

Thursday, January 10

**All passages taken from Holy Bible, New Living Translation, copyright © 1996.
Used by permission of Tyndale House Publishers, Inc., Wheaton, Illinois 60189.
All rights reserved.**

Genesis 23:1 - 24:51

23 **1** When Sarah was 127 years old, **2** she died at Kiriath-arba (now called Hebron) in the land of Canaan. There Abraham mourned and wept for her. **3** Then, leaving her body, he said to the Hittite elders, **4** “Here I am, a stranger and a foreigner among you. Please sell me a piece of land so I can give my wife a proper burial.” **5** The Hittites replied to Abraham, **6** “Listen, my lord, you are an honored prince among us. Choose the finest of our tombs and bury her there. No one here will refuse to help you in this way.” **7** Then Abraham bowed low before the Hittites **8** and said, “Since you are willing to help me in this way, be so kind as to ask Ephron son of Zohar **9** to let me buy his cave at Machpelah, down at the end of his field. I will pay the full price in the presence of witnesses, so I will have a permanent burial place for my family.” **10** Ephron was sitting there among the others, and he answered Abraham as the others listened, speaking publicly before all the Hittite elders of the town. **11** “No, my lord,” he said to Abraham, “please listen to me. I will give you the field and the cave. Here in the presence of my people, I give it to you. Go and bury your dead.” **12** Abraham again bowed low before the citizens of the land, **13** and he replied to Ephron as everyone listened. “No, listen to me. I will buy it from you. Let me pay the full price for the field so I can bury my dead there.” **14** Ephron answered Abraham, **15** “My lord, please listen to me. The land is worth 400 pieces of silver, but what is that between friends? Go ahead and bury your dead.” **16** So Abraham agreed to Ephron’s price and paid the amount he had suggested—400 pieces of silver, weighed according to the market standard. The Hittite elders witnessed the transaction. **17** So Abraham bought the plot of land belonging to Ephron at Machpelah, near Mamre. This included the field itself, the cave that was in it, and all the surrounding trees. **18** It was transferred to Abraham as his permanent possession in the presence of the Hittite elders at the city gate. **19** Then Abraham buried his wife, Sarah, there in Canaan, in the cave of Machpelah, near Mamre (also called Hebron). **20** So the field and the cave were transferred from the Hittites to Abraham for use as a permanent burial place.

24 **1** Abraham was now a very old man, and the LORD had blessed him in every way. **2** One day Abraham said to his oldest servant, the man in charge of his household, “Take an oath by putting your hand under my thigh. **3** Swear by the LORD, the God of heaven and earth, that you will not allow my son to marry one of these local Canaanite women. **4** Go instead to my

homeland, to my relatives, and find a wife there for my son Isaac.” **5** The servant asked, “But what if I can’t find a young woman who is willing to travel so far from home? Should I then take Isaac there to live among your relatives in the land you came from?” **6** “No!” Abraham responded. “Be careful never to take my son there. **7** For the LORD, the God of heaven, who took me from my father’s house and my native land, solemnly promised to give this land to my descendants. He will send his angel ahead of you, and he will see to it that you find a wife there for my son. **8** If she is unwilling to come back with you, then you are free from this oath of mine. But under no circumstances are you to take my son there.” **9** So the servant took an oath by putting his hand under the thigh of his master, Abraham. He swore to follow Abraham’s instructions. **10** Then he loaded ten of Abraham’s camels with all kinds of expensive gifts from his master, and he traveled to distant Aram-naharaim. There he went to the town where Abraham’s brother Nahor had settled. **11** He made the camels kneel beside a well just outside the town. It was evening, and the women were coming out to draw water. **12** “O LORD, God of my master, Abraham,” he prayed. “Please give me success today, and show unfailing love to my master, Abraham. **13** See, I am standing here beside this spring, and the young women of the town are coming out to draw water. **14** This is my request. I will ask one of them, ‘Please give me a drink from your jug.’ If she says, ‘Yes, have a drink, and I will water your camels, too!’—let her be the one you have selected as Isaac’s wife. This is how I will know that you have shown unfailing love to my master.” **15** Before he had finished praying, he saw a young woman named Rebekah coming out with her water jug on her shoulder. She was the daughter of Bethuel, who was the son of Abraham’s brother Nahor and his wife, Milcah. **16** Rebekah was very beautiful and old enough to be married, but she was still a virgin. She went down to the spring, filled her jug, and came up again. **17** Running over to her, the servant said, “Please give me a little drink of water from your jug.” **18** “Yes, my lord,” she answered, “have a drink.” And she quickly lowered her jug from her shoulder and gave him a drink. **19** When she had given him a drink, she said, “I’ll draw water for your camels, too, until they have had enough to drink.” **20** So she quickly emptied her jug into the watering trough and ran back to the well to draw water for all his camels. **21** The servant watched her in silence, wondering whether or not the LORD had given him success in his mission. **22** Then at last, when the camels had finished drinking, he took out a gold ring for her nose and two large gold bracelets for her wrists. **23** “Whose daughter are you?” he asked. “And please tell me, would your father have any room to put us up for the night?” **24** “I am the daughter of Bethuel,” she replied. “My grandparents are Nahor and Milcah. **25** Yes, we have plenty of straw and feed for the camels, and we have room for guests.” **26** The man bowed low and worshiped the LORD. **27** “Praise the LORD, the God of my master, Abraham,” he said. “The LORD has shown unfailing love and faithfulness to my master, for he has led me straight to my master’s relatives.” **28** The young woman ran home to tell her

family everything that had happened. **29** Now Rebekah had a brother named Laban, who ran out to meet the man at the spring. **30** He had seen the nose-ring and the bracelets on his sister's wrists, and had heard Rebekah tell what the man had said. So he rushed out to the spring, where the man was still standing beside his camels. **31** Laban said to him, "Come and stay with us, you who are blessed by the LORD ! Why are you standing here outside the town when I have a room all ready for you and a place prepared for the camels?" **32** So the man went home with Laban, and Laban unloaded the camels, gave him straw for their bedding, fed them, and provided water for the man and the camel drivers to wash their feet. **33** Then food was served. But Abraham's servant said, "I don't want to eat until I have told you why I have come." "All right," Laban said, "tell us." **34** "I am Abraham's servant," he explained. **35** "And the LORD has greatly blessed my master; he has become a wealthy man. The LORD has given him flocks of sheep and goats, herds of cattle, a fortune in silver and gold, and many male and female servants and camels and donkeys." **36** "When Sarah, my master's wife, was very old, she gave birth to my master's son, and my master has given him everything he owns. **37** And my master made me take an oath. He said, 'Do not allow my son to marry one of these local Canaanite women. **38** Go instead to my father's house, to my relatives, and find a wife there for my son.' **39** "But I said to my master, 'What if I can't find a young woman who is willing to go back with me?' **40** He responded, 'The LORD, in whose presence I have lived, will send his angel with you and will make your mission successful. Yes, you must find a wife for my son from among my relatives, from my father's family. **41** Then you will have fulfilled your obligation. But if you go to my relatives and they refuse to let her go with you, you will be free from my oath.' **42** "So today when I came to the spring, I prayed this prayer: 'O LORD, God of my master, Abraham, please give me success on this mission. **43** See, I am standing here beside this spring. This is my request. When a young woman comes to draw water, I will say to her, "Please give me a little drink of water from your jug." **44** If she says, "Yes, have a drink, and I will draw water for your camels, too," let her be the one you have selected to be the wife of my master's son.' **45** "Before I had finished praying in my heart, I saw Rebekah coming out with her water jug on her shoulder. She went down to the spring and drew water. So I said to her, 'Please give me a drink.' **46** She quickly lowered her jug from her shoulder and said, 'Yes, have a drink, and I will water your camels, too!' So I drank, and then she watered the camels. **47** "Then I asked, 'Whose daughter are you?' She replied, 'I am the daughter of Bethuel, and my grandparents are Nahor and Milcah.' So I put the ring on her nose, and the bracelets on her wrists. **48** "Then I bowed low and worshiped the LORD . I praised the LORD, the God of my master, Abraham, because he had led me straight to my master's niece to be his son's wife. **49** So tell me—will you or won't you show unfailing love and faithfulness to my master? Please tell me yes or no, and then I'll know what to do next." **50** Then Laban and Bethuel replied, "The LORD has obviously brought

you here, so there is nothing we can say. **51** Here is Rebekah; take her and go. Yes, let her be the wife of your master's son, as the LORD has directed."

Matthew 8:1 - 17

8 1 Large crowds followed Jesus as he came down the mountainside. **2** Suddenly, a man with leprosy approached him and knelt before him. "Lord," the man said, "if you are willing, you can heal me and make me clean." **3** Jesus reached out and touched him. "I am willing," he said. "Be healed!" And instantly the leprosy disappeared. **4** Then Jesus said to him, "Don't tell anyone about this. Instead, go to the priest and let him examine you. Take along the offering required in the law of Moses for those who have been healed of leprosy. This will be a public testimony that you have been cleansed." **5** When Jesus returned to Capernaum, a Roman officer came and pleaded with him, **6** "Lord, my young servant lies in bed, paralyzed and in terrible pain." **7** Jesus said, "I will come and heal him." **8** But the officer said, "Lord, I am not worthy to have you come into my home. Just say the word from where you are, and my servant will be healed. **9** I know this because I am under the authority of my superior officers, and I have authority over my soldiers. I only need to say, 'Go,' and they go, or 'Come,' and they come. And if I say to my slaves, 'Do this,' they do it." **10** When Jesus heard this, he was amazed. Turning to those who were following him, he said, "I tell you the truth, I haven't seen faith like this in all Israel! **11** And I tell you this, that many Gentiles will come from all over the world—from east and west—and sit down with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob at the feast in the Kingdom of Heaven. **12** But many Israelites—those for whom the Kingdom was prepared—will be thrown into outer darkness, where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth." **13** Then Jesus said to the Roman officer, "Go back home. Because you believed, it has happened." And the young servant was healed that same hour. **14** When Jesus arrived at Peter's house, Peter's mother-in-law was sick in bed with a high fever. **15** But when Jesus touched her hand, the fever left her. Then she got up and prepared a meal for him. **16** That evening many demon-possessed people were brought to Jesus. He cast out the evil spirits with a simple command, and he healed all the sick. **17** This fulfilled the word of the Lord through the prophet Isaiah, who said, "He took our sicknesses and removed our diseases."

Psalms 9:13 - 20

9 13 LORD, have mercy on me. See how my enemies torment me. Snatch me back from the jaws of death. **14** Save me so I can praise you publicly at Jerusalem's gates, so I can rejoice that you have rescued me. **15** The nations have fallen into the pit they dug for others. Their own feet have been caught in the trap they set. **16** The LORD is known for his justice. The wicked

are trapped by their own deeds. Quiet Interlude **17** The wicked will go down to the grave. This is the fate of all the nations who ignore God. **18** But the needy will not be ignored forever; the hopes of the poor will not always be crushed. **19** Arise, O LORD ! Do not let mere mortals defy you! Judge the nations!**20** Make them tremble in fear, O LORD . Let the nations know they are merely human. Interlude

Proverbs 3:1 - 6

3 1 My child, never forget the things I have taught you. Store my commands in your heart. **2** If you do this, you will live many years, and your life will be satisfying. **3** Never let loyalty and kindness leave you! Tie them around your neck as a reminder. Write them deep within your heart. **4** Then you will find favor with both God and people, and you will earn a good reputation. **5** Trust in the LORD with all your heart; do not depend on your own understanding. **6** Seek his will in all you do, and he will show you which path to take.