of Adam, Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob*. This would be problematic, as (1) Adam was not buried there and (2) this city would be taking on this name *before* Isaac and Jacob are buried there.

Some point to Judges 1:10, which reads: *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 Talmi*. The three named men were tribes when defeated by Judah and when added to Arba, their father, that would be *four*.

The simplest explanation is, Arba founded this city, and Arba was a man of great distinction (Joshua 14:15 15:13). He was the father of Anak, from whom were the Anakim (giants).

## Genesis 23:2b

| Hebrew/Pronunciation                                                  | Common English Meanings                                                | Notes/Morphology                                                                                     | BDB and Strong's #         |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------|
| hîy' (איה) [pronounced hee]                                           | <i>she, it; also used as a demonstrative pronoun: that, this (one)</i> | 3 <sup>rd</sup> person feminine singular, personal pronoun; sometimes the verb <i>is, is implied</i> | Strong's #1931<br>BDB #214 |
| Cheb <sup>e</sup> rōwn (חֶבְרֹן) [pronounced khe <sup>b</sup> v-ROHN] | <i>association, league, joined; transliterated Hebron</i>              | proper noun; location                                                                                | Strong's #2275<br>BDB #289 |

**Translation:...(that [is], Hebron)...**

Hebron is about 25 miles south-southwest of Jerusalem, and a short version of this doctrine is located below:

<sup>14</sup> From <https://ia600406.us.archive.org/27/items/bookofgenesisnot00drivuoft/bookofgenesisnot00drivuoft.pdf> (p. 224); accessed December 10, 2014.

<sup>15</sup> Albert Barnes, *Barnes' Notes on the Old Testament*; from e-Sword, Genesis 23:1–2.

<sup>16</sup> Adam Clarke, *Commentary on the Bible*; from e-Sword, Genesis 23:2. This is not necessarily Clarke's opinion; he was offering a variety of theories.



Kirjatharba is in southern Judah (not as far south as Beer-sheba), about 30 miles south of Jerusalem and about midway down the Dead Sea. This city came to be known as Hebron, and this would be from where David began to rule over Judah and years in the future and where his son, Absalom, would go to foment revolution.

The **Map of Hebron** below comes from [holylanarchive.com](http://holylanarchive.com), and was accessed June 26, 2013.



Interestingly enough, Abraham is somewhere else at this time, and he comes to Hebron to mourn her. Abraham would be 137 at this time, and he will live for another 38 years. It is likely that he had route that he traveled with his herds. Or his servants moved about with his herds and Moses rode about overseeing the operation (recall that Abraham is a very wealthy man with a huge ranch).

Although some think that Abraham has taken on another wife by this time, I do not believe that to be the case. He will be involved in purchasing a burial plot for Sarah in this chapter and then getting a wife for Isaac in the following chapter. In Genesis 25, Abraham will marry again, apparently fulfilling the ancient saying, "142 is the new 60." Or, however that goes.

It is also possible that, Abraham lives there with Sarah, and is simply *going in* to the burial tent to mourn Sarah. *And Abraham went in to mourn for Sarah and to weep for her.* This is another definition for the word *bōw'* (אָוַב) [pronounced *boh*], which means *to come in, to come, to go in, to go, to enter, to advance*. Strong's #935 BDB #97. There are details left out of this narrative, as if the writer wrote a few words, paused, thought about Sarah, and then added a few more words. So the author knows whether he meant that Abraham *came to* Hebron to mourn or whether he *went into* the burial tent to mourn Sarah.

Hebron was not actually built as Hebron until Num. 13:22; but that does not mean that the land had not been occupied prior to that time.

The first half of the **Doctrine of Hebron** ([HTML](#)) ([PDF](#)) ([WPD](#)). Here is a brief summary of that doctrine.

### A Brief Summary of the Doctrine of Hebron

Hebron means *association, league, joined*. McGee suggests that it means *fellowship, communion*; as Hebron was a place of fellowship with God.

Like many of the ancient cities which Israel captures, Hebron had a variety of names. It was previously known as Kiriath-arba (Genesis 23:2 35:27 Joshua 14:15 15:54 20:7 Judges 1:10 Nehemiah 11:25); *the oaks of Mamre* or simply *Mamre* (Genesis 13:18 14:13 18:1 23:17, 19 25:9 35:27 49:30 50:13); *the city of Arba* (Joshua 14:15 15:13 21:11) and *the city of Arbah* (Genesis 35:27).

Hebron is about 20 miles west from the midpoint of the Dead Sea in the hill country of Judah, 25 miles south-southwest of Jerusalem. Mamre is traditionally located 2 miles north of Hebron, making them so close as to be interchangeable.

## A Brief Summary of the Doctrine of Hebron

Hebron has an elevation of approximately 2800 ft. It is situated in a valley between two ridges. Hebron is an area which would certainly be populated. It has several natural springs and wells and there are two large pools with cut stone walls within the city limits today. There are apple, plum, fig, pomegranate, apricot and nut trees; and grapes, melons and other produce are grown in the rich soil of the valley and terrace.<sup>17</sup>

Hebron is where most of the Patriarchs lived and where most of them were buried.

We first hear about Hebron immediately after the separation of Abram and Lot somewhere in the early the mid 20<sup>th</sup> century B.C. Lot settles in around Sodom, a particularly horrid city and God takes Abram up to a hill and has him look in all directions and tells him that this land would belong to his descendants forever. God tells Abram to walk through the land to get a feel for it (it is like you have just gotten your son this great Christmas gift and you want to show him how to play with it). **Then Abram moved his tent and came and dwelt by the oaks of Mamre, which are in Hebron, and there he built an altar to Jehovah** (Genesis 13:18). Abram and Sarai apparently lived there for awhile (Genesis 14:13).

It was here that God appeared to Abram and promised him a son through Sarai (Genesis 18:1ff). Several decades after the birth of Isaac, Sarah dies at the age of 127 and is buried in Hebron, also called Kiriath-arba (Genesis 23:2). Abraham is also buried there by Isaac at age 175 (Genesis 25:7–10).

Jacob also chose to live in Hebron (Genesis 37:1). Jacob later asked his sons to bury him with Abraham, Sarah, Isaac, Rebekah and Leah (Genesis 49:29–33 50:13), which would have been Hebron.

In Joshua 9, the Gibeonites use deceit in order to attain an alliance with Joshua and then five kings allied themselves and attacked the Gibeonites. These five kings were from the hill country, one of them being the king of Hebron (Joshua 10:3, 5, 23). Joshua destroyed the armies of those kings and executed the kings as well (Joshua 10:22–26).

Joshua went through a half dozen cities and destroyed the people in the cities. One of the last ones was Hebron and he left no survivors (Joshua 10:36–39). They took no prisoners.

Hebron proper will actually go to the tribe of Aaron as a Levitical city and as a city of refuge. The surrounding area and villages will go to Caleb and his family (Joshua 21:11–13 I Chron. 5:55–56). In Joshua 14:12 and in great detail in Judges 1:10, we will discuss in more detail the chronological sequence involved.

The actual doctrine goes into much greater detail than we find here. I will cover the history of Hebron after the time of Joshua at another time.

[Chapter Outline](#)

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So far, we have: **When Sarah died in Kiriath-arba (later known as Hebron)...** At the time that this was written (assuming an Abrahamic authorship), there was no Hebron. Therefore, this would be known as a **gloss**, something which was added by a later editor or copyist. Very likely, this is based upon the geographical training that Abraham received as a young man—and that he only appended the book of Genesis with a few updated geographical references.

It is possible that Joshua added this in, as he would have no doubt copied the Scriptures as he had them. We find the same gloss in Joshua 15:54. This city was known as Hebron only, after Joshua's conquest of the land.

Apparently Keil suggests that this city was originally called Hebron, then Arba the Anakite called it Kiriath-arba, and then the Jews restored the name to Hebron. Whereas, this may be true; if this is offered as an explanation

<sup>17</sup> This description was paraphrased from *The Zondervan Pictorial Encyclopedia of the Bible*; ©1976; Vol. 3, pp. 107–108.

as to why the addition of the word *Hebron* here is not a gloss, that does not solve the problem of dozens of similar glosses throughout the Word of God. Furthermore, this is not really a problem. At some point in time, the book of Genesis was reduced to writing; or was copied—and many believe that Moses had a hand in this (most believe that Moses wrote Genesis, although I have never seen any credible proof of this). A gloss simply means that Moses (or whomever) knows, from his training in geography, that Hebron used to be known as Kiriath-arba; and so he simply adds in this clarification for newer readers without such a background. Such a gloss does not change anything—it simply gives an updated name to a city, village, river, or whatever. That Moses did this for the book of Genesis ought not to be a problem for any believer.



**Hebron, the Home of Abraham (graphic)** from [GoVista.com](http://GoVista.com); accessed December 14, 2014.

| Genesis 23:2c                                                                 |                                                                                                                      |                                  |                            |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------|----------------------------|
| Hebrew/Pronunciation                                                          | Common English Meanings                                                                                              | Notes/Morphology                 | BDB and Strong's #         |
| b <sup>e</sup> (ב) [pronounced b <sup>eh</sup> ]                              | <i>in, into, through; at, by, near, on, upon; with, before, against; by means of; among; within</i>                  | a preposition of proximity       | No Strong's #<br>BDB #88   |
| 'erets (אֶרֶץ) [pronounced EH-rets]                                           | <i>earth (all or a portion thereof), land, territory, country, continent; ground, soil; under the ground [Sheol]</i> | feminine singular construct      | Strong's #776<br>BDB #75   |
| K <sup>e</sup> na'an (כְּנָעַן) [pronounced k <sup>e</sup> NAH- <i>gahn</i> ] | which possibly means <i>merchant</i> and is transliterated <i>Canaan</i>                                             | masculine proper noun; territory | Strong's #3667<br>BDB #488 |

**Translation:** ...in the land of Canaan.

Canaan is the general area where Abraham lived, which later became Israel, as God had given this land to Abraham. God told Abraham to travel throughout this land, to enjoy its beauty and to recognize that it had been given him.

Although Abraham most recently is said to live in Beersheba, he and Sarah had lived in Hebron previously (Genesis 13:18). Why Sarah was there, we do not know—perhaps she was visiting and perhaps she had taken up permanent residence in Hebron.

| Genesis 23:2d                                                              |                                                                                     |                                                          |                           |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------|
| Hebrew/Pronunciation                                                       | Common English Meanings                                                             | Notes/Morphology                                         | BDB and Strong's #        |
| wa (or va) (ו) [pronounced wah]                                            | <i>and so, and then, then, and; so, that, yet, therefore, consequently; because</i> | wâw consecutive                                          | No Strong's #<br>BDB #253 |
| bôw' (אוּב) [pronounced boh]                                               | <i>to come in, to come, to go in, to go, to enter, to advance</i>                   | 3 <sup>rd</sup> person masculine singular, Qal imperfect | Strong's #935<br>BDB #97  |
| 'Ab <sup>e</sup> râhâm (אֲבִרָאם) [pronounced ahb <sup>ve</sup> -raw-HAWM] | <i>father of a multitude, chief of a multitude; transliterated Abraham</i>          | masculine singular proper noun                           | Strong's #85<br>BDB #4    |

**Translation:** [Consequently, Abraham went...](#)

This is an odd phrase as Abraham is said to be living in Hebron in Genesis 13:18 14:13 18:1 (the Oaks of Mamre is in Hebron—Genesis 13:18). Since this word can mean *to go in*, it is possible that Abraham is simply going into his tent or there may have been a tent erected for Sarah's funeral.

Adam Clarke provides an excellent explanation for this: *From Genesis 22:19 of the preceding chapter it appears that Abraham had settled at Beer-sheba; and here we find that Sarah died at Hebron, which was about twenty-four miles distant from Beersheba. For the convenience of feeding his numerous flocks, Abraham had probably several places of temporary residence, and particularly one at Beer-sheba, and another at Hebron; and it is likely that while he sojourned at Beersheba, Sarah died at Hebron; and his coming to mourn and weep for her signifies his coming from the former to the latter place on the news of her death.*<sup>18</sup>

Abraham probably had several living quarters, which he traveled to in order to oversee his flocks and herds. He was in Beersheba when his wife died in Hebron.

The lack of specificity here is an interesting trait of this chapter. There will be sequential information left out; and yet, there will be extraordinary detail elsewhere. This is typical of human memory—particularly on a day so emotionally jarring as this day would have been for Abraham. For much of the day, it would appear as if he is walking in a fog. We flit from one scene to another scene, but without any intervening text (Abraham appears to meet with these Hittites anywhere from 2 to 4 times—but there is no clear delineation between these meetings<sup>19</sup>). So, just as a day of great sorrow affects our own recollection of events, so it is with Abraham. There is nothing in this chapter which is incorrectly recalled or distorted; but we simply have an interesting commingling of explicit events (including dialogue) interspersed with some very indistinct narrative. In fact, this is very much like a dream state—where you may have a very vivid dream, but when you go to recall it, you can recall some shapes and colors and events with great specificity, but the interconnectedness of the dream along with many events in your dream, are lost. If you have not yet had such a sorrow-inducing day; perhaps then you have had a dream where you wake up with great sadness, but you do not fully recall the dream. This might help to explain both Abraham's mental state as well as his recollection of these events.

<sup>18</sup> Adam Clarke, *Commentary on the Bible*; from e-Sword, Genesis 23:2.

<sup>19</sup> If there is only one meeting, then Abraham goes to the city gate, has enough silver with him, has the lot picked out, and Ephron, the owner of the lot just happens to be there.

If you think that everything should be a blur, then you do not understand the human mind. I recall a wonderful principal at the school where I worked, and he was dying of cancer. Apparently there was some discussion or questions going about, should we save electricity by turning off the lights in our room when we leave, or by leaving them on (these are florescent lights, . Mr. Taylor put out a memo—just weeks before his death, if I recall—discussing this very question in the most minute detail possible.

### Genesis 23:2e

| Hebrew/Pronunciation                                    | Common English Meanings                                   | Notes/Morphology                   | BDB and Strong's #         |
|---------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------|----------------------------|
| lâmed (ל) [pronounced <i>le</i> ]                       | <i>to, for, towards, in regards to</i>                    | directional/relational preposition | No Strong's #<br>BDB #510  |
| çâphad (אָפַד) [pronounced <i>saw-FAHD</i> ]            | <i>to lament, to grieve, to mourn; to wail, to bewail</i> | Qal infinitive construct           | Strong's #5594<br>BDB #704 |
| This is the first occurrence of this word in Scripture. |                                                           |                                    |                            |
| lâmed (ל) [pronounced <i>le</i> ]                       | <i>to, for, towards, in regards to</i>                    | directional/relational preposition | No Strong's #<br>BDB #510  |
| Sârâh (שָׂרָה) [pronounced <i>saw-RAW</i> ]             | <i>princess, noble woman; transliterated Sarah</i>        | proper noun; feminine singular     | Strong's #8283<br>BDB #979 |

**Translation:** ...to grieve for Sarah...

Wherever it is that Abraham went, it was to grieve for Sarah or to lament her death.

When a loved one dies, there are often customary steps that one takes—and Abraham, as the first of the Hebrews, was probably quite demonstrative in his grief.

Guzik<sup>20</sup> points out that we are never told to look at Mary, the mother of the humanity of Jesus, as an example; but Sarah is named twice as an example for us (Isaiah 51:1–2 1Peter 3:3–6). Given that Mary was with Jesus when He was on the cross, she was obviously a woman of character and dedication. However, the point that should be taken from this is, there is no Scriptural reason for us to idolize Mary any more than Sarah. There is one **celebrity** in the heavens and earth, and that is Jesus Christ. It is reasonable to want to emulate some believers from the Bible (they are given to us as examples), but there is only One who receives our worship.

### Genesis 23:2f

| Hebrew/Pronunciation                                                  | Common English Meanings                                                                                                                     | Notes/Morphology                                                                  | BDB and Strong's #         |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------|
| w <sup>e</sup> (or v <sup>e</sup> ) (וּ, וְ) [pronounced <i>weh</i> ] | <i>and, even, then; namely; when; since, that; though</i>                                                                                   | simple wâw conjunction                                                            | No Strong's #<br>BDB #251  |
| lâmed (ל) [pronounced <i>le</i> ]                                     | <i>to, for, towards, in regards to</i>                                                                                                      | directional/relational preposition                                                | No Strong's #<br>BDB #510  |
| bâkâh (בָּכָה) [pronounced <i>baw-KAW</i> ]                           | <i>to weep [for] (in grief, humiliation, or joy), to weep [bitterly], to weep upon [i.e., to embrace and weep], to cry [for], to bewail</i> | Qal infinitive construct with the 3 <sup>rd</sup> person feminine singular suffix | Strong's #1058<br>BDB #113 |

<sup>20</sup> David Guzik's Commentary on the Old Testament; courtesy of e-sword; ©2006; Genesis 23:1.

**Translation:** ...and to weep for her.

This involved great weeping. Although we have no idea when Abraham and Sarah became an item, they left their home with his parents at age 75 and now it is 52 years later, so they have been an independent family unit now for 52 years—meaning independent of his and her family (they were closely related).

Whereas, one could interpret *to grieve* as a series of actions and ceremony, *to weep* indicates heartfelt grief.

Jamieson, Fausset and Brown: *The "mourning" describes his conformity to the customary usage of sitting on the ground for a time; while the "weeping" indicates the natural outburst of his sorrow.*<sup>21</sup>

Genesis 23:2 Sarah died in Kiriath-arba (that [is], Hebron) in the land of Canaan. Consequently, Abraham went to grieve for Sarah and to weep for her. (Kukis mostly literal translation)



Genesis 23:2 When Sarah died in Kiriath-arba (later known as Hebron) in the land of Canaan, Abraham went to grieve for Sarah and to weep for her. (Kukis paraphrase)

Although sometime is given to describing Abraham's sorrow, the bulk of this chapter is given over to his purchase of a burial site for Sarah. This is not unusual for a man's way of dealing with sorrow.

**And Sarah died in Kiryat Arba by Yoram Raanan** from [the Jerusalem Post](#), accessed December 14, 2014. Quite obviously, Raanan is very impressionistic in his style.

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## Abraham's Public Meeting with the Hittites to Purchase a Burial Plot for Sarah

We all process grief differently. Abraham recalls in great detail his purchasing a burial plot for his late wife.

**And so rises up Abraham from over faces of his dying one. And so he speaks unto the sons of Heth, to say,...**

Genesis  
23:3

**Abraham rose up from over his dead [wife's body] and spoke to the sons of Heth, saying,...**

**Abraham rose up from over his dead wife's body, and said to the Hittites:...**

Here is how others have translated this verse:

**Ancient texts:**

<sup>21</sup> Robert Jamieson, A. R. Fausset and David Brown; *Commentary Critical and Explanatory on the Whole Bible*; 1871; from e-sword, Genesis 23:2.

|                          |                                                                                                                             |
|--------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Masoretic Text (Hebrew)  | And so rises up Abraham from over faces of his dying one. And so he speaks unto the sons of Heth, to say,...                |
| Targum of Onkelos        | And Abraham rose up from the sight of the face of his dead, and spake with the sons of Hittah, saying,...                   |
| Latin Vulgate            | And after he rose up from the <u>funeral obsequies</u> , he spoke to the children of Heth, saying:...                       |
| Peshitta (Syriac)        | And Abraham rose up from before <u>the bier of</u> his dead and spoke to the sons of Heth, saying,...                       |
| Septuagint (Greek)       | And Abraham stood up from before his dead; and Abraham spoke to the sons of Heth, saying,...                                |
| Significant differences: | I am unsure about the underlined words found in the Latin and Vulgate; they do not appear to match exactly with the Hebrew. |

### Thought-for-thought translations; paraphrases:

|                         |                                                                                                                 |
|-------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Common English Bible    | After he got up from embracing his deceased wife, he spoke with the Hittites:...                                |
| Contemporary English V. | ...he went to the Hittites and said,...                                                                         |
| Easy-to-Read Version    | Then Abraham left his dead wife and went to talk to the Hittite people. He said,...                             |
| Good News Bible (TEV)   | He left the place where his wife's body was lying, went to the Hittites, and said,...                           |
| <i>The Message</i>      | Then Abraham got up from mourning his dead wife and spoke to the Hittites:...                                   |
| New Berkeley Version    | Then arising from the presence of his dead, Abraham said to the sons of Heth,...                                |
|                         | The Hittites were a great nation north and east of Palestine. A colony of them had migrated to southern Canaan. |
| New Living Translation  | Then, leaving her body, he said to the Hittite elders,...                                                       |

### Partially literal and partially paraphrased translations:

|                                 |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  |
|---------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| American English Bible          | And as AbraHam stood before his dead [woman], he spoke to the sons of Chet, saying,...                                                                                                                                                                           |
| Beck's American Translation     | After bowing over the face of his dead wife, Abraham got up and said to the Hittites,...                                                                                                                                                                         |
| <i>God's Word</i> <sup>TM</sup> | Then Abraham left the side of his dead wife and spoke to the Hittites,...                                                                                                                                                                                        |
| International Standard V        | Then Abraham stood up from beside his dead wife [The Heb. lacks wife] and addressed the Hittites. He said, "I am an alien and an outsider among you. Give me a cemetery among you where I can bury my dead away from my presence." V. 4 is included for context. |

### Mostly literal renderings (with some occasional paraphrasing):

|                           |                                                                                                                                                         |
|---------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Ancient Roots Translinear | Abraham raised his face from over the dead, and spoke to the sons of Heth, saying,...                                                                   |
| Bible in Basic English    | And Abraham came from his dead and said to the children of Heth,...                                                                                     |
| Ferar-Fenton Bible        | Then Abraham rose up from the presence of his dead, and spoke to the sons of Heth, saying,...                                                           |
| HCSB                      | Then Abraham got up from beside his dead wife and spoke to the Hittites:...                                                                             |
| New Advent Bible          | And after he rose up from the funeral obsequies, he spoke to the children of Heth, saying:...                                                           |
| NIV – UK                  | Then Abraham rose from beside his dead wife and spoke to the Hittites [Or the descendants of Heth; also in verses 5, 7, 10, 16, 18 and 20]. He said,... |

### Catholic Bibles (those having the imprimatur):

|                       |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           |
|-----------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| The Heritage Bible    | And Abraham stood up from the face of his dead, and spoke to the sons of Heth [ <b>Heth</b> , the second son of Canaan, Gen 10:15; 1 Chr 1:13, and ancestor of the terrorizing Hittites. Heth means terrible or terrorizing.], saying,...                                                                                                                                                                                                                 |
| New American Bible    | Then he left the side of his deceased wife and addressed the Hittites:... The Hittites: in the Bible the term is applied to several different groups-inhabitants of the second-millennium Hittite empire in Asia Minor and northern Syria, residents of the Neo-Hittite kingdoms in northern Syria in the first part of the first millennium, and (following Assyrian terminology) the inhabitants of Syria and Palestine. The third group is meant here. |
| New Jerusalem Bible   | Then rising from beside his dead, Abraham spoke to the Hittites,...                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       |
| Revised English Bible | When at last he rose and left the presence of his dead one, he approached the Hittites:...                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                |

### Jewish/Hebrew Names Bibles:

|                          |                                                                                                                            |
|--------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Complete Jewish Bible    | Then he got up from his dead one and said to the sons of Het,...                                                           |
| exeGesés companion Bible | ...and Abraham rises from the face of his who died and words to the sons of Heth, saying,...                               |
| Hebrew Names Version     | Avraham rose up from before his dead, and spoke to the children of Chet, saying,...                                        |
| Kaplan Translation       | Abraham rose from beside his dead, and he spoke to the children of Heth. That is, the Hittites. See note on Genesis 10:15. |

### Expanded/Embellished Bibles:

|                             |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         |
|-----------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Kretzmann's Commentary      | Abraham Negotiates for a Burial-Place. â?"<br>And Abraham stood up from before his dead, and spake unto the sons of Heth, saying, ...                                                                                                                                                                   |
| Lexham English Bible        | And Abraham went to mourn for Sarah and to weep for her. And Abraham rose up from his dead, and he spoke to the Hittites [and] said,...                                                                                                                                                                 |
| NET Bible®                  | Then Abraham got up from mourning his dead wife [Heb "And Abraham arose from upon the face of his dead."] and said to the sons of Heth,...                                                                                                                                                              |
| Translation for Translators | After Abraham mourned and cried over her, he left the body of his wife and spoke to some of the descendants of Heth, saying, "I am a foreigner [DOU] living among you, so I do not own any land here. Sell me some land here so that I can bury my wife's body." Vv. 2b and 4 are included for context. |
| The Voice                   | When he got up from his place beside her, he spoke to the Hittites <i>who had been his neighbors for many years.</i>                                                                                                                                                                                    |

### Literal, almost word-for-word, renderings:

|                            |                                                                                                          |
|----------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| American KJV               | And Abraham stood up from before his dead, and spoke to the sons of Heth, saying,...                     |
| Concordant Literal Version | And rising is Abraham from over the face of his dead. And speaking is he to the sons of Heth, saying,... |
| World English Bible        | Abraham rose up from before his dead, and spoke to the children of Heth, saying,...                      |
| Young's Updated LT         | And Abraham rises up from the presence of his dead, and speaks unto the sons of Heth, saying,...         |

**The gist of this verse:** After mourning the death of his wife, Abraham stands up to speak before the sons of Heth.



## Genesis 23:3a

| Hebrew/Pronunciation                                                                                                                                                                                                                       | Common English Meanings                                                                                                           | Notes/Morphology                                                                 | BDB and Strong's #                |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| wa (or va) (ו) [pronounced <i>wah</i> ]                                                                                                                                                                                                    | <i>and so, and then, then, and; so, that, yet, therefore, consequently; because</i>                                               | wâw consecutive                                                                  | No Strong's #<br>BDB #253         |
| qûwm (קום) [pronounced <i>koom</i> ]                                                                                                                                                                                                       | <i>to stand, to rise up, to get up; to establish, to establish a vow, to cause a vow to stand, to confirm or to fulfill a vow</i> | 3 <sup>rd</sup> person masculine singular, Qal imperfect                         | Strong's #6965<br>BDB #877        |
| ʿAb <sup>e</sup> râhâm (אברהם) [pronounced <i>ahb<sup>ve</sup>-raw-HAWM</i> ]                                                                                                                                                              | <i>father of a multitude, chief of a multitude; transliterated Abraham</i>                                                        | masculine singular proper noun                                                   | Strong's #85<br>BDB #4            |
| min (מן) [pronounced <i>mihn</i> ]                                                                                                                                                                                                         | <i>from, away from, out from, out of from, off, on account of, since, above, than, so that not, beyond, more than</i>             | preposition of separation                                                        | Strong's #4480<br>BDB #577        |
| ʿal (על) [pronounced <i>gahl</i> ]                                                                                                                                                                                                         | <i>upon, beyond, on, against, above, over, by, beside</i>                                                                         | preposition of proximity                                                         | Strong's #5920,<br>#5921 BDB #752 |
| Together, they mean <i>from upon, from over, from by, from beside, from attachment to, from companionship with, from accompanying [in a protective manner], from adhesion to, from</i> . Some translators rendered this <i>away from</i> . |                                                                                                                                   |                                                                                  |                                   |
| pânîym (פנים) [pronounced <i>paw-NEEM</i> ]                                                                                                                                                                                                | <i>face, faces, countenance; presence</i>                                                                                         | masculine plural construct (plural acts like English singular)                   | Strong's #6440<br>BDB #815        |
| Gesenius suggests that this means <i>in front of a thing; before a thing</i> . However, various translators rendered this as <i>from upon the face [surface] of, from the face [surface] of, on, from over</i> .                           |                                                                                                                                   |                                                                                  |                                   |
| mûwth (מוֹת) [pronounced <i>mooth</i> ]                                                                                                                                                                                                    | <i>dying, perishing; one who is dying [perishing]</i>                                                                             | Qal active participle, with the 3 <sup>rd</sup> person masculine singular suffix | Strong's #4191<br>BDB #559        |

**Translation:** Abraham rose up from over his dead [wife's body]...

The participle here logically refers to a state of being, rather than to a state of dying. So Abraham's wife is dead. We do not know exactly what the customs were of that day, but Abraham apparently went into a place, and here we have him rising up from being over his wife's body.

Abraham was mourning his wife; and then he stood up. We do not know from what position Abraham came out of, but I suspect that he is laying on the ground, mourning his wife, as the **Jews** tended to be very demonstrative with their emotions.

Part of the translation of v. 3 has been left out. Every language has its idioms and Hebrew has an abundance of them. The plural of the word face is found here (it is almost always in the plural) and it would have been more accurate to translate this: *and Abraham arose from before the faces of his dead*. Face is always in the plural in this type of usage because it refers to the various features of the face (in English, pants is always in the plural) and this is not unlike the Greek word πρὸς, which means *face to face with*. Here is one of the many places where

a strictly literal translation does not improve the understanding of the meaning of the passage. It is because of passages like this that I have gone to 3 translations.

Mourning is always a temporary process. For those who remain, life continues. No matter how important a person is to you, once they have died, if you are still alive, then God has a plan for your life. One of the first things which jars people in mourning out of this state is simply the fact of having to deal with the body of the loved one. You cannot leave Aunt Mabel in a rocking chair watching cable news after she has passed. Even in Abraham's day, there were procedures that must be followed—in his day, procedures dictated not by law but by custom. For Abraham, there were two primary considerations: (1) to bury his wife's body out of his sight and (2) to place her in a picturesque setting. In any case, Abraham must function; Abraham must transact business—simply as a natural result of Sarah's passing.

From what follows, there is no indication that Abraham had to search that place out. It appears that he already had a very specific place in mind. Had he thought about this as a grave site originally? Had he and his wife traveled by this place and sat and admired its quiet beauty and peacefulness? We do not really know that part of the backstory.

| Genesis 23:3b                                            |                                                                                                                                                                                                          |                                                               |                            |
|----------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------|
| Hebrew/Pronunciation                                     | Common English Meanings                                                                                                                                                                                  | Notes/Morphology                                              | BDB and Strong's #         |
| wa (or va) (ו) [pronounced <i>wah</i> ]                  | <i>and so, and then, then, and; so, that, yet, therefore, consequently; because</i>                                                                                                                      | wāw consecutive                                               | No Strong's #<br>BDB #253  |
| dābar (דָּבַר) [pronounced <i>daw<sup>b</sup>-VAHR</i> ] | <i>to speak, to talk [and back with action], to give an opinion, to expound, to make a formal speech, to speak out, to promise, to propose, to speak kindly of, to declare, to proclaim, to announce</i> | 3 <sup>rd</sup> person masculine singular, Piel imperfect     | Strong's #1696<br>BDB #180 |
| 'el (לָא) [pronounced <i>ehl</i> ]                       | <i>unto; into, among, in; toward, to; against; concerning, regarding; besides, together with; as to</i>                                                                                                  | directional preposition (respect or deference may be implied) | Strong's #413<br>BDB #39   |
| bānīym (בְּנֵי) [pronounced <i>baw-NEEM</i> ]            | <i>sons, descendants; children; people; sometimes rendered men</i>                                                                                                                                       | masculine plural construct                                    | Strong's #1121<br>BDB #119 |
| Cheth (חֵת) [pronounced <i>khayth</i> ]                  | transliterated <i>Heth; Hittite</i>                                                                                                                                                                      | masculine proper noun                                         | Strong's #2845<br>BDB #366 |
| lāmed (ל) [pronounced <i>l'</i> ]                        | <i>to, for, towards, in regards to</i>                                                                                                                                                                   | directional/relational preposition                            | No Strong's #<br>BDB #510  |
| 'amar (אָמַר) [pronounced <i>aw-MAHR</i> ]               | <i>to say, to speak, to utter; to say [to oneself], to think</i>                                                                                                                                         | Qal infinitive construct                                      | Strong's #559<br>BDB #55   |

**Translation:** ...and spoke to the sons of Heth, saying,...

The sons of Heth are thought by some to be the Hittites and, as we have seen so far in Genesis, there are a number of disparate groups throughout Palestine.

However, the NET Bible footnote here is: *Some translate the Hebrew term "Heth" as "Hittites" here (also in vv. 5, 7, 10, 16, 18, 20), but this gives the impression that these people were the classical Hittites of Anatolia. However, there is no known connection between these sons of Heth, apparently a Canaanite group (see Gen 10:15), and the Hittites of Asia Minor. See H. A. Hoffner, Jr., "Hittites," Peoples of the Old Testament World, 152-53.*<sup>22</sup>

Dr. Thomas Constable: *These Hittites (Hethites) were residents of Canaan, not members of the mighty Hittite Empire that later flourished north of the Promised Land in Syria. [Note: See Bryant G. Wood, "Hittites and Hethites: A Proposed Solution to an Etymological Conundrum," Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society 54:2 (June 2011):239-50.]*<sup>23</sup>

The Hittites were the descendants of Heth, Canaan's son, and one of the seven tribes which proceeded from Canaan. The relationship that we see here with Abraham is far different than what we will see later. God commanded the Jews to completely annihilate the Hittites, yet they did not do so (Deut. 7:1, 2, 24 Judges 3:5). They occupied this area of the land of Canaan, later known as Hebron (Deut. 7:1 1Kings 10:29). There were honorable Hittites found in Scripture, besides this passage. Ahimelech and Uriah are found in 1Samuel 26:6 and in 2Samuel 11:6, 21. However, in general, the Hittites were a powerful, warlike people.

Archeologists and historians have questioned whether there were Hittites in Palestine during this time because (1) the Hittite kingdom was in Asia Minor (now Turkey); (2) the Hittites did not rise to power until 400 years after this passage. However, we find them here and later in Num. 13:29 when Joshua and 11 other spies discover that there are Hittite settlements in this same area. However, it is very possible that the influence of the Hittites had extended to Palestine. For instance, archeologists have discovered a nonaggression pact signed by the Hittite New Kingdom and by Egypt with the treaty line drawn in such a way to put Palestine under Egyptian influence. This was much later in Hittite history—in the 13<sup>th</sup> century B.C.; but it shows that there was Hittite interest in Palestine. Earlier than this we have discovered cuneiform mercantile tablets in Cappadocia left by early Assyrian merchants, dating between 1950–1850 B.C. This would indicate trade between the Hittites and the Assyrians.

It is possible that these Hittites are not related to the famous Hittites that we find as a superpower ruling what is now Turkey during the time of King David. It is possible that these are the Hattis—or, possibly the ones who conquered the Hattis and adopted the name for themselves. This would have occurred between 2300–2000 B.C. and in the original Hebrew, Hatti and Hittite would have been spelled exactly the same as there were no vowels used in the original manuscripts. The vowels have been supplied by the oral tradition. If this is the case, then it is likely that it is this group which is found through Genesis during the time of the patriarchs.

However, it is not difficult to believe that these were the original Hittites; that they were pushed north by the Hebrews (although some were left in the land) and that they regrouped and formed a powerful kingdom north of Israel. We are lacking archeological evidence to substantiate this; but, a half century or so ago, we lacked archeological evidence for the Hittites as a world power anyway. As an investigative science, archeology is not finished. We have put but a small dent in the remaining archeological information for ancient history.

Keeping the NET Bible commentary in mind, let's take a brief look at the Hittites:

### An Introduction to the Hittites

1. The name *Heth* is found in relatively few places in the Bible: Genesis 10:15 23:3, 5, 7, 10, 16, 18, 20 25:10 27:46 49:32 1Chronicles 1:13. As you can see, the bulk of those references are found here in this chapter. Two of these mentions look back on this incident. Two of them, Genesis 10:15 and 1Chronicles 1:13 are genealogical mentions. Only one of these passages, Genesis 27:46 is slightly different: **And Rebekah said to Isaac, "I am weary of my life because of the daughters of Heth. If Jacob takes a wife of**

<sup>22</sup> From <http://bible.org/netbible/index.htm> (Genesis 23:3) accessed September 4, 2012. They cite H. A. Hoffner, Jr., "Hittites," Peoples of the Old Testament World, 152-153.

<sup>23</sup> From <http://www.studydrive.org/commentaries/dcc/view.cgi?bk=0&ch=23> accessed December 9, 2014.

## An Introduction to the Hittites

the daughters of Heth, like these of the daughters of the land, what good is my life to me?” Rebekah did not want her son Jacob to marry one of the daughters of Heth.

2. Although there is a large civilization of Hittites north and east of Canaan, the Word of God speaks of them differently than it does here, using a slightly different word. It appears in the context of this chapter that this group of Hittites are the dominant population where Abraham is, God has not judged them harshly as He did Sodom and Gomorrah, and, as this narrative goes on, it is clear that Abraham has a good relationship with these men. Furthermore, it will be clear from this chapter that these are good, honorable and honest men as well. Therefore, the most likely explanation is, a few of the sons of Heth came from the east and moved into the land of Canaan, and had populations in various places in Canaan. Although related by blood to the Hittites that we will encounter later in the Bible, there is likely a cultural disconnect with these same Hittites, so that these sons of Heth here probably have more in common with Abraham than they do with their own flesh and blood in the Hittite empire. Probably many of these men and women believe in Abraham’s God and are eternally saved (God worked circumstances to place them together).
3. What appears to be the case is, down the road, four centuries or more, the Hittites who live in the land will regress—they will no longer regard the spiritual heritage of their fathers by means of Abraham—and they will become just one more set of people in the land that God will drive out of the land in favor of the Jews (Exodus 23:28 33:2 34:11 Deut. 7:1); and that Joshua would destroy by means of the power of God (Joshua 11:1–8 24:11).
4. After Joshua had conquered the land, God allowed many groups of peoples to live in the land, to help keep Israel in line. Judges 2:1–3 3:4–5
5. Throughout Israel’s history, there would continue to be individual men, Hittites, who side with the God of Israel. 2Samuel 23:39

We will pick up with this doctrine again in the future when Israel has to deal with the Hittites as an opposition force.

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Although it is not clear if the Hittites were right there at the time, it does appear as if Abraham speaks before a number of Hittites in a fairly large meeting, and this is when he says the following:

The *sons of Heth* are Hittites. Therefore, at this time, they apparently had control of a major portion of the Land of Promise.

### When Critics Ask, on the Sons of Heth in Canaan

GENESIS 23 —How could the sons of Heth have been in Hebron in 2050 B.C. when their kingdom was in what is now modern Turkey?

**PROBLEM:** Heth was the progenitor of the Hittites, whose kingdom was located in what is now modern Turkey. But, according to some archaeological evidence, the Hittites did not become a prominent force in the Middle East until the reign of Mursilis I, which began about 1620 B.C. , and who captured the city of Babylon in 1600 B.C.

However, several times in Genesis 23 reference is made to Abraham’s encounter with the sons of Heth, who controlled Hebron about 2050 B.C. How could the Bible claim the presence of Hittites in control of Hebron so many years before they became a significant force in the area?

**SOLUTION:** More recent archaeological evidence from cuneiform tablets describes conflicts in Anatolia (modern Turkey), among the various Hittite principalities from about 1950 to 1850 B.C. Even before this conflict, however, there was a race of non- Indo-Europeans called Hattians. These people were subdued by invaders about 2300 to 2000 B.C . These Indo-European invaders adopted the name Hatti. In Semitic languages, like Hebrew, Hatti and Hitti would be written with the same letters, because only the consonants were written, not

## When Critics Ask, on the Sons of Heth in Canaan

the vowels.

In the days of Ramses II of Egypt, the military strength of the Hittites was sufficient to precipitate a non-aggression pact between Egypt and the Hittite empire which set a boundary between them. At this time, the Hittite empire reached as far south as Kadesh on the Orontes river (modern Asi). However, additional evidence indicates that the Hittites actually penetrated further south into Syria and Palestine. Although the Hittite kingdom did not reach its zenith until the second half of the 14th century, there is sufficient evidence to substantiate a Hittite presence in Hebron at the time of Abraham, which was significant enough to control the area.

Norman Geisler and Thomas Howe, *When Critics Ask*; Victor Books; taken from e-Sword, Genesis 23:1.

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This may be way more than you want to know.

### Driver on the Hittites

The term 'Hittite,' as has been explained (on X. 15), is used in the OT. (1) of the great people resident on the N. of Phoenicia and the Lebanon; (2) of a branch of them settled in the extreme N. of Canaan, under Hermon; (3) in the lists of nations to be dispossessed by the Israelites, of a branch, perhaps the same as (2), but possibly (see on xv. 20) a branch located, or supposed to have been located, elsewhere in Canaan (see Nu. xiii. 29); (4) in P of the inhabitants of Hebron (see the passages on xxiii. 3), and of two of Esau's wives (Gen. xxvi. 34, xxvii. 46, xxxvi. 2). This mention of Hittites at Hebron, in the South of Canaan, is surprising, and difficult to explain satisfactorily. (a) It is possible, no doubt, in the abstract, that there might have been a colony of the N. Hittites there; but if so, it is remarkable that there is no hint of its existence elsewhere, e.g. in the accounts of the conquest of Hebron by the Israelites (Josh. xv. 13 f.; (|| Jud. i. 10). The alleged proof from archaeology of the existence of Hittites in Hebron<sup>1</sup> breaks down entirely: the fact that \* among the prisoners of Ramses II. (1275—1208 B.C., Petrie), represented on the walls of Kamak, are natives of Ashkelon, whose features and mode of wearing the hair are Hittite' proves nothing as to the presence of Hittites in Hebron 1000 years previously<sup>2</sup>; while the argument that because Thothmes III. speaks of the 'greater Hittite land\* (in the North), therefore there must have been a 'lesser Hittite land' at Hebron in the South, is a very bad piece of reasoning: it is obvious that it may have lain equally well in any other direction. (b) There are grounds for supposing that, after the Hittites had ceased to exist as an independent people (c. 700 B.C.), and when they came to be known practically to the Hebrews only by tradition, the term was generalized, and used vaguely with reference to the pre-Israelite population of Canaan generally, much as \*Canaanite' and \*Amorite' were often employed<sup>3</sup>: it is possible therefore that P, when he speaks of the natives of Hebron as 'children of Heth,' really means no more than to describe them as 'Canaanites.' In support of this view we may point to Josh. i. 4 (Deuteronomical<sup>4</sup>), where 'all the land of the Hittites' manifestly embraces the whole of Palestine; to Ez. xvi. 3, 45, where the prophet, reproaching Jerusalem for its innate depravity, says that (morally) its father was an 'Amorite,' and its mother a 'Hittite'; and to Gen. xxvii. 46, xxviii. 1, 6, 8 (all P), where, with reference to Esau's 'Hittite' wives (xxvi. 34), 'daughters of Heth' and 'daughters of Canaan' are used interchangeably (cf. xxxvi. 2). In illustration of the vague and general ideas associated with some of these ethnographic terms it may be observed that the inhabitants of Hebron, who are called 'Hittites' by P, are called 'Amorites' by E (Josh. x. 5), and 'Canaanites' by J (Jud. i. 10). (c) Jastrow {EncB. s.v. Hittites) thinks that, though the Hittites of Hebron were certainly by Hebrew tradition identified with the Hittites of the North, they were in reality a different tribe altogether, who were settled in S. Palestine, and had nothing in common with the N. Hittites but the name. This seems rather a forced solution of the difficulty. To the present writer, judging as far as he is able on the basis of present knowledge, (b) seems the most probable view.

From <https://ia600406.us.archive.org/27/items/bookofgenesisnot00drivuoft/bookofgenesisnot00drivuoft.pdf> (pp. 228–231); accessed December 10, 2014.

<sup>1</sup> Sayce, Monuments, 144; EHH. 55 f., and elsewhere.

<sup>2</sup> Prof. Sayce's date for Bamses 11. is b.c. 1348—1281; and for Hammurabi (with whom, if he be the Amraphel of Gen. xiv. 1, Abraham will have been contemporary) 2376—2333 B.C. {Early Israel, 1899, pp. 277, 281}.

<sup>3</sup> It is remarkable that the term was generalized similarly by the Assyrians: Sennacherib, for instance, in the 'land of the Hatti,' includes Phoenicia and Palestine {EncB. ii. 2098}.

<sup>4</sup> Or perhaps, as the clause is not in the lxi., a gloss by a late hand: but even so, it remains as evidence of what was believed at the time when it was introduced.

Driver can provide some great insights sometimes, but he believed the **JEPD theory** (which is what the J, P and E stand for above).

### Chapter Outline

### Charts, Graphics and Short Doctrines

After all of that, I then came across H. C. Leupold, D. D., who writes: *The three arguments advanced are 1) that also Ezechiel traces the descent of Jerusalem from a Hittite mother (16:3, 45); 2) the country of the Hittites was promised to the descendants of Abraham (Gen. 15:19-21); 3) the testimony of the Tell-el-Amarna letters agrees to this in that the sons of a Hittite prince by name of Arzawia dwell to the south of the land and take part in an expedition against Jerusalem.*<sup>24</sup> His approach is much shorter, refers to some reasonably clear passages of Scripture, and without making weird references to J, E, P or D.

V. 3 reads: **Abraham rose up from over his dead [wife's body] and spoke to the sons of Heth, saying,...** It is not clear whether they are with Abraham while he is mourning his wife, or if Abraham seeks them out. Again, like the last verse, there are details left out. Sometimes we will be able to fill in these details in this chapter, but here we do not know. If you have ever suffered a great loss—and losing a spouse, even to old age, is a great loss—then your mind does not necessarily remember everything from that time. So, Abraham may have gotten up, and went to Kiriath-arba proper (to the city gate); or he may have turned around and begun speaking to Hittites who were there offering their condolences to him. We do not know where this first meeting takes place. Vv. 17 and 19 suggest that Kiriath-arba is the city where Abraham makes these arrangements (as the cave is said to be opposite of Mamre in those two verses).

Genesis 23:3 **Abraham rose up from over his dead [wife's body] and spoke to the sons of Heth, saying,...** (Kukis mostly literal translation)

Genesis 23:3 **Abraham rose up from over his dead wife's body, and said to the Hittites:...** (Kukis paraphrase)

Although throughout this chapter, these men will appear to be decent folk, the Hittites appear to take a turn for the worst, where two generations from now, their women cause great sadness for Rachel, Abraham's daughter-in-law (she will become his daughter-in-law in Genesis 24, and her position on her Hittite daughters-in-law will be expressed in Genesis 27:46).

Here is what we have so far: **And Sarah's life was 127 years; the years of the life of Sarah. Sarah died in Kiriath-arba (that [is], Hebron) in the land of Canaan. Consequently, Abraham went to grieve for Sarah and to weep for her. Abraham rose up from over his dead [wife's body] and spoke to the sons of Heth, saying,...**

Although the gate of the city will be mentioned in v. 10, we are not necessarily at this gate when Abraham first speaks to the sons of Heth. *He rises up and speaks to the sons of Heth.* It sounds very much as if they are right there with him. This would not be out of the question for many Hittites to be in attendance of Sarah's funeral (or, they have come to express their own sadness to Abraham). So the men with whom Abraham speaks at first, from this verse till v. 9 could have taken place at Abraham's compound, which is not too far from the gate of the city.

<sup>24</sup> From <http://www.ccel.org/ccel/leupold/genesis.xxv.html> accessed December 11, 2014.

So, if this is not a formal meeting at the gates of the Hittite city; there will be a formal meeting there by the time we get to v. 10.

What is most likely—although this is not clearly laid out—that Abraham knew he needed to provide a burial place for Sarah, so he went to the Hittite city (which may have been Hebron, where Sarah lived) to the gate of the city, where legal business was transacted, and he made his proposal there. However, what Abraham says in vv. 3–9 would have been appropriately said to Hittites who have come to mourn with him. Essentially, he will say, “I need to bury my wife. I have a place where I would like her to be buried.”

The person from whom he would like to purchase the land does not appear to be at the first meeting, but he will be at the second meeting. This second meeting will take place at the gate of the city. What city this is, is not named, unless it is Hebron (Kiriath-arba at this time).

Again, perhaps due to the emotions of the writer, important connecting events are left out and assumed. The verb which means *to stand, to get up, to rise up*; is often used to indicate that a person is about to do something. He has a clear mission, and this verb indicates that he is going to accomplish this mission. What is possible is, in between v. 3a and 3b is, Abraham travels to a nearby Hittite city and makes this proposal in a town courthouse (which is at the city gate). However, this possibly occurs, as mentioned, at Sarah’s compound, where she is being mourned.

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|                                                                                                                                                                         |                         |                                                                                                                                                                                         |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <p><b>“A sojourner and a stranger I [am] with you [all]. [You all] give to me a possession of a grave with you [all] and I may bury my dying from to my faces.”</b></p> | <p>Genesis<br/>23:4</p> | <p><b>“I [am] an immigrant and a newcomer [without property rights] near you [all]. Give me possession of a grave site near you that I may bury my dead away from my presence.”</b></p> |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|

**“I am an immigrant in your territory lacking property rights. Nevertheless, sell me a plot of land for a grave that I may bury my wife there, away from my sight.”**

Here is how others have translated this verse:

#### Ancient texts:

|                         |                                                                                                                                                           |
|-------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Masoretic Text (Hebrew) | “A sojourner and a stranger I [am] with you [all]. [You all] give to me a possession of a grave with you [all] and I may bury my dying from to my faces.” |
| Targum of Onkelos       | I am a sojourner and dweller with you; I pray sell me the <u>inheritance</u> of a sepulchre among you, and I will bury my dead there.                     |
| Latin Vulgate           | I am a stranger and sojourner among you: give me <u>the right of</u> a burying place with you, that I may bury my dead.                                   |
| Peshitta (Syriac)       | I am a stranger and a sojourner with you; give me the possession of a burial ground with you that I may bury my dead out of my sight.                     |
| Septuagint (Greek)      | I am a sojourner and a stranger among you. Therefore give me possession of a burying-place among you, and I will bury my dead away from me.               |

Significant differences: *Possession* (in the second phrase) can be also translated *inheritance* and possible as *right*.

#### Thought-for-thought translations; paraphrases:

|                         |                                                                                                                                                       |
|-------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Common English Bible    | "I am an immigrant and a temporary resident with you. Give me some property for a burial plot among you so that I can bury my deceased wife near me." |
| Contemporary English V. | "I live as a foreigner in your land, and I don't own any property where I can bury my wife. Please let me buy a piece of land."                       |

|                        |                                                                                                                                            |
|------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Easy English           | 'I am only a foreigner who is living among you. Give to me a grave in your country. So then I will be able to bury my dead wife properly.' |
| Easy-to-Read Version   | "I am only a traveler staying in your country. I have no place to bury my wife. Please give me some land so I can bury my wife."           |
| Good News Bible (TEV)  | "I am a foreigner living here among you; sell me some land, so that I can bury my wife."                                                   |
| New Berkeley Version   | "As I am a stranger and immigrant among you, may I have my own burial ground among you, so that I may bury my dead from my presence?"      |
| New Century Version    | "I am only a stranger and a foreigner here. Sell me some of your land so that I can bury my dead wife."                                    |
| New Life Bible         | "I am a stranger living among you for a time. Give me some of your land so I may bury my wife."                                            |
| New Living Translation | "Here I am, a stranger and a foreigner among you. Please sell me a piece of land so I can give my wife a proper burial."                   |

### Partially literal and partially paraphrased translations:

|                             |                                                                                                                                                                             |
|-----------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| American English Bible      | 'I'm just a visitor and a stranger among you, so, [please] allow me to buy a burying-place among [your people], and then I will bury my dead away from [my place].'         |
| Beck's American Translation | "I'm living as a foreigner with you. Let me have a burial place with you where I can bury my dead."                                                                         |
| God's Word™                 | "I'm a stranger with no permanent home. Let me have some of your property for a tomb so that I can bury my dead wife."                                                      |
| International Standard V    | He said, "I am an alien and an outsider among you. Give me a cemetery among you where I can bury my dead away from my presence." A portion of v. 3 is included for context. |
| NIRV                        | "I'm an outsider. I'm a stranger among you. Sell me some property here as a place for a family tomb. Then I can bury my wife's body."                                       |

### Mostly literal renderings (with some occasional paraphrasing):

|                           |                                                                                                                                |
|---------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Ancient Roots Translinear | "I am a stranger and a sojourner with you. Give to me a home for a grave with you to bury my dead in front of me."             |
| Bible in Basic English    | I am living among you as one from a strange country: give me some land here as my property, so that I may put my dead to rest. |
| Ferar-Fenton Bible        | "I am a foreigner and wanderer with you, give me the possession of a grave among you, so I can bury my dead from my sight."    |
| HCSB                      | "I am a resident alien among you. Give me a burial site among you so that I can bury my dead."                                 |

### Catholic Bibles (those having the imprimatur):

|                           |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   |
|---------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Christian Community Bible | ...and spoke to the Hittites, "I am only a stranger among you; give me a burial place among you, so that I may bury my dead." Obviously, the CCB took a portion of v. 3 and added it to v. 4.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     |
| The Heritage Bible        | I am a foreigner and a temporary resident with you; give me a possession of a burying-place with you that I may bury my dead from before my face.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 |
| New American Bible        | "Although I am a resident alien [A resident alien: such a one would normally not have the right to own property. The importance of Abraham's purchase of the field in Machpelah, which is worded in technical legal terms, lies in the fact that it gave his descendants their first, though small, land rights in the country that God had promised the patriarch they would one day inherit as their own. Abraham therefore insists on purchasing the field and not receiving it as a gift.] among you, sell me |



from your holdings a burial place, that I may bury my deceased wife." Gn 33:19  
Acts 7:16 Heb 11:9.

|                       |                                                                                                                                                |
|-----------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| New Jerusalem Bible   | 'I am a stranger resident here,' he said. 'Let me have a burial site of my own here, so that I can remove my dead for burial.'                 |
| New RSV               | 'I am a stranger and an alien residing among you; give me property among you for a burying-place, so that I may bury my dead out of my sight.' |
| Revised English Bible | 'I am an alien and a settler among you,' he said, 'Make over to me some ground among you for a burial-place, that I may bury my dead.'         |

#### Jewish/Hebrew Names Bibles:

|                            |                                                                                                                                                                                 |
|----------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Complete Jewish Bible      | "I am a foreigner living as an alien with you; let me have a burial site with you, so that I can bury my dead wife."                                                            |
| Hebrew Names Version       | "I am a stranger and a foreigner living with you. Give me a possession of a burying-place with you, that I may bury my dead out of my sight."                                   |
| JPS (Tanakh—1985)          | "I am a resident alien among you; sell me a burial site among you, that I may remove my dead for burial."                                                                       |
| Judaica Press Complete T.  | "I am a stranger and an inhabitant with you. Give me burial property with you, so that I may bury my dead from before me."                                                      |
| Kaplan Translation         | 'I am an immigrant and a resident among you,' he said. 'Sell me property for a burial place with you so that I can bury my dead, [and not have her here] right in front of me.' |
| <i>The Scriptures</i> 1998 | "I am a foreigner and a sojourner among you. Give me property for a burial site among you, so that I bury my dead from my presence."                                            |

#### Expanded/Embellished Bibles:

|                        |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            |
|------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Kretzmann's Commentary | I am a stranger and a sojourner with you; give me a possession of a burying-place with you that I may bury my dead out of my sight. That Abraham observed the usual period of mourning did not in any way conflict with his faith. Sarah had been his wife, a believer in the true God, in spite of all her weaknesses, the mother of all believing women. He had loved her dearly, as a faithful husband should, and she was his even in death. He now left the tent where Sarah lay in state, and appeared in the gate of the city, the customary assembling-place of the people, where all business was commonly transacted. The children of Heth, the Hittites, were living there, for Hebron was located in Hittite country, although not far from that of the Amorites on the west. As a stranger and a nomad in their midst he now negotiated for a burial-place, first of all for Sarah, his wife. |
| Lexham English Bible   | "I [am] a stranger and an alien among you; give to me {my own burial site} among you so that I may bury my dead from before me."                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           |
| NET Bible®             | "I am a temporary settler [Heb "a resident alien and a settler."] among you. Grant [Heb "give," which is used here as an idiom for "sell" (see v. 9). The idiom reflects the polite bartering that was done in the culture at the time.] me ownership [Or "possession."] of a burial site among you so that I may [Following the imperative, the cohortative with the prefixed conjunction expresses purpose.] bury my dead [Heb "bury my dead out of my sight." The last phrase "out of my sight" has not been included in the translation for stylistic reasons.]"                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       |
| The Voice              | <b>Abraham:</b> I am a stranger and an outsider living here among you. <i>In my heartache, I am asking you please to allow me to obtain some property here among you as a grave site for my dead wife. This would allow me to give her a proper burial.</i>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                |

#### Literal, almost word-for-word, renderings:

|                            |                                                                                                                                                   |
|----------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| American KJV               | I am a stranger and a sojourner with you: give me a possession of a burial plot with you, that I may bury my dead out of my sight.                |
| Concordant Literal Version | A sojourner and a settler am I with you. Give me a holding for a tomb with you, and I will entomb my dead from my face.                           |
| Context Group Version      | I am a stranger and a sojourner with you { pl }. Give me a possession of a burying-place with you { pl }, that I may bury my dead out of my sight |
| English Standard Version   | "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."              |
| LTHB                       | I am an alien and a visitor with you. Give to me a possession among you, so that I may bury my dead from before the eyes.                         |
| NASB                       | "I am a stranger and a sojourner among you; give me a burial site [Lit possession of a grave] among you that I may bury my dead out of my sight." |
| World English Bible        | "I am a stranger and a foreigner living with you. Give me a possession of a burying-place with you, that I may bury my dead out of my sight."     |
| Young's Updated LT         | "A sojourner and a settler I am with you; give to me a possession of a burying-place with you, and I bury my dead from before me."                |

**The gist of this verse:** Abraham asks for a burial place among the Hittites.

### Genesis 23:4a

| Hebrew/Pronunciation                                                    | Common English Meanings                                                                                                             | Notes/Morphology                                                                             | BDB and Strong's #         |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------|
| gêr (גַּר) [pronounced <i>gare</i> ]                                    | <i>sojourner, stranger, immigrant [or, outsider], temporary resident [inhabitant]; newcomer without inherited [property] rights</i> | masculine singular noun                                                                      | Strong's #1616<br>BDB #158 |
| w <sup>e</sup> (or v <sup>e</sup> ) (וּ, or ו) [pronounced <i>weh</i> ] | <i>and, even, then; namely; when; since, that; though</i>                                                                           | simple wâw conjunction                                                                       | No Strong's #<br>BDB #251  |
| tôwshâb (בְּשׂוּט) [pronounced <i>toh-SHAWB</i> ']                      | <i>emigrant, stranger, sojourner [not naturalized; without rights], temporary visitor</i>                                           | masculine singular noun:                                                                     | Strong's #8453<br>BDB #444 |
| This is the first occurrence of this word in Scripture.                 |                                                                                                                                     |                                                                                              |                            |
| 'ânôkîy (אֲנִי) [pronounced <i>awn-oh-KEE</i> ]                         | <i>I, me; (sometimes a verb is implied)</i>                                                                                         | 1 <sup>st</sup> person singular personal pronoun                                             | Strong's #595<br>BDB #59   |
| 'îm (עִם) [pronounced <i>geem</i> ]                                     | <i>with, at, by, near; like; from</i>                                                                                               | preposition of nearness and vicinity with the 2 <sup>nd</sup> person masculine plural suffix | Strong's #5973<br>BDB #767 |

**Translation:** "I [am] an immigrant and a newcomer [without property rights] near you [all]."

First of all, Abraham, although he has lived in this country for a half century, does not appear to have property rights. He seems to be recognizing here that, to these men, he is like someone who just moved into town. To some degree, he is saying, "I know that I do not have the right to ask you for this."

Now, Abraham has lived in this land for some 60+ years. However, he moved here, and he is dealing with a group of Hittites—perhaps a town council. Abraham still presents himself as a newcomer, a stranger and a visitor in their land, despite having spent a half a lifetime in Canaan.

Driver: *The word {ger} [is]...applied figuratively, to denote one having a precarious tenure and position. Lev. xxv. 23, Psalm xxxix. 12, 1 Ch. xxix. 15, 1 P. ii. 11.*<sup>25</sup>

This suggests that the Hittites have a fairly firm grasp of the country where they inhabit. That is, they would have cities, ranches and farms—and probably a military and a government. Abraham probably has several outposts, most of them temporary; and we know that he can raise an army if need be. However, he is allowed the access to these lands from the various peoples that the Jews will eventually displace.

Abraham, at this point, does not really own any land, but only lives by permission of the folks in the land of Canaan. As we have observed, Abraham has quite a good relationship with most of the people of the land.

This is a rather tricky situation. When we go from our land to another country, most of the time, there is a police force there and most of the time, they are there to protect its citizens and its visitors. However, there are portions of Africa or South America where the borderlines are questionable and the authority of that area is not clear.

Abraham is going to take some land which falls within a fairly well-defined area. However, there is reason to believe that Moses travels through some iffy portions of Palestine, where ownership is sort of defined, but where he might not be protected by a specific police force. Abraham has his own enforcement apparatus who traveled with him (remember, he was able to raise up a very small army quickly in Genesis 14). And there have been times when his wells and their ownership was not clearly defined. So, Abraham is going to buy a portion of land in a well-defined area, where there is an army and ownership, as well as peace and law.

As an aside, David will not be in such a clearly defined area when he personally sees to the protection of a man (Nabal) who is sheering his considerable herd. His wife understands the service that David provided and appreciated it; Nabal did not.

So far, we have Abraham speaking to a group of Hittites: “I [am] an immigrant and a newcomer [without property rights] near you [all].”

Although I like ending this phrase with *among you*, that does not appear to be a valid use of this preposition. In that case, we would find a *bêyth* preposition here instead. This indicates that Abraham lives near these people, and obviously has a good relationship with them. However, there is not this huge city of Heth with Abraham living smack dab in the middle of it on rented land. His ranch is probably nearby and we do not know if he owns that property or whether he is leasing it or exact what his arrangements are. As we have observed before, Abraham has moved a great deal throughout the land, and likely moves his flocks and herds about as well.

| Genesis 23:4b                                    |                                                                         |                                                                                    |                            |
|--------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------|
| Hebrew/Pronunciation                             | Common English Meanings                                                 | Notes/Morphology                                                                   | BDB and Strong's #         |
| nâthan (נָתַן) [pronounced naw-THAHN]            | <i>to give, to grant, to place, to put, to set; to make</i>             | 2 <sup>nd</sup> person masculine plural, Qal imperative                            | Strong's #5414<br>BDB #678 |
| lâmed (ל) [pronounced l <sup>e</sup> ]           | <i>to, for, towards, in regards to</i>                                  | directional/relational preposition with the 1 <sup>st</sup> person singular suffix | No Strong's #<br>BDB #510  |
| 'âchûzzâh (אֲחֻזָּזָה) [pronounced uh-khooz-ZAW] | <i>possession [of land, slaves, etc.], land possession; inheritance</i> | feminine singular construct                                                        | Strong's #272<br>BDB #28   |

<sup>25</sup> From <https://ia600406.us.archive.org/27/items/bookofgenesist00drivuoft/bookofgenesist00drivuoft.pdf> (p. 225); accessed December 10, 2014.

| Genesis 23:4b                                           |                                      |                                                                                              |                            |
|---------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------|
| Hebrew/Pronunciation                                    | Common English Meanings              | Notes/Morphology                                                                             | BDB and Strong's #         |
| qeber (קֶבֶר) [pronounced KEH <sup>o</sup> -VEHR]       | grave, sepulcher, tomb; burial place | masculine singular noun                                                                      | Strong's #6913<br>BDB #868 |
| This is the first occurrence of this word in Scripture. |                                      |                                                                                              |                            |
| ‘îm (עִם) [pronounced ġeem]                             | with, at, by, near; like; from       | preposition of nearness and vicinity with the 2 <sup>nd</sup> person masculine plural suffix | Strong's #5973<br>BDB #767 |

**Translation:** Give me possession of a grave site near you...

Although to us, when we demand that someone give us something, it is something belongs to them and we want them to just put it into our hands, thank you very much. Here, this is a request, but in the imperative mood, for these men to sell him a piece of property.

*Driver: As a temporary settler, Abraham has no landed possession in Canaan: he therefore asks, as a favour, to be allowed a site for a family sepulchre, such as all families of distinction possessed in the East.<sup>26</sup>*

God has given the land to his progeny. Abraham is not arrogant; he makes a reasonable request for a burial plot, since this would be a permanent dwelling place for Sarah now. He is choosing for this place to be a distance from him; out of his sight. He does not use the common expressions of entreaty, but uses the imperative mood instead, which is a sign of great grief and a natural preoccupation with his loss.

These men may or may not be attending Sarah's funeral. They may or may not be nearby to Abraham when he was mourning for his wife. However, he seems to be among a group of men here who have lived in this land for some period of time, and he is asking to purchase a small plot of land for his wife's burial place (the purchase aspect of this will become more clear when we get to v. 9).

Again, we have the ‘îm preposition, so Abraham is asking for this land to be near them.

| Genesis 23:4c                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        |                                                    |                                                                        |                            |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------|
| Hebrew/Pronunciation                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 | Common English Meanings                            | Notes/Morphology                                                       | BDB and Strong's #         |
| w <sup>e</sup> (or v <sup>e</sup> ) (וּ, or ו) [pronounced weh]                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      | and, even, then; namely; when; since, that; though | simple wâw conjunction                                                 | No Strong's #<br>BDB #251  |
| qâbar (קָבַר) [pronounced kaw-BAHR]                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  | to bury, to heap up a mound                        | 1 <sup>st</sup> person singular, Qal imperfect with the cohortative hê | Strong's #6912<br>BDB #868 |
| The cohortative expresses volition. In the English, we often render this with <i>let</i> or <i>may</i> ; in the plural, this can be <i>let us</i> . The cohortative is designed for the 1 <sup>st</sup> person, it can express a wish or a desire or purpose or an intent. It is found in conditional statements. Generally there is the hê suffix to indicate this. |                                                    |                                                                        |                            |

<sup>26</sup> From <https://ia600406.us.archive.org/27/items/bookofgenesist00drivuoft/bookofgenesist00drivuoft.pdf> (p. 225); accessed December 10, 2014.

## Genesis 23:4c

| Hebrew/Pronunciation                              | Common English Meanings                                                                                               | Notes/Morphology                                                                                          | BDB and Strong's #         |
|---------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------|
| mûwth (מוּת)<br>[pronounced <i>mooth</i> ]        | <i>dying, perishing; one who is dying [perishing]</i>                                                                 | Qal active participle, with the 1 <sup>st</sup> person singular suffix                                    | Strong's #4191<br>BDB #559 |
| min (מִן) [pronounced <i>mihn</i> ]               | <i>from, away from, out from, out of from, off, on account of, since, above, than, so that not, beyond, more than</i> | preposition of separation                                                                                 | Strong's #4480<br>BDB #577 |
| lâmed (ל) [pronounced <i>l'</i> ]                 | <i>to, for, towards, in regards to, with reference to, as to, with regards to, belonging to</i>                       | directional/relational preposition                                                                        | No Strong's #<br>BDB #510  |
| pânîym (פָּנִים)<br>[pronounced <i>paw-NEEM</i> ] | <i>face, faces, countenance; presence</i>                                                                             | masculine plural noun (plural acts like English singular) with the 1 <sup>st</sup> person singular suffix | Strong's #6440<br>BDB #815 |

Together, the two prepositions and pânîym mean *from before, from the presence of, from a position before a person or object, from before a place*. However, this also expresses source or cause, and is also rendered *because of, on account of*.

**Translation:** ...that I may bury my dead away from my presence.”

Here, Abraham uses the cohortative, to indicate that this is a request, which is a wish or a desire on his part. He speaks of his wife's body as being in a state of death.

There is no doubt that Abraham has already buried various servants and employees of his over the years, along with members of their families. Nothing is said of this in Scripture, but people do die and we would reasonably assume that Abraham oversaw their burial somewhere around one of his compounds (he appears to have had compounds in Beersheba and Kiriath-arba—which is, Hebron). He could have dealt with Sarah in the same way—but he chose not to. Abraham chose to own a piece of land in Canaan—even though it would be a relatively small parcel of land (large by today's standards for the average person). And Sarah, and then the rest of their family as they pass on, would be placed there. Perhaps the idea was, as they awoke in the resurrection, they would be on this little plot of land, and all around them would be a huge mass of land belonging to the Jewish people.<sup>27</sup>

We do not know the different languages involved here, and what we may be getting is a translation from the language that Abraham used to speak to the sons of Heth with. However, it is not dramatically different from the usage of these same words anywhere else.

Interestingly enough, Abraham wants to bury Sarah away from his own ranch. Some people want their loved ones buried in a place where they can visit; Abraham did not want to see the burial place of Sarah on a regular basis. We know that their marriage was at least 60 years in length; and it well may have been much longer. If Abraham married Sarah at age 40, then their marriage lasted 97 years.

The words *out of my sight* is not a literal rendering from the Hebrew, but a reasonable interpretation of what Abraham is saying. The final phrase suggests that Abraham wants a plot of ground this is away from him. He does not want to bury his wife's body on his ranch, but out of his sight.

<sup>27</sup> Partially inspired by <http://www.studylight.org/commentaries/pet/view.cgi?bk=0&ch=22> accessed December 8, 2014.

Genesis 23:4 “I [am] an immigrant and a newcomer [without property rights] near you [all]. Give me possession of a grave site near you that I may bury my dead away from my presence.” (Kukis mostly literal translation)

Genesis 23:4 “I am an immigrant in your territory lacking property rights. Nevertheless, sell me a plot of land for a grave that I may bury my wife there, away from my sight.” (Kukis paraphrase)

As we get further into this chapter, it will be clear that Abraham has a very specific place in mind, and we do not know how he came across this place or why he thought of it. However, there is probably a personal story involved here.

---

There are several pairs of verses that I should have combined; including vv. 5–6:

|                                                              |              |                                                             |
|--------------------------------------------------------------|--------------|-------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>And so answer sons of Heth Abraham, to say to him,...</b> | Genesis 23:5 | <b>The sons of Heth answered Abraham, saying to him,...</b> |
|--------------------------------------------------------------|--------------|-------------------------------------------------------------|

|                                                      |
|------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>The sons of Heth answered Abraham, saying,...</b> |
|------------------------------------------------------|

Here is how others have translated this verse:

#### Ancient texts:

|                         |                                                                  |
|-------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Masoretic Text (Hebrew) | And so answer sons of Heth Abraham, to say to him,...            |
| Targum of Onkelos       | And the sons of Hittah responded unto Abraham, saying to him,... |
| Latin Vulgate           | The children of Heth answered, saying:...                        |
| Peshitta (Syriac)       | And the sons of Heth answered and said to Abraham,...            |
| Septuagint (Greek)      | And the sons of Heth answered Abraham, saying, Not so, sir,...   |
| Brenton’s Septuagint    | And the sons of Chet answered to Abraam, saying, Not so, Sir,... |

Significant differences: The Latin leaves out *Abraham’s name*. The Greek contains the first portion of the answer.

#### Thought-for-thought translations; paraphrases:

|                       |                                                           |
|-----------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------|
| Common English Bible  | The Hittites responded to Abraham,...                     |
| Easy English          | The family of Heth replied to Abraham and they said this. |
| Easy-to-Read Version  | The Hittite people answered Abraham,...                   |
| Good News Bible (TEV) | They answered,...                                         |
| <i>The Message</i>    | The Hittites responded,...                                |

#### Partially literal and partially paraphrased translations:

|                          |                                                           |
|--------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------|
| American English Bible   | And the sons of Chet replied to AbraHam, saying, 'No Sir! |
| International Standard V | The Hittites responded to Abraham,...                     |

#### Mostly literal renderings (with some occasional paraphrasing):

|                        |                                                        |
|------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------|
| Bible in Basic English | And in answer the children of Heth said to Abraham,... |
| HCSB                   | The Hittites replied to Abraham,...                    |

#### Catholic Bibles (those having the imprimatur):

|                    |                                                              |
|--------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------|
| The Heritage Bible | And the children of Heth answered Abraham, saying to him,... |
|--------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------|

New American Bible           The Hittites answered Abraham: "Please,..."  
 New Jerusalem Bible        The Hittites replied to Abraham,...

### Jewish/Hebrew Names Bibles:

Complete Jewish Bible        The sons of Het answered Avraham,..."  
 exeGeses companion Bible    And the sons of Heth answer Abraham,  
                                           saying to him,..."  
 JPS (Tanakh—1985)         And the Hittites replied to Abraham, saying to him,..."  
 Kaplan Translation            The children of Heth replied to Abraham, saying to him,..."

### Expanded/Embellished Bibles:

Lexham English Bible         And the Hittites answered Abraham [and] said to him,..."  
 NET Bible®                    The sons of Heth answered Abraham [Heb "answered Abraham saying to him."],..."  
 The Voice                      The Hittites *conferred and* answered Abraham.

### Literal, almost word-for-word, renderings:

Concordant Literal Version    And the sons of Heth are answering Abraham, saying, "No!"  
 English Standard Version     The Hittites answered Abraham,..."  
 World English Bible         The children of Heth answered Abraham, saying to him,..."  
 Young's Updated LT          And the sons of Heth answer Abraham, saying to him,..."

**The gist of this verse:**       Several men from the audience before which Abraham is speaking answer him.

| Genesis 23:5a                                                         |                                                                                                                                     |                                                             |                            |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------|
| Hebrew/Pronunciation                                                  | Common English Meanings                                                                                                             | Notes/Morphology                                            | BDB and Strong's #         |
| wa (or va) (ו) [pronounced <i>wah</i> ]                               | <i>and so, and then, then, and; so, that, yet, therefore, consequently; because</i>                                                 | wâw consecutive                                             | No Strong's #<br>BDB #253  |
| ʿânâh (אָנָה) [pronounced <i>gaw-NAWH</i> ]                           | <i>to answer, to respond; to speak loudly, to speak up [in a public forum]; to testify; to sing, to chant, to sing responsively</i> | 3 <sup>rd</sup> person masculine plural, Qal imperfect      | Strong's #6030<br>BDB #772 |
| bânîym (בָּנִים) [pronounced <i>baw-NEEM</i> ]                        | <i>sons, descendants; children; people; sometimes rendered men</i>                                                                  | masculine plural construct                                  | Strong's #1121<br>BDB #119 |
| Cheth (חֵת) [pronounced <i>khayth</i> ]                               | transliterated <i>Heth; Hittite</i>                                                                                                 | masculine proper noun                                       | Strong's #2845<br>BDB #366 |
| ʿêth (אֶת) [pronounced <i>ayth</i> ]                                  | untranslated generally; occasionally <i>to, toward</i>                                                                              | indicates that the following substantive is a direct object | Strong's #853<br>BDB #84   |
| ʿAb̄erâhâm (אֲבִרְחָם) [pronounced <i>ahb<sup>ve</sup>-raw-HAWM</i> ] | <i>father of a multitude, chief of a multitude; transliterated Abraham</i>                                                          | masculine singular proper noun                              | Strong's #85<br>BDB #4     |

**Translation:** The sons of Heth answered Abraham,...

Although we appear to have this coherent quotation from one of the Hittites, that is not really what we find here. *To answer* is a plural verb, indicating that several Hittites are speaking. Therefore, this quotation here is actual a summary of what several different men said to Abraham.

Abraham is therefore speaking to a number of men, most of whom are probably landowners, so that they can respond to his request.

We have several people answering him, so what we may find below are the responses of several men.

| Genesis 23:5b                          |                                                                                                 |                                                                                              |                           |
|----------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------|
| Hebrew/Pronunciation                   | Common English Meanings                                                                         | Notes/Morphology                                                                             | BDB and Strong's #        |
| lâmed (ל) [pronounced l <sup>e</sup> ] | <i>to, for, towards, in regards to, with reference to, as to, with regards to, belonging to</i> | directional/relational preposition                                                           | No Strong's #<br>BDB #510 |
| 'âmar (אמר) [pronounced aw-MAHR]       | <i>to say, to speak, to utter; to say [to oneself], to think</i>                                | Qal infinitive construct                                                                     | Strong's #559<br>BDB #55  |
| lâmed (ל) [pronounced l <sup>e</sup> ] | <i>to, for, towards, in regards to, with reference to, as to, with regards to, belonging to</i> | directional/relational preposition with the 3 <sup>rd</sup> person masculine singular suffix | No Strong's #<br>BDB #510 |

**Translation:** ...saying to him,...

For whatever reason, these quotations are removed from the people saying them in these verses. The separation of verses is not inspired, and sometimes it is clumsy. As mentioned before, I should have combined some of these pairs of verses.

Genesis 23:5 The sons of Heth answered Abraham, saying to him,... (Kukis mostly literal translation)

Genesis 23:5 The sons of Heth answered Abraham, saying,... (Kukis paraphrase)

Bear in mind that, because of the plural verb in the previous verse, this is probably a conglomeration of comments made by several men at this meeting.

|                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            |                         |                                                                                                                                                                                                      |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <p><b>“Listen, my lord, a prince of Elohim you [are] in our midst. In a choicest of our graves, bury your dying [one]. A man from us his grave will not be withheld from you from burying your dying [one].”</b></p>                       | <p>Genesis<br/>23:6</p> | <p><b>“Listen, my lord, you [are] a prince of Elohim in our midst. Bury your dead in the choicest of our graves. No man from [among] us will withhold his grave from you burying your dead.”</b></p> |
| <p><b>“Listen, my lord, you are a prince of God in our midst. Please bury your dead in the choicest of our grave sites. There is no man among us who would withhold from you his grave site for the purpose of burying your wife.”</b></p> |                         |                                                                                                                                                                                                      |

Here is how others have translated this verse:



**Ancient texts:**

|                          |                                                                                                                                                                                                           |
|--------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Masoretic Text (Hebrew)  | "Listen, my lord, a prince of Elohim you [are] in our midst. In a choicest of our graves, bury your dying [one]. A man from us his grave will not be withheld from you from burying your dying [one]."    |
| Targum of Onkelos        | Attend to us, our lord. Great before the Lord are you among us, in the best of our sepulchres bury your dead: there is not a man of us who will refuse you his sepulchre, that you may bury your dead.    |
| Latin Vulgate            | My lord, hear us, you are a prince of God among us: bury your dead in our principal sepulchres: and no man will <u>have power to</u> hinder you from burying your dead in his sepulchre.                  |
| Peshitta (Syriac)        | Hear us, our lord; you are a prince of God among us; bury your dead in the choicest of our sepulchres; none of us will withhold from you his sepulchre for the burial of your dead.                       |
| Septuagint (Greek)       | ...but hear us; you are in the midst of us a prince of God; bury your dead in our choice tombs, for none of us will by any means withhold his tomb from you, so that you should not bury your dead there. |
| Significant differences: | The targum does not match the Hebrew text. The Latin appears to add a little text, but it affects the meaning very little.                                                                                |

**Thought-for-thought translations; paraphrases:**

|                         |                                                                                                                                                                                                                         |
|-------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Common English Bible    | "Listen to us, sir. You are an eminent man of God among us. Bury your dead in one of our own select burial sites. None of us will keep our own burial plots from you to bury your dead."                                |
| Contemporary English V. | "Sir," they answered, "you are an important man. Choose the best place to bury your wife. None of us would refuse you a resting place for your dead."                                                                   |
| Easy English            | 'Listen to us, my *lord. You are a great prince among us. Please bury your dead people in the best grave that we have. Nobody here would refuse to give his grave to you so that you can bury your dead people.'        |
| Easy-to-Read Version    | "Sir, you are one of God's great leaders among us. You can have the best place we have to bury your dead. You can have any of our burying places that you want. None of us will stop you from burying your wife there." |
| Good News Bible (TEV)   | "Listen to us, sir. We look upon you as a mighty leader; bury your wife in the best grave that we have. Any of us would be glad to give you a grave, so that you can bury her."                                         |
| <i>The Message</i>      | "Why, you're no mere outsider here with us, you're a prince of God! Bury your dead wife in the best of our burial sites. None of us will refuse you a place for burial."                                                |
| New Berkeley Version    | "Listen to us, Sir! You are a godlike prince among us. Bury your dead in the choicest of our sepulchres; none of us will refuse you his sepulchre for burying your dead."                                               |
| New Century Version     | "Sir, you are a great leader among us. You may have the best place we have to bury your dead. You may have any of our burying places that you want, and none of us will stop you from burying your dead wife."          |
| New Living Translation  | "Listen, my lord, you are an honored prince among us. Choose the finest of our tombs and bury her there. No one here will refuse to help you in this way."                                                              |

**Partially literal and partially paraphrased translations:**

|                        |                                                                                                                                                                                           |
|------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| American English Bible | Listen; You may live among us, but you're [really] a king from God; so bury your dead in our best tombs! None of us will ever withhold our tombs to keep you from burying your dead here! |
|------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|

|                          |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               |
|--------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| God's Word™              | "Listen to us, sir. You are a mighty leader among us. Bury your dead in one of our best tombs. Not one of us will withhold from you his tomb for burying your dead."                                                                          |
| International Standard V | "Listen to us, sir [Lit. us, my lord]. You are a mighty prince [MT reads a prince of God; LXX reads a king of God] among us. Bury your dead in the choicest of our burial tombs. None of us would refuse you his tomb for burying your dead." |
| NIRV                     | "Sir, listen to us. You are a mighty prince among us. Bury your dead wife in the best of our tombs. None of us will refuse to sell you his tomb for burying her."                                                                             |
| New Simplified Bible     | »Listen to us, my lord. You are a mighty leader among us. Bury your dead in one of our best tombs. Not one of us will withhold from you his tomb for burying your dead.«                                                                      |

### Mostly literal renderings (with some occasional paraphrasing):

|                           |                                                                                                                                                                                      |
|---------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Ancient Roots Translinear | "Hear us, my lord: You are a chief of God in our midst. Bury your dead in the choice grave. None of our men can contain his grave from you to bury your dead."                       |
| Bible in Basic English    | My lord, truly you are a great chief among us; take the best of our resting-places for your dead; not one of us will keep back from you a place where you may put your dead to rest. |
| Ferar-Fenton Bible        | "We listen to my lord, who stands like a god among us. Choose from our tombs a grave for your dead. None of us will deny his tomb to you, where you can bury your dead."             |
| New Advent Bible          | My lord, hear us, you are a prince of God among us: bury your dead in our principal sepulchres: and no man shall have power to hinder you from burying your dead in his sepulchre.   |

### Catholic Bibles (those having the imprimatur):

|                           |                                                                                                                                                                                           |
|---------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Christian Community Bible | <i>"Hear us, my lord. You are God's prince among us; bury your dead in the best of our tombs; none of us would refuse you a tomb to bury your dead."</i>                                  |
| The Heritage Bible        | Hear us, my lord; you are a prince of God among us; bury your dead in the choice of our sepulchres; not a man of us shall shut off from you his sepulcher so that you may bury your dead. |
| Revised English Bible     | 'Listen to us, sir; you are a might prince among us; bury your dead in the best grave we have. There is not one of us who would deny you his grave or hinder you from burying your dead.' |

### Jewish/Hebrew Names Bibles:

|                          |                                                                                                                                                                                                         |
|--------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| exeGesés companion Bible | Hear us, my adoni:<br>you are a hierarch of Elohim among us:<br>in the choice of our tombs entomb yours who died;<br>no man of us restrains from you his tomb,<br>to entomb yours who died.             |
| Kaplan Translation       | 'Listen to us, Sir. You are a prince of God in our midst. Take our best burial site [Or grave, tomb, or cemetery.] to bury your dead. No one among us will deny you his burial site to bury your dead.' |

### Expanded/Embellished Bibles:

|                        |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    |
|------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Kretzmann's Commentary | Hear us, my lord; thou art a mighty prince among us: in the choice of our sepulchres bury thy dead; none of us shall withhold from thee his sepulcher, but that thou mayest bury thy dead. The narrative presents a beautiful scene of politeness, simplicity, kindness, frankness, humility, modesty, not unmingled with some shades of avarice, as one commentator remarks. Abraham had come to purchase a piece |
|------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|

of ground, but with true Oriental ceremoniousness the men of the city drew out the negotiations, paying Abraham the compliment that they considered him a prince of God in their midst, and that he had but to pick out any burial-place which might suit his fancy, and they would feel honored in having him accept it as a gift.

Lexham English Bible

"Hear us, my lord, you [are] a mighty prince in our midst. Bury your dead in the choicest of our burial sites. None of us {will withhold his burial site} from you [for] burying your dead."

NET Bible®

"Listen, sir [Heb "Hear us, my lord."], you are a mighty prince [lit., *prince of God*] among us! You may bury your dead in the choicest of our tombs. None of us will refuse you his tomb to prevent you [The phrase "to prevent you" has been added in the translation for stylistic reasons.] from burying your dead."

Translation for Translators

They replied to him, "Sir, you are a powerful prince among us. Choose one of our finest tombs and bury your wife's *body* in it. None of us will refuse to sell land to you for a tomb for your wife's body." V. 5 is included for context.

The Voice

**Hittites:** Listen, my lord. *We recognize you are a powerful prince among us, and God is certainly with you.* Bury your dead in the best of our burial places. None of us will deny you any tomb so that you might *properly* bury your dead.

### Literal, almost word-for-word, renderings:

*The Amplified Bible*

Listen to us, my lord; you are a mighty prince among us. Bury your dead in any tomb or grave of ours that you choose; none of us will withhold from you his tomb or hinder you from burying your dead.

Concordant Literal Version

Hear us, my lord! A prince of the Elohim are you in our midst. In the choice of our tombs entomb your dead. Not a man of us will forbid the use of his tomb from you to entomb your dead there.

English Standard Version

"Hear us, my lord; you are a prince of God [Or a mighty prince] 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."

World English Bible

"Hear us, my lord. You are a prince of God among us. In the choice of our tombs bury your dead. None of us will withhold from you his tomb, but that you may bury your dead."

Young's Updated LT

"Hear us, my lord; a prince of God are you in our midst; in the choice of our burying-places bury your dead: none of us his burying-place does withhold from you, from burying your dead."

### The gist of this verse:

Abraham is assured by these men that they will not deny him a burial place for his wife.

## Genesis 23:6a

| Hebrew/Pronunciation                         | Common English Meanings                                                                                                                                             | Notes/Morphology                                                                                        | BDB and Strong's #              |
|----------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------|
| shâma' (שמע)<br>[pronounced shaw-MAHG]       | <i>listen [intently], hear, listen and obey, [or, and act upon, give heed to, take note of], hearken to, be attentive to, listen and be cognizant of</i>            | 2 <sup>nd</sup> person masculine singular, Qal imperative with the 1 <sup>st</sup> person plural suffix | Strong's #8085<br>BDB #1033     |
| 'ădônây (אֲדֹנָי)<br>[pronounced uh-doh-NAY] | <i>Lord (s), Master (s), my Lord (s), Sovereign; my lord [master]; can refer to the Trinity or to an intensification of the noun; transliterated Adonai, adonai</i> | masculine plural noun with the 1 <sup>st</sup> person singular suffix                                   | Strong's #113 & #136<br>BDB #10 |

## Genesis 23:6a

| Hebrew/Pronunciation | Common English Meanings | Notes/Morphology | BDB and Strong's # |
|----------------------|-------------------------|------------------|--------------------|
|----------------------|-------------------------|------------------|--------------------|

There are actually 3 forms of this word: ʾădônây (אֲדֹנָי) [pronounced *uh-doh-NAY*]; ʾădōnay (אֲדֹנַי) [pronounced *uh-doh-NAY*]; and ʾădōnîy (אֲדֹנֵי) [pronounced *uh-doh-NEE*].

This is a form of Strong's #113, where there are three explanations given for the yodh ending: (1) this is a shortened form of the plural ending, usually written -îym (יָיִם) [pronounced *eem*], an older form of the *pluralis excellentiæ* (the plural of excellence), where God's sovereignty and lordship are emphasized by the use of the plural; (2) this is the actual, but ancient, plural of the noun, which refers to the Trinity; or (3) this is the addition of the 1<sup>st</sup> person singular suffix, hence, *my Lord* (the long vowel point at the end would distinguish this from *my lords*).

**Translation:** "Listen, my lord,..."

You will note how differently these men treat Abraham as compared to how Lot's sons-in-law treated him. Lot warns them of God's coming wrath and they laughed at him. Here, these men take Abraham's request very seriously. They call him *my lord*, which indicates great respect.

## Genesis 23:6b

| Hebrew/Pronunciation | Common English Meanings | Notes/Morphology | BDB and Strong's # |
|----------------------|-------------------------|------------------|--------------------|
|----------------------|-------------------------|------------------|--------------------|

|                                               |                                             |                              |                            |
|-----------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------|------------------------------|----------------------------|
| nâsîy' (נָשִׂי') [pronounced <i>naw-SEE</i> ] | <i>one lifted up, leader, chief, prince</i> | masculine singular construct | Strong's #5387<br>BDB #672 |
|-----------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------|------------------------------|----------------------------|

|                                                    |                                                                                                     |                       |                          |
|----------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------|--------------------------|
| ʾĒlōhîym (אֱלֹהִים) [pronounced <i>el-o-HEEM</i> ] | <i>God; gods, foreign gods, god; rulers, judges; superhuman ones, angels; transliterated Elohim</i> | masculine plural noun | Strong's #430<br>BDB #43 |
|----------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------|--------------------------|

NET Bible: *Heb "prince of God." The divine name may be used here as a means of expressing the superlative, "mighty prince." The word for "prince" probably means "tribal chief" here. See M. H. Gottstein, "Nasi' `elohim (Gen 23:6)," VT 3 (1953) 298-99; and D. W. Thomas, "Consideration of Some Unusual Ways of Expressing the Superlative in Hebrew," VT 3 (1953) 215-16.<sup>28</sup>*

|                                              |                                                      |                                                             |                          |
|----------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------|
| ʾattâh (אַתָּה) [pronounced <i>aht-TAW</i> ] | <i>you</i> (often, the verb <i>to be</i> is implied) | 2 <sup>nd</sup> person masculine singular, personal pronoun | Strong's #859<br>BDB #61 |
|----------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------|

|                                                        |                                                                                                     |                            |                          |
|--------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------|--------------------------|
| b <sup>e</sup> (ב) [pronounced <i>b<sup>eh</sup></i> ] | <i>in, into, through; at, by, near, on, upon; with, before, against; by means of; among; within</i> | a preposition of proximity | No Strong's #<br>BDB #88 |
|--------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------|--------------------------|

|                                                                          |                             |                                                                       |                             |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------|
| tâvek <sup>e</sup> (תְּוֶכֶּךָ) [pronounced <i>taw-VEK<sup>E</sup></i> ] | <i>midst, among, middle</i> | masculine singular noun with the 1 <sup>st</sup> person plural suffix | Strong's #8432<br>BDB #1063 |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------|

With the bēyth preposition, tâvek<sup>e</sup> can mean *in the middle of, in the midst of; into, among*. In the Hebrew, this is spelled תְּוֶכֶּךָ. With the 1<sup>st</sup> person plural suffix, it means *in our midst*. With the 2<sup>nd</sup> person masculine plural suffix, it can mean *in your midst, among you*. with the 3<sup>rd</sup> person masculine plural suffix, it can mean *in their midst, among them*.

<sup>28</sup> From <https://bible.org/netbible/index.htm?gen23.htm> (footnote); accessed December 5, 2014.

**Translation:** ...you [are] a prince of Elohim in our midst.

Abraham is called a prince or leader of God among them (or *in their midst*).

During this period of occupation, Abraham had a generally very good relationship with those around him. Some may have even recognized the blessing by association which was involved with living in the same geographical area as he did. What is being said is that he can have any of the privately own burial places from any of the Hittites who are there. This reveals a great deal of respect for Abraham. There would be associated with this a great deal of blessing by association. *Prince of God* is said to be idiomatic for a *mighty prince*, but I do not believe that to be true. I believe that Abraham's testimony was such that the Hittite businessmen recognized and respected his relationship to the living God. Many of these Hittites were likely saved and will spend eternity in heaven because of Abraham.

Bible Query on Abraham's exalted status among the Hittites: *[W]hy did the Hittites consider Abraham a mighty prince among them? Abraham was very wealthy. Abraham also had apparently cultivated close relations with them and they counted him as not only a friend, but also one of their own.*<sup>29</sup>

Let me suggest instead that they recognized and believed in Abraham's God; and therefore recognized and respect Abraham as a prince of his God.

| Genesis 23:6c                                                           |                                                                                                     |                                                                                  |                            |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------|
| Hebrew/Pronunciation                                                    | Common English Meanings                                                                             | Notes/Morphology                                                                 | BDB and Strong's #         |
| b <sup>e</sup> (ב) [pronounced b <sup>eh</sup> ]                        | <i>in, into, through; at, by, near, on, upon; with, before, against; by means of; among; within</i> | a preposition of proximity                                                       | No Strong's #<br>BDB #88   |
| mib <sup>e</sup> châr (רְחַבַּמַּ) [pronounced mi <sup>b</sup> v-KHAWR] | <i>election; choice; the most excellent, the best; chosen, picked</i>                               | masculine singular construct                                                     | Strong's #4005<br>BDB #104 |
| qeber (קֶבֶר) [pronounced KEH <sup>b</sup> -VEHR]                       | <i>grave, sepulcher, tomb; burial place</i>                                                         | masculine plural noun with the 1 <sup>st</sup> person plural suffix              | Strong's #6913<br>BDB #868 |
| qâbar (קָבַר) [pronounced kaw-BAHR]                                     | <i>to bury, to heap up a mound</i>                                                                  | 2 <sup>nd</sup> person masculine singular, Qal imperative                        | Strong's #6912<br>BDB #868 |
| 'êth (אֵת) [pronounced ayth]                                            | untranslated generally; occasionally <i>to, toward</i>                                              | indicates that the following substantive is a direct object                      | Strong's #853<br>BDB #84   |
| mûwth (תּוּם) [pronounced mooth]                                        | <i>dying, perishing; one who is dying [perishing]</i>                                               | Qal active participle, with the 2 <sup>nd</sup> person masculine singular suffix | Strong's #4191<br>BDB #559 |

**Translation:** Bury your dead in the choicest of our graves.

The imperative used here indicates that these men will certainly go along with Abraham's request. He's requested a grave site away from his home, and they insist upon him doing this.

Even though we do not have the words, *I insist*, that appears to be the function of the imperative mood here.

<sup>29</sup> Bible Query; March 2006 version. Copyright (c) Christian Debater(tm) 1997-2006.; from e-Sword, Genesis 23:5.

| Genesis 23:6d                                     |                                                                                                                       |                                                                                     |                            |
|---------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------|
| Hebrew/Pronunciation                              | Common English Meanings                                                                                               | Notes/Morphology                                                                    | BDB and Strong's #         |
| ʾîysh (אִישׁ) [pronounced eesh]                   | <i>a man, a husband; anyone; a certain one; each, each one, everyone</i>                                              | masculine singular noun (sometimes found where we would use a plural)               | Strong's #376<br>BDB #35   |
| min (מִן) [pronounced mihn]                       | <i>from, away from, out from, out of from, off, on account of, since, above, than, so that not, beyond, more than</i> | preposition of separation with the 1 <sup>st</sup> person plural suffix             | Strong's #4480<br>BDB #577 |
| ʾêth (אֶת) [pronounced ayth]                      | untranslated generally; occasionally <i>to, toward</i>                                                                | indicates that the following substantive is a direct object                         | Strong's #853<br>BDB #84   |
| qeber (קֶבֶר) [pronounced KEH <sup>b</sup> -VEHR] | <i>grave, sepulcher, tomb; burial place</i>                                                                           | masculine plural noun with the 3 <sup>rd</sup> person masculine singular suffix     | Strong's #6913<br>BDB #868 |
| lô' (לוֹ' אוֹל אוֹל) [pronounced low]             | <i>not, no</i>                                                                                                        | negates the word or action that follows; the absolute negation                      | Strong's #3808<br>BDB #518 |
| kâlâ' (אָלַח) [pronounced kaw-LAW]                | <i>to close up, to shut up; to hold in, to restrain; to prohibit; to withhold [from someone]</i>                      | 3 <sup>rd</sup> person masculine singular, Qal imperfect                            | Strong's #3607<br>BDB #476 |
| min (מִן) [pronounced mihn]                       | <i>from, away from, out from, out of from, off, on account of, since, above, than, so that not, beyond, more than</i> | preposition of separation with the 2 <sup>nd</sup> person masculine singular suffix | Strong's #4480<br>BDB #577 |
| qâbar (קָבַר) [pronounced kaw-BAHR]               | <i>to bury, to heap up a mound</i>                                                                                    | Qal infinitive construct                                                            | Strong's #6912<br>BDB #868 |
| mûwth (מוֹת) [pronounced mooth]                   | <i>dying, perishing; one who is dying [perishing]</i>                                                                 | Qal active participle, with the 2 <sup>nd</sup> person masculine singular suffix    | Strong's #4191<br>BDB #559 |

**Translation:** No man from [among] us will withhold his grave from you burying your dead.”

There are several men speaking, so some of these phrases could have been repeated or affirmed, and spoken by different men. However, it is clear that none of them would refuse Abraham's request.

Again, Abraham's personal witness among these people is so much different than Lot's witness among his people.

Genesis 23:6 “Listen, my lord, you [are] a prince of Elohim in our midst. Bury your dead in the choicest of our graves. No man from [among] us will withhold his grave from you burying your dead.” (Kukis mostly literal translation)

Genesis 23:6 “Listen, my lord, you are a prince of God in our midst. Please bury your dead in the choicest of our grave sites. There is no man among us who would withhold from you his grave site for the purpose of burying your wife.” (Kukis paraphrase)

What we will find in this passage is an unusual negotiation take place—unusual by today’s standards. Abraham seems to have a good relationship with the Hittites here. You will recall that Abraham has a good relationship with the Philistines of Gerar as well, despite some early missteps on his part.

As an aside, there are several incidents throughout this section of Genesis which indicates that the people in the land were fine people. Many of them are clearly believers. Abraham seemed to have a good relationship with most of them. However, as we observed in Sodom and Gomorrah, there was a potential for great degeneracy (something which is true in every society). In Canaan, this would not happen overnight. It would take another 500 years before the people of Canaan will turn into nations of rabid dogs, which the Jews would have to destroy. However, at this point in their history, the interactions between Abraham and the Hittites are civil and indicate great mutual respect. The lesson that we should draw from this is, people change. When the people change, so does the nation. In the United States, the most recent generations have nearly nothing in common with the WWII generation, which is rapidly dying off now. That sort of thing can dramatically change our nation and the ideals upon which our nation was founded. The changes which will occur with the various peoples of Canaan—most of whom at this time are pretty nice and honorable—will result in their wholesale slaughter 500 years hence.

**Genesis 23:5–6** And the sons of Heth answered Abraham saying to him, “Hear us, my lord. You are a mighty prince among us. Bury your dead in the choice of our burying places. None of us will withhold from you his burying-place from burying your dead.”

The Hittite council has indicated to Abraham that they are willing to make a deal. As you may recall, Abraham does not own any land in Canaan, but these Hittites are willing to sell him a plot of land for the burial of his wife.

Notice that these men have a great deal of respect for Abraham. In this world, because we are believers, we do have enemies; and it is pretty much impossible for a person to go through this life without enemies. However, being a Christian does not mean that we are going to be at odds with every person that we meet. In fact, if that describes you, then you are probably at fault.

---

|                                                                                            |                 |                                                                                                                                |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>And so rises up Abraham and so he bows to people of the earth, to the sons of Heth.</b> | Genesis<br>23:7 | <b>Therefore, Abraham rose up and then he bowed down with reference to the people of the land, [even] to the sons of Heth.</b> |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|

**Therefore, Abraham rose up and then he bowed down before the people of the land, the sons of Heth.**

Here is how others have translated this verse:

**Ancient texts:**

|                          |                                                                                                           |
|--------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Masoretic Text (Hebrew)  | And so rises up Abraham and so he bows to people of the earth, to the sons of Heth.                       |
| Targum of Onkelos        | And Abraham rose and bowed to the people of the land, the sons of Hittah.                                 |
| Latin Vulgate            | Abraham rose up, and bowed down to the people of the land, <u>to wit</u> , the children of Heth.          |
| Peshitta (Syriac)        | And Abraham stood up and bowed himself to the people of the land, <u>that is</u> , to the Hittites.       |
| Septuagint (Greek)       | And Abraham rose up and bowed himself to the people of the land, to the sons of Heth.                     |
| Significant differences: | Both the Latin and the Syriac have a couple of extra words in them; and the Syriac lacks <i>sons of</i> . |

**Thought-for-thought translations; paraphrases:**

|                         |                                                                                     |
|-------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Common English Bible    | Abraham rose, bowed to the local citizens the Hittites,...                          |
| Contemporary English V. | Abraham bowed down...                                                               |
| Easy English            | Abraham stood up. And he *bowed to the family of Heth, who lived in that country.   |
| Easy-to-Read Version    | Abraham got up and bowed to the people.                                             |
| Good News Bible (TEV)   | Then Abraham bowed before them...                                                   |
| <i>The Message</i>      | Then Abraham got up, bowed respectfully to the people of the land, the Hittites,... |
| New Berkeley Version    | Then Abraham stood up, bowed earthward to the Hittites, the people of the land,...  |

### Partially literal and partially paraphrased translations:

|                          |                                                                                                                  |
|--------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| American English Bible   | Then AbraHam arose and bowed low before the people of the land (the sons of Chet).                               |
| <i>God's Word</i> ™      | Abraham got up in front of the Hittites, the people of that region, and bowed with his face touching the ground. |
| International Standard V | Abraham rose and bowed before the Hittites, the people of the land,...                                           |

### Mostly literal renderings (with some occasional paraphrasing):

|                        |                                                                                             |
|------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Bible in Basic English | And Abraham got up and gave honour to the children of Heth, the people of that land.        |
| New Advent Bible       | Abraham rose up, and bowed down to the people of the land, to wit, the children of Heth:... |

### Catholic Bibles (those having the imprimatur):

|                       |                                                                                                  |
|-----------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| The Heritage Bible    | And Abraham stood up, and prostrated himself to the people of the land, to the children of Heth. |
| New American Bible    | Abraham, however, proceeded to bow low before the people of the land, the Hittites,...           |
| New Jerusalem Bible   | At this, Abraham rose and bowed low to the local people, the Hittites,...                        |
| Revised English Bible | Abraham rose and bowing low to the Hittites, the people of that region,...                       |

### Jewish/Hebrew Names Bibles:

|                          |                                                                                                                   |
|--------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| exeGesés companion Bible | And Abraham rises and prostrates to the people of the land - the sons of Heth:...                                 |
| JPS (Tanakh—1985)        | Thereupon Abraham bowed low to the people of the land, the Hittites,...                                           |
| Kaplan Translation       | Abraham rose, and he bowed down to the local people [Literally, 'the people of the land.'], the children of Heth. |

### Expanded/Embellished Bibles:

|                             |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      |
|-----------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Kretzmann's Commentary      | And Abraham stood up and bowed himself to the people of the land, even to the children of Heth. This ceremonial, rising and bowing, on the part of Abraham signified that he deeply appreciated their compliments and their kindness in making such a liberal offer. |
| Lexham English Bible        | And Abraham rose up and bowed to the people of the land, to the Hittites.                                                                                                                                                                                            |
| NET Bible®                  | Abraham got up and bowed down to the local people [Heb "to the people of the land" (also in v. 12).], the sons of Heth.                                                                                                                                              |
| Translation for Translators | Then Abraham stood up and bowed <i>in respect</i> in front of the people who owned the land, the descendants of Heth.                                                                                                                                                |
| The Voice                   | Abraham got up and bowed in respect to the people of the land, the Hittites.                                                                                                                                                                                         |

### Literal, almost word-for-word, renderings:



|                                                    |                                                                                                                                                                    |
|----------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| American KJV                                       | And Abraham stood up, and bowed himself to the people of the land, even to the children of Heth.                                                                   |
| Concordant Literal Version                         | And rising is Abraham and bowing down to the people of the land, to the sons of Heth.                                                                              |
| English Standard Version<br>Third Millennium Bible | Abraham rose and bowed to the Hittites, the people of the land.<br>And Abraham stood up and bowed himself to the people of the land, even to the children of Heth. |
| World English Bible                                | Abraham rose up, and bowed himself to the people of the land, even to the children of Heth.                                                                        |
| Young's Updated LT                                 | And Abraham rises and bows himself to the people of the land, to the sons of Heth.                                                                                 |

**The gist of this verse:** Abraham bowed before these people to show his respect and deference to them, as well as his appreciation to them.

### Genesis 23:7a

| Hebrew/Pronunciation                                                              | Common English Meanings                                                                                                           | Notes/Morphology                                         | BDB and Strong's #         |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------|
| wa (or va) (ו) [pronounced <i>wah</i> ]                                           | <i>and so, and then, then, and; so, that, yet, therefore, consequently; because</i>                                               | wâw consecutive                                          | No Strong's #<br>BDB #253  |
| qûwm (קוּם) [pronounced <i>koom</i> ]                                             | <i>to stand, to rise up, to get up; to establish, to establish a vow, to cause a vow to stand, to confirm or to fulfill a vow</i> | 3 <sup>rd</sup> person masculine singular, Qal imperfect | Strong's #6965<br>BDB #877 |
| 'Ab <sup>e</sup> râhâm (אֲבִרְחָם) [pronounced <i>ahb<sup>ve</sup>-raw-HAWM</i> ] | <i>father of a multitude, chief of a multitude; transliterated Abraham</i>                                                        | masculine singular proper noun                           | Strong's #85<br>BDB #4     |

**Translation:** Therefore, Abraham rose up...

This suggests that Abraham and the people he is with are all sitting and perhaps this is a larger meeting with more than 3 or 4 men.

### Genesis 23:7b

| Hebrew/Pronunciation                            | Common English Meanings                                                                                              | Notes/Morphology                                                                             | BDB and Strong's #          |
|-------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------|
| wa (or va) (ו) [pronounced <i>wah</i> ]         | <i>and so, and then, then, and; so, that, yet, therefore, consequently; because</i>                                  | wâw consecutive                                                                              | No Strong's #<br>BDB #253   |
| shâchah (שָׁחָה) [pronounced <i>shaw-KHAW</i> ] | <i>to bow down, to prostrate oneself, to do obeisance to; to honor [with prayers]; to do homage to, to submit to</i> | 3 <sup>rd</sup> person masculine singular, Hithpael imperfect                                | Strong's #7812<br>BDB #1005 |
| lâmed (ל) [pronounced <i>le</i> ]               | <i>to, for, towards, in regards to, with reference to, as to, with regards to, belonging to</i>                      | directional/relational preposition with the 3 <sup>rd</sup> person masculine singular suffix | No Strong's #<br>BDB #510   |

| Genesis 23:7b                               |                                                                                                                                    |                                                          |                            |
|---------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------|
| Hebrew/Pronunciation                        | Common English Meanings                                                                                                            | Notes/Morphology                                         | BDB and Strong's #         |
| ‘am (אָם) [pronounced <i>gahm</i> ]         | <i>people; race, tribe; family, relatives; citizens, common people; companions, servants; entire human race; herd [of animals]</i> | masculine singular<br>collective noun;<br>construct form | Strong's #5971<br>BDB #766 |
| ’erets (אֶרֶץ) [pronounced <i>EH-rets</i> ] | <i>earth (all or a portion thereof), land, territory, country, continent; ground, soil; under the ground [Sheol]</i>               | feminine singular noun<br>with the definite article      | Strong's #776<br>BDB #75   |

**Translation:** ...and then he bowed down with reference to the people of the land,...

This is the first time we have this phrase in this chapter, *people of the land*, suggesting that this is a town meeting, probably led by some prominent men (the sons of Heth), but attended by several dozen people.

This also could have been the funeral of Sarah, and these could be attendees, all gathered together in one general area. Although that is a possibility, we are not given certain information or clues.

In any case, wherever they are, Abraham does business showing respect and honor to the other side.

| Genesis 23:7c                                    |                                                                                                 |                                                                                                       |                            |
|--------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------|
| Hebrew/Pronunciation                             | Common English Meanings                                                                         | Notes/Morphology                                                                                      | BDB and Strong's #         |
| lâmed (ל) [pronounced <i>l'</i> ]                | <i>to, for, towards, in regards to, with reference to, as to, with regards to, belonging to</i> | directional/relational<br>preposition with the 3 <sup>rd</sup><br>person masculine<br>singular suffix | No Strong's #<br>BDB #510  |
| bânîym (בָּנִיִּם) [pronounced <i>baw-NEEM</i> ] | <i>sons, descendants; children; people; sometimes rendered men</i>                              | masculine plural<br>construct                                                                         | Strong's #1121<br>BDB #119 |
| Cheth (חֵת) [pronounced <i>khayth</i> ]          | transliterated <i>Heth; Hittite</i>                                                             | masculine proper noun                                                                                 | Strong's #2845<br>BDB #366 |

**Translation:**...[even] to the sons of Heth.

There does seem to be a particular group of men to whom Abraham is directly dealing with, the sons of Heth, who are probably a subset of the people that Abraham is addressing.

Genesis 23:7 Therefore, Abraham rose up and then he bowed down with reference to the people of the land, [even] to the sons of Heth. (Kukis mostly literal translation)

Genesis 23:7 Therefore, Abraham rose up and then he bowed down before the people of the land, the sons of Heth. (Kukis paraphrase)

Abraham shows them reasonable deference here. What we are doing is looking into ancient history here and how business deals were struck in those days.

Whatever sort of bowing down shows them respect; Abraham, of course, is not worshiping them.

And so he spoke with them, to say, "If being with your soul to bury my dying from to my faces, hear me and urge for me Ephron ben Zohar;...

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23:8

Then he spoke with them, saying, "If there is with your soul to bury my dead away from me, listen to me and urge for me Ephron ben Zohar,...

Then Abraham spoke with them, saying, "If you are willing to allow me to bury my wife here, then urge Ephron the son of Zohar for me,...

Here is how others have translated this verse:

#### Ancient texts:

|                          |                                                                                                                                                                                 |
|--------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Masoretic Text (Hebrew)  | And so he spoke with them, to say, "If being with your soul to bury my dying from to my faces, hear me and urge for me Ephron ben Zohar;...                                     |
| Targum of Onkelos        | And he spake with them, saying, If it be with the consent of your mind that I bury my dead from before my face, receive of me, and intercede for me before Ephron bar Zochar... |
| Latin Vulgate            | And said to them: If it please your soul that I should bury my dead, hear me, and intercede for me to Ephron the son of Seor.                                                   |
| Peshitta (Syriac)        | And he discussed the matter with them and said to them, If you consent that I may bury my dead out of my sight, hear me and entreat for me to Ephron the son of Zohar,...       |
| Septuagint (Greek)       | And Abraham spoke to them, saying, If you have it in your mind that I should bury my dead out of my sight, listen to me, and speak to Ephron the son of Zohar for me.           |
| Significant differences: | The Latin reduces the first two phrases into one; they Syriac treats the first phrase with some originality.                                                                    |

#### Thought-for-thought translations; paraphrases:

|                         |                                                                                                                                                               |
|-------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Contemporary English V. | ...and replied, "If you are willing to let me bury my wife here, please ask Zohar's son Ephron...                                                             |
| Easy English            | He appealed to them, "I would like to bury my dead people properly. If you are pleased to let me, then listen to me. Please persuade Ephron, Zohar's son,..." |
| Easy-to-Read Version    | Abraham said to them, "If you truly want to help me bury my dead wife, then speak to Ephron the son of Zohar for me.                                          |
| Good News Bible (TEV)   | ...and said, "If you are willing to let me bury my wife here, please ask Ephron son of Zohar..."                                                              |
| <i>The Message</i>      | ...and said, "If you're serious about helping me give my wife a proper burial, intercede for me with Ephron son of Zohar.                                     |
| New Berkeley Version    | ...and told them, "If you are willing to have me bury my dead from my presence, then listen to me: Request for me of Ephron, Zohar's son,..."                 |
| New Century Version     | He said to them, "If you truly want to help me bury my dead wife here, speak to Ephron, the son of Zohar for me.                                              |
| New Living Translation  | ...and said, "Since you are willing to help me in this way, be so kind as to ask Ephron son of Zohar..."                                                      |

#### Partially literal and partially paraphrased translations:

|                          |                                                                                                                                                                            |
|--------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| American English Bible   | And AbraHam said to them, 'If you approve of me burying my dead out of my sight, then listen to what I have to say and [please] speak on my behalf to EphRon, the son SaA. |
| God's Word™              | He said to them, "If you are willing to let me bury my wife, listen to me. Encourage Ephron, son of Zohar,...                                                              |
| International Standard V | ...and addressed them, "If you are willing that I should bury my dead out of my sight, listen to me and make a request of Zohar's son Ephron on my behalf.                 |

### Mostly literal renderings (with some occasional paraphrasing):

|                           |                                                                                                                                                               |
|---------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Ancient Roots Translinear | He spoke with them, saying, "If it exists in your soul to bury my dead, hear me, and welcome my face to Ephron the son of Zohar...                            |
| Bible in Basic English    | And he said to them, If you will let me put my dead to rest here, make a request for me to Ephron, the son of Zohar,...                                       |
| Ferar-Fenton Bible        | ...and addressed them saying; "If it is in your minds to let my dead be buried from my sight, listen to me, and apply for me to Ephron, the son of Tzohar,... |
| HCSB                      | He said to them, "If you are willing for me to bury my dead, listen to me and ask Ephron son of Zohar on my behalf...                                         |

### Catholic Bibles (those having the imprimatur):

|                       |                                                                                                                                                                        |
|-----------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| The Heritage Bible    | And he spoke with them, saying, If it exists in your soul that I should bury my dead from before my face, hear me and impinge for me upon Ephron, the son of Zohar,... |
| New Jerusalem Bible   | ...and pleaded with them as follows, 'If you consent to my removing my dead for burial, you must agree to intercede for me with Ephron son of Zohar,...                |
| Revised English Bible | ...he said to them, 'If you have a mind to help me about the burial, then listen to me: speak to Ephron son of Zohar on my behalf,...                                  |

### Jewish/Hebrew Names Bibles:

|                          |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     |
|--------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| exeGesés companion Bible | ...and he words with them, saying,<br>If it is your soul<br>that I entomb mine who died from my face;<br>hear me and intercede for me<br>to Ephron the son of Sochar,...                                                                                                            |
| JPS (Tanakh—1985)        | ...and he said to them, "If it is your wish that I remove my dead for burial, you must agree to intercede for me with Ephron son of Zeohar.                                                                                                                                         |
| Kaplan Translation       | He spoke to them and said, 'If you really want to help me bury my dead and [put her out of] my presence, listen to me, and speak up for me to Ephron [Significantly, there is a Mount Ephron some 6 miles northwest of Jerusalem (Joshua 15:9, 2 Chronicles 13:19).] son of Tzohar. |

### Expanded/Embellished Bibles:

|                             |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 |
|-----------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Lexham English Bible        | And he spoke with them, saying, "{If you are willing} [that] I bury my dead from before me, hear me and intercede for me with Ephron the son of Zohar,...                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       |
| NET Bible®                  | Then he said to them, "If you agree [Heb "If it is with your purpose." The Hebrew noun נפש (nefesh) here has the nuance "purpose" or perhaps "desire" (see BDB 661 s.v. נפש).] that I may bury my dead [Heb "bury my dead out of my sight." The last phrase "out of my sight" has not been included in the translation for stylistic reasons.], then hear me out [Or "hear me."]. Ask [Heb "intercede for me with."] Ephron the son of Zohar... |
| Translation for Translators | He said to them, "If you say that you are willing for me to bury my wife's body here, listen to me, and ask Ephron, the son of Zohar for me,...                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 |

## The Voice

**Abraham (to the Hittites):** If you are really willing for me to give my dead wife a proper burial, then would you please ask Ephron (Zohar's son) for me if I might buy the cave of Machpelah. *It is a tract of land* he owns located at the end of his field. With you as my witnesses, I will offer him full price for the property as a place to bury my dead.

**Literal, almost word-for-word, renderings:**

|                            |                                                                                                                                                                                               |
|----------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| American KJV               | And he communed with them, saying, If it be your mind that I should bury my dead out of my sight; hear me, and entreat for me to Ephron the son of Zohar,...                                  |
| Concordant Literal Version | And speaking is Abraham with them, saying, "Should it forsooth, please your soul to entomb my dead from my face, hear me, and intercede for me with Ephron, the son of Zohar, the Hittite,... |
| A Conservative Version     | And he conversed with them, saying, If it be your mind that I should bury my dead out of my sight, hear me, and entreat for me to Ephron the son of Zohar,...                                 |
| Context Group Version      | And he spoke with them, saying, If it is your { pl } mind that I should bury my dead out of my sight, hear me, and entreat for me to Ephron the son of Zohar,...                              |
| <i>Emphasized Bible</i>    | ...and spake with them, saying,—If it is with the consent of your minds that I should bury my dead from before me, hear me, and intercede for me, with Ephron son of Zohar:...                |
| LTHB                       | And he spoke with them, saying, If it is your desire to bury my dead from before the eyes, hear me. Ask for me of Ephron the son of Zohar,...                                                 |
| NASB                       | And he spoke with them, saying, "If it is your wish [Lit soul] for me to bury my dead out of my sight, hear me, and approach Ephron the son of Zohar for me,...                               |
| World English Bible        | He talked with them, saying, "If it be your mind that I should bury my dead out of my sight, hear me, and entreat for me to Ephron the son of Zohar,...                                       |
| Young's Updated LT         | And he speaks with them, saying, "If it is your desire to bury my dead from before me, hear me, and meet for me with Ephron, son of Zoar.                                                     |

**The gist of this verse:**

Abraham asks that they speak on his behalf with Ephron ben Zoar.

**Genesis 23:8a**

| Hebrew/Pronunciation                               | Common English Meanings                                                                                                                                                                                  | Notes/Morphology                                                                                                | BDB and Strong's #         |
|----------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------|
| wa (or va) (ו) [pronounced wah]                    | <i>and so, and then, then, and; so, that, yet, therefore, consequently; because</i>                                                                                                                      | wâw consecutive                                                                                                 | No Strong's #<br>BDB #253  |
| dâbar (דָּבַר) [pronounced daw <sup>b</sup> -VAHR] | <i>to speak, to talk [and back with action], to give an opinion, to expound, to make a formal speech, to speak out, to promise, to propose, to speak kindly of, to declare, to proclaim, to announce</i> | 3 <sup>rd</sup> person masculine singular, Piel imperfect                                                       | Strong's #1696<br>BDB #180 |
| 'êth (אֶת) [pronounced ayth]                       | <i>with, at, near, by, among, directly from</i>                                                                                                                                                          | preposition (which is identical to the sign of the direct object) with the 3 <sup>rd</sup> person plural suffix | Strong's #854<br>BDB #85   |
| lâmed (ל) [pronounced l <sup>e</sup> ]             | <i>to, for, towards, in regards to</i>                                                                                                                                                                   | directional/relational preposition                                                                              | No Strong's #<br>BDB #510  |

## Genesis 23:8a

| Hebrew/Pronunciation               | Common English Meanings                                          | Notes/Morphology         | BDB and Strong's #       |
|------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| 'âmar (אָמַר) [pronounced aw-MAHR] | <i>to say, to speak, to utter; to say [to oneself], to think</i> | Qal infinitive construct | Strong's #559<br>BDB #55 |

**Translation:** Then he spoke with them, saying,...

Again, it is clear that Abraham is speaking to more than one person.

## Genesis 23:8b

| Hebrew/Pronunciation                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          | Common English Meanings                                                                                                                                          | Notes/Morphology                                                                                          | BDB and Strong's #         |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------|
| 'îm (אִם) [pronounced eem]                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    | <i>if, though; lo, behold; oh that, if only; when, since, though when (or, if followed by a perfect tense which refers to a past event)</i>                      | primarily an hypothetical particle                                                                        | Strong's #518<br>BDB #49   |
| The particle 'îm (אִם) can be used as a demonstrative ( <i>lo, behold</i> ), an interrogative (usually expecting a negative response and often used with other particles and rhetorically), and as a conditional particle ( <i>if, though</i> ); an indication of a wish or desire ( <i>oh that, if only</i> ; this is a rare usage).                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         |                                                                                                                                                                  |                                                                                                           |                            |
| yêsh (יֵשׁ) [pronounced yaysh]                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                | <i>being, substance, existence; used as a substitute for to be (without reference to number or tense); there [is, are]; to be present, to be ready, to exist</i> | substantive with a 3 <sup>rd</sup> person masculine singular suffix; the verb <i>to be</i> may be implied | Strong's #3426<br>BDB #441 |
| The substantive yêsh often acts as a substantive plus the absolute status quo verb <i>to be</i> ; e.g., [ <i>if</i> ] <i>there be</i> (1Samuel 20:8), <i>there is</i> (Esther 3:8), <i>there shall be</i> (Jer. 31:6). However, this acts not as a mere copula [pronounced KOP-ye-la], but existence is emphasized. In the KJV, the verbal portion of this is often italicized. The second word in the second line of Job 6:6 is the substantive of existence or being— <i>or is there, or does there exist</i> . We often render this <i>there is</i> , even though <i>there is</i> no verb. |                                                                                                                                                                  |                                                                                                           |                            |
| 'êth (אֶת) [pronounced ayth]                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  | <i>with, at, near, by, among, directly from</i>                                                                                                                  | preposition (which is identical to the sign of the direct object)                                         | Strong's #854<br>BDB #85   |
| nephesh (נֶפֶשׁ) [pronounced NEH-fesh]                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        | <i>soul, life, living being, desire, volition</i>                                                                                                                | feminine singular noun with the 2 <sup>nd</sup> person masculine plural suffix                            | Strong's #5315<br>BDB #659 |
| lâmed (ל) [pronounced le]                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     | <i>to, for, towards, in regards to</i>                                                                                                                           | directional/relational preposition                                                                        | No Strong's #<br>BDB #510  |
| qâbar (קָבַר) [pronounced kaw-BAHR]                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           | <i>to bury, to heap up a mound</i>                                                                                                                               | Qal infinitive construct                                                                                  | Strong's #6912<br>BDB #868 |
| mûwth (מוֹת) [pronounced mooth]                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               | <i>dying, perishing; one who is dying [perishing]</i>                                                                                                            | Qal active participle, with the 1 <sup>st</sup> person singular suffix                                    | Strong's #4191<br>BDB #559 |

| Genesis 23:8b                                   |                                                                                                                       |                                                                                                           |                            |
|-------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------|
| Hebrew/Pronunciation                            | Common English Meanings                                                                                               | Notes/Morphology                                                                                          | BDB and Strong's #         |
| min (מִן) [pronounced <i>mihn</i> ]             | <i>from, away from, out from, out of from, off, on account of, since, above, than, so that not, beyond, more than</i> | preposition of separation                                                                                 | Strong's #4480<br>BDB #577 |
| lâmed (לְ) [pronounced <i>l'</i> ]              | <i>to, for, towards, in regards to, with reference to, as to, with regards to, belonging to</i>                       | directional/relational preposition                                                                        | No Strong's #<br>BDB #510  |
| pânîym (פְּנֵיַם) [pronounced <i>paw-NEEM</i> ] | <i>face, faces, countenance; presence</i>                                                                             | masculine plural noun (plural acts like English singular) with the 1 <sup>st</sup> person singular suffix | Strong's #6440<br>BDB #815 |

Together, the two prepositions and pânîym mean *from before, from the presence of, from a position before a person or object, from before a place*. However, this also expresses source or cause, and is also rendered *because of, on account of*.

**Translation:...**“If there is with your soul to bury my dead away from me,...

The wording here is difficult, and I suspect that this is related to people communicating who do not speak the same language. Each bastardizes a little of his own language in order to communicate.

With all the descriptions found in the Bible about Canaan, this was once a well-watered and wonderful plot of ground, and therefore, it drew people of a variety of racial backgrounds to this area, not unlike the United States in this way. However, this was never organized into a country until the children of Israel went in there for the exodus.

Abraham is a relative newcomer to the area, having lived there for 60 years or so, and he has certainly developed a way of communicating with the variety of people in the area. Some of these peoples were Semitic, so some had a very similar language to his.

The idea here is, Abraham sets up an *if...then...* statement, and the “if” part is, they are willing to let him bury his wife’s body on their property away from him.

| Genesis 23:8c                                                            |                                                                                                                                                          |                                                                                                           |                             |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------|
| Hebrew/Pronunciation                                                     | Common English Meanings                                                                                                                                  | Notes/Morphology                                                                                          | BDB and Strong's #          |
| shâma' (שְׁמַע) [pronounced <i>shaw-MAHQ</i> ]                           | <i>listen [intently], hear, listen and obey, [or, and act upon, give heed to, take note of], hearken to, be attentive to, listen and be cognizant of</i> | 2 <sup>nd</sup> person masculine singular, Qal imperative with the 1 <sup>st</sup> person singular suffix | Strong's #8085<br>BDB #1033 |
| w <sup>e</sup> (or v <sup>e</sup> ) (וְ, or וּ) [pronounced <i>weh</i> ] | <i>and, even, then; namely; when; since, that; though</i>                                                                                                | simple wâw conjunction                                                                                    | No Strong's #<br>BDB #251   |

| Genesis 23:8c                                         |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      |                                                                                    |                            |
|-------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------|
| Hebrew/Pronunciation                                  | Common English Meanings                                                                                                                                                                                                                              | Notes/Morphology                                                                   | BDB and Strong's #         |
| pâga <sup>c</sup> (פגַע) [pronounced paw-GAHÇ]        | <i>to fall upon, to meet, to encounter, to reach; to entreat [by request], to assail [with a petition], to urge; to strike, to kill, to slay; to touch out of boundary; to reach [to anyone]; to strike a covenant [with someone], to make peace</i> | Qal infinitive construct                                                           | Strong's #6293<br>BDB #803 |
| lâmed (ל) [pronounced l <sup>e</sup> ]                | <i>to, for, towards, in regards to, with reference to, as to, with regards to, belonging to</i>                                                                                                                                                      | directional/relational preposition with the 1 <sup>st</sup> person singular suffix | No Strong's #<br>BDB #510  |
| b <sup>e</sup> (ב) [pronounced b <sup>eh</sup> ]      | <i>in, into, through; at, by, near, on, upon; with, before, against; by means of; among; within</i>                                                                                                                                                  | a preposition of proximity                                                         | No Strong's #<br>BDB #88   |
| ‘Eph <sup>e</sup> rôwn (עֹרְוֹן) [pronounced éf-ROHN] | <i>fawn-like; transliterated Ephron</i>                                                                                                                                                                                                              | masculine singular proper noun                                                     | Strong's #6085<br>BDB #780 |
| bên (בן) [pronounced bane]                            | <i>son, descendant</i>                                                                                                                                                                                                                               | masculine singular construct                                                       | Strong's #1121<br>BDB #119 |
| Tsôchar (צֹחַר) [pronounced TSOH-khahr]               | <i>reddish-gray, tawny; transliterated Zohar</i>                                                                                                                                                                                                     | masculine singular proper noun                                                     | Strong's #6714<br>BDB #850 |

**Translation:** ...listen to me and urge for me Ephron ben Zohar,...

Abraham repeats one of the words that they spoke to him, which suggests here simply that he is going to make his desires known. Abraham appears to know the plot that he wants. He also knows who the plot of land belongs to.

Genesis 23:8 Then he spoke with them, saying, “If there is with your soul to bury my dead away from me, listen to me and urge for me Ephron ben Zohar,...” (Kukis mostly literal translation)

Genesis 23:8 Then Abraham spoke with them, saying, “If you are willing to allow me to bury my wife here, then urge Ephron the son of Zohar for me,...” (Kukis paraphrase)

It will appear as though Ephron is in the crowd of men, suggesting that Abraham does not know him by face, based upon the way that he is speaking here. He is speaking to the group, and he is not addressing Ephron directly. Or, more likely, Ephron is not there, but it is a portion of his land which Abraham desires.

Abraham has obviously seen this plot of ground and knows to whom it belongs.

Abraham has walked this land for most of his life, and he knows it quite well. He has a particular piece of land already picked out. Ephron ben Zohar means Ephron son of Zohar, and today, we have shortened that to Ephron Zohar.

Abraham speaks about Ephron in the 3<sup>rd</sup> person, and the way that this verse is worded suggests that he is not at this meeting. Again, we do not know where this meeting is taking place. The text is so sketchy about this that,



these people may be outside of Sarah's burial tent discussing these matters or Abraham may have gone to this Hittite city and is speaking at the gate with several of the Hittite leaders and judges (which is what I believe to be the case).

Again, Abraham speaks of burying his wife out of his sight.

The Pulpit Commentary claims<sup>30</sup> that the orient demands that there be go-betweens on every business venture, but I don't believe that is what is going on here. It is not likely that the person Abraham needs to speak to simply has the time off and is by the gate of the city (if indeed that is where Abraham is). Like anyone else, he is probably working. Legal business did take place at the gates of the city; and people were there who witnessed the transactions.

...and so he will give to me a cave of Machpelah which [is] to him which [is] in an extremity of his field. In silver, full he will give her to me in your midst for a possession of a grave.

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...that he will give to me the cave of Machpelah which [is] his at the outskirts of his field. At the full [price] in silver he will sell [lit., give] it to me in your midst for a possession of the burial site."

...that he will sell me his cave called Machpelah, which is at the end of his property line. I will pay him the full price in your presence so that I might take possession of this as a burial site."

Here is how others have translated this verse:

#### Ancient texts:

|                          |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           |
|--------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Masoretic Text (Hebrew)  | ...and so he will give to me a cave of Machpelah which [is] to him which [is] in an extremity of his field. In silver, full he will give her to me in your midst for a possession of a grave.                                             |
| Targum of Onkelos        | ...that he sell me his double cave which is built in the <u>side</u> of his field, for the full price in silver let him give it me among you, for an inheritance of sepulture.                                                            |
| Latin Vulgate            | That he may give me the double cave, which he hath in the end of his field: For as much money as it is worth he shall give it me before you, for a possession of a burying place.                                                         |
| Peshitta (Syriac)        | That he may give me the double cave which belongs to him, which is by the <u>side</u> of his field; let him give it to me for a full price as a possession for a burial ground among you.                                                 |
| Septuagint (Greek)       | And let him give me the double cave which he has, which is in a <u>part</u> of his field, let him give it to me for the money it is worth for possession of a burying-place among you.                                                    |
| Significant differences: | The lot that Abraham wants is at the extremity (end) of Ephron's land. The targum and Syriac both have <i>side</i> and the Greek has <i>part</i> . The words <i>inheritance</i> and <i>possession</i> can come from the same Hebrew word. |

#### Thought-for-thought translations; paraphrases:

|                         |                                                                                                                                                                 |
|-------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Common English Bible    | ...to give me his own cave in Machpelah at the edge of his field. Let him give it to me for the full price, to be witnessed by you, as my own burial property." |
| Contemporary English V. | ...to sell me Machpelah Cave at the end of his field. I'll pay what it's worth, and all of you can be witnesses."                                               |

<sup>30</sup> *The Pulpit Commentary*; 1880-1919; by Joseph S. Exell, Henry Donald Maurice Spence-Jones, courtesy of e-sword, Genesis 23:8.

|                       |                                                                                                                                                                                                                           |
|-----------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Easy English          | ...to sell the cave in Machpelah to me. He owns the cave. It is at the edge of his field. Let him sell it to me now as a grave. Let him sell it at the full price. You will be witnesses to that.'                        |
| Easy-to-Read Version  | I would like to buy the cave of Machpelah. Ephron owns this. It is at the end of his field. I will pay him the full price—all that it is worth. I want all of you to be witnesses that I am buying it as a burial place." |
| Good News Bible (TEV) | ...to sell me Machpelah Cave, which is near the edge of his field. Ask him to sell it to me for its full price, here in your presence, so that I can own it as a burial ground."                                          |
| <i>The Message</i>    | Ask him to sell me the cave of Machpelah that he owns, the one at the end of his land. Ask him to sell it to me at its full price for a burial plot, with you as witnesses."                                              |
| New Berkeley Version  | ...to let me have the Machpelah cave he has at the end of his field. At its full price he should let me have it in your presence for my own cemetery lot."                                                                |

### Partially literal and partially paraphrased translations:

|                          |                                                                                                                                                                                                |
|--------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| American English Bible   | [I want] him to give me the double cave that he owns, which is located in his field. I will [be happy to pay] whatever it's worth [to buy] a burial-place among you.'                          |
| <i>God's Word</i> ™      | ...to let me have the cave of Machpelah that he owns at the end of his field. He should sell it to me for its full price as my property to be used as a tomb among you."                       |
| International Standard V | Give me the cave of Machpelah that belongs to him, at the end of his field. He should sell [Lit. give] it to me in your presence at full price for a burial site."                             |
| NIRV                     | Ask him to sell me the cave of Machpelah. It belongs to him and is at the end of his field. Ask him to sell it to me for the full price. I want it as a place to bury my dead wife among you." |
| New Simplified Bible     | ...to sell me Machpelah Cave. It is near the edge of his field. Ask him to sell it to me for its full price here in your presence. Then I can own it as a burial ground.«                      |

### Mostly literal renderings (with some occasional paraphrasing):

|                           |                                                                                                                                                                                                |
|---------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Ancient Roots Translinear | ...to give me the cave of his in Machpelah in the end of his field. Give me a home and a grave in your midst, for full silver."                                                                |
| Bible in Basic English    | That he will give me the hollow in the rock named Machpelah, which is his property at the end of his field; let him give it to me for its full price as a resting-place for my dead among you. |
| Ferrar-Fenton Bible       | ...and let him sell to me the Cave of Macphelah, which is within the boundaries of his land. He shall sell it to me for full value as a tomb possessed among you."                             |
| HCSB                      | ...to give me the cave of Machpelah that belongs to him; it is at the end of his field. Let him give it to me in your presence, for the full price, as a burial place."                        |

### Catholic Bibles (those having the imprimatur):

|                           |                                                                                                                                                                                                                           |
|---------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Christian Community Bible | ...to give me the cave of Machpelah belonging to him; it is at the edge of his field. For the full price and in your presence, let him give it to me for a burial place."                                                 |
| The Heritage Bible        | That he may give me the cave of Machpelah, which is his, which is in the end of his field; he shall give it to me for full payment for a possession of a burying-place among you.                                         |
| New Jerusalem Bible       | ...for him to let me have the cave he owns at Machpelah, which is on the edge of his field. Let him sell it to me in your presence at its full price, for a burial site of my own.'                                       |
| Revised English Bible     | ...and ask him to grant me the cave that belongs to him at Machpelah, at the far end of his land. In your presence let him make it over to me for the full price, so that I may take possession of it as a burial-place.' |

**Jewish/Hebrew Names Bibles:**

|                       |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            |
|-----------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Complete Jewish Bible | ...to give me the cave of Makhpelah, which he owns, the one at the end of his field. He should sell it to me in your presence at its full value; then I will have a burial site of my own."                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                |
| JPS (Tanakh—1985)     | Let him sell me the cave of Machpelah that he owns, which is at the edge of his land. Let him sell it to me, at the full price, for a burial site in your midst."                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          |
| Kaplan Translation    | Let him sell me the Makhpelah Cave [Literally, 'Doubler Cave.' It was so named because it had two levels (Targum; Eruvin 53a; Rashi). The name also applied to the entire area; Genesis 23:17,19. According to tradition, Adam and Eve had been buried there (Yerushalmi, Taanith 4:2). It can still be visited today.], which belongs to him, at the edge of his field. Let him sell it to me in your presence for its full price, as a burial property.' |

**Expanded/Embellished Bibles:**

|                             |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            |
|-----------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Kretzmann's Commentary      | ...that he may give me the cave of Machpelah which he hath, which is in the end of his field; for as much money as it is worth he shall give it me for a possession of a burying place amongst you. Abraham continued to conduct his business with all circumspection and politeness, begging the men present to intercede for him with Ephron, a man of some importance in the community, if that was in agreement with their ideas. For this Ephron was the owner of a piece of ground which contained a cave known as Machpelah, which Abraham thought would suit his purposes very well. For full silver he wanted to buy it, that is, he wanted to pay what the land was worth, since he intended to use it for a perpetual place of burial for his family. Believers will always do well if they do not place themselves under obligations to unbelievers, since the result may often react upon their Christianity. |
| Lexham English Bible        | ...that he may sell to me the cave of Machpelah which {belongs to him}, which [is] at the end of his field. At full value let him sell [it] to me in your midst as {a burial site}."                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       |
| NET Bible®                  | ...if he will sell [Heb "give." This is used here (also a second time later in this verse) as an idiom for "sell"; see the note on the word "grant" in v. 4.] me the cave of Machpelah that belongs to him; it is at the end of his field. Let him sell it to me publicly [Heb "in your presence."] for the full price [Heb "silver."], so that I may own it as a burial site."                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            |
| Translation for Translators | ...so that he will sell to me the cave in the Machpelah area, which is at the end of his field. Ask him to sell it to me for the full price he wants, so that I can have a burial ground among you."                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       |

**Literal, almost word-for-word, renderings:**

|                            |                                                                                                                                                                                              |
|----------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| American KJV               | That he may give me the cave of Machpelah, which he has, which is in the end of his field; for as much money as it is worth he shall give it me for a possession of a burial plot among you. |
| Concordant Literal Version | ...that he shall give to me the double cave which is his, which is at the end of his field. For silver, in full, shall he give it to me for a holding for a tomb in your midst.              |
| English Standard Version   | ...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."      |
| LTHB                       | ...that he may give to me the cave of Machpelah which he has, which is in the edge of his field. In full silver let him give it to me among you, for a possession of a burying place.        |

|                        |                                                                                                                                                                                                         |
|------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Third Millennium Bible | ...that he may give me the cave of Machpelah which he hath, which is in the end of his field. For as much money as it is worth he shall give it to me as a possession for a burying place amongst you." |
| World English Bible    | ...that he may give me the cave of Machpelah, which he has, which is in the end of his field. For the full price let him give it to me in the midst of you for a possession of a burying-place."        |
| Young's Updated LT     | And he gives to me the cave of Machpelah, which he has, which is in the extremity of his field; for full money does he give it to me, in your midst, for a possession of a burying-place."              |

**The gist of this verse:** Abraham asks that Ephron sell him a cave for its full price. Again, he is speaking to the crowd of Hittite men.

| Genesis 23:9a                                                             |                                                                                     |                                                                                    |                            |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------|
| Hebrew/Pronunciation                                                      | Common English Meanings                                                             | Notes/Morphology                                                                   | BDB and Strong's #         |
| wa (or va) (ו) [pronounced <i>wah</i> ]                                   | <i>and so, and then, then, and; so, that, yet, therefore, consequently; because</i> | wâw consecutive                                                                    | No Strong's #<br>BDB #253  |
| nâthan (נתן) [pronounced <i>naw-THAHN</i> ]                               | <i>to give, to grant, to place, to put, to set; to make</i>                         | 3 <sup>rd</sup> person masculine singular, Qal imperfect                           | Strong's #5414<br>BDB #678 |
| lâmed (ל) [pronounced <i>l'</i> ]                                         | <i>to, for, towards, in regards to</i>                                              | directional/relational preposition with the 1 <sup>st</sup> person singular suffix | No Strong's #<br>BDB #510  |
| 'êth (אֶת) [pronounced <i>ayth</i> ]                                      | untranslated generally; occasionally <i>to, toward</i>                              | indicates that the following substantive is a direct object                        | Strong's #853<br>BDB #84   |
| m <sup>ec</sup> ârâh (מְעָרָה) [pronounced <i>m<sup>e</sup>-ġaw-RAW</i> ] | <i>cave, den, hole</i>                                                              | feminine singular construct                                                        | Strong's #4631<br>BDB #792 |
| Mak <sup>e</sup> phêlâh (מַחְפְּלָה) [pronounced <i>mahk-pay-LAW</i> ]    | <i>double portion, the double; transliterated Machpelah</i>                         | proper singular noun/location                                                      | Strong's #4375<br>BDB #495 |

**Translation:** ...that he will give to me the cave of Machpelah...

Abraham knew exactly the place that he wanted to bury Sarah in. There was the cave of the double portion, or the cave of Machpelah. We do not have any personal information or background here, but that this cave was probably known to most of the people there, and perhaps it had a special meaning to Sarah, which we are unaware of.

Like many proper nouns, *Machpelah* is a transliteration. It means *double portion, the double*; transliterated *Machpelah*. Strong's #4375 BDB #495. It is suggested that this cave has two entrances or that there is a cave within a cave. Some suggest that Machpelah refers to the field and the cave; suggesting perhaps something else is doubled unrelated to the cave.

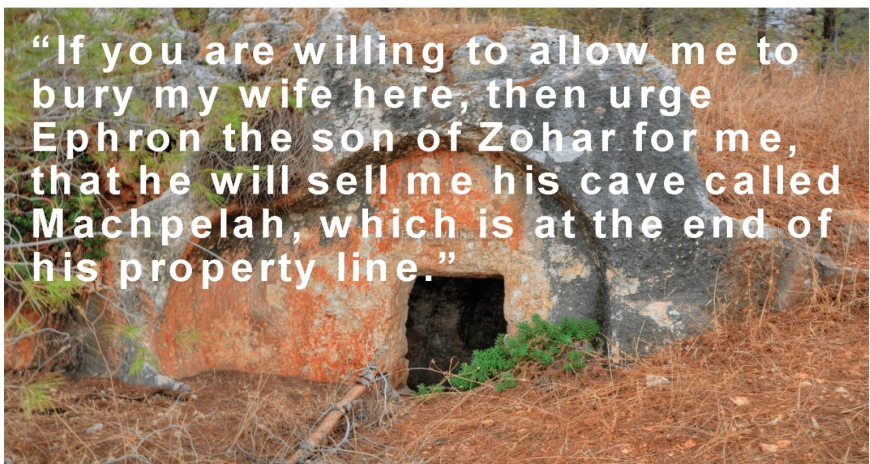
| Genesis 23:9b                                    |                                                                                                                               |                                                                                              |                            |
|--------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------|
| Hebrew/Pronunciation                             | Common English Meanings                                                                                                       | Notes/Morphology                                                                             | BDB and Strong's #         |
| ʾăsher (אֲשֶׁר)<br>[pronounced uh-SHER]          | <i>that, which, when, who, whom</i>                                                                                           | relative pronoun                                                                             | Strong's #834<br>BDB #81   |
| lâmed (ל) [pronounced lʰ]                        | <i>to, for, towards, in regards to, with reference to, as to, with regards to, belonging to</i>                               | directional/relational preposition with the 3 <sup>rd</sup> person masculine singular suffix | No Strong's #<br>BDB #510  |
| ʾăsher (אֲשֶׁר)<br>[pronounced uh-SHER]          | <i>that, which, when, who, whom</i>                                                                                           | relative pronoun                                                                             | Strong's #834<br>BDB #81   |
| b <sup>e</sup> (ב) [pronounced b <sup>eh</sup> ] | <i>in, into, through; at, by, near, on, upon; with, before, against; by means of; among; within</i>                           | a preposition of proximity                                                                   | No Strong's #<br>BDB #88   |
| qâtseh (קֵצֶה)<br>[pronounced kaw-TSEH]          | <i>end, extremity, border, outskirts; the whole [which includes the extremities]; at the end of [a certain time]; the sum</i> | masculine singular construct                                                                 | Strong's #7097<br>BDB #892 |
| sâdeh (שָׂדֵה)<br>[pronounced saw-DEH]           | <i>field, land, country, open field, open country</i>                                                                         | masculine singular noun with the 3 <sup>rd</sup> person masculine singular suffix            | Strong's #7704<br>BDB #961 |

**Translation:** ...which [is] his at the outskirts of his field.

Abraham knows exactly where this cave is, on the outskirts of Ephron's field or land which he owned. This suggests that Abraham has done some previous legwork. He appears to know about this land—he appears to know exactly what he wants. He appears to know where Ephron's land ends, and that this is right at the edge of his land.

King David, when he first became king, knew about Jerusalem and knew that he wanted this city as his own. He knew all of this and all about the city before he attacked it and made it a possession of the Jewish people. Similarly, Abraham knows about this place. We do not know how he knows, but that is one of the many unspoken background issues of this chapter.

**Genesis 23:8b–9a (graphic);** picture from [Bible Walks](#); accessed December 14, 2014. This is not the cave that Abraham bought; and it is probably not a very good representative sample. But the colors are nice.



| Genesis 23:9c                                    |                                                                                                     |                                                                                                                   |                            |
|--------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------|
| Hebrew/Pronunciation                             | Common English Meanings                                                                             | Notes/Morphology                                                                                                  | BDB and Strong's #         |
| b <sup>e</sup> (ב) [pronounced b <sup>eh</sup> ] | <i>in, into, through; at, by, near, on, upon; with, before, against; by means of; among; within</i> | a preposition of proximity                                                                                        | No Strong's #<br>BDB #88   |
| keçeph (כֶּסֶף)<br>[pronounced KEH-sef]          | <i>silver, money; silver [as a metal, ornament, color]; shekels, talents</i>                        | masculine singular noun                                                                                           | Strong's #3701<br>BDB #494 |
| mâle' (מָלֵא) [pronounced maw-LAY]               | <i>filled [with]; full, filling; fullness, that which is full; abundant; a multitude, a crowd</i>   | masculine singular, verbal adjective                                                                              | Strong's #4392<br>BDB #570 |
| nâthan (נָתַן) [pronounced naw-THAHN]            | <i>to give, to grant, to place, to put, to set; to make</i>                                         | 3 <sup>rd</sup> person masculine singular, Qal imperfect with the 3 <sup>rd</sup> person feminine singular suffix | Strong's #5414<br>BDB #678 |
| lâmed (ל) [pronounced l <sup>e</sup> ]           | <i>to, for, towards, in regards to</i>                                                              | directional/relational preposition with the 1 <sup>st</sup> person singular suffix                                | No Strong's #<br>BDB #510  |

**Translation:** *At the full [price] in silver he will sell [lit., give] it to me...*

At this point, even though we have the word *to give* used 3 times in this chapter, it is clear that the cave would be given based upon an exchange for money, a fair price. The idea is, the cave would then belong to Abraham completely and totally and forever. He would have free and clear title to this cave and the surrounding area.

The phrase *at the full silver* simply indicates that Abraham is willing to pay the full price for this plot of ground.

We know from Genesis 13:2 that Abraham has a great deal of silver, gold and livestock. However, this is the first financial transaction in the Bible which involves a precious metal.

We do not know at what time that the ***History of God and Man*** (that is, the book of Genesis) was committed to *paper*. Ancient men were obviously healthier—given that they lived for hundreds of years—and it is likelier that they had a greater capacity for memory. In this transaction, it is not clear if any “papers are filed” but the witnessing of the other Hittites appears to be fundamental to this transaction. Let me postulate that what was required for a transaction like this was a dozen or so men to sit in on the proceedings, and they kept track of the land sale which occurs here. If that is the case, then it is reasonable for *The History of God and Man* to be committed to memory for many generations.

At some point, perhaps during the time of Moses, this was committed to writing—and Moses was clearly an educated man with the ability to write these things down. Furthermore, God tells him to write stuff down throughout the 4 books of Moses.

How the *History of God and Man* came to Moses is unknown—was it from the Jews in Egypt? Did it come from his father-in-law? Was it a part of the extensive royal library of Egypt? We don't know—however, given that chapters like this are recorded in all of their minute detail suggests that Moses only functioned as an editor to this degree: he knew geography, and he updated some geographical references (which updating, we call a ***gloss***). However, it is a chapter like this which suggests that Moses did not do any other editing of the material. As mentioned before, this entire chapter could be summarized with a verse or two.

Given the number of Jews in Egypt who prayed to God to act (Exodus 2:23), I would suggest that there were many copies of this book in existence (or, hundreds of people memorized it). If this is the case—if there was in existence for many of the Jewish slaves in Egypt the books of Genesis and Job (again, perhaps written, perhaps memorized), then Moses would not have felt comfortable with making any deletions or summations of this book. Let me suggest that, by that time, the book of Genesis was their Word of God and they treated it in this way.

This chapter, and chapters about Jacob's love for Rachel, along with Genesis 24, which has a dramatically different style from all other chapters of Genesis, suggests that many different people wrote the book of Genesis. Let me suggest that some subset of the following men wrote the book of Genesis: Adam, Seth, Enoch, Noah, Shem, Abraham, Abraham's servant (or Rebekah), Isaac, Jacob and/or Joseph. Also, some unknown author would have added the last few paragraphs to Genesis.

Over the past several decades, we have unearthed an abundant amount of written material predating Abraham by hundreds of years—the Code of Hammurabi (1792-1750 B.C.), who lived within 250 years of the life of Abraham; we have stele's from that general era and before. Furthermore, Abraham hailed from the city of Ur, which was a very literate culture even during the times of Abraham.<sup>31</sup> So there is nothing which prevents the memories of Abraham from being preserved, either by writing or by memory.

Since Abraham came from a very civilized area and was obviously a learned man, the most likely chain of events was that he merely added to the Scriptures which had already been written down.

In any case, it ought to be clear that this attention to detail could only be that of a grieving husband.

The word *soul* refers to the *will* or *desire* of those Hittites present; specifically Ephron. This is called a metonymy and it has been covered previously.

| Genesis 23:9d                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            |                                                                                                     |                                                                                 |                             |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------|
| Hebrew/Pronunciation                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     | Common English Meanings                                                                             | Notes/Morphology                                                                | BDB and Strong's #          |
| b <sup>e</sup> (ב) [pronounced b <sup>eh</sup> ]                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         | <i>in, into, through; at, by, near, on, upon; with, before, against; by means of; among; within</i> | a preposition of proximity                                                      | No Strong's #<br>BDB #88    |
| tâvek <sup>e</sup> (תַּוֶּכֶּה) [pronounced <i>taw-VEK<sup>E</sup></i> ]                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 | <i>midst, among, middle</i>                                                                         | masculine singular noun with the 2 <sup>nd</sup> person masculine plural suffix | Strong's #8432<br>BDB #1063 |
| With the bêyth preposition, tâvek <sup>e</sup> can mean <i>in the middle of, in the midst of; into, among</i> . In the Hebrew, this is spelled תַּוֶּכֶּה. With the 1 <sup>st</sup> person plural suffix, it means <i>in our midst</i> . With the 2 <sup>nd</sup> person masculine plural suffix, it can mean <i>in your midst, among you</i> . with the 3 <sup>rd</sup> person masculine plural suffix, it can mean <i>in their midst, among them</i> . |                                                                                                     |                                                                                 |                             |
| lâmed (ל) [pronounced l <sup>e</sup> ]                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   | <i>to, for, towards, in regards to</i>                                                              | directional/relational preposition                                              | No Strong's #<br>BDB #510   |
| 'âchûzzâh (אֲחֻזָּזָה) [pronounced <i>uh-khooz-ZAW</i> ]                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 | <i>possession [of land, slaves, etc.], land possession; inheritance</i>                             | feminine singular construct                                                     | Strong's #272<br>BDB #28    |
| qeber (קֶבֶר) [pronounced <i>KEH<sup>P</sup>-VEHR</i> ]                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  | <i>grave, sepulcher, tomb; burial place</i>                                                         | masculine singular noun                                                         | Strong's #6913<br>BDB #868  |

**Translation:** ...in your midst for a possession of the burial site."

<sup>31</sup> From [http://www.truthnet.org/Bible-Origins/4\\_How\\_was\\_Bible\\_written/](http://www.truthnet.org/Bible-Origins/4_How_was_Bible_written/) accessed December 4, 2014.

When a financial exchange took place, particularly for land, it apparently takes place in the presence of several men. Therefore, for the rest of Abraham's life, and thereafter, there will be no confusion as to who owns this cave. There would be a deed, they would see the money change hands, and this would become Abraham's cave as a grave site.

Genesis 23:9 ...that he will give to me the cave of Machpelah which [is] his at the outskirts of his field. At the full [price] in silver he will sell [lit., give] it to me in your midst for a possession of the burial site." (Kukis mostly literal translation)

Genesis 23:9 ...that he will sell me his cave called Machpelah, which is at the end of his property line. I will pay him the full price in your presence so that I might take possession of this as a burial site." (Kukis paraphrase)

Abraham is not looking for any plot of land anywhere; he has a very specific site picked out. My guess is, he is able to easily describe its location to family and that it is easy for him to find, if it is to be Sarah's grave site.

Burials in gardens, caves, and fields is also recorded occurring in our Lord's day. John 11:30-31, 38. Matthew 27:7, 66.

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This is another verse I should have combined with the verse that follows.

Note that Abraham was not asking for a free ride. He was willing to pay the market value for the plot of land that he requested. Ephron was there and he responded:

**And Ephron was sitting in a midst of the sons of Heth and answers Ephron the Hittite Abraham in ears of sons of Heth, to all going in a gate of his city, to say,...**

Genesis  
23:10

**And Ephron was sitting [or, residing] in the midst of the sons of Heth, and he [lit., Ephron the Hittite] answered Abraham in the hearing of the sons of Heth, and [lit., to] all going in the gate of the city, saying,...**

**All this time, Ephron was sitting out in the crowd of Hittites, so he answered Abraham so that all the Hittites there as well as those entering the city, could hear him. He said,...**

Here is how others have translated this verse:

#### Ancient texts:

|                         |                                                                                                                                                                                                |
|-------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Masoretic Text (Hebrew) | And Ephron was sitting in a midst of the sons of Heth and answers Ephron the Hittite Abraham in ears of sons of Heth, to all going in a gate of his city, to say,...                           |
| Targum of Onkelos       | But Ephron the Hittite answered Abraham in the presence of the sons of Hittah, of all who entered the gate of his city, saying,...                                                             |
| Latin Vulgate           | Now Ephron dwelt in the midst of the children of Heth. And Ephron made answer to Abraham in the hearing of all that went in at the gate of the city, saying:...                                |
| Peshitta (Syriac)       | And Ephron <u>dwelt among</u> the Hittites; and Ephron the Hittite answered Abraham in the presence of the Hittites and in the presence of all that went in at the gate of his city, saying... |
| Septuagint (Greek)      | Now Ephron was sitting in the midst of the children of Heth, and Ephron the Hittite answered Abraham and spoke in the hearing of the sons of Heth, and of all who entered the city, saying,... |

Significant differences: The targum leaves out that Ephron is sitting in the midst of the sons of Heth. The Syriac makes it sound as if he just lives among them.



**Thought-for-thought translations; paraphrases:**

|                         |                                                                                                                                                                                                                   |
|-------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Common English Bible    | Now Ephron was a native Hittite. So Ephron the Hittite responded to Abraham publicly in order that the Hittites and everyone at his city's gate could hear:...                                                    |
| Contemporary English V. | Ephron was sitting there near the city gate, when Abraham made this request, and he answered,...                                                                                                                  |
| Easy English            | Now Ephron was sitting among the family of Heth, so Ephron, from Heth's family answered Abraham. Many members of the family of Heth were going in at the gate of the city. They were all listening to Ephron.     |
| Easy-to-Read Version    | Ephron was sitting there among the people. Ephron answered Abraham,...                                                                                                                                            |
| Good News Bible (TEV)   | Ephron himself was sitting with the other Hittites at the meeting place at the city gate; he answered in the hearing of everyone there,...                                                                        |
| <i>The Message</i>      | Ephron was part of the local Hittite community. Then Ephron the Hittite spoke up, answering Abraham with all the Hittites who were part of the town council listening:...                                         |
| New Berkeley Version    | Ephron was sitting among the sons of Heth; so Ephron the Hittite answered Abraham in the hearing of all the Hittites [We would say, "The citizens," in this case of Hebron.], who were entering the city-gate,... |
| New Century Version     | Ephron was sitting among the Hittites at the city gate. He answered Abraham,...                                                                                                                                   |
| New Life Bible          | Ephron was sitting among the sons of Heth. So Ephron the Hittite answered Abraham so what he said could be heard by the sons of Heth and all who came in through the gate of his city.                            |
| New Living Translation  | Ephron was sitting there among the others, and he answered Abraham as the others listened, speaking publicly before all the Hittite elders of the town.                                                           |

**Partially literal and partially paraphrased translations:**

|                                 |                                                                                                                                                                                                                    |
|---------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| American English Bible          | Now, Ephron happened to be sitting there in the midst of the children of Heth, and [he] answered Abraham (speaking where he could be heard by all the sons of Heth and all who were entering the city), saying,... |
| Beck's American Translation     | Ephron was sitting among the Hittites. Ephron the Hittite answered Abraham while all the Hittites who used to go into the gate of the town listened:...                                                            |
| <i>God's Word</i> <sup>TM</sup> | Ephron was sitting among the Hittites. He answered Abraham so that everyone who was entering the city gate could hear him. He said,...                                                                             |
| International Standard V        | Now since Ephron the Hittite had taken a seat there among the Hittites, he responded publicly to Abraham where the Hittites and everyone who was entering the gate of his city could hear him:...                  |
| NIRV                            | Ephron the Hittite was sitting there among his people. He replied to Abraham. All of the Hittites who had come to the gate of his city heard him.                                                                  |
| New Simplified Bible            | Ephron was sitting with the other Hittites at the meeting place at the city gate. He answered in the hearing of everyone there:...                                                                                 |

**Mostly literal renderings (with some occasional paraphrasing):**

|                           |                                                                                                                                                                                              |
|---------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Ancient Roots Translinear | Ephron dwelled amidst of the sons of Heth. Ephron of Central-Syria answered Abraham in the ears of the sons of Heth, and to all coming in the gate of his city, saying,...                   |
| Bible in Basic English    | Now Ephron was seated among the children of Heth: and Ephron the Hittite gave Abraham his answer in the hearing of the children of Heth, and of all those who came into his town, saying,... |
| Ferar-Fenton Bible        | Now Ephron resided among the sons of Heth, and Ephron spoke after Abraham, in the hearing of the sons of Heth, to all who came to the gates of the town, saying...                           |

|                         |                                                                                                                                                                                                       |
|-------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| New Heart English Bible | Now Ephron was sitting in the middle of the children of Heth. Ephron the Hittite answered Abraham in the hearing of the children of Heth, even of all who went in at the gate of his city, saying,... |
| NIV – UK                | Ephron the Hittite was sitting among his people and he replied to Abraham in the hearing of all the Hittites who had come to the gate of his city.                                                    |

### Catholic Bibles (those having the imprimatur):

|                           |                                                                                                                                                                                                  |
|---------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Christian Community Bible | <i>Now Ephron was there sitting among the Hittites, and he replied to Abraham in the hearing of all who were seated at the gate of the town,...</i>                                              |
| The Heritage Bible        | And Ephron was sitting among the children of Heth, and Ephron, the Hittite, answered Abraham in the audience of the children of Heth, of all who were coming in the gate of his city, saying,... |
| New American Bible        | Now Ephron was sitting with the Hittites. So Ephron the Hittite replied to Abraham in the hearing of the Hittites, all who entered the gate of his city:...                                      |
| Revised English Bible     | Ephron was sitting with the other Hittites and in the hearing of all who had assembled at the city gate he gave Abraham this answer:...                                                          |

### Jewish/Hebrew Names Bibles:

|                          |                                                                                                                                                                                                          |
|--------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Complete Jewish Bible    | 'Efron the Hitti was sitting among the sons of Het, and he gave Avraham his answer in the presence of the sons of Het who belonged to the ruling council of the city:...                                 |
| exeGesés companion Bible | And Ephron settles among the sons of Heth:<br>and Ephron the Hethiy answers Abraham<br>in the ears of the sons of Heth,<br>of all entering the portal of his city, saying,...                            |
| JPS (Tanakh—1985)        | Ephron was present among the Hittites; so Ephron the Hittite answered Abraham in the hearing of the Hittites, all who entered the gate of his town [ <i>i.e., all his fellow townsmen.</i> ], saying,... |
| Kaplan Translation       | Ephron was then sitting among the children of Heth. Ephron the Hittite replied to Abraham in the presence of the children of Heth, so that all who came to the city gate could hear.                     |

### Expanded/Embellished Bibles:

|                             |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      |
|-----------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Kretzmann's Commentary      | The Purchase of Machpelah<br>And Ephron dwelt among the children of Heth. And Ephron, the Hittite, answered Abraham in the audience of the children of Heth, even of all that went in at the gate of his city, saying, ...                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           |
| Lexham English Bible        | Now Ephron was sitting among the Hittites. And Ephron the Hittite answered Abraham in the hearing of the Hittites with respect to all [who were] entering the gate of his city, [and] said,...                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       |
| NET Bible®                  | (Now Ephron was sitting among the sons of Heth.) Ephron the Hethite [Or perhaps "Hittite," but see the note on the name "Heth" in v. 3.] replied to Abraham in the hearing [Heb "ears." By metonymy the "ears" stand for the presence or proximity (i.e., within earshot) of the persons named.] of the sons of Heth — before all who entered the gate [On the expression all who entered the gate see E. A. Speiser, "'Coming' and 'Going' at the City Gate," BASOR 144 (1956): 20-23; and G. Evans, "'Coming' and 'Going' at the City Gate: A Discussion of Professor Speiser's Paper," BASOR 150 (1958): 28-33.] of his city —... |
| Translation for Translators | Ephron was sitting among the people near the city gate where many [HYP] descendants of Heth had gathered. He heard what Abraham said to them.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        |
| The Voice                   | Now <i>it happened that</i> Ephron was sitting right there among the Hittites. He <i>personally</i> answered Abraham so that all those present at the city gate could hear.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          |

**Literal, almost word-for-word, renderings:**

|                             |                                                                                                                                                                                                      |
|-----------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| American KJV                | And Ephron dwelled among the children of Heth: and Ephron the Hittite answered Abraham in the audience of the children of Heth, even of all that went in at the gate of his city, saying,...         |
| Context Group Version       | Now Ephron was sitting in the midst of the sons of Heth. And Ephron the Hittite answered Abraham in the audience of the sons of Heth, even of all that went in at the gate of his city, saying,...   |
| English Standard Version    | 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,...                                    |
| Fred Miller's Revised KJV   | And Ephron dwelled among the children of Heth: and Ephron the Hittite answered Abraham in the audience of the children of Heth, even all that went in at the gate of his city, saying,...            |
| World English Bible         | Now Ephron was sitting in the midst of the children of Heth. Ephron the Hittite answered Abraham in the hearing of the children of Heth, even of all who went in at the gate of his city, saying,... |
| Young's Literal Translation | And Ephron was sitting among the sons of Heth; and Ephron the Hittite answered Abraham in the ears of the sons of Heth, all who entered at the gate of his city, saying,...                          |

**The gist of this verse:** Ephron is sitting among the sons of Heth, and he will answer Abraham so that all can hear his answer.

**Genesis 23:10a**

| Hebrew/Pronunciation                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    | Common English Meanings                                                                             | Notes/Morphology               | BDB and Strong's #          |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------|-----------------------------|
| w <sup>e</sup> (or v <sup>e</sup> ) (וּ, or ו) [pronounced <i>weh</i> ]                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 | <i>and, even, then; namely; when; since, that; though</i>                                           | simple wâw conjunction         | No Strong's #<br>BDB #251   |
| ʿEph <sup>e</sup> rôwn (עֹפְרוֹן) [pronounced <i>ʿef-ROHM</i> ]                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         | <i>fawn-like; transliterated Ephron</i>                                                             | masculine singular proper noun | Strong's #6085<br>BDB #780  |
| yâshab (בָּשַׁב) [pronounced <i>yaw-SHAH<sup>BV</sup></i> ]                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             | <i>inhabiting, staying, remaining, dwelling, residing; sitting</i>                                  | Qal active participle          | Strong's #3427<br>BDB #442  |
| b <sup>e</sup> (ב) [pronounced <i>b<sup>eh</sup></i> ]                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  | <i>in, into, through; at, by, near, on, upon; with, before, against; by means of; among; within</i> | a preposition of proximity     | No Strong's #<br>BDB #88    |
| tâvek <sup>e</sup> (תָּוֶק) [pronounced <i>taw-VEK<sup>E</sup></i> ]                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    | <i>midst, among, middle</i>                                                                         | masculine singular construct   | Strong's #8432<br>BDB #1063 |
| With the bêyth preposition, tâvek <sup>e</sup> can mean <i>in the middle of, in the midst of; into, among</i> . In the Hebrew, this is spelled תָּוֶקְבּ. With the 1 <sup>st</sup> person plural suffix, it means <i>in our midst</i> . With the 2 <sup>nd</sup> person masculine plural suffix, it can mean <i>in your midst, among you</i> . with the 3 <sup>rd</sup> person masculine plural suffix, it can mean <i>in their midst, among them</i> . |                                                                                                     |                                |                             |
| bânîym (בָּנִים) [pronounced <i>baw-NEEM</i> ]                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          | <i>sons, descendants; children; people; sometimes rendered men</i>                                  | masculine plural construct     | Strong's #1121<br>BDB #119  |
| Cheth (חֵת) [pronounced <i>khayth</i> ]                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 | <i>transliterated Heth; Hittite</i>                                                                 | masculine proper noun          | Strong's #2845<br>BDB #366  |

**Translation:** *And Ephron was sitting* [or, *residing*] *in the midst of the sons of Heth,*...

This verse is a little tricky, and part of the reason is the verb here, which can indicate either that Ephron was sitting among the Hittites who were there; or that he simply lived among the Hittites. What follows suggests that he responded in real time to what Abraham said, immediately after Abraham made his request known.

However, it is not out of the question for the meeting or this issue of the meeting to be put on hold and then resumed when Ephron could be brought in.

The options are like this: Abraham has an initial meeting with the heads of Hittites at that area. These may be Hittites who are in attendance at Sarah's funeral; or Abraham has gone to the city where the land deed is recorded of the land that he wants, and he has expressed his desire at the gates of the city to the city elders.

The second set of options are, Ephron just turned out to be in the group of observers at the gates of the city; or this represents a second (or third) meeting which takes place at the gates of the city; and Ephron is summoned to be there.

Because of the urgency of Abraham's request; if there were several meetings, they probably all took place in a period of 1 or 2 days.

The gate of the city is spoken of in v. 10, so this portion of the meeting definitely took place there. Whether this is a *second* meeting or not is unknown. Whether the first meeting took place here at the city gate is not clear either.

But we do know this—Abraham went about purchasing the piece of property legally. He knew who the property belonged to, but he probably did not know what this man looked like. He went to the gate of the city to negotiate and hopefully finalize the transaction in front of witnesses, in order to secure the deed.

| Genesis 23:10b                                                                    |                                                                                                                                     |                                                             |                            |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------|
| Hebrew/Pronunciation                                                              | Common English Meanings                                                                                                             | Notes/Morphology                                            | BDB and Strong's #         |
| wa (or va) (ו) [pronounced <i>wah</i> ]                                           | <i>and so, and then, then, and; so, that, yet, therefore, consequently; because</i>                                                 | wâw consecutive                                             | No Strong's #<br>BDB #253  |
| ʿânâh (אָנָה) [pronounced <i>gaw-NAWH</i> ]                                       | <i>to answer, to respond; to speak loudly, to speak up [in a public forum]; to testify; to sing, to chant, to sing responsively</i> | 3 <sup>rd</sup> person masculine singular, Qal imperfect    | Strong's #6030<br>BDB #772 |
| ʿEph <sup>e</sup> rôwn (עֹפְרוֹן) [pronounced <i>gef-ROHN</i> ]                   | <i>fawn-like; transliterated Ephron</i>                                                                                             | masculine singular proper noun                              | Strong's #6085<br>BDB #780 |
| Chittîy (חִיטִּי) [pronounced <i>khiht-TEE</i> ]                                  | <i>a descendant of Heth; transliterated Hittite</i>                                                                                 | gentilic adjective; with the definite article               | Strong's #2850<br>BDB #366 |
| ʿêth (אֵת) [pronounced <i>ayth</i> ]                                              | <i>untranslated generally; occasionally to, toward</i>                                                                              | indicates that the following substantive is a direct object | Strong's #853<br>BDB #84   |
| ʿAb <sup>e</sup> râhâm (אֲבִרְחָם) [pronounced <i>ahb<sup>ve</sup>-raw-HAWM</i> ] | <i>father of a multitude, chief of a multitude; transliterated Abraham</i>                                                          | masculine singular proper noun                              | Strong's #85<br>BDB #4     |

**Translation:** ...and he [lit., Ephron the Hittite] answered Abraham...

Ephron answers Abraham, which implies that Abraham spoke, make his request known, and then Ephron stood up and answered him. However, it is certainly possible that Ephron made his statement publically at a different time.

As you notice, I have used the pronoun *he* instead of *Ephron the Hittite*, for stylistic reasons.

| Genesis 23:10c                                   |                                                                                                     |                            |                            |
|--------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------|----------------------------|
| Hebrew/Pronunciation                             | Common English Meanings                                                                             | Notes/Morphology           | BDB and Strong's #         |
| b <sup>e</sup> (ב) [pronounced b <sup>eh</sup> ] | <i>in, into, through; at, by, near, on, upon; with, before, against; by means of; among; within</i> | a preposition of proximity | No Strong's #<br>BDB #88   |
| 'ôzen (אָזְנִי) [pronounced OH-zen]              | <i>ears</i>                                                                                         | feminine plural construct  | Strong's #241<br>BDB #23   |
| bânîym (בְּנֵי) [pronounced baw-NEEM]            | <i>sons, descendants; children; people; sometimes rendered men</i>                                  | masculine plural construct | Strong's #1121<br>BDB #119 |
| Cheth (חֵת) [pronounced khayth]                  | transliterated <i>Heth; Hittite</i>                                                                 | masculine proper noun      | Strong's #2845<br>BDB #366 |

**Translation:** ...in the hearing of the sons of Heth,...

Ephron spoke among the sons of Heth. He made this declaration so that all those around him could hear. There were no deals or offerings made in secret between Ephron and Abraham.

| Genesis 23:10d                         |                                                                                           |                                                                                  |                             |
|----------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------|
| Hebrew/Pronunciation                   | Common English Meanings                                                                   | Notes/Morphology                                                                 | BDB and Strong's #          |
| lâmed (ל) [pronounced l <sup>e</sup> ] | <i>to, for, towards, in regards to</i>                                                    | directional/relational preposition                                               | No Strong's #<br>BDB #510   |
| kôl (כֹּל) [pronounced kohl]           | with a plural noun, it is rendered <i>all of; any of</i>                                  | masculine singular construct with a masculine plural noun                        | Strong's #3605<br>BDB #481  |
| bôw' (בָּוֵא) [pronounced boh]         | <i>ones entering [coming, going, advancing] [in]; those entering [going, coming (in)]</i> | masculine plural, Qal active participle                                          | Strong's #935<br>BDB #97    |
| sha'ar (שַׁעַר) [pronounced SHAH-gahr] | <i>gate [control of city can be implied]; area inside front gate; entrance</i>            | masculine singular construct                                                     | Strong's #8179<br>BDB #1044 |
| 'îyr (עִיר) [pronounced geer]          | <i>encampment, city, town</i>                                                             | feminine singular noun with the 3 <sup>rd</sup> person masculine singular suffix | Strong's #5892<br>BDB #746  |

**Translation:** ...and [lit., to] all going in the gate of the city,...

As has been suggested before, this appears to be a large public meeting, held near the gate of the city, which is where court cases were tried and public meetings held. Ephron spoke loud enough so that even those going into the city (suggesting that this takes place at the end of a day) could hear him.

It is never 100% clear whether this is the city of Kiriath-arba that we are speaking of, although that seems to be the most logical conclusion.

*Matthew Henry: The conference was public. The place of session for judicial and other public business was the gate of the city, which was common ground, and where men were constantly going in and out. "His city." This implies not that he was the king or chief, but simply that he was a respectable citizen.*<sup>32</sup>

*Coke: The authors of the Universal History observe, that gates of cities in those days, and for many centuries after, were the places of judicature and common resort. Here the Governors, or elders of the city, met to hear complaints, administer justice, make conveyances of titles and estates, and to transact all the affairs of the place; whence that verse in the Psalms, they shall not be ashamed, when they speak with their enemies in the gate, i.e.. when they are accused by them before the court of magistrates. It is probable, that the room or hall where the magistrates sat, was over the gates.*<sup>33</sup>

| Genesis 23:10e                         |                                                                  |                                    |                           |
|----------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------|---------------------------|
| Hebrew/Pronunciation                   | Common English Meanings                                          | Notes/Morphology                   | BDB and Strong's #        |
| lâmed (ל) [pronounced l <sup>o</sup> ] | <i>to, for, towards, in regards to</i>                           | directional/relational preposition | No Strong's #<br>BDB #510 |
| 'âmar (אמר) [pronounced aw-MAHR]       | <i>to say, to speak, to utter; to say [to oneself], to think</i> | Qal infinitive construct           | Strong's #559<br>BDB #55  |

**Translation:** ...saying,...

The content of what Ephron said comes in the next verse.

Genesis 23:10 *And Ephron was sitting [or, residing] in the midst of the sons of Heth, and he [lit., Ephron the Hittite] answered Abraham in the hearing of the sons of Heth, and [lit., to] all going in the gate of the city, saying,...* (Kukis mostly literal translation)

Genesis 23:10 *All this time, Ephron was sitting out in the crowd of Hittites, so he answered Abraham so that all the Hittites there as well as those entering the city, could hear him. He said,...* (Kukis paraphrase)

Here, it appears that we have a second meeting. Or, Ephron is called to this meeting and talks are resumed when he arrives. Very likely, he is filled in as to what has occurred so far.

Furthermore, even though we were uncertain as to the location of the first meeting, this second meeting clearly takes place at the public courthouse (which is the gates of the city).

<sup>32</sup> Matthew Henry, *Commentary on the Whole Bible*; from e-Sword, Genesis 23:10–16.

<sup>33</sup> From <http://www.studylight.org/commentaries/tcc/view.cgi?bk=0&ch=23> accessed December 10, 2014.

“No, my adonai, hear me! The field, I have given to you. And the cave which [is] in him, to you, I have given her. For [two] eyes of sons of my people, I have given her to you. Bury your dying.”

Genesis  
23:11

“No, my adonai, hear me! I give the field to you. The cave which [is] in it, I have also given it to you. In the sight of the sons of my people, I have given it to you. [Please] bury your dead.”

“No, my lord; please hear me out. I will give the field to you. I will give the cave, which is in the field, to you. In the sight of my people, I have given the cave and the field to you. Go and please bury your dead.”

Here is how others have translated this verse:

#### Ancient texts:

|                          |                                                                                                                                                                                                    |
|--------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Masoretic Text (Hebrew)  | “No, my adonai, hear me! The field, I have given to you. And the cave which [is] in him, to you, I have given her. For [two] eyes of sons of my people, I have given her to you. Bury your dying.” |
| Targum of Onkelos        | My lord, listen to me: the field I give you, and the cave which is in it, to you I give it, as a gift before the sons of my people I give it to you; go, bury your dead.                           |
| Latin Vulgate            | Let it not be so, my lord, but do you rather hearken to what I say: The field I deliver to you, and the cave that is therein; in the presence of the children of my people, bury your dead.        |
| Peshitta (Syriac)        | No, my lord, listen to me; I will give you the field and the cave which is in it, I will give it to you; in the presence of my people I give it to you; bury your dead.                            |
| Septuagint (Greek)       | Attend to me, my lord, and hear me, I give to you the field and the cave which is in it; I have given it to you before all my countrymen; bury your dead.                                          |
| Significant differences: | The Hebrew has <i>I will give to you</i> thrice; this is found twice in the Syriac and the Greek; and only once in the Latin.                                                                      |

#### Thought-for-thought translations; paraphrases:

|                         |                                                                                                                                                                                       |
|-------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Contemporary English V. | "Sir, the whole field, including the cave, is yours. With my own people as witnesses, I freely give it to you as a burial place for your dead."                                       |
| Easy English            | He said, 'No, my *lord, please listen to me. I give the field to you and I give the cave in it. My people's sons here are witnesses that I give it to you. So bury your dead people.' |
| Easy-to-Read Version    | "No, sir. Here, in front of all my people, I give you that land and the cave on it so you can bury your wife."                                                                        |
| Good News Bible (TEV)   | "Listen, sir; I will give you the whole field and the cave that is in it. Here in the presence of my own people, I will give it to you, so that you can bury your wife."              |
| <i>The Message</i>      | "Oh no, my master! I couldn't do that. The field is yours--a gift. I'll give it and the cave to you. With my people as witnesses, I give it to you. Bury your deceased wife."         |
| New Berkeley Version    | "No, Sir. Listen to me! I give you the field and the cave it contains; I give it to you with the sons of my people witnessing; you bury your dead."                                   |
| New Century Version     | "No, sir. I will give you the land and the cave that is in it, with these people as witnesses. Bury your dead wife."                                                                  |
| New Life Bible          | He said, "No, my lord. Listen to me. I give you the field. And I give you the grave that is in it. I give it to you in front of the sons of my people. Bury your wife."               |

#### Partially literal and partially paraphrased translations:

|                        |                                                                                        |
|------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| American English Bible | 'Pay attention to me, my lord; Here before all my countrymen [I say], Bury your dead!' |
|------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|

|                          |                                                                                                                                                                                             |
|--------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| God's Word™              | "No, sir, listen to me. I'm giving you the field together with the cave that is in it. My people are witnesses that I'm giving it to you. Bury your wife!"                                  |
| International Standard V | "No, sir [Lit. <i>No, my lord</i> ]. Listen to me! I'll give you the field, and I'll give you the cave that's in it. I give it to you publicly, in the sight of my people. Bury your dead." |
| NIRV                     | "No, sir," Ephron said. "Listen to me. I will sell you the field. I'll also sell you the cave that's in the field. I will sell it to you in front of my people. Bury your wife."            |
| New Simplified Bible     | »Hear me my lord, I give you the field, including the cave. It is yours. With my own people as witnesses, I freely give it to you as a burial place for your dead.«                         |

### Mostly literal renderings (with some occasional paraphrasing):

|                        |                                                                                                                                                                                      |
|------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Bible in Basic English | No, my lord, I will give you the field with the hollow in the rock; before all the children of my people will I give it to you for a resting-place for your dead.                    |
| HCSB                   | "No, my lord. Listen to me. I give you the field, and I give you the cave that is in it. I give it to you in the presence of my people. Bury your dead."                             |
| JPS (Tanakh—1985)      | "No, my lord, hear me: I give you the field and I give you the cave that is in it; I give it to you in the presence of my people. Bury your dead."                                   |
| New Advent Bible       | Let it not be so, my lord, but rather hearken to what I say: The field I deliver to you, and the cave that is therein; in the presence of the children of my people, bury your dead. |

### Catholic Bibles (those having the imprimatur):

|                           |                                                                                                                                                                                             |
|---------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Christian Community Bible | <i>"No, my lord, listen! I give you the field and I give you the cave in it. In the presence of the sons of my people, I give it to you. Bury your dead there."</i>                         |
| The Heritage Bible        | No, my lord; hear me attentively; I have given you the field, and I have given you the cave that is in it; I have given it to you before the eyes of the sons of my people; bury your dead. |
| New Jerusalem Bible       | 'No, my lord, listen to me,' he said. 'I give you the field and the cave in it; I make this gift in the presence of my kinsmen. Bury your dead.'                                            |
| Revised English Bible     | 'No, sir; hear me: I shall make you a gift of the land and also give you the cave which is on it. In the presence of my people I give it to you; so bury your dead.'                        |

### Jewish/Hebrew Names Bibles:

|                          |                                                                                                                                                                                                             |
|--------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Complete Jewish Bible    | "No, my lord, listen to me: I'm giving you the field, with its cave - I'm giving it to you. In the presence of my people I give it to you."                                                                 |
| exeGesés companion Bible | No, my adoni, hear me: I give you the field and I give you the cave therein<br>- I give you in the eyes of the sons of my people:<br>entomb yours who died.                                                 |
| Kaplan Translation       | 'No, my lord,' he said. 'Listen to me. I have already given you the field. I have [also] given you the cave that is there. Here, in the presence of my countrymen, I have given it to you. Bury your dead.' |

### Expanded/Embellished Bibles:

|                        |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       |
|------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Kretzmann's Commentary | Nay, my lord, hear me: the field give I thee, and the cave that is therein, I give it thee; in the presence of the sons of my people give I it thee; bury thy dead. The same Oriental politeness continued to be exercised throughout. The offer of Ephron, the Hittite, made before the ears of all the members of his tribe and of all his fellow-citizens, was hardly intended seriously; for if Abraham had accepted his offer, he would, according to custom, have expected a very rich counter-present, and, in |
|------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|



case Abraham chose to purchase the land, Ephron's offer was designed to prevent any abatement of the price he had fixed in his mind.

Lexham English Bible

"No, my lord, hear me. I give you the field and the cave which [is] in it, I [also] give it to you in the sight of the children of my people I give it to you. Bury your dead."

NET Bible®

"No, my lord! Hear me out. I sell [Heb "give." The perfect tense has here a present nuance; this is a formal, legally binding declaration. Abraham asked only for a burial site/cave within the field; Ephron agrees to sell him the entire field.] you both the field and the cave that is in it [The Hebrew text adds "to you I give [i.e., sell] it." This is redundant in English and has not been translated for stylistic reasons.]. In the presence of my people [Heb "in the presence of the sons of my people."] I sell it to you. Bury your dead."

Translation for Translators

*So, just to make the customary reply to start the real discussion about a price, Ephron said, "No, sir, listen to me. I will give to you the field and the cave in it, without charge, with the people here as witnesses."*

The Voice

**Ephron:** No, my lord, listen: *I will not sell it to you; I will give you the field and the cave that lies on the property. In the presence of all of these people, my people, I give it to you so that you can go and bury your dead.*

### Literal, almost word-for-word, renderings:

American KJV

No, my lord, hear me: the field give I you, and the cave that is therein, I give it you; in the presence of the sons of my people give I it you: bury your dead.

Concordant Literal Version

No, my lord! Hear me! The field I give to you. And the cave which is in it, to you I give it. Before the eyes of the sons of all my people I give it to you. Entomb your dead.

Context Group Version

Please, my lord, hear me. The field I give you, and the cave that is in it, I give it you. In the presence of the sons of my people I give it to you. Bury your dead.

LTHB

No, my lord, hear me. I have given the field to you; also the cave that is in it. I have given it to you. Before the eyes of the sons of my people I have given it to you. Bury your dead.

Updated Bible Version 2.11

Please, my lord, hear me. The field I give you, and the cave that is in it, I give it you. In the presence of the sons of my people I give it to you. Bury your dead.

World English Bible

"No, my lord, hear me. I give you the field, and I give you the cave that is in it. In the presence of the children of my people I give it to you. Bury your dead."

Young's Updated LT

"Nay, my lord, hear me: the field I have given to you, and the cave that is in it, to you I have given it; before the eyes of the sons of my people I have given it to you—bury your dead."

### The gist of this verse:

Ephron says that he will give not just the cave that Abraham wants to buy, but the field that the cave is in.

## Genesis 23:11a

| Hebrew/Pronunciation                         | Common English Meanings                                                                                                                                      | Notes/Morphology                                                      | BDB and Strong's #              |
|----------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------|
| lō' (לֹא or לוֹא)<br>[pronounced low]        | not, no                                                                                                                                                      | negates the word or action that follows; the absolute negation        | Strong's #3808<br>BDB #518      |
| 'ādônây (אֲדֹנָי)<br>[pronounced uh-doh-NAY] | Lord (s), Master (s), my Lord (s), Sovereign; my lord [master]; can refer to the Trinity or to an intensification of the noun; transliterated Adonai, adonai | masculine plural noun with the 1 <sup>st</sup> person singular suffix | Strong's #113 & #136<br>BDB #10 |

## Genesis 23:11a

| Hebrew/Pronunciation                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       | Common English Meanings                                                                                                                                  | Notes/Morphology                                                                                          | BDB and Strong's #          |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------|
| There are actually 3 forms of this word: 'ădônây (אֲדֹנָי) [pronounced <i>uh-doh-NAY</i> ]; 'ădônay (אֲדֹנַי) [pronounced <i>uh-doh-NAY</i> ]; and 'ădônîy (אֲדֹנֵי) [pronounced <i>uh-doh-NEE</i> ].                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      |                                                                                                                                                          |                                                                                                           |                             |
| This is a form of Strong's #113, where there are three explanations given for the yodh ending: (1) this is a shortened form of the plural ending, usually written -îym (יָיִם) [pronounced <i>eem</i> ], an older form of the <i>pluralis excellentiæ</i> (the plural of excellence), where God's sovereignty and lordship are emphasized by the use of the plural; (2) this is the actual, but ancient, plural of the noun, which refers to the Trinity; or (3) this is the addition of the 1 <sup>st</sup> person singular suffix, hence, <i>my Lord</i> (the long vowel point at the end would distinguish this from <i>my lords</i> ). |                                                                                                                                                          |                                                                                                           |                             |
| shâma' (שָׁמַע)<br>[pronounced <i>shaw-MAHG</i> ]                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          | <i>listen [intently], hear, listen and obey, [or, and act upon, give heed to, take note of], hearken to, be attentive to, listen and be cognizant of</i> | 2 <sup>nd</sup> person masculine singular, Qal imperative with the 1 <sup>st</sup> person singular suffix | Strong's #8085<br>BDB #1033 |

**Translation:** "No, my adonai, hear me!"

I think what Ephron says sounds best as a series of statements without being tied together grammatically. He first says "no" but is not refusing to allow Abraham to bury his wife on his property, but he is either refusing to sell the property to Abraham (to give it to him instead) or he is refusing to sell Abraham the cave only, and that he believes Abraham should take the entire field as well.

The sort of bargaining which takes place here is very different from the way that we negotiate contracts here.

## Genesis 23:11b

| Hebrew/Pronunciation                           | Common English Meanings                                     | Notes/Morphology                                                                                          | BDB and Strong's #         |
|------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------|
| sâdeh (שָׂדֶה)<br>[pronounced <i>saw-DEH</i> ] | <i>field, land, country, open field, open country</i>       | masculine singular noun with the definite article                                                         | Strong's #7704<br>BDB #961 |
| nâthan (נָתַן) [pronounced <i>naw-THAHN</i> ]  | <i>to give, to grant, to place, to put, to set; to make</i> | 1 <sup>st</sup> person singular, Qal perfect                                                              | Strong's #5414<br>BDB #678 |
| lâmed (ל) [pronounced <i>l'</i> ]              | <i>to, for, towards, in regards to</i>                      | directional/relational preposition with the 2 <sup>nd</sup> person masculine singular suffix; pausal form | No Strong's #<br>BDB #510  |

**Translation:** I give the field to you.

The word *to give*, in this chapter, can also mean *to sell*. However, it is not clear that is what Ephron is saying. It appears as though he is just going to give his property to Abraham. I believe that is the way that this should be understood; and he repeats this verb 2 more times in this verse.

So that there is no misunderstanding, Ephron is not really offering to give this field and the cave in the field to Abraham. This is their way of doing business.

Abraham asked specifically for the cave at the end of his field; Ephron is going to say that he needs to buy the field *and* the cave.

This struck me as odd. Dr. Thomas Constable explains it: *Why did Ephron want to sell Abraham the entire plot of ground in which the cave lay rather than just the cave as Abraham requested (Genesis 23:8-11)? Hittite law specified that when a landowner sold only part of his property to someone else the original owner had to continue to pay all taxes on the land. However if he sold the entire tract the new owner was responsible to pay the taxes (cf. 1Chronicles 21:24). Consequently Ephron held out for the entire tract knowing that Abraham needed to make his purchase quickly so he could bury Sarah. [Note: Barker, p. 134].*<sup>34</sup>

| Genesis 23:11c                                                                |                                                                                                     |                                                                                                       |                            |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------|
| Hebrew/Pronunciation                                                          | Common English Meanings                                                                             | Notes/Morphology                                                                                      | BDB and Strong's #         |
| w <sup>e</sup> (or v <sup>e</sup> ) (ו, or וּ)<br>[pronounced <i>weh</i> ]    | <i>and, even, then; namely; when; since, that; though</i>                                           | simple wâw conjunction                                                                                | No Strong's #<br>BDB #251  |
| m <sup>e</sup> ârah (מְאָרָה)<br>[pronounced <i>m<sup>e</sup>-â-gaw-RAW</i> ] | <i>cave, den, hole</i>                                                                              | feminine singular noun with the definite article                                                      | Strong's #4631<br>BDB #792 |
| 'âsher (אֲשֶׁר)<br>[pronounced <i>uh-SHER</i> ]                               | <i>that, which, when, who, whom</i>                                                                 | relative pronoun                                                                                      | Strong's #834<br>BDB #81   |
| b <sup>e</sup> (ב) [pronounced <i>b<sup>eh</sup></i> ]                        | <i>in, into, through; at, by, near, on, upon; with, before, against; by means of; among; within</i> | a preposition of proximity with the 3 <sup>rd</sup> person masculine singular suffix                  | No Strong's #<br>BDB #88   |
| lâmed (ל) [pronounced <i>l<sup>e</sup></i> ]                                  | <i>to, for, towards, in regards to</i>                                                              | directional/relational preposition with the 2 <sup>nd</sup> person masculine singular suffix          | No Strong's #<br>BDB #510  |
| nâthan (נָתַן) [pronounced <i>naw-THAHN</i> ]                                 | <i>to give, to grant, to place, to put, to set; to make</i>                                         | 1 <sup>st</sup> person singular, Qal perfect with the 3 <sup>rd</sup> person feminine singular suffix | Strong's #5414<br>BDB #678 |

**Translation:** The cave which [is] in it, I have also given it to you.

The cave that Abraham wants to buy is at the end of the field, at the property line. Ephron says that he will give the cave and the field to Abraham as well.

| Genesis 23:11d                                            |                                                                                        |                                    |                                     |
|-----------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| Hebrew/Pronunciation                                      | Common English Meanings                                                                | Notes/Morphology                   | BDB and Strong's #                  |
| lâmed (ל) [pronounced <i>l<sup>e</sup></i> ]              | <i>to, for, towards, in regards to</i>                                                 | directional/relational preposition | No Strong's #<br>BDB #510           |
| 'êynayim (עֵינַיִם)<br>[pronounced <i>â-gay-nah-YIM</i> ] | <i>eyes, two eyes, literal eye(s), spiritual eyes; face, appearance, form; surface</i> | feminine plural construct          | Strong's #5869 (and #5871) BDB #744 |

<sup>34</sup> From <http://www.studylight.org/commentaries/dcc/view.cgi?bk=0&ch=23> accessed December 9, 2014.

## Genesis 23:11d

| Hebrew/Pronunciation                                                                                                                                                                    | Common English Meanings                                                                                                            | Notes/Morphology                                                                                          | BDB and Strong's #         |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------|
| The lâmed preposition + 'ayin mean, literally <i>to [for] [one's] eyes; before [one's] eyes</i> . The sense is <i>before any one, in the sight of [someone], in view of [someone]</i> . |                                                                                                                                    |                                                                                                           |                            |
| bânîym (בְּנֵי) [pronounced <i>baw-NEEM</i> ]                                                                                                                                           | <i>sons, descendants; children; people; sometimes rendered men</i>                                                                 | masculine plural construct                                                                                | Strong's #1121<br>BDB #119 |
| 'am (אִם) [pronounced <i>gahm</i> ]                                                                                                                                                     | <i>people; race, tribe; family, relatives; citizens, common people; companions, servants; entire human race; herd [of animals]</i> | masculine singular collective noun; construct form; with the 1 <sup>st</sup> person singular suffix       | Strong's #5971<br>BDB #766 |
| nâthan (נָתַן) [pronounced <i>naw-THAHN</i> ]                                                                                                                                           | <i>to give, to grant, to place, to put, to set; to make</i>                                                                        | 1 <sup>st</sup> person singular, Qal perfect with the 3 <sup>rd</sup> person feminine singular suffix     | Strong's #5414<br>BDB #678 |
| lâmed (ל) [pronounced <i>l'</i> ]                                                                                                                                                       | <i>to, for, towards, in regards to</i>                                                                                             | directional/relational preposition with the 2 <sup>nd</sup> person masculine singular suffix; pausal form | No Strong's #<br>BDB #510  |

**Translation:** *In the sight of the sons of my people, I have given it to you.*

This is what makes such a gift or a sale legal. It is done in the sight of the people of Heth. They are witnesses to what Ephron is saying.

Ephron is saying that he will make a gift of this land to Abraham.

This is a very formal and sympathetic proceeding. What is done is certainly done within the laws of that time. Obviously, transactions of this type were made legal by the witness of several other disinterested (i.e., neutral third-) parties.

Ephron appears to be magnanimous enough to give Abraham this plot of land without strings and without cost. However, that could have simply been the custom of that day.

What is revealed here is friendship and mutual respect. Abraham desires to pay the full price of the field and the owner desires to give the field to Abraham without charge. In v. 11, Ephron has told Abraham that *I have given you the field*; perfect tense, referring to a completed past action. However, this action has not yet occurred. This is called heterosis [pronounced *het'-e-rō'-sis*] where a future action is considered so certain that it is referred to with the certainty of a past event. The same use of the perfect tense is also found in v. 13 where Abram states *I have give you the price of the field*.

## Genesis 23:11e

| Hebrew/Pronunciation                        | Common English Meanings            | Notes/Morphology                                          | BDB and Strong's #         |
|---------------------------------------------|------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------|
| qâbar (קָבַר) [pronounced <i>kaw-BAHR</i> ] | <i>to bury, to heap up a mound</i> | 2 <sup>nd</sup> person masculine singular, Qal imperative | Strong's #6912<br>BDB #868 |

## Genesis 23:11e

| Hebrew/Pronunciation                       | Common English Meanings                               | Notes/Morphology                                                                 | BDB and Strong's #         |
|--------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------|
| mûwth (מוּת)<br>[pronounced <i>mooth</i> ] | <i>dying, perishing; one who is dying [perishing]</i> | Qal active participle, with the 2 <sup>nd</sup> person masculine singular suffix | Strong's #4191<br>BDB #559 |

**Translation:** [Please] bury your dead.”

Then Ephron orders Abraham to bury his dead. I would assume that, by the way this is said, that he is, in a sense, saying, “Please.”

Genesis 23:11 “No, my adonai, hear me! I give the field to you. The cave which [is] in it, I have also given it to you. In the sight of the sons of my people, I have given it to you. [Please] bury your dead.” (Kukis mostly literal translation)

Genesis 23:11 “No, my lord; please hear me out. I will give the field to you. I will give the cave, which is in the field, to you. In the sight of my people, I have given the cave and the field to you. Go and please bury your dead.” (Kukis paraphrase)

Whereas, when we buy a house, we often offer a low price whereas the seller has listed a slightly high price. Our negotiations are such that, the seller comes down in price and we come up in price until we find a meeting place. These negotiations are exactly the opposite. Ephron shows up to this meeting and he tries to give this piece of land to Abraham for free. In fact, he says, “I will give you both the field and the cave which is in it. This will be at no cost to you. I cannot charge you for this. Bury your dead.”

**And so bows down Abraham to faces of people of the land.**      Genesis 23:12      **Then Abraham bowed down before the people of the land.**

**Then Abraham bowed down before the people of the land.**

Here is how others have translated this verse:

### Ancient texts:

|                         |                                                          |
|-------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------|
| Masoretic Text (Hebrew) | And so bows down Abraham to faces of people of the land. |
| Targum of Onkelos       | And Abraham bowed before the sons of <u>Hittah</u> .     |
| Latin Vulgate           | Abraham bowed down before the people of the land.        |
| Peshitta (Syriac)       | And Abraham bowed down before the people of the land.    |
| Septuagint (Greek)      | And Abraham bowed down before the people of the land.    |

Significant differences:      The targum has *Shittah* instead of *land*.

### Thought-for-thought translations; paraphrases:

|                         |                                                                  |
|-------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Common English Bible    | Abraham bowed before the local citizens...                       |
| Contemporary English V. | Once again, Abraham bowed down...                                |
| Easy English            | Then Abraham *bowed down in front of the people in that country. |
| Easy-to-Read Version    | Abraham bowed before the Hittite people.                         |
| Good News Bible (TEV)   | But Abraham bowed before the Hittites.                           |
| <i>The Message</i>      | Abraham bowed respectfully before the assembled council...       |

New Living Translation Abraham again bowed low before the citizens of the land,...

### Partially literal and partially paraphrased translations:

American English Bible And at that, AbraHam bowed low before the people of the land, ...  
 Beck's American Translation Bowing before the people of the country, Abraham...  
*God's Word*<sup>TM</sup> Abraham bowed down again in front of the people of that region.  
 International Standard V Abraham bowed before the people of the land...  
 New Simplified Bible Once again, Abraham bowed down.

### Mostly literal renderings (with some occasional paraphrasing):

Ancient Roots Translinear Abraham bowed in front of the people of the land.  
 Bible in Basic English And Abraham went down on his face before the people of the land.  
 HCSB Abraham bowed down to the people of the land...  
 NIV – UK Again Abraham bowed down before the people of the land...

### Catholic Bibles (those having the imprimatur):

The Heritage Bible And Abraham prostrated himself before the face of the people of the land.  
 New American Bible But Abraham, after bowing low before the people of the land, .  
 New Jerusalem Bible Abraham bowed low to the local people...

### Jewish/Hebrew Names Bibles:

exeGesés companion Bible And Abraham prostrates  
 at the face of the people of the land.  
 Hebrew Names Version Avraham bowed himself down before the people of the land.  
 Kaplan Translation Abraham bowed down before the local people.

### Expanded/Embellished Bibles:

Kretzmann's Commentary And Abraham bowed down himself before the people of the land. He once more gratefully acknowledged the kind intention of the Hittites, also in this offer as made by Ephron; he was not to be outdone in politeness.  
 NET Bible® Abraham bowed before the local people...  
 The Voice Abraham *again* bowed in respect to the people of the land and replied to Ephron so all those present could hear. A portion of v. 13 is included for context.

### Literal, almost word-for-word, renderings:

Concordant Literal Version And bowing down is Abraham before the people of the land.  
 Context Group Version And Abraham bowed himself down before the people of the land { or earth }.  
 English Standard V. – UK Then Abraham bowed down before the people of the land.  
 World English Bible Abraham bowed himself down before the people of the land.  
 Young's Updated LT And Abraham bows himself before the people of the land,...

**The gist of this verse:** Abraham then bowed before the people as a show of respect.

## Genesis 23:12

| Hebrew/Pronunciation                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      | Common English Meanings                                                                                                            | Notes/Morphology                                               | BDB and Strong's #          |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------|
| wa (or va) (ו) [pronounced <i>wah</i> ]                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   | <i>and so, and then, then, and; so, that, yet, therefore, consequently; because</i>                                                | wâw consecutive                                                | No Strong's #<br>BDB #253   |
| shâchah (שָׁחָה) [pronounced <i>shaw-KHAW</i> ]                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           | <i>to bow down, to prostrate oneself, to do obeisance to; to honor [with prayers]; to do homage to, to submit to</i>               | 3 <sup>rd</sup> person masculine singular, Hithpael imperfect  | Strong's #7812<br>BDB #1005 |
| ʾAb <sup>e</sup> râhâm (אֲבִרָחָם) [pronounced <i>ahb<sup>ve</sup>-raw-HAWM</i> ]                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         | <i>father of a multitude, chief of a multitude; transliterated Abraham</i>                                                         | masculine singular proper noun                                 | Strong's #85<br>BDB #4      |
| lâmed (ל) [pronounced <i>le</i> ]                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         | <i>to, for, towards, in regards to</i>                                                                                             | directional/relational preposition                             | No Strong's #<br>BDB #510   |
| pânîym (פָּנִים) [pronounced <i>paw-NEEM</i> ]                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            | <i>face, faces, countenance; presence</i>                                                                                          | masculine plural construct (plural acts like English singular) | Strong's #6440<br>BDB #815  |
| Together, they mean <i>upon the face of, before, before the face of, in the presence of, in the sight of, in front of</i> . When used with God, it can take on the more figurative meaning <i>in the judgment of</i> . This can also mean <i>forwards; the front part</i> [or, the edge of a sword]. L <sup>e</sup> pânîym (לפְּנֵים) can take on a temporal sense as well: <i>before, of old, formerly, in the past, in past times</i> . |                                                                                                                                    |                                                                |                             |
| ʿam (עַם) [pronounced <i>gahm</i> ]                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       | <i>people; race, tribe; family, relatives; citizens, common people; companions, servants; entire human race; herd [of animals]</i> | masculine singular collective noun; construct form             | Strong's #5971<br>BDB #766  |
| ʿerets (אֶרֶץ) [pronounced <i>EH-rets</i> ]                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               | <i>earth (all or a portion thereof), land, territory, country, continent; ground, soil; under the ground [Sheol]</i>               | feminine singular noun with the definite article               | Strong's #776<br>BDB #75    |

**Translation:** Then Abraham bowed down before the people of the land.

This again suggests that Abraham is before an assembly of people near the gate of the city; that Ephron has always been in the audience; and that what we have here is a meeting.

The customs of that time call for Abraham to bow before these people, and Abraham does this, showing deference towards them for their hospitality.

Genesis 23:12 Then Abraham bowed down before the people of the land. (Kukis mostly literal translation)

Genesis 23:12 Then Abraham bowed down before the people of the land. (Kukis paraphrase)

Again, Abraham shows deference to these people. It very well could be that, when he bowed, this was his way of indicating that he heard what they said to him and that he had something to say to them (he bows before them also in v. 7, right after they speak and before he speaks to them).

H. C. Leupold, D. D., who writes: *Many of these fine acts of courtesy ascribed to Abraham were, no doubt, dictated by custom...Luther especially remarks what fine manners also a good man of God may have and recommends laying aside all boorish [behavior].*<sup>35</sup>

**Genesis 23:1–12** And Sarah lived to be 127. When Sarah died in Kiriath-arba (later known as Hebron) in the land of Canaan, Abraham went to grieve for Sarah and to weep for her. Abraham rose up from over his deceased wife's body, (and then went to the Hittites) and said to them: "I am an immigrant in your territory lacking property rights. Nevertheless, sell me a plot of land for a grave that I may bury my wife there, away from my sight." The sons of Heth answered Abraham, saying, "Listen, my lord, you are a prince of God in our midst. Please bury your dead in the choicest of our grave sites. There is no man among us who would withhold from you his grave site for the purpose of burying your wife." Therefore, Abraham rose up and then he bowed down before the people of the land, the sons of Heth. Then Abraham spoke with them, saying, "If you are willing to allow me to bury my wife here, then urge Ephron the son of Zohar for me, that he will sell me his cave called Machpelah, which is at the end of his property line. I will pay him the full price in your presence so that I might take possession of this as a burial site." All this time, Ephron was sitting out in the crowd of Hittites, so he answered Abraham so that all the Hittites there as well as those entering the city, could hear him. He said, "No, my lord; please hear me out. I will give the field to you. I will give the cave, which is in the field, to you. In the sight of my people, I have given the cave and the field to you. Go and please bury your dead." Then Abraham bowed down before the people of the land. And he spoke to Ephron in the presence of the people of the land, saying, "Listen, I will give you the silver for your field; please take it so that I may bury my wife's body there."

Abraham's wife has died, and he wants to bury her in a place that he does not see daily. Abraham has chosen a plot of ground where he does not spend most of his time (which appears to be Hebron). He has a place which he has picked out, suggesting that he has given this some thought, probably over a period of time prior to Sarah's death. There is this cave in a forested area where Abraham would like to bury his wife, on Hittite land, near Mamre (v. 17).

It is clear that Moses has a wonderful relationship with these Hittites and that they view him as a man of God.

At this point, we are in the midst of the negotiations about this cave.

As we have seen, this is much different than the way people negotiate today. The owner of the land attempts to give the land to Abraham for free, and Abraham insists on paying a fair market price for the land. The seller starts at the lowest possible price (free) and it is up to the buyer to persuade the seller to take a fair market price for the land.

Jamieson, Fausset and Brown: *Here is a great show of generosity, but it was only a show; for while Abraham wanted only the cave, he joins "the field and the cave"; and though he offered them both as free gifts, he, of course, expected some costly presents in return, without which, he would not have been satisfied. The patriarch, knowing this, wished to make a purchase and asked the terms.*<sup>36</sup>



<sup>35</sup> From <http://www.ccel.org/ccel/leupold/genesis.xxv.html> accessed December 11, 2014.

<sup>36</sup> Robert Jamieson, A. R. Fausset and David Brown; *Commentary Critical and Explanatory on the Whole Bible*; 1871; from e-sword, Genesis 23:11–15.



**Map of Hebron and Mamre.** Hebron and Mamre are close to one another, as this map reveals. The map is from [Bible-history.com](http://Bible-history.com), accessed October 2, 2013.

## Chapter Outline

### Charts, Graphics and Short Doctrines

And so he speaks unto Ephron in [two] ears of people of the land, to say, “Surely, if you—oh that, hear me: I have given the silver of the field. Take from me and I may bury my dying there-ward.”

Genesis  
23:13

And he spoke to Ephron in the hearing of the people of the land, saying, “Surely, behold, if you would [sell to me]—hear me: I will give the silver of the field; take [it] from me that I may bury my dead there.”

And he spoke to Ephron in the presence of the people of the land, saying, “Listen, I will give you the silver for your field; please take it so that I may bury my wife’s body there.”

Here is how others have translated this verse:

#### Ancient texts:

|                          |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         |
|--------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Masoretic Text (Hebrew)  | And so he speaks unto Ephron in [two] ears of people of the land, to say, “Surely, <u>if you—oh that</u> , hear me: I have given the silver of the field. Take from me and I may bury my dying there-ward.”                             |
| Targum of Onkelos        | And he speaks with Ephron before the people of the land, saying, Nevertheless, <u>if you are willing to do me a favour</u> , hear me: I will give you in silver the price of the field; take (it) of me, and I will bury my dead there. |
| Latin Vulgate            | And he spoke to Ephron, in the presence of the people: <u>I beg you to</u> hear me: I will give money for the field; take it, and so will I bury my dead in it.                                                                         |
| Peshitta (Syriac)        | Then he said to Ephron in the presence of the people of the land, <u>If you are willing</u> , then listen to me; I will give you money for the price of the field; take it from me, and I will bury my dead there.                      |
| Septuagint (Greek)       | And he said in the ears of Ephron before the people of the land, <u>Since you are on my side</u> , hear me; take the price of the field from me, and I will bury my dead there.                                                         |
| Significant differences: | What exactly Abraham says to the people to begin with is unclear. The Syriac and targum understand this to mean, <i>if you are willing</i> .                                                                                            |

#### Thought-for-thought translations; paraphrases:

|                         |                                                                                                                                                                               |
|-------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Contemporary English V. | ...and said to Ephron, "In front of these witnesses, I offer you the full price, so I can bury my wife. Please accept my offer."                                              |
| Easy English            | Abraham said to Ephron before all the people, "But I want to pay you the full price for the field. Accept my money, and I will bury my dead."                                 |
| Easy-to-Read Version    | He spoke to Ephron and the people listened. 'Please, listen to me. I will pay the right price for the field. Please take the money, so that I can bury my dead people there.' |
| Good News Bible (TEV)   | ...and said to Ephron, so that everyone could hear, "May I ask you, please, to listen. I will buy the whole field. Accept my payment, and I will bury my wife there."         |
| <i>The Message</i>      | ...and answered Ephron: "Please allow me--I want to pay the price of the land; take my money so that I can go ahead and bury my wife."                                        |

|                        |                                                                                                                                                                                        |
|------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| New Berkeley Version   | ...and said to Ephron, so that all the natives heard it, "If you consent, then please listen to me, I will pay you for the fields; accept the money from me, and I will bury my dead." |
| New Life Bible         | He said to Ephron so that all the people of the land heard it, "Listen to me if you will. I will give you the price of the field. Receive it from me, that I may bury my wife there."  |
| New Living Translation | ...and he replied to Ephron as everyone listened. "No, listen to me. I will buy it from you. Let me pay the full price for the field so I can bury my dead there."                     |

### Partially literal and partially paraphrased translations:

|                             |                                                                                                                                                                                                          |
|-----------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| American English Bible      | ...and he told Ephron (before the people of the land): 'Since you're on my side, listen to me; Accept the price of the field from me and I'll bury my dead there.'                                       |
| Beck's American Translation | ...said to Ephron while the people of the country were listening, "If you're willing, please listen to me. I'm paying you the price of the fields; take it from me, and I'll bury my dead one there."    |
| God's Word™                 | He spoke to Ephron so that the people of that region could hear him. He said, "If you would only listen to me. I will pay you the price of the field. Take it from me so that I can bury my wife there." |
| International Standard V    | ...and then addressed Ephron so all the people of the land could hear him: "Please listen to me! I'm willing to pay the price of the field. Accept it from me, so I may bury my dead there."             |
| New Simplified Bible        | He spoke to Ephron in the hearing of the people of the land. He said: »If you will only please listen to me. I will give the price of the field. Accept it from me that I may bury my dead there.«       |

### Mostly literal renderings (with some occasional paraphrasing):

|                        |                                                                                                                                                                                                               |
|------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Bible in Basic English | And Abraham said to Ephron, in the hearing of the people of the land, If only you will give ear to me, I will give you the price of the field; take it, and let me put my dead to rest there.                 |
| Ferar-Fenton Bible     | ...and addressed Ephron in the hearing of the people of the land, saying; "Nay, if you are disposed to listen to me, I will pay you money for the field; so accept it from me and I will bury my dead there." |
| HCSB                   | ...and said to Ephron in the presence of the people of the land, "Please listen to me. Let me pay the price of the field. Accept it from me, and let me bury my dead there."                                  |

### Catholic Bibles (those having the imprimatur):

|                       |                                                                                                                                                                                                   |
|-----------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| The Heritage Bible    | And he spoke to Ephron in the ears of the people of the land, saying, And if you would please hear me, I have given the silver for the field; take it from me, that I may bury my dead there.     |
| New Jerusalem Bible   | ...and, in the hearing of the local people, replied to Ephron as follows, 'Be good enough to listen to me. I shall pay the price of the field; accept it from me and I shall bury my dead there.' |
| Revised English Bible | ...and said to Ephron in their hearing, 'Do you really mean it? But listen to me—let me give you the price of the land: take it from me, and I shall bury my dead there.'                         |

### Jewish/Hebrew Names Bibles:

|                          |                                                                                                                                                        |
|--------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| exeGesés companion Bible | ...and he words to Ephron<br>in the ears of the people of the land, saying,<br>If only you hear me:<br>I give you silver for the field; take it of me: |
|--------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|

|                           |                                                                                                                                                                                                      |
|---------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
|                           | and there I entomb mine who died.                                                                                                                                                                    |
| JPS (Tanakh—1985)         | ...and spoke to Ephron in the hearing of the people of the land, saying, "If only you would hear me out! Let me pay the price of the land; accept it from me, that I may bury my dead there."        |
| Judaica Press Complete T. | And he spoke to Ephron in the hearing of the people of the land, saying, "But, if only you would listen to me. I am giving the money for the field; take it from me, and I will bury my dead there." |
| Kaplan Translation        | He spoke to Ephron so that all the local people could hear. 'If you will only listen to me,' he said. 'I am giving you the money for the field. Take it from me, and I will bury my dead there.'     |

### Expanded/Embellished Bibles:

|                             |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                |
|-----------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Kretzmann's Commentary      | And he spake unto Ephron in the audience of the people of the land, saying, But if thou wilt give it, I pray thee, hear me: I will give thee money for the field; take it of me, and I will bury my dead there. The words of Abraham at this point indicate some measure of agitation and a shade of impatience: But if thou—Oh, that thou wouldest listen to me! As he had indicated from the start, he did not want the cave as a gift, but had come prepared to pay for it. |
| Lexham English Bible        | And he spoke to Ephron in the hearing of the people of the land, saying, "{If only you will hear me}--I give the price of the field. Take [it] from me that I may bury my dead there."                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         |
| NET Bible®                  | ...and said to Ephron in their hearing, "Hear me, if you will. I pay [Heb "give."] to you the price [Heb "silver."] of the field. Take it from me so that I may [After the imperative, the cohortative with the prefixed conjunction expresses purpose or result.] bury my dead there."                                                                                                                                                                                        |
| Translation for Translators | Abraham again bowed before the people who lived in the land, and said to Ephron, as all the others were listening, "No, listen to me. If you are willing, I will pay for the field. You tell me what the price is, and I will give it to you. If you accept it, the field will become mine, and I can bury my wife's body there." V. 12 is included for context.                                                                                                               |
| The Voice                   | <b>Abraham:</b> Please, listen to what I have to say. I will gladly pay you a fair price for the field. Please accept it from me. That way I can bury my dead <i>in peace</i> . The portion of v. 13 which is missing is found with v. 12.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     |

This account reveals the complex and rather ambiguous Near Eastern way of negotiating a purchase. The transaction takes place publicly at the city gate in the presence of the community leaders who could serve as advisors to the deal or witnesses if the deal goes awry. Initially Ephron offers to give the land to Abraham for a burial site, but in true Near Eastern style the patriarch indicates respectfully that he desires to purchase it instead. Ephron's true motive may be seen in his counteroffer; the property is worth 10 pounds of silver, a not-so-insignificant price for a tract of land on the edge of his property. Abraham's motive is clear enough. He wants to own outright a parcel of land near where he and his family have lived for many years, a land promised to him by God, a land where now Sarah has died and needs a proper burial. Gifts come with strings attached, and Abraham does not want to owe Ephron or anyone else for that matter. He knows full well he owes everything to God.

### Literal, almost word-for-word, renderings:

|                            |                                                                                                                                                                                                     |
|----------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Concordant Literal Version | And speaking is he to Ephron in the ears of the people of the land, saying, "Yea, should you be for me, hear me! Give will I silver for the field. Take it from me and I will entomb my dead there. |
|----------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|

|                          |                                                                                                                                                                                              |
|--------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| English Standard Version | 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."                 |
| LTHB                     | ...and spoke to Ephron in the ears of the people of the land, saying, Only if you would hear me. I have given the silver for the field; take it from me, that I may bury my dead there.      |
| World English Bible      | He spoke to Ephron in the audience of the people of the land, saying, "But if you will, please hear me. I will give the price of the field. Take it from me, and I will bury my dead there." |
| Young's Updated LT       | And speaks unto Ephron in the ears of the people of the land, saying, "Only—if you would hear me—I have given the money of the field—accept from me, and I bury my dead there."              |

**The gist of this verse:** Abraham speaks directly to Ephron, but the people are listening to his proposal. He proposes to pay the price for the field, so that he might bury his wife there.

| Genesis 23:13a                                         |                                                                                                                                                                                                          |                                                               |                            |
|--------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------|
| Hebrew/Pronunciation                                   | Common English Meanings                                                                                                                                                                                  | Notes/Morphology                                              | BDB and Strong's #         |
| wa (or va) (ו) [pronounced wah]                        | <i>and so, and then, then, and; so, that, yet, therefore, consequently; because</i>                                                                                                                      | wâw consecutive                                               | No Strong's #<br>BDB #253  |
| dâbar (דָּבַר) [pronounced daw <sup>b</sup> -VAHR]     | <i>to speak, to talk [and back with action], to give an opinion, to expound, to make a formal speech, to speak out, to promise, to propose, to speak kindly of, to declare, to proclaim, to announce</i> | 3 <sup>rd</sup> person masculine singular, Piel imperfect     | Strong's #1696<br>BDB #180 |
| 'el (לָא) [pronounced eh/]                             | <i>unto; into, among, in; toward, to; against; concerning, regarding; besides, together with; as to</i>                                                                                                  | directional preposition (respect or deference may be implied) | Strong's #413<br>BDB #39   |
| 'Eph <sup>e</sup> rôwn (עֹרְוֹן) [pronounced gef-ROHN] | <i>fawn-like; transliterated Ephron</i>                                                                                                                                                                  | masculine singular proper noun                                | Strong's #6085<br>BDB #780 |
| b <sup>e</sup> (ב) [pronounced b <sup>eh</sup> ]       | <i>in, into, through; at, by, near, on, upon; with, before, against; by means of; among; within</i>                                                                                                      | a preposition of proximity                                    | No Strong's #<br>BDB #88   |
| 'ôzen (אָזְן) [pronounced OH-zen]                      | <i>ears</i>                                                                                                                                                                                              | feminine plural construct                                     | Strong's #241<br>BDB #23   |
| 'am (עַם) [pronounced gahm]                            | <i>people; race, tribe; family, relatives; citizens, common people; companions, servants; entire human race; herd [of animals]</i>                                                                       | masculine singular collective noun; construct form            | Strong's #5971<br>BDB #766 |
| 'erets (אֶרֶץ) [pronounced EH-rets]                    | <i>earth (all or a portion thereof), land, territory, country, continent; ground, soil; under the ground [Sheol]</i>                                                                                     | feminine singular noun with the definite article              | Strong's #776<br>BDB #75   |

**Translation:** And he spoke to Ephron in the hearing of the people of the land,...

Business transactions are carried out in the full hearing of the people of Heth, so that they are witnesses as to the final agreement.

| Genesis 23:13b                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  |                                                                                                                                                          |                                                                                                           |                                         |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------|
| Hebrew/Pronunciation                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            | Common English Meanings                                                                                                                                  | Notes/Morphology                                                                                          | BDB and Strong's #                      |
| lâmed (ל) [pronounced l <sup>e</sup> ]                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          | <i>to, for, towards, in regards to</i>                                                                                                                   | directional/relational preposition                                                                        | No Strong's #<br>BDB #510               |
| 'âmar (אמר) [pronounced aw-MAHR]                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                | <i>to say, to speak, to utter; to say [to oneself], to think</i>                                                                                         | Qal infinitive construct                                                                                  | Strong's #559<br>BDB #55                |
| 'ak <sup>e</sup> (אך) [pronounced ahk <sup>e</sup> ]                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            | <i>surely, certainly, no doubt, only, but; only now, just now, only this once; nothing but</i>                                                           | adverb of restriction, contrast, time, limitation, and exception. Also used as an affirmative particle    | Strong's #389<br>BDB #36                |
| 'îm (אם) [pronounced eem]                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       | <i>if, though; lo, behold; oh that, if only; when, since, though when (or, if followed by a perfect tense which refers to a past event)</i>              | primarily an hypothetical particle                                                                        | Strong's #518<br>BDB #49                |
| The particle 'îm (אם) can be used as a demonstrative ( <i>lo, behold</i> ), an interrogative (usually expecting a negative response and often used with other particles and rhetorically), and as a conditional particle ( <i>if, though</i> ); an indication of a wish or desire ( <i>oh that, if only</i> ; this is a rare usage).                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            |                                                                                                                                                          |                                                                                                           |                                         |
| 'attâh (אתה) [pronounced aht-TAW]                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               | <i>you (often, the verb to be is implied)</i>                                                                                                            | 2 <sup>nd</sup> person masculine singular, personal pronoun                                               | Strong's #859<br>BDB #61                |
| lû (לו) [also written lû' (לו)] [pronounced lue]                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                | <i>O that, would that, if only, if</i>                                                                                                                   | conjunction                                                                                               | Strong's #3863 (and #3808?)<br>BDB #530 |
| The LXX reads this as:                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          |                                                                                                                                                          |                                                                                                           |                                         |
| lâmed (ל) [pronounced l <sup>e</sup> ]                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          | <i>to, for, towards, in regards to</i>                                                                                                                   | directional/relational preposition with the 1 <sup>st</sup> person singular suffix                        | No Strong's #<br>BDB #510               |
| These particles are difficult to make sense of, so here is what other translators have done: ESV, WEB: <i>But if you will, please hear me</i> ; LTHB: <i>Only if you would hear me</i> ; CLV: <i>Yea, should you be for me, hear me!</i> AKJV KJ2000: <i>But if you will give it, I pray you.</i> VW: <i>If you will give it, please hear me.</i> JPCT: <i>But, if only you would listen to me.</i> MKJV: <i>Only if you would hear me.</i> Webster (updated): <i>But if you [wilt give it], I pray you.</i> NRSV: <i>If you only will listen to me.</i> NKJV: <i>If you (will give it), please hear me.</i> NASB: <i>If you will only please listen to me.</i> CGV: <i>But if you will, I beg of you, hear me.</i> The Amplified Bible: <i>But if you will give it, I beg of you, hear me.</i> |                                                                                                                                                          |                                                                                                           |                                         |
| shâma <sup>c</sup> (שמע) [pronounced shaw-MAHG]                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 | <i>listen [intently], hear, listen and obey, [or, and act upon, give heed to, take note of], hearken to, be attentive to, listen and be cognizant of</i> | 2 <sup>nd</sup> person masculine singular, Qal imperative with the 1 <sup>st</sup> person singular suffix | Strong's #8085<br>BDB #1033             |

**Translation:** ...saying, "Surely, behold, if you would [sell to me]—hear me:...

The particles strung together are difficult to translate. Abraham is expressing the desire that Ephron has agreed to sell to him, and states what he believes are fair and honest terms.

| Genesis 23:13c                        |                                                                       |                                                   |                            |
|---------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------|----------------------------|
| Hebrew/Pronunciation                  | Common English Meanings                                               | Notes/Morphology                                  | BDB and Strong's #         |
| nâthan (נָתַן) [pronounced naw-THAHN] | to give, to grant, to place, to put, to set; to make                  | 1 <sup>st</sup> person singular, Qal perfect      | Strong's #5414<br>BDB #678 |
| keçeph (כֶּסֶף) [pronounced KEH-sef]  | silver, money; silver [as a metal, ornament, color]; shekels, talents | masculine singular construct                      | Strong's #3701<br>BDB #494 |
| sâdeh (שָׂדֵה) [pronounced saw-DEH]   | field, land, country, open field, open country                        | masculine singular noun with the definite article | Strong's #7704<br>BDB #961 |

**Translation:** ...I will give the silver of the field;...

The perfect tense indicates that this is exactly what Abraham is willing to do. He would purchase the field from Ephron. The exact price is not stated as of yet.

*John Wesley: It was not in pride that Abraham refused the gift; but In justice. Abraham was rich in silver and gold, and therefore would not take advantage of Ephron's generosity.<sup>37</sup>*

And it could certainly be that this is the way that people interacted in those days in order to buy and sell land.

You may recall that, back in Genesis 14, Abraham saved the King of Sodom's people, and Abraham could have claimed any reward that he desired. However, instead he said, "I have lifted my hand to the LORD, God Most High, Possessor of heaven and earth, 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.' 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." (Gen 14:22b–24; ESV) Abraham required that the men who were with him should have a fair share of reward for what they have done, but that he would take nothing for himself. Abraham became very rich, but never simply from doing the right thing (here, rescuing his nephew Lot).

| Genesis 23:13d                        |                                                                                                                |                                                                           |                            |
|---------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------|
| Hebrew/Pronunciation                  | Common English Meanings                                                                                        | Notes/Morphology                                                          | BDB and Strong's #         |
| lâqach (לָקַח) [pronounced law-KAHKH] | take, seize, take away, take in marriage; send for, fetch, bring, receive                                      | 2 <sup>nd</sup> person masculine singular, Qal imperative                 | Strong's #3947<br>BDB #542 |
| min (מִן) [pronounced mihn]           | from, away from, out from, out of from, off, on account of, since, above, than, so that not, beyond, more than | preposition of separation with the 1 <sup>st</sup> person singular suffix | Strong's #4480<br>BDB #577 |

**Translation:** ...take [it] from me...

<sup>37</sup> John Wesley; *Explanatory Notes on the Whole Bible*; courtesy of e-sword, Genesis 23:13.

Abraham asks that Ephron take his silver from him, which would be in exchange for the land.

Abraham appears to be offering full price for the field, even though a price has not yet been offered. This is much different than we bargain today.

What is going on is public negotiations at the city gate. They will come to an agreement, and much of this city will know of the agreement which has been made. They will know that land which is conveyed and the price which has been negotiated. All of these people are witnesses to the negotiated price.

“Listen,” says Abraham, “I have silver and I am more than willing to give you a fair price. I cannot take this land from you without paying.”

**Application:** This records the way that Abraham and Ephron transacted business, and therefore reflects the norms and standards of their day. This does not mean that this ought to be the way that we must handle our transactions. However, it should be noted that, it is not necessary that you always win; it is not necessary that you believe that you have negotiated the lowest price by far from the seller (or that you have gotten the highest price that you can from a buyer). Our time here on earth is quite limited; we will live here 60–90 years and then we will leave this place. We are to be witnesses for Jesus Christ, so where it is reasonable to be frugal with your money and to invest wisely and give generously; this does not mean that you ought to squeeze out the cheapest price that you can in every transaction that you are involved in (if you are the buyer). Always bear in mind that you are here on earth for a very brief time, and having to win in a financial transaction time-after-time is not always a good Christian witness. Since I have been involved in the buying and selling of many houses, I suggest that you ask yourself this: *can I sit across the table from the people with whom I've just done business and sit down as friends and leave as friends?* Or, to put it another, are they going to stare across the table at you at closing, and think, “That sonuvabitch took me for every single cent he thought he could take.” If you see this person in the future—say you bump into them on the street—will they be happy to see you? Will they be glad that you transacted business together? Now, I realize that in the United States, it seems that almost everything is a business deal, and we have been trained, most of us, to get the very best deal that we possibly can, and that is a normal, cultural trait. Just do not do this at the expense of the people on the other side of the deal. Don't come to an agreement where they will remember you for months or years and think, “That lousy so-and-so; I hope we never transact business again.”

**Application:** There are many professions where you act on behalf of someone else, and it is your job, in many cases, to get the best deal that you can. Again, I think of this like a real estate agent, but it certainly has other applications. Will the other realtor that you interact with, will they hope to interact with you again? When you call them on the phone a month later and say, “I've got a buyer for your property,” will they think to themselves, “Oh, no, I have to work with Charlie Brown again!” Or do you have a reputation of doing your job and being honest and forthright, yet without violating your fiduciary relationship with the person you represent?

**Application:** In whatever business deal you are involved with, with whomever you have to deal, you should be honest and professional, without cutting corners and without misrepresenting yourself or your client. A lawyer will find himself in a variety of adversarial relationships—but will everyone hate you when it is all over? When you collect your commission, how will all the parties involved view you? Obviously, there are times and transactions where there is nothing you can say or do to make it easier—that these two parties hate one another and will do so until their dying day. That is when you need a lot of Bible doctrine and divine guidance to do that which is right and pleasing to God. Obviously, in this world, you cannot right every wrong, or bring together recalcitrant parties.

**Application:** There is a right time and a wrong time to communicate your thoughts. I recall one transaction where I apologized to the opposite side for the behavior of my clients, and I was wrong to do so (and I stupidly did this when my clients were right there). You will, from time to time, have to represent people that you lose your respect for. Still, you handle the transaction professionally. You might say to the other side, privately, “Look, this is the offer they are coming back with; they seem to be intransigent about this. I believe that the terms which your clients offered were fair and reasonable, but the people I represent do not. Here is their counter-offer, and, as you know, I am obligated in my profession to make this offer.”

**Application:** And no matter where you are in this or that deal, it is not important that you have squeezed the very last dime out of that deal, or that you took the opposing party to the breaking point without quite getting there. Life is not always about money—in fact, it is not about money at all. Life is about doing that which God approves while being filled with the Holy Spirit. And let’s say that you have come to a point with someone who represents you or that you represent, and you do not like where this transaction is going, then you break free of the transaction while maintaining a fiduciary relationship to whom it is due. If there are laws, rules and customs, you must follow these, but with the idea that Jesus Christ is guiding you through the transaction.

**Application:** Quite obviously, you do not transact every business deal to pay the highest price or to be taken to the cleaners each and every time. You should be honest and act with personal integrity.

**Application:** I recently concluded a real estate transaction which was very beneficial to me. There were several points in the negotiations where things may have fallen apart, where I could have allowed pride and my natural hard-headedness to take over. Had I done that, this property would not have become mine. When involved in any sort of a business negotiation, the believer needs to remain filled with the Spirit. It is not wrong to engage in business transactions; it is not wrong to act in your own best interest. But it is wrong to be dishonest; and often it is wrong to be surly.

### Genesis 23:13e

| Hebrew/Pronunciation                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 | Common English Meanings                                   | Notes/Morphology                                                       | BDB and Strong’s #          |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------|
| w <sup>e</sup> (or v <sup>e</sup> ) (ו, or ו) [pronounced <i>weh</i> ]                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               | <i>and, even, then; namely; when; since, that; though</i> | simple wâw conjunction                                                 | No Strong’s #<br>BDB #251   |
| qâbar (קָבַר) [pronounced <i>kaw-BAHR</i> ]                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          | <i>to bury, to heap up a mound</i>                        | 1 <sup>st</sup> person singular, Qal imperfect with the cohortative hê | Strong’s #6912<br>BDB #868  |
| The cohortative expresses volition. In the English, we often render this with <i>let</i> or <i>may</i> ; in the plural, this can be <i>let us</i> . The cohortative is designed for the 1 <sup>st</sup> person, it can express a wish or a desire or purpose or an intent. It is found in conditional statements. Generally there is the hê suffix to indicate this. |                                                           |                                                                        |                             |
| ’êth (אֵת) [pronounced <i>ayth</i> ]                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 | untranslated generally; occasionally <i>to, toward</i>    | indicates that the following substantive is a direct object            | Strong’s #853<br>BDB #84    |
| mûwth (מוֹת) [pronounced <i>mooth</i> ]                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                              | <i>dying, perishing; one who is dying [perishing]</i>     | Qal active participle, with the 1 <sup>st</sup> person singular suffix | Strong’s #4191<br>BDB #559  |
| shâm (שָׁמָּה) [pronounced <i>shawm</i> ]                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            | <i>there; at that time, then; therein, in that thing</i>  | adverb with the hê locale                                              | Strong’s #8033<br>BDB #1027 |

The hê locale: If a word, after a verb of motion, has the hê locale *âh* (ה) ending, it is called the *directive hê* or the *he locale*, which often indicates direction and puts somewhat of an adverbial spin on the noun. I call it the *directional hê* for simplicity’s sake. Essentially, it answers the question *where?*

**Translation:** ...that I may bury my dead there.”

The intent here is so that Abraham could bury his wife. It is clear that the Hittites sympathize with his situation.

Genesis 23:13 And he spoke to Ephron in the hearing of the people of the land, saying, “Surely, behold, if you would [sell to me]—hear me: I will give the silver of the field; take [it] from me that I may bury my dead there.” (Kukis mostly literal translation)



Genesis 23:13 And he spoke to Ephron in the presence of the people of the land, saying, "Listen, I will give you the silver for your field; please take it so that I may bury my wife's body there." (Kukis paraphrase)

And so answers Ephron Abraham to say to him, "My adonai, hear me: a land—four hundreds of a shekel of silver—between me and between you what is she? And your dying, bury.

Genesis  
23:14–15

Then Ephron answered Abraham, saying to him, "My adonai, hear me: [this piece of] land—400 shekels of silver—between you and I, what [is] that? Then bury your dead."

Then Ephron answered Abraham, saying, "My lord, please hear me then: the land is 400 shekels of silver. What is that between you and I? Then you may bury your wife."

Here is how others have translated this verse:

#### Ancient texts:

|                         |                                                                                                                                                                                            |
|-------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Masoretic Text (Hebrew) | And so answers Ephron Abraham to say to him, "My adonai, hear me: a land—four hundreds of a shekel of silver—between me and between you what is she? And your dying, bury.                 |
| Targum of Onkelos       | And Ephron answered Abraham, saying to him, My lord, hear me: the land, <u>as to its price</u> , would be four hundred sileen of silver; between me and you what is that? Bury your dead.  |
| Latin Vulgate           | And Ephron answered: My lord, hear me. The ground <u>which you desire, is worth</u> four hundred sicles of silver: this is the price between me and you: but what is this? bury your dead. |
| Peshitta (Syriac)       | And Ephron answered Abraham and said, My lord, hearken to me; the land <u>is worth</u> four hundred shekels of silver; what is that between me and you? You may bury your dead.            |
| Septuagint (Greek)      | But Ephron answered Abraham, saying, No, my lord, I have heard indeed, the land <u>is worth</u> four hundred silver shekels, but what can this be between me and you? So bury your dead.   |

Significant differences: The Latin leaves out Abraham's name in the first phrase. All of the other translations include something like *is worth*, which the Hebrew leaves out.

#### Thought-for-thought translations; paraphrases:

|                         |                                                                                                                                                                   |
|-------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Common English Bible    | Ephron responded to Abraham, "Sir, what is four hundred shekels of silver between me and you for the land so that you can bury your dead?"                        |
| Contemporary English V. | "But sir," the man replied, "the property is worth only four hundred pieces of silver. Why should we haggle over such a small amount? Take the land. It's yours." |
| Easy English            | Ephron answered Abraham, "My *lord, listen to me. The price of the field is 400 *shekels. The price is not important to you or me. Do bury your dead people."     |
| Easy-to-Read Version    | Ephron answered Abraham, "Sir, listen to me. 10 pounds [129] of silver means nothing to you and me! Take the land, and bury your dead wife."                      |
| Good News Bible (TEV)   | Ephron answered, "Sir, land worth only four hundred pieces of silver---what is that between us? Bury your wife in it."                                            |
| <i>The Message</i>      | Then Ephron answered Abraham, "If you insist, master. What's four hundred silver shekels between us? Now go ahead and bury your wife."                            |
| New Century Version     | Ephron answered Abraham, "Sir, the land is worth ten pounds of silver, but I won't argue with you over the price. Take the land, and bury your dead wife."        |

|                        |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  |
|------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| New Life Bible         | Ephron answered Abraham, "Listen to me, Sir! The land is worth 260 dollars, what does that amount to between me and you? Go ahead, and bury your dead."                                                                                          |
| New Living Translation | Ephron answered Abraham, "My lord, please listen to me. The land is worth 400 pieces of silver [Hebrew 400 shekels, about 10 pounds or 4.6 kilograms in weight; also in 23:16.], but what is that between friends? Go ahead and bury your dead." |

### Partially literal and partially paraphrased translations:

|                           |                                                                                                                                                                                             |
|---------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| American English Bible    | However, Ephron answered Abraham, saying, 'No, my lord! I've heard that the land [is worth] four hundred silver coins, but what value is that between you and me? No, just bury your dead.' |
| Christian Community Bible | <i>Ephron replied to Abraham, "My lord, hear me. Four hundred silver coins for a piece of land, is it not the right price for both of us? Bury your dead."</i>                              |
| God's Word™               | Ephron answered Abraham, "Sir, listen to me. The land is worth ten pounds of silver. What is that between us? Bury your wife!"                                                              |
| International Standard V  | So Ephron answered Abraham, "Sir [Lit. <i>My lord</i> ], listen to me! The land is worth 400 shekels of silver, but what's that between us? You may bury your dead."                        |

### Mostly literal renderings (with some occasional paraphrasing):

|                        |                                                                                                                                                                                     |
|------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Bible in Basic English | So Ephron said to Abraham, My lord, give ear to me: the value of the land is four hundred shekels; what is that between me and you? so put your dead to rest there.                 |
| Ferar-Fenton Bible     | Then Ephron, in reply to Abraham said; "My lord, listen to me; for four hundred shekels of money between me and you, the land is yours, and you can bury your dead."                |
| New Advent Bible       | And Ephron answered: My lord, hear me. The ground which you desire, is worth four hundred sicles of silver: this is the price between me and you: but what is this? Bury your dead. |

### Catholic Bibles (those having the imprimatur):

|                       |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        |
|-----------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| The Heritage Bible    | And Ephron answered Abraham, saying to him, My lord, hear me attentively; the land is worth four hundred shekels of silver; what is that between me and you? Bury your dead.                                                                                                                                                           |
| New American Bible    | Ephron replied to Abraham, "Please, sir, listen to me! A piece of land worth four hundred shekels [probably an exorbitant sum; Jeremiah (32:9) paid only seventeen shekels for his field in Anathoth, though the Babylonian invasion no doubt helped to reduce the price.] of silver—what is that between you and me? Bury your dead!" |
| New Jerusalem Bible   | Ephron replied to Abraham, 'Please listen to me, my lord. What is a plot of land for four hundred shekels of silver between me and you? Bury your dead.'                                                                                                                                                                               |
| Revised English Bible | Ephron answered, 'Listen, sir: land worth four hundred shekels of silver, what is that between me and you! You may bury your dead there.'                                                                                                                                                                                              |

### Jewish/Hebrew Names Bibles:

|                    |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                |
|--------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| JPS (Tanakh—1985)  | And Ephron replied to Abraham, saying to him, "My lord, do you hear me! A piece of land worth four hundred shekels of silver—what is that between you and me? Go and bury your dead."                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          |
| Kaplan Translation | Ephron replied to Abraham, saying to him, 'My lord, listen to me. What's 400 silver shekels [A shekel was a unit of weight, equal to 22.8 grams or 0.8 ounces. A silver shekel was therefore a little smaller than a silver dollar, and worth around \$1.00. Abraham therefore paid 20 pounds of silver, or about \$400 for the cave. Considering land values at the time, this was highly excessive. Thus, for example, King Omri paid only 6000 shekels for the entire territory of Samaria (1 Kings 16:25), |

and Jeremiah paid only 17 shekels for a property that was at least as large as Makhpelah Field (Jeremiah 32:9). For comparison, according to the Hammurabi Code of that time, a year's wage for a working man was between six and eight shekels.] worth of land between you and me? Bury your dead.'

*The Scriptures* 1998

And Ephron answered Abraham, saying to him, "My master, listen to me! The land is worth four hundred sheqels of silver. What is that between you and me? So bury your dead."

### Expanded/Embellished Bibles:

Kretzmann's Commentary

And Ephron answered Abraham, saying unto him, My lord, hearken unto me: the land is worth four hundred shekels of silver; what is that betwixt me and thee? Bury therefore thy dead. Ephron here named his price: "The field-four hundred shekels silver; between me and thee, what is that?" It is named in courtly terms and intimates an apology for the demand, since Abraham would insist upon having it thus. The silver shekel being worth about 50 cents, the piece of land with the cave Machpelah cost Abraham two hundred dollars. "A piece of land of so little value could not be the matter of a long transaction between two rich men."

Lexham English Bible

And Ephron answered Abraham, saying to him "My lord, hear me. A [piece of] land [worth] four hundred shekels of silver--what [is] that between me and you? Bury your dead."

NET Bible®

Ephron answered Abraham, saying to him, "Hear me, my lord. The land is worth [The word "worth" has been supplied in the translation for stylistic reasons.] 400 pieces of silver [Four hundred pieces of silver. The standards for weighing money varied considerably in the ancient Near East, but the generally accepted weight for the shekel is 11.5 grams (0.4 ounce). This makes the weight of silver here 4.6 kilograms, or 160 ounces (about 10 pounds).], but what is that between me and you? So bury your dead."

Translation for Translators

Ephron answered Abraham, saying to him, "Sir, listen to me. The land is worth 400 pieces of silver. But the price is not important to you and me. Give me the money and bury your wife's body there."

The Voice

Ephron answered Abraham.

**Ephron:** My lord, listen to me. The property is worth 10 pounds of silver. Surely that is an amount we can agree on. So go, and bury your dead *in peace*.

### Literal, almost word-for-word, renderings:

American KJV

And Ephron answered Abraham, saying to him, My lord, listen to me: the land is worth four hundred shekels of silver; what is that between me and you? bury therefore your dead.

Concordant Literal Version

And answering is Ephron Abraham, saying, No lord! Hear me. The land is four hundred shekels of silver. What is that between me and you? Your dead entomb.

Context Group Version

And Ephron answered Abraham, saying, Please my lord, listen to me. A piece of land { or earth } worth four hundred shekels of silver, what is that between me and you? Bury therefore your dead.

English Standard Version

Ephron answered Abraham, "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."

Young's Updated LT

And Ephron answers Abraham, saying to him, "My lord, hear me: the land—four hundred shekels of silver; between me and you, what is it? —your dead bury."

### The gist of this verse:

Ephron reveals the price for the land as being 400 shekels of silver.

| Genesis 23:14                                                                     |                                                                                                                                     |                                                                                              |                            |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------|
| Hebrew/Pronunciation                                                              | Common English Meanings                                                                                                             | Notes/Morphology                                                                             | BDB and Strong's #         |
| wa (or va) (ו) [pronounced <i>wah</i> ]                                           | <i>and so, and then, then, and; so, that, yet, therefore, consequently; because</i>                                                 | wâw consecutive                                                                              | No Strong's #<br>BDB #253  |
| ʿânâh (אָנָה) [pronounced <i>gaw-NAWH</i> ]                                       | <i>to answer, to respond; to speak loudly, to speak up [in a public forum]; to testify; to sing, to chant, to sing responsively</i> | 3 <sup>rd</sup> person masculine singular, Qal imperfect                                     | Strong's #6030<br>BDB #772 |
| ʿEph <sup>e</sup> rôwn (עֹפְרוֹן) [pronounced <i>gef-ROHN</i> ]                   | <i>fawn-like; transliterated Ephron</i>                                                                                             | masculine singular proper noun                                                               | Strong's #6085<br>BDB #780 |
| ʾêth (אֶת) [pronounced <i>ayth</i> ]                                              | untranslated generally; occasionally <i>to, toward</i>                                                                              | indicates that the following substantive is a direct object                                  | Strong's #853<br>BDB #84   |
| ʾAb <sup>e</sup> râhâm (אַבְרָהָם) [pronounced <i>ahb<sup>ve</sup>-raw-HAWM</i> ] | <i>father of a multitude, chief of a multitude; transliterated Abraham</i>                                                          | masculine singular proper noun                                                               | Strong's #85<br>BDB #4     |
| lâmed (ל) [pronounced <i>le</i> ]                                                 | <i>to, for, towards, in regards to</i>                                                                                              | directional/relational preposition                                                           | No Strong's #<br>BDB #510  |
| ʾâmar (אָמַר) [pronounced <i>aw-MAHR</i> ]                                        | <i>to say, to speak, to utter; to say [to oneself], to think</i>                                                                    | Qal infinitive construct                                                                     | Strong's #559<br>BDB #55   |
| lâmed (ל) [pronounced <i>le</i> ]                                                 | <i>to, for, towards, in regards to</i>                                                                                              | directional/relational preposition with the 3 <sup>rd</sup> person masculine singular suffix | No Strong's #<br>BDB #510  |

**Translation:** Then Ephron answered Abraham, saying to him,...

Ephron stands up and essentially concludes the negotiations with Abraham, laying out the selling price for the first time in this passage.

| Genesis 23:15a                                    |                                                                                                                                                                     |                                                                       |                                 |
|---------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------|
| Hebrew/Pronunciation                              | Common English Meanings                                                                                                                                             | Notes/Morphology                                                      | BDB and Strong's #              |
| ʾădônây (אֲדֹנָי) [pronounced <i>uh-doh-NAY</i> ] | <i>Lord (s), Master (s), my Lord (s), Sovereign; my lord [master]; can refer to the Trinity or to an intensification of the noun; transliterated Adonai, adonai</i> | masculine plural noun with the 1 <sup>st</sup> person singular suffix | Strong's #113 & #136<br>BDB #10 |

There are actually 3 forms of this word: ʾădônây (אֲדֹנָי) [pronounced *uh-doh-NAY*]; ʾădônay (אֲדֹנַי) [pronounced *uh-doh-NAY*]; and ʾădônîy (אֲדֹנֵי) [pronounced *uh-doh-NEE*].

## Genesis 23:15a

| Hebrew/Pronunciation                                  | Common English Meanings                                                                                                                                  | Notes/Morphology                                                                                          | BDB and Strong's #          |
|-------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------|
| shâma <sup>c</sup> (שָׁמָע)<br>[pronounced shaw-MAHG] | <i>listen [intently], hear, listen and obey, [or, and act upon, give heed to, take note of], hearken to, be attentive to, listen and be cognizant of</i> | 2 <sup>nd</sup> person masculine singular, Qal imperative with the 1 <sup>st</sup> person singular suffix | Strong's #8085<br>BDB #1033 |

**Translation:**...“My adonai, hear me:...

Ephron speaks to Abraham with great respect. Again, contrast this to Lot in Sodom, when surrounded by his neighbors who threatened to kill him. This is not necessarily an indictment of Lot, but of the people with whom he chose to live.

## Genesis 23:15b

| Hebrew/Pronunciation                                                              | Common English Meanings                                                                                              | Notes/Morphology                                  | BDB and Strong's #          |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------|
| 'erets (אֶרֶץ) [pronounced EH-rets]                                               | <i>earth (all or a portion thereof), land, territory, country, continent; ground, soil; under the ground [Sheol]</i> | feminine singular noun                            | Strong's #776<br>BDB #75    |
| 'ar <sup>e</sup> ba <sup>c</sup> (עֶבְרָא)<br>[pronounced ahr <sup>e</sup> -BAHG] | <i>four</i>                                                                                                          | masculine singular noun; numeral                  | Strong's #702<br>BDB #916   |
| mê'ôwth (מֵאוֹת)<br>[pronounced may-OHTH]                                         | <i>hundreds</i>                                                                                                      | feminine plural absolute; numeral; construct form | Strong's #3967<br>BDB #547  |
| sheqel (שֶׁקֶל)<br>[pronounced SHEH-keh]                                          | <i>0.4 ounces or 11 grams and is transliterated shekel</i>                                                           | masculine singular construct                      | Strong's #8255<br>BDB #1053 |
| This is the first occurrence of this word in Scripture.                           |                                                                                                                      |                                                   |                             |
| keçeph (כֶּסֶף)<br>[pronounced KEH-sef]                                           | <i>silver, money; silver [as a metal, ornament, color]; shekels, talents</i>                                         | masculine singular noun                           | Strong's #3701<br>BDB #494  |

**Translation:**...[this piece of] land—400 shekels of silver—...

At this point, Ephron gives Abraham the price he is willing to accept for the land.

Then Ephron just says *land*; he does not say *field*, *burial plot* or anything else. And he names a price: 400 shekels of silver, which is 10 lbs. of silver, according to many experts. Doing a spot price on silver **today**,<sup>38</sup> this is about

<sup>38</sup> I went with \$16.30/oz. In looking at silver prices, that is quite a low for the past 3 or 4 years.

\$2600,<sup>39</sup> which, in some rural areas, is a low price for an unimproved lot. Barnes says<sup>40</sup> that this is 45 lbs. of silver, which makes this lot of land worth, in today's prices, \$11,700<sup>41</sup> and Matthew Henry suggests<sup>42</sup> that this is about 50lbs. We do not know the size of this piece of ground or its amenities; but if you were buying an unimproved lot for a memorial, this is a fairly reasonable price.

Jamieson, Fausset and Brown: *[It] as if Ephron had said, "Since you wish to know the value of the property, it is so and so; but that is a trifle, which you may pay or not as it suits you." They spoke in the common forms of Arab civility, and this indifference was mere affectation.*<sup>43</sup>

Abraham acted in accord with the traditions of the Hittite people. Preacher's Complete Homiletical Commentary: *In the words of Ephron to Abraham, "Nay, my lord, the field give I you, and the cave that is therein I give it you" (Gen 23:11), we have simply a conventional mode of speech—one of those made and provided forms which must be held to mean much less than they express. Abraham asks for a burying-place, and it is offered as a gift. (Gen 23:4; Gen 23:6.) He understands what is really meant, refuses the offer, and pays for the ground. Ephron makes a show of reluctance, but at length consents to receive payment. This was all well understood as being a common mode of dealing. Abraham was a just man, and at the same time prudent.*<sup>44</sup>

If anything, for that era when there would have been a sparse population, land would have been cheap. We read about Omri buying the entire city of Samaria for 6000 shekels in 1Kings 16:24. That is 15x higher, which suggests that Abraham here is overpaying or Omri got a really, really good bargain on Samaria (\$175,000<sup>45</sup> by today's standards).

Dr. Thomas Constable confirms that this is a high price: *Abraham's willingness to pay what appears to have been an unusually large price for the land further demonstrates his faith (Genesis 23:15-16). An average field cost four shekels per acre, and garden land cost 40 shekels per acre. [Note: Francis D. Nichol, ed., The Seventy-Day Adventist Bible Commentary, 1:356.] Abraham was willing to pay 400 shekels. Of course, the text does not give the exact area of the property, but it appears to have been relatively small. Hamilton adds: The piece of property was no bargain for Abraham; 400 shekels would be more than a hundred pounds of silver. David paid only one-eighth that amount—50 shekels of silver—for the purchase of the temple site from Araunah (2Samuel 24:24)."* [Note: Hamilton, *The Book . . . Chapters 18-50*, p. 135].<sup>46</sup>

So, let's say that Abraham paid too much; let's reasonably assume that this son of Heth made it sound like he was being kind and reasonable, but he overcharges Abraham. Abraham can afford it—he is a very wealthy man—and this grave site was a significant memorial for many centuries after that. Ephron? We know his name, and little else—and only because we have studied this chapter of Genesis.

Several commentators said it was common to start out with a price twice that which the field is worth; so that Abraham will then offer half that, and they have a deal. On the one hand, this makes sense, as half what Abraham pays sounds like a more fair price. However it seems weird to start out, "You can have this piece of land from me for free;" and then go from there to twice what the land is worth. It leaves the buyer in an odd position, who just

<sup>39</sup> Multiply the spot silver price by 10 and then by 16 (16 ounces in a pound).

<sup>40</sup> Albert Barnes, *Barnes' Notes on the Old Testament*; from e-Sword, Genesis 23:10–16.

<sup>41</sup> Multiply the spot silver price by 45 and then by 16 (16 ounces in a pound).

<sup>42</sup> Matthew Henry, *Commentary on the Whole Bible*; from e-Sword, Genesis 23:3–15.

<sup>43</sup> Robert Jamieson, A. R. Fausset and David Brown; *Commentary Critical and Explanatory on the Whole Bible*; 1871; from e-sword, Genesis 23:15.

<sup>44</sup> From <http://www.studyLight.org/commentaries/phc/view.cgi?bk=0&ch=22> accessed December 7, 2014.

<sup>45</sup> This assumes that a shekel in the time of Abraham is the same weight as a shekel in the time of Omri. That may not be the case.

<sup>46</sup> From <http://www.studyLight.org/commentaries/dcc/view.cgi?bk=0&ch=23> accessed December 9, 2014.

said that they cannot take the land as a gift; but now, the price is twice what it is worth. The bargaining sounds weird to me and I do not recall any of the commentators offering examples from that era to confirm this idea.

If this were the case, that the seller starts out offering his land as a gift, then jumps to twice the price (expecting to be countered), he must have been surprised that Abraham—who seemed to know how to bargain with him—suddenly said, “Okay, I will pay that” without offering any further adjustment in price. That must have surprised Ephron.

Driver footnotes this verse with: *'An Arab gives his house, field, horse, to-day, as in Abraham's time, to an intending buyer, and appeals to witnesses that he does so. But it is none the less known that this is only a form to help him to raise the price in the end ' (Geikie, l.c. p. 365. Similarly Lane, Mod. Eg. n. 13 f.).<sup>47</sup>*

Whether or not, this is how business was conducted within the people from which Abraham was descended, I could not say. However, Abraham interacts with these men exactly as their culture dictates. There would be a price set, they would agree to it, but it had to be reached according to their business traditions. Whether this was a phenomenon which was found in other nearby cultures, I do not know. Abraham, however, knew how to interact, so that they would come to an agreement that both parties could live by.

As far as we know, there were no coins prior to 700 B.C. and the Hebrews did not use coins until approximately 500 B.C.<sup>48</sup> Had the OT been written during those times (which is what is alleged by liberal *scholars*) then coinage would have been quoted here. However, during this time, financial transactions were accomplished using several mediums, including precious metals (value determined by weight and demand), as well as cattle, grain and spices. Recall that we are dealing with a very small and dispersed population during those days; land would be very inexpensive; and that Abraham and these Hittites are likely all very wealthy, successful businessmen, the equivalent of millionaires today (they likely did not have men who were equivalent to our billionaires today or even 100-millionaires).

One of the many Jewish stereotypes perpetuated today is their alleged parsimonious nature. Whether or not this is statistically true, this was certainly not a trait of their father Abraham. Abraham began bargaining from the set price of the land and the owner of the land began bargaining from zero. This is a clear deviation from that stereotype. What we have here is a couple of millionaires (or, at least, very wealthy businessmen) and the owner of the property is telling Abraham that there is not enough money involved here to even be an issue. This is not exactly what is occurring here, but it is close. It is actually a very polite way of bargaining and it is done in front of witnesses. What we are seeing is a business transaction which took place 2000 years prior to the incarnation of our Lord between businessmen who had mutual respect for one another. It is a far cry from today and stock transactions, buyouts, and the selling of companies as though they were so much scrap, etc. This reveals a system of honor almost nonexistent today.

### Genesis 23:15c

| Hebrew/Pronunciation             | Common English Meanings                                                                 | Notes/Morphology                                               | BDB and Strong's #        |
|----------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------|
| bêyn (בֵּינַי) [pronounced bane] | <i>in the midst of, between, among,</i><br>when found twice, it means<br><i>between</i> | preposition with the 1 <sup>st</sup><br>person singular suffix | Strong's #996<br>BDB #107 |

<sup>47</sup> From <https://ia600406.us.archive.org/27/items/bookofgenesisnot00drivuoft/bookofgenesisnot00drivuoft.pdf> (p. 226); accessed December 10, 2014.

<sup>48</sup> The Pulpit Commentary: *Coined money was unknown to the Hebrews until after the captivity. In the time of the Maccabees (RAPC 1Ma 15:6) silver coins were struck bearing the inscription Iar Iq According to Josephus (Ant., iii. 8, 2). The Pulpit Commentary; 1880-1919; by Joseph S. Exell, Henry Donald Maurice Spence-Jones, courtesy of e-sword, Genesis 23:14–15. They go into more detail, but I saw no reason to quote more than I did.*

## Genesis 23:15c

| Hebrew/Pronunciation                                                                                                     | Common English Meanings                                                    | Notes/Morphology                                                                                      | BDB and Strong's #         |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------|
| w <sup>e</sup> (or v <sup>e</sup> ) (וּ, or ו) [pronounced weh]                                                          | <i>and, even, then; namely; when; since, that; though</i>                  | simple wâw conjunction                                                                                | No Strong's #<br>BDB #251  |
| bêyn (בֵּינַי) [pronounced bane]                                                                                         | <i>in the midst of, between, among; when found twice, it means between</i> | preposition with the 2 <sup>nd</sup> person masculine singular suffix                                 | Strong's #996<br>BDB #107  |
| When this preposition is found more than once, it is most accurately rendered <i>between</i> (and translated only once). |                                                                            |                                                                                                       |                            |
| mâh (מַה) [pronounced maw]                                                                                               | <i>what, how, why; what [thing]; anything, something, whatever</i>         | interrogative; exclamatory particle; indefinite pronoun; relative pronoun                             | Strong's #4100<br>BDB #552 |
| hîy' (הִיא) [pronounced hee]                                                                                             | <i>she, it; also used as a demonstrative pronoun: that, this (one)</i>     | 3 <sup>rd</sup> person feminine singular, personal pronoun; sometimes the verb <i>is</i> , is implied | Strong's #1931<br>BDB #214 |

**Translation:** ...between you and I, what [is] that?

This is colloquialism to indicate, given the land and given the amount of money, and given their relationship, that Ephron is asking a fair and reasonable price.

“Here is what the land is worth, but that is nothing in the light of our friendship.” is essentially what Ephron is saying.

Note that Ephron has politely laid out the price that he is willing to take. The phrase “What is that between me and you?” appears to mean, “This is what I would charge someone else, but how can I take any money from you?” Or it may mean, “What is this small amount of money and this little piece of land between me and you?” I believe that is the sense of what Ephron is saying.

Clarke: *What is that between you and me? [What is this] between two persons so rich, the sum was trifling and inconsiderable, whether the one paid it, and the other received it, or not; or between two such friends it was not worth speaking of, it was no matter whether it was paid or not: or else the sense is, between us both it is honestly worth so much; it is a good bargain, and must be owned to be so, what is it? the sum is so small, and it is so clearly the worth of it, that there needs no more to be said about it.*<sup>49</sup>

In any case, Abraham does not say, “You will give it to me for nothing? Gee, thanks; I really mean that.” It is understood from the beginning that Abraham would pay something for the land, and that would be a fair market value. Abraham is not trying to get this land for the cheapest price possible, nor is Ephron trying to get top dollar for his property, seeing the state of mind that Abraham is in. The approach that they took to get to that place is obviously a matter of their culture.

<sup>49</sup> Adam Clarke, *Commentary on the Bible*; from e-Sword, Genesis 23:15.



| Genesis 23:15d                                                         |                                                           |                                                                                  |                            |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------|
| Hebrew/Pronunciation                                                   | Common English Meanings                                   | Notes/Morphology                                                                 | BDB and Strong's #         |
| w <sup>e</sup> (or v <sup>e</sup> ) (ו, or ו) [pronounced <i>weh</i> ] | <i>and, even, then; namely; when; since, that; though</i> | simple wâw conjunction                                                           | No Strong's #<br>BDB #251  |
| 'êth (אֶת) [pronounced <i>ayth</i> ]                                   | untranslated generally; occasionally <i>to, toward</i>    | indicates that the following substantive is a direct object                      | Strong's #853<br>BDB #84   |
| mûwth (תּוּם) [pronounced <i>mooth</i> ]                               | <i>dying, perishing; one who is dying [perishing]</i>     | Qal active participle, with the 2 <sup>nd</sup> person masculine singular suffix | Strong's #4191<br>BDB #559 |
| qâbar (קָבַר) [pronounced <i>kaw-BAHR</i> ]                            | <i>to bury, to heap up a mound</i>                        | 2 <sup>nd</sup> person masculine singular, Qal imperative                        | Strong's #6912<br>BDB #868 |

**Translation:** Then bury your dead.”

Again, Ephron encourages Abraham to bury his wife there. This is the sixth time in this short chapter that someone has said, these words or very similar words.

Genesis 23:14–15 Then Ephron answered Abraham, saying to him, “My adonai, hear me: [this piece of land—400 shekels of silver—between you and I, what [is] that? Then bury your dead.” (Kukis mostly literal translation)

Genesis 23:14–15 Then Ephron answered Abraham, saying, “My lord, please hear me then: the land is 400 shekels of silver. What is that between you and I? Then you may bury your wife.” (Kukis paraphrase)

He is saying, “Between you and me, the money is nothing; please take my land for this price, and get on with what you intend to do—to bury your wife.”

And so hears Abraham unto Ephron and so weighs out Abraham for Ephron the silver which he had said in [two] ears of sons of Heth: four hundreds of a shekel of silver passing through to one going about.

Genesis  
23:16

So Abraham listened to [and agreed with] Ephron so he [lit., *Abraham*] weighed out for Ephron the silver that he had proposed in the hearing of the sons of Heth: 400 shekels of silver passing through regarding the trader [or, *merchant*].

So Abraham agreed to Ephron's terms, and he weighed out the amount of silver that Ephron had proposed at this public meeting, which was 400 shekels of silver according to the scales of traders.

Here is how others have translated this verse:

#### Ancient texts:

Masoretic Text (Hebrew)

And so hears Abraham unto Ephron and so weighs out Abraham for Ephron the silver which he had said in [two] ears of sons of Heth: four hundreds of a shekel of silver passing through to one going about.

Targum of Onkelos

And Abraham hearkened unto Ephron, and Abraham weighed to Ephron the silver which he had named before the sons of Hittah, four hundred sileen of silver, good,

|                          |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     |
|--------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Latin Vulgate            | passing at every table, and <u>receivable in all transactions</u> [JERUSALEM. Four hundred sileen of silver, passing at every table, and receivable in all transactions.]. And when Abraham had heard this, he weighed out the money that Ephron had asked, in the hearing of the children of Heth, four hundred sicles of silver, <u>of common current money</u> . |
| Peshitta (Syriac)        | And Abraham hearkened to Ephron; and Abraham weighed to Ephron the sum of money which he had named in the presence of the Hittites, four hundred shekels of silver, <u>legal tender with the merchants</u> .                                                                                                                                                        |
| Septuagint (Greek)       | And Abraham listened to Ephron, and Abraham rendered to Ephron the money, which he mentioned in the ears of the sons of Heth, four hundred shekels of silver <u>approved with merchants</u> .                                                                                                                                                                       |
| Significant differences: | Although the MT has <i>ears</i> in the 3 <sup>rd</sup> phrase, this word does not have to be repeated exactly. The final words in the Hebrew are confusing, so we have a variety in interpretations in the other ancient languages.                                                                                                                                 |

### Thought-for-thought translations; paraphrases:

|                         |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         |
|-------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Common English Bible    | Abraham accepted Ephron's offer and weighed out for Ephron the silver he requested publicly before the Hittites: four hundred shekels of silver at the current rate of exchange.                                                                        |
| Contemporary English V. | Abraham accepted Ephron's offer and paid him the four hundred pieces of silver in front of everyone at the city gate.                                                                                                                                   |
| Easy English            | Abraham agreed with Ephron. He weighed out 400 *shekels of silver for Ephron. He did it with the scales that the merchants used. The chief men in the family of Heth were witnesses to the sale.                                                        |
| Easy-to-Read Version    | Abraham understood that Ephron was telling him the price of the land. [130] So Abraham paid him for the land. Abraham weighed 10 pounds [131] of silver for Ephron and gave it to the merchant.                                                         |
| Good News Bible (TEV)   | Abraham agreed and weighed out the amount that Ephron had mentioned in the hearing of the people---four hundred pieces of silver, according to the standard weights used by the merchants.                                                              |
| <i>The Message</i>      | Abraham accepted Ephron's offer and paid out the sum that Ephron had named before the town council of Hittites--four hundred silver shekels at the current exchange rate.                                                                               |
| New Berkeley Version    | Abraham understood Ephron; so he weighed out to Ephron the silver he had stipulated in the hearing of the Hittites, 260 dollar, currency with the merchants.                                                                                            |
| New Century Version     | Abraham agreed and paid Ephron in front of the Hittite witnesses. He weighed out the full price, ten pounds of silver, and they counted the weight as the traders normally did.                                                                         |
| New Life Bible          | Abraham listened to Ephron. And Abraham weighed for Ephron the silver which he had said and was heard by the sons of Heth to be the price, four hundred pieces of silver. He weighed it in the same way those who buy and sell weighed it at that time. |
| New Living Translation  | So Abraham agreed to Ephron's price and paid the amount he had suggested-400 pieces of silver, weighed according to the market standard. The Hittite elders witnessed the transaction.                                                                  |

### Partially literal and partially paraphrased translations:

|                        |                                                                                                                                                                                      |
|------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| American English Bible | And although AbraHam listened to EphRon, he still paid [him] the money, just as he had said before the sons of Chet - four hundred silver coins that had been approved by merchants. |
|------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|

|                             |                                                                                                                                                                                          |
|-----------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Beck's American Translation | Abraham did as Ephron suggested; he weighed out to Ephron the sum he stated while the Hittites were listening, 400 shekels of silver according to the standard weight of the merchant.   |
| God's Word™                 | Abraham agreed to Ephron's terms. So he weighed out for Ephron the amount stated in front of the Hittites: ten pounds of silver at the current merchants' exchange rate.                 |
| International Standard V    | Abraham agreed with Ephron, so he weighed out to Ephron the money to which he had agreed publicly while the Hittites were listening: 400 shekels of silver at the current merchant rate. |

### Mostly literal renderings (with some occasional paraphrasing):

|                           |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     |
|---------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Ancient Roots Translinear | Abraham heard Ephron. Abraham weighed to Ephron the silver which he spoke in the ear of the sons of Heth. Four hundred shekels of silver passed in the trade.                                                                       |
| Bible in Basic English    | And Abraham took note of the price fixed by Ephron in the hearing of the children of Heth, and gave him four hundred shekels in current money.                                                                                      |
| HCSB                      | Abraham agreed with Ephron, and Abraham weighed out to Ephron the silver that he had agreed to in the hearing of the Hittites: 400 shekels of silver at the current commercial rate.                                                |
| New Advent Bible          | And when Abraham had heard this, he weighed out the money that Ephron had asked, in the hearing of the children of Heth, four hundred sicles of silver, of common current money.                                                    |
| NIV – UK                  | Abraham agreed to Ephron's terms and weighed out for him the price he had named in the hearing of the Hittites: four hundred shekels of silver [That is, about 4.6 kilograms], according to the weight current among the merchants. |

### Catholic Bibles (those having the imprimatur):

|                       |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      |
|-----------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| The Heritage Bible    | And Abraham attentively heard Ephron, and Abraham weighed to Ephron the silver, which he had spoken in the ears of the sons of Heth, four hundred shekels of silver, crossed over to the merchant.                                                                                                   |
| New American Bible    | Abraham accepted Ephron's terms; he weighed out to him the silver that Ephron had stipulated in the hearing of the Hittites, four hundred shekels of silver at the current market value. The current market value: the standard weight called a shekel varied according to time and place. Acts 7:16 |
| New Jerusalem Bible   | Abraham agreed to Ephron's terms, and Abraham weighed out for Ephron the silver he had stipulated in the hearing of the Hittites, namely four hundred shekels of silver, according to the current commercial rate.                                                                                   |
| Revised English Bible | Abraham closed the bargain with him and weighed out the amount that Ephron had named in the hearing of the Hittites, four hundred shekels of the standard recognized by merchants.                                                                                                                   |

### Jewish/Hebrew Names Bibles:

|                           |                                                                                                                                                                                                                              |
|---------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Complete Jewish Bible     | Avraham got the point of what 'Efron had said, so he weighed out for 'Efron the amount of money he had specified in the presence of the sons of Het, 400 silver shekels of the weight accepted among merchants [ten pounds]. |
| JPS (Tanakh—1985)         | Abraham accepted Ephron's terms. Abraham paid out to Ephron the money that he had named in the hearing of the Hittites—four hundred shekels of silver at the going merchants' rate.                                          |
| Judaica Press Complete T. | And Abraham listened to Ephron, and Abraham weighed out to Ephron the silver that he had named in the hearing of the sons of Heth, four hundred shekels of silver, accepted by the merchant.                                 |

|                            |                                                                                                                                                                                                            |
|----------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Hebrew Names Version       | Avraham listened to `Efron. Avraham weighed to `Efron the silver which he had named in the audience of the children of Chet, four hundred shekels of silver, according to the current merchants' standard. |
| Kaplan Translation         | Abraham understood what Ephron meant. He weighed out for Ephron the silver that had been mentioned in the presence of the children of Heth, 400 shekels in negotiable currency.                            |
| <i>The Scriptures</i> 1998 | And Abraham listened to Ephron, and Abraham weighed out the silver for Ephron which he had named in the hearing of the sons of Heth, four hundred shekels of silver, currency of the merchants.            |

### Expanded/Embellished Bibles:

|                             |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               |
|-----------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Kretzmann's Commentary      | And Abraham hearkened unto Ephron; and Abraham weighed to Ephron the silver which he had named in the audience of the sons of Heth, four hundred shekels of silver, current money with the merchant. There were no stamped coins with a fixed value in Canaan at that time, but there seem to have been pieces of silver of a definite weight, which could readily be weighed out. In a transaction such as that recorded here, these pieces were weighed out in order to show that no fraud was being attempted. Abraham weighed out full measure, as it was required with the merchants, in honest business Christians, as the apostle rightly says, will avoid even the appearance of evil. Abraham here gave evidence of his faith by buying a small piece of land in the country which was promised to his descendants, being sure that the Lord would keep His promise. |
| Lexham English Bible        | Then Abraham listened to Ephron, and Abraham weighed for Ephron the silver that he had named in the hearing of the Hittites: four hundred shekels of silver {at the merchants' current rate}.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 |
| NET Bible®                  | So Abraham agreed to Ephron's price [Heb "listened to Ephron."] and weighed [Heb "and Abraham weighed out."] out for him [Heb "to Ephron." The proper name has been replaced by the pronoun ("him") in the translation for stylistic reasons.] the price [Heb "silver."] that Ephron had quoted [Heb "that he had spoken." The referent (Ephron) has been specified here in the translation for clarity and for stylistic reasons.] in the hearing of the sons of Heth — 400 pieces of silver, according to the standard measurement at the time [Heb "passing for the merchant." The final clause affirms that the measurement of silver was according to the standards used by the merchants of the time.].                                                                                                                                                                 |
| Translation for Translators | Abraham agreed with Ephron about the price, and weighed for Ephron the 400 pieces of silver he had suggested, as everyone was listening, using the standard weights for silver used by people who sold things.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                |
| The Voice                   | So Abraham accepted Ephron's offer, and he weighed out the silver for him in the amount they had agreed upon in the presence of the Hittites-10 pounds of silver, according to the weights among the merchants of that time.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  |

### Literal, almost word-for-word, renderings:

|                            |                                                                                                                                                                                                            |
|----------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| LTHB                       | And Abraham listened to Ephron, and Abraham weighed to Ephron the silver of which he had spoken in the ears of the sons of Heth, four hundred silver shekels which passes with the merchant.               |
| Updated Bible Version 2.11 | And Abraham listened to Ephron. And Abraham weighed to Ephron the silver which he had named in the audience of the sons of Heth, four hundred shekels of silver, current [money] with the merchant.        |
| World English Bible        | Abraham listened to Ephron. Abraham weighed to Ephron the silver which he had named in the audience of the children of Heth, four hundred shekels of silver, according to the current merchants' standard. |

Young's Updated LT

And Abraham hearkens unto Ephron, and Abraham weighs to Ephron the silver which he has spoken of in the ears of the sons of Heth, four hundred silver shekels, passing with the merchant.

The gist of this verse:

Abraham agreed to Ephron's price, and weighed out the proper amount of silver to close the deal.

### Genesis 23:16a

| Hebrew/Pronunciation                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           | Common English Meanings                                                                                                                                                    | Notes/Morphology                                              | BDB and Strong's #          |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------|
| wa (or va) (ו) [pronounced wah]                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                | <i>and so, and then, then, and; so, that, yet, therefore, consequently; because</i>                                                                                        | wâw consecutive                                               | No Strong's #<br>BDB #253   |
| shâma' (שמע) [pronounced shaw-MAHÇ]                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            | <i>to listen [intently], to hear, to listen and obey, [or, and act upon, give heed to, take note of], to hearken to, to be attentive to, to listen and be cognizant of</i> | 3 <sup>rd</sup> person masculine singular, Qal imperfect      | Strong's #8085<br>BDB #1033 |
| The BDB Qal meanings for shâma' are 1a1) to hear (perceive by ear); 1a2) to hear of or concerning; 1a3) to hear (have power to hear); 1a4) to hear with attention or interest, listen to; 1a5) to understand (language); 1a6) to hear (of judicial cases); 1a7) to listen, give heed; 1a7a) to consent, agree; 1a7b) to grant request; 1a8) to listen to, yield to; 1a9) to obey, be obedient. |                                                                                                                                                                            |                                                               |                             |
| 'Ab <sup>e</sup> râhâm (אברהם) [pronounced ahb <sup>ve</sup> -raw-HAWM]                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        | <i>father of a multitude, chief of a multitude; transliterated Abraham</i>                                                                                                 | masculine singular proper noun                                | Strong's #85<br>BDB #4      |
| 'el (ל) [pronounced eh]                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        | <i>unto; into, among, in; toward, to, against; concerning, regarding; besides, together with; as to</i>                                                                    | directional preposition (respect or deference may be implied) | Strong's #413<br>BDB #39    |
| 'Eph <sup>e</sup> rôwn (עפרון) [pronounced ġef-ROHN]                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           | <i>fawn-like; transliterated Ephron</i>                                                                                                                                    | masculine singular proper noun                                | Strong's #6085<br>BDB #780  |

**Translation:** So Abraham listened to [and agreed with] Ephron...

The verb which we have seen many times in this chapter, which can simply mean *to hear, to listen*; can also indicate that there is agreement. Abraham heard was what proposed and he agreed to that proposal.

### Genesis 23:16b

| Hebrew/Pronunciation                | Common English Meanings                                                             | Notes/Morphology                                         | BDB and Strong's #          |
|-------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------|
| wa (or va) (ו) [pronounced wah]     | <i>and so, and then, then, and; so, that, yet, therefore, consequently; because</i> | wâw consecutive                                          | No Strong's #<br>BDB #253   |
| shâqal (שקל) [pronounced shaw-KAHL] | <i>to weigh [out]; to pay out; to grieve</i>                                        | 3 <sup>rd</sup> person masculine singular, Qal imperfect | Strong's #8254<br>BDB #1053 |

| Genesis 23:16b                                                                       |                                                                              |                                                                                              |                            |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------|
| Hebrew/Pronunciation                                                                 | Common English Meanings                                                      | Notes/Morphology                                                                             | BDB and Strong's #         |
| ʾAb <sup>e</sup> râhâm (אֲבִרָאָם)<br>[pronounced <i>ahb<sup>ve</sup>-raw-HAWM</i> ] | <i>father of a multitude, chief of a multitude; transliterated Abraham</i>   | masculine singular proper noun                                                               | Strong's #85<br>BDB #4     |
| lâmed (ל) [pronounced <i>le</i> ]                                                    | <i>to, for, towards, in regards to</i>                                       | directional/relational preposition with the 3 <sup>rd</sup> person masculine singular suffix | No Strong's #<br>BDB #510  |
| ʿEph <sup>e</sup> rôwn (עֲפְרֹן)<br>[pronounced <i>gef-ROHN</i> ]                    | <i>fawn-like; transliterated Ephron</i>                                      | masculine singular proper noun                                                               | Strong's #6085<br>BDB #780 |
| ʾêth (אֶת) [pronounced <i>ayth</i> ]                                                 | untranslated generally; occasionally <i>to, toward</i>                       | indicates that the following substantive is a direct object                                  | Strong's #853<br>BDB #84   |
| keçeph (כֶּסֶף)<br>[pronounced <i>KEH-sef</i> ]                                      | <i>silver, money; silver [as a metal, ornament, color]; shekels, talents</i> | masculine singular noun with the definite article                                            | Strong's #3701<br>BDB #494 |

**Translation:** ...so he [lit., Abraham] weighed out for Ephron the silver...

Silver, like gold, is one of those metals which is seen to have intrinsic value. It does not appear as though there are silver coins which can be given for the purchase of the property, so Abraham probably has various weights of silver, and he weighs is out until there is about 10 lbs.

Abraham now measures out 400 shekels of silver. Some translators put this at 10 lbs of silver. Spot silver today is around \$20/oz., so that would make this transaction around \$3200, which, for an unimproved plot of land, is not out of line with today's prices. This sounds like a fairly large piece of property which includes a cave and trees.

As previously discussed, there may have been considerably more than 10 lbs. of silver here.

Clarke: *and Abraham weighed to Ephron the silver: for in those times money had no mark or stamp upon it to show its value, and therefore was not told by pieces, but weighed, by which its full worth was known; and that Ephron might have his whole and just demand, the silver was weighed to him.*<sup>50</sup>

Now, this particular scenario is actually trickier than you might realize. Did Abraham just happen to have this much silver with him? Did he bring a much more generous amount? How did he have any idea at this time?

First off, any amount of silver around or exceeding 10 lbs is not difficult to carry about—if it is 50 lbs., that might be a bit more difficult. So, Abraham could have, at some point in time—not necessarily right after Sarah died—determined the approximate property values and brought more than enough to pay for the land. Even though we only have Abraham and the elders at the gate; Abraham probably traveled with a number of bodyguards and servants. So, bringing this amount of silver is not that big of a deal.

Another possibility is, Abraham, having heard the price, will shake hands (or whatever), leave, and then return with Sarah's body and 10 (50?) lbs. of silver. So, this may be the 2<sup>nd</sup> or even 3<sup>rd</sup> meeting that Abraham has with the elders of the Hittites. Even though, when we read the text, there is the impression that all of this took place at one time (which is possible), there is nothing in the text which necessitates that. Even though I (along with most

<sup>50</sup> Adam Clarke, *Commentary on the Bible*; from e-Sword, Genesis 23:16.

translators) strung together vv. 16a–c as if one event, that is not necessarily the case. This could read: **Abraham listened to Ephron [and then he returned home]. Then 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 [and returned to the city gate with the silver and with the body of Sarah, to be buried in the cave]. [Abraham paid this silver to Ephron, and] 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 deeded over to Abraham as a possession in the presence of the Hittites, before all who went in at the gate of his city. 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.** (Genesis 23:16–19; ESV mostly, with additions by me).

Certainly, Abraham did not bring his wife’s body to the initial meeting (s). However, at some point, he did bring his wife’s body to bury. By that point in time, the land had probably been deeded over to him.

I only mention these things because, sometimes people find so-called contradictions in the text of Scripture, and that is because they do not allow for intervening events. As we have seen, there may have been as many as 3 different meetings—and if Sarah’s body was brought to be buried at a later day, there may have been as many as 4 trips by Abraham to this city east of Mamre. Since Abraham would not have brought Sarah’s body with him to the initial meeting, there had to be no fewer than 2 trips by Abraham to this city.

There is no problem if the author does not choose to mentioned intervening trips or subsequent meetings. We do not need to know, for instance, that Abraham took an hour break for lunch while Ephron was located and brought to the meeting. We do not need to know that, after securing the property, *Abraham returned home for the body of Sarah.*

| Genesis 23:16c                                              |                                                                                                                                                                                                          |                                                         |                            |
|-------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------|
| Hebrew/Pronunciation                                        | Common English Meanings                                                                                                                                                                                  | Notes/Morphology                                        | BDB and Strong’s #         |
| ’ăsher (אֲשֶׁר)<br>[pronounced <i>uh-SHER</i> ]             | <i>that, which, when, who, whom</i>                                                                                                                                                                      | relative pronoun                                        | Strong’s #834<br>BDB #81   |
| dâbar (דָּבַר) [pronounced<br><i>daw<sup>b</sup>-VAHR</i> ] | <i>to speak, to talk [and back with action], to give an opinion, to expound, to make a formal speech, to speak out, to promise, to propose, to speak kindly of, to declare, to proclaim, to announce</i> | 3 <sup>rd</sup> person masculine singular, Piel perfect | Strong’s #1696<br>BDB #180 |
| b <sup>e</sup> (ב) [pronounced <i>b<sup>eh</sup></i> ]      | <i>in, into, through; at, by, near, on, upon; with, before, against; by means of; among; within</i>                                                                                                      | a preposition of proximity                              | No Strong’s #<br>BDB #88   |
| ’ôzen (אָזְן) [pronounced<br><i>OH-zen</i> ]                | <i>ears</i>                                                                                                                                                                                              | feminine plural construct                               | Strong’s #241<br>BDB #23   |
| bânîym (בָּנִים)<br>[pronounced <i>baw-NEEM</i> ]           | <i>sons, descendants; children; people; sometimes rendered men</i>                                                                                                                                       | masculine plural construct                              | Strong’s #1121<br>BDB #119 |
| Cheth (חֵת) [pronounced<br><i>khayth</i> ]                  | transliterated <i>Heth; Hittite</i>                                                                                                                                                                      | masculine proper noun                                   | Strong’s #2845<br>BDB #366 |

**Translation:** ...that he had proposed in the hearing of the sons of Heth:...

Ephron proposed this amount, and Abraham had agreed to it. This was done in a group, so that there would be no reason for either man to later say, “I didn’t get the price I expected” or “I never received the land.” It suggests that these men together can be counted upon to be honest with one another. This also suggests that this was a common way for contracts and agreements to be drawn up.

It suggests—although I don’t want to make this an emphatic point—that this was not written down, but done as a public transaction. What is done here does not preclude a deed of possession being issued; but such a deed is not necessary, with all of the witnesses there.

All of the witnesses preclude either man from reneging on this deal or trying to change any of the terms after the fact.

| Genesis 23:16d                                                |                                                                                                 |                                                      |                             |
|---------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------|
| Hebrew/Pronunciation                                          | Common English Meanings                                                                         | Notes/Morphology                                     | BDB and Strong’s #          |
| ʾarbaʿ (עֲרֵבָא)<br>[pronounced <i>ahr<sup>e</sup>-BAHG</i> ] | <i>four</i>                                                                                     | masculine singular noun;<br>numeral                  | Strong’s #702<br>BDB #916   |
| mēʾōwth (מֵאוֹת)<br>[pronounced <i>may-OHTH</i> ]             | <i>hundreds</i>                                                                                 | feminine plural absolute;<br>numeral; construct form | Strong’s #3967<br>BDB #547  |
| sheqel (שֶׁקֶל)<br>[pronounced <i>SHEH-keh</i> ]              | <i>0.4 ounces or 11 grams and is transliterated shekel</i>                                      | masculine singular<br>construct                      | Strong’s #8255<br>BDB #1053 |
| This is the first occurrence of this word in Scripture.       |                                                                                                 |                                                      |                             |
| keṣeph (כֶּסֶף)<br>[pronounced <i>KEH-sef</i> ]               | <i>silver, money; silver [as a metal, ornament, color]; shekels, talents</i>                    | masculine singular noun                              | Strong’s #3701<br>BDB #494  |
| ʾābar (אָבַר) [pronounced <i>gaw<sup>p</sup>-VAHR</i> ]       | <i>passing by, passing through; passing over</i>                                                | Qal active participle                                | Strong’s #5674<br>BDB #716  |
| lāmed (ל) [pronounced <i>l</i> ʰ]                             | <i>to, for, towards, in regards to, with reference to, as to, with regards to, belonging to</i> | directional/relational<br>preposition                | No Strong’s #<br>BDB #510   |
| ṣāchar (צָחַר)<br>[pronounced <i>saw-KHAHR</i> ]              | <i>the one going around [about], the traveler [about, in]; merchant, trader</i>                 | Qal active participle with<br>the definite article   | Strong’s #5503<br>BDB #695  |

**Translation:** ...400 shekels of silver passing through regarding the trader [or, merchant].

The final participles are quite difficult; at least the 2<sup>nd</sup> to the last is. There are a variety of meanings given for the first participle: BDB lists these: *to pass over or by or through, alienate, bring, carry, do away, take, take away, transgress*. This is before listing out the meanings as per the stems and participles. Perhaps what is being indicated here is, traders regularly pass through this area, and the amount is done according to the system of weights which has become common to the traders of that day which pass through.

Genesis 23:16 So Abraham listened to [and agreed with] Ephron so he [lit., Abraham] weighed out for Ephron the silver that he had proposed in the hearing of the sons of Heth: 400 shekels of silver passing through regarding the trader [or, merchant]. (Kukis mostly literal translation)



Genesis 23:16 So Abraham agreed to Ephron's terms, and he weighed out the amount of silver that Ephron had proposed at this public meeting, which was 400 shekels of silver according to the scales of traders. (Kukis paraphrase)

According to Barnes: *The Kenaanites, of whom the Hittites were a tribe, were among the earliest traders in the world. The merchant, as the original imports, is the traveller who brings the wares to the purchasers in their own dwellings or towns. To him a fixed weight and measure were necessary.*<sup>51</sup>

You will take note that all of this bargaining is taking place in public. Everyone at this public meeting will know the agreed-to price and all of the terms of this transaction. They will know the location of the property, the boundaries of the property, the amount offered for the property, and the amount given for the property. So, they may or may not have recorded an official deed with a survey as we do today. But, there are enough people present at this meeting to witness the entire transaction.

Matthew Henry: *Prudence, as well as justice, directs us to be fair, and open, and above-board, in our dealings. Fraudulent contracts hate the light, and choose to be clandestine; but those that design honestly in their bargains care not who are witnesses to them.*<sup>52</sup>

Henry continues: *Abraham, without fraud, covin, or further delay, pays the money...He pays it readily, without hesitation, - pays it in full, without diminution, - and pays it by weight, current money with the merchant, without deceit. See how anciently money was used for the help of commerce; and see how honestly money should be paid where it is due...The saints' title to an eternal inheritance does not entitle them to the possessions of this world, nor justify them in doing wrong.*<sup>53</sup>

It should also be noticed that Abraham could show up to this meeting of Hittites with a hand full of silver, and not feel concerned that he might be robbed. More than likely, there is a third meeting where this transaction is consummated (where Abraham is said to weigh out the silver for Ephron). This would be witnessed to by many of the elders of the city.

Here is why there were probably 3 meetings. When Abraham first speaks to the elders of the city, Ephron may not have been there. In the next meeting, Ephron is there, and a price is agreed to. Abraham must return again with the silver in order to finalize this deal. The narrative does not require 3 meetings, but it suggests that 3 meetings took place.

As an aside, it ought to be apparent that, in the ancient world, it was not easy for a person to make his way through life. Working from sunrise to sunset appears to be the norm in order to eek out a living. But, on the other hand, we appear to have all of these people gathered here at the city gates witnessing a land transaction. So, what gives? Here is what I believe explains this. As a person becomes older, they gain both wisdom and resources. If you have lived your life well, then at age 60, you have far more than you had back at age 30. At age 60, you are able to slow down your life somewhat. Now, I do not recommend to retire at age 60 or 65 or even at age 70. God put us on earth, in part, to work; and working is honorable and healthy (both physically and mentally). I don't recall the Bible saying anything about retirement.

We will study Abraham and one of his servants in Genesis 24, and it will become apparent that most of Abraham's day-to-day operations are under the control of this head servant—he oversees much of what Abraham has and he appears to be more closely involved in Abraham's businesses than Abraham himself.

So, there is a point where you are able to cut back. A person in the ancient world who is nearing old age may have more slaves or more employees; and/or is able to cut back on his own working hours. Some of these elders, apparently (and this was a cultural thing) made it a point to go to the city gates to act as witnesses or to even offer

<sup>51</sup> Albert Barnes, *Barnes' Notes on the Old Testament*; from e-Sword, Genesis 23:10–16.

<sup>52</sup> Matthew Henry, *Commentary on the Whole Bible*; from e-Sword, Genesis 23:16–20.

<sup>53</sup> Matthew Henry, *Commentary on the Whole Bible*; from e-Sword, Genesis 23:16–20.

opinions and testimony regarding the legal transactions which might take place on that day. This would be in service to their own community; and they would have more flexible hours so that this can be done. Think of it as akin to a voluntary jury duty. They were witnesses more than they were a jury, but it is the same principle.

Although this is simply a cultural norm, how could we apply this to today? I would suggest that jury duty draw disproportionately from an older group of people. That is, a 60 year-old might be called upon once or twice a year to serve on a jury; whereas a 30 year-old might be called upon once every 2 or 3 years. Ideally speaking, the 60 year-old has more free time and greater wisdom upon which to base a verdict.

[Chapter Outline](#)

[Charts, Graphics and Short Doctrines](#)

## The Conclusion of Abraham's Land Deal with Ephron ben Zophar

Nearly every translation had v. 17 being continued to v. 18, so I put these two verses together. Several translations combined these verses into one.

And so stands a field of Ephron which [is] in the Machpelah which [is] to faces of Mamre—the field and the cave which [is] in it and every tree which [is] in the field which [is] in all his border round about—to Abraham for a purchase to [two] eyes of sons of Heth in all those going in a gate of his city.

Genesis  
23:17–18

And so [it] is confirmed: the field of Ephron which [is] in Machpelah which [is] in front of Mamre—the field with the cave that [is] in it, with all the trees that [are] in the field which [is] within its border round about—[this field is conveyed] to Abraham for a possession before the sons of Heth among all those entering the gates of his city.

Consequently, the field of Ephron which is in Machpelah east of Mamre—which field includes the cave as well as all of the trees within its borders on all sides, is legally conveyed to Abraham as his possession. This took place before the sons of Heth as witnesses as well as before all those who were entering into the gates of the city.

Here is how others have translated this verse:

### Ancient texts:

|                         |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    |
|-------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Masoretic Text (Hebrew) | And so stands a field of Ephron which [is] in the Machpelah which [is] to faces of Mamre—the field and the cave which [is] in it and every tree which [is] in the field which [is] in all his border round about—to Abraham for a purchase to [two] eyes of sons of Heth in all those going in a gate of his city.                                                                 |
| Targum of Onkelos       | And he confirmed the purchase of the field of Ephron, in which (was) the double (cave) which is before Mamre, The field, and the cave that is therein, and all the trees that were in the field, in all the boundaries thereof round about, unto Abraham, for a purchased possession, in the presence of the sons of Hittah, (even) of all who entered in at the gate of the city. |
| Latin Vulgate           | And the field that before was Ephron's, wherein was the double cave, looking towards Mambre, both it and the cave, and all the trees thereof, in all its limits round about, was made sure to Abraham for a possession, in the sight of the children of Heth, and of all that went in at the gate of his city.                                                                     |
| Peshitta (Syriac)       | Thus the field of Ephron, which was by the side of the double cave which was before Mamre, that is, the Field of the Cave and the cave which was in it and all the trees that were in the field that were on its borders round about were made sure                                                                                                                                |

And sold to Abraham in the presence of the Hittites and in the presence of all that went in at the gate of his city.

Septuagint (Greek) And the field of Ephron, which was in Double Cave, which is opposite Mamre, the field and the cave, which was in it, and every tree which was in the field, and whatever is in its borders round about, were deeded to Abraham for a possession, before the sons of Heth, and all that entered into the city.

Significant differences: The verb in the first phrase is legitimately placed later in the sentence in the Latin, Syriac and Greek.

### Thought-for-thought translations; paraphrases:

|                         |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                |
|-------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Common English Bible    | So the field of Ephron in Machpelah near Mamre--the field and the cave in it, and all the trees within the field's boundaries--was officially transferred to Abraham as his property in the presence of the Hittites and of everyone at his city's gate.                                                       |
| Contemporary English V. | That's how Abraham got Ephron's property east of Hebron, which included the field with all of its trees, as well as Machpelah Cave at the end of the field.                                                                                                                                                    |
| Easy English            | So Abraham became the owner of Ephron's field. That field was in Machpelah, which was east from Mamre. There was a cave in it, and there were trees. Abraham bought all that. And the members of Heth's family who were at the gate were witnesses.                                                            |
| Good News Bible (TEV)   | That is how the property which had belonged to Ephron at Machpelah east of Mamre, became Abraham's. It included the field, the cave which was in it, and all the trees in the field up to the edge of the property. It was recognized as Abraham's property by all the Hittites who were there at the meeting. |
| <i>The Message</i>      | That's how Ephron's field next to Mamre--the field, its cave, and all the trees within its borders--became Abraham's property. The town council of Hittites witnessed the transaction.                                                                                                                         |
| New Berkeley Version    | This secured Ephron's field at Machpelah that faced Mamre; the field with the cave that was in it, and all the trees that were in the field to its surrounding boundaries were legally conveyed to Abraham to be his property, witnessed by all the Hittites who were entering the gate of his city.           |
| New Century Version     | So Ephron's field in Machpelah, east of Mamre, was sold. Abraham became the owner of the field, the cave in it, and all the trees that were in the field. The sale was made at the city gate, with the Hittites as witnesses.                                                                                  |
| New Life Bible          | So Ephron's field in Machpelah east of Mamre, the field and grave that was in it, and all the trees within the sides of the field, were handed over to Abraham for his own. It was handed over in front of the sons of Heth and all who came in through the gate of his city.                                  |
| New Living Translation  | So Abraham bought the plot of land belonging to Ephron at Machpelah, near Mamre. This included the field itself, the cave that was in it, and all the surrounding trees. It was transferred to Abraham as his permanent possession in the presence of the Hittite elders at the city gate.                     |

### Partially literal and partially paraphrased translations:

|                             |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    |
|-----------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| American English Bible      | And the double cave that was in the field of Ephron opposite Mamre (both the field and the cave that was in it, as well as every tree in the field and everything that was within its borders) was sold to Abraham as his possession, there in front of the sons of Heth and everyone [who was] entering the city. |
| Beck's American Translation | And so Ephron's field at Machpelah, east of Mamre, with the cave in it and all the trees on the whole area of the field were sold to Abraham and became his property in the sight of all the Hittites who used to come into the gate of the town.                                                                  |

|                           |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        |
|---------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Christian Community Bible | <i>And so Ephron's field in Machpelah, to the east of Mamre, the field with the cave in it, and all the trees in the field, throughout its entire area, was acquired by Abraham as his possession in the presence of the Hittites and of all who went in at the gate of their city.</i>                                                                |
| God's Word™               | So Ephron's field at Machpelah, east of Mamre, was sold to Abraham. His property included the field with the cave in it as well as all the trees inside the boundaries of the field. The Hittites together with all who had entered the city gate were the official witnesses for the agreement.                                                       |
| International Standard V  | That's how Ephron's field in Machpelah, east of [Lit. <i>which faces or is before</i> ] Mamre--the field, the cave that was in it, and all the trees that were within the boundaries of [Lit. <i>within the area around</i> ] the field--came to be deeded to Abraham in the presence of all the Hittites and everyone who was entering the city gate. |
| NIRV                      | So Ephron sold his field in Machpelah near Mamre to Abraham. He bought the field and the cave that was in it. He also bought all of the trees that were inside the borders of the field. Everything was sold to Abraham as his property. He bought it in front of all of the Hittites who had come to the gate of the city.                            |
| New Simplified Bible      | Ephron's field at Machpelah, east of Mamre, was sold to Abraham. His property included the field with the cave in it as well as all the trees inside the boundaries of the field. The Hittites together with all who had entered the city gate were the official witnesses for the agreement.                                                          |

#### **Mostly literal renderings (with some occasional paraphrasing):**

|                           |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               |
|---------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Ancient Roots Translinear | The raised field of Ephron in Machpelah in front of Mamre, a field with the cave in it, and all the trees in the field bordering all around it, Abraham bought in the eyes of the sons of Heth, and all coming in the gate of his city.                                                                                                                                                                                                       |
| Bible in Basic English    | So Ephron's field at Machpelah near Mamre, with the hollow in the rock and all the trees in the field and round it, became the property of Abraham before the eyes of the children of Heth and of all who came into the town.                                                                                                                                                                                                                 |
| Ferar-Fenton Bible        | Thus he bought the field of Ephron, that is in Macphelah, which is opposite Mamrah, the field and the cave which is in it, and all the trees which were in the field, with all the hedge around it. Thus Abraham bought it in the presence of the sons of Heth, to all who came to the gate of the town;... I think F. F. hold the distinction of both separating vv. 17 and 18 into two separate sentences, and continuing v. 18 into v. 19. |
| HCSB                      | So Ephron's field at Machpelah near Mamre--the field with its cave and all the trees anywhere within the boundaries of the field--became Abraham's possession in the presence of all the Hittites who came to the gate of his city.                                                                                                                                                                                                           |
| New Advent Bible          | And the field that before was Ephron's, wherein was the double cave, looking towards Mambre, both it and the cave, and all the trees thereof, in all its limits round about, was made sure to Abraham for a possession, in the sight of the children of Heth, and of all that went in at the gate of his city.                                                                                                                                |
| NIV – UK                  | So Ephron's field in Machpelah near Mamre - both the field and the cave in it, and all the trees within the borders of the field - was legally made over to Abraham as his property in the presence of all the Hittites who had come to the gate of the city.                                                                                                                                                                                 |

#### **Catholic Bibles (those having the imprimatur):**

|                    |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   |
|--------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| The Heritage Bible | And the field of Ephron, which was in Machpelah, which was before the face of Mamre, the field, and the cave which was there, and all the trees that were in the field, that were in all the borders which surrounded it, were caused to rise To Abraham for a purchased possession in the eyes of the children of Heth before all entering the gate of his city. |
|--------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|

|                       |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    |
|-----------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| New American Bible    | Thus Ephron's field in Machpelah, facing Mamre, together with its cave and all the trees anywhere within its limits, was conveyed to Abraham by purchase in the presence of the Hittites, all who entered the gate of Ephron's city. Genesis 49:29–30              |
| New Jerusalem Bible   | Thus Ephron's field at Machpelah, facing Mamre -- the field and the cave in it and all the trees anywhere within the boundaries of the field -- passed into Abraham's possession in the sight of the Hittites, of all the inhabitants of his town.                 |
| Revised English Bible | So the plot of land belonging to Ephron at Machpelah to the east of Mamre, the plot, the cave that is on it, with all the trees in the whole area, became the legal possession of Abraham, in the presence of all the Hittites who had assembled at the city gate. |

### Jewish/Hebrew Names Bibles:

|                           |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   |
|---------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Complete Jewish Bible     | Thus the field of 'Efron in Makhpelah, which is by Mamre - the field, its cave and all the trees in and around it - were deeded to Avraham as his possession in the presence of the sons of Het who belonged to the ruling council of the city.                                                                                                                                                                                   |
| exeGeses companion Bible  | And the field of Ephron in Machpelah<br>at the face of Mamre<br>- the field and the cave therein<br>and all the trees in the field,<br>in all the borders all around<br>are raised<br>to Abraham for a chattel<br>in the eyes of the sons of Heth,<br>in front of all who go in at the portal of his city.                                                                                                                        |
| JPS (Tanakh—1985)         | So Ephron's land in Machpelah, near Mamre—the field with its cave and all the trees anywhere within the confines of that field—passed to Abraham as his possession, in the presence of the Hittites, of all who entered the gate of this town [ <i>i.e.</i> , all his fellow townsmen].                                                                                                                                           |
| Judaica Press Complete T. | And so the field of Ephron which was in Machpelah, facing Mamre, was established (as Abraham's possession). <i>This included</i> the field and the cave that was in it, and all the trees that were in the field, which were within its entire border around. <i>It was</i> to Abraham as a possession before the eyes of the sons of Heth, in the presence of all who had come within the gate of his city                       |
| Kaplan Translation        | Ephron's field in Makhpelah adjoining Mamre [(Chizzkuni). See Genesis 13:18. Josephus notes that the 'Tree of Mamre' is approximately one half mile (6 furlongs) from Hebron proper (Wars 4:9:7).] thus became [Abraham's] uncontested property. [This included] the field, its cave, and every tree within its circumference. It was Abraham's purchase with all the children of Heth who came to the city gate as eyewitnesses. |

### Expanded/Embellished Bibles:

|                        |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      |
|------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Kretzmann's Commentary | The Burial of Sarah<br>And the field of Ephron, which was in Machpelah, which was before Mamre, the field, and the cave which was therein, and all the trees that were in the field, that were in all the borders round about, were made sure unto Abraham for a possession in the presence of the children of Heth, before all that went in at the gate of his city. The language is that of a formal instrument used in the transfer of real estate; the location of the field is given: before Mamre, over against the grove of Mamre, adjoining the cave Machpelah, which was at one end of it; the description of the property is accurate and includes even the trees on the plot itself and on its borders on every side. The field was thus conveyed to Abraham with all the |
|------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|

appurtenances thereof, the record of the transaction being very minute and the witnesses expressly mentioned.

|                             |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             |
|-----------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Lexham English Bible        | So the field of Ephron which [was] in the Machpelah, which [was] near Mamre--the field and the cave which [was] in it, with all the trees that [were] in the field, which [were] within all its surrounding boundaries--{passed} 18 to Abraham as a property in the presence of the Hittites, with respect to all [who were] entering the gate of his city.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 |
| NET Bible®                  | So Abraham secured [Heb "And it was conveyed." The recipient, Abraham (mentioned in the Hebrew text at the beginning of v. 18) has been placed here in the translation for stylistic reasons.] Ephron's field in Machpelah, next to Mamre, including the field, the cave that was in it, and all the trees that were in the field and all around its border, as his property in the presence of the sons of Heth before all who entered the gate of Ephron's city [Heb "his city"; the referent (Ephron) has been specified in the translation for clarity.] [See G. M. Tucker, "The Legal Background of Genesis 23," JBL 85 (1966):77-84; and M. R. Lehmann, "Abraham's Purchase of Machpelah and Hittite Law," BASOR 129 (1953): 15-18.]. |
| Translation for Translators | So Ephron's field in the Machpelah area, near Mamre, and the cave in the field, and all the trees that were in the field inside the boundaries of the land, became Abraham's possession. It became Abraham's property as all the descendants of Heth were listening there at the city gate.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 |
| The Voice                   | So it was that the field of Ephron in Machpelah, east of Mamre, the field with the cave in it and the trees on it all passed to Abraham and became his <i>legal</i> possession in the presence of the Hittites and all those <i>officials</i> present at the city gate.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     |

#### Literal, almost word-for-word, renderings:

|                            |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   |
|----------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <i>The Amplified Bible</i> | So the field of Ephron in Machpelah, which was to the east of Mamre [Hebron]-the field and the cave which was in it, and all the trees that were in the field and in all its borders round about-was made over as a possession to Abraham in the presence of the Hittites, before all who went in at his city gate.                                                               |
| Concordant Literal Version | And confirmed is the field of Ephron in which is the double cave, which is adjoining Mamre, the field and the cave which is in it, and all the trees which are in the field, which are in all its boundary around, to Abraham by acquisition, before the eyes of the sons of Heth to all entering the gateway of his city.                                                        |
| Darby Translation          | So the field of Ephron, which was at Machpelah, which was before Mamre, the field, and the cave that was in it, and all the trees that were in the field, that were in all its borders round about, were assured to Abraham for a possession before the eyes of the sons of Heth, before all who went in at the gate of his city.                                                 |
| English Standard Version   | 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 to Abraham as a possession in the presence of the Hittites, before all who went in at the gate of his city.                                                                        |
| LTHB                       | And was certified the field of Ephron in Machpelah, which was before Mamre, the cave and the field in it, and all the trees in the field, which were in all its borders around it, to Abraham for a purchase before the sons of Heth, with all entering the gate of his city.                                                                                                     |
| NASB                       | So Ephron's field, which was in Machpelah, which faced Mamre, the field and cave which was in it, and all the trees which were in the field, that were within all the confines of its border [Lit in all its border around], were deeded over [Or were ratified] to Abraham for a possession in the presence of the sons of Heth, before all who went in at the gate of his city. |
| Third Millennium Bible     | And the field of Ephron which was in Machpelah, which was before Mamre, the field and the cave which was therein, and all the trees that were in the field that were in                                                                                                                                                                                                           |

all the borders round about, were secured unto Abraham as a possession in the presence of the children of Heth, before all who went in at the gate of his city. And the field of Ephron which was in Machpelah, which was before Mamre, the field and the cave which was in it, and all the trees that were in the field, which were within all the surrounding borders, were deeded to Abraham as a possession before the eyes of the sons of Heth, before all who went in at the gate of his city.

A Voice in the Wilderness

World English Bible

Young's Updated LT

So the field of Ephron, which was in Machpelah, which was before Mamre, the field, the cave which was therein, and all the trees that were in the field, that were in all the border of it round about, were made sure to Abraham for a possession in the presence of the children of Heth, before all who went in at the gate of his city. And established is the field of Ephron, which is in Machpelah, which is before Mamre, the field and the cave which is in it, and all the trees which are in the field, which are in all its border round about, to Abraham by purchase, before the eyes of the sons of Heth, among all entering the gate of his city.

**The gist of this verse:** A summation of the conveyance of property to Abraham.

| Genesis 23:17a                                                   |                                                                                                                                   |                                                          |                            |
|------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------|
| Hebrew/Pronunciation                                             | Common English Meanings                                                                                                           | Notes/Morphology                                         | BDB and Strong's #         |
| wa (or va) (וַ) [pronounced <i>wah</i> ]                         | <i>and so, and then, then, and; so, that, yet, therefore, consequently; because</i>                                               | wâw consecutive                                          | No Strong's #<br>BDB #253  |
| qûwm (קוּם) [pronounced <i>koom</i> ]                            | <i>to stand, to rise up, to get up; to establish, to establish a vow, to cause a vow to stand, to confirm or to fulfill a vow</i> | 3 <sup>rd</sup> person masculine singular, Qal imperfect | Strong's #6965<br>BDB #877 |
| sâdeh (שָׂדֵה) [pronounced <i>saw-DEH</i> ]                      | <i>field, land, country, open field, open country</i>                                                                             | masculine singular construct                             | Strong's #7704<br>BDB #961 |
| ‘Eph <sup>e</sup> rôwn (עֲפְרָתָא) [pronounced <i>gef-ROHN</i> ] | <i>fawn-like; transliterated Ephron</i>                                                                                           | masculine singular proper noun                           | Strong's #6085<br>BDB #780 |

**Translation:** And so [it] is confirmed: the field of Ephron...

This legal transaction is going to be summed up. We understand that people are property owners and that it is legitimate to buy and sell property. God did not come to Abraham and tell him to just take this land. Much of this is because the degeneracy of the Amorites is not yet full (Genesis 15:16). At this time, there was some degeneracy (Genesis 18–19) but there was also law and order, which is illustrated in this chapter.

The verb translated *certified* above is the Hebrew word qûwm (קוּם) [pronounced *koom*], which means *to stand, to rise up, to get up; to establish, to establish a vow, to cause a vow to stand, to confirm or to fulfill a vow*. Remember in v. 3 when Abraham *stood up*, and I suggested that he was going to involve himself in a purposeful action? It is the same word. Strong's #6965 BDB #877.

There are no closed doors in this transaction, no written contracts (as far as I can see), no secrecy. What is being sold is agreed to in front of a large group of businessmen and elders, the land is described with its borders and assets; the amount that it is sold for is spoken aloud; and the actual transaction is observed by all of these businessmen and elders.

The verb in v. 17 is qûwm (קוּם) [pronounced *koom*] and its basic meanings are *to stand, to arise*. However, the land is not standing nor is it arising in this verse. This verb is found no less than 400 times in the Old Testament

in the Qal stem alone. Obviously, it has wide application depending upon the context. In this context, we are dealing with the purchase of property where the amount paid for the property and the actual property itself are agreed to. It could be reasonably translated *established* or *confirmed* or *to fix (with respect to price and terms)* but the NASB conveys the concept in the clearest sense for us when it translates this word *deeded over*. This gives a contemporary understanding of the word without doing a serious disservice to the meaning.

| Genesis 23:17b                                                            |                                                                                                     |                                                         |                            |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------|
| Hebrew/Pronunciation                                                      | Common English Meanings                                                                             | Notes/Morphology                                        | BDB and Strong's #         |
| ʾăsher (אֲשֶׁר)<br>[pronounced <i>uh-SHER</i> ]                           | <i>that, which, when, who, whom</i>                                                                 | relative pronoun                                        | Strong's #834<br>BDB #81   |
| bē (ב) [pronounced <i>b<sup>eh</sup></i> ]                                | <i>in, into, through; at, by, near, on, upon; with, before, against; by means of; among; within</i> | a preposition of proximity                              | No Strong's #<br>BDB #88   |
| Mak <sup>e</sup> phêlâh (מַכְפֵּלָה)<br>[pronounced <i>mahk-pay-LAW</i> ] | <i>double portion, the double; transliterated Machpelah</i>                                         | proper singular noun/location with the definite article | Strong's #4375<br>BDB #495 |

**Translation:** ...which [is] in Machpelah...

Machpelah is the proper name for the land that Abraham is purchasing. It is the lot of land which contains the field and cave which Abraham was buying in order to bury the body of Sarah there. From the description, it sounds to be between 1 and 5 acres in size. This is Abraham's first his only possession in the land of promise.

*Machpelah* means *the double cave*; from *kaphal* (*to divide or double*). Fausset,<sup>54</sup> from whom this was paraphrased, suggests that there were two entrances to the cave or two sections in the cave.

I have to include this remark made by Adam Clarke, because it is unusual to find in commentaries: *This clearly shows that Machpelah is the proper name of a place or tract of ground, and not an appellative, or to be rendered the double cave, since a field could never be said to be in a cave: and yet some have been so stupid, as Vatablus observes, as to render the words, "the field of Ephron, which was in the double cave," whereas, on the contrary, the cave was in that field; and so the Vulgate version, to better sense, though not agreeably to the Hebrew text, "the field of Ephron, in which was the double cave."*<sup>55</sup> Maybe this was taken from a post Vatablus put on facebook, ragging on some other 19<sup>th</sup> century cardinal?

| Genesis 23:17c                                    |                                           |                                                                |                            |
|---------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------|
| Hebrew/Pronunciation                              | Common English Meanings                   | Notes/Morphology                                               | BDB and Strong's #         |
| ʾăsher (אֲשֶׁר)<br>[pronounced <i>uh-SHER</i> ]   | <i>that, which, when, who, whom</i>       | relative pronoun                                               | Strong's #834<br>BDB #81   |
| lâmed (ל) [pronounced <i>l<sup>e</sup></i> ]      | <i>to, for, towards, in regards to</i>    | directional/relational preposition                             | No Strong's #<br>BDB #510  |
| pânîym (פָּנִים)<br>[pronounced <i>paw-NEEM</i> ] | <i>face, faces, countenance; presence</i> | masculine plural construct (plural acts like English singular) | Strong's #6440<br>BDB #815 |

<sup>54</sup> Andrew Robert Fausset, *Fausset's Bible Dictionary*; from e-Sword, topic: Machpelah.

<sup>55</sup> Adam Clarke, *Commentary on the Bible*; from e-Sword, Genesis 23:17.



## Genesis 23:17c

| Hebrew/Pronunciation                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  | Common English Meanings                        | Notes/Morphology              | BDB and Strong's #         |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------|----------------------------|
| Together, they mean <i>upon the face of, before, before the face of, in the presence of, in the sight of, in front of</i> . When used with God, it can take on the more figurative meaning <i>in the judgment of</i> . This can also mean <i>forwards; the front part</i> [or, the edge of a sword]. L <sup>o</sup> pānīym (לפני) can take on a temporal sense as well: <i>before, of old, formerly, in the past, in past times</i> . |                                                |                               |                            |
| Mam <sup>o</sup> rê' (מַמְרֵ) [pronounced mahm-<br>RAY]                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               | <i>strength; fatness; transliterated Mamre</i> | proper singular noun/location | Strong's #4471<br>BDB #577 |

**Translation:** ...which [is] in front of Mamre...

Mamre is the general area in which Abraham lived. We do not know the circumstances of his own land—whether he owns any, whether he moves from place to place, remaining in the same general vicinity, or whether he leases property from time to time. However, in this situation, he is clearly buying a plot of land.

## Genesis 23:17d

| Hebrew/Pronunciation                                                   | Common English Meanings                                                                             | Notes/Morphology                                                                     | BDB and Strong's #         |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------|
| sâdeh (שָׂדֵה) [pronounced saw-<br>DEH]                                | <i>field, land, country, open field, open country</i>                                               | masculine singular noun with the definite article                                    | Strong's #7704<br>BDB #961 |
| w <sup>e</sup> (or v <sup>e</sup> ) (וְ, וּ) [pronounced weh]          | <i>and, even, then; namely; when; since, that; though</i>                                           | simple wâw conjunction                                                               | No Strong's #<br>BDB #251  |
| m <sup>e</sup> ârah (מְאָרָה) [pronounced m <sup>e</sup> -gaw-<br>RAW] | <i>cave, den, hole</i>                                                                              | feminine singular noun with the definite article                                     | Strong's #4631<br>BDB #792 |
| 'âsher (אֲשֶׁר) [pronounced uh-<br>SHER]                               | <i>that, which, when, who, whom</i>                                                                 | relative pronoun                                                                     | Strong's #834<br>BDB #81   |
| b <sup>e</sup> (בְּ) [pronounced b <sup>eh</sup> ]                     | <i>in, into, through; at, by, near, on, upon; with, before, against; by means of; among; within</i> | a preposition of proximity with the 3 <sup>rd</sup> person masculine singular suffix | No Strong's #<br>BDB #88   |

**Translation:**...—the field with the cave that [is] in it,...

Abraham is not simply buying the cave, which is what he wanted, but the entire plot of land that the cave is in, is being sold to Abraham. This is something which he and Ephron had agreed to.

We do not know the size of this property. My guess is, it is between maybe 1 to 5 acres. We divide up land with fences and in most neighborhoods, there are boundary markers buried in the corners of most properties. Although we do not know the size of this lot, we do have a description of it. Furthermore, this description is apparently understood by the witnesses which are at this town meeting.

## Genesis 23:17e

| Hebrew/Pronunciation                                                  | Common English Meanings                                                                                                                     | Notes/Morphology                                            | BDB and Strong's #         |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------|
| w <sup>e</sup> (or v <sup>e</sup> ) (וּ, וְ) [pronounced <i>weh</i> ] | <i>and; even; in particular, namely; when, since, seeing, though; so, then, therefore; or, but yet; who, which; or; that, in that; with</i> | simple wâw conjunction                                      | No Strong's #<br>BDB #251  |
| kôl (כֹּל) [pronounced <i>kohl</i> ]                                  | <i>the whole, all of, the entirety of, all; can also be rendered any of</i>                                                                 | masculine singular construct followed by a definite article | Strong's #3605<br>BDB #481 |
| 'êts (עֵץ) [pronounced <i>gayts</i> ]                                 | <i>tree, wood; wooden post, [wooden] stake, gallows; [collectively for] a forest of trees</i>                                               | masculine singular noun with the definite article           | Strong's #6086<br>BDB #781 |
| 'ăsher (אֲשֶׁר) [pronounced <i>uh-SHER</i> ]                          | <i>that, which, when, who, whom</i>                                                                                                         | relative pronoun                                            | Strong's #834<br>BDB #81   |
| b <sup>e</sup> (בְּ) [pronounced <i>b<sup>eh</sup></i> ]              | <i>in, into, through; at, by, near, on, upon; with, before, against; by means of; among; within</i>                                         | a preposition of proximity                                  | No Strong's #<br>BDB #88   |
| sâdeh (שָׂדֵה) [pronounced <i>saw-DEH</i> ]                           | <i>field, land, country, open field, open country</i>                                                                                       | masculine singular noun with the definite article           | Strong's #7704<br>BDB #961 |

**Translation:** ...with all the trees that [are] in the field...

Although *tree* is in the singular, this can stand for a forest of trees; and the use of *kôl* suggests that there are many trees on this property. On an acre of land, 10–20 full sized trees are not unusual. In any case, Ephron is conveying forestry rights to Abraham, which is fairly important. In our day in Texas, very often when you buy a plot of ground, you own that plot of land going straight down to the center of the earth, but, what you often do not own or have a part ownership in, is the mineral rights (i.e., oil, natural gas, or whatever).

## Genesis 23:17f

| Hebrew/Pronunciation                                                                                                                                                                | Common English Meanings                                                                             | Notes/Morphology                                                                  | BDB and Strong's #         |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------|
| 'ăsher (אֲשֶׁר) [pronounced <i>uh-SHER</i> ]                                                                                                                                        | <i>that, which, when, who, whom</i>                                                                 | relative pronoun                                                                  | Strong's #834<br>BDB #81   |
| b <sup>e</sup> (בְּ) [pronounced <i>b<sup>eh</sup></i> ]                                                                                                                            | <i>in, into, through; at, by, near, on, upon; with, before, against; by means of; among; within</i> | a preposition of proximity                                                        | Strong's# none<br>BDB #88  |
| kôl (כֹּל) [pronounced <i>kohl</i> ]                                                                                                                                                | <i>every, each, all of, all; any of, any</i>                                                        | masculine singular construct not followed by a definite article                   | Strong's #3605<br>BDB #481 |
| Literally, <i>in all</i> . Although I don't have this in the lexicons, it is rendered by the most literal translations as <i>among all, through all, throughout all, with all</i> . |                                                                                                     |                                                                                   |                            |
| g <sup>e</sup> bûwl (גְּבוּל) [pronounced <i>g<sup>eb</sup>-VOOL</i> ]                                                                                                              | <i>border, boundary, territory [within a border], region, territory [of darkness]; edge</i>         | masculine singular noun with the 3 <sup>rd</sup> person masculine singular suffix | Strong's #1366<br>BDB #147 |

## Genesis 23:17f

| Hebrew/Pronunciation                                               | Common English Meanings                                                               | Notes/Morphology   | BDB and Strong's #         |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------|----------------------------|
| çâbîyb (בִּיבָּ) [pronounced saw <sup>b</sup> -VEE <sup>B</sup> V] | <i>around, surrounding, circuit, round about, encircle; all around; on every side</i> | adverb/preposition | Strong's #5439<br>BDB #686 |

This is the first occurrence of this word in the Bible.

**Translation:** ...which [is] within its border round about—...

There is a specific border, which is not precisely discussed, but was apparently discussed or understood by those at this property-owners meeting. This meeting essentially was the deed to the property. There were many witnesses as to the description of the property and the monies spent to acquire it.

Genesis 23:17 And so [it] is confirmed: the field of Ephron which [is] in Machpelah which [is] in front of Mamre—the field with the cave that [is] in it, with all the trees that [are] in the field which [is] within its border round about—... (Kukis mostly literal translation)

## Genesis 23:18a

| Hebrew/Pronunciation                                                        | Common English Meanings                                                                                                                         | Notes/Morphology                   | BDB and Strong's #         |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------|----------------------------|
| lâmed (ל) [pronounced l <sup>e</sup> ]                                      | <i>to, for, towards, in regards to</i>                                                                                                          | directional/relational preposition | No Strong's #<br>BDB #510  |
| ʿAb <sup>e</sup> râhâm (אֲבִרְחָם) [pronounced ahb <sup>ve</sup> -raw-HAWM] | <i>father of a multitude, chief of a multitude; transliterated Abraham</i>                                                                      | masculine singular proper noun     | Strong's #85<br>BDB #4     |
| lâmed (ל) [pronounced l <sup>e</sup> ]                                      | <i>to, for, towards, in regards to</i>                                                                                                          | directional/relational preposition | No Strong's #<br>BDB #510  |
| miq <sup>e</sup> nâh (מִקְנָה) [pronounced mihk-NAW]                        | <i>a purchase, a buying; a document of purchase; cost, price, a purchase-price; that which is purchased; a possession [gained by purchase];</i> | feminine singular noun             | Strong's #4736<br>BDB #889 |

**Translation:**... [this field is conveyed] to Abraham for a possession...

It is likely that the verb back in v. 17a is what is carried over to this point; however, what is in brackets reasonably explains what is going on.

The exact boundaries of this land sale are determined. Furthermore, this was done in front of many witnesses, so all know the cost of the land and the boundaries of the land. That is the exchange which takes place.

Driver: *In the Assyrian and Babylonian contract-tablets, the number of trees sold with a piece of ground, esp. date-palms, is generally specified, KB. iv. 101 (747 B.C.), 161, 165 (721 B.C.); Comp. also the specification of the houses, gardens, wells, &c., appertaining to a family sepulchre, in the Nabataean inscription, of the 1st cent. A.D., cited in Hogarth's Authority and Archaeology, p. 135.*<sup>56</sup>

<sup>56</sup>From <https://ia600406.us.archive.org/27/items/bookofgenesist00drivuoft/bookofgenesist00drivuoft.pdf> (p. 227); accessed December 10, 2014.

The Expositor's Bible: [T]he formal purchase and conveyance of it—the complete and precise terms in which the transaction is completed... The precise subjects made over to Abraham are also detailed with all the accuracy of a legal document— "the field of Ephron, which was in Machpelah, which was before Mature, the field and the cave which was therein, and all the trees that were in the field, that were in all the borders round about, were made sure unto Abraham for a possession in the presence of the children of Heth, before all that went in at the gate of this city." Abraham had no doubt of the friendliness of such men as Aner, Eshcol, and Mamre, his ancient allies, but he was also aware that the best way to maintain friendly relations was to leave no loophole by which difference of opinion or disagreement might enter. Let the thing be in black and white, so that there may be no misunderstanding as to terms, no expectations doomed to be unfulfilled, no encroachments which must cause resentment, if not retaliation. Law probably does more to prevent quarrels than to heal them. As statesmen and historians tell us that the best way to secure peace is to be prepared for war, so legal documents seem no doubt harsh and unfriendly, but really are more effective in maintaining peace and friendliness than vague promises and benevolent intentions.<sup>57</sup>

**Application:** Even between two Christians—there is nothing wrong with a handshake deal, but how much better if the terms are carefully laid out, so that both parties understand the agreement fully? How much better it is that possible misunderstandings are cleared up with clear and unequivocal text to which both men have put their signatures?

Constable: Abraham's purchase of the cave of Machpelah (lit. double cave, or split cave) indicates his continuing faith in God's promise to give the land of Canaan to him and his descendants. Similarly Jeremiah purchased property in the Promised Land on the eve of the Babylonian captivity to express his belief that God would bring the Israelites back there eventually (cf. Jeremiah 32:6-15). One does not usually bury his family in a place unless he considers it his home and plans to be there a long time.<sup>58</sup> At least one commentator said that it would have been customary for Abraham to bury Sarah back east, in the land that they came from.

Davis: The very fact that Abraham buried Sarah in the land of Canaan is proof of his unwavering faith. Knowing that his descendants would have to endure four hundred years of bitter bondage in a foreign country (Genesis 15:13), he looked beyond that to the ultimate fulfillment of God's promises.<sup>59</sup>

### Genesis 23:18b

| Hebrew/Pronunciation                                                                                                                                                                    | Common English Meanings                                                                | Notes/Morphology                   | BDB and Strong's #                  |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| lâmed (ל) [pronounced <i>lah</i> ]                                                                                                                                                      | <i>to, for, towards, in regards to</i>                                                 | directional/relational preposition | No Strong's #<br>BDB #510           |
| ʿêynayim (עֵינַיִם)<br>[pronounced <i>gay-nah-YIM</i> ]                                                                                                                                 | <i>eyes, two eyes, literal eye(s), spiritual eyes; face, appearance, form; surface</i> | feminine plural construct          | Strong's #5869 (and #5871) BDB #744 |
| The lâmed preposition + ʿayin mean, literally <i>to [for] [one's] eyes; before [one's] eyes</i> . The sense is <i>before any one, in the sight of [someone], in view of [someone]</i> . |                                                                                        |                                    |                                     |
| bânîym (בָּנָיִם)<br>[pronounced <i>baw-NEEM</i> ]                                                                                                                                      | <i>sons, descendants; children; people; sometimes rendered men</i>                     | masculine plural construct         | Strong's #1121<br>BDB #119          |

<sup>57</sup> From <http://www.studydrive.org/commentaries/teb/view.cgi?bk=0&ch=23> accessed December 8, 2014.

<sup>58</sup> From <http://www.studydrive.org/commentaries/phc/view.cgi?bk=0&ch=22> accessed December 7, 2014.

<sup>59</sup> From <http://www.studydrive.org/commentaries/phc/view.cgi?bk=0&ch=22> accessed December 7, 2014. Constable cites Davis, p. 223.

## Genesis 23:18b

| Hebrew/Pronunciation                                                                                                                                                                | Common English Meanings                                                                             | Notes/Morphology                                                                 | BDB and Strong's #          |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------|
| Cheth (חֶת) [pronounced <i>khayth</i> ]                                                                                                                                             | transliterated <i>Heth; Hittite</i>                                                                 | masculine proper noun                                                            | Strong's #2845<br>BDB #366  |
| b <sup>e</sup> (ב) [pronounced <i>b<sup>eh</sup></i> ]                                                                                                                              | <i>in, into, through; at, by, near, on, upon; with, before, against; by means of; among; within</i> | a preposition of proximity                                                       | Strong's# none<br>BDB #88   |
| kôl (כֹּל) [pronounced <i>kohl</i> ]                                                                                                                                                | <i>every, each, all of, all; any of, any</i>                                                        | masculine singular construct not followed by a definite article                  | Strong's #3605<br>BDB #481  |
| Literally, <i>in all</i> . Although I don't have this in the lexicons, it is rendered by the most literal translations as <i>among all, through all, throughout all, with all</i> . |                                                                                                     |                                                                                  |                             |
| bôw' (בָּוֵא) [pronounced <i>boh</i> ]                                                                                                                                              | <i>ones entering [coming, going, advancing] [in]; those entering [going, coming (in)]</i>           | masculine plural, Qal active participle                                          | Strong's #935<br>BDB #97    |
| sha'ar (שַׁעַר) [pronounced <i>SHAH-gahr</i> ]                                                                                                                                      | <i>gate [control of city can be implied]; area inside front gate; entrance</i>                      | masculine singular construct                                                     | Strong's #8179<br>BDB #1044 |
| 'îyr (עִיר) [pronounced <i>geer</i> ]                                                                                                                                               | <i>encampment, city, town</i>                                                                       | feminine singular noun with the 3 <sup>rd</sup> person masculine singular suffix | Strong's #5892<br>BDB #746  |

**Translation:** ...before the sons of Heth among all those entering the gates of his city.

All of this property conveyance takes place before a meeting of the local property owners, businessmen and elders,<sup>60</sup> who have apparently approved of Abraham, approved of him purchasing this property, and are witnesses to it.

Genesis 23:18 ...[this field is conveyed] to Abraham for a possession before the sons of Heth among all those entering the gates of his city. (Kukis mostly literal translation)

The Expositor's Bible: *The narrative is careful to remind us again and again that the whole transaction was negotiated in the audience of the people of the land, of all those who went in at the gate, that the sale was thoroughly approved and witnessed by competent authorities.*<sup>61</sup>

Although this is nowhere stated, it is possible that adjacent property owners could have stood up and said, "I would not like to see this property change hands for these reasons..." We do not know if several property owners could have blocked this sale or, at least given Ephron a reason to not sell to Abraham. However, by the language here, it is clear that all of these men here were witnesses to the conveyance of property from Ephron to Abraham.

This entire episode also suggests that Abraham is quite well-to-do. That is, he can shell out in cash \$5300 (or \$11,000) for this plot of land, and there is no indication that such a purchase leaves him poor.

Genesis 23:17–18 And so [it] is confirmed: the field of Ephron which [is] in Machpelah which [is] in front of Mamre—the field with the cave that [is] in it, with all the trees that [are] in the field which [is] within its border round

<sup>60</sup> This is by a reasonable assumption.

<sup>61</sup> From <http://www.studylight.org/commentaries/teb/view.cgi?bk=0&ch=23> accessed December 8, 2014.

about—[this field is conveyed] to Abraham for a possession before the sons of Heth among all those entering the gates of his city. (Kukis mostly literal translation)

Genesis 23:17–18 Consequently, the field of Ephron which is in Machpelah east of Mamre—which field includes the cave as well as all of the trees within its borders on all sides, is legally conveyed to Abraham as his possession. This took place before the sons of Heth as witnesses as well as before all those who were entering into the gates of the city. (Kukis paraphrase)

Vv. 17–18 read: And so [it] is confirmed: the field of Ephron which [is] in Machpelah which [is] in front of Mamre—the field with the cave that [is] in it, with all the trees that [are] in the field which [is] within its border round about—[this field is conveyed] to Abraham for a possession before the sons of Heth among all those entering the gates of his city. Note how closely this matches a modern-day deed of conveyance—the exactly property is described in full; the amount paid for the property is found back in v. 16. There are enough witnesses about that this does not need to be written down (there is no indication in this passage one way or the other). Abraham and Ephron will walk away from this transaction, both of them satisfied, both of them having received exactly what they expected to receive; and a number of 3<sup>rd</sup> party witnesses confirm the transaction.

This is how business was done in the ancient world—at least among these Hittites. There may have been a land deed written out, but all of this was done before witnesses of that area, so that they all knew the terms of the sale as well as the new owner of this piece of property. It sounds, from the description as if this is a fair sized piece of land—there is a cave, and field in which the cave sits, and there are trees in this field. It would not be surprising to me if this were an acre of land or more for Sarah’s burial place.

In our transactions of property transferral today, we have a very similar situation. Because of the more complex legalities when dealing with a piece of property, a neutral 3<sup>rd</sup> party usually handles the transaction. This is usually a title company which researches the property to make certain that the seller can sell this piece of property unencumbered by liens to a buyer willing to pay an agreed upon price; and that the people signing the paperwork are actually that seller and that buyer. In a town meeting, as Abraham attended, if there was a lien on Ephron’s property, the lien-holder would have stood up and said, “But you borrowed 5 lbs. of silver from me, and put up that piece of land as collateral for the loan.” However, this property was apparently free of all liens against it.

One of the reasons that we have realtors is because people have sin natures. I may buy a piece of property from Charley Brown, but after he and I discuss a few issues, I decide that he is the biggest doofus on the planet and I would not do business with him if my life depended upon it. A realtor who represents him and a realtor who represents me, on the other hand, are able to work out a deal, act as our go-betweens, so that my sin nature does not rub up against Charley Brown’s sin nature. And this way, it is all about the deal—what I want, what he wants, and if we can come to an agreement about that. Our sin natures become less relevant if we have intermediaries between us. When I tell my realtor, “Take this offer back to Charley Brown, and also tell him, I think that he is a total ass.” My realtor will take the contract back to Charley Brown’s agent and tell him, “My principal would like to close in 3 weeks; is that agreeable to Mr. Brown?”

Abraham, being at a more advanced spiritual state that I am, is able to work directly with the seller; and they are able to come to a mutually advantageous agreement.

The phrase *his city* refers to Ephron’s city (not Abraham’s); and it is never clearly identified in this chapter. It is *probably* Kiriath-arba (v. 1), but not necessarily so.

It appears that nothing is written down. We do have writing from this general region, but often, it is found in stone (which we would expect, because writing on stone would last). If there is a written deed to this property, it is not clearly alluded to. However, given the way that this property was conveyed, before a number of witnesses, there is really no need for a written deed. All the men who were there now knew Abraham and Ephron; they knew the amount paid, and they knew the boundaries of the property conveyed. They all agreed that these few acres belong to Ephron and that he could convey title to said property, free and clear, to Abraham.

Scofield explains what some see as a discrepancy between this and other passages.

### Scofield on the Burying Place of Sarah

Compare the following:

Gen. 23:17–18 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 to Abraham as a possession in the presence of the Hittites, before all who went in at the gate of his city.

Gen. 33:18–19 And Jacob came safely to the city of Shechem, which is in the land of Canaan, on his way from Paddan-aram, and he camped before the city. And from the sons of Hamor, Shechem's father, he bought for a hundred pieces of money the piece of land on which he had pitched his tent.

Gen. 50:12–14 Thus his sons did for him as he had commanded them, 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. After he had buried his father, Joseph returned to Egypt with his brothers and all who had gone up with him to bury his father.

Joshua 24:32 As for the bones of Joseph, which the people of Israel brought up from Egypt, they buried them at Shechem, in the piece of land that Jacob bought from the sons of Hamor the father of Shechem for a hundred pieces of money. It became an inheritance of the descendants of Joseph.

Acts 7:15–16 And Jacob went down into Egypt, and he died, he and our fathers, and they were carried back to Shechem and laid in the tomb that Abraham had bought for a sum of silver from the sons of Hamor in Shechem. (All ESV; capitalized)

A discrepancy in these statements has been fancied. It disappears entirely before the natural supposition that in the interval of about eighty years between the purchase by Abraham of the family sepulchre (Genesis 23:4–20) and Jacob's purchase (Genesis 33:19); the descendants of Hamor (or "Emmor," (Acts 7:15–16) had resumed possession of the field in which the burial cave was situated. Instead of asserting an ancient title by inheritance, Jacob repurchased the field. Heth was the common ancestor.

C. I. Scofield, *Scofield Notes from the Scofield King James' Bible*; from e-Sword, Genesis 23:4.

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Let's take this problem with these burial plots point-by-point:

### Who is buried where?

1. First of all, Hebron is south of Jerusalem and Shechem is north of Jerusalem.
2. Abraham clearly purchased this plot in or close to Kiriath-arba (Hebron) (Genesis 23:17–18); and Jacob purchase a plot of ground in Shechem (Genesis 50:12–14).
3. Jacob is buried in Ephron's cave (Genesis 50:12–14) and Joseph is buried at Shechem (Joshua 24:32).
4. Acts 7:14–16 reads: **And Joseph sent and summoned Jacob his father and all his kindred, seventy-five persons in all. And Jacob went down into Egypt, and he died, he and our fathers, and they were carried back to Shechem and laid in the tomb that Abraham had bought for a sum of silver from the sons of Hamor in Shechem.** This verse does not strictly require Joseph *and* Jacob to be buried in Shechem. But, for the most part, the fathers of the Jews to be buried in Shechem. So, most of Jacob's sons would have been buried at Shechem (including Joseph).
5. Jacob purchases Shechem; he wills this to Joseph (Joshua 24:32 Acts 7:16), and Joseph is buried there (Joshua 24:32).
6. The Scriptures indicate that the Jewish fathers are buried at Shechem (Acts 7:14–16); even though Josephus has them being buried at Hebron (**Antiquities Book 2; chapter 8; section 2<sup>1</sup>**) (this is *iffy*).
7. The actual problem is, *who purchased the field in Shechem?* Acts 7:14 says Abraham; and Genesis 33:18–19 Joshua 24:32 says Jacob.
8. There is the possibility that Abraham purchased this property—perhaps even for a burial ground—but did not use it when Sarah died pretty far south of there. It would have been a long distance to haul her body. Because Abraham did not have the proper witnesses present for the purchase of Shechem (or perhaps

## Who is buried where?

because they died), Jacob found it necessary to repurchase this property. This is conjecture, but the only reasonable explanation. There are ways to purchase property here in the United States where your ownership extends for 40 years or the rest of your lifetime or whatever; and then it would revert back to the heirs (or company) of the seller. It is not impossible for this to explain Jacob having to repurchase the property.

9. There is another similar possibilities: Jacob purchased an adjacent lot to Abraham's lot (both would belong to Jacob)—to increase his real estate holdings. I have not seen this offered as a possible explanation.
10. In any case, it is not impossible to imagine Abraham buying land here and there; as he was a rich man in gold, silver and livestock. People with money do tend to invest in other areas.
11. One explanation which I reject is, Stephen was simply wrong on the facts. Given the fact that his sermon is recorded in the Word of God is reason enough to assume that it is accurate.

This explanation requires us to make assumptions of things which are not recorded in Scripture. However, there is no reason to assume all notable acts of Abraham are recorded in the Bible. He is said to be rich in gold, silver and livestock; yet I am unaware of any passage that has him purchasing gold or silver.

<sup>1</sup> Joseph also died when he had lived a hundred and ten years; having been a man of admirable virtue, and conducting all his affairs by the rules of reason; and used his authority with moderation, which was the cause of his so great felicity among the Egyptians, even when he came from another country, and that in such ill circumstances also, as we have already described. At length his brethren died, after they had lived happily in Egypt. Now the posterity and sons of these men, after some time, carried their bodies, and buried them at Hebron: but as to the bones of Joseph, they carried them into the land of Canaan afterward, when the Hebrews went out of Egypt, for so had Joseph made them promise him upon oath. But what became of every one of these men, and by what toils they got the possession of the land of Canaan, shall be shown hereafter, when I have first explained upon what account it was that they left Egypt.

[Chapter Outline](#)

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Any explanation to smooth out the text of Acts 7 will be difficult, because every approach requires some conjecture. Personally, explanations (1) and (3) don't hold water for me.

### Three Explanations Given by the Pulpit Commentary

Here is the problem text: Acts 7:14–16 **And Joseph sent and summoned Jacob his father and all his kindred, seventy-five persons in all. And Jacob went down into Egypt, and he died, he and our fathers, and they were carried back to Shechem and laid in the tomb that Abraham had bought for a sum of silver from the sons of Hamor in Shechem.**

- (1) That the two purchases of Abraham and Jacob are here intentionally, for the sake of brevity, compressed into one account (Bengel, Pererius, Willet, Hughes); or
- (2) that Abraham bought two graves, one at Hebron of Ephron the Hittite, as recorded [in the book of Genesis]...and another at Shechem of the sons of Hamor the father of Shechem (Words. worth); or
- (3) that the words "which Abraham bought for a sum of money" should be regarded as a parenthesis, and the sentence read as intimating that Jacob and the fathers were carried over into Shechem, and (afterwards) by the sons of Hamor the lather of Shechem interred in Abraham's sepulcher at Hebron (Cajetan). Obvious difficulties attach to each of them; but the facts shine out clear enough in spite of the encompassing obscurity, viz., that Abraham bought a tomb at Hebron, in which first the dust of Sarah was deposited, and to which afterwards the bodies of himself, Isaac and Rebekah, Jacob and Leah were consigned, while Joseph and the twelve patriarchs, who all died in Egypt, were brought over to the promised land and buried in Jacob's field at Shechem.



*The Pulpit Commentary*; 1880-1919; by Joseph S. Exell, Henry Donald Maurice Spence-Jones, courtesy of e-sword, Genesis 23:20.

## Chapter Outline

## Charts, Graphics and Short Doctrines

This is the first piece of land of Canaan owned by a Jew, but it is associated with death.

**And after so, buried Abraham Sarah his woman unto a cave of a field of Machpelah, upon faces of Mamre (that [is] Hebron in a land of Canaan).**

Genesis  
23:19

**Consequently, afterwards, Abraham buried Sarah, his wife, in the cave of the field of Machpelah, facing Mamre (that is Hebron) in the land of Canaan.**

**Consequently, Abraham then buried Sarah, his wife, in that cave, which was in the field of Machpelah, opposite Mamre (which we now call Hebron) in the land of Canaan.**

Here is how others have translated this verse:

### Ancient texts:

|                         |                                                                                                                                                |
|-------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Masoretic Text (Hebrew) | And after so, buried Abraham Sarah his woman unto a cave of a field of Machpelah, upon faces of Mamre (that [is] Hebron in a land of Canaan).  |
| Targum of Onkelos       | And afterwards Abraham buried Sarah his wife in the cave of the field Kapheilta which is before Mamre, that is, Hebron in the land of Kanaan.  |
| Latin Vulgate           | And so Abraham buried Sara, his wife, in the double cave of the field, that looked towards Mambre, this is Hebron in the land of Chanaan.      |
| Peshitta (Syriac)       | And after this, Abraham buried Sarah his wife in the double cave which is in the field before Mamre; the same is Hebron in the land of Canaan. |
| Septuagint (Greek)      | After this Abraham buried Sarah his wife in the Double Cave of the field, which is opposite Mamre, this is Hebron in the land of Canaan.       |

Significant differences: *Machpelah = double-cave.*

### Thought-for-thought translations; paraphrases:

|                                             |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       |
|---------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Contemporary English V.<br>Easy English     | So Abraham buried his wife Sarah in Machpelah Cave that was in the field...<br>After that, Abraham buried his wife Sarah in that cave. The cave was in the field in Machpelah. That place was east from Mamre (which is Hebron). It is in that country called Canaan. |
| Easy-to-Read Version                        | After this, Abraham buried Sarah his wife in the cave of that field near Mamre (Hebron) in the land of Canaan.                                                                                                                                                        |
| Good News Bible (TEV)<br><i>The Message</i> | Then Abraham buried his wife Sarah in that cave in the land of Canaan.<br>Abraham then proceeded to bury his wife Sarah in the cave in the field of Machpelah that is next to Mamre, present-day Hebron, in the land of Canaan.                                       |
| New Berkeley Version                        | This doe, Abraham buried his wife Sarah in the cave of the Machpelah field, fronting Mamre, that is Hebron, in the land of Canaan.                                                                                                                                    |
| New Century Version                         | After this, Abraham buried his wife Sarah in the cave in the field of Machpelah, near Mamre. (Mamre was later called Hebron in the land of Canaan.)                                                                                                                   |
| New Living Translation                      | Then Abraham buried his wife, Sarah, there in Canaan, in the cave of Machpelah, near Mamre (also called Hebron).                                                                                                                                                      |

### Partially literal and partially paraphrased translations:

|                          |                                                                                                                                            |
|--------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| American English Bible   | So, AbrahAm buried his woman SarAh inside the field's double cave, which is opposite MamRe (Hebron in the land of CanaAn).                 |
| International Standard V | After this, Abraham buried his wife Sarah in the cave at the field of Machpelah, east of Mamre (that is, in Hebron) in the land of Canaan. |
| New Simplified Bible     | Abraham buried his wife Sarah in the cave in the field of Machpelah, east of Mamre (Hebron), in the land of Canaan.                        |

### Mostly literal renderings (with some occasional paraphrasing):

|                           |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      |
|---------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Ancient Roots Translinear | After this, Abraham buried Sarah his woman at the cave in the field of Machpelah by the front of Mamre. (It's Hebron in the land of Canaan.)                                                                                                                                                         |
| Bible in Basic English    | Then Abraham put Sarah his wife to rest in the hollow rock in the field of Machpelah near Mamre, that is, Hebron in the land of Canaan.                                                                                                                                                              |
| Ferar-Fenton Bible        | ...and after that, Abraham buried Sarah his wife in the cave of the field of Macphelah, opposite Mamrah [The words "that is now Hebron," are the note of an ancient editor, not part of the original text, for Hebron had not attained its name in the days of Moses —F. F.], in the land of Canaan. |
| New Advent Bible          | And so Abraham buried Sara, his wife, in the double cave of the field, that looked towards Mambre, this is Hebron in the land of Chanaan.                                                                                                                                                            |

### Catholic Bibles (those having the imprimatur):

|                           |                                                                                                                                                        |
|---------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Christian Community Bible | <i>After this Abraham buried his wife Sarah in the cave of Machpelah.</i>                                                                              |
| The Heritage Bible        | And after this, Abraham buried Sarah, his wife, in the cave of the field of Machpelah before the face of Mamre, which is Hebron in the land of Canaan. |
| New Jerusalem Bible       | And after this, Abraham buried his wife Sarah in the cave of the field of Machpelah, facing Mamre -- now Hebron -- in the land of Canaan.              |

### Jewish/Hebrew Names Bibles:

|                           |                                                                                                                                             |
|---------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| exeGesés companion Bible  | And thus, Abraham entombs Sarah his woman in the cave of the field of Machpelah at the face of Mamre<br>- Hebron in the land of Kenaan: ... |
| Hebrew Names Version      | After this, Avraham buried Sarah his wife in the cave of the field of Makhpelah before Mamre (that is, Chevron), in the land of Kena`an.    |
| JPS (Tanakh—1985)         | And then Abraham buried his wife Sarah in the cave of the field of Machpelah, facing Mamre—now Hebron—in the land of Canaan.                |
| Judaica Press Complete T. | And afterwards, Abraham buried Sarah his wife in the cave of the field of Machpelah, facing Mamre, which is Hebron, in the land of Canaan.  |
| Kaplan Translation        | Abraham then buried his wife Sarah in the cave of Makhpelah Field, which adjoins Mamre (also known as Hebron), in the land of Canaan.       |

### Expanded/Embellished Bibles:

|                             |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        |
|-----------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Kretzmann's Commentary      | And after this Abraham buried Sarah, his wife, in the cave of the field of Machpelah before Mamre; the same is Hebron, in the land of Canaan. That was the object of the purchase of this field with its cave, which from its name may have had two entrances or been a double cavern. |
| Lexham English Bible        | And thus afterward Abraham buried Sarah his wife in the cave of the field of Machpelah near Mamre; that [is] Hebron, in the land of Canaan.                                                                                                                                            |
| Translation for Translators | After that, Abraham buried his wife Sarah's body in the cave in the field in the Machpelah area near Mamre, which is now called Hebron <i>city</i> , in Canaan land.                                                                                                                   |

The Voice After the agreement was made, Abraham buried his wife Sarah in the cave in the field of Machpelah, east of Mamre (an area now known as Hebron) in Canaan.

**Literal, almost word-for-word, renderings:**

|                            |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                |
|----------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| The Amplified Bible        | After this, Abraham buried Sarah his wife in the cave of the field of Machpelah [Here were buried Abraham and Sarah, Isaac and Rebekah, and Jacob and Leah (Gen. 49:31; 50:13).] to the east of Mamre, that is, Hebron, in the land of Canaan. |
| Concordant Literal Version | And afterward Abraham entombs Sarah, his wife, at the double cave of the field adjoining Mamre. (It is Hebron), in the land of Canaan.                                                                                                         |
| Darby Translation          | And after this, Abraham buried Sarah his wife in the cave of the field at Machpelah, opposite to Mamre: that is Hebron, in the land of Canaan.                                                                                                 |
| English Standard Version   | 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.                                                                                                         |
| World English Bible        | After this, Abraham buried Sarah his wife in the cave of the field of Machpelah before Mamre (the same is Hebron), in the land of Canaan.                                                                                                      |
| Young's Updated LT         | And after this has Abraham buried Sarah his wife at the cave of the field of Machpelah before Mamre (which is Hebron), in the land of Canaan.                                                                                                  |

**The gist of this verse:** Abraham buries Sarah in this cave on the plot of land that he had just purchased.

| <b>Genesis 23:19a</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                           |                                                                                                                                             |                                                             |                            |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------|
| Hebrew/Pronunciation                                                                                                                                                                                                                            | Common English Meanings                                                                                                                     | Notes/Morphology                                            | BDB and Strong's #         |
| w <sup>e</sup> (or v <sup>e</sup> ) (וּ, or ו) [pronounced <i>weh</i> ]                                                                                                                                                                         | <i>and; even; in particular, namely; when, since, seeing, though; so, then, therefore; or, but yet; who, which; or; that, in that; with</i> | simple wâw conjunction                                      | No Strong's #<br>BDB #251  |
| 'achărêy (אַחֲרָי) [pronounced <i>ah-kuh-RAY</i> ]                                                                                                                                                                                              | <i>behind, after; following; after that, afterwards; hinder parts</i>                                                                       | preposition; plural form                                    | Strong's #310<br>BDB #29   |
| The plural form of this preposition occurs more often than the singular, although I am uncertain as to any difference in meaning when used as a preposition.                                                                                    |                                                                                                                                             |                                                             |                            |
| kên (כֵּן) [pronounced <i>kane</i> ]                                                                                                                                                                                                            | <i>so, therefore, thus; then, afterwards; upright, honest; rightly, well; [it is] so, such, so constituted</i>                              | properly, an active participle; used primarily as an adverb | Strong's #3651<br>BDB #485 |
| These two words together literally mean <i>after so</i> ; however, they appear to mean <i>afterward, afterwards, after these things, after this, [and] after that</i> . See Genesis 15:14 23:19 25:26 Leviticus 14:36 Deut. 21:13 1Samuel 10:5. |                                                                                                                                             |                                                             |                            |
| qâbar (קָבַר) [pronounced <i>kaw-BAHR</i> ]                                                                                                                                                                                                     | <i>to bury, to heap up a mound</i>                                                                                                          | 3 <sup>rd</sup> person masculine singular, Qal perfect      | Strong's #6912<br>BDB #868 |
| 'Ab <sup>e</sup> râhâm (אֲבִרְחָם) [pronounced <i>ahb<sup>ve</sup>-raw-HAWM</i> ]                                                                                                                                                               | <i>father of a multitude, chief of a multitude; transliterated Abraham</i>                                                                  | masculine singular proper noun                              | Strong's #85<br>BDB #4     |
| 'êth (אֵת) [pronounced <i>ayth</i> ]                                                                                                                                                                                                            | untranslated generally; occasionally <i>to, toward</i>                                                                                      | indicates that the following substantive is a direct object | Strong's #853<br>BDB #84   |

## Genesis 23:19a

| Hebrew/Pronunciation                                  | Common English Meanings                             | Notes/Morphology                                                                 | BDB and Strong's #         |
|-------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------|
| Sârâh (סָרָה)<br>[pronounced saw-RAW]                 | <i>princess, noble woman</i> ; transliterated Sarah | proper noun; feminine singular                                                   | Strong's #8283<br>BDB #979 |
| This is the first mention of Sarah's name since v. 2. |                                                     |                                                                                  |                            |
| ʾîshshâh (אִשָּׁה)<br>[pronounced eesh-SHAW]          | <i>woman, wife</i>                                  | feminine singular noun with the 3 <sup>rd</sup> person masculine singular suffix | Strong's #802<br>BDB #61   |

**Translation:** Consequently, afterwards, Abraham buried Sarah, his wife,...

Once the purchase had been made, Abraham laid his wife to rest in this parcel of land that he purchased.

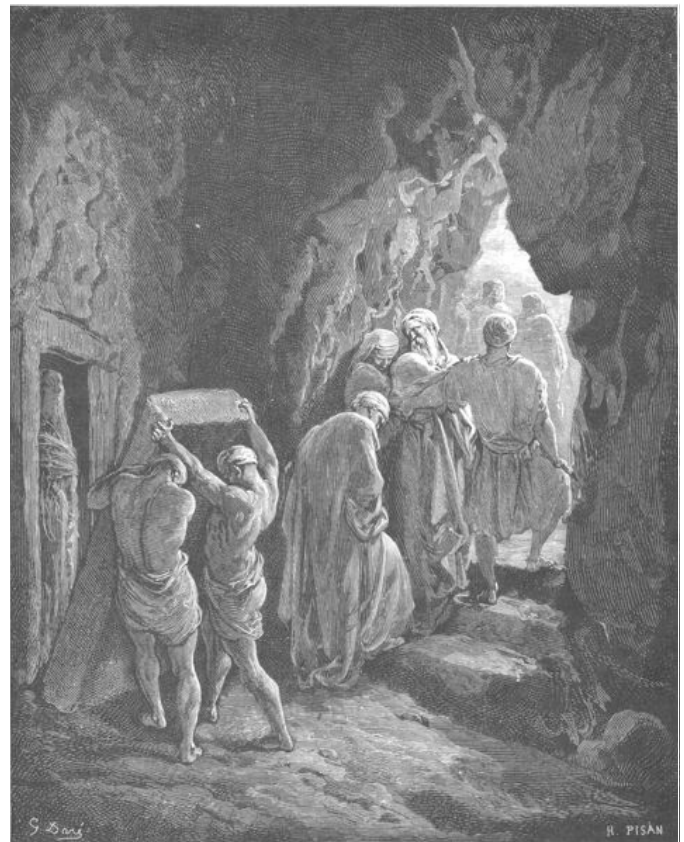
The word translated *buried* is qâbar (קָבַר) [pronounced kaw-BAHR], and it means *to bury, to heap up a mound*. Strong's #6912 BDB #868. It is possible that the body of Sarah was lain onto the ground and dirt heaped over her in the cave.

**The Burial of Sarah from Gustave Doré (1866);** Doré's English Bible; from Wikimedia accessed December 14, 2014.

Barnes: *The burial of Sarah is noted because she was the wife of Abraham and the mother of the promised seed. The purchase of the field is worthy of note, as it is the first property of the chosen race in the promised land. Hence, these two events are interwoven with the sacred narrative of the ways of God with man.*<sup>62</sup>

J. Vernon McGee: *Abraham and Sarah, Isaac and Rebekah, Jacob and Leah are all...buried [here]. (Rachel is buried at Bethlehem.) These folk are all buried in Israel because of their hope of being raised from the dead in that land. It is an earthly hope. Our hope as New Testament believers is a heavenly hope. I trust that that is clear to you so that you can understand why this burial was so important to Abraham at this particular time.*<sup>63</sup>

The Preacher's Complete Homiletical Commentary notes: *[Abraham] believed in immortality. This is evident by his care that the dead should have decent and honourable burial. Why should there be such concern for the dead body if all is over and ended-if the being that inhabited it is blotted out of*



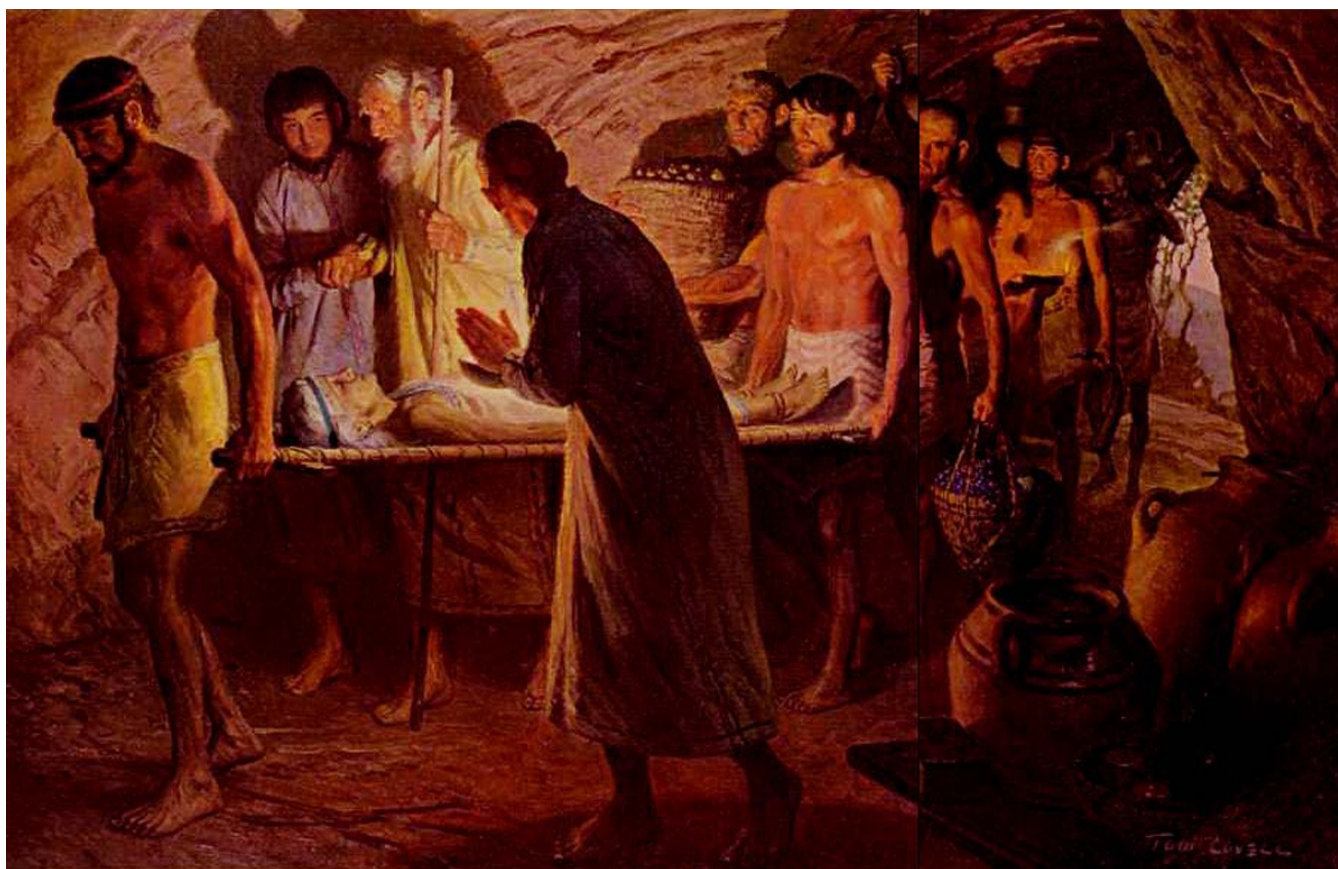
<sup>62</sup> Albert Barnes, *Barnes' Notes on the Old Testament*; from e-Sword, Genesis 23:17–20.

<sup>63</sup> From [https://archive.org/stream/01\\_Genesis/01-GENESIS\\_djvu.txt](https://archive.org/stream/01_Genesis/01-GENESIS_djvu.txt) accessed December 7, 2014.

existence? This reverence for the dead shows that the mortal frame was once tenanted by spirit, and that that spirit continues to live on, though no longer discerned by men in the flesh. The honour paid to the dead by early nations, especially by the Egyptians, proves that they had a secret glimmer of immortality...Abraham did not believe that his departed wife had done with God for ever, and therefore he paid honour to the temple where her consecrated soul once dwelt.<sup>64</sup>

F. B. Meyer: *Death is an ever-constant monitor that this world is not our home. We rise up from before our dead to confess that we are only strangers and sojourners on the earth...Abraham's insistence on buying this grave, and the care with which the negotiations were pursued, show that he realized that his descendants would come again into that land and possess it. It was as though he felt that he and Sarah should lie there awaiting the return of their children and children's children... So the graves of the martyrs and of missionaries who have fallen at the post of duty are the silent outposts that hold those lands for Christ, as the graves of the saints await the Second Advent.*<sup>65</sup>

The Burial of Sarah in Hebron by Tom Lovell (1967) from [Cartoons 4 Christ.com](http://Cartoons4Christ.com); accessed December 14, 2014.



**Genesis 23:19b**

| Hebrew/Pronunciation     | Common English Meanings                                                                          | Notes/Morphology                                              | BDB and Strong's #       |
|--------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------|
| 'el (אל) [pronounced eh] | unto; into, among, in; toward, to; against; concerning, regarding; besides, together with; as to | directional preposition (respect or deference may be implied) | Strong's #413<br>BDB #39 |

<sup>64</sup> From <http://www.studylight.org/commentaries/phc/view.cgi?bk=0&ch=22> accessed December 7, 2014.

<sup>65</sup> From <http://www.studylight.org/commentaries/fbm/view.cgi?bk=0&ch=23> accessed December 8, 2014.

| Genesis 23:19b                                                        |                                                      |                                                         |                            |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------|
| Hebrew/Pronunciation                                                  | Common English Meanings                              | Notes/Morphology                                        | BDB and Strong's #         |
| m <sup>é</sup> ârah (מְאָרָה)<br>[pronounced m <sup>é</sup> -gaw-RAW] | cave, den, hole                                      | feminine singular construct                             | Strong's #4631<br>BDB #792 |
| sâdeh (שָׂדֶה)<br>[pronounced saw-DEH]                                | field, land, country, open field, open country       | masculine singular construct                            | Strong's #7704<br>BDB #961 |
| Mak <sup>é</sup> phêlâh (מַכְפֵּלָה)<br>[pronounced mahk-pay-LAW]     | double portion, the double; transliterated Machpelah | proper singular noun/location with the definite article | Strong's #4375<br>BDB #495 |

**Translation:** ...in the cave of the field of Machpelah,...

There is a repeating that this is the cave in the field of Machpelah. It surprises me that this is repeated so many times, and I do not know exactly why.

Abraham himself will be buried here (Genesis 25:9), as well as Isaac, Rebekah and Leah (Genesis 49:30–32), Jacob (Genesis 47:29–31), and later, Joseph (Genesis 50:13, 25).

*J. Vernon McGee: Apparently, this place is where the mosque is built at Hebron today. It is considered either the second or third most important mosque in the world of Islam. They have many mosques in Cairo and other places, and the ones I have seen are absolutely beautiful. The most important one, of course, would be at Mecca. I am not sure whether the one at Hebron or the one at Jerusalem would be number two, but the other would then be number three. You can see how important this is, because the Arabs all trace their lineage back to Abraham.<sup>66</sup>*

Driver: The traditional site of this cave, on the NE. edge of the modern El-Haltl (see on xiii. 18), is now surmounted by a mosque, 70 ft. long (from NW. to SE.) and 93 ft. broad, which occupies the SE. part of a court 181 ft. long by 93 ft. broad, called the Haram ('prohibited,' i.e. sacred, 'place'), and enclosed by massive walls 8 ft. thick and 40ft. high. The Haram is most jealously guarded by the Moslems, and has never in modern times been entered by Christians except on rare occasions by distinguished strangers, for instance in 1862 by the (then) Prince of Wales, accompanied by Dean Stanley and other members of his suite, and in 1881 by the Princes Albert Victor and George, Canon Dalton, Sir Charles Wilson, and Capt. [now Col.] Conder... The Haram enclosure contains six large cenotaphs, equidistantly disposed along the length of the enclosure, and supposed by the Moslems to stand vertically above the actual graves of the three patriarchs and their wives, each enclosed in a separate chapel, guarded by doors inlaid with brass-work, and covered with richly embroidered silk hangings. The cenotaphs of Isaac and Rebekah are in the mosque itself, those of Abraham and Sarah in the porch on the NW. of it, in the middle of the Haram, and those of Jacob and Leah in two separate chambers at the NW. end of the Haram. There is also a cenotaph of Joseph in a building just outside the Haram, on its NW. corner. The cave below has never been entered in modern times : there are in the floor of the mosque three entrances said to lead into it, but they could be reached only by breaking up the flags of the flooring, a proceeding which the Moslems would regard as sacrilegious. As regards the date of the Haram and its contents, the massive enclosing walls are considered to belong to the time of Herod ; the mosque contains large remains of a Christian Church, belonging probably to the 12th cent. A.D. ; the cenotaphs and their decorations are of later Arab workmanship.<sup>67</sup>

<sup>66</sup> From [https://archive.org/stream/01\\_Genesis/01-GENESIS\\_djvu.txt](https://archive.org/stream/01_Genesis/01-GENESIS_djvu.txt) accessed December 7, 2014.

<sup>67</sup> From <https://ia600406.us.archive.org/27/items/bookofgenesisnot00drivuoft/bookofgenesisnot00drivuoft.pdf> (p. 228); accessed December 10, 2014.

For the Jews, this would be an important place, a geographical bookmark of their history, as every Jew traces himself back to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob (and every Arab traces himself back to Abraham). If it were up to the Jews, I can guarantee you that this place would be opened up, and given easy access to adherents to all 3 religions (Christianity, Judaism and Islam). However, since this land is in the hands of the followers of Mohammed, it will never be an easily accessible place; nor will it ever be as safe as are many of the other ancient places in modern-day Israel.

| <b>Genesis 23:19c</b>                                                                                                                   |                                                                                                                      |                                                                                                              |                            |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------|
| <b>Hebrew/Pronunciation</b>                                                                                                             | <b>Common English Meanings</b>                                                                                       | <b>Notes/Morphology</b>                                                                                      | <b>BDB and Strong's #</b>  |
| ‘al (עַל) [pronounced <i>gahʼ</i> ]                                                                                                     | <i>upon, beyond, on, against, above, over, by, beside</i>                                                            | preposition of proximity                                                                                     | Strong's #5921<br>BDB #752 |
| pānîym (פָּנִים) [pronounced <i>paw-NEEM</i> ]                                                                                          | <i>face, faces, countenance; presence</i>                                                                            | masculine plural construct (plural acts like English singular)                                               | Strong's #6440<br>BDB #815 |
| Together, ‘al and pānîym mean <i>upon the face of, facing, in front of, before (as in preference to), in addition to, overlooking</i> . |                                                                                                                      |                                                                                                              |                            |
| Mam <sup>e</sup> rêʾ (מַמְרֵא) [pronounced <i>mahm-RAY</i> ]                                                                            | <i>strength; fatness; transliterated Mamre</i>                                                                       | proper singular noun/location                                                                                | Strong's #4471<br>BDB #577 |
| hîyʾ (הִיא) [pronounced <i>hee</i> ]                                                                                                    | <i>she, it; also used as a demonstrative pronoun: that, this (one)</i>                                               | 3 <sup>rd</sup> person feminine singular, personal pronoun; sometimes the verb <i>is</i> , <i>is</i> implied | Strong's #1931<br>BDB #214 |
| b <sup>e</sup> (ב) [pronounced <i>b<sup>eh</sup></i> ]                                                                                  | <i>in, into, through; at, by, near, on, upon; with, before, against; by means of; among; within</i>                  | a preposition of proximity                                                                                   | Strong's# none<br>BDB #88  |
| ʾerets (אֶרֶץ) [pronounced <i>EH-rets</i> ]                                                                                             | <i>earth (all or a portion thereof), land, territory, country, continent; ground, soil; under the ground [Sheol]</i> | feminine singular construct                                                                                  | Strong's #776<br>BDB #75   |
| K <sup>e</sup> naʿan (כְּנָעַן) [pronounced <i>k<sup>e</sup>NAH-gahn</i> ]                                                              | which possibly means <i>merchant</i> and is transliterated <i>Canaan</i>                                             | masculine proper noun; territory; pausal form                                                                | Strong's #3667<br>BDB #488 |

**Translation:** ...facing Mamre (that is Hebron) in the land of Canaan.

According to one source, the name of this place being Hebron is a name actually by which it is known after the time of Moses.

This appears to confirm that the city where this legal transaction takes place is in Kiriath-arba (later known as Hebron).

Genesis 23:19 **Consequently, afterwards, Abraham buried Sarah, his wife, in the cave of the field of Machpelah, facing Mamre (that is Hebron) in the land of Canaan.** (Kukis mostly literal translation)

Genesis 23:19 **Consequently, Abraham then buried Sarah, his wife, in that cave, which was in the field of Machpelah, opposite Mamre (which we now call Hebron) in the land of Canaan.** (Kukis paraphrase)

Canaan is the name of a person, in Genesis 9–10, after whom the general area appears to be named (Genesis 11:31 12:5 16:3). After and including Genesis 11, the land of Canaan is named several times.

Now, in case you are particularly morbid and are wondering about the body of Sarah and its state, as she has no doubt been lying in state for several days to possibly a few weeks; you can rest assured that her body was preserved by spices and linen, to retard the purification and to mask the smell.

After the land transaction occurred, then Abraham laid the body of his wife to rest in this cave. The whole idea here, I believe is, that she will just sit up from her place for the resurrection (as will Abraham, as they are laid to rest in the same cave—Genesis 25:9).

*Clarke: Benjamin of Tudela says, in his time (who lived in the latter end of the twelfth century), in the field of Machpelah was a city or town, and in it a large temple called Saint Abraham, where were shown the sepulchres of the six persons before mentioned, and inscriptions over each of them, showing whose they were; and that at the end of the field was the house of Abraham, and before the house a fountain, and no other was suffered to be built there in honour to Abraham.*<sup>68</sup>

The actual location is disputed.

The Pulpit Commentary says: *[This tomb is] more probably to be sought for in the Mohammedan mosque Haram, built of colossal blocks, and situated on the mountain slope of Hebron towards the east (Robinson, Thomson, Stanley, Tristram), which, after having been for 600 years hermetically sealed against Europeans, only three during that period having gained access to it in disguise, was visited in 1862 by the Prince of Wales and party (vide Stanley, "Lectures on Jewish Church," App. 2).*<sup>69</sup>

Abraham's first portion in the promised land is not much more than a footstep; but, as Zechariah wrote, **For who has despised the day of small things?** (Zechariah 4:10a; AKJV).

**And so stands the field and the cave which [is] in him for Abraham for a possession of a burial site from with sons of Heth.**

Genesis  
23:20

**So the field is established (and the cave which [is] in it) for Abraham for a possession of a burial site directly from the sons of Heth.**

**So both the field and the cave which is in the field were established as a possession for Abraham as a burial site, purchased from the sons of Heth.**

Here is how others have translated this verse:

#### Ancient texts:

|                         |                                                                                                                              |
|-------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Masoretic Text (Hebrew) | And so stands the field and the cave which [is] in him for Abraham for a possession of a burial site from with sons of Heth. |
| Targum of Onkelos       | And the field and the cave therein were confirmed unto Abraham for an inheritance of sepulture from the sons of Hittah.      |
| Latin Vulgate           | And the field was made sure to Abraham, and the cave that was in it, for a possession to bury in, by the children of Heth.   |
| Peshitta (Syriac)       | Thus the field and the cave that is in it were deeded to Abraham for a possession of a burial ground by the Hittites.        |

<sup>68</sup> Adam Clarke, *Commentary on the Bible*; from e-Sword, Genesis 23:19. Clarke cites Itinerarium, p. 48, 49.

<sup>69</sup> *The Pulpit Commentary*; 1880-1919; by Joseph S. Exell, Henry Donald Maurice Spence-Jones, courtesy of e-sword, Genesis 23:19.



Septuagint (Greek) So the field and the cave which was in it were deeded to Abraham for possession of a burying place, by the sons of Heth.

Significant differences: None.

### Thought-for-thought translations; paraphrases:

|                                      |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     |
|--------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Common English Bible                 | The field and the cave in it were officially transferred from the Hittites to Abraham as his burial property.                                                                                                                                                                       |
| Contemporary English V. Easy English | ...he had bought from the Hittites. Abraham bought the field and cave from the family of Heth and he became the owner. He used the field and cave to bury dead people.                                                                                                              |
| Easy-to-Read Version                 | Abraham bought the field and the cave on it from the Hittite people. This became his property, and he used it as a burying place.                                                                                                                                                   |
| Good News Bible (TEV)                | So the field which had belonged to the Hittites, and the cave in it, became the property of Abraham for a burial ground.                                                                                                                                                            |
| <i>The Message</i>                   | The field and its cave went from the Hittites into Abraham's possession as a burial plot.                                                                                                                                                                                           |
| New Berkeley Version                 | The field and the cave it contained were legally conveyed by the sons of Heth into Abraham's possession for a cemetery. Here we have a true picture of an important business transaction in the Near East, without use of writing: the price was high, but Abraham would not barter |
| New Century Version                  | So Abraham bought the field and the cave in it from the Hittites to use as a burying place.                                                                                                                                                                                         |
| New Life Bible                       | The field and the grave in it were handed over to Abraham by the sons of Heth for a place to bury his wife.                                                                                                                                                                         |
| New Living Translation               | So the field and the cave were transferred from the Hittites to Abraham for use as a permanent burial place.                                                                                                                                                                        |

### Partially literal and partially paraphrased translations:

|                                 |                                                                                                                                                                                                                        |
|---------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| American English Bible          | For the field and its cave were sold to AbraHam as his burying place by the sons of Chet.                                                                                                                              |
| Beck's American Translation     | And the field with the dave in it, which once belonged to the Hittites, now continued to be Abraham's property for a burial place.                                                                                     |
| <i>God's Word</i> <sup>TM</sup> | So the field and its cave were sold by the Hittites to Abraham as his property to be used as a tomb.                                                                                                                   |
| International Standard V NIRV   | And so the field with its cave was deeded by the Hittites to Abraham as a burial site. So the field and the cave that was in it were sold to Abraham by the Hittites. The property became a place for his family tomb. |
| New Simplified Bible            | The Hittites sold the field and its cave to Abraham as his property to be used as a tomb.                                                                                                                              |

### Mostly literal renderings (with some occasional paraphrasing):

|                           |                                                                                                         |
|---------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Ancient Roots Translinear | The raised field and the cave in it was a grave home of Abraham from the sons of Heth.                  |
| Bible in Basic English    | And the field and the hollow rock were handed over to Abraham as his property by the children of Heth.  |
| Ferar-Fenton Bible        | ...and the field with the cave in it was acquired by Abraham for a burial ground from the sons of Heth. |
| HCSB                      | The field with its cave passed from the Hittites to Abraham as a burial place.                          |
| NIV – UK                  | So the field and the cave in it were legally made over to Abraham by the Hittites as a burial site.     |

**Catholic Bibles (those having the imprimatur):**

|                           |                                                                                                                                  |
|---------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Christian Community Bible | <i>The unused field and the cave that is in it were given to Abraham as a possession for a burying place by the Hittites.</i>    |
| The Heritage Bible        | And the field and the cave that is in it were caused to rise to Abraham for a possession of a burying-place by the sons of Heth. |
| New American Bible        | Thus the field with its cave was transferred from the Hittites to Abraham as a burial place.                                     |
| New Jerusalem Bible       | And so the field and the cave in it passed from the Hittites into Abraham's possession as a burial site of his own.              |
| New RSV                   | The field and the cave that is in it passed from the Hittites into Abraham's possession as a burying-place.                      |
| Revised English Bible     | Thus, by purchase from the Hittites, the plot and the cave in it became Abraham's possession as a burial-place.                  |

**Jewish/Hebrew Names Bibles:**

|                           |                                                                                                                                      |
|---------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Complete Jewish Bible     | The field and its cave had been purchased by Avraham from the sons of Het as a burial-site which would belong to him.                |
| exeGesés companion Bible  | ...and the field and the cave therein are raised to Abraham for a possession of a tomb by the sons of Heth.                          |
| JPS (Tanakh—1985)         | Thus the field with its cave passed from the Hittites to Abraham, as a burial site.                                                  |
| Judaica Press Complete T. | And the field and the cave within it were established to Abraham as burial property, <i>purchased</i> from the sons of Heth.         |
| Kaplan Translation        | This is how the field and its cave became the uncontested property of Abraham as a burial site, purchased from the children of Heth. |

**Expanded/Embellished Bibles:**

|                             |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             |
|-----------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Kretzmann's Commentary      | And the field, and the cave that is therein, were made sure unto Abraham for a possession of a burying-place by the sons of Heth. By burying his wife in Canaan, in the Land of Promise, Abraham confessed that Sarah took part in the promised blessing, that her body was buried in the sure hope of the future resurrection by virtue of the redemption of Christ. In that sense the cemeteries of Christian congregations are truly God's acres, from which He will, on the last day, gather the harvest of rich fruit. |
| Lexham English Bible        | And the field and the cave which [was] in it {passed} to Abraham as {a burial site} from the Hittites.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      |
| NET Bible®                  | So Abraham secured the field and the cave that was in it as a burial site [Heb "possession of a grave."] from the sons of Heth.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             |
| Translation for Translators | So the field and the cave in it were officially sold to Abraham by the descendants of Heth, to be used as a burial ground.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  |
| The Voice                   | The field and the cave in it became Abraham's property with the approval of the Hittites; now he had a proper place to bury his dead.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       |

**Literal, almost word-for-word, renderings:**

|                            |                                                                                                                        |
|----------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <i>The Amplified Bible</i> | The field and the cave in it were conveyed to Abraham for a permanent burial place by the sons of Heth.                |
| Concordant Literal Version | And confirmed is the field and the cave which is in it to Abraham for a holding for a tomb from the sons of Heth.      |
| Darby Translation          | And the field and the cave that was in it were assured to Abraham for a possession of a sepulchre by the sons of Heth. |

|                           |                                                                                                                                                                   |
|---------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| English Standard Version  | The field and the cave that is in it were made over to Abraham as property for a burying place by the Hittites.                                                   |
| LTHB                      | And the field was certified, and the cave in it, to Abraham for a burial possession from the sons of Heth.                                                        |
| NASB                      | So the field and the cave that is in it, were deeded over [Or were ratified] to Abraham for a burial site [Lit possession of a burial place] by the sons of Heth. |
| A Voice in the Wilderness | And the field and the cave that is in it were deeded to Abraham by the sons of Heth as property for a burial place.                                               |
| World English Bible       | The field, and the cave that is therein, were made sure to Abraham for a possession of a burying place by the children of Heth.                                   |
| Young's Updated LT        | And established are the field, and the cave which is in it, to Abraham for a possession of a burying-place, from the sons of Heth.                                |

**The gist of this verse:** And so, this field and the cave in it were sold to Abraham from the Hittites as a burial plot.

| Genesis 23:20a                                                 |                                                                                                                                   |                                                                                      |                            |
|----------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------|
| Hebrew/Pronunciation                                           | Common English Meanings                                                                                                           | Notes/Morphology                                                                     | BDB and Strong's #         |
| wa (or va) (ו) [pronounced wah]                                | <i>and so, and then, then, and; so, that, yet, therefore, consequently; because</i>                                               | wâw consecutive                                                                      | No Strong's #<br>BDB #253  |
| qûwm (קום) [pronounced koom]                                   | <i>to stand, to rise up, to get up; to establish, to establish a vow, to cause a vow to stand, to confirm or to fulfill a vow</i> | 3 <sup>rd</sup> person masculine singular, Qal imperfect                             | Strong's #6965<br>BDB #877 |
| sâdeh (שדה) [pronounced saw-DEH]                               | <i>field, land, country, open field, open country</i>                                                                             | masculine singular noun with the definite article                                    | Strong's #7704<br>BDB #961 |
| w <sup>e</sup> (or v <sup>e</sup> ) (ו, or ו) [pronounced weh] | <i>and, even, then; namely; when; since, that; though</i>                                                                         | simple wâw conjunction                                                               | No Strong's #<br>BDB #251  |
| m <sup>e</sup> ârâh (מרה) [pronounced m <sup>e</sup> -gaw-RAW] | <i>cave, den, hole</i>                                                                                                            | feminine singular noun with the definite article                                     | Strong's #4631<br>BDB #792 |
| 'âsher (אשר) [pronounced uh-SHER]                              | <i>that, which, when, who, whom</i>                                                                                               | relative pronoun                                                                     | Strong's #834<br>BDB #81   |
| b <sup>e</sup> (ב) [pronounced b <sup>eh</sup> ]               | <i>in, into, through; at, by, near, on, upon; with, before, against; by means of; among; within</i>                               | a preposition of proximity with the 3 <sup>rd</sup> person masculine singular suffix | Strong's# none<br>BDB #88  |

**Translation:** So the field is established (and the cave which [is] in it)...

The establishment of the field and the cave indicated that the ownership of this area was transferred to Abraham, and that it would have a very specific purpose.

## Genesis 23:20b

| Hebrew/Pronunciation                                                        | Common English Meanings                                                    | Notes/Morphology                       | BDB and Strong's #         |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------|----------------------------|
| lâmed (ל) [pronounced l <sup>e</sup> ]                                      | <i>to, for, towards, in regards to</i>                                     | directional/relational preposition     | No Strong's #<br>BDB #510  |
| ʾAb <sup>e</sup> râhâm (אָבְרָחָם) [pronounced ahb <sup>ve</sup> -raw-HAWM] | <i>father of a multitude, chief of a multitude; transliterated Abraham</i> | masculine singular proper noun         | Strong's #85<br>BDB #4     |
| lâmed (ל) [pronounced l <sup>e</sup> ]                                      | <i>to, for, towards, in regards to</i>                                     | directional/relational preposition     | No Strong's #<br>BDB #510  |
| ʾăchûzzâh (אֲחֻזָּזָה) [pronounced uh-khooz-ZAW]                            | <i>possession [of land, slaves, etc.], land possession; inheritance</i>    | feminine singular construct            | Strong's #272<br>BDB #28   |
| qeber (קֶבֶר) [pronounced KEH <sup>p</sup> -VEHR]                           | <i>grave, sepulcher, tomb; burial place</i>                                | masculine singular noun<br>pausal form | Strong's #6913<br>BDB #868 |

**Translation:** ...for Abraham for a possession of a burial site...

The cave would become a burial site, not just for Abraham, but for the next 2 generations after him as well as where they will all be buried.

Hamilton: *This verse [Genesis 23:20] is a conclusion to Genesis 23:2-19. It seems strange appearing after Genesis 23:19 -which would have been a reasonable note on which to conclude. Its placement here points out that the crucial element in this chapter is not Sarah's death, but Abraham's acquisition of land from outsiders. As such, it is a harbinger of things to come.*<sup>70</sup>

Dr. Thomas Constable: *The time of death should be the time when the godly proclaim their faith most loudly in view of our hope in God's promises.*<sup>71</sup>

## Genesis 23:20c

| Hebrew/Pronunciation         | Common English Meanings                                                              | Notes/Morphology                                                  | BDB and Strong's #         |
|------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------|
| min (מִן) [pronounced mihn]  | <i>from, off, out from, out of, away from, on account of, since, than, more than</i> | preposition of separation                                         | Strong's #4480<br>BDB #577 |
| ʾêth (אֶת) [pronounced ayth] | <i>with, at, near, by, among, directly from</i>                                      | preposition (which is identical to the sign of the direct object) | Strong's #854<br>BDB #85   |

Together, min ʾêth mean *from proximity with, from with, from close proximity to, to proceed from someone*. A good up-to-date rendering might be *directly from*. The idea is, the person that these prepositions refer to is supposed to directly be involved in the action or in whatever is being requested.

<sup>70</sup> From <http://www.studylight.org/commentaries/phc/view.cgi?bk=0&ch=22> accessed December 7, 2014. Constable cites Hamilton, The Book . . . Chapters 18-50, p. 136.

<sup>71</sup> From <http://www.studylight.org/commentaries/phc/view.cgi?bk=0&ch=22> accessed December 7, 2014. Constable cites Hamilton, The Book . . . Chapters 18-50, p. 136.

## Genesis 23:20c

| Hebrew/Pronunciation                         | Common English Meanings                                     | Notes/Morphology           | BDB and Strong's #         |
|----------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------|----------------------------|
| bânîym (בְּנֵי־יָם)<br>[pronounced baw-NEEM] | sons, descendants; children; people; sometimes rendered men | masculine plural construct | Strong's #1121<br>BDB #119 |
| Cheth (חֵת) [pronounced khayth]              | transliterated <i>Heth</i> ; <i>Hittite</i>                 | masculine proper noun      | Strong's #2845<br>BDB #366 |

**Translation:** ...directly from the sons of Heth.

The sons of Heth agreed to this transaction and witnessed it.

Genesis 23:20 So the field is established (and the cave which [is] in it) for Abraham for a possession of a burial site directly from the sons of Heth. (Kukis mostly literal translation)

Genesis 23:20 So both the field and the cave which is in the field were established as a possession for Abraham as a burial site, purchased from the sons of Heth. (Kukis paraphrase)

This appears to be the first time in the Bible that Abraham legally acquires any property in the Land of Promise.

Quite obviously, men of that era entered into contracts with one another for various reasons. He had an alliance with 3 chiefs early on when he was in the land, which is mentioned in Genesis 14:13. This is one set of contracts. Later, the king of Gerar searches Abram out to make a contract with him in Genesis 21:22–34. Finally, here, when Abram purchases a burial plot for his wife (this is a long time in the future), he will enter into a contract to purchase this land.

Similarly, Abram has entered into contracts with the Living God. God has promised Abram protection, similar to his relationship with the 3 chiefs. God also promised to bless those who bless him; which explains why a king would search Abraham out in order to make a contract with him. Finally, God had a land contract with Abraham, analogous to this small plot of land which he purchases here.

It sounds, by this translation, that there was a record made of this transaction, and it is possible that copies were made of the transaction. This is again the Qal imperfect of qûwm (קוּם) [pronounced koom], which means, *to stand, to rise up, to get up; to establish, to establish a vow, to cause a vow to stand, to confirm or to fulfill a vow*. There is nothing in this word which indicates that something was actually written down. Strong's #6965 BDB #877. There are witnesses present; the land area completely described; the sale price is agreed upon, and the parties to this sale are specified. The idea is that, at least for the lifetimes of these people, this sale is final, and all of the details of the sale are witnessed to.

*Robbie Dean: When Abraham dies the only land that he possesses is this grave site. There is this emphasis on death throughout this chapter. In fact, the word is used about eight or nine times in the chapter, and that is a reminder to us that where we are today is not where God is taking us. And we are still living in the devil's world, a fallen environment, and our orientation needs to be, as the writer of Hebrews says, on the future destiny that God has for us; that we are strangers and pilgrims on the earth.<sup>72</sup>*

Although God gave Abraham and his seed a huge land area, what Abraham actually owns at the end of his days is a relatively small patch of land. By the description of the land, it appears that Abraham purchased between one

<sup>72</sup> From [Dean's Notes](#), accessed September 30, 2013.

and five acres of unimproved land with some interesting physical features and landmarks on it. It is here where he and his wife will rest their bodies until God calls for them again.

What is found throughout most of this chapter, but not always in my translation, are a preponderance of *and*'s. This continued use of *and*, as has been pointed out previously, is someone who is going through the motions under great stress or great solemnity. It is very perfunctory and deliberate.

A final note—this is exactly the kind of chapter that we would expect from the grieving husband at the loss of his wife. The details are recalled in the way that a man would recall such details and this is the way a man often grieves and remembers. It is a few days out of Abraham's life which affect him profoundly, yet he holds to these details. This is not something which would have been passed down in verse or in a song or by oral tradition. This is what Abraham would remember, maybe several years later, these incidents in all their minutiae. I have no idea how scholar after scholar can study this book of Genesis and not conclude that portions like this could come from nowhere else but the hand of Abraham. Certainly it was possibly edited with some additions inserted to help the reader better identify the geographical locations, but by and large this is Abraham recording this information.

*The Expositor's Bible: It is certainly a most acceptable lesson that is read to us here...that God's promises do not shrivel but grow solid and expand as we grasp them. Abraham went out to enter on possession of a few fields a little richer than his own, and he found an eternal inheritance. Naturally we think quite the opposite of God's promises; we fancy they are grandiloquent and magnify things, and that the actual fulfilment will prove unworthy of the language describing it. But as the woman who came to touch the hem of Christ's garment, with some dubious hope that thus her body might be healed, found herself thereby linked to Christ for evermore, so always, if we meet God at any one point and honestly trust Him for even the smallest gift, He makes that the means of introducing Himself to us and getting us to understand the value of His better gifts.<sup>73</sup>*

|                              |                            |                                             |
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## A Set of Summary Doctrines and Commentary

### An Abbreviated Exegesis of Genesis 23:

Bible translation used: The Scriptures 2009. Unless otherwise noted, all other quotations will be taken from this translation as well.

In the Scriptures 2009, instead of *God*, we have the word *Elohim*, which is a transliteration from the Hebrew. The other name for God, YHWH (or Jehovah, Yahweh, Adonai, Lord, JHWH, Y<sup>e</sup>howah) is represented with the actual Hebrew יהוה. The reason for there being so many different words used here is interesting. Originally, the Hebrew was written without vowels—not just YHWH, but every single Hebrew word. Because the Hebrew Scriptures (which we know as the Old Testament) were read aloud so often, the reader could look at the Hebrew consonants and know the word that was there. In fact, the Masorettes, who preserved the Bibles' pronunciation, introduced diacritical marks in the 7th century A.D. (these are vowel points, which was added above and below the original Hebrew text). Up to that time, every word in the Bible was read aloud except for one, and that was YHWH. When the Jews came to this proper name, they said, *Adonai* (= *Lord*). As a result, the Jews preserved the pronunciation

<sup>73</sup> From <http://www.studyight.org/commentaries/teb/view.cgi?bk=0&ch=23> accessed December 8, 2014.

of the Biblical text for all but one word. Of the nearly 100 translations of the Old Testament to which I refer, any one of those eight forms may be found—and one of them, the Message (I believe) uses *GOD*. Furthermore, Bible translations are not necessarily consistent at this point. One place we may read *Lord*, and elsewhere we may read *Jehovah* in the same translation.

There are some strange chapters in Genesis, and this is one of the strangest.

Genesis 23:1 *And Sarah lived one hundred and twenty-seven years, the years of the life of Sarah.*

Sarah, Abraham's wife, dies at age 127.

Genesis 23:2 *And Sarah died in Qiryath Arba, that is Hebron, in the land of Kena'an [= Canaan], and Abraham came to mourn for Sarah and to weep for her.*

She dies in Kiriath Arba, which is Hebron, in the land of Canaan.

Genesis 23:3–4 *Then Abraham rose up from beside his dead, and spoke to the sons of Heth, saying, "I am a foreigner and a sojourner among you. Give me property for a burial-site among you, so that I bury my dead from my presence."*

Abraham, after mourning for a time, gets up and speaks to the sons of Heth (these would be Hittites). He wants a piece of property where he can bury Sarah.

Genesis 23:5–6 *And the sons of Heth answered Abraham, saying to him, "Hear us, my master: You are a prince of Elohim among us. Bury your dead in the choicest of our burial-sites. None of us withholds from you his burial-site, from burying your dead."*

These Hittites assure Abraham that he will be able to bury his wife anywhere.

Genesis 23:7 *So Abraham rose and bowed himself to the people of the land, the sons of Heth.*

Abraham bows before them as a sign of respect.

Genesis 23:8–9 *And he spoke with them, saying, "If it is your desire that I bury my dead from my presence, hear me, and approach Ephron son of Tsohar for me, and let me have the cave of Maqpehah which he has, which is at the end of his field. Let him give it to me for the complete amount of silver, as property for a burial-site among you."*

Abraham had a specific place picked out. Recall that he has traveled throughout the land of Canaan. He asks to pay full price for it in silver.

Genesis 23:10–11 *And Ephron dwelt among the sons of Heth. And Ephron the Hittite answered Abraham in the hearing of the sons of Heth, all who entered at the gate of his city, saying, "No, my master, listen to me! I shall give you the field and the cave that is in it. I shall give it to you in the presence of the sons of my people. I shall give it to you. Bury your dead!"*

The owner of this land assures Abraham that there will be no cost to him. "I will give it to you," he says. "Bury your dead!"

Genesis 23:12–13 *And Abraham bowed himself down before the people of the land, and he spoke to Ephron in the hearing of the people of the land, saying, "If only you would hear me. I shall give the amount of silver for the field, take it from me, and let me bury my dead there."*

Abraham insists upon paying full price for this land.

Genesis 23:14–15 And Ephron answered Abraham, saying to him, “My master, listen to me! The land is worth four hundred sheqels of silver. What is that between you and me? So bury your dead.”

Ephron allows for a price of 400 shekels of silver to pass through his lips, saying, “What is that between you and me? Go bury your dead.” Interpretation: I cannot possibly ask you to pay this amount. Just take it and bury your wife there.

Genesis 23:16 And Abraham listened to Ephron, and Abraham weighed out the silver for Ephron which he had named in the hearing of the sons of Heth, four hundred sheqels of silver, currency of the merchants.

Having been given an amount, Abraham weighs that amount out. He pays for the land.

Genesis 23:17–18 Thus the field of Ephron which was in Makpelah, which was before Mamre, the field and the cave which was in it, and all the trees that were in the field, which were within all the surrounding borders, were deeded to Abraham as a possession in the presence of the sons of Heth, before all who went in at the gate of his city.

The exact dimensions and property line is stated aloud, so that all of the men there understand and remember what they are a witness to.

Genesis 23:19 And after this Abraham buried Sarah his wife in the cave of the field of Makpelah, before Mamre, that is Hebron, in the land of Kena'an.

After that, Abraham buried his wife, Sarah, on that plot of land.

Genesis 23:20 Thus the field and the cave that is in it were deeded to Abraham by the sons of Heth as property for a burial-site.

This entire chapters gives us insight as to the relationship between Abraham and the Hittites there; and to their relationship, which was good.

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## Addendum

### Why Genesis 23 is in the Word of God

1. Burying Sarah in the Land of Promise indicates the Abraham believes that there is a future for his children in this land.
2. The style and material found in this chapter tells us that Abraham recorded this information and not some later editor (like Moses). Otherwise this entire chapter would have been summed up in one verse.
3. This tells us that the people of Canaan, during the era of Abraham, were not idol-worshipping heathen worthy of death. They had great respect for Abraham and his God; and therefore, many of them were saved.
4. This is the first piece of land owned by a Jew in Canaan.
5. Barnes notes: *This chapter is interesting as containing the first record of mourning for the dead, of burial, of property in land, of purchase of land, of silver as a medium of purchase, and of a standard of weight.*<sup>1</sup> This does not mean that this is the first time in human history that these things occurred; but such things appear to be commonplace at this time, as per the narrative of this chapter.

<sup>1</sup> Albert Barnes, *Barnes' Notes on the Old Testament*; from e-Sword, Genesis 23:16–20.



## What We Learn from Genesis 23

1. We briefly studied the life of Sarah.
2. We also looked at the doctrine of physical death.
3. We examined the doctrine of Hebron and different theories concerning its name.
4. There was some question as to whether these are the Hittites from the Anatolia area. This was examined as well.
5. We saw here that certain things were standard—the conveyance of property, the use of silver as a medium of exchange, the use of several witnesses in a land transaction, and the burial of the dead (which could simply involved placing Sarah's body into the cave and placing dirt over her).
6. As has been observed on previous occasions, men of this era could be healthier and more intelligent than men today.
7. We still do not know how Genesis came to Moses.
8. We discussed business dealings between believers.
9. We saw when coinage was begun to be used.
10. Contracts were out in the open and witnessed in these days.
11. We even studied why Christians should have contracts and why there are real estate agents.
12. Finally, we discussed where this cave might be located today.

[Chapter Outline](#)

[Charts, Graphics and Short Doctrines](#)

The ancient historian Josephus seems to take the Old Testament texts at face value and uses them to record the history of this era.

## Josephus' History of this Time Period

### CONCERNING SARAH ABRAHAM'S WIFE; AND HOW SHE ENDED HER DAYS.

NOW Sarah died a little while after, having lived one hundred and twenty-seven years. They buried her in Hebron; the Canaanites publicly allowing them a burying-place; which piece of ground Abraham bought for four hundred shekels, of Ephron, an inhabitant of Hebron. And both Abraham and his descendants built themselves sepulchers in that place.

From: <http://www.sacred-texts.com/jud/josephus/ant-1.htm> accessed September 9, 2012. Josephus *Antiquities of the Jews*; Book 1, Chapter 14.

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## Edersheim Summarizes Genesis 23

After the offering up of Isaac, Abraham lived many years; yet scarcely any event worth record in Scripture occurred during their course. The first thing we afterwards read is the death of Sarah, at the age of one hundred and twenty-seven. She is the only woman whose age is recorded in Scripture, the distinction being probably due to her position towards believers, as stated in 1Peter 3:6. Isaac was at the time thirty-seven years old, and Abraham once more resident in Hebron. The account of Abraham's purchase of a burying place from "the children of Heth" is exceedingly pictorial. It also strikingly exhibits alike Abraham's position in the land as a stranger and a pilgrim, and yet his faith in his future possession thereof. The treaty for the field and cave of Machpelah (either "the double" cave, or else "the separated place," or "the undulating spot"), which Abraham wished to purchase for "a burying-place," was carried on in public assembly, "at the gate of the city," as the common Eastern fashion is. The patriarch expressly acknowledged himself "a stranger and a sojourner" among "the children of Heth;" and the sacred text emphatically repeats again and again how "Abraham stood up, and bowed himself to the people of the land." On the other hand, they carry on their negotiations in the true Eastern

### Edersheim Summarizes Genesis 23

fashion, first offering any of their own sepulchers, since Abraham was confessedly among them "a prince of God" (rendered in our version "a mighty prince"), then refusing any payment for Machpelah, but finishing up by asking its fullest value, in this true oriental manner: "My lord, hearken unto me: the land is worth four hundred shekels of silver (about fifty guineas<sup>1</sup>); what is that between me and you?"

In contrast, Abraham truly stands out prince-like in his courtesy and in his dealings. And so the field and cave were secured to him - a "burying-place," Abraham's only "possession" in a land that was to be his for ever! But even in this purchase of a permanent family burying-place, Abraham showed his faith in the promise; just as, many centuries later, the prophet Jeremiah showed his confidence in the promised return of Judah from Babylon, by purchasing a field in Anathoth. (Jeremiah 32:7, 8) In this cave of Machpelah lie treasured the remains of Abraham and Sarah, of Isaac and Rebekah, of Leah also, and the embalmed bodies of Jacob and perhaps Joseph.<sup>38</sup> No other spot in the Holy Land holds so much precious dust as this; and it is, among all the so-called "holy places," the only one which to this day can be pointed out with perfect certainty. Since the Moslem rule, it has not been accessible to either Christian or Jew. The site over the cave itself is covered by a Mahomedan sanctuary, which stands enclosed within a quadrangular building, two hundred feet long, one hundred and fifteen wide, and fifty or sixty high, the walls of which are divided by pilasters, about five feet apart, and two and a half feet wide. This building, with its immense stones, one of which is no less than thirty-eight feet long, must date from the time of David or of Solomon. The mosque within it was probably anciently a church; and in the cave below its floor are the patriarchal sepulchers.

<sup>1</sup> A very considerable price for those times.

From <http://www.levendwater.org/books/v1bhot.pdf> accessed September 9, 2012 (some slight updating was done to the text).

[Chapter Outline](#)

[Charts, Graphics and Short Doctrines](#)

It may be helpful to see this chapter as a contiguous whole:

### A Complete Translation of Genesis 23

#### A Reasonably Literal Translation

#### A Reasonably Literal Paraphrase

#### Sarah's Death

And Sarah's life was 127 years; the years of the life of Sarah. Sarah died in Kiriath-arba (that [is], Hebron) in the land of Canaan. Consequently, Abraham went to grieve for Sarah and to weep for her.

And Sarah lives until she was 127. When Sarah died in Kiriath-arba (later known as Hebron) in the land of Canaan, Abraham went to grieve for Sarah and to weep for her.

#### Abraham Meets with the Hittites to Purchase a Burial Site

Abraham rose up from over his dead [wife's body] and spoke to the sons of Heth, saying, "I [am] an immigrant and a newcomer [without property rights] near you [all]. Give me possession of a grave site near you that I may bury my dead away from my presence."

Abraham rose up from over his dead wife's body, and said to the Hittites: "I am an immigrant in your territory lacking property rights. Nevertheless, sell me a plot of land for a grave that I may bury my wife there, away from my sight."

| <b>A Complete Translation of Genesis 23</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                              |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>A Reasonably Literal Translation</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    | <b>A Reasonably Literal Paraphrase</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       |
| The sons of Heth answered Abraham, saying to him, "Listen, my lord, you [are] a prince of Elohim in our midst. Bury your dead in the choicest of our graves. No man from [among] us will withhold his grave from you burying your dead."                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   | The sons of Heth answered Abraham, saying, "Listen, my lord, you are a prince of God in our midst. Please bury your dead in the choicest of our grave sites. There is no man among us who would withhold from you his grave site for the purpose of burying your wife."                                                                                                                                                                      |
| Therefore, Abraham rose up and then he bowed down with reference to the people of the land, [even] to the sons of Heth. Then he spoke with them, saying, "If there is with your soul to bury my dead away from me, listen to me and urge for me Ephron ben Zohar, that he will give to me the cave of Machpelah which [is] his at the outskirts of his field. At the full [price] in silver he will sell [lit., <i>give</i> ] it to me in your midst for a possession of the burial site." | Therefore, Abraham rose up and then he bowed down before the people of the land, the sons of Heth. Then Abraham spoke with them, saying, "If you are willing to allow me to bury my wife here, then urge Ephron the son of Zohar for me, that he will sell me his cave called Machpelah, which is at the end of his property line. I will pay him the full price in your presence so that I might take possession of this as a burial site." |
| And Ephron was sitting in the midst of the sons of Heth, and he [lit., <i>Ephron the Hittite</i> ] answered Abraham in the hearing of the sons of Heth, and [lit., <i>to</i> ] all going in the gate of the city, saying, "No, my adonai, hear me! I give the field to you. The cave which [is] in it, I have also given it to you. In the sight of the sons of my people, I have given it to you. [Please] bury your dead."                                                               | All this time, Ephron was sitting out in the crowd of Hittites, so he answered Abraham so that all the Hittites there as well as those entering the city, could hear him. He said, "No, my lord; please hear me out. I will give the field to you. I will give the cave, which is in the field, to you. In the sight of my people, I have given the cave and the field to you. Go and please bury your dead."                                |
| Then Abraham bowed down before the people of the land. And he spoke to Ephron in the hearing of the people of the land, saying, "Surely, behold, if you would [sell to me]—hear me: I will give the silver of the field; take [it] from me that I may bury my dead there."                                                                                                                                                                                                                 | Then Abraham bowed down before the people of the land. And he spoke to Ephron in the presence of the people of the land, saying, "Listen, I will give you the silver for your field; please take it so that I may bury my wife's body there."                                                                                                                                                                                                |
| Then Ephron answered Abraham, saying to him, "My adonai, hear me: [this piece of] land—400 shekels of silver—between you and I, what [is] that? Then bury your dead."                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      | Then Ephron answered Abraham, saying, "My lord, please hear me then: the land is 400 shekels of silver. What is that between you and I? Then you may bury your wife."                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        |
| So Abraham listened to [and agreed with] Ephron so he [lit., <i>Abraham</i> ] weighed out for Ephron the silver that he had proposed in the hearing of the sons of Heth: 400 shekels of silver passing through regarding the trader [or, <i>merchant</i> ].                                                                                                                                                                                                                                | So Abraham agreed to Ephron's terms, and he weighed out the amount of silver that Ephron had proposed at this public meeting, which was 400 shekels of silver according to the scales of traders.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            |
| <b>The Final Transaction and the Burial of Sarah</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                              |
| And so [it] is confirmed: the field of Ephron which [is] in Machpelah which [is] in front of Mamre—the field with the cave that [is] in it, with all the trees that [are] in the field which [is] within its border round about—[this field is conveyed] to Abraham for a possession before the sons of Heth among all those entering the gates of his city.                                                                                                                               | Consequently, the field of Ephron which is in Machpelah east of Mamre—which field includes the cave as well as all of the trees within its borders on all sides, is legally conveyed to Abraham as his possession. This took place before the sons of Heth as witnesses as well as before all those who were entering into the gates of the city.                                                                                            |

| A Complete Translation of Genesis 23                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| A Reasonably Literal Translation                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       | A Reasonably Literal Paraphrase                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             |
| Consequently, afterwards, Abraham buried Sarah, his wife, in the cave of the field of Machpelah, facing Mamre (that <i>is</i> Hebron) in the land of Canaan. So the field is established (and the cave which [is] in it) for Abraham for a possession of a burial site directly from the sons of Heth. | Consequently, Abraham then buried Sarah, his wife, in that cave, which was in the field of Machpelah, opposite Mamre (which we now call Hebron) in the land of Canaan. So both the field and the cave which is in the field were established as a possession for Abraham as a burial site, purchased from the sons of Heth. |
| <a href="#">Chapter Outline</a>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        | <a href="#">Charts, Graphics and Short Doctrines</a>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        |

### Doctrinal Teachers\* Who Have Taught Genesis 23

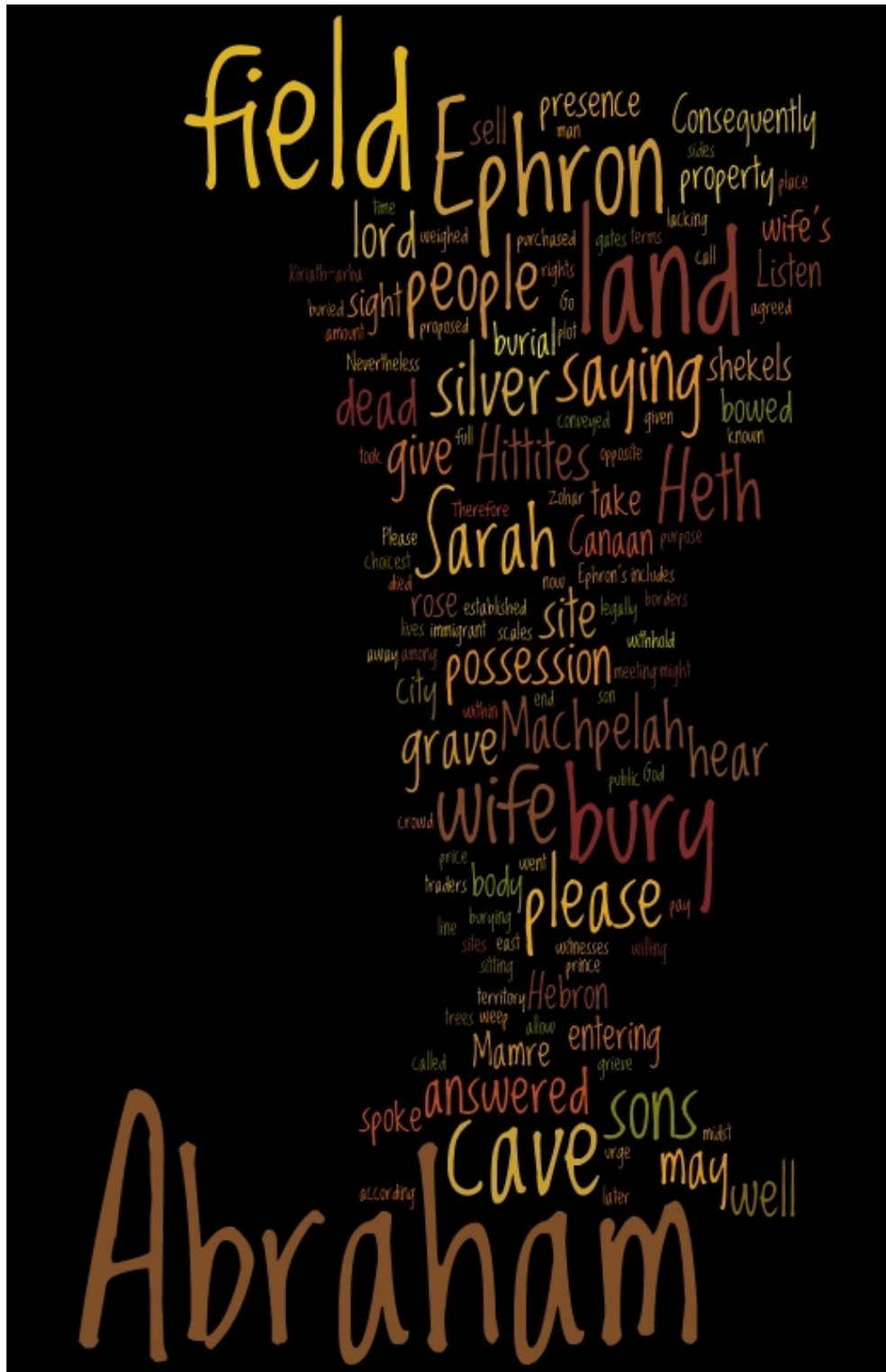
|                                   | Series                                                                                                                                                                                                                          | Lesson (s) | Passage       |
|-----------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------|---------------|
| <a href="#">R. B. Thieme, Jr.</a> | 1971 Civilizations (The Hittite Special) (#624)                                                                                                                                                                                 | #11        | Genesis 23    |
| Ken Reed                          | <a href="https://www.lakeeriebiblechurch.org/exegesis/">https://www.lakeeriebiblechurch.org/exegesis/</a>                                                                                                                       |            | Genesis 38–50 |
| Dr. Robert Dean                   | <a href="https://deanbible.org/old-testament-menuitem/genesis-menuitem">https://deanbible.org/old-testament-menuitem/genesis-menuitem</a>                                                                                       |            | Genesis 1–50  |
| Bill Wenstrom                     | <a href="https://www.wenstrom.org/index.php?option=com_libwritten&amp;view=libwritten&amp;selCat=2&amp;Itemid=124">https://www.wenstrom.org/index.php?option=com_libwritten&amp;view=libwritten&amp;selCat=2&amp;Itemid=124</a> |            | Genesis 1–50  |
| Jack M. Ballinger                 | <a href="http://www.versebyverse.org/classnotes/Genesis/genesisindex.html">http://www.versebyverse.org/classnotes/Genesis/genesisindex.html</a>                                                                                 |            | Genesis 1–49  |
| Ron Snider                        | <a href="http://www.makarios-bible-church.org/oldtest.html">http://www.makarios-bible-church.org/oldtest.html</a>                                                                                                               |            | Genesis 1–50  |

\* By doctrinal teacher, I mean a man whose primary focus is the teaching of the Word of God, verse-by-verse and book by book. A believer under the teaching of such a man should fully understand the gospel and rebound after less than a month in attendance.

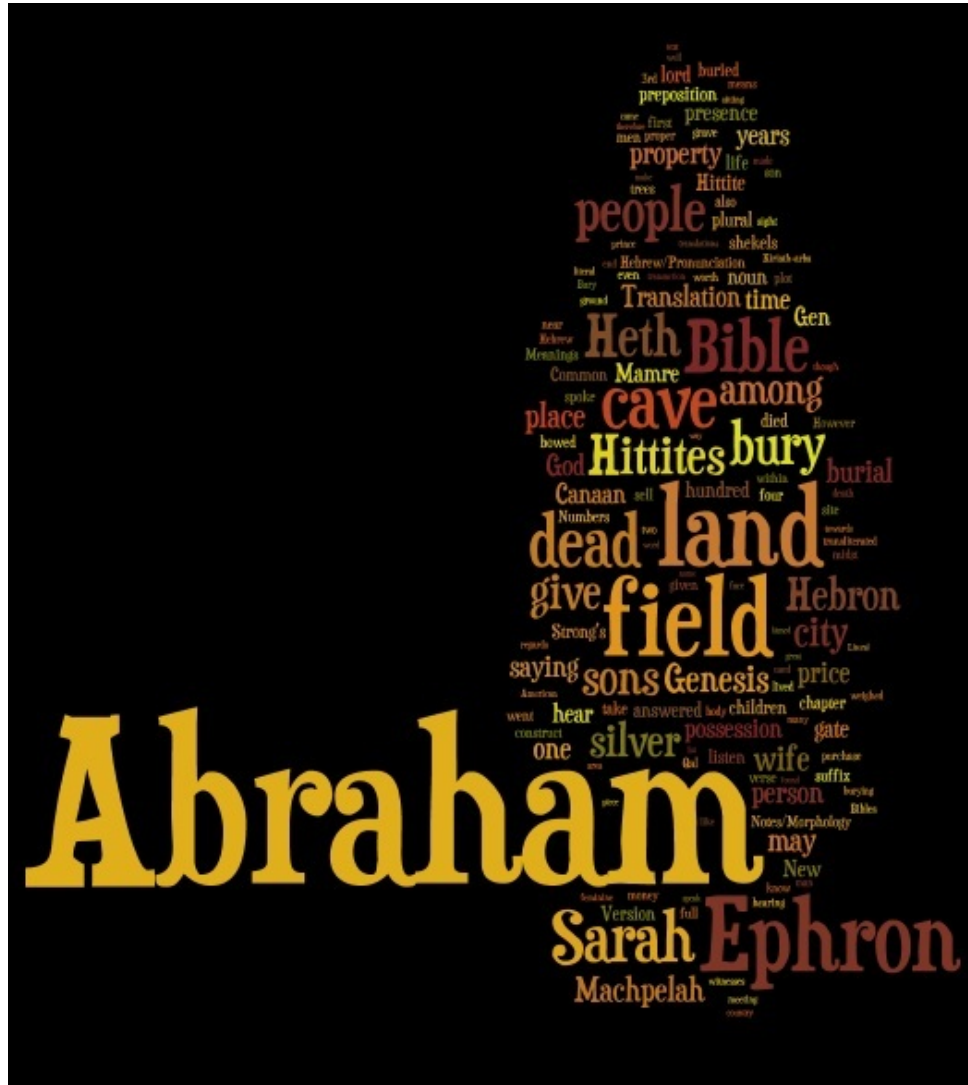
When it comes to teaching, I should think that a 45 minute teaching session would be the bare minimum; and that, at least 3x a week (with provisions for getting teaching in some way on the other days of the week). Although this man may interact or even learn from other teachers, he should clearly be the authority over his church; and the authority over him is the Word of God and God the Holy Spirit (Who guides the pastor in his study).

ICE teaching would also be a part of the package, ICE being an acronym standing for Isagogics (a teaching of the history of that time in order to understand the context of a passage), Categories (a study of categories of Bible doctrine), and Exegesis (a close study of each passage, word-by-word whenever necessary).

### Word Cloud from a Reasonably Literal Paraphrase of Genesis 23



Word Cloud from Exegesis of Genesis 23<sup>74</sup>



These two graphics should be very similar; this means that the exegesis of Genesis 23 has stayed on topic and has covered the information found in this chapter of the Word of God.

|                                                  |                                                      |                                        |
|--------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------|
| <a href="#">Chapter Outline</a>                  | <a href="#">Charts, Graphics and Short Doctrines</a> |                                        |
| <a href="#">Beginning of Document</a>            | <a href="#">Definition of Terms</a>                  | <a href="#">Introduction and Text</a>  |
| <a href="#">Chapter Summary</a>                  | <a href="#">Addendum</a>                             | <a href="#">A Complete Translation</a> |
| <a href="http://www.kukis.org">www.kukis.org</a> | <a href="#">Exegetical Studies in Genesis</a>        |                                        |

<sup>74</sup> Some words have been left out of this graphic; including *Strong*, *BDB*, and *pronounced*.