

TORAH PORTION "CHAYEI SARA", NOVEMBER 20-26, 2005

"CONTINUAL DEATH"¹

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In my last commentary ("*Lech Lechah*" portion), I discussed with you mainly two issues. The first was the biblical truth concerning us, true followers of Israel's Messiah, who do *not* belong to this world (as we are only '*sojourners*'/'*pilgrims*' here) and secondly, I discussed our great need, while living here on planet earth, to DIE TO SELF. To sum it up, we learned that we are to offer ourselves as "living sacrifices" to the Lord ("*building altars*").

Interestingly enough, one of the main issues dealt with in last week's Torah portion, was the near *death* of Isaac on the Altar at Mt. Moriah (Gen' 22). This week's portion begins with the *death* of Sarah (Gen. 23:1-3) and ends with the *death* of Abraham and Ishmael (Gen. 25:7-10, 17-18)!

I see a clear connection between the concept of "death to self", natural death and our Torah portion. Let me explain. *Shaul* (Paul) said, "*I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me*" (Gal. 2:20 KJV)! (See also: Rom. 6:1-11, 15:31, 2 Cor. 4:7-10, Col. 3:3.)

Abraham, the "father of all of us believers" (see for example Gal. 3:7), in his lifestyle exemplifies the above truth in a clear way. He, who was granted great promises by the Almighty, especially concerning the land of Canaan (later on known as "Israel" or the "Promised Land"), considered himself to be only "a foreigner and a visitor among you" (Gen. 23:4).

Abraham was considered by the people of that very land promised to him by the Almighty, as "lord. . . mighty prince among us. . ." (Gen. 23:6), yet he did not let the above *truths* spoken by the people of the land, to "get to his head" and fill him with pride. Abraham acted in the exact opposite manner. For example, twice, he "bowed himself to the people of the land" (Gen. 23:7, 12). Yes, indeed Abraham was a humble and meek man who "died to (his) self" as a lifestyle!

Moreover, it is very interesting to notice that the very first piece of land (within God's Promised Land), purchased by the one to whom that land was promised, was "*a burial place*"! The very first time Abraham could actually take hold of God's promises (i.e., be an actual owner of God's Promised Land), was in the context of his wife's *death*!

Please notice that Abraham needed to pay a full price for being an actual owner of God's great promise! On the one hand, it was only after he lost his own wife that he could purchase this piece of land, and on the other hand, he paid quite a high price for that piece of land (400 shekels of silver)

While reading the Word carefully, one can see, again and again, the clear connection between God's promises (as seen in "The Promised Land") and the price we, on our side, need to pay if we want these promises to be a reality in our lives!

Actually, until the very last day of our natural lives, as followers of Israel's Messiah, our lifestyles should project a continuing "death to self", in other words, "death" to our own 'fleshly' ambitions; "death" to the ugly "deeds of the flesh" and the like.

But, the question we all should ask ourselves is, what in the world motivated Abraham to adopt this “dying to self” life style? In my opinion, what enabled him to live the lifestyle that he lived, one full of faith and trust in the Almighty, was his personal and intimate knowledge and fellowship with his heavenly Father, his loving Creator!

This brings me to the next point I wanted to discuss with you in this commentary. Speaking of “continual death” to self as a lifestyle we all should adopt, it is very interesting to note that God never asks us to do something He did not do or plan on doing Himself!

God (in our portion foreshadowed by Abraham), like Abraham, also paid a very high price to purchase a “piece of land” or “A burial place” for us. This price was his “dead wife”, (foreshadowed here by Sarah). The price God paid was His only begotten Son, who died and was buried at a “piece of land” two thousand years ago!

To this very day, God is trying to tell us something very important. It’s as if he was saying, “As Abraham bought a burial place for his dead wife, so I came to purchase a “burial place” for *you*, My wife! And, as Sarah’s dead body was placed in that “piece of land”, to be resurrected one day into a new life, by ME, so you are welcome by Me to come daily and place your own “dead bodies” where the body of My Son was placed, so that you also can be resurrected, *in Him* into a newness of life, leaving behind your “old man” or your “old nature”!

How can “the people of the land” today see that we are indeed “mighty princes of God”? They can tell by simply watching our “fruits”! Do we really follow the example left to us by our father Abraham? Are we humble and meek as he was? Are we willing to pay a price so God’s promises to us will be a reality in our lives?

Oh Abba, please help us all to be like our father Abraham! Help us to go about your business like your servant did in his life, so many years ago. Help us come daily to Golgotha and let you bury the “old us” so that we can indeed experience the newness of life like that of your only begotten Son, our Savior, our Redeemer and our LORD! Amen!

Many blessings in His Mighty Name!

In Him,

Rami