

Let the dead bury their dead - Gen 23 life and death of Sarah

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Table of Contents

Introduction.....	1
Some Verses.....	1
Mat 8:19-22 - Follow me; and let the dead bury their dead.....	1
Luk 9:57-62 - Let the dead bury their dead: but go thou and preach the kingdom of God.....	1
My Thoughts.....	2
Lev 21:1 – Priest is not to be defiled by a dead body.....	2
Lev 21:11-12 – the dead body of father or mother causes defilement.....	2
Num 19:9-13 - Ashes of the Red Heifer and touching a dead body.....	2
Gen 12:2-3 - Abraham’s “ricochet” blessings.....	3

Introduction

ToDo: This could use a review

These are my thoughts on the Genesis 23 ^a commentary ^b of Glenn McWilliams.

How does this relate to Y'shua's words “Let the dead bury their dead” see Mat 8:19-22 & Luk 9:57-62? Would Y^eshua have said to Abraham to not worry about this? Maybe it's more like do the minimal amount you need to do and delegate as much as you can to those who are of this world.

Some Verses

Mat 8:19-22 - Follow me; and let the dead bury their dead

²¹ And a certain scribe came, and said unto him, Master, I will follow thee whithersoever thou goest. ²⁰ And Jesus saith unto him, **The foxes have holes, and the birds of the air have nests; but the Son of man hath not where to lay his head.** ²¹ And another of his disciples said unto him, Lord, suffer me first to go and bury my father. ²² But Jesus said unto him, **Follow me; and let the dead bury their dead.**

Luk 9:57-62 - Let the dead bury their dead: but go thou and preach the kingdom of God

And it came to pass, that, as they went in the way, a certain *man* said unto him, Lord, I will follow thee whithersoever thou goest. ⁵⁸ And Y^eshua said unto him, **Foxes have holes, and birds of the air have nests; but the Son of man hath not where to lay his head.** ⁵⁹ And he said unto another, **Follow me.** But he said, Lord, suffer me first to go and bury my father. ⁶⁰ Y^eshua said unto him, **Let the dead bury their dead: but go thou and preach the kingdom of God.** ⁶¹ And another also said, Lord, I will follow thee; but let me first go bid them

^a See Gen-23-Death-and-Burial-of-Sarah, article #[945](#)

^b See “Week_20_Y1_P20_6008_The_Death_of_Sarah_EDITED”. Glenn’s ministry is called Torah Keepers.

farewell, which are at home at my house. ⁶² And Y^eshua said unto him, **No man, having put his hand to the plough, and looking back, is fit for the kingdom of God.** ^c

My Thoughts

Abrahams realm is the Kingdom of Heaven which is for the realm of the living. Abraham is the first to be called a prophet ^{Gen 20:7}, but does a priest like action for Abimelech ^{Gen 20:14-18}, so the restrictions of a priest regarding the dead is very limited ^{Lev 21:1}, ^{Lev 21:11}.

Lev 21:1 – Priest is not to be defiled by a dead body

And YHVH said unto Moses, Speak unto the priests the sons of Aaron, and say unto them, There shall none be defiled for the dead among his people:

Lev 21:11-12 – the dead body of father or mother causes defilement

¹¹ Neither shall he go in to any dead body, nor defile himself for his father, or for his mother; ¹² Neither shall he go out of the sanctuary, nor profane **תִּקַּח** the sanctuary of his God; for the crown of the anointing oil of his God *is* upon him: I *am* YHVH.

GM points out that the name of YHVH nor any of his titles is found in the chapter, ^d the reason given is YHVH is the Elohim of the living. Along with the verses in Lev, see also Num 19:11-13.

Num 19:9-13 ^e - Ashes of the Red Heifer and touching a dead body

⁹ And a man *that is* clean shall gather up the **תִּקַּח** ashes of the heifer, and lay *them* up without the camp in a clean place, and it shall be kept for the congregation of the children of Israel for a water of separation: it *is* a purification for sin. ¹⁰ And he that gathereth the ashes of the heifer shall wash his clothes, and be unclean until the even: and it shall be unto the children of Israel, and unto the stranger that sojourneth among them, for a statute for ever. ¹¹ He that toucheth the dead body of any man shall be unclean seven days. ¹² He shall purify himself with it on the third day, and on the seventh day he shall be clean: but if he purify not himself the third day, then the seventh day he shall not be clean. ¹³ Whosoever toucheth the dead body of any man that is dead, and purifieth not himself, defileth the tabernacle of YHVH; and that soul shall be cut off from Israel: because the water of separation was not sprinkled upon him, he shall be unclean; his uncleanness *is* yet upon him.

GM continues (pg 8)

In many ways this could have been a very simple action of digging a hole in the ground and placing Sarah's body in it. But as we shall see, there was much more at stake than just a place to lay Sarah's remains to rest.

^c See "Kingdom-of-Heaven-and-Kingdom-of-God", article #???

^d Sidebar it would be interesting to find if this is the only place in Torah or TaNaCh where this is true. I know for much of the story of Yoseph, the name of YHVH is not mentioned.

^e See Standalone-Aleph-Tav-Numbers-19-9-Red-Heifer-and-the-clean-man, article #305.

This is the crux of my commentary so I appreciate the question, but differ with the answer given. My answer is based on 1) the “ricochet blessings” of ^{Gen 12:2-3}. Those in the world deal with dead things (including the strawman^f) and that's a good thing. This is in their realm and not in Abrahams realm, therefore he has to delegate this to “the proper authorities”.

By doing so he will be blessed. Do you think in the future that Ephron will remember Abraham and that in future dealings will be to his benefit? It makes sense to me and I would say the same thing of Abimelech. This deal goes down in front of a whole bunch of people, do you think they would have the same positive reaction towards Abraham that Ephron has?

Gen 12:2-3 - Abraham's “ricochet” blessings

² And I will make of thee a great nation, and I will bless thee, and make thy name great; and thou shalt be a blessing: ³ And I will bless them that bless thee, and curse him that curseth thee: and in thee shall all families of the earth be blessed.

The point I'm trying to make is that it's Abraham's mission to be a blessing to the nations. A Hebrew Evangelists if you will who is not inhibited by his neighbors as that is how he “gets paid” from YHVH.

The oriental culture has, in many ways, mastered the art of making oneself look good (saving face), even better than others, while at the same time apparently elevating those around one, including one's adversaries.

JKM: to me I see this more as honor vs dishonor and respect vs disrespect which is a necessary component in the realm of Torah Equity.

Saving face maybe the game that people of the world play, (even sophisticated people of the world), but it's not the "game" that's played in Torah Equity.

He cannot avail himself of local burial facilities without municipal permission, and he cannot acquire land.

JKM: It seems this point, Lev 25:23, is irrelevant.

GM pg 9

talks about how getting land during the time of Abraham was a hard thing to do. I'm not sure I buy this (pun) because it seems to me that Abraham could have buried Sarah's body in a million places. So this begs the question why does the Torah spend time telling us this story. The first says how long Sarah lived and the remaining 19 verses of chapter 23 are about what Abraham took to get her buried. verses 3-18 (16 of the 20) is the whole purchase process.

GM pg 11

Abraham is asking for a —possession." What Abraham wants is something that will be his and his offspring's after him. This is why the public meeting is necessary. The whole community needs to consider

^f I'm using “commercial redemption” language.

the possible disruption of community continuity if another people start claiming rights to a portion of their land. Recognizing the magnitude of what Abraham is asking of them in his time of great need, the elders of the city respond by offering Abraham a solution to the crisis (his need for a burial place for Sarah) while at the same time protecting their property and saving face

JKM: Coming from my Torah Equity understanding, I have a stark contrast to what GM is saying. In the nature of the idea that contracts are dynamic, we need to go through the dynamic nature of this contract. The first thing to point out is that Abraham asks for possession of a piece of property i.e. I want a contract for a piece of land.

Second, in verses 5 & 6, they, the Hittites, counter offer by suggesting to Abraham to just go ahead and bury Sarah's body in one of their sepulchers. If Abraham does this then he is taking a privilege from them, i.e. a gift, and that's not what we wants, he wants a contract and a gift is not a contract.