



A Torah Study Guide  
for the Young  
& Young at Heart

by  
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& his kids

PARASHAT  
CHAYEI SARAH  
פרשת חיי שרה

Genesis 23:1-25:18

Note to the adult teacher: It will be necessary for you to give the scriptural context and background for each of the points listed below.

**Great Discoveries In This Week's Parashah (Torah Portion)**

- 23:1 Sarah Dies and Abraham Purchases a Burial Site
- 24:1 The Mission to Find a Wife for Isaac
- 24:11 Eliezer's Prayer and Test
- 24:17 Rebecca Passes the Test
- 24:28 Eliezer Meets Laban; Eliezer Invited to Laban's Home
- 24:34 Eliezer Retells His Story
- 24:62 Isaac and Rebecca Meet
- 25:1 Abraham Remarries; The Death of Abraham
- 25:12 Ishmael's Genealogy

**Exploring This Week's Parashah:**

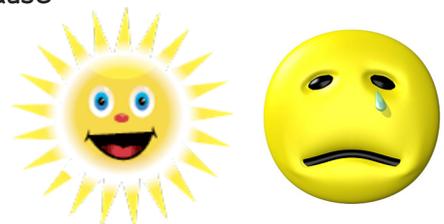
**Sarah and Rebecca: Two Righteous Mothers of Faith**

**1 Sarah: Let's Explore a Few of Her Character Qualities**

First we will take a look at Sarah's physical qualities and facial expression.

-  (a) Have you ever looked at yourself in the mirror after you have been crying, or when you are sad, upset or angry? Do you look beautiful or ugly? You probably look more like a prune face or a basset hound (see picture on next page). Compare that to how you look when you're happy and smiling. When someone takes your picture, do you usually smile or frown? Why do you smile? Is it because you want to look your best and you want people to remember you that way?

-  (b) Read Genesis 12:14, and then read verses 10-20. What can we learn here from Sarah's physical looks?



From these verses we learn that Sarah was very beautiful in character and physical appearance. These two qualities are related. A person who is angry and bitter will have an ugly look on their face and will not be beautiful and attractive.

At age 90, Sarah was still youthful-looking and beautiful. Why else would King Abimelech have kidnapped her and wanted to marry her? (See Genesis 20:2.) Sarah was so beautiful that she was fit for a king. This is the first thing we learn about Sarah: She was beautiful.

What else can we learn about Sarah? Remember how YHVH blessed Abraham and made promises to him. It is called the Abrahamic Covenant



**(c)** Did YHVH include Sarah in the promises he made to Abraham? (Read Genesis 17:15-22.)

When YHVH made promises to Abraham, he changed his name from Abram to Abraham meaning "father of many nations." This new name was an outward sign to the world concerning the promises YHVH had made to Abraham.

Likewise, YHVH changed Sarah's name from Sarai meaning "my princess" to Sarah meaning "princess" (Genesis 17:15). We learn from this that YHVH wanted her to have a place of honor right next to her husband and to be blessed in the Abrahamic Covenant as well. Sarah was a noble and honorable woman.

Next, let's look at how she ran her home and at what kind of mother she was.



**(d)** Are home and family a big thing to a woman? What kind of mother do you suppose Sarah was? Did she protect her children? How do you suppose she felt when another person's child was making fun of her child? (Read Genesis 21:10.)



**(e)** What did Abraham do about this problem in response to Sarah's concerns? (Read verses 11-14.)

Sarah protected the spiritual atmosphere of her home. She was guarding her righteous son, Isaac, from Ishmael who was a worldly and rude man. She was concerned that Ishmael's behavior toward Isaac would prevent Isaac from fulfilling his godly mission. Sarah realized that Ishmael would have a harmful influence upon Isaac. This is why Sarah demanded that Abraham drive Ishmael and Hagar away, and why YHVH agreed with Sarah's righteous request. Scripture says, "Bad company corrupts good morals" (1 Corinthians 15:33, NAS).

Now, let's look at how Sarah treated her husband.



**(f)** Did Sarah treat Abraham with respect or disrespect? (Read 1 Peter 3:1-7, especially note verse 6.) What can we learn from this passage about the role of husbands and wives in a marriage? How are husbands to treat their wives and wives to treat their husbands? What did Sarah call her husband as a sign of respect for him? Did she follow his instructions as the head of the home, or did she do her own thing?

Sarah treated her husband with honor and respect. The word "lord" (as found in the KJV) in verse six may be translated as "master" or "sir." It is a title of honor expressing reverence or respect.

Finally, let's look at Sarah's faith and relationship with YHVH.



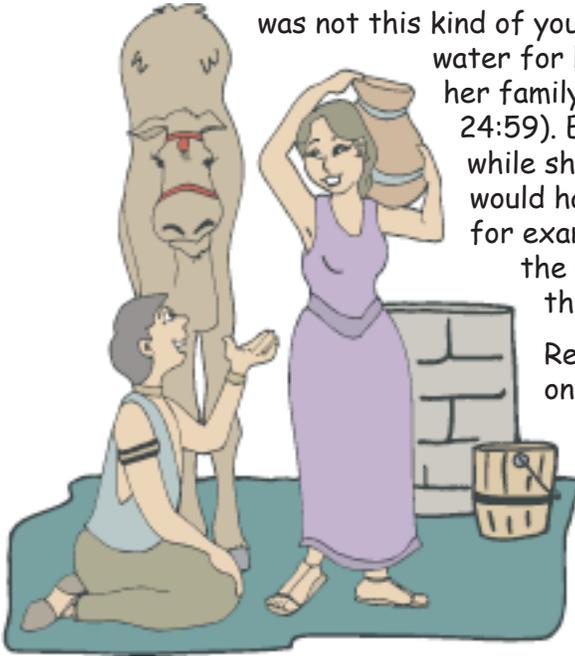
**(g)** We all know that Abraham was a man of great faith, but what about Sarah? Like her husband Abraham, did Sarah possess great faith in the Word and promises of Elohim? (Read Hebrews 11:11-12.)



## 2 Rebecca: Let's Explore a Few of Her Character Qualities

-  (h) What kind of person was Rebecca? (Read Genesis 24:11-21.) Here we read of Eliezer's first encounter with Rebecca at the well. What kind of girl was Rebecca? Was she lazy? Did she try to get out of hard work and let others do the work for her? How did she treat strangers? Did she care only about herself, or was she willing to go out of her way to help others?

Eliezer, the trusted servant of Abraham, was on a mission to find the perfect wife for Isaac. He was not interested in a wealthy, snobby or lazy girl for Isaac. Rebecca was not this kind of young lady. She was the kind of maiden who would draw water for herself instead of having servants do it for her—and her family was wealthy enough to give her a servant (see Genesis 24:59). Eliezer wanted to see how this young lady would behave while she was away from her home atmosphere. In this way, he would have a better perspective on her character. At a well, for example, a girl would act naturally. At home, however, in the company of guests, she might put on an act to impress those around her.



Rebecca, however, passed Eliezer's test, for she spoke only about bringing water for him, and then went ahead and drew water for the camels. The selfless heart of a servant was second nature to Rebecca. She put the needs of another above her own. It was hard work and took great strength to lower a stone jug into a well of water and then to pull it up by a rope. She didn't do this just once or twice, but maybe twenty to thirty times to water all the camels! You see, in their first drink, ten camels would consume 140 gallons of

water! Rebecca was modest and had a servant's heart; she was selfless and kind. This kind of woman would make a great wife for Isaac.

-  (i) What else can we learn about Rebecca's character qualities? (Read Genesis 24:62-67.) At the end of verse 65 what did Rebecca do?

What Rebecca did was a sign of modesty. She was being very proper, humble, respectful and polite when meeting Isaac for the first time. Rebecca was not loud and brash. She did not force herself upon others or draw attention to herself.

Finally, we read in Genesis 24:67 that Isaac brought her to his mother's tent (Sarah had just died), and there it became clear that she was to be Isaac's wife.

-  (j) How did Isaac feel about Rebecca? How did she make Isaac feel? Read the last part of verse 67. Is this the kind of woman that is pleasing to a man and makes a godly wife?
-  (k) Rebecca had some other notable qualities, as well. What were they?
-  (l) Read Genesis 25:21-23. Did she seek spiritual direction from YHVH? Was she able to hear the voice of YHVH? Did she believe what he said?

What else can we learn about Rebecca?

-  (m) Read Genesis 27:1-29.

YHVH had spoken to her at the birth of her two twin sons Esau and Jacob (Genesis 25:23).

YHVH told her that the older son would serve the younger, and to insure that the Word of YHVH would come to pass and that the first born son's blessing would go to Jacob, and not to Esau, Rebecca took to scheming to make sure things worked out how YHVH had said they would. She wanted to make sure that the birthright promises that Abraham had passed onto Isaac would go to Jacob and not to Esau, who was a wicked and ungodly man and who had no interest in following YHVH. She knew that Esau was not worthy of such a divine mission and blessing. On the other hand, Jacob was worthy of it. He would use his blessing to serve and obey YHVH. Rebecca loved YHVH, believed in his Word and wanted to do everything possible to make sure it would be fulfilled. This was the kind of woman she was. YHVH was first in her life.

