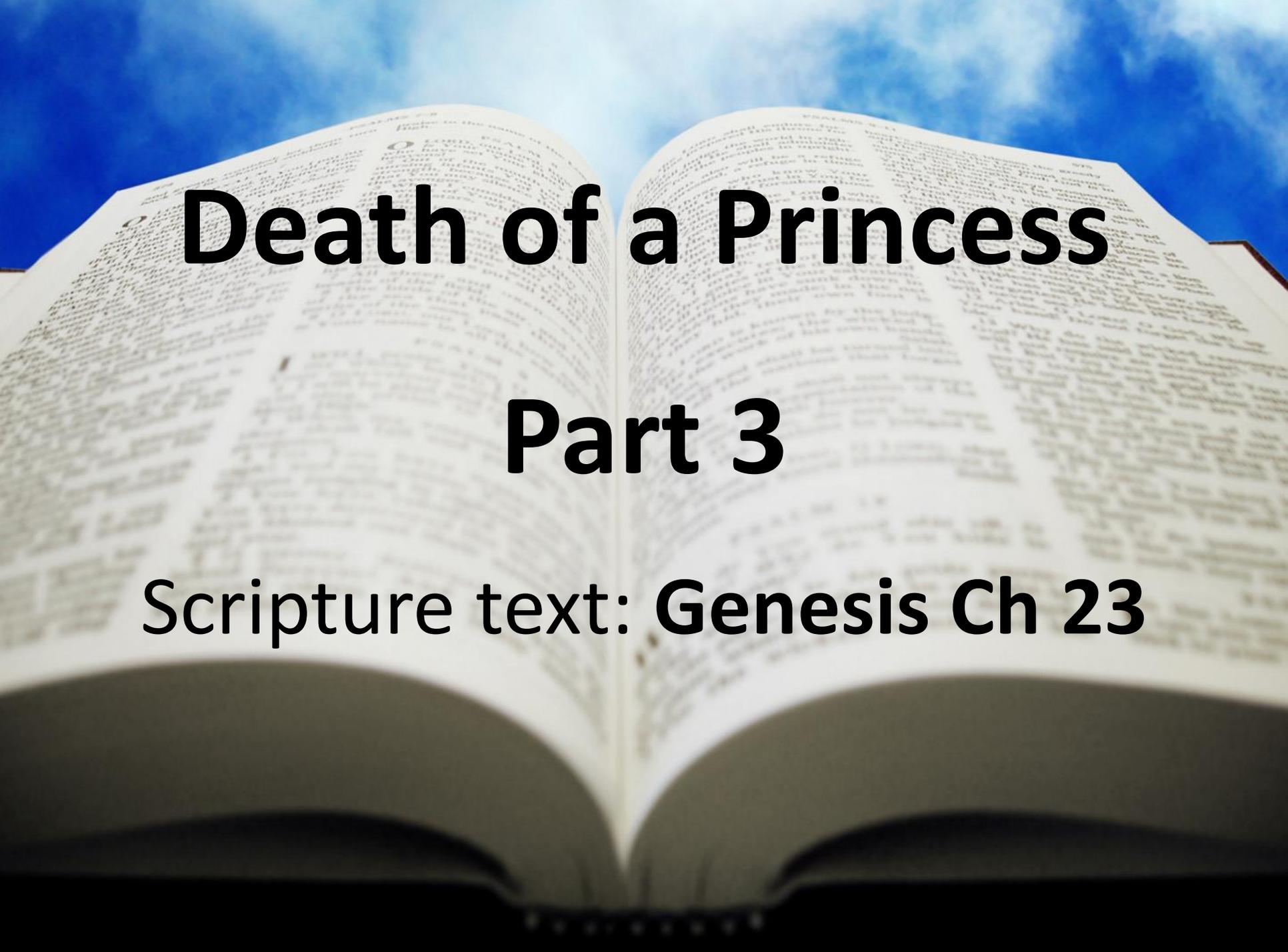


Welcome to Promise Land Bible Church
We're glad you're here!



An open book is shown from a low angle, looking up at the pages. The pages are filled with small, dense text, likely a Bible. The book is set against a bright blue sky with wispy white clouds. The text is overlaid in a large, bold, black font.

Death of a Princess

Part 3

Scripture text: **Genesis Ch 23**

Abraham's tact (Gen. 23:7–16). In the East in that day, most business transactions were carried on at the city gate (23:10) with the people as witnesses (23:7). Arriving at a final price for a piece of property usually involved a great deal of bargaining and deferential politeness that sometimes covered up greed and intrigue. **But Abraham was open and honest in his request: He wanted to buy the cave of Machpelah from Ephron, who was in the crowd at the time.**

Following the custom of the East, Ephron offered to give Abraham not only the cave but the whole field in which the cave was located. Of course, this was only a clever maneuver on his part; for he had no intentions of giving away a valuable piece of property, especially to a man as wealthy as Abraham. But Ephron's reply gave Abraham two pieces of information: Ephron **was willing to sell,** but he wanted to sell the whole field and not just the cave.

Ephron had Abraham in a corner, and he knew it. Sarah had to be buried soon, and Ephron had the only piece of property that met Abraham's needs. So, Abraham agreed to buy both the cave and the field even before Ephron named the price.

That is really living by faith! Ephron's price was far too much, but Abraham paid it and claimed the property for himself.

In Acts 7:15–16, Stephen seems to contradict the Genesis record by saying that Abraham bought the property from Hamor and it was located in Shechem rather than Hebron (Gen. 23:19). But surely two different burial places are in view here. It is likely that Abraham bought a second burial plot from Hamor in Shechem and **that Jacob had to buy it back years later** (33:18–19). Since Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob moved about quite a bit, **it would be difficult for the residents of the land to keep track of them and their family real estate.**

In our business dealings with the people of the world, **we must be careful to maintain honesty and integrity and to put our witness for the Lord ahead of monetary gain.** Abraham knew that Ephron had him trapped and that it was foolish to haggle over the price, as much as Easterners love to do it.

Genesis 23:16 Abraham listened to Ephron, and **Abraham weighed out for Ephron the silver that he had named in the hearing of the Hittites,** four hundred shekels of silver, according to the weights current among the merchants.

Abraham's tomb (Gen. 23:17–20).

The key phrase in the chapter, used seven times, is “bury my [the, thy] dead.” Even though Sarah was gone, **Abraham showed respect for her body and wanted to give it a proper burial.** This is the pattern for God's people throughout the Scriptures. Neither the Old Testament Jews nor the New Testament Christians cremated their dead.

Rather, they washed the body, wrapped it in clean cloth with spices, and placed it in the ground or in a tomb. While there may be some situations when cremation is the better way to dispose of the body, for the most part, **Christians prefer burial.**

This is the way our Lord's body was handled after His death (Matt. 27:57–61), and Paul seems to teach burial in 1 Corinthians 15:35–46.

Matthew 27:57-60 When it was evening, there came a rich man from Arimathea, named Joseph, who also was a disciple of Jesus. He went to Pilate and **asked for the body of Jesus.** Then Pilate ordered it to be given to him. And **Joseph took the body and wrapped it in a clean linen shroud and laid it in his own new tomb,** which he had cut in the rock. And he **rolled a great stone to the entrance of the tomb** and went away.

1 Corinthians 15:42-46 So is it with the resurrection of the dead. **What is sown is perishable; what is raised is imperishable.** It is sown in dishonor; it is raised in glory. It is sown in weakness; it is raised in power. **It is sown a natural body; it is raised a spiritual body.** If there is a natural body, there is also a spiritual body. Thus it is written, "The first man Adam became a living being"; the last Adam became a life-giving spirit. But it is not the spiritual that is first but the natural, and then the spiritual.

When Abraham purchased the cave of Machpelah for a tomb, **he was making a statement of faith to all who were there.** He did not take Sarah back to their former home in Ur but **buried her in the land God had given him and his descendants.** He did not ignore the body but **gave it a proper burial in view of the promised resurrection.** When God saves us, He saves the whole person, not just “the soul.” **The body has a future, and burial bears witness to our faith in the return of Christ and the resurrection of the body.**

It must be pointed out, however, that resurrection is not “reconstruction.” God will not *reassemble the dust of the body and restore the body to its previous state.* **God promises us a new body!** In 1 Corinthians 15:35–38, Paul makes it clear that there **is continuity** but not identity between the old body and the new body.

1 Corinthians 15:37-38 And **what you sow is not the body that is to be**, but a bare kernel, perhaps of wheat or of some other grain. But **God gives it a body as he has chosen**, and to each kind of seed its own body.

He illustrated this miracle with **the planting of a seed.**

The seed dies and decays, but from it comes a beautiful flower or some grain. There is continuity but not identity: The same seed does not come out of the ground, but what came out came from the seed that was planted.

Christian burial bears witness that we believe in a future resurrection.

When you get to the end of Genesis, you find that **Abraham's tomb is quite full**. Sarah was buried there, and then Abraham, Isaac, Rebekah, and Leah (Gen. 49:29–31); and then Jacob joined them (50:13).

Genesis ends with a full tomb, but **the four Gospels end with an empty tomb!** Jesus has conquered death and taken away its sting (1 Cor. 15:55–58). **Because of His victory, we need not fear death or the grave.**

1 Corinthians 15:54-58 When the perishable puts on the imperishable, and **the mortal puts on immortality**, then shall come to pass the saying that is written: "**Death is swallowed up in victory.**" "**O death, where is your victory? O death, where is your sting?**" The sting of death is sin, and the power of sin is the law. But **thanks be to God, who gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.** Therefore, my beloved brothers, **be steadfast, immovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, knowing that in the Lord your labor is not in vain.**

Abraham owned the whole land, but **the only piece of property that was legally his was a tomb**. If the Lord Jesus does not return to take us to heaven, the only piece of property each of us will own in this world will be a plot in the cemetery! **We will take nothing with us; we will leave it all behind (1 Tim. 6:7)**. But, if we are investing in things eternal, we can send it ahead (Matt. 6:19–34). **If we live by faith, then we can die by faith; and when you die by faith, you have a wonderful future.**

Matthew 6:19-21 "Do not lay up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust destroy and where thieves break in and steal, but **lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven**, where neither moth nor rust destroys and where thieves do not break in and steal. For **where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.**

Matthew 6:25 "Therefore I tell you, **do not be anxious about your life**, what you will eat or what you will drink, nor about your body, what you will put on. Is not life more than food, and the body more than clothing?"

Matthew 6:31-34 Therefore do not be anxious, saying, 'What shall we eat?' or 'What shall we drink?' or 'What shall we wear?' For the Gentiles seek after all these things, and your heavenly Father knows that you need them all. **But seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and all these things will be added to you.** "Therefore do not be anxious about tomorrow, for tomorrow will be anxious for itself. Sufficient for the day is its own trouble.

In November 1858, missionary John Paton landed in the New Hebrides to establish a ministry among the people. On February 12, 1859, his wife gave birth to a son; and on March 3, his **wife died**. Seventeen days later, the **baby died**. “But for Jesus and the fellowship He gave me there,” said Paton, “I must have gone mad and died beside that lonely grave.” **But we do not sorrow as those who have no hope!** We have been born again “**to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead**” (1 Peter 1:3, NKJV), and we are “**looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Savior Jesus Christ**” (Titus 2:13).

1 Peter 1:3-5 Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ! **According to his great mercy, he has caused us to be born again to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, to an inheritance that is imperishable, undefiled, and unfading, kept in heaven for you, who by God's power are being guarded through faith for a salvation ready to be revealed in the last time.**

Titus 2:13 **waiting for our blessed hope, the appearing of the glory of our great God and Savior Jesus Christ,**