

POSITIVELY TORAH

Torah Text 1 for Chapter 14 Group Projects

Genesis 23:1–16

Overview: Abraham needs a burial place for Sarah. His Hittite neighbors offer to give him land at no cost. He insists on a fair deal in which he will pay for the burial site.

¹Sarah’s lifetime—the span of Sarah’s life—came to one hundred and twenty-seven years. ²Sarah died in Kiriath-arba—now Hebron—in the land of Canaan; and Abraham proceeded to mourn for Sarah and to bewail her.

³Then Abraham rose from beside his dead, and spoke to the Hittites, saying, ⁴“I am a resident alien among you; sell me a burial site among you, that I may remove my dead for burial.” ⁵And the Hittites replied to Abraham, saying to him, ⁶“Hear us, my lord: you are the elect of God among us. Bury your dead in the choicest of our burial places; none of us will withhold his burial place from you for burying your dead.”

⁷Thereupon Abraham bowed low to the landowning citizens, the Hittites, ⁸and he said to them, “If it is your wish that I remove my dead for burial, you must agree to speak on my behalf with Ephron son of Zohar. ⁹Let him sell me the cave of Machpelah that he owns, which is at the edge of his land. Let him sell it to me, at the full price, for a burial site in your midst.” ¹⁰Ephron was present among the Hittites; so Ephron the Hittite answered Abraham in the hearing of the Hittites, the assembly in his town’s gate, saying, ¹¹“No, my lord, hear me: I give you the field and I give you the cave that is in it; I give it to you in the presence of my people. Bury your dead.”

¹²Then Abraham bowed low before the landowning citizens, ¹³and spoke to Ephron in the hearing of the landowning citizens, saying, “If only you would hear me out! Let me pay the price of the land; accept it from me, that I may bury my dead there.” ¹⁴And Ephron replied to Abraham, saying to him, ¹⁵“My lord, do hear me! A piece of land worth four hundred shekels of silver—what is that between you and me? Go and bury your dead.”

¹⁶Abraham accepted Ephron’s terms. Abraham paid out to Ephron the money that he had named in the hearing of the Hittites—four hundred shekels of silver at the going merchants’ rate.

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Torah Text 2 for Chapter 14 Group Projects

Exodus 17:8–16

The Amalekites attack the Israelites. When Moses raises the rod of God, the Israelite army is strong. Aaron and Hur assist Moses by holding his arms up throughout the fighting.

⁸Amalek came and fought with Israel at Rephidim. ⁹Moses said to Joshua, “Pick some troops for us, and go out and do battle with Amalek. Tomorrow, I will station myself on the top of the hill, with the rod of God in my hand.”

¹⁰Joshua did as Moses told him and fought with Amalek, while Moses, Aaron, and Hur went up to the top of the hill. ¹¹Then, whenever Moses held up his hand, Israel prevailed; but whenever he let down his hand, Amalek prevailed.

¹²But Moses’ hands grew heavy; so they took a stone and put it under him and he sat on it, while Aaron and Hur, one on each side, supported his hands; thus his hands remained steady until the sun set. ¹³And Joshua overwhelmed the people of Amalek with the sword.

¹⁴Then God said to Moses, “Inscribe this in a document as a reminder, and read it aloud to Joshua: I will utterly blot out the memory of Amalek from under heaven!” ¹⁵And Moses built an altar and named it Adonai-nissi. ¹⁶He said, “It means, ‘Hand upon the throne of Adonai [God]!’ Adonai [God] will be at war with Amalek throughout the ages.”

POSITIVELY TORAH

Torah Text 3 for Chapter 14 Group Projects

Exodus 35:25–36:8

Overview: Moses asks Bezalel and all the skilled artists to build the Mishkan, a portable sanctuary in the desert.

²⁵And all the skilled women spun with their own hands, and brought what they had spun, in blue, purple, and crimson yarns, and in fine linen. ²⁶And all the women who excelled in that skill spun the goats' hair.

²⁷And the chieftains brought lapis lazuli [a deep-blue colored rock] and other stones for setting, for the *ephod* [special garment worn by the high priest] and for the breastplate [pouch decorated with special stones worn by the high priest]; ²⁸and spices and oil for lighting, for the anointing oil, and for the aromatic incense.

²⁹Thus the Israelites, all the men and women whose hearts moved them to bring anything for the work that God, through Moses, had commanded to be done, brought it as a freewill offering to God. ³⁰And Moses said to the Israelites: See, God has singled out by name Bezalel, son of Uri son of Hur, of the tribe of Judah, ³¹endowing him with a divine spirit of skill, ability, and knowledge in every kind of craft, ³²and inspiring him to make designs for work in gold, silver, and copper, ³³to cut stones for setting and to carve wood—to work in every kind of designer's craft—³⁴and to give directions. He and Oholiab son of Ahisamach of the tribe of Dan ³⁵have been endowed with the skill to do any work—of the carver, the designer, the embroiderer in blue, purple, crimson yarns, and in fine linen, and of the weaver—as workers in all crafts and as makers of designs.

¹Let, then, Bezalel and Oholiab and all the skilled persons whom God has endowed with skill and ability to perform expertly all the tasks connected with the service of the sanctuary carry out all that God has commanded.

²Moses then called Bezalel and Oholiab, and every skilled person whom God had endowed with skill, everyone who excelled in ability, to undertake the task and carry it out. ³They took over from Moses all the gifts that the Israelites had brought, to carry out the tasks connected with the service of the sanctuary. But when these continued to bring freewill offerings to him morning after morning, ⁴all the artisans who were engaged in the tasks of the sanctuary came, from the task upon which each one was engaged, ⁵and said to Moses, "The people are bringing more than is needed for the tasks entailed in the work that God has commanded to be done."

⁶Moses thereupon had this proclamation made throughout the camp: "Let no man or woman make further effort toward gifts for the sanctuary!" So the people stopped bringing: ⁷their efforts had been more than enough for all the tasks to be done. ⁸Then all the skilled among those engaged in the work made the Tabernacle of ten strips of cloth, which they made of fine twisted linen, blue, purple, and crimson yarns; into these they worked a design of cherubim.