

# Genesis 23:10

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

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,

## Analysis

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**And Ephron dwelt among the children of Heth: and Ephron the Hittite answered Abraham in the audience...** This passage is part of the Abrahamic narratives which shift from universal human history to God's particular covenant people. The Abraham cycle (Genesis 12-25) demonstrates God's sovereign election, covenant faithfulness, and the development of faith through testing and promise fulfillment.

Central themes include God's unconditional covenant promises (land, descendants, blessing to nations), the call to faith and obedience, the testing of faith through delays and impossibilities, the contrast between divine promises and human schemes, and God's gracious persistence despite human failures. Abraham emerges as the father of faith whose trust in God's promises becomes the model for all believers (Romans 4, Galatians 3, Hebrews 11).

Theologically, these narratives establish:

1. salvation by grace through faith rather than works
2. covenant as God's gracious initiative binding Himself to His people
3. the necessity of patient trust when promises seem impossible
4. the consequences of attempting to fulfill God's promises through human effort
5. the pattern of divine testing producing mature faith.

The Abraham cycle foreshadows Christ as the ultimate seed through whom blessing extends to all nations (Galatians 3:16).

## Historical Context

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The patriarchal narratives (Genesis 12-50) reflect the cultural, social, and legal customs of the ancient Near East during the Middle Bronze Age (2000-1500 BCE). Archaeological discoveries including the Mari tablets, Nuzi tablets, and Egyptian records confirm many details: nomadic pastoralism, covenant-making ceremonies, marriage customs, property laws, and international travel patterns described in Genesis.

The cultural practices reflected include: treaty/covenant forms (Genesis 15), bride-price customs (Genesis 24, 29), inheritance laws favoring firstborn sons (Genesis 25, 27), adoption practices (Genesis 15, 30), levirate-type arrangements (Genesis 38), and Egyptian administrative systems (Genesis 41, 47). These parallels confirm Genesis's historical reliability while showing how God worked within ancient cultural frameworks to accomplish His purposes.

For later Israelites, these narratives established their identity as Abraham's descendants, explained their claim to Canaan, justified their possession of Joseph's bones (Exodus 13:19), and provided models of faith despite imperfection. The patriarchs' failures and God's faithfulness encouraged Israel that covenant relationship depended on God's grace rather than human merit. The movement from Mesopotamia to Canaan to Egypt set the stage for the Exodus and conquest narratives.

## Related Passages

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**1 Corinthians 13:4** — Characteristics of love

**John 15:13** — Greatest form of love

**Genesis 1:1** — Creation of heavens and earth

**Psalms 19:1** — Heavens declare God's glory

## Study Questions

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1. How does this verse contribute to the biblical doctrine of creation, fall, or redemption?
2. How does this passage challenge modern cultural assumptions about identity, purpose, or morality?
3. How does this verse fit into the broader biblical story culminating in Christ?

## Interlinear Text

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עֶפְרוֹן וִן	יָשָׁב	בֵּת וְ	בְּנֵי	הֵת	וַיַּעַן	עֶפְרוֹן וִן
And Ephron	dwelt	among	of the children	of Heth	answered	And Ephron
H6085	H3427	H8432	H1121	H2845	H6030	H6085
הַחִתִּי	אֶת	אַבְרָהָם	בְּאָזְנוֹ	בְּנֵי	הֵת	לְכָל
the Hittite	H853	Abraham	in the audience	of the children	of Heth	H3605
H2850		H85	H241	H1121	H2845	
בָּא	שָׁעַר	עִיר וְ	לֵאמֹר:			
even of all that went in	at the gate	of his city	saying			
H935	H8179	H5892	H559			

## Additional Cross-References

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**Genesis 34:24** (Parallel theme): And unto Hamor and unto Shechem his son hearkened all that went out of the gate of his city; and every male was circumcised, all that went out of the gate of his city.

**Genesis 34:20** (Parallel theme): And Hamor and Shechem his son came unto the gate of their city, and communed with the men of their city, saying,

**Genesis 23:18** (References Abraham): Unto Abraham for a possession in the presence of the children of Heth, before all that went in at the gate of his city.