

GENESIS 23

Sarah Dies And Is Buried

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KEYWORD

REVERANCE

God (Plural)
God (Singular)
LORD
GOD
Lord
lord
El Olam
Bara
Asah
Beth
Numbers

Elohim (The Trinity)
El
Jehovah & or Yahweh (YHWH)
Jehovah & or Yahweh
GOD the Master (Kurios), Adonai
Man the Master
Everlasting God
God creating from nothing
God making or assembling from existent materials
House

- 1 - Unity between God the Father & His Son Jesus (John 10:30)
- 2 - Represents union, division, and verification
- 3 - Harmony, New Life & completeness (467 times)
- 4 - Creation & The creative ability of God.
- 5 - God's grace, goodness and favor toward humans (318)
- 6 - Imperfection of man and the sin and weakness he has
- 7 - Perfection
- 8 - New beginnings
- 9 - Divine completeness or conveys the meaning of finality (49)
- 10 - God's authority, completeness, order, and divine perfection
- 11 - Disorder, chaos and judgment (11 - 24 & "11th" - 19)
- 12 - God's power and authority (187)
- 13 - Rebellion
- 40 - Represent completeness or wholeness.
- 70 - Perfect spiritual order carried out with all power.

Keywords

“create” (bara), “make” (asah), and “form” (yatsar). In Isaiah 43:7 – All the three are used.

Jehova means the becoming one as God relates to man and man's needs and becomes to man whatever man may need

PRAYER

Father we thank you for the privilege of studying your word together.

Thank you for the records Jesus, that lead us to you and eternal life in you.

Jesus let your Holy spirit now implant upon our hearts your truths.

Thank you Jesus that revelation knowledge will flow freely, uninterrupted & un-hindered by satanic or demonic forces.

In Jesus's name and everybody say Amen!

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REVIEW

We see in the Old Testament, types of Shadows that would be fulfilled in the New Testament.

When you begin to study, in the Old Testament, about the tabernacle, different sacrifices, and the various feast days; you will find that they were all types of things to come in the New Testament.

The Passover Feast was the foreshadowing of the death of Jesus Christ and so it was significant that He died on the day of the Passover.

The Feast of Pentecost foreshadowed the birth of the “church,” and so, the pouring out of the Spirit and the first fruits of the harvest among the gentiles, were fulfilled on the Day of Pentecost.

In the History of Abraham, we have a type of God, the Father, and his son Isaac as a type of Jesus Christ.

Sarah, the wife of Abraham would be a type of Israel, who was the wife of God.

God called Israel to be His bride and espoused her to Himself.

God spoke of Israel as His wife and her turning away from Him as an adulteress wife.

So, in the story of Abraham, being called upon by God to take his son, his only son Isaac, and offer him for a sacrifice on a mountain that God would show him; you have a foreshadowing of the event that would take place some two thousand years later on the same mount Moriah in Jerusalem.

God gave His only begotten Son as a sacrifice for our sins.

It is significant in the story that once Isaac was offered, God provided the substitute.

Abraham prophesied,

“...God will provide Himself a lamb for a burnt-offering” and “In the mount of the Lord it shall be seen.”

We do not read of Isaac again until we get to the 24th chapter of Genesis and we do not see Isaac, in the picture again, until the “bride” for Isaac has been brought from a far land and he rises up to meet the bride.

Once Jesus died and was our sacrifice, He was received up into heaven and does not appear on the scene again until the Holy Spirit, of which the servant of Abraham is a type, brings his “bride” to Him and He rises up to meet His “bride.”

As we look at chapters 22, 23, and 24 in sequence, we find that chapter 22 tells of the sacrifice of Isaac; chapter 23 tells of the death of Sarah; and in chapter 24, we find the gathering of a bride for the son by the servant, Eliezer.

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Upon the death of Jesus Christ and the rejection of Him as the Messiah by the Jews, Israel, the wife of God, is set aside.

And so we read that Sarah died.

The Holy Spirit is dispatched to get a bride for the son, not from the land where they were dwelling; but, to go back to the nation of Abraham and to his family to get the bride for his son.

As we begin chapter 23, we read of the death of Sarah or the setting aside of the nation of Israel in order that God may get from among the gentiles, a “bride” for His Son.

Now Sarah has died at the age of 127 years old.

That would make Abraham 137 years old and Isaac about 37 years old (Genesis 17:17).

We find them living in Hebron, near the familiar area of Mamre, about 20 miles south of what would become Jerusalem in Genesis 23:1–2.

After Abraham mourns for his wife, he approaches the Hittite people of the area with a request.

These Hittites would be the descendants of Noah's grandson Canaan, making them part of the original Canaanites.

Abraham comes before an assembled group of Hittite landowners or elders, perhaps in the city gate of Hebron.

Abraham presented himself to them as a foreigner and a sojourner.

He requests that they give him a piece of property to use as a burial place.

Their response is gracious. They know Abraham well.

They call him "a prince of God among [them]."

Abraham was a foreigner, but he was also quite wealthy and clearly blessed by God in all he did.

The Hittites of the area seem to have regarded him as a friend in Genesis 23:3–6.

In fact, the Hittites offer Abraham the choice of any of their own tombs to bury his dead.

Abraham, however, wants something more specific.

He wants to establish a permanent family burial place of his own in the land of Canaan.

He wants to acquire a piece of property that will belong to him and him alone.

Once the Hittites state that they are willing for Abraham to bury his dead in their region, Abraham reveals he has a specific property in mind.

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He singles out Ephron, son of Zohar, and asks to purchase a cave of his east of Mamre at Machpelah.

A negotiation of sorts takes place, couched in the tradition and customs of Middle Eastern bargaining.

Ephron offers to give the cave to Abraham, along with the field attached to it.

Abraham insists on paying for it so there can be no future dispute about who owns it.

Ephron dismissively mentions a price of 400 shekels of silver for the cave and field.

Abraham immediately agrees, paying out the price on the spot and in full view of the assembled Hittites.

Very quickly, the transaction is concluded and signed off by the Hittite elders in Genesis 23:7–18.

Finally, Abraham buries Sarah in the cave he now owns in the promised land of Canaan.

Later, Abraham himself will be buried there, then Isaac and Rebekah and Jacob and Leah.

Without a battle of any kind, the people of God have begun their occupation of the land God has promised to give to Abraham's offspring in Genesis 23:19–20.

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GEN 23: 1

And Sarah was an hundred and seven and twenty years old; these were the years of the life of Sarah.

About 35 years have passed since the last mention of Abraham's wife Sarah.

At that prior incident, a celebration for the weaning of their son, Isaac, Sarah insisted that Ishmael, Isaac's half-brother, should be sent away, along with his mother, Hagar in Genesis 21:10.

Sarah is not mentioned in the previous chapter 22 where we studied of Abraham's near-offering of Isaac in obedience to God's command.

Sarah is the only woman in the Bible whose age at death is recorded.

This gives us some measure of how highly she is regarded in the Bible.

Nowhere in the Bible are we told to look to Mary the mother of Jesus as an example of a godly woman.

Twice we are told to look to Sarah as such an example in Isaiah 51:1-2 and 1 Peter 3:3-6.

So if Sarah was 127 years old when she died, that means that Isaac was 37 years old at this time.

This was immediately after the story of the sacrifice of Isaac.

You can put out of your mind the pictures in your Sunday school papers, where you see Abraham leading a small boy up a mountain and the boy is unaware that his father is going to offer him as a sacrifice.

The very next event, in the scripture, is the death of Sarah and Isaac is 37 years old.

We don't know how much time elapsed between chapters 22 and 23, but, Isaac could have been 33 years old at the time he was offered for sacrifice.

To fill the type of Christ, who was 32 or 33, when He was sacrificed; it would be fitting for Isaac to be about that age.

GEN 23: 2

And Sarah died in Kirjath-arba;

(This was also called the city of the four.

Some suppose this place was called the city of the four because it was the burial place of Adam, Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob;

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Others, according to the opinion of the rabbins, Eve was buried there with Sarah, Rebekah, and Leah.

But it seems evidently to have had its name from a Canaanite, one of the Anakim, probably called Arba who was the chief of the four brothers who dwelt there.

Their names being Sheshai, Ahiman, and Talmi in Judges 1:10. These three were destroyed by the tribe of Judah and probably the fourth one had been dead.)

the same is Hebron (Hebron is located between Beersheba and Jerusalem, about 20 miles south of Jerusalem, close to Mamre) in the land of Canaan; and Abraham came to mourn for Sarah, and to weep for her.

It would seem that Abraham was probably not there when Sarah died, because it said, “...Abraham came to mourn for Sarah.”

He could have been tending flocks further south in the Negev, where he spent a lot of time, but he came back up to Hebron when he heard of Sarah’s death and mourned and wept for her.

It could indicate that Sarah’s death was quite sudden and Abraham might have wept because he wasn’t there when she died.

If Sarah had a prolonged illness, Abraham would have certainly been at her side.

None the less Abraham felt his loss of Sarah deeply and wasn’t afraid to mourn, though he did not sorrow as those without hope in 1 Thessalonians 4:13.

That is, he set himself deliberately to all the functions of a mourner which would have included the tearing of garments, rubbing of ashes, and fasting.

The marriage of Abraham and Sarah, as recorded in Genesis, revealed the strengths and weaknesses of both which is true of any marriage in any era.

As such it's not surprising to find Abraham mourning the loss of his wife so deeply.

Boice would say that:

“To weep for a loved one is to show that we have been close, that the loss is keenly felt, that death is an enemy, and that sin has brought this sad punishment upon the human race.”

Blessed be God that there is a world where sin, death, vanity, and vexation cannot enter and even death cannot separate us Christ.

GEN 23: 3-6

And Abraham stood up from before his dead,

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(He had probably sat on the ground for some days in token of sorrow, as the custom then was, (More in *Tobit 2:12, 13*; *Isaiah 47:1*; and *Genesis 37:35*;) and when this time was finished he arose and began to plan about the burying place.)

and spake unto the sons of Heth, saying,

(The area around their current dwelling place in Hebron was owned by a group known as the Hittites.

Hittites means "sons of Heth."

Heth was one of the sons of Canaan, a grandson of Noah.

These Hittites, then, are clearly Canaanites of the land of Canaan, as opposed to other "Hittites" known from history.)

⁴I am a stranger and a sojourner with you;

(Abraham never considered taking Sarah back to Babylon for burial and as such he wanted to secure a permanent ownership of a burying place in the land of Canaan.

He approached the Hittites, the rightful owners of the place he wishes to buy and described his situation clearly and simply.

Abraham described himself before the Hittites as a sojourner, a traveler, someone who is not a permanent resident in a place.

It is possible that Abraham stood before these Hittite men still dressed in his torn garments, with unkempt hair and covered in ashes, having just come from mourning his wife according to the custom of the day.

True, he's a foreigner and this is not his country—yet.

Remember in previous chapters, God promised him that it will be the possession of his offspring.

Regardless of God's promise, he will pay for it so as to have a place to permanently bury his dead.

This also is part of the eventual possession of the land by Israel; burying one's dead in a specific place is a sign of ownership.

Like Abraham we are sojourners here on earth and our real home is heaven.

Moses knew the same, and commanded Israel to know it in *Leviticus 25:23*.

David also knew this truth in *1 Chronicles 29:14-15* and *Psalms 39:12*)

give me a possession of a burying place with you, that I may bury my dead out of my sight.

(Abraham had a particular **property** in mind – **the cave of Machpelah**.)

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That property was in the land of **Ephron the son of Zohar**.

In his travels around Canaan, Abraham had earlier lived in this area and here built an altar to God in Genesis 13:18.

He knew this **cave** and was willing to pay **the full price** for it.)

⁵And the children of Heth answered Abraham, saying unto him,

(This act of creating a long-term family tomb is part of Abraham's family taking possession of the Promised Land.)

⁶ Hear us, my lord: thou *art* a mighty prince among us:

(They call him a prince of God or mighty price of God among them.

In other words, they do not view Abraham as a mere wanderer; they see him as powerful, blessed by God, and worthy to be among them.)

in the choice of our sepulchres bury thy dead; none of us shall withhold from thee his sepulchre, but that thou mayest bury thy dead.

(Very generously, they insist that none of them would withhold from Abraham his own tomb for the purpose of burying his people, presumably starting with Sarah.

However, their response does not acknowledge Abraham's request for a property of his own.

He is not asking to share a tomb; he is asking to acquire a permanent possession, as the following verses will make it clear)

Abraham was highly respected by the people of the land.

Of course, at the time when the confederacy of kings had invaded the land and sacked the cities and taken many hostages, Abraham led the group that freed the hostages and defeated these kings.

In the next few verses, we get a small view of the oriental customs that help form their culture.

As Abraham goes through the purchase of the property, they do a lot of bowing and talking about the price of the property.

There were certain niceties that took place and the words that were said were not necessarily genuine.

GEN 23: 7-8

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And Abraham stood up, and bowed himself to the people of the land, even to the children of Heth. ⁸ And he communed with them, saying, If it be your mind that I should bury my dead out of my sight; hear me, and intreat for me to Ephron the son of Zohar.

Abraham seems to be going out of his way to be cordial with the Hittites, and they clearly respect him enough to return that respect.

So now he asks the sons of Heth to be a mediator between him and Ephron the son of Zohar.

GEN 23: 9-11

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.

(Part of the significance of this request is that Abraham is asking to become a landowner in the area, though he is a foreigner.)

This would make him an official stakeholder among the Hittites, though the size of his property would be very small.)

¹⁰ 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,

(Now Ephron prepared to respond to Abraham, also in a public manner, with the understanding that whatever agreement they reach will be formally recognized by the community.)

The pattern of this negotiation follows the typical style of the time: politeness, counter-offers, and public confirmation.)

¹¹ 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.

This way of negotiating the price was typical of ancient and modern practices in that culture.

As a gesture of kindness, the selling party may offer to give the property in question to the buyer, until the buyer insists on paying a price.

Ephron the Hittite followed the cultural customs of bargaining.

First, the seller offered to *give* the item – confident that the buyer would refuse the ceremonial offer.

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When the buyer refused to receive it as a gift, the seller suggested a price, which he claimed was modest but was really very high.

The other possibility is that Ephron did not want to give up permanent ownership of the cave.

Perhaps by "giving" it to Abraham, his people would retain ultimate ownership of the cave and the field in the long run, creating a long-term loan of sorts.

His offer to "give" the property, then, might have been intended as just that, though it would have come with obligations.

Regardless this was understood to be the starting point, and from there the bargaining began.

GEN 23: 12-15

And Abraham bowed down himself before the people of the land,

(For the second time in this negotiation with the Hittites, Abraham bows before the people.

In both cases, he does so just before he is to resist an offer and insist on his own position.

Again, this respectful approach may have been customary of Middle Eastern bargaining of the time.

An interesting aspect of this negotiation is that Abraham is bargaining to buy land that God has promised to give Abraham's descendants.

None the less, Abraham showed how a follower of God should conduct business with the world: *courteously, fairly, prudently*.

In not giving a counter-offer to the suggested price of **four hundred shekels of silver**, Abraham was remarkably generous in his dealings with Ephron.

Clarke quoted that:

"They who, under the sanction of religion, trample under foot the decent forms of civil respect, supposing that because they are religious, they have a right to be rude, totally mistake the spirit of Christianity.")

¹³ 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.

(Ephron had offered to "give" the cave to Abraham, along with the field attached to it.

It is likely this was a form of negotiation, however.

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In reality, Ephron may have been saying, "I don't want to sell you the cave without the field." Or, "I'll lend you the field as long as it is still mine."

Now Abraham responds to this counter offer of the "gift" of the cave and field together by agreeing to buy the field with the cave.

In fact, Abraham insisted on it.)

¹⁴ And Ephron answered Abraham, saying unto him, ¹⁵ 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.

Middle Eastern negotiations at the time included very respectful language and generous offers that were understood to come with an unspoken price.

Ephron's price was probably a highly inflated and he was expecting Abraham to dicker for the land.

Usually they would ask double what something was worth.

If you go to Israel today they still go through this process of dickering and so, you should never pay the first price asked; for, they will take about fifty percent of the asking price.

It's like a game to them to dicker for the price.

Ephron ended his offer with "bury your dead," implying that he is being generous in helping Abraham to get past this unpleasant negotiating and back to the business of burying his wife Sarah.

This is a shrewd business tactic: reminding the buyer of what they stand to gain when they "seal the deal."

Ephron was probably waiting for Abraham to make a counter offer.

GEN 23: 16-17

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.

(Abraham immediately accepted the first price Ephron mentioned, agreeing to purchase the field along with the cave he initially asked about.

For Abraham, the most important thing was to have the full legal ownership rights to this property, something he ensured by purchasing the cave and field in full view of the "people of the land".

Why was this so important?

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In this era, people were often buried in their homeland, entombed along with their ancestors.

Abraham's decision to bury Sarah, and later to be buried himself, in Canaan, was a declaration of faith that this would become the permanent homeland of his offspring.)

¹⁷ 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.

(So, the cave, the field, the trees and all within the borders were deeded to Abraham.

The text emphasizes this property was Abraham's land by deed, not only by the promise of God.

If this was the only piece of land Abraham ever owned in the land promised to him, it showed that he was a real man of faith.)

GEN 23: 18-19

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 transaction is concluded in full view of the Hittites and all who go in at the gate of the city including but not limited to the the elders of Hebron.

This was a public and legal transaction according the customs of the land at this time.)

¹⁹ And after this, Abraham buried Sarah his wife in the cave of the field of Machpelah

(In a sense, this choice to bury Sarah in Canaan was a final renouncement of his former homeland.

Until Sarah died and was buried in the land of promise, it was always potentially possible for Abraham to give up on God's promises and "go home."

He never did, and his decisive action to buy a burial place for Sarah and himself and their descendants in Canaan showed that he had fully cut his ties to his old life.

Canaan, the land of promise, was home for now and for his people forever.

This is where Isaac and Ishmael buried Abraham in [Genesis 25:9](#).

Isaac and Rebekah were both buried here in [Genesis 49:31](#).

Jacob buried Leah here in [Genesis 49:31](#), and Joseph buried Jacob here in [Genesis 50:13](#).

The cave of **Machpelah** near **Hebron** was the great tomb of the Patriarchs.)

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before Mamre; the same is Hebron in the land of Canaan.

At the present day you can go to Hebron to the place of the cave of Machpelah.

You are not allowed to go down into the cave, but you can go to the shrine that is built above it.

At this point there is a supposed contradiction in scripture.

In the New Testament when Stephen, in the Book of Acts prior to his stoning, is rehearsing the history of the people, he makes mention of Abraham purchasing a cave.

The patriarchs were brought back for burial in the cave that Abraham bought in Shechem.

Notice in Acts 7:15-16, where it says,

“So Jacob went down into Egypt, and died, he, and our fathers, And were carried over into Shechem, and laid in the sepulchre that Abraham bought for a sum of money of the sons of Emmor the father of Shechem.”

We don't know the whole story, but we do know that later on Jacob purchased a cave in Shechem.

When Jacob was dying in Egypt, he had Joseph, his son, take an oath that he would be carried back to be buried in the cave at Shechem.

One possible solution:

Abraham lived many years after the death of Sarah and married a woman named Keturah and had children by her.

It is possible that after he married again that he went to the area of Shechem and bought a field for his wife and her family, leaving the Machpelah cave for himself and Isaac and those who were later buried at Machpelah.

It is also possible that the children of Keturah, later on, sold the field in Shechem and that even still later, Jacob, in Shechem, knowing that Abraham had once purchased that field repurchased the field for the family that they might have a burial place.

There are many plausible explanations to this seeming contradiction in scripture.

You can't just jump on Acts and say Stephen didn't know his history and that here is a contradiction of scripture.

There are those who are always looking to point out mistakes in scripture and say,

“You can't trust the Bible, it contradicts itself.”

We don't have all the information and as the scripture says in John 21:25,

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“And there are also many other things which Jesus did, the which, if they should be written every one, I suppose that even the world itself could not contain the books that should be written.”

So Abraham buried Sarah, his wife.

GEN 23: 20

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.

Not only was Sarah buried in this cave, Abraham, their son Isaac, his wife Rebekah, their son Jacob, and his wife Leah, would be buried here, as well.

With this burial cave and field, the people of God had begun their occupation of the promised land of Canaan.

And now Sarah is set aside; as Israel was set aside after the crucifixion of Jesus.

THE LESSONS WE LEARN FROM THIS STUDY ARE:

1. We often talk about the greatness of Abraham’s faith, but rarely consider Sarah’s faith.
 2. Sarah was willing to move hundreds of miles away from her home and family to obey God’s instructions to Abraham to move to Canaan.
 3. She patiently waited for her promised son until she was 90 years old (Heb 11:11).
 4. She had her faults, but so did Abraham, and so do we.
 5. The Apostle Peter wrote that Christian women should consider themselves daughters of Sarah if they “do good and do not fear anything that is frightening” (1Peter 3:6).
 6. She is a role model for modern women of all ages.
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We will start from Chapter 24 next week ...

IF YOU HAVEN’T RECEIVED JESUS CHRIST AS YOUR PERSONAL SAVIOUR, I WANT YOU TO PRAY THIS PRAYER WITH ME RIGHT NOW

- Heavenly Father, I realize that I’m a sinner
 - But right now I repent of my sins
 - I make you my Lord
-

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- I receive the free gift of forgiveness of sin
- I need you, Jesus
- Be my savior
- So right now I declare by faith that I am saved in Jesus' name. Amen & Praise God

If you just prayed that prayer with me online, please let us know through our website and we shall send you a free eBook as a gift to you today.

Otherwise, welcome to the family of God. Amen!

LET'S STANDUP FOR THE FINAL BLESSING

Now unto Him that is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that worketh in us:

- Be with you, bless you and keep you
 - May the Lord cause his face to shine upon you and give you peace
 - May your heart be filled with his love
 - May you walk in the spirit
 - May you be strengthened by the work of his Holy spirit in your inner man
 - May you be increased in knowledge and understanding of His word, His will and His purposes for your life that you might walk before the Lord in a way that's pleasing unto him
 - And may God increase your faith and your trust
 - May he work in your life in a beautiful way as he natures you and as he leads you into that path of fellowship with him self
 - May your life be enriched in all things in Christ Jesus
 - And May the Lord and his blessings be upon you while we are absent from each other until we are brought back together again to continue our fellowship and our growing together in grace and in the knowledge of our Lord and savior Jesus Christ
 - Amen
-