23

*23:1-20* **Sarah Dies And Abraham Buys A Cave To Bury Her**

Gen 23:1 **Now the life of Sarah was 127 years; the years of the life of Sarah.**

**Now the life of Sarah was 127 years;**

“Sarah lived 127 years” or “Sarah lived to be 127 years old”

**the years of the life of Sarah**

“{Yes,} that is how long she lived” or “That is how old she lived to be”. Consider whether it is better in your language to combine the last part of verse 1 with the beginning of verse 2 and say, “That is how old she was **2** when she died in Kiriath Arba, that is...” (See: figs-infostructure)

Gen 23:2 **Then Sarah died in Kiriath Arba, that is, Hebron, in the land of Canaan, and Abraham went to mourn for Sarah and to weep for her.**

**Then Sarah died**

“Then she died” or “before she died”. Decide whether or not it is best to begin a new sentence here in your language.

**in Kiriath Arba,**

“in {the city of} Kiriath Arba,” or “in {the city of} Kiriath-arba,” The name of this city means “city of Arba” or “city of the four”. You can spell this name as two words, as in the Hebrew text, or combine them into one word, with or without a hyphen. Be consistent with how you spell this name throughout the Bible. (See: translate-names)

**that is, Hebron,**

“which is {also called/named} Hebron” or “also known as Hebron”. The city of Kiriath Arba was later named Hebron (Joshua 14:15).

**in the land of Canaan,**

“in the land/region of/called Canaan”.If it is more natural in your language to put a general location before a specific location, you could move this phrase before the phrase “in {the city of} Kiriath Arba”. (See: figs-infostructure)

**and Abraham went**

“Abraham went/came {to her}” or “Abraham went/came {to her side}”

**to mourn for Sarah and to weep for her.**

“to mourn and weep/cry for her.” or “and cried and mourned for her.” For some languages it is necessary to translate this using a verb form that expresses completion or past tense so that it is clear that Abraham actually did this. Do what is natural and clear in your language.

Gen 23:3 **Then Abraham got up from beside his dead one and he spoke to the sons of Heth, saying,**

**Then Abraham**

“After a while, Abraham/he” or “Later he”

**got up from beside**

“got/stood up from {mourning} beside” or “left”

**his dead one**

“her body” or “her” or “his wife’s body”

**and he spoke to the sons of Heth, saying,**

“and he {went to the city gates and} said to {the leaders/elders of} the Hittites {there},” or “and he {went} to {the leaders/elders of} the Hittites {at the city gates} {and} said to them,”In that culture, the leaders of a city would hold their meetings at the city gates, where they would make decisions on important matters such as this one. For some languages it is necessary to make it explicit here in verse 3 that Abraham went to the city gates to meet with the Hittites, rather than wait until verse 10. Do what is best in your language. (See: figs-explicit)

**the sons of Heth**

“the descendants of Heth” or “the Hittites”. Heth was Canaan’s son (Genesis 10:15, 15:20). His descendants were the Hittites. Decide the best way to refer to them here in your language. (See: translate-names)

Gen 23:4 **“I {am} a foreigner and a sojourner among you. Give to me property for a burial place among you, so that I can bury my dead from before me.”**

**“I {am}**

“I {am coming to you as}” or “{As you know,} I {am}” or “{Since} I {am}”. The leaders of the city already knew that Abraham was a foreigner, so make sure your translation of this sentence does not sound like he is telling them something new that they did not know. (See: figs-explicit)

**a foreigner and a sojourner**

“a foreigner/outsider who has settled” or “a foreigner/outsider who is living”. See how you translated “foreigner” in Gen 15:13.

**among you.**

“among you {and I have no land/property of my own}” or “in your land {and/so I do not own any property here}.” It is implied by Abraham and understood by the Hittites that Abraham’s status as a foreigner means he owns no property. Consider whether or not to make this implied information explicit in your translation. (See: figs-explicit)

**Give to me**

“{Please} give/sell me” or “{Please} let me buy”. Make sure the way you translate this sounds polite, not rude or demanding. (See: writing-politeness)

**property for a burial place among you, so that I can bury**

“{some} property/land among you where I can bury/put” or “{some} of your land/property so I have a place to bury/put”

**my dead from before me.”**

“my dead/deceased {wife} from view.” or “{the body of} my wife who has died.” Translate this in a way that shows respect for the person who has died.

Gen 23:5 **Then the sons of Heth replied to Abraham, saying to him,**

**Then the sons of Heth**

“{The leaders/elders of} the Hittites” or “When {the leaders/elders of} the Hittites {heard that}, they”. See how you translated “the sons of Heth” in verse 3.

**replied to Abraham, saying to him,**

“replied/responded to Abraham/him,” or “replied/responded,” (See: writing-quotations)

Gen 23:6 **“Listen to us, my lord. You {are} a mighty prince among us. Bury your dead in the choicest of our burial places. Each of us will not refuse from you his burial place to bury your dead.”**

**“Listen to us, my lord.**

“{Please} listen to our proposal, my/our lord/master.” or “Sir, {please} listen to what we propose:” Abraham was not their actual lord or master, rather the Hittites are addressing him in a respectful manner. Also, it may be more natural or respectful to put the form of address “My lord” or “Sir” first in this quote. (See: grammar-honorifics)

**You {are} a mighty prince among us.**

The Hebrew text is ambiguous here. It can mean (1) “You {are} a powerful/important leader/man {living} among us.” or (2) “You {are} a leader/man of/from God {living} among us.” The interpretation that you do not follow in your translation could be put in a footnote.

**Bury your dead in the choicest of our burial places.**

“{So} {you may} bury/put your dead/deceased {wife} in {any} one of our best burial sites.” or “{So please choose} {any} one of our best burial sites and bury/put your dead/deceased {wife} there.**”**

**your dead**

“your dead/deceased {wife}” or “{the body of} your wife who has died”

**burial places**

“places to bury {people who have died}” or “tombs”

**Each of us will not refuse from you his burial place to bury**

“Each of us is willing/happy to give you {some of} his land where you can bury” or “All of us are willing for you to use {any of} our burial sites to bury” (See: figs-litotes)

**your dead.”**

“your dead/deceased {wife}.” or “{the body of} your wife who has died.” or “her.” Look at the previous context of verse 6 and consider what is the most natural way to refer to Sarah’s body here in your translation.

\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_Paragraph Break\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Gen 23:7 **Then Abraham got up and bowed before the people of the land, before the sons of Heth,**

**Then Abraham got up**

“Abraham got/stood up” or “So Abraham got/stood up”. Consider what is the best way to begin this sentence in your language in this context. Abraham and the leaders/elders of the Hittites were all sitting as they talked to each other.

**and bowed**

“and bowed {in respect}” or “and bowed down/low {to the ground} {in respect}” or “and kneeled and touched his forehead to the ground {in respect}”. We do not know how far Abraham bowed down. He may have bowed his upper body from a standing position, or he may have knelt down and touched his forehead to the ground with his arms outstretched. (See: translate-symaction)

**before**

“before/to” or “in front of”

**the people of the land, before the sons of Heth,**

“{the leaders/elders of} the Hittites, who owned the land {in the area}” or “the leaders/elders over the Hittites”. The phrase “people of the land” is a term that refers to the leaders of that region who owned land in the area and were the ones to decide whether a foreigner could acquire land.

Gen 23:8 **and he said to them, saying, “If it is your will to bury my dead from before me, listen to me and intercede for me with Ephron, the son of Zohar,**

**and he said to them, saying,**

“and said to them,” or “Then he said to them,” Consider whether it is more natural in your language to have two verbs, or just one verb, in this quote margin. (See: writing-quotations)

**“If it is your will**

“If you are willing”

**to bury**

“{for me} to bury” or “{to allow me} to bury”

**my dead from before me,**

“my dead/deceased {wife} from view,” or “{the body of} my wife who has died,” See how you translated this in verse 4.

**listen to me and intercede for me with Ephron, the son of Zohar**

“{please} appeal to Ephron the son of Zohar on my behalf” or “{please} help me by asking Zohar’s son Ephron”

Gen 23:9 **so that he will give to me the cave of Machpelah, which {belongs} to him, which {is} at the end of his field. For full price let him give it to me among you as property for a burial place.”**

**so that he will give to me**

“to give/sell to me”

**the cave of Machpelah, which {belongs} to him, which {is} at the end of his field.**

“his cave that is at the end/edge of his field in the Machpelah {area}.” Machpelah is the name of the area or neighborhood where Ephron’s cave and field were located (verse 17). (See: translate-names)

**For full price let him give it to me**

“Ask him to give/sell it to me for its full price/value” or “Ask him to sell it to me and I will pay him the full amount that it is worth”

**among you**

“in front of you {all}” or “with all of you {present/here} to witness the sale”

**as property for a burial place.”**

“so that I will have land/property to bury {the body of my deceased wife}.” or “That way I will have a place {here} where I can bury {the body of my wife who has died}.”

Gen 23:10 **Now Ephron was sitting among the sons of Heth, so Ephron the Hittite responded to Abraham in the ears of the sons of Heth, for everyone {who} had come to the gate of his city, saying,**

**Now Ephron was sitting among the sons of Heth, so Ephron the Hittite**

“Now Ephron the Hittite was sitting {there} {at the meeting} among the {other} Hittite leaders/elders, so he” or “Ephron was one of the Hittite leaders/elders who had gathered {there} {at the meeting}, and/so he”

**responded to Abraham**

“replied to Abraham” (See: writing-quotations)

**in the ears of the sons of Heth,**

“in the hearing/presence of {the leaders/elders of} the Hittites,” or “as/while the {other} leaders/elders listened,” (See: figs-idiom)

**for everyone {who} had come to the gate of his city,**

“including everyone {who} had gathered {there} at the/their city gate,” The pronoun “his” refers back to “everyone” who had gathered at the city gate.

**saying,**

“He said,” or “This is what he said:” Consider whether or not it is better in your language to begin a new sentence here. (See: writing-quotations)

Gen 23:11 **“No, my lord. Listen to me: I give to you the field, and I give to you the cave that {is} in it. I give it to you before the eyes of the sons of my people. Bury your dead.”**

**“No, my lord.**

“That is not necessary, sir.” or “Sir, there is no need for that.” Make sure your translation of this phase sounds polite. In some cultures it is rude to say “No” too directly. (See: writing-politeness)

**Listen to me:**

“{Please} listen to this/my proposal:” or “{Please} accept this offer/proposal:” or “{Please} listen to what I am proposing:”

**I give to you the field,**

I {hereby} give/offer you the {entire} field,” Ephron is making a formal proposal or offer. Consider how to communicate that in your language.

**and I give to you the cave that {is} in it.**

“including the cave that {is} in it.” or “as well as the cave that {is} in it.”

**I give it to you**

“I’m giving it/them to you {now/here}”

**before the eyes ofthe sons of my people.**

“in the sight/presence of the leaders/elders of my people.” or “as/while the leaders/elders of my people watch/listen {as witnesses}.” or “and {all} the leaders/elders of my people here are witnesses of this.”

**Bury your dead.”**

“{You may/can} bury your dead/deceased {wife} {there}.” or “{Please go ahead and} bury your dead/deceased {wife} {on that land}.”

\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_Paragraph Break\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Gen 23:12 **Then Abraham bowed before *the* people of the land,**

**Then Abraham bowed**

“Then Abraham bowed {again}” or “{Once again,} Abraham bowed”. See how you translated “bowed” in verse 7. (See: translate-symaction)

**before**

“before/to” or “in front of”

**the people of the land,**

“the people/leaders/elders who owned the land {in the area}” or “the leaders/elders {of/over the Hittites}”. See how you translated this phrase in verse 7. You could translate this slightly differently here since these people have been referred to repeatedly before this.

Gen 23:13 **and he spoke to Ephron in the ears of the people of the land, saying, “Rather if you would, please listen to me. I will give the price of the field. Take it from me, then I will bury my dead there.”**

**and he spoke to Ephron in the ears of the people of the land, saying,**

“and he said to Ephron while the {rest of} the leaders/elders listened,” or “As/While they {all} listened, he/Abraham said to Ephron,” See how you translated “in the ears of” in verse 10. (See: writing-quotations)

**“Rather**

“Rather {than that,}” or “Instead {of doing that,}”

**if you would,**

“If you are willing,” or “Since you are willing {to let me have the field},” In verses 9-15, Abraham and Ephron are bargaining indirectly with each other according to the customs of that culture and time. Keep that in mind as you translate their conversation.

**please listen to me.**

“please accept my proposal/offer.” or “please listen to what I am offering/proposing.”

**I will give the price of the field.**

“I will give/pay you the {full} price of what the field is worth.” or “I want to give/pay you the {full} price of/for the field.”

**Take it from me,**

“{Please} take/accept my money/payment,” or “{Please} let me buy it from you,” (See; writing-politeness)

**then I will bury my dead there.”**

“so that I can bury {the body of} my dead/deceased {wife} there” or “so that {the field will be mine and} I can bury {my wife} there who has died.” or “then I will have a place to bury {the body of} my dead/deceased {wife}.”

Gen 23:14 **Then Ephron answered Abraham, saying to him,**

**Then Ephron answered Abraham, saying to him,**

“Then Ephron said to Abraham,” or “Ephron responded to Abraham,” (See: writing-quotations)

Gen 23:15 **“My lord, listen to me. Land {worth} 400 shekels of silver, between me and you, what {is} that? So bury your dead.”**

**“My lord,**

“Sir,” See how you translated this respectful form of address in verses 6 and 11. (See: grammar-honorifics)

**listen to me.**

“{please} listen to me.” See how you translated this in verse 13. Make sure Ephron sounds polite here in your translation. (See: writing-politeness)

**Land {worth} 400 shekels of silver,**

“The land/field is worth 400 shekels of silver.” or “If I were selling that land, it would cost 400 shekels of silver.” Coins did not exist at that time. Rather people paid each other with shekels of silver or gold, which was a weight measurement. Four hundred shekels of silver was about 10 pounds (4.5 kilos) of silver. Many translation teams like to keep the same numbers that are in the Hebrew text in their translation, and then in a footnote give the equivalent amount in their own currency. Other teams put the equivalent amount in the text and put the literal phrase in a footnote. See how you translated “shekels of silver” in Gen 20:16. (See: translate-bmoney)

**between me and you,**

“{However/but} since you and I are friends,” or “{But} as far as you and I are concerned,”

**what {is} that?**

“what {significance} {is} that?” or “that {is} not important.” or “I would not ask you to pay that.” or “there is no need for that.” Decide whether or not a rhetorical question fits here well in your language. (See: figs-rquestion)

**So bury your dead.”**

“So {go ahead and} bury your dead/deceased {wife} {there}.” Consider again how you translated “bury...dead” in verses 4, 6, 8, 11, 13 and 15.

Gen 23:16 **So Abraham listened to Ephron, and Abraham weighed out to Ephron the price that he had mentioned in the ears of the sons of Heth, 400 shekels of silver, the currency among the merchants.**

**So Abraham listened to Ephron,**

“Abraham accepted Ephron’s price/offer,” or “Abraham agreed with Ephron’s price/offer,” Make sure it is clear in your translation that Abraham did not just hear what Ephron said, but also acted on it.

**and Abraham weighed out to Ephron**

“and/so he paid Ephron/him”

**the price that he had mentioned**

“the {amount of} silver that he/Ephron had stated/suggested”

**in the ears of the sons of Heth,**

“in the hearing/presence of the {other} Hittite leaders/elders” or “as/while{the rest of} {the leaders/elders of} the Hittites {watched and} listened”. See how you translated this phrase in verse 10. You might need to translate it differently here because of the different context. (See: figs-idiom)

**400 shekels of silver,**

“{which was} 400 shekels of silver,” or “{Abraham weighed the} 400 shekels of silver”

**the currency among the merchants.**

“using/with the same kind of weights/scale that merchants used {to accurately weigh silver/things}.” or “using the standard shekel/weights that sellers/traders used {at that time}.”

\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_Paragraph Break\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Gen 23:17 **So the field of Ephron that {was} in Machpelah which {was} before Mamre, the field and the cave that {was} in it, and every tree that {was} in the field, that {was} within all of its surrounding borders, was deeded**

**So the field of Ephron**

“So Ephron’s field” or “That is how the field that belonged to Ephron”

**that {was} in Machpelah**

“that {was} in the Machpelah {area}”

**which {was} before Mamre,**

“east of {the city of} Mamre,” or “near {the city of} Mamre,” Mamre was another name for the city of Hebron (verse 19). The name probably came from Abraham’s friend and ally who lived there (Gen 13:18; 14:13).

**the field and the cave that {was} in it,**

“{including both} the field and the cave that {was} in it,” or “including the cave that {was} in the field,”

**and every tree that {was}**

“as well as all the trees that {were}”

**in the field, that {was} within all of its surrounding borders,**

“in the field, {whatever was} inside its borders,” or “anywhere inside the borders/boundaries of the field,”

**was deeded**

“{all of that} was {officially/legally} sold {by Ephron}” or “Ephron sold {all of that}”. Consider what is the best way to translate this passive clause in your language. (See: figs-activepassive)

Gen 23:18 **to Abraham as his possession before the eyes of the sons of Heth, before everyone who had come to the gate of his city.**

**to Abraham ashis possession**

“to Abraham as his property” or “to Abraham and it becamehis possession/property”

**beforethe eyes of the sons of Heth,**

“in the sight/presence of {the leaders/elders of} the Hittites” or “while {the leaders/elders of} the Hittites watched {as witnesses}”. See how you translated the idiom “before the eyes of” in verse 11. (See: figs-idiom}

**before everyone who had come to the gate of his city.**

“including everyone who had gathered at the city gate.” or “That included everyone who had met together at the city gate.”See how you translated a similar phrase in verse 10.The sentence in verses 17 and 18 is very long. Consider whether or not it is better in your language to break it into two or more shorter sentences and say, “That is how {Abraham bought} Ephron’s field, including the cave and all the trees that were within its borders. The field was in the Machpelah {area}, near {the city of} Mamre. Ephron sold the field **18** to Abraham in front of {the leaders of} the Hittites who had gathered at the city gates, so that they all witnessed/knew that the land was now Abraham’s property.”

Gen 23:19 **Then after that, Abraham buried Sarah his wife in the cave of the field of Machpelah before Mamre, that {is}, Hebron, in the land of Canaan.**

**Then after that,**

“After that,” or “After Abraham/he bought the field,”

**Abraham buried Sarah his wife**

“Abraham/he put/placed {the body of} his wife Sarah”

**in the cave of the field of Machpelah**

“in the cave in the field in the Machpelah {area},” Be consistent here with how you spelled “Machpelah” in verses 9 and 17. (See: translate-names)

**before Mamre,**

“east of {the city of} Mamre,” or “near {the city of} Mamre,” See how you translated this phrase in verse 17. Also, be consistent here with how you spelled this name in verse 17 and in Gen 14:13, 24; 18:1.

**that {is}, Hebron,**

“which is {also called/named} Hebron,” or “also known as Hebron,”

**in the land of Canaan.**

“in the land/region called Canaan.” See how you translated this phrase in verse 2. If it is more natural in your language to put a general location before a specific location, you could put this phrase earlier in this sentence before “in the cave”. (See: figs-infostructure)

Gen 23:20 **So the field and the cave that {was} in it were deeded to Abraham as property for a burial place from the sons of Heth.**

**So the field**

“So {that is how} that field,” or “So {in that way,} the field {of Ephron}”. Verse 20 is a concluding summary of chapter 23 and repeats parts of verses 17-18. Make sure the way you translate this does not sound like Abraham bought another property from the Hittites.

**and the cave that {was} in it**

“including the cave that {was} in the field,”

**were deeded to Abraham**

“was/were {officially/legally} sold to Abraham”. See how you translated this in verse 17.

**as property for a burial place from the sons of Heth.**

“by the Hittites as a burial place/site.” or “by the Hittites, so that he had a place where he could bury {his wife who had died}.” Consider again how you translated “a burial place” in verses 4, 9, and 20, and how you translated “the sons of Heth” in verses 3, 5, 7, 10, 16, 18, and 20.