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1 Samuel

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unfoldingWord® Translation Notes

1 Samuel

Introduction to 1 Samuel

Part 1: General Introduction

Outline of 1 Samuel

Samuel as judge over Israel (1:1–7:17)
Samuel as a child (1:1–3:21)
Shiloh priesthood; the fall and death of Eli the priest (4:1–22)
The ark of God and the war with the Philistines (5:1–6:21)
Mizpah; Samuel's rule over Israel (7:1–17)
Saul and Samuel (8:1–15:35)
Samuel lets the people seek a king (8:1–22)
Saul anointed king (9:1–10:27)
Battle and victory over the Ammonites (11:1–15)
Samuel's farewell (12:1–25)
Saul's weakness and failures (13:1–15:35)
David and his conflicts with Saul (16:1–31:13)
God's choice of David to be king (16:1–23)
David fights Goliath (17:1–58)
Saul's jealousy of David; David and Jonathan (18:1–20:42)
David in the wilderness; David in Philistia (21:1–30:31)
Death of Saul (31:1–13)

What is the Book of 1 Samuel about?

The Book of 1 Samuel is about Samuel, Saul, and David. Samuel was the last of the judges over Israel. Saul was the first king of Israel. Much of the book is about how Saul became king, then how he later sinned against God and died. God chose David to be king after Saul. This book shows how God protected David when Saul tried to kill him.

How should the title of this book be translated?

Translators can use the traditional title "1 Samuel" or "First Samuel." Or, translators may consider a clearer title such as "The First Book About Samuel, Saul, and David." (See: [How to Translate Names](#))

What is the purpose of the Book of 1 Samuel?

The purpose of 1 Samuel is to give an account of the events leading up to David becoming king of Israel. In 1 Samuel, the twelve tribes of Israel unite under the first king of Israel, Saul. But Saul does not obey Yahweh's commands. So God uses Samuel to choose David as a king who will trust and obey Yahweh.

Who wrote the Book of 1 Samuel?

It is uncertain who wrote 1 Samuel. It may have been someone alive soon after King Solomon died. When Solomon died, the kingdom of Israel split into two kingdoms. The author probably lived in the southern kingdom of Judah. A descendant of David continued to rule over the southern kingdom. The author may have written 1 Samuel to defend David's right to be king. This would prove that David's descendant was the rightful king of God's people.

Part 2: Important Religious and Cultural Concepts

Who is “Yahweh’s anointed”?

The writer of 1 Samuel often speaks of “Yahweh’s anointed.” This refers to the one whom Yahweh chose to be the king of his people. Also, the phrase “Yahweh’s anointed” would make later readers think about the future descendant of David who would become king of God’s people. This person who Yahweh chose would be known as the Messiah. (See: [anoint](#), [anointed](#), [anointing](#) and [people of God](#) and [Christ, Messiah](#))

Part 3: Important Translation Issues

What are curses, as found in 1 Samuel and elsewhere?

A curse is a strong statement a person makes to cause bad things to happen to the person or thing being cursed. A curse usually has this pattern: “May God do so to you, and even more, if you hide anything from me of all the words that he spoke to you” (1 Sam. 3:17). Other instances of curses in 1 and 2 Samuel are found in 1 Sam 14:44; 20:13; 25:22; 2 Sam 3:9, 35; and 19:13. The translator should represent a curse in the project language in as strong a way as possible.

How is the name “Israel” used in the Bible?

The name “Israel” is used in many different ways in the Bible. Jacob was the son of Isaac. God changed his name to Israel. The descendants of Jacob became a nation also called Israel. Eventually, the nation of Israel split into two kingdoms. The northern kingdom was named Israel. The southern kingdom was named Judah. (See: [Israel](#), [Israelites](#))

The Book of 1 Samuel has two references to Israel and Judah ([1 Samuel 17:52](#), [1 Samuel 18:16](#)). However, these references appear in the text long before the two kingdoms split apart. It seems clear that the references to Israel and Judah are in the text because the author wrote at a time after the kingdoms split. He wanted the readers to understand that all the twelve tribes had supported David.

What is the meaning of the phrase “to this day”?

This phrase was used by the narrator to refer to the time when he was writing. The translator should be aware that “to this day” refers to a time already passed. He must avoid giving the impression that the present day of the translation’s readers is meant. The translator might decide to say, “to this day, at the time when this is being written” or “to this day, at the time of writing.” This phrase occurs in 1 Samuel 5:5; 6:18; 27:6; 30:25.

1 Samuel 1

1 Samuel 1 General Notes

Structure and formatting

This chapter introduces Samuel. It is the beginning of the section 1, Samuel chapters 1-7, which tell about Samuel, the religious leader of Israel.

Special concepts in this chapter

Two wives

This was a common practice in the ancient Near East. It was against the law of Moses. The men of Israel would have sinned if they married more than one woman. This type of marriage always creates problems because of jealousy. (See: [law](#), [law of Moses](#), [law of Yahweh](#), [law of God](#) and [sin](#), [sinful](#), [sinner](#), [sinning](#) and [jealous](#), [jealousy](#))

“Pay his vow”

It was customary for Israelites to promise God to make a sacrifice to him if God answered special prayers. Making such a sacrifice was called paying one’s vow. (See: [vow](#))

Important figures of speech in this chapter

Idioms

When Hannah wanted to assure Eli she was telling the truth, she used the idiom “as you live.” This is a type of oath formula meaning “I promise you I am telling the truth.” (See: [Idiom](#))

The author also uses the phrase “call to mind.” This is a common idiom meaning “remember.”

1 Samuel 1:1

the Ramathaim (ULT)

This is the name of a small village possibly located eight kilometers northwest of Jerusalem. (See: [How to Translate Names](#))

the Zuphites (ULT)

The phrase **the Zuphites** refers to the people group that descended from Zuph. (See: [How to Translate Names](#))

Ephraim (ULT)

Here, **Ephraim** refers to the land that was allotted to the people belonging to the Israelite tribe of Ephraim (see Joshua 16:1-9). (See: [How to Translate Names](#))

was Elkanah...Jeroham...Elihu...Tohu...Zuph (ULT)

These are the names of men. (See: [How to Translate Names](#))

an Ephraimite (ULT)

Here, **Ephraimite** refers to anyone living in the territory of Ephraim. (See: [How to Translate Names](#))

ULT

¹ Now there was one man from the Ramathaim, the Zuphites, from the hill country of Ephraim, and his name was Elkanah, the son of Jeroham, the son of Elihu, the son of Tohu, the son of Zuph, an Ephraimite. ^[1]

1 Samuel 1:2

And for him (ULT)

The pronoun **him** refers to Elkanah. (See: [Pronouns — When to Use Them](#))

Hannah ... Peninnah

These are the names of two women. (See: [How to Translate Names](#))

ULT

² And for him were two wives: the name of the first was Hannah and the name of the second was Peninnah. And it happened that for Peninnah were children, but for Hannah there were no children.

1 Samuel 1:3

that man (ULT)

The word **that** in the phrase **that man** is a demonstrative pronoun which refers to Elkanah. Alternate translation: “the man Elkanah” (See: [Pronouns — When to Use Them](#))

And...went up (ULT)

Here, **went up** indicates that in order to reach Shiloh, Elkanah had to travel from a lower location to a higher location because Shiloh was located in a mountainous region. (See: [Go and Come](#))

from days to days (ULT)

The expression **days to days** is a Hebrew idiom. Alternate translation: “year by year” or “annually” (See: [Idiom](#))

Eli...Hophni...and Phinehas (ULT)

These are the names of men. (See: [How to Translate Names](#))

ULT

³ And that man went up from his city from days to days to worship and to sacrifice to Yahweh of hosts in Shiloh. And the two of the sons of Eli, Hophni and Phinehas, priests of Yahweh, were there.

1 Samuel 1:4

portions (ULT)

Here, **portions** refers to portions of meat. See UST. Alternate translation: “meat portions” or “portions of meat”

that he gave (ULT)

Beginning here and continuing until the middle of verse 7, the author provides background information and explains what took place repeatedly year after year. The author does this to help readers better understand the story. (See: [Background Information](#))

ULT

⁴ And it happened the day when Elkanah sacrificed that he gave portions to Peninnah his wife and to all her sons and her daughters.

1 Samuel 1:5

But to Hannah (ULT)

Hannah is a woman's name. See how you translated this in [1 Samuel 1:2](#). (See: [How to Translate Names](#))

one portion of two faces (ULT)

The phrase, **one portion of two faces** could mean: (1) Elkanah gave Hannah a double portion. Alternate translation: "a double portion" (2) Elkanah gave Hannah especially desirable portions of meat. Alternate translation: "a special portion"

had shut her womb (ULT)

The phrase **shut her womb** is used figuratively to mean that Yahweh had not allowed Hannah to become pregnant. If it would be clearer in your language, you can use a phrase that would be most natural in your language. Alternative translation: "made her barren" or "prevented her from becoming pregnant" (See: [Euphemism](#))

portion (ULT)

Here, **portion** refers to the portion of meat that God let the people eat from the animal which they sacrificed. (See: [Translate Unknowns](#))

ULT

⁵ But to Hannah he would give one portion of two faces, for he loved Hannah. (Now Yahweh had shut her womb.)

1 Samuel 1:6

And her rival would provoke her, even with provocation in order to cause her to thunder (ULT)

This means that Peninnah would intentionally seek ways to humiliate and mock Hannah so that she would feel emotionally disturbed and be greatly troubled in spirit. You can translate this in a way that

would be most natural in your language. Alternate translation: “And Peninnah would intentionally provoke Hannah severely, for the purpose of hurting her feelings” (See: [Connect — Reason-and-Result Relationship](#))

ULT

⁶ And her rival would provoke her, even with provocation in order to cause her to thunder, because Yahweh had shut up her womb.

And her rival would provoke her, even with provocation (ULT)

The word **provocation** is an abstract noun. If it would be more natural in your language you may translate this word using a verb phrase or adjective. Alternate translation: “And Peninnah would intentionally provoke Hannah severely” (See: [Abstract Nouns](#))

her rival (ULT)

Here, **her rival** refers to Hannah’s rival Peninnah. It is probable that Elkanah took Peninnah as his second wife after Hannah was unable to bear children so that he could have offspring by Peninnah. This would result in Hannah and Peninnah viewing each other as rivals. You can use a word or phrase that would be most natural in your language. Alternate translation: “his second wife” or “her co-wife”

cause her to thunder (ULT)

The phrase **cause her to thunder** is a figurative way of saying that Peninnah’s actions caused Hannah to be greatly irritated or troubled. The point of this comparison is that Peninnah would cause Hannah to be greatly bothered and disrupted in a way that is similar to the sky being disrupted to the point of thundering. You can communicate this in a way which would be most natural in your language. (See: [Simile](#))

shut up her womb (ULT)

The phrase **shut up her womb** is used figuratively to mean that Yahweh had not allowed Hannah to become pregnant. You can use a phrase that would be most natural in your language. Alternative translation: “made her barren” or “prevented her from becoming pregnant” (See: [Euphemism](#))

1 Samuel 1:7

she went up (ULT)

Here, **went up** indicates that in order to reach Shiloh, Elkanah had to travel from a lower location to a higher location because Shiloh was located in a mountainous region. See how you translated this in [1 Samuel 1:3](#). (See: [Go and Come](#))

she went up (ULT)

Here, **she** refers to Hannah. (See: [Pronouns — When to Use Them](#))

ULT

⁷ And thus it would be year by year, as often as she went up in the house of Yahweh, thus she would provoke her. And she would weep and would not eat.

1 Samuel 1:8

**why do you weep? And why do you not eat?
And why is your heart displeased? Am I not
better to you than ten sons (ULT)**

These rhetorical questions can be translated as statements, if it would be clearer in your language. Alternate translation: “you should not weep. You should eat, and your heart should be glad because I am better to you than ten sons!” or “you have little reason for sadness. I favor you and that should be enough.” (See: [Rhetorical Question](#))

Am I not better to you than ten sons (ULT)

Elkanah is intentionally exaggerating to emphasize what he wants Hannah to understand. Alternate translation: “Am I not better to you than any son could be” (See: [Hyperbole](#))

ULT

⁸ And Elkanah her husband would say to her, “Hannah, why do you weep? And why do you not eat? And why is your heart displeased? Am I not better to you than ten sons?”

1 Samuel 1:9

And Hannah got up after (ULT)

Here, implicit information can be made explicit. This could mean: (1) Hannah's tent was next to the tabernacle tent. (2) Hannah walked from her tent to the tabernacle to pray. Alternate translation: "Hannah rose up and went to the house of Yahweh to pray after" (See: [Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information](#))

ULT

⁹ And Hannah got up after eating and after drinking in Shiloh. (Now Eli the priest was sitting upon the seat by the doorway to the temple of Yahweh.)

Now Eli (ULT)

Now is used here to mark a break in the main story line. Here, the author tells about a new person in the story. This person is the priest **Eli**. (See: [How to Translate Names](#))

the temple of (ULT)

Here, **the temple** was actually a tent, but it was where the people worshiped, so it is translated as **temple** here. You could use an equivalent word or phrase to describe **temple** in your language. (See: [Translate Unknowns](#))

1 Samuel 1:10

And she was bitter of spirit, and she prayed to Yahweh and wept abundantly (ULT)

Hannah prayed to Yahweh because she was greatly grieved because she was not able to have any children and because Peninnah regularly ridiculed her. If it would be clearer in your language you could state this explicitly. (See: [Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information](#))

ULT

¹⁰ And she was bitter of spirit, and she prayed to Yahweh and wept abundantly.

was bitter of spirit (ULT)

The phrase **bitter of spirit** is a simile. The point of this comparison is that Hannah's emotional state was very unpleasant and undesirable, comparable to the unpleasant experience of eating something very bitter tasting. If it would be clearer in your language, you could express this meaning in a non-figurative way. Alternate translation: "was greatly distressed" (See: [Simile](#))

1 Samuel 1:11

And she vowed a vow (ULT)

The phrase **vowed a vow** is a way of saying that Hannah made a promise. If it would be clearer in your language you could state this explicitly. Alternate translation: “made a promise” (See: [Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information](#))

and said (ULT)

Here, **and said** is introducing the authors quotation of Hannah’s prayer. Consider natural ways of introducing direct quotations in your language. Alternate translation: “and this is what she prayed” (See: [Quotations and Quote Margins](#))

ULT

11 And she vowed a vow and said, “Yahweh of hosts, if you will indeed look on the affliction of your female servant and remember me, and not forget your female servant, and give to your female servant a seed of men, then I will give him to Yahweh all the days of his life, and a razor will not go up on his head.”

Yahweh of hosts, if you will indeed look on the affliction of your female servant and remember me, and not forget your female servant, and give to your female servant a seed of men, then I will give him to Yahweh all the days of his life, and a razor will not go up on his head (ULT)

This portion is the authors quotation of Hannah’s prayer to Yahweh. (See: [Quotations and Quote Margins](#))

on the affliction of your female servant (ULT)

The abstract noun **affliction** can be translated as a verbal phrase. This could mean: (1) Hannah’s emotional suffering because she was unable to become pregnant. Alternate translation: “on how I am suffering because I cannot become pregnant” (2) Hannah’s emotional suffering because of Peninnah’s frequent insults and taunts. Alternate translation: “on how that woman is afflicting me” (See: [Abstract Nouns](#))

and remember me, and not forget (ULT)

These two phrases mean basically the same thing. The repetition is used for emphasis. If it would be clearer in your language, you could combine these two phrases. Alternate translation: “and indeed remember” (See: [Doublet](#))

and remember me, and not forget (ULT)

Hannah does not actually think that Yahweh is unaware of her situation or has forgotten about it. Rather, this is an emphatic and urgent way of asking Yahweh to act on her behalf by answering her prayer for a son. Alternate translation: “and give heed to, and act on behalf of” (See: [Hyperbole](#))

then I will give him (ULT)

This portion of Hannah’s prayer begins her promise to Yahweh. She tells Yahweh that if he gives her, her request for a son, she will dedicate the child to Yahweh all the days of his life and not give him a haircut. She begins her promise with the phrase **then I will give**. If your language has a specific way that it would introduce a promise in this context, you may consider using it here if it would be natural in your language. Alternative translation: “then I promise I will give him”

1 Samuel 1:12

when she increased to pray (ULT)

The phrase **increased to pray** is a Hebrew idiom. It means that Hannah was continuing in prayer, or making her prayers many. It is used here to show that Hannah was praying for a long time. Alternate translation: “when she continued praying” (See: [Idiom](#))

ULT

¹² And it happened when she increased to pray before the face of Yahweh that Eli was watching her mouth.

before the face of (ULT)

The phrase **before the face of** is a Hebrew idiom. It is used to show that something takes place in front of or in the presence of someone or something else. It is used here to show that Hannah was praying in the presence of Yahweh. Use the term or phrase in your language that would most naturally communicate that something takes place in front of someone or in the presence of someone. Alternate translation: “in the presence of” (See: [Idiom](#))

that Eli (ULT)

Eli was the chief priest, so he was in the tabernacle of God and in charge of it. (See: [How to Translate Names](#))

1 Samuel 1:13

Now Hannah, she was speaking to her heart, only her lips were quivering and her voice was not heard. So Eli thought of her as drunk (ULT)

If it would be clearer in your language, you could arrange the order of events in a way that is most natural in your language. Alternate translation: "Now Hannah was silently praying. And Eli assumed that she was drunk, because she was not making any sound, only her lips were moving" (See: [Connect — Goal \(Purpose\) Relationship](#))

ULT

¹³ Now Hannah, she was speaking to her heart, only her lips were quivering and her voice was not heard. So Eli thought of her as drunk.

was speaking to her heart (ULT)

Here, **heart** is used figuratively. Use the term or phrase that would be most natural in your language. If you do not have a figurative way to express this in your language you could express the meaning in a non-figurative way. See UST. (See: [Metaphor](#))

1 Samuel 1:14

Until when will you make yourself drunk (ULT)

Eli is stating this in the form of a question for emphasis. If it would be clearer in your language, you could translate his words as a statement or as an exclamation. See UST. (See: [Rhetorical Question](#))

ULT

¹⁴ And Eli said to her, “Until when will you make yourself drunk? Remove your wine from with you!”

1 Samuel 1:15

my master (ULT)

The phrase **my master** is a way of politely or respectfully addressing someone. If you have an equivalent term or phrase in your language, consider using that. Alternate translation: “my lord” or “sir” (See [\[\[rc://en/ta/man/translate/writing-politeness\]\]](#))

difficult of spirit (ULT)

The phrase **difficult of spirit** is a Hebrew idiom. Alternative translation: “troubled of spirit” or “very unhappy” (See: [Idiom](#))

but I have been pouring out my soul (ULT)

The phrase **pouring out** refers to emptying the contents of what is inside something. Here it is used figuratively, and so the phrase **pouring out my soul** means telling Yahweh one’s troubles or deepest emotions. If it would be clearer in your language, you can state this explicitly. Alternate translation: “but I have been telling my troubles” or “but I have been telling my deepest emotions” (See: [Idiom](#))

before the face of (ULT)

The phrase **before the face of** is a Hebrew idiom. It is used to show that something takes place in front of or in the presence of someone or something else. It is used here to show that Hannah was praying in the presence of Yahweh. Use the term or phrase in your language that would most naturally communicate that something takes place in front of someone or in the presence of someone. Alternate translation: “in the presence of” (See: [Idiom](#))

ULT

15 And Hannah answered and said, “No, my master, a woman difficult of spirit am I. And wine and intoxicating drink I have not drunk, but I have been pouring out my soul before the face of Yahweh.”

1 Samuel 1:16

your female servant (ULT)

Hannah speaks of herself in the third person to show humility. If it would be clearer in your language you may use a first person pronoun here. Alternate translation: “me” (See: [First, Second or Third Person](#))

your female servant (ULT)

Here, Hannah calls herself Eli’s **female servant** as a humble way of showing respect. Hannah was not actually Eli’s servant. If you have an equivalent term or phrase in your language consider using it here if it would be natural. (See: [\[\[rc://en/ta/man/translate/writing-politeness\]\]](#))

from the abundance of my complaint and my provocation (ULT)

Here, Hannah tells Eli why she is praying the way that she is. Hannah uses three abstract nouns, **abundance**, **complaint**,* and **provocation**. If it would be clearer in your language you can translate these using verbs, adjectives, or adverbs. Alternate translation: “because I am very troubled, and my rival has greatly provoked me” (See: [Abstract Nouns](#))

ULT

16 Do not give your female servant to the face of a daughter of worthlessness. For I have been speaking from the abundance of my complaint and my provocation until now.”

1 Samuel 1:17

Then Eli answered

Eli was the head priest residing over the tabernacle.

ULT

17 And Eli answered and said, "Go in peace. And may the God of Israel grant your request that you requested from with him."

1 Samuel 1:18

Let your servant find

Hannah speaks of herself in the second person to show respect for Eli, the head priest. This can be stated in the first person. Alternate translation: "Let me, your servant, find" or "Let me find" (See: [First, Second or Third Person](#))

find favor in your eyes

Here "find favor" is an idiom that means be approved of or that he is pleased with her. Here the eyes are a metonym for sight, and seeing represents judging or deciding the value of something. Alternate translation: "evaluated me and approve" (See: [Metonymy](#) and [Metaphor](#))

ate; her face was

Here "her face" represents Hannah herself. You can make this a separate sentence, if needed. Alternate translation: "ate. She was" or "ate. People could see that she was" (See: [Synecdoche](#))

ULT

18 And she said, "May your female servant find favor in your eyes." And the woman went to her way and she ate. And her face was no longer against her.

1 Samuel 1:19

Elkanah knew Hannah

This is a euphemism. Alternate translation: "Elkanah had sexual relations with Hannah" (See: [Euphemism](#))

remembered her

God knew what was happening to Hannah; he had not forgotten her. See how you translated similar words in [1 Samuel 1:11](#).

ULT

19 And they rose early in the morning and worshiped before the face of Yahweh. And they returned and came to their house in the Ramah. And Elkanah knew Hannah his wife and Yahweh remembered her.

1 Samuel 1:20

Hannah conceived

“Hannah became pregnant”

ULT

²⁰ And it happened at the turning of the days that Hannah conceived and bore a son. And she called his name Samuel, for, “I requested him from Yahweh.”

1 Samuel 1:21

his house

The word "house" is a metonym for the people who lived in the house. Alternate translation: "his family" (See: [Metonymy](#))

ULT

²¹ And the man Elkanah and all his house went up to sacrifice to Yahweh the sacrifice of the days and his vow.

1 Samuel 1:22

is weaned

stops drinking milk and starts eating only solid food

he may appear before Yahweh and live there forever

Hannah had promised God that she would allow Samuel to live and work with Eli the priest in the temple ([1 Samuel 1:11](#)).

ULT

²² But Hannah did not go up. For she had said to her husband, "Until the boy is weaned, then I will bring him. And he will appear with the face of Yahweh and dwell there until eternity."

1 Samuel 1:23

nursed her son

“gave her son milk”

ULT

²³ And Elkanah her husband said to her, “Do the good thing in your eyes. Stay until you have weaned him. Only, may Yahweh raise up his word.” And the woman stayed and nursed her son until she weaned him.

1 Samuel 1:24

ephah

An ephah is about 22 liters of dry material. (See: [Biblical Volume](#))

bottle

Wine was kept in animal skins, not glass bottles.

ULT

²⁴ And she brought him up with her when she had weaned him, with three bulls and one ephah of flour and a skin of wine. And she brought him to the house of Yahweh in Shiloh. (Now the boy was a boy.)

1 Samuel 1:25

(There are no notes for this verse.)

ULT

²⁵ And they slaughtered the bull. And they brought the boy to Eli.

1 Samuel 1:26

As your spirit is alive (ULT)

The phrase **As your spirit is alive** is an oath formula. If you have a term or phrase that would be most natural in your language to express an oath in this context, consider using that. Alternative translation: (See: [[rc://en/ta/man/translate/writing-oathformula]])

Please, my master (ULT)

The phrase **Please, my master** is a respectful way of addressing someone of higher status. Use the term or phrase that would be most natural in your language for addressing someone of higher status in this context. If your language has a specific way that a woman would address a man of higher status consider using that. Alternate translation: "Please, sir" (See: [[rc://en/ta/man/translate/writing-politeness]])

ULT

26 And she said, "Please, my master! As your spirit is alive, my master! I am the woman who was standing with you at here to pray to Yahweh.

1 Samuel 1:27

has given me my petition which I asked of him

The noun “petition” refers to a formal request for another person to do something. It can be translated with a verb. The idiom “to give a petition” means to do what the person requests. Alternate translation: “has agreed to do what I solemnly requested that he do” (See: [Abstract Nouns](#) and [Idiom](#))

ULT

²⁷ For this boy I prayed and Yahweh gave to me my request which I had requested from with him.

1 Samuel 1:28

he is lent to Yahweh

This can be translated in active form. Alternate translation: "I am loaning him to Yahweh" (See: [Active or Passive](#))

he worshiped Yahweh

This could mean: (1) "He" refers to Elkanah or (2) "he" is a synecdoche referring to both Elkanah and his family. Alternate translation: "Elkanah and his family" (See: [Synecdoche](#))

ULT

28 And also I have lent him to Yahweh all the days that he is lent to Yahweh." And he worshiped Yahweh there.

1 Samuel 2

1 Samuel 2 General Notes

Structure and formatting

Some translations set each line of poetry farther to the right than the rest of the text to make it easier to read. The ULT does this with Hannah's poetic prayer in 2:1-10 .

Special concepts in this chapter

Hannah's song of praise to God

This song is about how God protects the weak and strengthens them. He humbles the rich, provides for the poor, and defeats his enemies.

Eli's Sons

Eli, the chief priest, had two sons. They were ungodly priests who continually sinned and did not honor God. Eli corrected them but they did not listen. A prophet warned Eli that God would stop his family from being priests and his sons would both die on the same day. At the same time, Samuel was growing up and serving God. (See: [sin, sinful, sinner, sinning](#) and [godly, godliness, ungodly, godless, ungodliness, godlessness](#) and [prophet, prophecy, prophesy, seer, prophetess](#))

Important figures of speech in this chapter

This chapter has many figures of speech because the first part of the chapter is a song and the last part of the chapter is a prophecy. Songs and prophecy tend to have many figures of speech.

Synecdoches

"My heart" and "my mouth" are synecdoches referencing the speaker. (See: [Synecdoche](#))

Metonymies

Body parts are often used to stand for activities involving that part of the body. "The feet of his faithful people" is a metonym meaning what they are doing or where they are going. Place names are often used for people in that place such as "the ends of the earth" meaning the people living in the ends of the earth. (See: [Metonymy](#))

Metaphors

Hannah used many military metaphors: "rock," representing protection; "the bows of the mighty men are broken," representing military defeat; "the horn of his anointed," representing the power of the one that God has chosen to be king. (See: [Metaphor](#))

Rhetorical questions

God used three rhetorical questions to correct and condemn Eli. "Did I not reveal myself to the house of your ancestor, when they were in Egypt in bondage to Pharaoh's house?" "Why then do you scorn my offerings that I required in the place where I live?" "Why do you honor your sons above me by making yourselves fat with the best of every offering of my people Israel?" (See: [Rhetorical Question](#))

1 Samuel 2:1

General Information:

Hannah recites a song to Yahweh. (See: [Parallelism](#))

My heart exults

"I have great joy"

in Yahweh

"because of who Yahweh is" or "because Yahweh is so great"

My horn is exalted

A horn is a symbol of strength. Alternate translation: "I am now strong" (See: [Metaphor](#))

ULT

¹ And Hannah prayed and said, "My heart exults in Yahweh. My horn is exalted in Yahweh. My mouth is wide against my enemies. For I rejoice in your salvation."

1 Samuel 2:2

Hannah continues to recite a song to Yahweh. (See: [Parallelism](#))

there is no rock like our God

This is another way of saying that God is strong and faithful. (See: [Metaphor](#))

rock

This is a rock large enough to hide behind or to stand on and so be high above one's enemies.

ULT

² There is no one holy like Yahweh.
Indeed, there is no one besides you.
And there is no rock like our God.

1 Samuel 2:3

Hannah continues to recite a song to Yahweh. She speaks as if other people were listening to her. (See: [Parallelism](#))

no arrogance

“no arrogant words”

by him actions are weighed

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: “he weighs people’s actions” or “he understands why people act as they do” (See: [Active or Passive](#))

ULT

³ Do not speak so much very proudly!
Let arrogance go out from your mouth.
For Yahweh is a God of knowledge. And
by him actions are weighed.

1 Samuel 2:4

Hannah continues to recite a song to Yahweh. (See: [Parallelism](#))

The bow of the mighty men are broken

This could mean: (1) the bows themselves are broken or (2) the men who carry the bows are prevented from acting. Alternate translation: "Mighty bowmen are kept from acting"

ULT

⁴ Mighty men are shattered of bow. But those who stumble gird on strength.

The bow of the mighty men are broken

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "Yahweh breaks the bows of the mighty men" or "Yahweh can make even the strongest of people weak" (See: [Active or Passive](#))

those who stumble put on strength like a belt

This metaphor means they will no longer stumble, but their strength will remain with them as tightly as a belt. Alternate translation: "he will make those who stumble strong" (See: [Metaphor](#))

put on ... a belt

This is the general term for putting something around one's waist to prepare for work.

1 Samuel 2:5

Hannah continues to recite a song to Yahweh. (See: [Parallelism](#))

gives birth to seven

“gives birth to seven children”

languishes

becomes weak and sad and lonely

ULT

⁵ The satisfied ones hired themselves out for bread, but the hungry ones cease. Even the barren woman bears seven, but the woman of many sons languishes.

1 Samuel 2:6

Hannah continues to recite a song to Yahweh. (See: [Parallelism](#))

**Yahweh kills ... brings to life ... brings down ...
raises up**

Yahweh is in control of everything. (See: [Merism](#))

ULT

⁶Yahweh puts to death and brings to life, brings down to Sheol and brings up.

1 Samuel 2:7

Hannah continues to recite a song to Yahweh. (See: [Parallelism](#))

**makes some people poor ... some rich ...
humbles ... lifts up**

Yahweh is in control of everything. (See: [Merism](#))

ULT

⁷ Yahweh makes poor and makes rich,
makes low, but also lifts up.

1 Samuel 2:8

Hannah continues to recite a song to Yahweh. (See: [Parallelism](#))

out of the dust ... from the ash heap

These are metaphors for the lowest position in society. (See: [Metaphor](#))

the needy

people who do not have the things that they need

ULT

⁸ Raising the lowly from the dust, he lifts up the needy from the trash heap to make sit with nobles and causes them to inherit the seat of honor. For the pillars of the earth are for Yahweh and he has set the world on them.

1 Samuel 2:9

Hannah continues to recite a song to Yahweh. (See: [Parallelism](#))

guard the feet of his faithful people

Here “feet” is a metonym for the way a person walks, which in turn is a metaphor for the way a person decides how to live his life.

Alternate translation: “keep his faithful people from making foolish decisions” or “enable his faithful people to make wise decisions”

(See: [Metonymy](#) and [Metaphor](#))

ULT

⁹ He will keep the feet of his loyal ones, but the wicked ones will be silenced in the darkness. For not by strength does a man prevail.

the wicked will be put to silence in darkness

This polite way of saying that Yahweh will kill the wicked can be stated in active form. Alternate translation:

“Yahweh will put the wicked to silence in darkness” or “Yahweh will put the wicked in the dark and silent world of the dead” (See: [Euphemism](#))

the wicked will be put to silence

The words “be put to silence” are an idiom for “be made silent.” This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: “Yahweh will make them silent” (See: [Idiom](#) and [Active or Passive](#))

by strength

“because he is strong”

1 Samuel 2:10

Hannah continues to recite a song to Yahweh. (See: [Parallelism](#))

Those who oppose Yahweh will be broken

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: “Yahweh will break those who oppose him” (See: [Active or Passive](#))

broken to pieces

This idiom means “defeated.” (See: [Idiom](#))

the ends of the earth

This is an idiom that means everywhere. Alternate translation: “the whole earth” (See: [Idiom](#))

exalt the horn of his anointed

A horn is a symbol of strength. See how you translated similar words in [1 Samuel 2:1](#). Alternate translation: “he will make the leader he has chosen stronger than his enemies” (See: [Metaphor](#))

his anointed

This speaks of the person that Yahweh chose and empowered for his purposes as if Yahweh had anointed the person with oil. This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: “the one he has anointed” or “the one he has chosen” (See: [Metaphor](#) and [Active or Passive](#))

ULT

¹⁰ By Yahweh the ones who oppose him will be shattered. He makes thunder against him in the heavens. Yahweh will judge the ends of the earth. And he will give strength to his king and lift up the horn of his anointed one.”

1 Samuel 2:11

(There are no notes for this verse.)

ULT

11 And Elkanah went to the Ramah, to his house. And the boy was serving Yahweh with the face of Eli the priest.

1 Samuel 2:12

General Information:

When people would offer animals as sacrifices, they would first burn the animal's fat and then boil the meat and eat it.

did not know Yahweh

“did not listen to Yahweh” or “did not obey Yahweh”

ULT

¹² Now the sons of Eli were sons of worthlessness. They did not know Yahweh.

1 Samuel 2:13

custom

A custom is an action that people regularly do.

ULT

13 And the custom of the priests with the people was: when any man was sacrificing a sacrifice, then the servant of the priest would come with a fork of three prongs in his hand as soon as the meat was boiling.

1 Samuel 2:14

into the pan, or kettle, or cauldron, or pot

These are containers in which food could be cooked. If your language does not have separate words for these items it can be stated more generally. Alternate translation: "into whatever the people were cooking the meat in"

pan

a small metal container for boiling and cooking

kettle

a large, heavy metal container for boiling and cooking

cauldron

a large, heavy metal container for boiling and cooking

pot

a clay container for cooking

ULT

14 And he would stick it into the pan, or into the kettle, or into the cauldron, or into the pot. All that the fork brought up the priest would take with him. Thus they did to all Israel, the ones who came there at Shiloh.

1 Samuel 2:15

General Information:

When people would offer animals as sacrifices, they would first burn the animal's fat and then boil the meat, give some to the priest, and eat the rest.

Worse, before

"They even did something worse than that. Before"

they burned

The person who actually did the burning can be made explicit. Alternate translation: "the man who was sacrificing took his sacrifice to the priests and the priests burned" (See: [Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information](#))

Give meat to roast for the priest

"Give me some meat so I can give it to the priest so he can roast it"

roast

cook over a fire

boiled

cooked in water

raw

not cooked

ULT

15 Also, before they burned the fat, the servant of the priest would come, and he would say to the man who was sacrificing, "Give meat to roast for the priest. And he will not take boiled meat from you, but only living."

1 Samuel 2:16

(There are no notes for this verse.)

ULT

16 And the man would say to him, "Let them burn the fat completely as the day, then take for yourself what your self desires," And he would say, "No, rather now you will give it; and if not, I will take it by force."

1 Samuel 2:17

despised Yahweh's offering

The young men did not like Yahweh's instructions regarding the offering and paid no attention to them.

ULT

17 And the sin of the young men was very great with the face of Yahweh. For the men spurned the offering of Yahweh.

1 Samuel 2:18

(There are no notes for this verse.)

ULT

18 And Samuel was serving with the face of Yahweh, a boy girded with an ephod of linen.

1 Samuel 2:19

(There are no notes for this verse.)

ULT

19 And his mother would make a small robe for him and she would bring it to him from days to days, when she came up with her husband to sacrifice the sacrifice of the days.

1 Samuel 2:20

because of the request she made of Yahweh

Hannah had asked Yahweh for a baby and promised him that she would give the baby to serve in the temple.

ULT

²⁰ And Eli would bless Elkanah and his wife and would say, "May Yahweh set seed from this woman for you in place of the request that he requested to Yahweh." And they would go to his place.

1 Samuel 2:21

before Yahweh

This means where Yahweh could see him and Samuel could learn about Yahweh.

ULT

²¹ Because Yahweh visited Hannah, she conceived and bore three sons and two daughters. And the boy Samuel grew with Yahweh.

1 Samuel 2:22

they were lying with the women

This is a euphemism. Alternate translation: “they were having sexual relations with the women” (See: [Euphemism](#))

ULT

22 Now Eli was very old. And he heard all that his sons were doing to all Israel and that they were lying with the women who were serving at the opening of the Tent of Meeting.

1 Samuel 2:23

Why do you do such things?

This rhetorical question can be translated as a statement. Alternate translation: "It is terrible that you do such things!" (See: [Rhetorical Question](#))

ULT

²³ And he said to them, "Why do you do like these things that I am hearing, your evil things, from with all these people?"

1 Samuel 2:24

(There are no notes for this verse.)

ULT

²⁴ No, my sons! For the report is not good that I am hearing the people of Yahweh passing on.

1 Samuel 2:25

who will speak for him?

This rhetorical question can be translated as a statement. Alternate translation: "there is certainly no one who can speak for him." (See: [Rhetorical Question](#))

speak for him

"ask Yahweh to have mercy on him"

the voice of their father

Here the father's "voice" represents the father. Alternate translation: "their father" or "what their father said" (See: [Synecdoche](#))

ULT

²⁵ If a man sins against a man, then God will mediate for him; but if a man sins against Yahweh, who will intercede for him?" And they would not listen to the voice of their father, for Yahweh desired to put them to death.

1 Samuel 2:26

(There are no notes for this verse.)

ULT

²⁶ Now the boy Samuel was going and growing, and good, both with Yahweh and also with men.

1 Samuel 2:27

man of God

This phrase usually means a prophet of Yahweh. Alternate translation: "a man who hears and tells words from God"

Did I not reveal myself ... house?

This rhetorical question can be translated as a statement. Alternate translation: "You should know that I revealed myself ... house." (See: [Rhetorical Question](#))

the house of your ancestor

The word "house" is a metonym for the people who lived in the house. Alternate translation: "the family of your ancestor" (See: [Metonymy](#))

your ancestor

Aaron

ULT

27 And a man of God came to Eli and said to him, "Thus says Yahweh, 'Did I clearly reveal myself to the house of your father, when they were in Egypt for the house of Pharaoh?'"

1 Samuel 2:28

to go up to my altar, and to burn incense

This refers to making an offering to Yahweh.

to wear an ephod before me

The words “wear an ephod” are a metonym for the work of the priests who wear the ephod. Alternate translation: “to do what I had commanded the priests to do” (See: [Metonymy](#))

ULT

28 And I chose him from all the tribes of Israel to be for me for a priest, to bring up on my altar, to burn incense, to carry an ephod before my face. And I gave to the house of your father all the offerings made by fire of the sons of Israel.

1 Samuel 2:29

Connecting Statement:

The man of God continues to speak to Eli.

Why, then, do you scorn my sacrifices ... live?

This rhetorical question is a rebuke. It can be translated as a statement. Alternate translation: "You should not scorn my sacrifices ... where I live." (See: [Rhetorical Question](#))

the place where I live

"the place where my people bring offerings to me"

making yourselves fat with the best of every offering

The best part of the offering was to be burned up as an offering to Yahweh, but the priests were eating it.

ULT

²⁹ Why do you kick at my sacrifice and at my offering that I commanded for the Dwelling, and honor your sons more than me by fattening yourselves from the first of every offering of Israel, of my people?'

1 Samuel 2:30

the house of your ancestor

The word “house” is a metonym for the people who lived in the house. See how you translated this in [1 Samuel 2:27](#). Alternate translation: “the family of your ancestor” (See: [Metonymy](#))

should walk before me

This is an idiom that means “live in obedience to me.” (See: [Idiom](#))

Far be it from me to do this

“I will certainly not allow your family to serve me forever”

those who despise me will be lightly esteemed

The words “lightly esteemed” is an ironic euphemism for “greatly despised.” This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: “I will lightly esteem those who despise me” or “I will greatly despise those who despise me” (See: [Irony](#) and [Euphemism](#) and [Active or Passive](#))

ULT

³⁰ Therefore, this is the declaration of Yahweh the God of Israel: ‘I indeed said your house and the house of your father would walk about before my face until eternity.’ But now this is the declaration of Yahweh: ‘Far be it for me! For I will honor those who honor me, but those who despise me will be slighted.’

1 Samuel 2:31

See

“Listen carefully to what I am about to say” or “What I am about to say is very important”

I will cut off your strength and the strength of your father’s house

The words “cut off ... strength” are probably a euphemism for the death of strong, young men; the words “your father’s house” are a metonym for “your family.” Alternate translation: “I will kill you and all strong, young male descendants in your family” (See: [Euphemism](#) and [Metonymy](#))

be any old man

“be any old men” or “be any men who grow old”

ULT

31 Behold, the days are coming when I will cut off your arm and the arm of the house of your father from there being an old man in your house.

1 Samuel 2:32

(There are no notes for this verse.)

ULT

³² And you will see the distress of the Dwelling, in all that he will do good with Israel. And there will not be an old man in your house all the days.

1 Samuel 2:33

cause your eyes to fail

“cause you to lose your eyesight” or “cause you to go blind”

ULT

³³ But I will not cut off a man from near my altar for you, to cause your eyes to fail and to cause your spirit to grieve. But all the increase of your house will die as men.

1 Samuel 2:34

(There are no notes for this verse.)

ULT

³⁴ And this is the sign for you that will come to the two of your sons, to Hophni and Phinehas: in one day the two of them will die.

1 Samuel 2:35

I will raise up ... a faithful priest

This is an idiom. Alternate translation: "I will cause a man to become priest" (See: [Idiom](#))

for myself

This is an idiom. Alternate translation: "to serve me" (See: [Idiom](#))

what is in my heart and in my soul

"what I want him to do and what I tell him to do"

I will build him a sure house

Here "house" is an idiom used for "descendants." Alternate translation: "I will ensure that he always has a descendant who serves as high priest" (See: [Idiom](#))

ULT

³⁵ And I will raise up for myself a priest who is faithful. He will do just as is in my heart and in my self. And I will build for him a house that is faithful; and he will walk before the face of my anointed one all the days.

1 Samuel 2:36

him

the faithful priest whom God will raise up

so I can eat a piece of bread

Here “piece of bread” is used for “food.” Alternate translation: “so I can have something to eat” (See: [Synecdoche](#))

ULT

³⁶ And it will happen that all the ones who remain in your house will come to bow down to him for a payment of silver and a round loaf of bread. And he will say, “Please assign me to one of the priestly positions to eat a bit of bread.””

1 Samuel 3

1 Samuel 3 General Notes

Special concepts in this chapter

God speaks to Samuel

God spoke at night to Samuel when he was a small boy, telling him that he would punish Eli's family. As Samuel grew up, God gave him many messages. People came from all over Israel to find out what God had to say.

Important figures of speech in this chapter

Metonymy

In order to show respect when talking to God, Samuel calls himself "your servant" when referring to himself. (See: [Metonymy](#))

Idioms

One characteristic of prophecy is the use of figures of speech. In this passage there are two idioms: "ears will shake," meaning "will shock everyone who hears" and "carry out," meaning "do." (See: [prophet](#), [prophecy](#), [prophesy](#), [seer](#), [prophetess](#) and [Idiom](#))

In order to be sure Samuel would tell him the whole truth, Eli used the standard formula for a curse: "may God do to you, and even more, if," meaning "God will punish severely if the person does what the curse says he will do." (See: [curse](#), [cursed](#), [cursing](#))

1 Samuel 3:1

Yahweh's word was rare

"Yahweh did not often speak to people"

ULT

¹ Now the boy Samuel was serving Yahweh before the face of Eli. And the word of Yahweh was rare in those days; there was no widespread vision.

1 Samuel 3:2

(There are no notes for this verse.)

ULT

² And it happened in that day, that Eli was lying down in his place. And his eyes had begun to be dim; he was not able to see.

1 Samuel 3:3

The lamp of God

This is the seven-candle lampstand in the holy place of the tabernacle that burned every day and through the night until it was empty.

the temple of Yahweh

The “temple” was actually a tent, but it was where the people worshiped, so it is best to translate the word as “temple” here. See how you translated this in [1 Samuel 1:9](#).

ULT

³ And before the lamp of God had gone out Samuel was lying down in the temple of Yahweh, there where the Box of God was.

1 Samuel 3:4

(There are no notes for this verse.)

ULT

⁴ And Yahweh called to Samuel. And he said, "Here I am."

1 Samuel 3:5

(There are no notes for this verse.)

ULT

⁵ And he ran to Eli and said, "Here I am, for you called to me." And he said, "I did not call. Go back, lie down." And he went and lay down.

1 Samuel 3:6

my son

Eli was not Samuel's true father. Eli speaks as if he were Samuel's father to show Samuel that he is not angry but that Samuel needs to listen to him. (See: [Metaphor](#))

ULT

⁶ And Yahweh did again call again, "Samuel." And Samuel rose and went to Eli and said, "Here I am, for you called to me." And he said, "I did not call, my son. Go back, lie down."

1 Samuel 3:7

nor had any message from Yahweh ever been revealed to him

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: “nor had Yahweh ever revealed any message to him” or “and Yahweh had never revealed any message to him” (See: [Active or Passive](#))

ULT

⁷ (Now it was before Samuel knew Yahweh, and before the word of Yahweh had been revealed to him.)

1 Samuel 3:8

(There are no notes for this verse.)

ULT

⁸ And Yahweh did again call Samuel at the third time. And he rose and went to Eli and said, "Here I am, for you called to me." And Eli understood that Yahweh was calling to the boy.

1 Samuel 3:9

your servant is

Eli tells Samuel to speak to Yahweh as if Samuel were another person so that Samuel would show respect to Yahweh. Alternate translation: "I am" (See: [Pronouns](#))

ULT

⁹ And Eli said to Samuel, "Go, lie down. And it will happen that, if he calls to you, then you shall say, 'Speak, Yahweh, for your servant is listening.'" And Samuel went and lay down in his place.

1 Samuel 3:10

Yahweh came and stood

This could mean: (1) Yahweh actually appeared and stood before Samuel or (2) Yahweh made his presence known to Samuel.

your servant is

Samuel speaks to Yahweh as if Samuel were another person to show respect to Yahweh. Alternate translation: "I am" (See: [Pronouns](#))

ULT

10 And Yahweh came and stationed himself and called as time on time, "Samuel, Samuel." And Samuel said, "Speak, for your servant is listening."

1 Samuel 3:11

at which the ears of everyone who hears it will tingle

Here “ears ... will tingle” is an idiom that means everyone will be shocked by what they hear. Alternate translation: “that will shock everyone who hears it” (See: [Idiom](#))

tingle

This means to feel like someone is gently poking with small, sharp objects, usually because of the cold or because someone has slapped that body part with their hand.

ULT

11 And Yahweh said to Samuel, “Behold, I am about to do a thing in Israel that everyone who hears it, the two of his ears will tingle.”

1 Samuel 3:12

from beginning to end

This is a merism for completeness. Alternate translation: “absolutely everything” (See: [Merism](#))

ULT

12 In that day I will raise against Eli all that I have spoken against his house, beginning and ending.

1 Samuel 3:13

brought a curse upon themselves

“did those things which Yahweh had said he would punish those who did them”

ULT

13 And I have told him that I am about to judge his house until eternity because of the iniquity that he knew. For his sons were cursing against themselves and he did not rebuke them.

1 Samuel 3:14

the sins of his house will never be atoned for by sacrifice or offering

This can be translated in active form. Alternate translation: “there is no sacrifice or offering that anyone can offer that will atone for the sins of his house” (See: [Active or Passive](#))

the sins of his house

“the sins that the people in his family have committed”

ULT

14 And therefore, I have sworn to the house of Eli: The iniquity of the house of Eli will not be covered by sacrifice or by offering until eternity.”

1 Samuel 3:15

the house of Yahweh

The “house” was actually a tent, but it would be best to translate “house” here.

ULT

15 And Samuel lay down until the morning, and he opened the doors of the house of Yahweh. And Samuel was afraid of telling the vision to Eli.

1 Samuel 3:16

my son

Eli was not Samuel's true father. Eli speaks as if he were Samuel's father to show Samuel that he is not angry but that Samuel needs to answer him. See how you translated this in [1 Samuel 1:6](#). (See: [Metaphor](#))

ULT

16 And Eli called Samuel and said, "Samuel, my son." And he said, "Here I am."

1 Samuel 3:17

the word he spoke

“the message Yahweh gave”

May God do so to you, and even more

This is an idiom to emphasize how serious Eli is. Alternate translation: “May God punish you the same way he said he will punish me, and even more” (See: [Idiom](#))

ULT

17 And he said, “What is the word that he spoke to you? Do not hide it from me! Thus may God do to you and thus may he add, if you hide from me a word of all the word that he spoke to you.”

1 Samuel 3:18

(There are no notes for this verse.)

ULT

18 And Samuel told him all the words, and did not hide it from him. And he said, "It is Yahweh. May he do the good in his eyes."

1 Samuel 3:19

he let none of his prophetic words fall to the ground

Here messages that do not come true are spoken of as if they fell to the ground. This can be stated positively. Alternate translation: "he made all the things he prophesied happen" (See: [Metaphor](#) and [Litotes](#))

ULT

¹⁹ And Samuel grew. And Yahweh was with him and he did not cause any of his words to fall to the ground.

1 Samuel 3:20

All Israel

“All the people in Israel”

from Dan to Beersheba

This is a merism for “in every part of the land.” Alternate translation: “from one end of the land to the other” or “from Dan in the very north to Beersheba in the very south” (See: [Merism](#))

Samuel was appointed

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: “Yahweh had appointed” (See: [Active or Passive](#))

ULT

²⁰ And all Israel from Dan and as far as Beersheba knew that Samuel was faithful as a prophet of Yahweh.

1 Samuel 3:21

(There are no notes for this verse.)

ULT

²¹ And Yahweh continued to appear in Shiloh. For Yahweh revealed himself to Samuel in Shiloh by the word of Yahweh.

1 Samuel 4

1 Samuel 4 General Notes

Structure and formatting

The Ark of the Covenant in Philistine country

This chapter begins a new section on the Ark and the Philistines. It recounts two battles between Israel and the Philistines. In both battles, Israel was badly defeated and, in the second, the Ark was captured.

Special concepts in this chapter

The Ark is captured

The Philistine army invaded Israel, and Israel's army went to fight them but was defeated. Israel decided that if they took the Ark into the next battle, God would cause them to win. When Eli's sons took the Ark into the next battle and the Philistines won the battle, they killed Eli's two sons and captured the Ark. When Eli heard the Ark was captured, he fell over, broke his neck, and died. Hearing this news, his daughter-in-law named her baby "the glory has departed."

Important figures of speech in this chapter

Rhetorical Question

The Philistines expressed their fear using a rhetorical question: "Who will protect us from the strength of this mighty God?" (See: [Rhetorical Question](#))

1 Samuel 4:1

Ebenezer ... Aphek

These are the names of places. (See: [How to Translate Names](#))

ULT

¹ And the word of Samuel was to all Israel. And Israel went out to meet the Philistines for the battle. And they camped at Ebenezer and the Philistines camped at Aphek.

1 Samuel 4:2

Israel was defeated by the Philistines, who killed

This can be translated in active form. Alternate translation: “the Philistines defeated the Israelites and killed” (See: [Active or Passive](#))

about four thousand men

Here the number four thousand is a round number. There may have been a few more than that or a few less than that. The word “about” shows that it is not an exact number. Alternate translation: “about 4,000 men” (See: [Numbers](#))

ULT

² And the Philistines lined up to meet Israel and the battle spread and Israel was defeated before the face of the Philistines. And they struck down about 4,000 men in the battle line in the field.

[1]

1 Samuel 4:3

the people

the soldiers who had been fighting the battle

Why has Yahweh defeated us today before the Philistines? Let us bring ... enemies

The elders truly did not know why Yahweh had defeated them, but they wrongly thought they knew how to make sure it did not happen again, by bringing the ark to be with them.

ULT

³ And the people came into the camp and the elders of Israel said, "Why did Yahweh strike us today before the face of the Philistines? Let us take for ourselves the Box of the Covenant of Yahweh from Shiloh. And it will come in our midst and it will save us from the palm of our enemies."

1 Samuel 4:4

who sits above the cherubim

You may need to make explicit that the cherubim are those on the lid of the ark of the covenant. The biblical writers often spoke of the ark of the covenant as if it were Yahweh's footstool upon which he rested his feet as he sat on his throne in heaven above. Alternate translation: "who sits on his throne above the cherubim on the ark of the covenant" (See: [Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information](#))

ULT

⁴ And the people sent to Shiloh and from there they lifted the Box of the Covenant of Yahweh of hosts, who sits on the cherubim. And the two sons of Eli, Hophni and Phinehas, were there with the Box of the Covenant of God.

Phinehas

This Phinehas is not the same as the grandson of Aaron in Exodus and Numbers.

were there

were in Shiloh

1 Samuel 4:5

When the ark of the covenant of Yahweh came into the camp

“When the people carried the ark of the covenant of Yahweh into the camp” Some languages may need to add understood information to make the meaning clear. Alternate translation: “The people, along with Hophni and Phinehas, picked up the ark of the covenant of Yahweh and carried it into the camp. When the people carried the ark into the camp” (See: [Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information](#))

ULT

⁵ And it happened as soon as the Box of the Covenant of Yahweh came into the camp, that all Israel shouted a great shout. And the earth resounded.

1 Samuel 4:6

the ark of Yahweh had come into the camp

“the people had carried the ark of Yahweh into the camp”

ULT

⁶ And the Philistines heard the sound of the shout, and they said, “What is the sound of this great shout in the camp of the Hebrews?” Then they knew that the Box of Yahweh had come into the camp.

1 Samuel 4:7

they said ... They said

“they said to themselves ... They said to each other” or “they said to each other ... They said to each other.” The second clause clearly refers to what the Philistines said to each other. The first clause probably refers to what they thought, though it could also refer to what they said to each other. If possible, avoid stating who was spoken to.

A god has come

The Philistines worshiped many gods, so they probably believed that one of those gods, or one whom they did not worship, had come into the camp. Another possible meaning is that they were speaking the proper name of the God of Israel: “Yahweh has come.” Because 4:8 speaks of “gods,” some translations read, “Gods have come,” that is, “It is gods who have come.” (See: [Pronouns](#))

ULT

⁷ And the Philistines were afraid, for they said, “A god has come into the camp.” And they said, “Woe to us! For it was not like this yesterday and three days ago!”

1 Samuel 4:8

Who will protect us from the strength of these mighty gods?

This rhetorical question is an expression of deep fear. It can be written as a statement. Alternate translation: "There is no one who can protect us from these mighty gods." (See: [Rhetorical Question](#))

these mighty gods ... the gods who attacked

Because the word "god" (or "God") in 4:7 is singular, many translations read "this mighty god ... the god who attacked," referring to any one of many possible gods, or "this mighty God ... the God who attacked," using the proper name of the God of Israel. (See: [Pronouns](#))

ULT

⁸ Woe to us! Who will rescue us from the hand of these mighty gods? These are they: the gods who struck the Egyptians with every plague in the wilderness.

1 Samuel 4:9

be men

This is an idiom. Alternate translation: “be strong and fight” (See: [Idiom](#))

ULT

⁹ Strengthen yourselves and become men, Philistines, lest you serve for the Hebrews, just as they have served for you. Now become men and fight!”

1 Samuel 4:10

Israel was defeated

This can be stated in active form. Also, "Israel" refers to the army of Israel. Alternate translation: "they defeated the army of Israel" (See: [Active or Passive](#) and [Synecdoche](#))

ULT

10 And the Philistines fought, and Israel was struck and fled, a man to his tent, and it was a very great blow. And 30,000 foot soldiers from Israel fell.

1 Samuel 4:11

The ark of God was taken

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: “The Philistines also took the ark of God” (See: [Active or Passive](#))

ULT

11 And the Box of God was taken. And the two sons of Eli, Hophni and Phinehas, died.

1 Samuel 4:12

clothes torn and earth on his head

This is a way to express deep mourning in Israelite culture.

ULT

12 And a man of Benjamin ran from the battle line and came to Shiloh on that day. And his clothing was torn and earth was on his head.

1 Samuel 4:13

his heart trembled with concern

This is an idiom which means he was very fearful or terribly concerned about something. (See: [Idiom](#))

the whole city

This is a metonym for “all the people in the city.” (See: [Metonymy](#))

ULT

13 And he came, and behold, Eli was sitting on the seat at the hand of the road watching because his heart was trembling concerning the Box of God. Now the man came to report in the city, and all the city cried out.

1 Samuel 4:14

The man

“The man of Benjamin”

ULT

14 And Eli heard the sound of the outcry, and he said, “What is the sound of this tumult?” And the man hurried and came and reported to Eli.

1 Samuel 4:15

(There are no notes for this verse.)

ULT

¹⁵ Now Eli was a son of 98 years. And his eyes were set and he was not able to see.

1 Samuel 4:16

my son

Eli was not the other man's true father. Eli speaks as if he were the man's father to show the man that he is not angry but that the man needs to answer him. (See: [Metaphor](#))

ULT

16 And the man said to Eli, "I am the one who has come from the battle line. As for me, I fled from the battle line today." And he said, "What was the matter, my son?"

1 Samuel 4:17

Israel fled from the Philistines

This is a general statement about what happened. The rest of the man's words give details.

Also, there has been ... people. Also, your two sons

"I will now tell you something worse ... I will now tell you something worse" or "Not only has there been ... people, but your two sons"

the ark of God has been taken

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "the Philistines have taken the ark of God" (See: [Active or Passive](#))

ULT

17 And the one who brought news answered and said, "Israel fled before the face of the Philistines. And also, there has been a great blow among the people. And also, the two of your sons, Hophni and Phinehas, died, and the Box of God was taken."

1 Samuel 4:18

When he mentioned

“When the man of Benjamin mentioned”

mentioned

“spoke of”

His neck was broken

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: “His neck broke because he fell” or “He broke his neck when he fell” (See: [Active or Passive](#))

ULT

18 And it happened, as soon as he mentioned the Box of God, that he fell backward from on the seat beside the hand of the gate. And his neck was broken and he died, because the man was old and heavy. And he had judged Israel 40 years.

1 Samuel 4:19

his daughter-in-law

Eli's daughter-in-law

the ark of God was captured

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "the Philistines had captured the ark of God" (See: [Active or Passive](#))

ULT

19 Now his daughter-in-law, the wife of Phinehas, was pregnant, about to give birth. And she heard the news about the Box of God being taken and that her father-in-law and her husband died. And she knelt down and gave birth, for her pains had turned on her.

1 Samuel 4:20

take what they said to heart

“pay any attention to what they said” or “allow herself to feel better”

ULT

20 And about the time of her dying, the women who stood over her said, “Do not be afraid, for you have given birth to a son.” But she did not answer and did not put her heart.

1 Samuel 4:21

Ichabod

The name is actually a phrase that means “no glory.” The name of a person sometimes reveals information about the person, place, or thing it refers to. (See: [How to Translate Names](#))

for the ark of God had been captured

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: “for the Philistines had captured the ark of God” (See: [Active or Passive](#))

ULT

21 And she called the boy Ichabod, saying, “The glory has departed from Israel!” about the Box of God being taken, and about her father-in-law and her husband.

1 Samuel 4:22

the ark of God has been captured

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: “because the Philistines have captured the ark of God” (See: [Active or Passive](#))

ULT

²² And she said, “The glory has departed from Israel, because the Box of God has been taken.”

1 Samuel 5

1 Samuel 5 General Notes

Structure and formatting

The story of the Ark of the Covenant in Philistia continues.

Special concepts in this chapter

The Ark in the Philistine Cities

The Philistines took the Ark of God to Ashdod and put it in their idol temple, but their idol fell down in front of the Ark and the people got sick with bubonic plague. They took it to Gath next, and the people of Gath began dying of the plague. When they took the Ark to Ekron, the people of Ekron were afraid of it too and did not want it there. Finally they decided to send it back to Israel. (See: [temple](#), [house](#), [house of God](#))

Important figures of speech in this chapter

Idioms

There are two slightly different idioms used in the same way: the “hand was heavy” and the “hand was hard.” Both idioms mean “was severely punished.” (See: [Idiom](#))

1 Samuel 5:1

Now

This word marks the beginning of a new part of the story. If your language has a word or phrase that does the same, you could use it here.

ark of God

See how you translated this in [1 Samuel 3:3](#). This is the same as the “ark of the covenant of Yahweh” in [1 Samuel 4:3](#).

ULT

¹ Now the Philistines had taken the Box of God. And they brought it from Ebenezer to Ashdod.

1 Samuel 5:2

house of Dagon

This refers to the temple of Dagon, the god of the Philistines.

ULT

² And the Philistines took the Box of God, and brought it to the house of Dagon. And they placed it beside Dagon.

1 Samuel 5:3

behold, Dagon

“they were very surprised to see that Dagon”

Dagon had fallen facedown on the ground

The reader should understand that Yahweh had caused the statue to fall on its face during the night. (See: [Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information](#))

ULT

³ And the Ashdodites rose early on the next day, and behold, Dagon had fallen to his face to the ground before the face of the Box of Yahweh! And they took Dagon and returned him to his place.

1 Samuel 5:4

Dagon had fallen

The reader should understand that Yahweh had caused Dagon to fall.

The head of Dagon and both of his hands were lying cut off

It was as if Yahweh were a soldier who had defeated his enemy and cut off the enemy's head and hands.

ULT

⁴ And they rose early in the morning on the next day, and behold, Dagon had fallen to his face to the ground before the face of the Box of Yahweh! And the head of Dagon and the two of the palms of his hands were cut off, on the threshold. Only Dagon was left on him.

1 Samuel 5:5

This is why, even today

The writer is about to give some background information separate from the main story. (See: [Background Information](#))

even today

Here “today” means up to the day when the author was writing this book.

ULT

⁵ Therefore, the priests of Dagon and all the ones who enter the house of Dagon do not tread on the threshold of Dagon in Ashdod, until this day.

1 Samuel 5:6

Yahweh's hand was heavy upon

This is an idiom. "Yahweh severely judged" (See: [Idiom](#))

tumors

This could mean: (1) painful swelling under the skin or (2) hemorrhoids.

both Ashdod and its territories

The name of the town is a metonym for the people living in the town. "both the people of Ashdod and the people in the land surrounding Ashdod" (See: [Metonymy](#))

ULT

⁶ And the hand of Yahweh was heavy on the Ashdodites and he devastated them. And he struck them with tumors, Ashdod and its territories.

1 Samuel 5:7

the men of Ashdod realized

“the men of Ashdod understood”

ark of the God of Israel

See how you translated this in [1 Samuel 3:3](#). This is the same as the “ark of the covenant of Yahweh” in [1 Samuel 4:3](#).

ULT

⁷ And the men of Ashdod saw that it was so, and they said, “The Box of the God of Israel should not stay with us because his hand is hard on us and on Dagon our god.”

1 Samuel 5:8

(There are no notes for this verse.)

ULT

⁸ And they sent and gathered all of the rulers of the Philistines to them. And they said, "What should we do with the Box of the God of Israel?" And they said, "Let the Box of the God of Israel be brought around to Gath." And they brought around the Box of the God of Israel.

1 Samuel 5:9

Yahweh's hand was against

This is an idiom. Alternate translation: "Yahweh punished" (See: [Idiom](#))

both small and great

This could mean: (1) this is a merism that refers to age. Alternate translation: "men of all ages" or (2) this is a merism that refers social class. Alternate translation: "from the poorest and weakest men to the richest and most powerful men" (See: [Merism](#))

tumors

This could mean: (1) painful swelling under the skin or (2) hemorrhoids. See how you translated this in [1 Samuel 5:6](#)

ULT

⁹ And it happened after they brought it around, that the hand of Yahweh was on the city, a very great tumult. And he struck the men of the city from small and as far as great. And tumors broke out to them.

1 Samuel 5:10

cried out

Why they cried out can be stated clearly. Alternate translation: “cried out in fear” (See: [Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information](#))

ULT

10 And they sent the Box of God to Ekron. And it happened as soon as the Box of God entered Ekron, that the Ekronites cried out, saying, “They have brought around to me the Box of the God of Israel to put me and my people to death!”

1 Samuel 5:11

the ark of the God of Israel

See how you translated similar words in [1 Samuel 3:3](#). This is the same as the “ark of the covenant of Yahweh” in [1 Samuel 4:3](#).

the God of Israel

This could mean: (1) they were speaking the proper name of the God of Israel or (2) they believed that Israel worshiped one of many gods, “the god of Israel.” See how you translated this in [1 Samuel 5:7](#).

there was a deathly panic throughout the city

“people all over the city were afraid that they were going to die”

the hand of God was very heavy there

The hand is a metonym for God punishing the people. “Yahweh was punishing the people there very severely” (See: [Metonymy](#))

ULT

11 And they sent and gathered all the rulers of the Philistines. And they said, “Send away the Box of the God of Israel, and let it return to its place, and it will not put me and my people to death.” For there was a tumult of death in all the city. The hand of God was very heavy there.

1 Samuel 5:12

The men who did not die

This implies that many men actually died. (See: [Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information](#))

tumors

This could mean: (1) painful swelling under the skin or (2) hemorrhoids. See how you translated this in [1 Samuel 5:6](#).

the cry of the city went up to the heavens

The word “city” is a metonym for the people of the city. This could mean: (1) the words “went up to the heavens” is an idiom for “was very great.” Alternate translation: “the people of the city cried out very loudly” or (2) the words “the heavens” is a metonym for the people’s gods. Alternate translation: “the people of the city cried out to their gods” (See: [Metonymy](#) and [Idiom](#))

ULT

12 And the men who did not die were struck with the tumors. And the cry of the city went up to the heavens.

1 Samuel 6

1 Samuel 6 General Notes

Structure and formatting

This chapter ends the story of the Ark of the Covenant among the Philistines.

Special concepts in this chapter

The Philistines send the Ark back to Israel

The Philistine leaders asked their priests what they should do with the Ark. The priests said to send it off with an offering. The Philistines put the Ark on a cart drawn by cows and let them go wherever they wanted to go. The cows went straight toward Israel. When some people peeked into the Ark, God killed them. Because of this, the people sent the Ark to Kiriath Jearim.

1 Samuel 6:1

(There are no notes for this verse.)

ULT

¹ And the Box of Yahweh was in the field of the Philistines seven months.

1 Samuel 6:2

the priests and the diviners

These were pagan priests and diviners who worshiped Dagon.

Tell us how we should send it

The Philistines wanted to know how to get rid of the ark without angering Yahweh any further.

ULT

² And the Philistines called to the priests and to the ones who practice divination, saying, "What should we do for the Box of Yahweh? Make known to us with what we should send it away to its place."

1 Samuel 6:3

the God of Israel

This could mean: (1) they were speaking the proper name of the God of Israel or (2) they believed that Israel worshiped one of many gods, “the god of Israel.” See how you translated this in [1 Samuel 5:7](#).

by all means send him a guilt offering

The words “by all means” are a forceful way of saying something. Alternate translation: “you must send a guilt offering” (See: [Idiom](#))

you will be healed

“you will no longer be ill”

you

The pronoun “you” is plural, referring to all of the Philistines. (See: [Forms of You](#))

why his hand has not been lifted off of you

Here “hand” is a metonym used to represent God’s power to afflict or discipline. Alternate translation: “why he has not relieved your suffering” (See: [Metonymy](#))

ULT

³ And they said, “If you are about to send away the Box of the God of Israel, do not send it away empty, but surely return to him a guilt offering. Then you will be healed, and it will be known to you why his hand has not turned aside from you.”

1 Samuel 6:4

tumors

This could mean: (1) painful swelling under the skin or (2) hemorrhoids. See how you translated this in [1 Samuel 5:6](#).

mice

more than one mouse

ULT

⁴ And they said, "What is the guilt offering that we should return to him?" And they said, "Five tumors of gold and five mice of gold, from the number of the rulers of the Philistines, for one plague was for all of them and for your rulers."

1 Samuel 6:5

models

A model is something that looks like a real thing.

tumors

This could mean: (1) painful swelling under the skin or (2) hemorrhoids. See how you translated this in [1 Samuel 5:6](#).

that ravage

“that are destroying”

the God of Israel

This could mean: (1) they were speaking the proper name of the God of Israel or (2) they believed that Israel worshiped one of many gods, “the god of Israel.” See how you translated this in [1 Samuel 5:7](#).

lift his hand from you, from your gods, and from your land

Here “hand” is a metonym used to represent God’s power to afflict or discipline. Alternate translation: “stop punishing you, your gods and your land” (See: [Metonymy](#))

ULT

⁵ And you shall make images of your tumors and images of your mice, the ones destroying the land, and you shall give glory to the God of Israel. Perhaps he will lighten his hand from on you and from on your gods and from on your land.

1 Samuel 6:6

Why should you harden your hearts, as the Egyptians and Pharaoh hardened their hearts?

The priests and diviners use a rhetorical question to urge the Philistines to think very seriously about what will happen if they refuse to obey God. This can be translated as a warning. Alternate translation: "Do not be stubborn like the Egyptians and Pharaoh were!" (See: [Rhetorical Question](#))

harden your hearts

This is an idiom that means to be stubborn or unwilling to obey God. Alternate translation: "refuse to obey God" (See: [Idiom](#))

did not the Egyptians send away the people, and they left?

This is another rhetorical question used to remind the Philistines how the Egyptians finally sent the Israelites out of Egypt so that God would stop afflicting the Egyptians. This can be translated as a statement. Alternate translation: "remember that the Egyptians sent the Israelites out of Egypt." (See: [Rhetorical Question](#))

ULT

⁶ And why do you make heavy your heart, just as the Egyptians and Pharaoh made their heart heavy? When he dealt severely with them, did they not send them away and they went?

1 Samuel 6:7

two nursing cows

“two cows that have calves that are still drinking milk”

ULT

⁷ So now, take and make one new cart with two nursing cows on which a yoke has not gone up. And tie the cows to the cart and return their sons from behind them to the house.

1 Samuel 6:8

Then send it off and let it go its own way

Normally the two cows would head back home to their calves.

ULT

⁸ And take the Box of Yahweh and put it into the cart, and set the objects of gold that you are returning to him as a guilt offering in the box by its side. And send it away and it will go.

1 Samuel 6:9

if it goes ... to Beth Shemesh, then it is Yahweh

It is unlikely that the cows would choose to wander to Beth Shemesh when their calves are back in the Philistine area.

ULT

⁹ And look; if it goes up the way of its own territory, Beth Shemesh, he has done this great evil to us. But if not, then we will know that his hand did not strike us. It happened to us by chance.”

1 Samuel 6:10

two nursing cows

“two cows that have calves that are still drinking milk” See how you translated this in [1 Samuel 6:7](#).

ULT

10 And the men did thus, and they took two nursing cows, and tied them to the cart. But they shut up their sons in the house.

1 Samuel 6:11

mice

Translated this as in [1 Samuel 6:4](#).

castings of their tumors

“models of their tumors”

tumors

This could mean: (1) painful swelling under the skin or (2) hemorrhoids. See how you translated this in [1 Samuel 5:6](#).

ULT

11 And they set the Box of Yahweh into the cart with the box and the mice of gold and the images of their tumors.

1 Samuel 6:12

The cows went straight in the direction of Beth Shemesh

Nursing cows would normally return to their calves, but these cows went to Beth Shemesh.

lowing as they went

Lowing is the noise cows make with their voices.

they did not turn aside either to the right or to the left

“they did not wander off of the highway.” This can be stated positively. Alternate translation: “they stayed on the highway” or “they went straight ahead”

ULT

¹² And the cows went straight in the way, on the road of Beth Shemesh. They went in one highway, going and lowing, and they did not turn aside right or left. And the rulers of the Philistines were going after them as far as the border of Beth Shemesh.

1 Samuel 6:13

Now

The writer is introducing a new part of the story. If your language has a way of marking the beginning of a new part of the story, you could use it here.

people of Beth Shemesh

These were Israelites.

lifted up their eyes

This is an idiom. Alternate translation: “looked up” (See: [Idiom](#))

ULT

13 Now Beth Shemesh was reaping the harvest of wheat in the valley. And they lifted up their eyes and saw the Box, and they rejoiced to see it.

1 Samuel 6:14

A great stone was there

The people used this stone as an altar when they offered the cows as sacrifices.

ULT

14 And the cart came into the field of Joshua the Bethshemite and stood there, and a large stone was there. And they split the wood pieces of the cart, and offered up the cows as a burnt up offering to Yahweh.

1 Samuel 6:15

The Levites took down the ark of Yahweh

This actually happened before they chopped the cart into firewood to use in offering the cows to Yahweh.

The Levites took down the ark

According to the law of Moses, only the Levites were permitted to handle the ark.

the box that was with it, where the golden figures were

“the box containing the gold models of the rats and the tumors”

ULT

15 And the Levites brought down the Box of Yahweh and the box that was with it, in which was the objects of gold, and they set them on the large stone. And the men of Beth Shemesh offered up burnt up offerings and sacrificed sacrifices on that day to Yahweh.

1 Samuel 6:16

the five rulers of the Philistines

“the five Philistine kings”

ULT

16 And the five rulers of the Philistines saw and returned to Ekron on that day.

1 Samuel 6:17

tumors

This could mean: (1) painful swelling under the skin or (2) hemorrhoids. See how you translated this in [1 Samuel 5:6](#).

ULT

17 And these are the tumors of gold which the Philistines returned as a guilt offering to Yahweh: one for Ashdod, one for Gaza, one for Ashkelon, one for Gath, one for Ekron.

1 Samuel 6:18

mice

Translated this as in [1 Samuel 6:4](#).

fortified cities

These are cities with high walls around them to protect the people inside from attack by their enemies.

The great stone ... remains a witness

The stone is referred to as if it is a person who can see. Alternate translation: "The great stone ... is still there, and people remember what happened on it" (See: [Personification](#))

Joshua

This is a man's name. (See: [How to Translate Names](#))

the Bethshemite

This is what a person from Beth Shemesh is called. Alternate translation: "from Beth Shemesh" (See: [How to Translate Names](#))

to this day

to the time at which the writer wrote the book

ULT

18 And the mice of gold were from the number of all the cities of the Philistines of the five rulers, from the cities of fortification and as far as the villages of the open country, and as far as the great Abel on which they rested the Box of Yahweh. It is in the field of Joshua the Bethshemite until this day.

1 Samuel 6:19

they had looked into the ark

The ark was so holy that no one was permitted to look inside it. Only the priests were allowed to even see the ark.

50,070 men

“fifty thousand and seventy men” (See: [Numbers](#))

ULT

19 And he struck among the men of Beth Shemesh because they had looked in the Box of Yahweh. And he struck 50,070 men among the people. And the people mourned because Yahweh had stricken a great blow among the people. ^[1]

1 Samuel 6:20

Who is able to stand before Yahweh, this holy God?

This could mean: (1) this is a rhetorical question that expresses the people's fear of Yahweh. Alternate translation: "There is no one who can resist Yahweh because he is so holy!" or (2) this is a question asking for information. The phrase "stand before Yahweh" may refer to priests who serve Yahweh. It is implied that the people were looking for a priest whom Yahweh would permit to handle the ark. Alternate translation: "Is there a priest among us who serves this holy God, Yahweh, and is able to handle this ark?" (See: [Rhetorical Question](#) and [Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information](#))

ULT

²⁰ And the men of Beth Shemesh said, "Who is able to stand before the face of Yahweh, this holy God? And to whom will he go up from on us?"

To whom will the ark go up from us?

This is a question asking for information. It is implied that the people want Yahweh and the ark to go somewhere else so he will not punish them again. Alternate translation: "Where can we send this ark so that Yahweh will not punish us again?" (See: [Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information](#))

1 Samuel 6:21

Kiriath Jearim

This was a town in Israel. (See: [How to Translate Names](#))

ULT

21 And they sent messengers to those dwelling in Kiriath Jearim, saying, "The Philistines have returned the Box of Yahweh; come down and bring it up to you."

1 Samuel 7

1 Samuel 7 General Notes

Structure and formatting

This chapter completes the section on Samuel leading Israel.

Special concepts in this chapter

Israel begins to worship Yahweh again

Samuel told the people to get rid of all their idols and worship Yahweh alone. The people were obedient. When the Philistines heard the Israelites were all gathered together, the Philistines attacked, but God defeated them. There was a time of peace during which Samuel settled disputes between the people as the judges had done before.

Important figures of speech in this chapter

Idioms

Whenever Samuel spoke to a group of people, he used many idioms: “to turn to” means “to worship”; “with your whole heart” means “completely”; and “rescue from the hand” means “rescued from the power.” (See: [Idiom](#))

1 Samuel 7:1

Kiriath Jearim

This is the name of a place. (See: [How to Translate Names](#))

Abinadab ... Eleazar

These are the names of men. (See: [How to Translate Names](#))

ULT

¹ And the men of Kiriath Jearim came and lifted up the Box of Yahweh, and brought it into the house of Abinadab on the hill. And they consecrated Eleazar his son to keep the Box of Yahweh.

1 Samuel 7:2

twenty years

“20 years” (See: [Numbers](#))

ULT

² And it happened from the day of the dwelling of the Box in Kiriath Jearim, that the days were numerous, and they were 20 years. And all the house of Israel lamented after Yahweh.

1 Samuel 7:3

the entire house of Israel

The word “house” is a metonym for the people who live in the house and their descendants. Alternate translation: “all of the descendants of Israel” or “all of the Israelite people” (See: [Metonymy](#))

return to Yahweh with your whole heart

Here “with your whole heart” is an idiom that means to be completely devoted to something. Alternate translation: “become completely devoted to worshiping and obeying Yahweh only” (See: [Idiom](#))

ULT

³ And Samuel said to all the house of Israel, saying “If you are going to return to Yahweh with all your heart, remove the gods of the foreigner and the Ashtoreths from your midst. And make firm your heart to Yahweh, and serve him alone, then he will rescue you from the hand of the Philistines.”

1 Samuel 7:4

(There are no notes for this verse.)

ULT

⁴ And the sons of Israel removed the Baals and the Ashtoreths. And they served Yahweh alone.

1 Samuel 7:5

all Israel

“all the people of Israel” or “all the Israelites”

ULT

⁵ And Samuel said, “Gather all Israel to the Mizpah. And I will pray for you to Yahweh.”

1 Samuel 7:6

drew water and poured it out before Yahweh

This could mean: (1) the people denied themselves water as part of fasting or (2) they got water out of a stream or well and poured it on the ground as an outward sign of being sorry for their sin. (See: [Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information](#))

ULT

⁶ And they gathered at the Mizpah, and drew water and poured it out before the face of Yahweh. And they fasted on that day and said there, "We have sinned against Yahweh." And Samuel judged the sons of Israel in the Mizpah.

1 Samuel 7:7

the rulers of the Philistines attacked Israel

It can be stated plainly that it was the army and not the rulers by themselves who attacked Israel. Alternate translation: “the Philistine rulers led their army and attacked Israel” (See: [Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information](#))

ULT

⁷ And the Philistines heard that the sons of Israel had gathered at the Mizpah, and the rulers of the Philistines went up against Israel. And the sons of Israel heard, and they were afraid because of the face of the Philistines.

1 Samuel 7:8

save us from the hand of the Philistines

The “hand” is a metonym for the power of the person. Alternate translation: “save us from the Philistine army” or “keep the Philistine army from harming us” (See: [Metonymy](#))

ULT

⁸ And the sons of Israel said to Samuel, “Do not be silent from us, from crying out to Yahweh our God! And may he save us from the hand of the Philistines.”

1 Samuel 7:9

nursing lamb

a lamb that is still drinking its mother's milk

cried out

"cried out for help"

Yahweh answered him

"Yahweh did what Samuel asked him to do"

ULT

⁹ And Samuel took one lamb of milk and he offered it up, a whole burnt up offering to Yahweh. And Samuel cried out to Yahweh for Israel, and Yahweh answered him.

1 Samuel 7:10

As Samuel ... they were routed before Israel

This begins to explain what the writer means by “Yahweh answered him” in (1 [Samuel 7:9](#)).

threw them into confusion

The word “confusion” here is used as a casual way of saying the Philistines were unable to think clearly. Alternate translation: “made them unable to think clearly” (See: [Idiom](#))

they were routed before Israel

This can be translated in active form. This could mean: (1) “Yahweh routed them before Israel” or (2) “Israel routed them” (See: [Active or Passive](#))

routed

To rout people is to defeat them before they can cause any harm.

ULT

10 (Now Samuel was offering up the burnt up offering, and the Philistines approached for the battle with Israel.) And Yahweh thundered with a great sound on that day against the Philistines and confused them, and they were struck before the face of Israel.

1 Samuel 7:11

The men of Israel ... Beth Kar

This finishes explaining what the writer means by “Yahweh answered him” in (1 Samuel 7:9).

Beth Kar

This is the name of a place. (See: [How to Translate Names](#))

ULT

11 And the men of Israel went out from the Mizpah, and they pursued the Philistines and struck them down as far as below Beth Kar.

1 Samuel 7:12

took a stone and set it

The Israelites and other peoples in that land would place a large stone where important events had happened as a reminder of God's help.

Mizpah ... Shen

These are the names of places. (See: [How to Translate Names](#))

ULT

12 And Samuel took one stone and set it between the Mizpah and the Shen. And he called its name Ebenezer, and he said, "As far as here Yahweh has helped us."

1 Samuel 7:13

So the Philistines were subdued

The writer has just finished telling how the Philistines were subdued. If your language has a way of marking the end of a description, you could use it here.

the Philistines were subdued

This can be translated in active form. Alternate translation: “Yahweh subdued the Philistines” or “Yahweh kept the Philistines from causing harm” (See: [Active or Passive](#))

they did not enter the border of Israel

The Philistines did not enter Israel’s border to attack them.

The hand of Yahweh was against the Philistines

The word “hand” is a metonym for power. Alternate translation: “Yahweh used his power against the Philistines” (See: [Metonymy](#))

ULT

13 And the Philistines were subdued and did not do again to enter the border of Israel. And the hand of Yahweh was against the Philistines all the days of Samuel.

1 Samuel 7:14

The towns ... from Israel were restored to Israel

This can be stated in active form. This could mean: (1) Here "Israel" refers to the "land" of Israel. "Yahweh restored to the land of Israel the towns ... from Israel" or (2) "Israel" is a metonym for the people who live there. Alternate translation: "the people of Israel were able to reclaim the towns ... from Israel" (See: [Active or Passive](#) and [Metonymy](#))

ULT

¹⁴ And the cities that the Philistines had taken from with Israel were returned to Israel, from Ekron and as far as Gath. And Israel rescued their territory from the hand of the Philistines. And there was peace between Israel and the Amorites.

1 Samuel 7:15

(There are no notes for this verse.)

ULT

15 And Samuel judged Israel all the days of his life.

1 Samuel 7:16

went on a circuit

traveled from place to place in a rough circle

He decided disputes

Disputes are arguments or disagreements between two or more people.

ULT

16 And he went as often as year by year and went around Bethel, and the Gilgal, and the Mizpah. And he judged Israel, all these places.

1 Samuel 7:17

(There are no notes for this verse.)

ULT

17 And his returning place was the Ramah, because his house was there; and there he judged Israel. And he built an altar there to Yahweh.

1 Samuel 8

1 Samuel 8 General Notes

Structure and formatting

Saul and Samuel

The section including chapters 8-16 begins a new part of the story. The people wanted a king, and God chose Saul, the man the people wanted, to be their king. He was not the king Yahweh wanted.

Special concepts in this chapter

The people want a king

When Samuel was old, he appointed his sons to be judges. They were corrupt and took bribes, so the people came and asked Samuel to appoint a king for them. Samuel asked God, who gave them a king but warned them what a king would be like. Despite Samuel's warning that a king would oppress them, the people still wanted a king. This was sinful because they were rejecting God as their king. (See: [appoint](#), [appointed](#), [oppress](#), [oppressed](#), [oppression](#), [oppressor](#), [dominate](#) and [Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information](#) and [sin](#), [sinful](#), [sinner](#), [sinning](#))

1 Samuel 8:1

(There are no notes for this verse.)

ULT

¹ And it happened when Samuel was old, that he appointed his sons judges of Israel.

1 Samuel 8:2

(There are no notes for this verse.)

ULT

² And the name of his firstborn son was Joel, and the name of his second, Abijah. They were judges in Beersheba.

1 Samuel 8:3

chased after dishonest gain

The writer speaks of money that people would give Samuel's sons as if it were a person or animal running away from Samuel's sons, and he speaks of Samuel's sons as if they were physically chasing that person or animal. Alternate translation: "they worked hard to gain money by being dishonest" (See: [Metaphor](#))

perverted justice

"judged in favor of those who did evil"

ULT

³ But his sons did not walk in his ways, and they reached out after dishonest gain. And they took a bribe and perverted justice.

1 Samuel 8:4

(There are no notes for this verse.)

ULT

⁴ And all the elders of Israel gathered together and came to Samuel at the Ramah.

1 Samuel 8:5

do not walk in your ways

The way a person lives is spoken of as walking on a path. Alternate translation: “do not do the things you do” or “do not do what is just the way you do” (See: [Idiom](#))

Appoint for us a king to judge us like all the nations

This could mean: (1) “Appoint for us a king like the kings of all the nations so that he can judge us” or (2) “Appoint for us a king who will judge us the way the kings of the nations judge them”

Appoint for us a king to judge us

The leaders wrongly believed that a king, and his sons after him, would rule justly.

ULT

⁵ And they said to him, “Behold, you are old, and your sons do not walk in your ways. Now appoint for us a king to judge us like all the nations.”

1 Samuel 8:6

But it displeased Samuel ... Give us a king to judge us

Samuel was unhappy that the people did not just want him to remove his corrupt sons and to appoint honest judges, but they wanted a king to rule over them like other countries had.

ULT

⁶ And the matter was evil in the eyes of Samuel when they said, "Give to us a king to judge us." And Samuel prayed to Yahweh.

1 Samuel 8:7

Obey the voice of the people

Here “the voice” is a metonym for the will or the desire of the people. Alternate translation: “Do what the people say” (See: [Metonymy](#))

but they have rejected me

Yahweh knew that the people were not just rejecting corrupt judges, but they were rejecting Yahweh as their king.

ULT

⁷ And Yahweh said to Samuel, “Listen to the voice of the people according to all that they say to you. For they have not rejected you, but they have rejected me from reigning over them.”

1 Samuel 8:8

I brought them out of Egypt

This refers to Yahweh freeing the Israelites from slavery in Egypt many years before.

ULT

⁸ Like all the deeds that they have done from the day I brought them up from Egypt and until this day, they have forsaken me and served other gods. So they are doing also to you.

1 Samuel 8:9

Now listen to them

“Now do what they are asking you to do”

warn them solemnly

“be very serious as you warn them”

ULT

⁹ And now, listen to their voice.
However, solemnly warn them and tell them the custom of the king who will rule over them.”

1 Samuel 8:10

(There are no notes for this verse.)

ULT

10 And Samuel said all the words of Yahweh to the people who were requesting a king from him.

1 Samuel 8:11

This will be the practice ... He will take

The practice of the king will be to take. This begins the list of things he will take.

This will be the practice of the king who will reign over you

The abstract noun “practice” can be translated as a verb. Alternate translation: “This is how the king who will reign over you will act” or “This is what the king who will reign over you will do” (See: [Abstract Nouns](#))

appoint them to his chariots

“have them drive chariots in battle”

be his horsemen

They will ride horses into battle.

ULT

11 And he said, “This will be the custom of the king who will reign over you: he will take your sons and appoint them for himself in his chariots and among his horsemen, and they will run before the face of his chariot;

1 Samuel 8:12

(There are no notes for this verse.)

ULT

12 and appoint for himself commanders of thousands and commanders of fifties, and to plow his plowing, and to harvest his harvest, and to make the implements of his warfare and the implements of his chariot.

1 Samuel 8:13

Connecting Statement:

Samuel continues to tell what things the king will take.

to be perfumers

“to make good-smelling oils to put on his body”

ULT

13 And he will take your daughters for perfumers and for cooks and for bakers.

1 Samuel 8:14

olive orchards

“fields of olive trees”

ULT

14 And your fields and your vineyards and your olive orchards, the good ones, he will take and give to his servants.

1 Samuel 8:15

a tenth of your grain

They will have to divide their grain into ten equal parts and give one of those parts to the king's officers and servants. (See: [Fractions](#))

a tenth ... of your vineyards

They will have to divide the wine that they produce in their vineyards into ten equal parts and give one of those parts to the king's officers and servants. (See: [Fractions](#))

officers

These are the leaders of the king's army.

ULT

15 And he will take a tenth of your seeds and your vineyards, and give to his officials and to his servants.

1 Samuel 8:16

Connecting Statement:

Samuel continues to tell what things the king will take.

ULT

16 And your male servants and your female servants and your young men, the good ones, and your donkeys he will take and make for his work.

1 Samuel 8:17

the tenth of your flocks

They will have to divide their flocks into ten equal parts and give one of those parts to the king's officers and servants. See how you translated "tenth" in [1 Samuel 8:15](#). (See: [Fractions](#))

you will be his slaves

"you will feel as if you are his slaves"

ULT

17 He will take a tenth of your flock. And you yourselves will be for him for servants.

1 Samuel 8:18

you will cry out

This could mean: (1) the people will ask Yahweh to rescue them from the king or (2) the people will ask the king to stop treating them so badly .

ULT

18 And on that day you will cry out from before the face of your king whom you have chosen for yourselves. But Yahweh will not answer you on that day."

1 Samuel 8:19

(There are no notes for this verse.)

ULT

¹⁹ And the people refused to listen to the voice of Samuel. And they said, "No! But a king will be over us."

1 Samuel 8:20

(There are no notes for this verse.)

ULT

²⁰ And we also, we will be like all the nations. And our king will judge us and go out before our face and fight our battles.”

1 Samuel 8:21

he repeated them in the ears of Yahweh

Here “the ears of Yahweh” refers to Yahweh. Samuel prayed to Yahweh repeating all that the people said. Alternate translation: “he repeated them to Yahweh” (See: [Synecdoche](#))

ULT

²¹ And Samuel heard all the words of the people. And he spoke them in the ears of Yahweh.

1 Samuel 8:22

Obey their voice

Here the metonym “their voice” refers to the will of the people.
Alternate translation: “Obey the people” (See: [Metonymy](#))

cause someone to be king for them

“make someone king over them.” Use the common term in your language for making someone king.

go to his own city

“go home”

ULT

22 And Yahweh said to Samuel, “Listen to their voice and cause a king to reign for them.” And Samuel said to the men of Israel, “Go, a man to his city.”

1 Samuel 9

1 Samuel 9 General Notes

Special concepts in this chapter

Samuel chooses Saul to be their king

When the donkeys of Saul's father strayed away, Saul went looking for them. When he could not find them, he asked Samuel to ask God where they were. Samuel said the donkeys had been found. He invited Saul as the guest of honor to a feast and gave him a place to sleep for the night.

Important figures of speech in this chapter

Rhetorical questions

Saul uses two rhetorical questions to convince Samuel he is not important: "Am not I a Benjamite, from the smallest of the tribes of Israel? Is not my clan the least of all the clans of the tribe of Benjamin?" (See: [Rhetorical Question](#))

1 Samuel 9:1

General Information:

If your language has a way of telling the reader that the writer is giving background information in these verses, you could use it here. (See: [Background Information](#))

a man of influence

This could mean: (1) he was a wealthy man or (2) he was a nobleman or (3) he was a mighty and brave man.

Kish ... Abiel ... Zeror ... Bekorath ... Aphiah

These are names of the men of Saul's family line. (See: [How to Translate Names](#))

Benjamite

A Benjamite is someone who belongs to the tribe of Benjamin.

ULT

¹ And there was a man from Benjamin and his name was Kish the son of Abiel, the son of Zeror, the son of Bekorath, the son of Aphiah, the son of a man of a Yaminite, a mighty one of strength.

1 Samuel 9:2

handsome

someone who looks good

From his shoulders upward he was taller than any of the people

The other tall people in Israel did not even come up to his shoulders.

ULT

² And for him was a son and his name was Saul, a young man and good. And there was no man from the sons of Israel better than him. From his shoulder and upward he was taller than all the people.

1 Samuel 9:3

Now

The writer has ended the background information that began in (1 Samuel 9:1) and starts a new main part of the story.

arise and go

“stop what you are doing and go”

ULT

³ Now the female donkeys of Kish, the father of Saul, were lost. And Kish said to Saul his son, “Take now one from the servants with you, and rise, go seek the female donkeys.”

1 Samuel 9:4

the hill country of Ephraim ... the land of Shalishah ... the land of Shaalim ... the land of the Benjamites

These are all areas in Israel. (See: [How to Translate Names](#))

did not find them ... they were not there ... did not find them

The words "them" and "they" all refer to the donkeys.

ULT

⁴ And he passed through the hill country of Ephraim and passed through the land of Shalishah, but they did not find them. And they passed through the land of Shaalim, but there was nothing. And he passed through the land of the Benjamites, but they did not find them.

1 Samuel 9:5

land of Zuph

This is an area in Israel just north of Jerusalem. (See: [How to Translate Names](#))

ULT

⁵ They themselves entered in the land of Zuph, and Saul said to his servant who was with him, "Come, let us return, lest my father cease about the female donkeys and worry about us."

1 Samuel 9:6

man of God

This phrase usually means a prophet of Yahweh. See how you translated this in [1 Samuel 2:27](#). Alternate translation: “a man who hears and tells words from God”

which way we should go on our journey

“which way we should go to find the donkeys”

ULT

⁶ And he said to him, “Behold, please, a man of God is in this city, and the man is honored; all that he speaks certainly comes. Let us go there now. Perhaps he will tell us our way on which we have gone.”

1 Samuel 9:7

what can we bring the man?

Giving a gift is a sign of respect for the man of God.

man of God

This phrase usually means a prophet of Yahweh. See how you translated this in [1 Samuel 2:27](#). Alternate translation: “a man who hears and tells words from God”

ULT

⁷ And Saul said to his servant, “Now behold, we will go, but what will we bring to the man? For the bread is gone from our vessels and there is no gift to bring to the man of God. What is with us?”

1 Samuel 9:8

one-fourth of a shekel

"1/4 of a shekel." A shekel is a type of money used in the Old Testament. (See: [Biblical Money](#) and [Fractions](#))

ULT

⁸ And the servant added to answer Saul, and he said, "Behold, one-fourth of a shekel of silver has been found in my hand. And I will give it to the man of God and he will tell us our way."

1 Samuel 9:9

Formerly in Israel ... seer

This is cultural information added by the Hebrew author. If it is not natural in your language to state this information here, it can be moved to the end of verse 11. (See: [Background Information](#))

For today's prophet was formerly called a seer

"Seer is the old name for what we call a prophet today"

ULT

⁹ (Before in Israel, a man said thus when he went to seek God, "Come and let us go to the seer." For the prophet today was called the seer before.)

1 Samuel 9:10

(There are no notes for this verse.)

ULT

10 And Saul said to his servant, "Your word is good. Come, let us go." And they went to the city there where the man of God was.

1 Samuel 9:11

(There are no notes for this verse.)

ULT

11 They were going up on the ascent to the city, and they themselves found young women going out to draw water. And they said to them, "Is the seer in this place?"

1 Samuel 9:12

the people are sacrificing today

These are likely the feast or first-fruit sacrifices, not the sin sacrifices, which must be held at the tabernacle.

ULT

12 And they answered them, and said,
"There is, behold, before your face.
Hurry now, for today he has come to
the city, because the sacrifice of the day
is for the people at the high place.

1 Samuel 9:13

(There are no notes for this verse.)

ULT

13 As soon as you enter the city then you will find him, before he goes up to the high place to eat. For the people will not eat until he comes, because he himself will bless the sacrifice; afterwards the ones who are called will eat. So now go up, for, as for him, you will find him as soon as today."

1 Samuel 9:14

to go up to the high place

This is a place that the people had designated as holy to make sacrifices and offerings to Yahweh. The writer writes as though it were outside the wall that was around the city.

ULT

14 And they went up to the city. They were entering in the midst of the city, and behold, Samuel was going out to meet them to go up to the high place.

1 Samuel 9:15

General Information:

The writer stops telling the story and gives background information so the reader can understand what happens next. (See: [Background Information](#))

ULT

¹⁵ Now Yahweh had uncovered the ear of Samuel one day before the coming of Saul, saying:

1 Samuel 9:16

you will anoint him to be prince

The term prince is used here instead of king. This is the man whom God has chosen to be king of Israel. (See: [Euphemism](#))

the land of Benjamin

“the land where people from the tribe of Benjamin live”

from the hand of the Philistines

Here the word “hand” is a metonym for control. Alternate translation: “from the control of the Philistines” or “so the Philistines will no longer control them” (See: [Metonymy](#))

For I have looked on my people with pity

“My people are suffering and I want to help them”

ULT

16 “About this time tomorrow I will send to you a man from the land of Benjamin, and you shall anoint him to be ruler over my people Israel. And he will save my people from the hand of the Philistines. For I have seen my people, for its cry has come to me.”

1 Samuel 9:17

Yahweh told him

“Yahweh told Samuel”

ULT

17 And Samuel saw Saul, and Yahweh answered him, “Behold, the man whom I said to you! This one will restrain my people.”

1 Samuel 9:18

the seer

“the prophet of Yahweh”

ULT

18 And Saul approached Samuel in the midst of the gate. And he said, “Please tell me, where is the house of the seer?”

1 Samuel 9:19

(There are no notes for this verse.)

ULT

19 And Samuel answered Saul and said, "I am the seer. Go up before my face to the high place, and you will eat with me today. And I will send you away in the morning, and I will tell you all that is in your heart."

1 Samuel 9:20

Then on whom are all the desires of Israel set? Is it not on you and all your father's house?

These questions are an expression of deep conviction that Saul is the one whom Yahweh wants to be the king that the Israelites are looking for. The questions can be translated as statements. Alternate translation: "You should know that it is on you that all the desires of Israel are set. They are set on you and your father's family." (See: [Rhetorical Question](#))

ULT

²⁰ As for your female donkeys that were lost three days ago, do not set your heart to them, for they have been found. Now for whom is all the desire of Israel? Is it not for you and for all the house of your father?"

1 Samuel 9:21

Am not I a Benjamite ... of Israel? Is not my clan ... Benjamin? Why then have you spoken to me in this manner?

Saul is expressing surprise because Benjamin was the smallest tribe in Israel, and other Israelites considered the tribe unimportant. Also, Benjamites considered the clan of which Saul was a member as unimportant. These questions can be translated as statements.

Alternate translation: "I am from the tribe of Benjamin, the least important of all tribes. And my clan is the least important clan in our tribe. I do not understand why you are saying that the Israelite people want me and my family to do something important." (See: [Rhetorical Question](#))

ULT

²¹ And Saul answered and said, "Am I not a Benjamite, from the smallest of the tribes of Israel, and my clan the least from all the clans of the tribe of Benjamin? Yet why have you spoken to me like this word?"

1 Samuel 9:22

the hall

The writer assumes that the reader knows that near the place where they would offer sacrifices there was a large building in which people would eat together.

head place

This is the seat of honor.

thirty people

“30 people” (See: [Numbers](#))

ULT

22 And Samuel took Saul and his servant and brought them to the room. And he gave to them a place at the head of the ones who had been called. (Now they were about 30 men.)

1 Samuel 9:23

(There are no notes for this verse.)

ULT

²³ And Samuel said to the cook, "Give the portion which I gave to you, of which I said to you, 'Set it with you.'"

1 Samuel 9:24

what was on it

This could mean: (1) the other food that Saul was to eat along with the meat or (2) other parts of the bull.

Then Samuel said

In the original language it is not clear who is speaking. It is possible that the cook is speaking to Saul. Alternate translation: "Then the cook said"

ULT

24 And the cook lifted the thigh and what was on it and set it before the face of Saul. And he said, "Behold, what has been left over is set before your face. Eat, because it has been kept for you for the appointed time, saying, 'I have called the people.'" And Saul ate with Samuel on that day.

1 Samuel 9:25

on the rooftop

This is a normal place for family and guests to eat, visit, and sleep. It tends to be cooler in the evening and at night than the inside of the house.

ULT

²⁵ And they came down from the high place to the city. And he spoke with Saul on the roof.

1 Samuel 9:26

Samuel called to Saul on the rooftop and said

What Saul was doing on the rooftop can be made explicit. Alternate translation: "while Saul was sleeping on the rooftop, Samuel called to him and said" (See: [Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information](#))

ULT

26 And they rose early. And it happened as soon as the dawn went up that Samuel called to Saul on the roof, saying, "Get up and I will send you away." And Saul got up, and the two of them went out, he and Samuel, to the outside.

1 Samuel 9:27

ahead of us”—and he went ahead—“but you must stay

It is possible that Samuel speaks all of these words. Alternate translation: “ahead of us, and when he has gone ahead, you must stay”

that I may announce the message of God to you

“so that I can tell you God’s message for you”

ULT

²⁷ They were going down to the end of the city, and Samuel said to Saul, “Speak to the servant so he may pass on before our face,” and he passed on. “But you stand now, and I will cause you to hear the word of God.”

1 Samuel 10

1 Samuel 10 General Notes

Structure and formatting

This is the first chapter about King Saul.

Special concepts in this chapter

Saul as the New King

Samuel told Saul that God had chosen him to be king, and on the way home he would meet some prophets. Saul would then begin prophesying and God would give him the Holy Spirit to help him to know what to do. Samuel told everyone to come to Mizpah where he announced that God had chosen Saul to be their king. (See: [prophet](#), [prophecy](#), [prophesy](#), [seer](#), [prophetess](#) and [Holy Spirit](#), [Spirit of God](#), [Spirit of the Lord](#), [Spirit](#))

Important figures of speech in this chapter

Rhetorical questions

This chapter uses rhetorical questions to express different ideas: to state a fact (“Has not Yahweh anointed you to be a ruler over his inheritance?”), to express surprise (“And who is their father?”), to say he is someone very special (“Do you see the man that Yahweh has chosen?”), and to express contempt (“How can this man save us?”). (See: [Rhetorical Question](#))

Idioms

Samuel frequently uses idioms when prophesying: “going to God” means “going to worship God”; “take it from their hands” means “accept their gift”; “rush upon you” means “control you”; “hand finds to do” means “what you think you should do”; “God is with you” means “God is directing you”; “another heart” means “a different way of thinking”; “came to pass” means “happened”; “before Yahweh” means “to do work for Yahweh”; and “hearts God had touched” means “God had made them want to help Saul.” (See: [Idiom](#))

1 Samuel 10:1

took a flask of oil, poured it on Saul's head

In Israelite culture, when a prophet poured oil on someone's head, that person received a blessing from Yahweh.

flask

a small container made from baked clay

ULT

1 And Samuel took a flask of oil, and poured it on his head, and kissed him. And he said, "Is it not Yahweh who has anointed you to be ruler over his inheritance?"

Has not Yahweh anointed you to be a ruler over his inheritance?

Samuel knows the answer to his question. He is reminding Saul that Yahweh has chosen him to be king of Israel. Alternate translation: "Yahweh has certainly anointed you to be a ruler over his inheritance." (See: [Rhetorical Question](#))

1 Samuel 10:2

Zelzah

This is the name of a place. (See: [How to Translate Names](#))

What should I do about my son?

Saul's father is now concerned about Saul and wants to find him.

ULT

² When you go today from with me, then you will find two men near the tomb of Rachel in the territory of Benjamin in Zelzah. And they will say to you, 'The female donkeys that you went to seek have been found. And behold, your father has stopped the matter of the female donkeys and is worried about you, saying, "What should I do about my son?"'

1 Samuel 10:3

Tabor

This is the name of a place. (See: [How to Translate Names](#))

ULT

³ And you will go on from there and further, and you will come as far as the oak of Tabor. And you will find three men there going up to God at Bethel, one carrying three young goats, and one carrying three round loaves of bread, and one carrying a skin of wine.

1 Samuel 10:4

take from their hands

The hands are a synecdoche for the person. “take from them” or “accept” (See: [Synecdoche](#))

ULT

⁴ And they will ask about you with respect to well-being and give to you two bread loaves, and you will take from their hand.

1 Samuel 10:5

tambourine

This is a musical instrument with a head like a drum that can be hit and with pieces of metal around the side that sound when the instrument is shaken. (See: [Translate Unknowns](#))

ULT

⁵ Afterward you will come to the hill of God, there where the garrisons of the Philistines are. And it will happen as soon as you come there to the city, that you will meet a group of prophets going down from the high place. And before their face will be a harp and a tambourine and a flute and a lyre. And they will be prophesying.

1 Samuel 10:6

The Spirit of Yahweh will rush upon you

The phrase “rush upon” means that Yahweh’s Spirit will influence Saul. In this case it means it means he will make Saul prophesy and act like a different person. (See: [Idiom](#))

ULT

⁶ And the spirit of Yahweh will rush on you, and you will prophesy with them. And you will be changed into another man.

1 Samuel 10:7

do whatever your hand finds to do

Here Samuel speaks of Saul's hand as if it were a person trying to find things. Alternate translation: "do whatever you think is right to do" (See: [Personification](#))

ULT

⁷ And it will happen that when these signs come to you, do for yourself what your hand finds, for God is with you.

1 Samuel 10:8

(There are no notes for this verse.)

ULT

⁸ And go down before my face to the Gilgal. And behold, I will come down to you to offer up burnt up offerings, to sacrifice sacrifices of peace offerings. Wait seven days until my coming to you and I will make known to you what you shall do.”

1 Samuel 10:9

God gave him another heart

God enabled Samuel to think differently from the way he had thought before. (See: [Idiom](#))

ULT

⁹ And it happened as soon as he turned his shoulder to go from with Samuel, that God turned for him another heart. And all these signs came on that day.

1 Samuel 10:10

the Spirit of God rushed upon him

Samuel speaks as if the Spirit of Yahweh were a person running up to Saul and taking complete control of him. See how you translated this in [1 Samuel 10:6](#). Alternate translation: “the Spirit of Yahweh took complete control of him” (See: [Personification](#))

ULT

10 And they came there to the hill, and behold, a group of prophets met him. And the spirit of God rushed on him and he prophesied in their midst.

1 Samuel 10:11

What has happened to the son of Kish?

This could mean: (1) the people are asking for information or (2) this is a rhetorical question that means Saul is not important. Alternate translation: "Kish is not an important person, so it cannot be true that his son has become a prophet!" (See: [Rhetorical Question](#))

the son of Kish

"Saul, the son of Kish"

ULT

11 And it happened that every one who knew him from yesterday and three days ago saw, and behold, he prophesied with the prophets! And the people said, a man to his neighbor, "What is this that has happened to the son of Kish? Is Saul also among the prophets?"

1 Samuel 10:12

Then who is their father?

This man uses a rhetorical question to remind people that being a prophet has nothing to do with who one's parents are. The question can be translated as a statement. Alternate translation: "It does not matter who the parents of these other prophets are. What matters is that, amazingly, Saul is speaking messages from God." (See: [Rhetorical Question](#))

ULT

12 And a man from there answered and said, "And who is their father?"
Therefore, it became a proverb, "Is Saul also among the prophets?"

Because of this, it became a saying, "Is Saul also one of the prophets?"

This became a proverb among the Israelites. Apparently people said this to express surprise when a person unexpectedly did something that he had not done before. The implied meaning of the question can be stated explicitly. Alternate translation: "And that is why, when people cannot believe some report, they think about what happened to Saul and say, 'Is Saul really one of the prophets?'" (See: [Proverbs](#) and [Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information](#))

1 Samuel 10:13

(There are no notes for this verse.)

ULT

13 And he finished from prophesying,
and he came to the high place.

1 Samuel 10:14

Then Saul's uncle said to him

"Then the brother of Saul's father said to Saul"

ULT

14 And the uncle of Saul said to him and to his servant, "Where did you go?" And he said, "To seek the female donkeys. And we saw that there was nothing, and we went to Samuel."

1 Samuel 10:15

(There are no notes for this verse.)

ULT

15 And the uncle of Saul said, "Please tell me what Samuel said to you."

1 Samuel 10:16

he did not tell him about the matter of the kingdom

“Saul did not tell his uncle that God had appointed him to be the king of Israel”

ULT

¹⁶ And Saul said to his uncle, “He told us indeed that the female donkeys had been found.” But he did not tell him the word of the kingship, which Samuel had said.

1 Samuel 10:17

(There are no notes for this verse.)

ULT

17 And Samuel called together the people to Yahweh at the Mizpah.

1 Samuel 10:18

I brought up Israel out of Egypt

The name "Israel" is a metonym for the people of Israel. "I brought the people of Israel out of Egypt" (See: [Metonymy](#))

the hand of the Egyptians ... the hand of all the kingdoms

The word "hand" is a metonym for power. Alternate translation: "the power of the Egyptians ... the power of all the kingdoms" (See: [Metonymy](#))

ULT

18 And he said to the sons of Israel, "Thus says Yahweh, the God of Israel: 'I myself brought up Israel from Egypt. And I rescued you from the hand of the Egyptians, and from the hand of all the kingdoms that oppressed you.'

1 Samuel 10:19

today

Samuel is speaking of the time since Israel had begun to reject God, not only the time since the sun had last set.

Set a king over us

“Give us a king to rule us”

present yourselves before Yahweh by your tribes and by your clans

“gather together by tribes and clans and come to stand before Yahweh”

ULT

19 But you today have rejected your God, him who saves you from all your calamities and your distresses. And you have said to him, ‘Rather set a king over us.’ And now station yourselves before the face of Yahweh according to your tribes and according to your thousands.”

1 Samuel 10:20

the tribe of Benjamin was chosen

This can be translated in active form. It is probably best not to say how the people knew whom Yahweh had chosen. Alternate translation: "Yahweh chose the tribe of Benjamin" (See: [Active or Passive](#))

ULT

²⁰ And Samuel brought near all the tribes of Israel. And the tribe of Benjamin was taken.

1 Samuel 10:21

the clan of the Matrites was chosen ... Saul son of Kish was chosen

This can be translated in active form. It is probably best not to say how the people knew whom Yahweh had chosen. Alternate translation: "Yahweh chose the clan of the Matrites ... Yahweh chose Saul son of Kish" (See: [Active or Passive](#))

ULT

²¹ And he brought near the tribe of Benjamin according to its clans, and the clan of the Matrites was taken. And Saul the son of Kish was taken and they sought him, but he was not found.

1 Samuel 10:22

(There are no notes for this verse.)

ULT

²² And they asked of Yahweh again,
"Has a man come here yet?" And
Yahweh said, "Behold, he has hidden
himself with the things."

1 Samuel 10:23

he was taller than any of the people from his shoulders upward

The other tall people in Israel did not even come up to his shoulders. See how you translated this in [1 Samuel 9:2](#).

ULT

²³ And they ran and took him from there. And he stationed himself in the midst of the people. And he was taller than any of the people from his shoulders and upward.

1 Samuel 10:24

(There are no notes for this verse.)

ULT

²⁴ And Samuel said to all the people, "Do you see him whom Yahweh has chosen? Indeed there is no one like him among all the people!" And all the people saw and said, "May the king live!"

1 Samuel 10:25

the customs and rules of kingship

The abstract noun “kingship” can be translated with a noun clause. Alternate translation: “the customs and rules that a king would be required to follow” (See: [Abstract Nouns](#))

ULT

²⁵ And Samuel spoke to the people the ordinance of the kingship, and he wrote it in the book, and rested it before the face of Yahweh. And Samuel sent away all the people, a man to his house.

1 Samuel 10:26

whose hearts God had touched

God touching a person's heart is an idiom that means God put something in their mind or moved them to do something. Alternate translation: "who wanted to go with Saul because God had changed their thinking" (See: [Idiom](#))

ULT

²⁶ And Saul also went to his house at Gibeah. And with him went the mighty whose hearts God had touched.

1 Samuel 10:27

How can this man save us?

This is a rhetorical question that is used to express sarcasm.
Alternate translation: "This man has no power to save us!" (See: [Rhetorical Question](#))

despised

strongly disliked or hated

ULT

²⁷ But the sons of worthlessness said, "How can this one save us?" And they despised him and did not bring to him a gift. But he was like one being silent.

1 Samuel 11

1 Samuel 11 General Notes

Structure and formatting

This chapter continues the story of King Saul by telling of his first victory in war.

Special concepts in this chapter

Saul rescues the people of Jabesh Gilead

Nahash, king of the Ammonites, and his army surrounded the Israeli town of Jabesh Gilead. When the city's leaders asked for peace terms, Nahash demanded the right to poke out one eye of every man in order to show Israel their weakness. When Saul heard this, he called for all of Israel to help save this city. Many people came to help Saul's army. Israel was victorious and everyone wanted Saul as their king. At this time, Israel was not a truly unified country, even though it is often spoken of as one country. (See: [save](#), [saved](#), [safe](#), [salvation](#) and [Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information](#))

Important figures of speech in this chapter

Idioms

The idioms in this chapter explain the effect God has on his people: "rushed upon him" means "empowered him"; "terror ... fell" means "they became afraid"; "as one man" means "they all agreed"; and "put to death" means "kill." (See: [Idiom](#))

1 Samuel 11:1

Nahash

This is a man from Ammon, a descendent of Lot, Abraham's nephew.
(See: [How to Translate Names](#))

Jabesh Gilead

This is the name of a place. (See: [How to Translate Names](#))

ULT

1 And Nahash the Ammonite went up and camped against Jabesh Gilead. And all the men of Jabesh said to Nahash, "Cut a covenant for us, and we will serve you."

1 Samuel 11:2

I gouge out

“I cut out” or “I pluck out”

bring disgrace on

“bring shame on” or “bring a bad reputation to”

ULT

² And Nahash the Ammonite said to them, “By this will I cut for you, by gouging out for you every right eye. And I will set it as a disgrace against all Israel.”

1 Samuel 11:3

seven days

“7 days” (See: [Numbers](#))

ULT

³ And the elders of Jabesh said to him, “Leave us alone seven days, so that we may send messengers through all the territory of Israel. And if there is no one to save us, then we will go out to you.”

1 Samuel 11:4

Gibeah

This is the name of a place. (See: [How to Translate Names](#))

ULT

⁴ And the messengers came to Gibeah of Saul, and they spoke the words in the ears of the people. And all the people lifted up their voice and wept.

1 Samuel 11:5

(There are no notes for this verse.)

ULT

⁵ And behold, Saul was coming behind the cattle from the field. And Saul said, "What is for the people that they are weeping?" And they recounted to him the words of the men of Jabesh.

1 Samuel 11:6

the Spirit of God rushed upon him

The phrase “rushed upon” means Yahweh’s Spirit influenced Saul. In this case he enabled Saul to cause the people to fearfully respect him as their king and to join his army. See how you translated a similar phrase in [1 Samuel 10:6](#).

ULT

6 And the Spirit of God rushed on Saul when he heard these words. And his nose burned exceedingly.

1 Samuel 11:7

does not come out after

Saul was calling all the men of Israel to come fight against Nahash and the Ammonites.

Then the terror of Yahweh fell on the people

Yahweh enabled people to fearfully respect Saul as their king. The result was that the men rallied together with Saul at Bezek.

ULT

⁷ And he took a pair of cattle, and cut it into pieces, and sent away through all the territory of Israel by the hand of the messengers, saying, "Whoever is not coming out behind Saul and behind Samuel, thus will be done to his cattle." And the dread of Yahweh fell on the people, and they went out as one man.

1 Samuel 11:8

Bezek

This is the name of a town near Jabesh Gilead. (See: [How to Translate Names](#))

the people of Israel were three hundred thousand, and the men of Judah thirty thousand

“the people of Israel were 300,000, and the men of Judah were 30,000” (See: [Numbers](#))

ULT

⁸ And he mustered them at Bezek. And the sons of Israel were 300,000, and the men of Judah were 30,000.

1 Samuel 11:9

They said to the messengers

"They" refers to Samuel and Saul.

by the time the sun is hot

"before the hottest part of the day" or "before noon"

Jabesh Gilead ... Jabesh

These are the names of places. See how you translated them in [1 Samuel 11:1](#).

ULT

⁹ And they said to the messengers who had come, "Thus you will say to the men of Jabesh Gilead, 'Tomorrow deliverance will be for you, at the heat of the sun.'" And the messengers went and told the men of Jabesh, and they rejoiced.

1 Samuel 11:10

Nahash

This is the name of a king. See how you translated this name in [1 Samuel 11:1](#).

ULT

10 And the men of Jabesh said,
“Tomorrow we will go out to you. And
you may do to us according to all the
good in your eyes.”

1 Samuel 11:11

the morning watch

This was before dawn when most people in the camp were still asleep.

ULT

11 And it happened from the next day that Saul set the people in three heads. And they came into the midst of the camp at the watch of the morning, and they struck down Ammon until the heat of the day. And it happened that the remaining ones were scattered, and two among them did not remain together.

1 Samuel 11:12

(There are no notes for this verse.)

ULT

¹² And the people said to Samuel, “Who are those who said, ‘Will Saul reign over us?’ Give the men, and we will put them to death.”

1 Samuel 11:13

(There are no notes for this verse.)

ULT

13 And Saul said, "A man shall not be put to death on this day. For today Yahweh has done a deliverance in Israel."

1 Samuel 11:14

(There are no notes for this verse.)

ULT

14 And Samuel said to the people,
“Come, and let us go to the Gilgal. And
let us renew the kingship there.”

1 Samuel 11:15

made Saul king before Yahweh

“made Saul king while Yahweh watched”

There they sacrificed peace offerings before Yahweh

Part of Samuel’s service to Yahweh is to offer sacrifices even though he is not from the line of Aaron or Levi.

ULT

15 And all the people went to the Gilgal and caused Saul to reign there before the face of Yahweh in the Gilgal. And there they sacrificed sacrifices, peace offerings, before the face of Yahweh. And there Saul and all the men of Israel rejoiced up to abundance.

1 Samuel 12

1 Samuel 12 General Notes

Special concepts in this chapter

Samuel's farewell address

This chapter serves as a type of farewell address. This is a way for leaders to give instructions to their followers before they leave or die. Samuel first established his holiness before calling on the people to repent of their desire to have a king. (See: [holy](#), [holiness](#), [unholy](#), [sacred](#) and [repent](#), [repentance](#))

Other possible translation difficulties in this chapter

It is common in Scripture to use Israel's history to show how faithful God has been. This gives the readers evidence to trust in Yahweh in their current situation. (See: [faithful](#), [faithfulness](#), [trustworthy](#) and [trust](#), [trusted](#), [trustworthy](#), [trustworthiness](#))

1 Samuel 12:1

(There are no notes for this verse.)

ULT

¹ And Samuel said to all Israel, "Behold, I have listened to your voice, according to all that you said to me. And I have caused a king to reign over you."

1 Samuel 12:2

the king walking before you ... I have walked before you

These expressions mean that people can actually see the kind of lives Saul and Samuel are living. Alternate translation: “the king’s life was seen ... My life was seen” (See: [Idiom](#))

ULT

² And now, behold the king is walking about before your face. And as for me, I am old and gray; and my sons, behold they are with you. And I myself have walked about before your face from my youth until this day.

1 Samuel 12:3

Here I am; testify against me before Yahweh and before his anointed one

By this statement, Samuel is challenging the people to speak up if he has done anything wrong to anyone. Alternate translation: "I stand in front of you now. I ask you to speak in front of Yahweh and his anointed king if I have done you any wrong" (See: [Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information](#))

Whose ox have I taken? Whose donkey have I taken?

Samuel uses rhetorical questions to remind the people that he has never stolen their animals. Alternate translation: "I have never stolen a prized animal from anyone." (See: [Rhetorical Question](#))

Whom have I defrauded?

Samuel uses another rhetorical question to say he has always been honest. Alternate translation: "I have never cheated or bribed any man." (See: [Rhetorical Question](#))

Testify against me, and I will restore it to you

"If I have done any of these evil things, speak now, and I will pay back what I owe. I will make right any wrong"

ULT

³ Here I am! Testify against me in front of Yahweh and in front of his anointed one. Whose ox have I taken, or whose donkey have I taken, or whom have I defrauded? Whom have I oppressed or from whose hand have I taken a bribe so that I hid my eyes with it? And I will restore to you."

1 Samuel 12:4

from any man's hand

This phrase means what a person possesses or what they have done to obtain favor from others. This is a polite way of saying he has not stolen, nor has he given or taken bribes. (See: [Euphemism](#))

ULT

⁴ And they said, "You have not defrauded us, and have not oppressed us, and have not taken anything from the hand of a man."

1 Samuel 12:5

in my hand

This phrase means what a person possesses or what they have done to obtain favor from others. This is a polite way of saying he has not stolen, nor has he given or taken bribes. (See: [Euphemism](#))

ULT

⁵ And he said to them, "Yahweh is a witness against you, and his anointed one is a witness this day, that you have not found anything in my hand." And he said, "Witness."

1 Samuel 12:6

(There are no notes for this verse.)

ULT

⁶ And Samuel said to the people, "It is Yahweh who made Moses and Aaron, and who brought up your fathers from the land of Egypt.

1 Samuel 12:7

all of the righteous deeds of Yahweh

Samuel is calling their attention to the history of Yahweh's dealing with Israel, which has been filled with goodness and purpose.

ULT

⁷ And now, station yourselves so that I may be judged with you before the face of Yahweh with all the righteous deeds of Yahweh, which he did with you and with your fathers.

1 Samuel 12:8

Jacob ... Moses ... Aaron

These are names of men. (See: [How to Translate Names](#))

ULT

⁸ When Jacob came to Egypt, and your fathers cried out to Yahweh, then Yahweh sent Moses and Aaron, and they brought out your fathers from Egypt and they caused them to dwell in this place.

1 Samuel 12:9

into the hand of Sisera ... Philistines ... king of Moab

“into the power of Sisera ... Philistines ... king of Moab”

Sisera

This is the name of a man. (See: [How to Translate Names](#))

Hazor

This is the name of a place. (See: [How to Translate Names](#))

he sold them

This is an expression for God giving them over to their enemies to be their slaves.

ULT

⁹ And they forgot Yahweh their God. And he sold them into the hand of Sisera, the commander of the army of Hazor, and into the hand of the Philistines, and into the hand of the king of Moab. And they fought against them.

1 Samuel 12:10

They cried out to Yahweh

“They” refers to the nation of Israel.

have served the Baals and the Ashtoreths

Serving here is referring to acting worshipful towards the false gods.
Alternate translation: “have worshiped false gods and goddesses”
(See: [Metonymy](#))

the hand of our enemies

This statement is using “hand” to refer to power. Alternate translation: “the power or control of our enemies”
(See: [Metonymy](#))

ULT

10 And they cried out to Yahweh and said, ‘We have sinned, because we have forsaken Yahweh and have served the Baals and the Ashtoreths. And now rescue us from the hand of our enemies, and we will serve you.’

1 Samuel 12:11

Jerub Baal

This is sometimes translated Jerubbaal. This is a name of godly honor and strength to fight the false god.

Yahweh sent ... and gave you victory

Samuel is telling the story of what God did after the people's confession of sin and plea for help. (See: [Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information](#))

Jerub Baal, Bedan, Jephthah, and Samuel

These are the names of some judges that God raised up. Samuel included himself in this list. (See: [How to Translate Names](#))

ULT

11 And Yahweh sent Jerub Baal and Bedan and Jephthah and Samuel. And he rescued you from the hand of your enemies from all around you, and you dwelled securely.

1 Samuel 12:12

(There are no notes for this verse.)

ULT

12 And you saw that Nahash the king of the sons of Ammon came against you, and you said to me, 'No! Rather a king will reign over us.' But Yahweh your God was your king.

1 Samuel 12:13

whom you have chosen, whom you have asked for

These two phrases have similar meanings and emphasize that this is the king whom the people wanted. (See: [Parallelism](#))

ULT

¹³ And now, behold the king whom you have chosen, whom you have requested! And behold, Yahweh has given a king over you!

1 Samuel 12:14

fear ... serve ... obey ... not rebel

These similar words are used to emphasize how important this is.
(See: [Parallelism](#))

ULT

14 If you fear Yahweh and serve him and listen to his voice and do not rebel against the mouth of Yahweh, then both you and the king who reigns over you will be after Yahweh your God.

1 Samuel 12:15

Yahweh's hand will be against you, as it was against your ancestors

This speaks of Yahweh punishing the people as his "hand" being against them. The word "hand" here represents Yahweh's power and control. Alternate translation: "Yahweh will punish you, just as he punished your ancestors" (See: [Metonymy](#))

ULT

¹⁵ But if you do not listen to the voice of Yahweh, and you rebel against the mouth of Yahweh, then the hand of Yahweh will be against you and against your fathers.

1 Samuel 12:16

before your eyes

The word “eyes” here represents the people of the nation of Israel.
Alternate translation: “out in the open where all of the nation of Israel may see” (See: [Synecdoche](#))

ULT

16 Even now station yourselves and see this great thing that Yahweh is about to do before your eyes.

1 Samuel 12:17

Is it not the wheat harvest today?

Samuel knows it is harvest time. He is using a rhetorical question to emphasize that it does not usually rain at this time so the people will know that the rain that will ruin their harvest is a judgment from Yahweh. Alternate translation: "It is harvest time and does not usually rain at this time" (See: [Rhetorical Question](#))

he may send thunder and rain

Samuel is asking Yahweh to punish Israel for asking for a king by sending a rainstorm during the harvest which will ruin the grain.

ULT

17 Is it not the harvest of wheat today? I will call to Yahweh, and he will give thunder and rain. And know and see that your evil is great, which you have done in the eyes of Yahweh, by requesting a king for yourselves."

1 Samuel 12:18

(There are no notes for this verse.)

ULT

18 And Samuel called to Yahweh, and Yahweh gave thunder and rain on that day. And all the people greatly feared Yahweh and Samuel.

1 Samuel 12:19

so that we do not die

The ultimate punishment for sin is death. The nation of Israel had seen Yahweh destroy the nations that had oppressed them. They were concerned that they had become “dedicated for destruction” like those nations.

ULT

19 And all the people said to Samuel, “Pray for your servants to Yahweh your God, so that we may not die. For we have added evil onto all our sins by requesting a king for ourselves.”

1 Samuel 12:20

Do not be afraid

The people did evil and were afraid of God destroying them.
Alternate translation: "Do not be afraid that God will be angry and destroy you because of this sin" (See: [Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information](#))

ULT

²⁰ And Samuel said to the people, "Do not fear. You yourselves have done all this evil. Only do not turn aside from after Yahweh, but serve Yahweh with all your heart.

1 Samuel 12:21

turn away after empty things

“pursue worship of false gods”

ULT

²¹ And do not turn aside! For it is after the empty thing that does not profit and does not rescue, because they are emptiness.

1 Samuel 12:22

For the sake of his great name

Here “name” refers to the reputation of Yahweh. Alternate translation: “So that people will continue to honor and respect Yahweh” (See: [Metonymy](#))

ULT

²² For Yahweh will not leave his people, for the sake of his great name. For Yahweh was pleased to make you into a people for himself.

1 Samuel 12:23

far be it from me that I should sin against Yahweh by ceasing to pray for you

The people are filled with fear because of the rain and thunder that Yahweh sent when Samuel prayed. Some people may believe Samuel would use his prayers to harm them. (See: [Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information](#))

ULT

²³ Also me, far be it for me from sinning against Yahweh by ceasing to pray for you. And I will instruct you in the good and straight way.

1 Samuel 12:24

(There are no notes for this verse.)

ULT

²⁴ Only fear Yahweh and serve him in faithfulness with all your heart. Indeed, see what he has made great with you!

1 Samuel 12:25

(There are no notes for this verse.)

ULT

²⁵ But if you continually do evil, both you and your king will be carried away.”

1 Samuel 13

1 Samuel 13 General Notes

Structure and formatting

This chapter is the beginning of a story about Jonathan's victory over the Philistines.

Special concepts in this chapter

Preparation for the battle

Saul sent most of his army home before Jonathan attacked and defeated a Philistine garrison. This attack made the Philistines very angry, and they brought a huge army into Israel and camped at the top of a hill. Most of Saul's army ran away in fear and hid from the Philistines. There are many aspects of this story that give the reader the impression that Israel was unprepared for battle.

Important figures of speech in this chapter

Hyperbole

Wanting to express the vast number of enemy soldiers, the author uses a hyperbole: "as numerous as the sand on the seashore," meaning "too many to count." (See: [Hyperbole](#))

1 Samuel 13:1

General Information:

Samuel has renewed Saul's kingdom at Gilgal and Samuel has reminded the people to follow the Lord.

Saul was thirty years old ... over Israel

The text of this verse in ancient copies seems to have been mutilated, so modern versions have many different translations. They are all attempts to represent the most probable meaning of the original text.

ULT

¹ Saul was a son of a year when he reigned. And he reigned over Israel two years. ^[1]

1 Samuel 13:2

chose three thousand men

“chose 3,000 men” (See: [Numbers](#))

Two thousand were with him

“2,000 men were with him” (See: [Numbers](#))

Michmash

This is the name of a city. (See: [How to Translate Names](#))

Gibeah of Benjamin

Gibeah is a town. See how you translated this in [1 Samuel 10:26](#).

The rest of the soldiers he sent home

“He sent the rest of the soldiers home”

ULT

² And Saul chose for himself 3,000 from Israel. And 2,000 were with Saul in Michmash and in the hill country of Bethel, and 1,000 were with Jonathan in Gibeah of Benjamin. And the rest of the people he sent away, a man to his tent.

1 Samuel 13:3

garrison of the Philistines

“military base of the Philistines” or “military camp of the Philistines”

Geba

This is the name of the town that the Philistine garrison was stationed in. (See: [How to Translate Names](#))

ULT

³ And Jonathan struck down the garrison of the Philistines that was at Geba and the Philistines heard. And Saul blew with the horn in all the land, saying, “Let the Hebrews hear!”

1 Samuel 13:4

All Israel heard that Saul had defeated

This could mean: (1) Saul was taking responsibility for Jonathan's actions or (2) Saul was taking credit for Jonathan's actions.

Israel had become a rotten smell to the Philistines

The Philistines hating the Israelites is spoken of as if the Israelites had become a bad smell that offended the Philistines. Alternate translation: "the Philistines hated the Israelites" (See: [Metaphor](#))

the soldiers were summoned together to join Saul at Gilgal

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "Saul called the soldiers together to join him at Gilgal" (See: [Active or Passive](#))

ULT

⁴ And all Israel heard, saying, "Saul struck down the garrison of the Philistines, and also Israel has become a stench among the Philistines." And the people were called together after Saul at the Gilgal.

1 Samuel 13:5

three thousand ... six thousand

“3,000...6,000” (See: [Numbers](#))

troops as numerous as the sand on the seashore

This is an exaggeration that means a group of soldiers so large that it was difficult to count them. (See: [Hyperbole](#))

Michmash

This is the name of a place. (See: [How to Translate Names](#))

Beth Aven

This is the name of a place. (See: [How to Translate Names](#))

ULT

⁵ And the Philistines gathered to fight against Israel: 30,000 chariots and 6,000 horsemen and a people like the sand that is on the shore of the sea with respect to abundance. And they went up and camped at Michmash, east of Beth Aven.

1 Samuel 13:6

General Information:

The Philistines had gathered together to fight against Israel.

the people

This phrase refers to the nation of Israel.

the people were distressed

“the people worried greatly”

ULT

⁶ And the men of Israel saw that it was narrow for them, for the people were hard-pressed. And the people hid themselves in the caves and in the thornbushes and in the cliffs and in the underground chambers and in the pits.

1 Samuel 13:7

followed him trembling

The people were greatly afraid.

ULT

⁷ And Hebrews crossed over the Jordan to the land of Gad and Gilead. But Saul was still at the Gilgal and all the people trembled after him.

1 Samuel 13:8

the time Samuel had set

“according to the time Samuel had told them he would come”

the people were scattering from Saul

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: “the people had started to leave Saul” (See: [Active or Passive](#))

ULT

⁸ And he waited seven days to the appointed time when Samuel would be there, but Samuel did not come to the Gilgal. And the people scattered from beside him.

1 Samuel 13:9

Then he offered the burnt offering

Only the line of Aaron was permitted to perform the burnt offering sacrifice to God.

ULT

⁹ And Saul said, "Bring near to me the burnt up offering and the peace offerings." And he offered up the burnt up offering.

1 Samuel 13:10

(There are no notes for this verse.)

ULT

10 And it happened as soon as he finished offering up the burnt up offering that, behold, Samuel came! And Saul went out to meet him to bless him.

1 Samuel 13:11

What have you done

Samuel was not really asking a question, but giving a rebuke to Saul. Saul sought to defend his actions even though they were wrong. (See: [Rhetorical Question](#))

Michmash

Michmash is the name of a place. See how you translated this in [1 Samuel 13:2](#).

ULT

11 And Samuel said, "What have you done?" And Saul said, "When I saw that the people scattered from beside me, and you, you did not come by the appointed time of days, and the Philistines were gathering at Michmash,

1 Samuel 13:12

(There are no notes for this verse.)

ULT

¹² then I said, 'Now the Philistines will come down against me at the Gilgal, and I have not appeased the face of Yahweh.' So I forced myself and offered up the burnt up offering."

1 Samuel 13:13

You have not kept the command of Yahweh

Saul was to wait for Samuel to come and sacrifice the burnt offering to God. He was not to perform the sacrifice himself.

established your rule

“set up your rule” or “authorized your rule” or “appointed your rule”

ULT

13 And Samuel said to Saul, “You have acted foolishly! You have not kept the command of Yahweh your God that he commanded you. For then Yahweh would have established your reign over Israel until eternity.”

1 Samuel 13:14

your rule will not continue

This is a litotes that can be stated in the positive form. Alternate translation: "your rule will end soon" (See: [Litotes](#))

a man after his own heart

Here "heart" represents Yahweh's desire or will. The phrase "man after his own heart" is an idiom that means to be a person who does what Yahweh desires. Alternate translation: "a man who is the kind of person he wants" or "a man who will obey him" (See: [Metonymy](#) and [Idiom](#))

ULT

14 But now your reign will not stand. Yahweh has sought for himself a man according to his heart, and Yahweh has commanded him to be leader over his people, for you did not keep what Yahweh commanded you."

1 Samuel 13:15

Samuel arose and went up

This is an idiom for “Samuel left and went up.” (See: [Idiom](#))

went up from Gilgal

Gilgal is a city. See how you translated this in [1 Samuel 7:15](#).

Gibeah of Benjamin

Gibeah is a town. See how you translated this in [1 Samuel 10:26](#).

six hundred men

“600 men” (See: [Numbers](#))

ULT

15 And Samuel rose and went up from the Gilgal to Gibeah of Benjamin. And Saul mustered the people who were found with him, about 600 men.

1 Samuel 13:16

Geba of Benjamin

Geba is a town. See how you translated this in [1 Samuel 13:3](#).

Philistines camped at Michmash

Michmash is the name of a place. See how you translated this in [1 Samuel 13:2](#).

ULT

16 Now Saul and Jonathan his son and the people who were found with him were staying in Geba of Benjamin. And the Philistines camped at Michmash.

1 Samuel 13:17

Raiders came

Raiders are normally military people who attack enemy villages for their food and other supplies.

Ophrah, to the land of Shual

These are the names of places. (See: [How to Translate Names](#))

ULT

17 And destroyers went out from the camp of the Philistines, three heads. One head turned to the way of Ophrah, to the land of Shual.

1 Samuel 13:18

Beth Horon ... Valley of Zeboyim

These are the names of places. (See: [How to Translate Names](#))

ULT

18 And one head turned the way of Beth Horon. And one head turned the way of the border that looks down over the valley of Zeboyim, toward the wilderness.

1 Samuel 13:19

General Information:

The narrative shifts to background information regarding blacksmiths in Israel.

No blacksmith could be found

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: “No one could find a blacksmith” (See: [Active or Passive](#))

blacksmith

Here “blacksmith” refers to someone who made or sharpened metal tools and weapons.

ULT

19 Now a blacksmith could not be found in all the land of Israel. For the Philistines said, “Lest the Hebrews make sword or spear.”

1 Samuel 13:20

sharpen his plow points

The words “plow points” refer to the point of a metal tool used for digging up the ground for planting crops.

mattock ... ax ... sickle

These are common garden tools.

mattock

A “mattock” is a broad-bladed axe, with a horizontal blade that is used for breaking up hard soil.

sickle

a curved blade for cutting grasses and grain stalks

ULT

20 And all Israel used to go down to the Philistines, a man to sharpen his plow and his mattock and his axe and his sickle.

1 Samuel 13:21

two-thirds of a shekel

The shekel is divided into 3 parts, 2 of 3 parts are given. "2/3 of a shekel" (See: [Biblical Money](#))

straightening the goads

"taking out the bend and making the ox goad straight again so it could be used"

ULT

21 And the charge was a pim for the plowshares and for the mattocks and for three picks and for the axes and for straightening the goads.

1 Samuel 13:22

General Information:

The narrative continues.

there were no swords or spears

This explains in part why Saul's army was afraid. They did not have any weapons to fight.

ULT

²² And it happened on the day of battle that a sword or spear was not found in the hands of any of the people who were with Saul and with Jonathan, but was found for Saul and for his son Jonathan.

1 Samuel 13:23

(There are no notes for this verse.)

ULT

²³ And the garrison of the Philistines went out to the pass of Michmash.

1 Samuel 14

1 Samuel 14 General Notes

Structure and formatting

This chapter completes the story of Jonathan's victory over the Philistines.

Special concepts in this chapter

The battle against the Philistines

Jonathan took his armor bearer to where the Philistines were on the top of the hill. He said God could use a few people just as easily as he could use many people to win his battles. He and his armor bearer started killing the Philistines, and suddenly the Philistines began fighting each other or running away. The rest of Israel, who had hidden, came and chased the Philistines. Even though Israel had a king, God was still in control of the nation of Israel.

Important figures of speech in this chapter

Special reference

The people of Israel often used the term "uncircumcised" to refer to Gentiles. Here it is used to mean the Philistines. (See: [circumcise](#), [circumcised](#), [circumcision](#), [uncircumcised](#), [uncircumcision](#))

1 Samuel 14:1

General Information:

Jonathan begins his second raid on the Philistines' army.

his young armor bearer

a teenage boy who is responsible for caring for his master's weapons of war

Philistines' garrison

This is an outpost staffed by the Philistine army.

ULT

¹ And it happened one day that Jonathan the son of Saul said to his servant who carried his equipment, "Come, and let us cross over to the garrison of the Philistines that is on the other side from here." But he did not tell his father.

1 Samuel 14:2

Gibeah

This is the name of a hill north of Jerusalem. (See: [How to Translate Names](#))

under the pomegranate tree

a tree whose fruit is thick skinned, round, red and has many seeds to eat

that is in Migron

“Migron” is the name of a place north of Jerusalem. (See: [How to Translate Names](#))

six hundred men were with him

“600 men were with him” (See: [Numbers](#))

ULT

² Now Saul was staying at the end of the Gibeah under the pomegranate tree that is in Migron. And the people who were with him were about 600 men,

1 Samuel 14:3

son of Ahitub (Ichabod's brother)

"Ahitub" and "Ichabod" are names of men. (See: [How to Translate Names](#))

Phinehas son of Eli

Phinehas was one of the priests. See how you translated this in [1 Samuel 1:3](#).

ULT

³ and Ahijah the son of Ahitub the brother of Ichabod the son of Phinehas the son of Eli, the priest of Yahweh at Shiloh who was carrying an ephod. And the people did not know that Jonathan had gone.

1 Samuel 14:4

One rocky cliff was called Bozez

A "cliff" is a rocky height with a steep drop. The cliff was well-known and given the name "Bozez." (See: [How to Translate Names](#))

the other rocky cliff was called Seneh

This was the name of the other cliff. (See: [How to Translate Names](#))

ULT

⁴ Now between the passes that Jonathan sought to pass over to the garrison of the Philistines was the tooth of the cliff on one side from this and the tooth of the cliff on the other side from this. And the name of one was Bozez and the name of one was Seneh.

1 Samuel 14:5

Michmash ... Geba

towns north of Jerusalem (See: [How to Translate Names](#))

ULT

⁵ The tooth of the one was a pillar from the north in front of Michmash. And the one from the south was in front of Geba.

1 Samuel 14:6

his young armor bearer

This was a teenage boy who was responsible for caring for his master's weapons of war. See how you translated this in [1 Samuel 14:1](#).

uncircumcised fellows

a derogatory term used for non-Jewish men

work on our behalf

"work for our support" or "help us"

nothing can stop Yahweh from saving

This double negative can be stated in positive form. Alternate translation: "Yahweh can save" (See: [Double Negatives](#))

by many or by few people

These extremes also include everything in between. Alternate translation: "by any number of people" (See: [Merism](#))

ULT

⁶ And Jonathan said to his servant who carried his equipment, "Come, and let us pass over to the garrison of these uncircumcised ones! Perhaps Yahweh will act for us, for there is no hindrance for Yahweh to save by many or by few."

1 Samuel 14:7

everything that is in your heart

Here “heart” refers to Jonathan’s desires. Alternate translation: “everything that you desire to do” (See: [Metonymy](#))

ULT

⁷ And the one who carried his equipment said to him, “Do all that is in your heart. Turn for yourself; behold, I am with you according to your heart.”

1 Samuel 14:8

(There are no notes for this verse.)

ULT

⁸ And Jonathan said, "Behold, we will cross over to the men. And we will reveal ourselves to them."

1 Samuel 14:9

will not cross over to them

“will not go over to the other side of the valley where the Philistines are”

ULT

⁹ If thus they say to us, ‘Be still until we reach you,’ then we will stand under ourselves and not go up to them.

1 Samuel 14:10

has given them into our hand

Here “hand” refers to the power to defeat them. Alternate translation: “will enable us to defeat them” (See: [Metonymy](#))

This will be the sign to us

“This will confirm that the Lord will be with us”

ULT

10 But if thus they say, ‘Come up to us,’ then we will go up, for Yahweh has given them into our hand. And this will be the sign for us.”

1 Samuel 14:11

revealed themselves to the garrison of the Philistines

“allowed the Philistine soldiers to see them”

the garrison

the army camp

coming out of the holes where they have hidden themselves

The Philistines implied that the Hebrews had been hiding in holes in the ground like animals. (See: [Metaphor](#))

ULT

11 And the two of them revealed themselves to the garrison of the Philistines. And the Philistines said, “Behold, Hebrews are coming out from the holes there where they have hidden themselves.”

1 Samuel 14:12

we will show you something

This is an idiom that means “we will teach you a lesson.” (See: [Idiom](#))

has given them into the hand of Israel

Here “hand” refers to power to defeat the Philistines. Alternate translation: “will enable Israel to defeat them” (See: [Metonymy](#))

ULT

12 And the men of the garrison answered Jonathan and the one who carried his equipment, and said, “Come up to us, and we will cause you to know a thing.” And Jonathan said to the one who carried his equipment, “Go up behind me, for Yahweh has given them into the hand of Israel.”

1 Samuel 14:13

Jonathan climbed up on his hands and feet

He did this because it was very steep. This could be made explicit. Alternate translation: "So Jonathan climbed up, using his hands and his feet because it was very steep" (See: [Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information](#))

The Philistines were put to death before Jonathan

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "Jonathan killed the Philistines" (See: [Active or Passive](#))

his armor bearer put some to death behind him

"Jonathan's armor bearer followed him and also killed Philistine soldiers"

ULT

13 And Jonathan went up on his hands and on his feet, and the one who carried his equipment was behind him. And they fell before the face of Jonathan, and the one who carried his equipment was putting to death behind him.

1 Samuel 14:14

(There are no notes for this verse.)

ULT

14 And the first blow that Jonathan and the one who carried his equipment struck was about 20 men in about half of a furrow, a yoke of a field.

1 Samuel 14:15

There was a panic in the camp, in the field, and among the people

The abstract noun “panic” can be translated as a verb or as an adjective. Alternate translation: “The Philistine soldiers in the camp and in the field, and all the people with them, panicked” or “The Philistine soldiers in the camp and in the field, and all the people with them, became very afraid” (See: [Abstract Nouns](#))

the raiders

the Philistines who were raiding Israelite cities

The earth quaked

It may be helpful to state the cause. Alternate translation: “God caused the ground to shake” (See: [Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information](#))

ULT

¹⁵ And a trembling was in the camp, in the field, and among all the people. The garrison and the destroyers, even they trembled. And the earth quaked and it became a trembling of God.

1 Samuel 14:16

Gibeah

This was the town where Saul was born. Translated "Gibeah" as in [1 Samuel 10:26](#). (See: [How to Translate Names](#))

was dispersing ... going here and there

These two phrases share similar meanings and emphasize that the soldiers were running away in every direction. (See: [Parallelism](#))

ULT

16 And the lookouts of Saul in Gibeah of Benjamin looked, and behold, the crowd melted away and went even here.

1 Samuel 14:17

(There are no notes for this verse.)

ULT

17 And Saul said to the people who were with him, "Muster now and see who has gone from with us." And they mustered, and behold, there was no Jonathan or the one who carried his equipment!

1 Samuel 14:18

Bring the ark of God here

A few versions have “ephod” here instead of “ark of God.” (See: [Textual Variants](#))

ULT

18 And Saul said to Ahijah, “Bring near the Box of God.” For on that day the Box of God was with the sons of Israel.

1 Samuel 14:19

commotion

great noise and confusion

Withdraw your hand

This seems to be an idiom that means “Stop what you are doing.” Saul did not want Ahijah to continue to use the ark to ask God for direction. Alternate translation: “Do not bring the sacred chest at this time” (See: [Idiom](#))

ULT

19 And it happened while Saul spoke to the priest, that the tumult that was in the camp of the Philistines was going continually and increasingly. And Saul said to the priest, “Withdraw your hand.”

1 Samuel 14:20

the people who were with him

the remnant of the Israelite army that remained with Saul

Every Philistine's sword was against his fellow countrymen

The swords are spoken of as if they were living people. Alternate translation: "The Philistine soldiers were striking each other with their swords" (See: [Personification](#))

ULT

²⁰ And Saul and all the people who were with him were called together and came to the battle. And behold, the sword of a man was against his companion, a very great confusion.

1 Samuel 14:21

(There are no notes for this verse.)

ULT

²¹ Now some Hebrews were for the Philistines according to yesterday and three days ago, who had gone up with them into the camp all around. But even they were to be with Israel, who were with Saul and Jonathan.

1 Samuel 14:22

the men of Israel who had hidden themselves in the hills

This does not refer to an ambush. These soldiers were hiding because they were afraid of the Philistines. This can be stated explicitly. Alternate translation: “the Israelite soldiers who were afraid and had hidden themselves in the hills” (See: [Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information](#))

ULT

²² And all the men of Israel who had hidden themselves in the hill country of Ephraim heard that the Philistines fled, and they also pursued after them in the battle.

1 Samuel 14:23

Beth Aven

This is a place in Israel. See how you translated this in [1 Samuel 13:5](#).
(See: [How to Translate Names](#))

ULT

²³ And Yahweh saved Israel on that day.
And the battle passed over Beth Aven.

1 Samuel 14:24

So none of the troops tasted food

It was understood by the troops that no refreshment was permitted under Saul's oath.

ULT

²⁴ And the men of Israel were hard-pressed on that day. And Saul had made the people swear, saying, "Cursed is the man who eats food until the evening and I take vengeance from my enemies." So all the people had not tasted food.

1 Samuel 14:25

the people entered the forest

The Philistine soldiers fled through the forests and the Israelite soldiers followed them there.

ULT

²⁵ And all the land entered into the forest. And honey was on the face of the field.

1 Samuel 14:26

the honey flowed

This is an exaggeration to emphasize how much honey there was in the forest. Alternate translation: “there was a lot of honey everywhere” (See: [Hyperbole](#))

no one put his hand to his mouth

Here putting one’s “hand to his mouth” is a metonym that means to eat. Alternate translation: “no one ate any” (See: [Metonymy](#))

the people feared the oath

The people were not afraid of the oath, but of the punishment that was associated with breaking the oath. Alternate translation: “the people were afraid of what Saul would do to them if they broke his oath” (See: [Metonymy](#))

ULT

26 And the people entered into the forest, and behold, the flowing of honey! But no one reached his hand to his mouth for the people feared the oath.

1 Samuel 14:27

General Information:

Jonathan learns of his father's oath.

bound the people with an oath

Here the obligation to obey an oath is spoken of as if the people were bound with ropes. Alternate translation: "commanded that the people obey his oath" (See: [Metaphor](#))

He raised his hand to his mouth

Here "hand to his mouth" is a metonym that means to eat. Alternate translation: "He ate some honey" (See: [Metonymy](#))

his eyes brightened

This idiom means that he was strengthened. Alternate translation: "he regained his strength" (See: [Idiom](#))

ULT

²⁷ But Jonathan had not heard when his father had made the people swear. And he extended the end of the staff that was in his hand and dipped it in the honeycomb of the honey. And he returned his hand to his mouth and his eyes became bright.

1 Samuel 14:28

(There are no notes for this verse.)

ULT

²⁸ And a man from the people answered and said, "Your father surely made the people swear, saying, 'Cursed is the man who eats food today.' So the people are faint."

1 Samuel 14:29

for the land

This is a metonym that represents the nation of Israel. Alternate translation: "for Israel" (See: [Metonymy](#))

my eyes have become brightened

This idiom means that he was strengthened. Alternate translation: "I regained my strength" (See: [Idiom](#))

ULT

²⁹ And Jonathan said, "My father has troubled the land. See now that my eyes have become bright because I tasted a little of this honey."

1 Samuel 14:30

How much better if the people ... that they found?

Jonathan uses this hypothetical question to state that the people should have been allowed to eat. This can be a statement. Alternate translation: "Our victory would have been better if the people had eaten freely today of the plunder that they took from their enemies." (See: [Rhetorical Question](#) and [Hypothetical Situations](#))

ULT

³⁰ How much more if the people had eaten freely today from the plunder of their enemies that they found? For now the blow has not been great among the Philistines."

plunder

This word refers to the things the people had taken from the battle with their enemy.

Because now the slaughter has not been great

Because the troops were not able to eat during the battle, as the day progressed, they became weaker. Because of this, they were not able to kill as many of the Philistines.

1 Samuel 14:31

General Information:

Jonathan's words lead the army to sin against God in their great hunger.

Michmash

This is the name of a town. See how you translated this in [1 Samuel 13:2](#).

Aijalon

a place in Zebulun in Israel (See: [How to Translate Names](#))

The people

This refers to the Israelites.

ULT

³¹ And on that day they struck down the Philistines from Michmash to Aijalon. And the people were very faint.

1 Samuel 14:32

ate them with the blood

The were so hungry they did not drain the blood first before eating. This was a violation of the Law which was given to Moses for the nation of Israel. This can be made explicit. Alternate translation: “ate them without draining the blood first as required by the law” (See: [Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information](#))

ULT

³² And the people rushed with shouting on the plunder and took sheep and cattle and sons of cattle, and they slaughtered on the ground. And the people ate with the blood.

1 Samuel 14:33

by eating with the blood

This was a violation of the Law which was given to Moses for the nation of Israel. This can be made explicit. Alternate translation: “by eating meat without draining the blood first as required by the law” (See: [Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information](#))

You have acted unfaithfully

Saul is accusing his whole army of acting unfaithfully though this is a generalization because not every soldier acted unfaithfully. (See: [Hyperbole](#))

Now, roll a big stone here to me

The stone would hold the animals up and make it easier to drain the blood from them. (See: [Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information](#))

ULT

33 Then they told Saul, saying, “Behold, the people are sinning against Yahweh by eating with the blood!” And he said, “You have acted deceptively. Roll a big stone to me today.”

1 Samuel 14:34

kill them here, and eat

This would allow Saul to observe if the blood was properly drained from the animals.

ULT

³⁴ And Saul said, "Disperse among the people and say to them, 'Bring near to me, a man his ox and a man his sheep, and slaughter here and eat. And you shall not sin against Yahweh by eating with the blood.'" And all the people brought near, a man his ox by his hand that night and they slaughtered there.

1 Samuel 14:35

General Information:

Saul had told the people to bring their animals to a big stone to kill and eat.

Saul built an altar to Yahweh

It is unclear if Saul built this altar with the large stone that the people brought to him in [1 Samuel 14:33](#).

ULT

³⁵ And Saul built an altar to Yahweh, it he began to build an altar to Yahweh.

1 Samuel 14:36

General Information:

Saul seeks to continue the fight against the Philistines.

let us not leave one of them alive

This is stated in a negative way to emphasize the slaughter. It can be stated in positive form. Alternate translation: "let us kill every one of them" (See: [Litotes](#))

Do whatever seems good to you

Saul had the support of his army to continue the fight.

Let us approach God here

Here "approaching God" is associated with asking him counsel. Alternate translation: "Let us ask God what we should do" (See: [Metonymy](#))

ULT

³⁶ And Saul said, "Let us go down after the Philistines by night and plunder them until the light of morning. And let us not leave a man among them." And they said, "Do all the good in your eyes." And the priest said, "Let us draw near to God here."

1 Samuel 14:37

give them into the hand of Israel

Here “hand” refers to the power to defeat them. Alternate translation: “enable us to defeat them” (See: [Metonymy](#))

But God did not answer him that day

This implies that God was not willing to help Saul.

ULT

³⁷ And Saul asked of God, “Should I go down after the Philistines? Will you give them into the hand of Israel?” But he did not answer him on that day.

1 Samuel 14:38

the people

This refers to the Israelites.

learn and see how this sin has happened

“find who sinned”

ULT

³⁸ And Saul said, “Come near here, all the corners of the people! And know and see by what this sin has happened today.”

1 Samuel 14:39

even if it is in Jonathan my son, he will surely die

Saul stated this as a hypothetical situation because he did not believe that Jonathan was guilty. (See: [Hypothetical Situations](#))

But none of the men among all the people answered him

The people remained silent because most of them knew that Jonathan had broken Saul's oath. This can be stated explicitly. Alternate translation: "His men knew who was guilty, but none of them said anything to Saul" (See: [Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information](#))

ULT

³⁹ For, as Yahweh is alive, the one who saves Israel, even if it is by Jonathan my son, indeed he will surely die." But there was no one answering him from all the people.

1 Samuel 14:40

Then he said to all Israel

This was a generalization since only the Israelite soldiers were present. Alternate translation: "Then he said to the Israelite soldiers who were there" (See: [Hyperbole](#))

ULT

40 And he said to all Israel, "You will be on one side, and I and Jonathan my son will be on one side." And the people said to Saul, "Do the good in your eyes."

1 Samuel 14:41

give the Thummim

The Israelites at that time used special stones called the Urim and the Thummim to receive direction from God. Alternate translation: "Show us by means of the Thummim" (See: [Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information](#))

Thummim

This is a borrowed word from the original language. (See: [Copy or Borrow Words](#))

Jonathan and Saul were taken by lot, but the army was exonerated

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "The lots indicated that either Jonathan or Saul was guilty, but the army was not guilty" (See: [Active or Passive](#))

ULT

41 And Saul said to Yahweh the God of Israel, "Give a perfect one!" And Jonathan and Saul were taken, but the people went out.

1 Samuel 14:42

Then Jonathan was taken by lot

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "Then the lot indicated that Jonathan was guilty" (See: [Active or Passive](#))

ULT

⁴² And Saul said, "Cause it to fall between me and Jonathan my son."
And Jonathan was taken.

1 Samuel 14:43

General Information:

The lots had just showed that Jonathan had sinned.

Tell me what you have done

“Tell me how you have sinned” or “Tell me what you have done that was wrong”

I will die

This could mean: (1) “I am willing to die” or (2) “do I deserve to be executed because of doing that?”

ULT

⁴³ And Saul said to Jonathan, “Tell me what you have done.” And Jonathan told him and said, “Indeed I tasted a little honey with the end of the staff that was in my hand. Here I am; I will die.”

1 Samuel 14:44

God do so and more also to me, if you do not die, Jonathan

Saul makes a second foolish oath in less than one day. Alternate translation: "May God kill me if I do not kill you, Jonathan"

ULT

⁴⁴ And Saul said, "May God do so and may he add so, for you shall surely die, Jonathan."

1 Samuel 14:45

General Information:

The Army defends and protects Jonathan from Saul.

Should Jonathan die, who has accomplished this great victory for Israel? Far from it!

The people scold Saul. This rhetorical question can be translated as a statement. Alternate translation: "Jonathan has just accomplished this great victory for Israel. He should surely not die." (See: [Rhetorical Question](#))

As Yahweh lives

The people were expressing their certainty that they would not let anything happen to Jonathan.

not one hair of his head will fall to the ground

This exaggeration shows how the people of Israel would protect Jonathan and keep him safe. This litotes can be stated in a positive form. Alternate translation: "we will protect him from any harm" (See: [Hyperbole](#) and [Litotes](#))

ULT

⁴⁵ And the people said to Saul, "Should Jonathan die, who has made this great salvation in Israel? Far from it! As Yahweh is alive, a hair of his head will not fall to the ground! For he has worked with God this day." And the people ransomed Jonathan and he did not die.

1 Samuel 14:46

(There are no notes for this verse.)

ULT

⁴⁶ And Saul went up from after the Philistines. And the Philistines went to their place.

1 Samuel 14:47

General Information:

For a brief period Saul served with great courage in defeating Israel's enemies.

Israel

This is a metonym that represents the people of Israel. Alternate translation: "the Israelites" (See: [Metonymy](#))

Moab

This refers to the people of Moab. Alternate translation: "the Moabites" (See: [Metonymy](#))

Edom

This refers to the people of Edom. Alternate translation: "the Edomites" (See: [Metonymy](#))

Wherever he turned

"Wherever he sent his army"

ULT

47 Now Saul had taken the kingship over Israel. And he fought against all his enemies all around: against Moab and against the sons of Ammon and against Edom and against the kings of Zobah and against the Philistines. And he inflicted punishment against everywhere he turned.

1 Samuel 14:48

out of the hands

The word “hand” represents control. Alternate translation: “out of the control” (See: [Metonymy](#))

ULT

48 And he acted strongly and struck down the Amalekites. And he rescued Israel from the hand of those who plundered it.

1 Samuel 14:49

General Information:

This is background information on Saul's family.

Ishvi ... Malki-Shua

These are names of men. (See: [How to Translate Names](#))

Merab ... Michal

These are names of women. (See: [How to Translate Names](#))

ULT

⁴⁹ Now the sons of Saul were Jonathan and Ishvi and Malki-Shua. As for the names of the two of his daughters: the name of the firstborn was Merab and the name of the younger was Michal.

1 Samuel 14:50

Ahinoam

This is the name of a woman. (See: [How to Translate Names](#))

Ahimaaz ... Abner ... Ner

These are names of men. (See: [How to Translate Names](#))

ULT

⁵⁰ The name of the wife of Saul was Ahinoam the daughter of Ahimaaz. And the name of the commander of his army was Abner the son of Ner the uncle of Saul.

1 Samuel 14:51

Kish ... Ner ... Abner ... Abiel

These are names of men. (See: [How to Translate Names](#))

ULT

⁵¹ And Kish was the father of Saul, and Ner the father of Abner was the son of Abiel.

1 Samuel 14:52

all the days of Saul

“all of Saul’s life”

he attached him to himself

“he forced him to join his army”

ULT

⁵² And the battle was strong against the Philistines all the days of Saul. When Saul saw any man of might, or any son of strength, then he gathered him to himself.

1 Samuel 15

1 Samuel 15 General Notes

Structure and formatting

This is the end of the section on Saul and Samuel (8-15).

Special concepts in this chapter

God wants total obedience

Samuel told Saul that God wanted him to completely destroy the Amalekite people and animals. Saul fought the Amalekites and killed all the people except the king. He destroyed the animals that were not very good but saved the best animals. Saul told Samuel he had obeyed God's command. Samuel asked him about the animals Saul had. Saul said he had saved them for a sacrifice to God. God said that obedience was better than sacrifice. Because Saul had disobeyed him, God had chosen someone else to become king.

Important figures of speech in this chapter

Idiom

"He has turned back from following me" is an idiom meaning "he has stopped obeying me." (See: [Idiom](#))

Rhetorical questions

When Saul insisted that he had obeyed God, Samuel rebuked him with these rhetorical questions: "What then is this bleating of sheep in my ears, and the lowing of the oxen that I hear?"; "Though you are little in your own sight, were you not made the head of the tribes of Israel?"; "Why then did you not obey the voice of Yahweh, but instead you seized the booty and did what was evil in the sight of Yahweh?"; and "Has Yahweh as much delight in burnt offerings and sacrifices, as in obeying the voice of Yahweh?" (See: [Rhetorical Question](#))

1 Samuel 15:1

the words of Yahweh

“the message of Yahweh”

ULT

¹ And Samuel said to Saul, “Yahweh sent me to anoint you as king over his people, over Israel. And now, listen to the voice of the words of Yahweh.

1 Samuel 15:2

(There are no notes for this verse.)

ULT

² Thus says Yahweh of hosts, 'I have noted what Amalek did to Israel when he set against him on the way when he came up from Egypt.

1 Samuel 15:3

completely destroy all that they have ... kill both man and woman, child and infant, ox and sheep, camel and donkey

These two phrases mean the same thing. The second phrase gives specific details about what they are to destroy completely. (See: [Parallelism](#))

Do not spare them

This negative statement emphasizes the completeness of the destruction. (See: [Litotes](#))

ULT

³ Now go and strike down Amalek and completely destroy all that is for him, and do not have compassion on him. But put to death from man as far as woman, from child and as far as infant, from ox and as far as sheep, from camel and as far as donkey.'"

1 Samuel 15:4

the people

“the army”

numbered them

“counted them”

two hundred thousand men on foot, and ten thousand men of Judah

“200,000 men on foot, and 10,000 men of Judah” (See: [Numbers](#))

ULT

⁴ And Saul caused the people to hear and mustered them at the Telaim: 200,000 on foot, and 10,000 men of Judah.

1 Samuel 15:5

(There are no notes for this verse.)

ULT

⁵ Then Saul came as far as the city of Amalek and he lie in ambush in the wadi.

1 Samuel 15:6

Kenites

a nomad people group that had always been friendly to the nation of Israel (See: [How to Translate Names](#))

ULT

⁶ And Saul said to the Kenites, "Go, depart, go down from the midst of the Amalekite, lest I remove you with him. As for you, you did kindness with all the sons of Israel when they came up from Egypt." And the Kenites departed from the midst of Amalek.

1 Samuel 15:7

Havilah ... Shur

These are the names of places. (See: [How to Translate Names](#))

ULT

⁷ And Saul struck down Amalek, from Havilah as you enter Shur, which is on the face of Egypt.

1 Samuel 15:8

General Information:

Yahweh had told Saul to destroy everything, but here Saul disobeys Yahweh's command.

he took Agag

Here Saul represents himself accompanied by his army. Alternate translation: "Saul and his army took Agag" or "Saul and his army captured Agag" (See: [Synecdoche](#))

he completely destroyed all the people with the edge of the sword

The "edge of the sword" represents the swords and other weapons that soldiers used in battle. Here Saul represents himself accompanied by his army. Alternate translation: "they completely destroyed all of the people with their swords" or "they killed all of the people with their swords" (See: [Synecdoche](#))

ULT

⁸ And he seized Agag the king of Amalek alive. But he completely destroyed all the people by the mouth of the sword.

1 Samuel 15:9

Saul ... spared Agag

Saul disobeyed God by letting Agag live.

as well as the best of the sheep

Saul disobeyed God by keeping the best of the livestock.

ULT

⁹ And Saul and the people had compassion on Agag and on the best of the sheep and the cattle and the second ones and on the young rams and on all the good, and they were not willing to completely destroy them. But all the despised and weak property, it they completely destroyed. ^[1]

1 Samuel 15:10

the word of Yahweh came to Samuel, saying,

The idiom “the word of Yahweh came to” is used to introduce a special message from God. Alternate translation: “Yahweh gave a message to Samuel. He said,” or “Yahweh spoke this message to Samuel:” (See: [Idiom](#))

ULT

10 And the word of Yahweh was to Samuel, saying,

1 Samuel 15:11

It grieves me

"I am sorry"

he has turned back from following me

Saul not obeying Yahweh is spoken of as if Saul had physically turned away from walking behind God. Alternate translation: "he has stopped following me" (See: [Metaphor](#))

has not performed my commandments

"has not obeyed what I commanded him to do." Saul was to completely destroy everything and everyone. God had placed a ban on the Amalekites. But Saul permitted some livestock to live.

Samuel was angry

This could mean: (1) Samuel was angry with Saul for his disobedience or (2) Samuel was disturbed.

ULT

11 "I regret that I have caused Saul to reign as king, for he has turned from after me and has not raised up my words." And it was hot for Samuel, and he cried out to Yahweh all the night.

1 Samuel 15:12

Samuel was told

“Someone told Samuel”

he set up a monument to himself

Saul was full of pride.

down to Gilgal

Gilgal was lower in elevation than Carmel.

ULT

12 And Samuel rose early in the morning to meet Saul. And it was told to Samuel, saying, “Saul came to the Carmel, and behold, he is setting up a monument for himself! And he turned around and passed over and went down to the Gilgal.”

1 Samuel 15:13

I have fulfilled the command of Yahweh

It is not clear if Saul understood that he had not fully obeyed God's command to completely destroy the Amalekites.

ULT

13 And Samuel came to Saul, and Saul said to him, "Blessed are you by Yahweh! I have raised up the word of Yahweh."

1 Samuel 15:14

General Information:

Samuel questions why Saul did not utterly destroyed the Amalekites.

bleating of sheep ... lowing of the oxen

These are the sounds that these animals make. Your language may have different terms for these.

in my ears ... that I hear

These two phrases mean the same thing. Here "in my ears" refers to hearing. (See: [Parallelism](#) and [Metonymy](#))

ULT

14 And Samuel said, "And what is the sound of this flock in my ears? And the sound of the cattle that I am hearing?"

1 Samuel 15:15

They have brought ... the people spared

The word “they” and the phrase “the people” here both represent Saul’s army. Saul is blaming the people rather than himself.

to sacrifice to Yahweh your God

Saul is arguing that animals for sacrifice were an exception to Yahweh’s command to destroy everything.

Yahweh your God

Saul here does not describe Samuel’s God as his own God.

ULT

15 And Saul said, “They have brought them from the Amalekite. For the people had compassion on the best of the sheep and the cattle, in order to sacrifice to Yahweh your God. But the excess we have completely destroyed.”

1 Samuel 15:16

(There are no notes for this verse.)

ULT

16 And Samuel said to Saul, "Stop, and let me tell you what Yahweh spoke to me at night." And he said to him, "Speak!"

1 Samuel 15:17

in your own sight

Here sight represents judgment or evaluation. Alternate translation: “in your own opinion” or “in your judgment” (See: [Metaphor](#))

were you not made the head of the tribes of Israel?

Samuel uses this question to remind Saul of how much God had given him. This question can be translated as a statement. Alternate translation: “Yahweh made you the ruler of the tribes of Israel!” (See: [Rhetorical Question](#))

ULT

17 And Samuel said, “Although you are small in your own eyes, are you not the head of the tribes of Israel? And Yahweh anointed you as king over Israel.

1 Samuel 15:18

(There are no notes for this verse.)

ULT

18 And Yahweh sent you on your way.
And he said, 'Go and completely destroy
the sinners, Amalek. And fight against
them until they have finished them.'

1 Samuel 15:19

Why did you not obey ... Yahweh?

Samuel asks this question to rebuke Saul for disobeying Yahweh. This question can be translated as a statement. Alternate translation: "You should have obeyed ... Yahweh!" (See: [Rhetorical Question](#))

the voice of Yahweh

Here "voice" refers to the commands that Yahweh spoke. Alternate translation: "the things that Yahweh commanded" (See: [Metonymy](#))

but instead you seized the booty

Samuel is accusing Saul of direct disobedience. Yahweh commanded Saul to completely destroy everything belonging to the Amalekites, and not to bring anything back to camp.

the booty

"the plunder" or "the possessions you took from the enemy"

what was evil in the sight of Yahweh

Here "sight" refers to Yahweh's thoughts or opinion. Alternate translation: "what Yahweh considers to be evil" or "what is evil in Yahweh's judgement" (See: [Metaphor](#))

ULT

19 And why did you not listen to the voice of Yahweh? But you rushed with shouting on the spoil and you did evil in the eyes of Yahweh."

1 Samuel 15:20

I have indeed obeyed the voice of Yahweh

This is an emphatic statement. It is unclear if Saul thought this was true, or if he was simply making excuses for his sin.

the voice of Yahweh

Here “voice” refers to the commands that Yahweh spoke. Alternate translation: “the things that Yahweh commanded” (See: [Metonymy](#))

Agag

This is the name of the king of the Amalekites. (See: [How to Translate Names](#))

ULT

20 And Saul said to Samuel, “I have listened to the voice of Yahweh, and have gone on the way that Yahweh sent me. And I have brought Agag the king of Amalek and have completely destroyed Amalek.”

1 Samuel 15:21

But the people took

This appears to be shifting the blame to the people.

things devoted to destruction

“animals that Yahweh commanded them to destroy”

Gilgal

This is the name of a place. (See: [How to Translate Names](#))

ULT

21 And the people took from the spoil sheep and cattle, the first of the banned thing, to sacrifice to Yahweh your God at the Gilgal.”

1 Samuel 15:22

Has Yahweh as much delight in burnt offerings and sacrifices, as in obeying the voice of Yahweh?

Samuel asks this question to emphasize that obedience is much more important than sacrifice. This can be translated as a statement. Alternate translation: "Yahweh does not delight in burnt offerings and sacrifices as much as in obeying his voice!" (See: [Rhetorical Question](#))

the voice of Yahweh

Here "voice" refers to the commands that Yahweh spoke. Alternate translation: "the things that Yahweh commanded" (See: [Metonymy](#))

Obedience is better than sacrifice

God wanted Saul's complete obedience in the destruction of the Amalekites. Nothing in the land was fit for sacrifice.

better than the fat of rams

"better than to sacrifice the fat of rams as a burnt offering"

ULT

²² And Samuel said, "Is the delight of Yahweh in burnt up offerings and sacrifices, as in listening to the voice of Yahweh? Behold, listening is better than sacrifice, paying attention is more than the fat of rams."

1 Samuel 15:23

rebellion is like the sin of divination

The abstract noun “rebellion” can be translated with a verb.
Alternate translation: “to rebel is as sinful as practicing divination”
(See: [Abstract Nouns](#))

stubbornness is like wickedness and iniquity

The abstract noun “stubbornness” can be translated with a verb and the abstract noun “wickedness” can be translated as an adjective. Alternate translation: “being stubborn is as bad as doing wicked things and practicing iniquity” (See: [Abstract Nouns](#))

the word of Yahweh

“Yahweh’s message” or “Yahweh’s command”

rejected you from being king

“decided that you will no longer be king”

ULT

²³ For rebellion is the sin of divination, and to display pushing is iniquity and idols. Because you have rejected the word of Yahweh, he has rejected you from being king.”

1 Samuel 15:24

I have broken Yahweh's commandment

This is an idiom that means he had disobeyed the commandment. Alternate translation: "I have disobeyed what Yahweh commanded" (See: [Idiom](#))

because I was afraid of the people

This is the reason Saul gives for not obeying God. Alternate translation: "because I was afraid of the soldiers"

obeyed their voice

Here "voice" refers to what the soldiers asked Saul to do. Alternate translation: "did what they asked" (See: [Metonymy](#))

ULT

24 And Saul said to Samuel, "I have sinned! For I have passed over the mouth of Yahweh and your words, because I feared the people and listened to their voice."

1 Samuel 15:25

return with me

Saul and Samuel were apparently talking in private away from the other people.

ULT

²⁵ And now, please lift up my sin. And return with me so I may worship Yahweh.”

1 Samuel 15:26

for you have rejected the word of Yahweh

Samuel made it clear that Saul understood that he was disobeying God at the time when he spared the best animals and did not kill Agag.

rejected the word of Yahweh

“rejected Yahweh’s command” or “rejected Yahweh’s message.” This means that he refused to obey Yahweh’s command. Alternate translation: “refused to obey Yahweh’s command” (See: [Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information](#))

ULT

26 And Samuel said to Saul, “I will not return with you. For you have rejected the word of Yahweh, and Yahweh has rejected you from being king over Israel.”

1 Samuel 15:27

Saul took hold of the hem of his robe

Saul did this to try to stop Samuel from leaving. This can be stated explicitly. Alternate translation: "Saul tried to stop him by grabbing the edge of Samuel's robe" (See: [Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information](#))

the hem of his robe

"the edge of his robe" or "the fringe of his robe"

ULT

27 And Samuel turned around to go.
And he grabbed the edge of his robe,
and it was torn.

1 Samuel 15:28

Yahweh has torn the kingdom of Israel

This refers back to when Saul tore Samuel's robe in [1 Samuel 15:27](#). This can be made explicit. Alternate translation: "Just as you tore my robe, Yahweh has torn the kingdom of Israel" (See: [Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information](#))

has given it to a neighbor of yours, one who is better than you

God had already decided who would be the next king after Saul.

ULT

28 And Samuel said to him, "Yahweh has torn the kingdom of Israel from on you today. And he has given it to your companion, the better one than you."

1 Samuel 15:29

the Strength of Israel

Here Yahweh is referred to as “the Strength of Israel” because he gives strength to the Israelites. Alternate translation: “Yahweh, who is the strength of Israel” (See: [Idiom](#) and [Metonymy](#))

will not lie nor change his mind

This is stated as a negative to emphasize that God tells the truth. This can be stated in positive form. Alternate translation: “will always tell the truth and do what he says” (See: [Litotes](#))

his mind

This refers to his thoughts and decisions. Alternate translation: “what he has decided to do” (See: [Metonymy](#))

he is not a man, that he should change his mind

This is stated as a negative to emphasize that God is trustworthy. This can be stated in positive form. Alternate translation: “he is God, and will do what he says he will do” (See: [Litotes](#))

ULT

²⁹ And also, the Perpetual One of Israel will not act falsely and will not change his mind. For he is not a man, changing his mind.”

1 Samuel 15:30

But please honor me now before the elders

Saul may have been more interested in being honored by the people than in actually worshipping God.

before the elders of my people and before Israel

Here "Israel" refers to the people of Israel. Alternate translation: "before the people of Israel and the elders who lead them" (See: [Metonymy](#))

Turn again with me

"Come back with me" or "Return with me"

ULT

³⁰ And he said, "I have sinned! Now please honor me in front of the elders of my people and in front of Israel. And return with me, so I may worship Yahweh your God."

1 Samuel 15:31

So Samuel turned again after Saul

This implies that Samuel changed his mind, and that they went together to where the people were. Alternate translation: "So Samuel finally agreed to do that, and they went together back to where the people were"

ULT

³¹ And Samuel returned behind Saul.
And Saul worshiped Yahweh.

1 Samuel 15:32

Agag came to him confined with chains and said

“They brought Agag to him bound by chains and Agag said”

Surely the bitterness of death has past

This idiom appears to mean that Agag no longer thought he would be killed. Alternate translation: “Surely I am no longer in danger or dying” (See: [Idiom](#))

ULT

³² And Samuel said, “Bring near to me Agag the king of Amalek.” And Agag went to him in bonds. And Agag said, “Surely the bitterness of death has turned aside.”

1 Samuel 15:33

As your sword has made women childless, so shall your mother be childless among women

Both of these phrases have similar meaning and may be intended to be in poetic form. Alternate translation: "Since you have killed people, you will also be killed" (See: [Parallelism](#))

made women childless, so shall your mother be childless

This is a polite way of referring to killing people. Alternate translation: "killed the sons of other women, so shall I kill your mother's son" (See: [Euphemism](#))

Then Samuel chopped Agag to pieces

Samuel is the one who completed this task that Yahweh commanded Saul to do. Alternate translation: "Then Samuel cut Agag into pieces with his sword"

ULT

³³ And Samuel said, "Just as your sword has made women childless, so will your mother be made childless among women." And Samuel hacked Agag to pieces before the face of Yahweh at the Gilgal.

1 Samuel 15:34

Ramah ... Gibeah

These are the names of places. (See: [How to Translate Names](#))

went up to his house at Gibeah

Gibeah was higher in elevation than Gilgal where Saul and Samuel had been talking.

ULT

³⁴ And Samuel went to the Ramah. And Saul went up to his house at Gibeah of Saul.

1 Samuel 15:35

Samuel did not see Saul until the day of his death

“Samuel did not see Saul again for as long as he lived”

ULT

³⁵ And Samuel did not see Saul again until the day of his death, but Samuel mourned for Saul. And Yahweh regretted that he had caused Saul to reign over Israel.

1 Samuel 16

1 Samuel 16 General Notes

Structure and formatting

1 Samuel 16-31 Saul and David

Chapter 16 establishes God's choice of David to be the next king. David receives the Holy Spirit to empower and guide him as the king. This chapter also records the Holy Spirit leaving Saul because of his disobedience. (See: [Holy Spirit](#), [Spirit of God](#), [Spirit of the Lord](#), [Spirit](#))

Special concepts in this chapter

David chosen to be the next king

Humans judge others by what they look like, but God judges people by their true inner character. God rejected David's older brothers in favor of David, who truly loved and obeyed him. (See: [judge](#), [judgment](#) and [love](#), [beloved](#))

Important figures of speech in this chapter

==Rhetorical Question == God scolds Samuel with this rhetorical question for his unwillingness to accept God's decision: "How long will you mourn for Saul, since I have rejected him from being king over Israel?" It was wrong to mourn because it was God's punishment of Saul. (See: [Rhetorical Question](#))

1 Samuel 16:1

How long will you mourn for Saul, since I have rejected him from being king over Israel?

This rhetorical question is a rebuke from God and can be translated as a statement. Alternate translation: “Stop mourning that I rejected Saul from being king over Israel.” (See: [Rhetorical Question](#))

Fill your horn with oil

The term “horn” was sometimes used to refer to a “flask” that was shaped like a horn and was used for holding water or oil. A flask of oil was used for anointing a king.

ULT

¹ And Yahweh said to Samuel, “Until when will you be mourning for Saul, while I myself have rejected him from being king over Israel? Fill your horn with oil and go. I will send you to Jesse the Bethlehemite, for I have seen among his sons a king for me.”

1 Samuel 16:2

How can I go?

Samuel uses a question to emphasize that he is worried about going to Bethlehem. Alternate translation: "I cannot go!" or "I am afraid to go." (See: [Rhetorical Question](#))

with you and say

You can state the understood information. Alternate translation: "with you to Bethlehem and say to the people there" (See: [Ellipsis](#))

say, 'I have come to sacrifice to Yahweh.'

This has a quotation within a quotation. The direct quotation can be stated as an indirect quotation. Alternate translation: "say to the people there that you have come to sacrifice to Yahweh." (See: [Quotes within Quotes](#) and [Direct and Indirect Quotations](#))

ULT

² And Samuel said, "How can I go? If Saul hears, then he will slay me." And Yahweh said, "Take a heifer of the cattle in your hand and say, 'I have come to sacrifice to Yahweh.'

1 Samuel 16:3

(There are no notes for this verse.)

ULT

³ And call for Jesse at the sacrifice, and I myself will show you what you shall do. And you shall anoint for me whom I say to you.”

1 Samuel 16:4

The elders of the city were trembling as they came to meet him

It seems the elders were trembling because they were worried that Samuel came to rebuke them. (See: [Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information](#))

ULT

⁴ And Samuel did what Yahweh had spoken and he came to Bethlehem. And the elders of the city trembled to meet him and said, "Are you coming in peace?"

1 Samuel 16:5

In peace

This can be stated as a complete sentence. Alternate translation: "Yes, I have come in peace" (See: [Ellipsis](#))

to set ... apart

To set someone apart means to get that person ready for Yahweh's purposes by making sure that person is ritually clean according to the law of Moses.

ULT

⁵ And he said, "In peace; I have come to sacrifice to Yahweh. Consecrate yourselves and come with me to the sacrifice." And he consecrated Jesse and his sons and called them to the sacrifice.

1 Samuel 16:6

When they came

Here “they” refers to Jesse and his sons.

he looked at Eliab

Here “he” refers to Samuel.

Eliab

This is the name of Jesse’s oldest son. (See: [How to Translate Names](#))

standing before him

Here “him” refers to Yahweh.

ULT

⁶ And it happened when they came, that he saw Eliab. And he said, “Surely in front of Yahweh is his anointed one.”

1 Samuel 16:7

Yahweh does not see as man sees

Here “see” means to evaluate something. (See: [Metaphor](#))

For Yahweh does not see ... Yahweh looks

Yahweh is speaking about himself in the third person. Alternate translation: “For I, Yahweh, do not see ... I, Yahweh, look” (See: [First, Second or Third Person](#))

on the heart

Here “heart” represents a person’s inner being. (See: [Metonymy](#))

ULT

⁷ And Yahweh said to Samuel, “Do not look on his outward appearance or on the height of his stature because I have rejected him. For it is not what the man sees, for the man sees by the eyes, but Yahweh sees to the heart.”

1 Samuel 16:8

Abinadab

This is the name of one of Jesse's sons. (See: [How to Translate Names](#))

made him pass before Samuel

"told him to go to Samuel"

ULT

⁸ And Jesse called for Abinadab and made him pass over before the face of Samuel. And he said, "Also Yahweh has not chosen this one."

1 Samuel 16:9

Jesse then made Shammah pass by

It is understood that Shammah passed by Samuel. Alternate translation: "Jesse then made Shammah pass before Samuel" or "Jesse then told Shammah to go to Samuel" (See: [Ellipsis](#))

Shammah

This is the name of one of Jesse's sons. (See: [How to Translate Names](#))

ULT

⁹ And Jesse made Shammah pass over. And he said, "Also Yahweh has not chosen this one."

1 Samuel 16:10

(There are no notes for this verse.)

ULT

10 And Jesse made seven of his sons pass over before the face of Samuel. And Samuel said to Jesse, "Yahweh has not chosen among these."

1 Samuel 16:11

There remains yet the youngest

“There is still my youngest son”

we will not sit down

It is understood that they were waiting to sit down and eat. Alternate translation: “we will not sit down to eat” (See: [Ellipsis](#))

ULT

11 And Samuel said to Jesse, “Are your young men complete?” And he said, “The youngest one still remains, and behold, he is tending among the flock.” And Samuel said to Jesse, “Send and get him, for we will not turn around until he comes here.”

1 Samuel 16:12

Now ... appearance

The word "Now" is used here to mark a break in the main story line. Here the narrator tells about a new person in the story.

this son was ruddy

The word "ruddy" means David was healthy looking.

ULT

12 And he sent and brought him. (Now he was ruddy with beautiful eyes and a good appearance.) And Yahweh said, "Rise, anoint him, for this is he."

1 Samuel 16:13

the horn of oil

The term “horn” was sometimes used to refer to a “flask” that was shaped like a horn and was used for holding water or oil. A flask of oil was used for anointing a king. See how you translated a similar phrase in [1 Samuel 16:1](#).

Samuel rose up and went

It is implied that he rose up after they sat down to eat. (See: [Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information](#))

The Spirit of Yahweh rushed on David

The phrase “rushed on” means Yahweh’s Spirit influenced David. In this case it means he enabled David to fulfill whatever Yahweh wanted him to do. See how you translated a similar phrase in [1 Samuel 10:6](#).

ULT

13 And Samuel took the horn of oil and anointed him in the middle of his brothers. And the Spirit of Yahweh rushed on David from that day and onward. And Samuel rose and went to the Ramah.

1 Samuel 16:14

Now

This word is used here to mark a break in the main story line. Here the narrator starts to tell a new part of the story.

harmful spirit

This may refer to either a “spirit that causes trouble” or an “evil spirit.”

ULT

14 Now the Spirit of Yahweh turned aside from with Saul, and a spirit of evil from with Yahweh terrified him.

1 Samuel 16:15

(There are no notes for this verse.)

ULT

15 And the servants of Saul said to him,
“Behold, an evil spirit of God is
terrifying you.”

1 Samuel 16:16

Let our master now command

The servants refer to Saul in the third person as “our master.”
Alternate translation: “We ask that you, our master, command”
(See: [First](#), [Second](#) or [Third Person](#))

command your servants who are before you to look

The servants refer to themselves in the third person as “your servants.” Alternate translation: “command us, your servants who attend to you, to look” (See: [First](#), [Second](#) or [Third Person](#))

is on you

“troubles you”

ULT

16 Let our master please say to your servants before your face, “Seek a man who knows how to play on the lyre. And it will happen that when the evil spirit of God is on you, then he will play by his hand and it will be good for you.”

1 Samuel 16:17

(There are no notes for this verse.)

ULT

17 And Saul said to his servants, "See now for me a man who is good at playing and bring him to me."

1 Samuel 16:18

a strong, courageous man

This could mean: (1) “a great warrior” or (2) “a very brave man.”

one prudent in speech

“one wise in speech” or “one who speaks wisely”

Yahweh is with him

Here “with him” means Yahweh helps and blesses David. (See: [Idiom](#))

ULT

18 And one from the young men answered and said, “Behold, I have seen a son of Jesse the Bethlehemite, knowing how to play and mighty of strength and a man of war and discerning of word and a man of appearance. And Yahweh is with him.”

1 Samuel 16:19

(There are no notes for this verse.)

ULT

19 And Saul sent messengers to Jesse.
And he said, "Send to me David your
son, who is with the flock."

1 Samuel 16:20

(There are no notes for this verse.)

ULT

²⁰ And Jesse took a donkey, bread, and a skin of wine, and one kid of the goats, and he sent them by the hand of David his son to Saul.

1 Samuel 16:21

David came to Saul

Here “came” can be translated as “went.” (See: [Go and Come](#))

entered his service

The abstract noun “service” can be stated as a verb. Alternate translation: “began to serve him” (See: [Abstract Nouns](#))

he became his armor bearer

“David became Saul’s armor bearer”

ULT

21 And David came to Saul and he stood before his face. And he loved him greatly, and he became for him one who carried the equipment.

1 Samuel 16:22

Let David stand before me

Here “stand before me” is an idiom that means to continue in Saul’s service. Alternate translation: “Let David stay in my service” (See: [Idiom](#))

he has found favor in my eyes

Here “eyes” are a metonym for sight, and “my sight” represents how Saul judges or evaluates David. Alternate translation: “he has found favor in my judgment” or “I am pleased with him” (See: [Metonymy](#) and [Metaphor](#))

ULT

22 And Saul sent to Jesse, saying, “Let David now stand before my face, for he has found favor in my eyes.”

1 Samuel 16:23

harmful spirit

Here “harmful spirit” may refer to either a “spirit that causes trouble” or an “evil spirit.” See how you translated this in [1 Samuel 16:14](#).

was upon Saul

“troubled Saul”

Saul would be refreshed and well

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: “the music would refresh Saul and make him well” (See: [Active or Passive](#))

ULT

23 And it happened that whenever the spirit of God was on Saul, then David took the lyre and played by his hand. And it would be relief for Saul and good for him, and the spirit of evil would turn aside from on him.

1 Samuel 17

1 Samuel 17 General Notes

Structure and formatting

This chapter introduced David as a soldier, a skill that will be important for the rest of his life.

Special concepts in this chapter

David kills Goliath

Trust in God is more powerful than physical might or military training and equipment. David, trusting in the Lord and armed only with a sling, defeats Goliath who is well-armed and physically strong but who did not believe in Yahweh. (See: [trust](#), [trusted](#), [trustworthy](#), [trustworthiness](#) and [believe](#), [believer](#), [belief](#), [unbeliever](#), [unbelief](#))

Uncircumcised

The people of Israel often used the term “uncircumcised” to refer to Gentiles. Here it is used to describe the Philistines. (See: [circumcise](#), [circumcised](#), [circumcision](#), [uncircumcised](#), [uncircumcision](#))

Important figures of speech in this chapter

Rhetorical questions

David uses rhetorical questions to state his desire to fight the giant: “What will be done for the man who kills this Philistine and takes away the disgrace from Israel? Who is this uncircumcised Philistine that he should defy the armies of the living God?” (See: [Rhetorical Question](#))

His brother uses rhetorical questions to show his disdain for his younger brother, whom he thinks is pretending to be bigger than he really is: “Why did you come down here? With whom have you left those few sheep in the wilderness?” David defends himself with some questions: “What have I done now? Was it not just a question?”

Goliath also uses a rhetorical question to show his contempt for young David: “Am I a dog, that you come to me with sticks?”

1 Samuel 17:1

(There are no notes for this verse.)

ULT

¹ And the Philistines gathered their camps for the battle. And they were gathered at Sokoh, which is of Judah. And they camped between Sokoh and Azekah in Ephes Dammim.

1 Samuel 17:2

the Valley of Elah

This is the name of a place. (See: [How to Translate Names](#))

ULT

² And Saul and the men of Israel were gathered and they camped in the valley of Elah. And they arranged for battle to meet the Philistines.

1 Samuel 17:3

(There are no notes for this verse.)

ULT

³ Now the Philistines were standing on this mountain, and Israel was standing on that mountain. And the valley was between them.

1 Samuel 17:4

six cubits and a span

A cubit is a unit of measurement equal to about 46 centimeters. A span is a unit of measurement equal to about 23 centimeters. Alternate translation: "about 3 meters" (See: [Biblical Distance](#))

ULT

⁴ And a man of the space between came out from the camp of the Philistines, Goliath was his name, from Gath. His height was six cubits and a span.

1 Samuel 17:5

he was armed with a coat of chainmail

A "coat of chainmail" is a flexible piece of body armor covered with protective scales or small plates. This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "he protected himself by wearing a coat of chainmail" or "he wore a coat of chainmail" (See: [Active or Passive](#))

five thousand shekels

A shekel is a unit of weight equal to about 11 grams. Alternate translation: "about 55 kilograms" (See: [Biblical Weight](#))

ULT

⁵ And a helmet of bronze was on his head and he was wearing body armor of scales. And the weight of the body armor was 5,000 shekels of bronze.

1 Samuel 17:6

a javelin of bronze

A "javelin" is a small spear that is meant to be thrown.

ULT

⁶ And shin guards of bronze were on his legs. And a javelin of bronze was between his shoulders.

1 Samuel 17:7

staff of his spear

“the handle of his spear”

loop of cord

“rope rolled up into a circle”

His spear’s head

“The point of his spear”

six hundred shekels of iron

A shekel is a unit of weight equal to about 11 grams. Alternate translation: “about 7 kilograms” (See: [Biblical Weight](#))

ULT

⁷ And the wood of his spear was like the beam of those who weave. And the point of his spear was 600 iron shekels. And the one who carried his shield was going before his face.

1 Samuel 17:8

Why have you come out to draw up for battle?

“Why have you come to fight in battle against us?” Goliath uses this question to mock the Israelites. Alternate translation: “You are fools if you think you can fight in battle against us!” (See: [Rhetorical Question](#))

Am not I a Philistine, and are you not servants of Saul?

Goliath uses this question to mock the Israelites. When he says that he is a Philistine, he is implying that he is strong. Alternate translation: “I am a great Philistine, and you are merely servants of Saul.” (See: [Rhetorical Question](#))

ULT

⁸ And he stood and called out to the ranks of Israel, and he said to them, “Why have you come out to arrange for battle? Am not I a Philistine, and you, servants of Saul? Choose a man for yourselves and let him come down to me.

1 Samuel 17:9

(There are no notes for this verse.)

ULT

⁹ If he is able to fight with me and strike me down, then we will become servants for you. But if I prevail against him and strike him down, then you will become servants for us and you will serve us.”

1 Samuel 17:10

I challenge the ranks of Israel

“I challenge the army of Israel”

ULT

10 And the Philistine said, “I myself taunt the ranks of Israel this day. Give to me a man so we may fight together.”

1 Samuel 17:11

all Israel

This refers to the Israelite soldiers who were there.

they were discouraged and greatly afraid

The words “discouraged” and “greatly afraid” mean basically the same thing and emphasize the intensity of their fear. (See: [Doublet](#))

ULT

11 And Saul and all Israel heard these words of the Philistine. And they were dismayed and feared greatly.

1 Samuel 17:12

He had eight sons

“He” refers to Jesse.

Jesse was an old man ... very old among men

The two phrases mean basically the same thing and are combined for emphasis. (See: [Parallelism](#))

ULT

¹² Now David was the son of this Ephrathite man from Bethlehem in Judah, and his name was Jesse. And eight sons were for him. And the man was old in the days of Saul, coming among men.

1 Samuel 17:13

second to him Abinadab, and the third Shammah

“Abinadab the second born, and Shammah the third born.” This phrase shows birth order.

ULT

¹³ And the oldest three of the sons of Jesse had gone, they went after Saul to the battle. And the names of the three of his sons who went into the battle were Eliab the firstborn and his second Abinadab and the third Shammah.

1 Samuel 17:14

The three oldest

The implied information is that these are the sons of Jesse. Alternate translation: "The three oldest sons of Jesse" (See: [Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information](#))

ULT

14 Now David, he was the youngest. And the three oldest ones had gone after Saul.

1 Samuel 17:15

(There are no notes for this verse.)

ULT

¹⁵ But David was going and returning from with Saul to tend the flock of his father at Bethlehem.

1 Samuel 17:16

For forty days

“For 40 days” (See: [Numbers](#))

to present himself for battle

“to show that he was ready to fight”

ULT

16 And the Philistine came near at early morning and at evening. And he stationed himself 40 days.

1 Samuel 17:17

ephah

An ephah is a unit of measurement equal to about 22 liters. (See: [Biblical Volume](#))

ULT

17 And Jesse said to David his son, "Take now to your brothers an ephah of this roasted grain and ten loaves of this bread, and bring quickly to the camp, to your brothers.

1 Samuel 17:18

the captain of their thousand

“the captain of your brothers’ thousand.” This could mean: (1) the word “thousand” represents the exact amount of soldiers that this captain led. Alternate translation: “the captain of your brothers’ unit of 1,000 soldiers” or (2) the word translated as “thousand” does not represent exact number, but is the name of a large military division. Alternate translation: “the captain of your brothers’ military division” (See: [Numbers](#))

See how your brothers are doing

“Check and find out how your brothers are doing”

ULT

18 And bring these ten cuts of cheese to the commander of the thousand. And observe your brothers with respect to well-being and take their pledge.

1 Samuel 17:19

all the men of Israel

“all the soldiers of Israel”

the Valley of Elah

This is the name of a place. See how you translated it in [1 Samuel 17:2](#). (See: [How to Translate Names](#))

ULT

19 Now Saul and they and all the men of Israel are in the valley of Elah, fighting with the Philistines.”

1 Samuel 17:20

(There are no notes for this verse.)

ULT

²⁰ And David rose early in the morning and left the flock with one who keeps. And he carried and went, just as Jesse had commanded him. And he came to the entrenchment and the army was going out to the battle line and they shouted in the battle.

1 Samuel 17:21

(There are no notes for this verse.)

ULT

²¹ And Israel and the Philistines
arranged, battle line to meet battle line.

1 Samuel 17:22

(There are no notes for this verse.)

ULT

²² And David left the equipment from on him on the hand of one who keeps the equipment, and he ran to the battle line. And he came and asked his brothers with respect to well-being.

1 Samuel 17:23

Goliath by name

“whose name was Goliath”

came out of the ranks of the Philistines

“stepped forward from the Philistines’ battle line”

ULT

²³ And he was speaking with them, and behold, the man of the between space was coming up, Goliath the Philistine was his name, from Gath, from the ranks of the Philistines, and he spoke like these words. And David heard.

1 Samuel 17:24

(There are no notes for this verse.)

ULT

²⁴ And all the men of Israel, when they saw the man, they fled from his face and feared greatly.

1 Samuel 17:25

Have you seen this man who has come up?

The soldiers were saying this to draw one another's attention to the man Goliath. Alternate translation: "Look at this man who has come up!" (See: [Rhetorical Question](#))

The king

This refers to the king of Israel. Alternate translation: "Our king" (See: [Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information](#))

his daughter

This refers to the king's daughter.

to him ... his father's house

The words "him" and "his" refer to the man who kills Goliath.

will make his father's house free from taxation in Israel

The word "house" refers to the household or family. Alternate translation: "will no longer require his family to pay taxes" (See: [Metonymy](#))

ULT

²⁵ And the men of Israel said, "Have you seen this man who is coming up? Surely he is coming up to taunt Israel! And it will happen that the king will make rich with great wealth the man who strikes him down, and he will give his daughter to him, and he will make the house of his father free in Israel."

1 Samuel 17:26

takes away the disgrace from Israel

This can be expressed with the verb “disgrace.” Alternate translation: “stops Israel from being disgraced” or “stops him from disgracing Israel” (See: [Abstract Nouns](#))

Who is this uncircumcised Philistine that he should defy the armies of the living God?

David said this to show his anger that this Philistine was defying God’s army. Alternate translation: “This uncircumcised Philistine certainly has no power that he should defy the armies of the living God!” (See: [Rhetorical Question](#))

this uncircumcised Philistine

This phrase is an insult and indicates that Goliath does not belong to the living God.

ULT

²⁶ And David said to the men who were standing with him, saying, “What will be done for the man who strikes down this Philistine and removes the disgrace from on Israel? For who is this uncircumcised Philistine that he should taunt the ranks of the living God?”

1 Samuel 17:27

(There are no notes for this verse.)

ULT

²⁷ And the people said to him like this word, saying, "Thus it will be done for the man who strikes him down."

1 Samuel 17:28

Eliab's anger was kindled against David

Here anger is spoken of as if it were a fire that could be kindled. Alternate translation: "Eliab became angry with David" (See: [Metaphor](#))

Why did you come down here?

Eliab uses this question to show that he is angry that David came down. He was probably implying that David did not have a good reason for coming. Alternate translation: "You had no good reason to come here" (See: [Rhetorical Question](#))

With whom have you left those few sheep in the wilderness?

Eliab uses this question to insult David by making his work seem unimportant and by accusing him of not taking care of his father's sheep. Alternate translation: "You simply had the responsibility of watching over a few sheep in the wilderness. You could not even carry out that simple responsibility!" (See: [Rhetorical Question](#))

your pride, and the mischief in your heart

These two phrases mean basically the same thing and are combined for emphasis. (See: [Parallelism](#))

ULT

28 And Eliab his oldest brother heard when he spoke to the men. And the nose of Eliab burned against David, and he said, "Why is this—you came down? And with whom have you left those few sheep in the wilderness? I myself know your presumtuousness and the evil of your heart, for you have come down in order to see the battle!"

1 Samuel 17:29

What have I done now? Was it not just a question?

David used these questions to express his frustration and to justify himself. Alternate translation: "I have done nothing wrong. I was only asking a question!" (See: [Rhetorical Question](#))

ULT

²⁹ And David said, "What have I done now? Was it not a word?"

1 Samuel 17:30

He turned away from him

“He” refers to David and the word “him” refers to Eliab.

ULT

³⁰ And he turned around from beside him toward the front of another and spoke like this word. And the people returned a word to him like the first word.

1 Samuel 17:31

When the words that David said were heard

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: “When the soldiers heard what David said” (See: [Active or Passive](#))

ULT

³¹ And they heard the words that David spoke. And they told before the face of Saul, and he took him.

1 Samuel 17:32

Let no man's heart fail

The heart failing represents being terrified and losing confidence. Alternate translation: "Do not let anyone be terrified" or "Do not let anyone lose their confidence" (See: [Metonymy](#))

your servant will go

David spoke of himself as "your servant" to show respect to Saul. Alternate translation: "I, your servant, will go" (See: [First](#), [Second](#) or [Third Person](#))

ULT

³² And David said to Saul, "Do not let the heart of a man fall on himself. Your servant will go and fight with this Philistine."

1 Samuel 17:33

(There are no notes for this verse.)

ULT

³³ And Saul said to David, “You are not able to go against this Philistine to fight with him. For you are a boy, but he a man of war from his youth.”

1 Samuel 17:34

Your servant used to keep his father's sheep

David spoke of himself as "your servant" to show respect to Saul. See how you translated this in [1 Samuel 17:32](#). Alternate translation: "I, your servant, used to keep my father's sheep" (See: [First](#), [Second](#) or [Third Person](#))

used to keep his father's sheep

"used to take care of his father's sheep"

a bear

A bear is a large animal with thick fur and long claws and that walks on four legs but can stand on two legs as a person does.

ULT

³⁴ And David said to Saul, "Your servant has been tending for his father among the flock. And the lion or the bear has come and has carried a sheep from the flock."

1 Samuel 17:35

chased after him and attacked him

Here “him” refers to the lion or bear. Some languages would use the word “it” instead of “him.”

rescued it out of his mouth

Here “it” refers to the lamb.

he rose up against me

Here “rose up against” is an idiom that refers to attacking. Alternate translation: “it attacked me” (See: [Idiom](#))

caught him by his beard

The “beard” refers to the lion’s mane or the hair on the bear’s face.

ULT

³⁵ And I have gone out after it and struck it and rescued from its mouth. If it rose against me, then I would grasp its jaw and strike it down and put it to death.

1 Samuel 17:36

Connecting Statement:

David continues speaking to King Saul.

This uncircumcised Philistine

This phrase is an insult and indicates that Goliath does not belong to the living God. See how you translated this in [1 Samuel 17:26](#).

will be like one of them

David is saying that he will be able to kill the Philistine just as he was able to kill the lion and bear.

ULT

³⁶ Your servant has struck down both the lion and the bear. And this uncircumcised Philistine will be like one of them, for he has taunted the ranks of the living God.”

1 Samuel 17:37

from the paw of the lion and from the paw of the bear

Bears and lions use their paws when they attack, so the word “paw” represents the attack. Alternate translation: “from the attack of the lion and from the attack of the bear” or “from the lion and the bear” (See: [Metonymy](#))

the hand of this Philistine

The Philistine’s hand represents his power in fighting. Alternate translation: “the power of this Philistine” or “the Philistine” (See: [Metonymy](#))

ULT

³⁷ And David said, “Yahweh who has rescued me from the hand of the lion and from the hand of the bear, he will rescue me from the hand of this Philistine.” And Saul said to David, “Go, and Yahweh be with you.”

1 Samuel 17:38

coat of chainmail

a flexible piece of body armor covered with protective scales or small plates

ULT

38 And Saul clothed David with his garments and put a helmet of bronze on his head. And he clothed him with body armor.

1 Samuel 17:39

his sword on his armor

“Saul’s sword on the armor”

ULT

³⁹ And David strapped on his sword over his garments and he undertook to walk because he had not trained. And David said to Saul, “I am not able to walk with these, for I have not trained.” And David removed them from on him.

1 Samuel 17:40

his staff in his hand

Here “his” refers to David.

His sling was in his hand

A sling is a weapon for throwing stones.

ULT

40 And he took his staff in his hand and chose for himself five smooth stones from the wadi, and he put them in the bag of the shepherds that belonged to him, even in the pouch, and his sling was in his hand. And he came near to the Philistine.

1 Samuel 17:41

with his shield bearer in front of him

“and his shield bearer walked in front of him”

ULT

41 And the Philistine came, coming on and near to David. And the man who carried the shield was before his face.

1 Samuel 17:42

he despised him

“he hated him”

and ruddy

“and healthy looking”

ULT

⁴² And the Philistine looked and saw David, and he despised him, for he was a boy, and ruddy with a beautiful appearance.

1 Samuel 17:43

Am I a dog, that you come to me with sticks?

Here a dog represents a small animal that a person can easily kill. The word “sticks” refers to David’s staff and shows Goliath’s opinion that it is not a good weapon. Goliath uses this question to accuse David of insulting him. Alternate translation: “You insult me by coming at me with mere sticks as if I were just a dog!” (See: [Metaphor](#) and [Rhetorical Question](#))

ULT

43 And the Philistine said to David, “Am I a dog, that you are coming to me with staves?” And the Philistine cursed David by his gods.

1 Samuel 17:44

I will give your flesh to the birds of the heavens and to the beasts of the field

Goliath speaks of killing David and leaving his body on the ground for the animals to eat it as if he were to give David's body to the animals. Alternate translation: "I will kill you, and the birds of the heavens and the beasts of the field will eat your body" (See: [Metaphor](#))

birds of the heavens

"birds of the sky" or "birds"

beasts of the field

"wild animals"

ULT

⁴⁴ And the Philistine said to David,
"Come to me, and let me give your flesh
to the bird of the heavens and to the
beast of the field."

1 Samuel 17:45

in the name of Yahweh

Here “name” represents God’s power or authority. Alternate translation: “with the power of Yahweh” or “with the authority of Yahweh” (See: [Metonymy](#))

whom you have defied

“whom you have provoked” or “whom you have insulted”

ULT

45 And David said to the Philistine, “You are coming to me with sword and with spear and with javelin. But I am coming to you in the name of Yahweh of hosts, the God of the ranks of Israel, whom you have taunted.”

1 Samuel 17:46

Connecting Statement:

David continues speaking to Goliath.

I will give the dead bodies ... to the birds ... and to the wild beasts of the earth

David speaks of leading the Israelites in killing the Philistines and leaving their bodies on the ground for the animals to eat them as if he were to give their bodies to the animals. Alternate translation: "We Israelites will kill the Philistine army, and the birds of the heavens and the wild beasts of the earth will eat them" (See: [Metaphor](#))

all the earth may know

The word "earth" refers to the people on earth. Alternate translation: "all the people of the earth may know" (See: [Metonymy](#))

ULT

46 This day Yahweh will deliver you into my hand, and I will strike you down and remove your head from on you. And this day I will give the corpse of the army of the Philistines to the bird of the heavens and to the living thing of the earth. And all the earth will know that there is a God for Israel.

1 Samuel 17:47

Yahweh does not give victory with sword or spear

Swords and spears are examples of battle weapons. They represent human ways of fighting. Alternate translation: “The victory that Yahweh gives does not depend on sword and spear” or “when Yahweh gives us victory, he does not depend on how we fight” (See: [Metonymy](#))

the battle is Yahweh’s

Winning the battle is spoken of as owning the battle. Alternate translation: “Yahweh always wins the battle” or “the victory belongs to Yahweh” (See: [Metonymy](#))

he will give you into our hand

Giving the Philistines into Israel’s hand represents helping Israel to defeat the Philistines in battle. Alternate translation: “he will help us defeat you” (See: [Metonymy](#))

ULT

⁴⁷ And all this assembly will know that Yahweh does not save by sword or by spear. For the battle belongs to Yahweh, and he will give you into our hand.”

1 Samuel 17:48

(There are no notes for this verse.)

ULT

⁴⁸ And it happened when the Philistine rose and went and came near to meet David, that David hurried and ran to the battle line to meet the Philistine.

1 Samuel 17:49

(There are no notes for this verse.)

ULT

⁴⁹ And David sent his hand into his bag, and took a stone from there, and slung. And it struck the Philistine on his forehead. And the stone sank into his forehead and he fell on his face to the ground.

1 Samuel 17:50

David defeated ... He hit ... killed ... There was no sword in David's hand

Verse 50 is a summary of David's amazing victory over Goliath. The details about how he hit and killed Goliath are in [1 Samuel 17:49](#) and [17:51](#). Some languages do not use summary statements like this. In those situations, translators may restructure the verses as they are in the UST.

ULT

⁵⁰ And David was stronger than the Philistine with the sling and with the stone. And he struck down the Philistine and put him to death. (Now there was no sword in the hand of David.)

1 Samuel 17:51

Then David ran and stood over the Philistine

David did this after Goliath fell to the ground in [1 Samuel 17:49](#).

took his sword

“took the Philistine’s sword.” Here the word “his” refers to Goliath.

ULT

⁵¹ And David ran and stood over the Philistine and took his sword and drew it from its sheath and put him to death and cut off his head with it. And the Philistines saw that their strong man was dead and they fled.

1 Samuel 17:52

The dead Philistines lay along the way to Shaaraim

It can be stated clearly that the Israelites were killing the Philistines as they chased them. Alternate translation: "And they killed the Philistines as they chased them, and the bodies of the dead Philistines were on the ground along the way to Shaaraim" (See: [Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information](#))

ULT

⁵² And the men of Israel and Judah rose and they shouted and pursued the Philistines as far as your coming to the valley and as far as the gates of Ekron. And the pierced ones of the Philistines fell on the way of Shaaraim and as far as Gath and as far as Ekron.

1 Samuel 17:53

they plundered their camp

“the Israelites plundered the Philistines’ camp”

ULT

⁵³ And the sons of Israel returned from burning after the Philistines. And they plundered their camp.

1 Samuel 17:54

he put his armor in his tent

“he put Goliath’s armor in his own tent”

ULT

⁵⁴ And David took the head of the Philistine and brought it to Jerusalem. And he set his equipment in his tent.

1 Samuel 17:55

When Saul saw David

The conversation in 17:55-56 happened before David killed Goliath. Alternate translation: “When Saul had seen David” or “Earlier when Saul saw David” (See: [Order of Events](#))

go out against the Philistine

“go to fight against the Philistine”

whose son is this youth

“who is this youth’s father”

As you live

This was a way of swearing that what he was about to say was true.

ULT

55 Now as soon as Saul saw David going out to meet the Philistine, he said to Abner the commander of the army, “This boy is the son of whom, Abner?” And Abner said, “As your self is alive, king, if I know!”

1 Samuel 17:56

whose son the boy is

“who the boy’s father is”

ULT

⁵⁶ And the king said, “You ask the son of whom is this boy.”

1 Samuel 17:57

in his hand

Here “his” refers to David.

ULT

57 And as soon as David returned from striking down the Philistine, then Abner took him and brought him before the face of Saul. And the head of the Philistine was in his hand.

1 Samuel 17:58

Whose son are you

“Who is your father?”

I am the son of your servant Jesse the Bethlehemite

“My father is your servant Jesse, the Bethlehemite.”

your servant Jesse

David referred to his father as “your servant” to show that his father was faithful to King Saul.

ULT

⁵⁸ And Saul said to him, “The son of whom are you, boy?” And David said, “The son of your servant Jesse the Bethlehemite.”

1 Samuel 18

1 Samuel 18 General Notes

Structure and formatting

This is the first chapter of a section explaining why Saul wants to kill David.

Some translations set each line of poetry farther to the right than the rest of the text to make it easier to read. The ULT does this with the poetic song in 18:7.

Special concepts in this chapter

Saul is jealous of David's popularity

Saul's son, Jonathan, loves David. David is successful in battling the Philistines, and Saul is happy until the women give David more attention than they give him. He fears that David will replace him as king. This is potentially confusing because the author has already established that David will be the next king. It is probably that Saul feared David would kill him in order to be the next king sooner, or that he did not really believe David would be the next king. (See: [love](#), [beloved](#))

Jonathan's love of David

Some scholars believe Jonathan loved David as a man loves his wife. There is no reason to translate this as if Jonathan were a homosexual. Instead, treat this as a brotherly type of love.

1 Samuel 18:1

the soul of Jonathan was bound to the soul of David

Very close friendship is spoken of as if it were binding together the souls of two people. This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "Jonathan felt a strong affection towards David" or "Jonathan committed himself to David" (See: [Metaphor](#) and [Active or Passive](#))

Jonathan loved him as his own soul

Here "loved" refers to the love between friends, not romantic love. The word "soul" represents the person or the person's life. Alternate translation: "Jonathan loved David as much as he loved himself" or "Jonathan loved David as he loved his own life" (See: [Synecdoche](#))

ULT

¹ And it happened as soon as he finished speaking to Saul, that the self of Jonathan was bound to the self of David. And Jonathan loved him like his own self.

1 Samuel 18:2

(There are no notes for this verse.)

ULT

² And Saul took him on that day. And he did not give him to return to the house of his father.

1 Samuel 18:3

Jonathan loved him as his own soul

Here “loved” refers to the love between friends, not romantic love. The word “soul” represents the person or the person’s life. See how you translated this in [1 Samuel 18:1](#). Alternate translation: “Jonathan loved David as much as he loved himself” or “Jonathan loved David as he loved his own life” (See: [Synecdoche](#))

ULT

³ And Jonathan cut a covenant with David because he loved him like his own self.

1 Samuel 18:4

(There are no notes for this verse.)

ULT

⁴ And Jonathan stripped himself of the robe that was on him and he gave it to David, and his garments and even to his sword and even to his bow and even to his belt.

1 Samuel 18:5

he succeeded

“he prospered”

This was pleasing in the eyes of all the people and also in the sight of Saul’s servants

The phrases “in the eyes of” and “in the sight of” mean the same thing. The opinion of the people is spoken of as something that they view as either good or bad. Alternate translation: “This was pleasing in the opinions of all the people and of Saul’s servants” or “This pleased all the people and Saul’s servants” (See: [Metaphor](#))

ULT

⁵ And David went out, he succeeded at wherever Saul sent him. And Saul set him over the men of war. And he was good in the eyes of all the people and also in the eyes of the servants of Saul.

1 Samuel 18:6

from all the cities of Israel

This is generalization that emphasizes the great number of women who came from many cities. Alternate translation: “from many of the cities throughout Israel” (See: [Hyperbole](#))

with tambourines, with joy, and with musical instruments

“joyfully playing tambourines and other musical instruments”

with tambourines

A “tambourine” is a small handheld drum.

ULT

⁶ And it happened when they came, when David returned from striking down the Philistine, that the women came out from all the cities of Israel to sing with the dancing ones, to meet Saul the king, with tambourines, with joy, and with three-stringed instruments.

1 Samuel 18:7

David his ten thousands

The verb may be supplied from the previous line. Alternate translation: "David has killed his ten thousands" (See: [Ellipsis](#))

ULT

⁷ And the women sang who were playing, and said: "Saul has struck down his thousands, and David his ten thousands."

1 Samuel 18:8

They have ascribed

“They have credited”

What more can he have but the monarchy?

This rhetorical question can be translated as a statement. Alternate translation: “The only thing left for him to have is the kingship.” (See: [Rhetorical Question](#))

ULT

⁸ And it burned greatly for Saul, and this thing was evil in his eyes. And he said, “They have given to David ten thousands, but to me they have given the thousands. And only the kingship is yet for him!”

1 Samuel 18:9

(There are no notes for this verse.)

ULT

⁹ And it happened that Saul looked at David with suspicion from that day and onward.

1 Samuel 18:10

a harmful spirit from God

Here “harmful spirit” may refer to either “a spirit that causes trouble” or “an evil spirit.” See how you translated this in [1 Samuel 16:15](#).

a harmful spirit from God rushed upon Saul

The phrase “rushed upon” means the harmful spirit influenced Saul. In this case it means it caused Saul to be troubled and act crazy. See how you translated a similar phrase in [1 Samuel 10:6](#).

he raved

“he acted crazy”

ULT

10 And it happened from the next day that an evil spirit of God rushed on Saul and he prophesied in the midst of the house. And David was playing by his hand, as day by day. And the spear was in the hand of Saul.

1 Samuel 18:11

(There are no notes for this verse.)

ULT

11 And Saul hurled the spear, and he said, "I will strike David, even into the wall!" But David turned around from his face two times.

1 Samuel 18:12

Yahweh was with him

“Yahweh was with David”

ULT

¹² And Saul was afraid from before the face of David. For Yahweh was with him but had turned aside from with Saul.

1 Samuel 18:13

So Saul removed him from his presence

“So Saul removed David from his presence”

a commander of a thousand

This could mean: (1) the word “thousand” represents the exact amount of soldiers that he would lead. Alternate translation: “a commander of 1,000 soldiers” or (2) the word translated as “thousand” does not represent exact number, but is the name of a large military division. Alternate translation: “a commander of a large military division” See how you translated a similar phrase in [1 Samuel 17:18](#). (See: [Numbers](#))

ULT

13 And Saul removed him from with him and set him as a commander of a thousand for himself. And he went out and came in before the face of the people.

David went out and came in before the people

Here “the people” refers to the soldiers under David’s command. The phrases “went out” and “came in” are idioms that refer to leading the people into battle and leading them home from battle. Alternate translation: “David led his soldiers into battle and led them home from battle” (See: [Idiom](#) and [Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information](#))

1 Samuel 18:14

(There are no notes for this verse.)

ULT

14 And David was succeeding in all his ways. And Yahweh was with him.

1 Samuel 18:15

he stood in awe of him

Here “stood in awe” is an idiom that means to fear. Alternate translation: “he feared David” (See: [Idiom](#))

ULT

15 And Saul saw that he was succeeding greatly. And he dreaded his face.

1 Samuel 18:16

all Israel and Judah loved David

Here “Israel and Judah” represent the people of all of the tribes.
Alternate translation: “all the people in Israel and Judah loved David”
(See: [Metonymy](#))

ULT

16 But all Israel and Judah were loving David, for he was going out and coming in before their face.

went out and came in before them

The phrases “went out” and “came in” are idioms that refer to leading the people into battle and leading them home from battle. See how you translated this in [1 Samuel 18:13](#). Alternate translation: “led his soldiers into battle and led them home from battle” (See: [Idiom](#))

1 Samuel 18:17

Let not my hand be on him, but let the hand of the Philistines be on him

Harming someone is spoken of as if it were placing one's hand on that person. Here, Saul is referring to killing David. Alternate translation: "I will not be the one to kill him; I will let the Philistines kill him" (See: [Metaphor](#) and [Euphemism](#))

ULT

17 And Saul said to David, "Behold, my oldest daughter Merab. I will give her to you for a wife. Only become for me a son of strength and fight the battles of Yahweh." And Saul said, "Let not my hand be against him, but let the hand of the Philistines be against him."

1 Samuel 18:18

Who am I, and who are my relatives, or my father's clan in Israel ... to the king?

David uses this rhetorical question to emphasize that he is not worthy of being Saul's son-in-law. Alternate translation: "I am nobody and neither my relatives nor my father's family are important enough in Israel ... to the king." (See: [Rhetorical Question](#))

son-in-law to the king

"husband of the king's daughter"

ULT

¹⁸ And David said to Saul, "Who am I, and who are my relatives of the clan of my father in Israel, that I should be son-in-law to the king?"

1 Samuel 18:19

when Merab, Saul's daughter, should have been given to David

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "when Saul should have given his daughter Merab to David" (See: [Active or Passive](#))

she was given to Adriel

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "Saul gave her to Adriel" (See: [Active or Passive](#))

ULT

¹⁹ And it happened at the time to give Merab the daughter of Saul to David, that she was given to Adriel the Meholathite for a wife.

1 Samuel 18:20

Michal ... loved David

Here “loved” means she had romantic feelings for David.

They told Saul

Here “they” refers to people who found out about Michal’s feelings, not to David and Michal.

ULT

²⁰ And Michal the daughter of Saul loved David. And they told Saul and the matter was right in his eyes.

1 Samuel 18:21

that the hand of the Philistines may be against him

Harming someone is spoken of as if it were placing one's hand on that person. Here, Saul is referring to killing David. See how you translated a similar phrase in [1 Samuel 18:17](#). Alternate translation: "so that the Philistines may kill him" (See: [Metaphor](#) and [Euphemism](#))

You will be my son-in-law

"You will be the husband of my daughter"

ULT

²¹ And Saul said, "I will give her to him and may she become a snare for him and may the hand of the Philistines be against him." And Saul said to David a second time, "You will be a son-in-law of mine today."

1 Samuel 18:22

all his servants love you

“all of his servants admire you”

Now then

“For these reasons you should”

ULT

²² And Saul commanded his servants, “Speak to David in secrecy, saying, ‘Behold, the king delights in you and all his servants love you. And now, become a son-in-law of the king.’”

1 Samuel 18:23

Is it a small matter to you to be the king's son-in-law, since I am a poor man, and lightly esteemed?

David asks this rhetorical question to emphasize that he is not worthy to be the king's son-in-law. Alternate translation: "It is a great matter to be the king's son-in-law, and I am too poor and unimportant for that." (See: [Rhetorical Question](#))

ULT

²³ And the servants of Saul spoke these words in the ears of David. And David said, "Is it insignificant in your eyes to be a son-in-law of the king? And I am a poor man and lightly esteemed."

1 Samuel 18:24

(There are no notes for this verse.)

ULT

²⁴ And the servants of Saul told him, saying, "Like these words David spoke."

1 Samuel 18:25

The king does not desire any price for the bride except a hundred foreskins

The verb for the second phrase may be supplied from the first. Alternate translation: "The king does not desire any price for the bride; he desires only that you bring to him 100 foreskins" (See: [Ellipsis](#) and [Numbers](#))

foreskins

The foreskin is a fold of skin on a man's private part that is removed during circumcision.

to be avenged from the king's enemies

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "to get revenge on the king's enemies" (See: [Active or Passive](#))

to make David fall by the hand of the Philistines

Here "fall" means to die. The phrase "by the hand" is an idiom that tells us the means by which something will happen, in this case, David will be killed by the Philistines. This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "to have the Philistines kill David" (See: [Euphemism](#) and [Idiom](#) and [Active or Passive](#))

ULT

²⁵ And Saul said, "Thus you shall say to David, 'There is no desire of the king for the bride price, except for a hundred foreskins of the Philistines, to be avenged on the enemies of the king.'" (Now Saul thought to make David fall by the hand of the Philistines.)

1 Samuel 18:26

(There are no notes for this verse.)

ULT

²⁶ And his servants told David these words, and the word was right in the eyes of David, to become son-in-law of the king. And the days were not fulfilled.

1 Samuel 18:27

two hundred Philistines

This can be rendered numerically. Alternate translation: "200 Philistines" (See: [Numbers](#))

they gave them in full number to the king

"David and his men gave all of them to the king"

ULT

27 And David rose and went, he and his men, and he struck down 200 men among the Philistines. And David brought their foreskins and they fulfilled them for the king, to become son-in-law of the king. And Saul gave to him Michal his daughter for his wife.

1 Samuel 18:28

Saul saw, and he knew

Here the words “saw” and “knew” share similar meanings and emphasize that Saul knew with certainty. Alternate translation: “Saul recognized” (See: [Doublet](#))

Michal, Saul’s daughter, loved him

Here “loved” means she had romantic feelings for David.

ULT

28 And Saul saw and he knew that Yahweh was with David and Michal the daughter of Saul loved him.

1 Samuel 18:29

(There are no notes for this verse.)

ULT

²⁹ And Saul added to be more afraid from the face of David. And Saul was being hostile to David all the days.

1 Samuel 18:30

so that his name was highly regarded

Here “name” is a metonym for David. This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: “so that people greatly respected David” (See: [Metonymy](#) and [Active or Passive](#))

ULT

30 And the commanders of the Philistines came out. And it happened that as often as they came out, David was more successful than all the servants of Saul and his name became greatly esteemed.

1 Samuel 19

1 Samuel 19 General Notes

Special concepts in this chapter

God protects David

Jonathan persuades Saul not to kill David, but Saul again becomes jealous and orders his servants to bring David to him to be killed. God uses Michal to save David. David flees to Samuel and they begin prophesying. When Saul sends servants to capture David, they begin prophesying. This causes Saul to go himself and he begins to prophesy. (See: [jealous](#), [jealousy](#) and [save](#), [saved](#), [safe](#), [salvation](#) and [prophet](#), [prophecy](#), [prophesy](#), [seer](#), [prophetess](#))

1 Samuel 19:1

to all his servants

Here “his” refers to Saul.

took great pleasure in David

Jonathan greatly enjoyed being with David.

ULT

¹ And Saul spoke to Jonathan his son and to all his servants to put David to death. But Jonathan the son of Saul delighted greatly in David.

1 Samuel 19:2

(There are no notes for this verse.)

ULT

² And Jonathan told David, saying, "Saul my father is seeking to put you to death. And now, please be on guard in the morning and stay in the hiding place and hide yourself."

1 Samuel 19:3

(There are no notes for this verse.)

ULT

³ As for me, I will go out and stand by the hand of my father in the field there where you are, and I myself will speak of you to my father. And I will see whatever and I will tell you.”

1 Samuel 19:4

Do not let the king sin against his servant

Jonathan speaks as if Saul is another person to show Saul that Jonathan respects Saul. Alternate translation: "Do not sin against your servant" (See: [Pronouns](#))

ULT

⁴ And Jonathan spoke good of David to Saul his father and said to him, "Do not let the king sin against his servant, against David. For he has not sinned against you and indeed his deeds were very good for you.

1 Samuel 19:5

he took his life in his hand

Here “life in his hand” is an idiom that refers to risking his life.
Alternate translation: “he risked his life” (See: [Idiom](#))

Why would you sin against innocent blood by killing David for no reason?

Jonathan asks this question to rebuke Saul. This rhetorical question can be translated as a statement. Alternate translation: “You should not sin against innocent blood and kill David without cause.” (See: [Rhetorical Question](#))

sin against innocent blood

Here “blood” is a metonym for the life of an innocent person. Alternate translation: “commit the sin of murder” (See: [Metonymy](#))

ULT

⁵ And he set his life in his palm and struck down the Philistine. And Yahweh made a great salvation for all Israel. You saw and rejoiced. And why would you sin against innocent blood by putting David to death without cause?”

1 Samuel 19:6

he will not be put to death

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: “I will not put him to death” or “I will not kill him” or “I will certainly keep him alive” (See: [Active or Passive](#))

ULT

⁶ And Saul listened to the voice of Jonathan. And Saul swore, “As Yahweh is alive, he shall not be put to death!”

1 Samuel 19:7

he was in his presence

David was in Saul's presence.

ULT

⁷ And Jonathan called out to David, and Jonathan told him all these words. And Jonathan brought David to Saul and he was before his face as yesterday and three days ago.

1 Samuel 19:8

(There are no notes for this verse.)

ULT

⁸ And there was war again. And David went out and fought with the Philistines and struck them a great blow. And they fled from his face.

1 Samuel 19:9

A harmful spirit from Yahweh

Here “harmful spirit” may refer to either “a spirit that causes trouble” or “an evil spirit.” See how you translated this in [1 Samuel 16:14](#).

ULT

⁹ And an evil spirit of Yahweh was on Saul and he was sitting in his house and his spear was in his hand. And David was playing by hand.

1 Samuel 19:10

pin David to the wall with the spear

throw his spear so it would go through David and into the wall

ULT

10 And Saul sought to strike into David with the spear, even into the wall, but he escaped from the face of Saul, and he struck the spear into the wall. And David fled and slipped away on that night.

1 Samuel 19:11

he might kill him

“Saul might kill David”

Michal ... told him

Michal told David

If you do not save your life

Here “save your life” is an idiom that refers to escape. Alternate translation: “If you do not escape” (See: [Idiom](#))

you will be killed

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: “someone will kill you” (See: [Active or Passive](#))

ULT

11 And Saul sent messengers to the house of David to watch him and to put him to death in the morning. And Michal his wife told David, saying, “If you do not save your life tonight, tomorrow you will be put to death.”

1 Samuel 19:12

General Information:

Michal helps David escape King Saul. She uses a household idol to make David's bed look like he is sleeping in it.

ULT

12 And Michal lowered David out through the window. And he went and fled and slipped away.

1 Samuel 19:13

she put a pillow of goats' hair at its head, and covered it with the clothes

This could mean: (1) the head of the idol was lying on the goat's hair pillow and Michal dressed the idol in David's clothes or (2) Michal used David's clothes as a blanket to completely cover the idol and made the "pillow" of goat's hair look like David's hair sticking out from under the blanket of clothes.

ULT

¹³ And Michal took the household idol and put it on the bed. And she put a quilt of the goats at the place of its head. And she covered it with the clothes.

1 Samuel 19:14

General Information:

Saul acts out his desire to kill David.

take David

“take David back to Saul”

she said

Here “she” refers to Michal.

ULT

14 And Saul sent messengers to take David. And she said, “He is sick.”

1 Samuel 19:15

Bring him up to me in the bed

The reason why the men thought David was in bed can be made explicit. Alternate translation: "If he really is too sick to come to me, bring me the bed with him in it" (See: [Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information](#))

ULT

15 And Saul sent the messengers to see David, saying, "Bring him up to me in the bed to put him to death."

1 Samuel 19:16

pillow of goats' hair

See how you translated this in [1 Samuel 19:13](#).

behold

The word “behold” here shows that the messengers were surprised by what they saw.

ULT

16 And the messengers came, and behold, the household idol was on the bed! And the quilt of the goats was at the place of its head.

1 Samuel 19:17

Why have you deceived me and let my enemy go, so that he has escaped?

This could mean: (1) Saul really wants to know why Michal did what she did or (2) Saul uses this question to rebuke Michal. This rhetorical question can be translated as a statement. Alternate translation: "You should not have deceived me and let my enemy go, so that he has escaped." (See: [Rhetorical Question](#))

Let me go. Why should I kill you?

Although David did not actually say this, Michal tells Saul that David threatened her with this question. This rhetorical question can be translated as a statement. Alternate translation: "I will kill you if you do not help me to escape." (See: [Rhetorical Question](#))

ULT

¹⁷ And Saul said to Michal, "Why have you deceived me like so and sent away my enemy, so that he slipped away?" And Michal said to Saul, "He himself said to me, 'Send me away. Why should I put you to death?'"

1 Samuel 19:18

General Information:

David flees to Samuel.

Now

This word is used here to show that the writer has started to tell a new part of the story.

ULT

18 Now David fled and slipped away and came to Samuel in the Ramah and told him all that Saul had done to him. And he and Samuel went and stayed in Naioth.

1 Samuel 19:19

It was told to Saul

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "Someone told Saul" (See: [Active or Passive](#))

See

"Look" or "Listen" or "Pay attention to what I am about to tell you"

ULT

19 And it was told to Saul, saying,
"Behold, David is in Naioth in the
Ramah."

1 Samuel 19:20

standing as head over them

Here “head” refers to a position of authority. Alternate translation: “acting as their leader” (See: [Metonymy](#))

ULT

20 And Saul sent messengers to take David. And they saw the company of the prophets prophesying, and Samuel was standing, stationed over them. And the Spirit of God was on the messengers of Saul and they also prophesied.

1 Samuel 19:21

When Saul was told this

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: “When someone told Saul this” (See: [Active or Passive](#))

ULT

21 And they told Saul and he sent other messengers and they also prophesied. And Saul did again and sent messengers a third time, and they also prophesied.

1 Samuel 19:22

Ramah ... Seku ... Naioth

These are place names. (See: [How to Translate Names](#))

ULT

²² And he went, he also, to the Ramah and came as far as the great cistern that is in Seku. And he asked and said, "Where are Samuel and David?" And one said, "Behold, in Naioth in the Ramah."

1 Samuel 19:23

(There are no notes for this verse.)

ULT

²³ And he went there to Naioth in the Ramah. And the Spirit of God was on him, him also, and he went along and he prophesied until he entered in Naioth in the Ramah.

1 Samuel 19:24

This is why they ask, “Is Saul also among the prophets?”

This became a proverb among the Israelites. Apparently people said this to express surprise when a person unexpectedly did something that he had not done before. The implied meaning of the question can be stated explicitly. See how you translated this in [1 Samuel 10:12](#). Alternate translation: “That is the reason that when people see someone doing something that is very unexpected, they say, ‘Is Saul also a prophet?’” (See: [Proverbs](#) and [Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information](#))

they ask

Here “they” refers to people in general. The question became a proverb among the people.

ULT

²⁴ And he also stripped off his clothes and he also prophesied before the face of Samuel. And he lay naked all that day and all the night. Therefore they said, “Is Saul also among the prophets?”

1 Samuel 20

1 Samuel 20 General Notes

Special concepts in this chapter

Jonathan warns David

David tells Jonathan that Saul is still trying to kill him. Jonathan promises to find out if this is true. When David misses dinner two consecutive days, Saul asks about him. Jonathan says that David went home for an annual sacrifice. Saul gets angry at Jonathan, telling him he will never be king unless they kill David. Saul throws his spear at Jonathan. Jonathan warns David to run away, but first they both promise to always be friends. It was usually a king's son who became king after his death in the ancient Near East. (See: [Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information](#))

Important figures of speech in this chapter

Metaphor

David uses a powerful metaphor and an oath to impress Jonathan with the danger he is in: "But as truly as Yahweh lives, and as you live, there is but a step between me and death." (See: [Metaphor](#))

1 Samuel 20:1

What have I done? What is my iniquity? What is my sin before your father, that he seeks to take my life?

These three questions mean basically the same thing. David uses them to emphasize that he has done nothing wrong to Saul. This rhetorical question can be translated as a statement. Alternate translation: "I have done nothing wrong. I have not committed any iniquity. I have not sinned against your father. He has no reason to take my life." (See: [Parallelism](#) and [Rhetorical Question](#))

that he seeks to take my life?

Here "take my life" is an idiom for "kill me." (See: [Idiom](#))

ULT

¹ And David fled from Naioth in the Ramah. And he came and said before the face of Jonathan, "What have I done? What is my iniquity? And what is my sin before the face of your father, that he is seeking my life?"

1 Samuel 20:2

Far from it

Here “far from it” is an idiom that refers to that it is not true. Alternate translation: “This is certainly not true” (See: [Idiom](#))

nothing either great or small

The words “great or small” include everything in between. Alternate translation: “nothing at all” (See: [Merism](#))

Why should my father hide this thing from me?

Jonathan uses this question to emphasize that Saul would have told him if he planned to kill David. This rhetorical question can be translated as a statement. Alternate translation: “My father has no reason to hide this thing from me!” or “If this thing were true, my father would certainly let me know!” (See: [Rhetorical Question](#))

It is not so

“It is not true”

ULT

² And he said to him, “Far from it! You will not die. Behold, my father does not do a great thing or a small thing and not uncover my ear. And why would my father hide this thing from me? There is not this!”

1 Samuel 20:3

I have found favor in your eyes

Here the eyes represent seeing, and seeing represents thoughts or judgment. Alternate translation: "I have pleased you" or "you consider me favorably" (See: [Metaphor](#))

he will be grieved

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "this will grieve him" or "he will be very sad" (See: [Active or Passive](#))

there is but a step between me and death

Here "step between me and death" is an idiom that refers to being very close to death. Alternate translation: "I am very close to death" (See: [Idiom](#))

ULT

³ And David swore again and said, "Your father surely knows that I have found favor in your eyes. And he said, 'Do not let Jonathan know this, lest he be grieved.' But indeed, as Yahweh is alive, and as your soul is alive, surely between me and death is like a step!"

1 Samuel 20:4

General Information:

David proposes a test against King Saul to Jonathan.

ULT

⁴ And Jonathan said to David, "Whatever your self says, I will do for you."

1 Samuel 20:5

Tomorrow is the new moon

On the first of every month the people would celebrate and offer sacrifices to God.

until the third day at evening

“until the evening of the day after tomorrow”

ULT

⁵ And David said to Jonathan, “Behold, the new moon is tomorrow, and surely I should sit with the king to eat. But you shall send me away and I will hide myself in the field until the third evening.”

1 Samuel 20:6

Connecting Statement:

David's continues to describe the test he proposes.

asked leave of me

"asked me if I would allow him to leave"

ULT

⁶ If your father misses me at all, then you shall say, 'David earnestly asked from me to run to Bethlehem, his city, for the sacrifice of the days is there for all the clan.'

1 Samuel 20:7

he says ... he is ... he has decided

The word “he” refers to Saul.

your servant will have peace

David speaks of himself as if he were another person to show that he respects Jonathan. Alternate translation: “I, your servant, will have peace” (See: [Pronouns](#))

ULT

⁷ If thus he says, ‘Good,’ peace is for your servant. But if it burns intensely for him, know that the evil is completed from with him.

1 Samuel 20:8

Connecting Statement:

David continues speaking to Jonathan.

with your servant ... have brought your servant

David speak of himself in the third person as a form of humility.
Alternate translation: "with me, your servant ... have brought me, your servant" or "with me ... have brought me" (See: [Pronouns](#))

ULT

⁸ And you shall do covenant faithfulness with your servant. For you have brought your servant into a covenant of Yahweh with you. But if there is iniquity in me, put me to death yourself. And why should you bring me as far as your father?"

you have brought your servant into a covenant of Yahweh with you

What it was that the two men agreed on can be made explicit. Alternate translation: "Yahweh heard you when you made a solemn agreement with me that you and I will always be good friends" (See: [Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information](#))

for why then should you bring me to your father?

This rhetorical question can be translated as a statement. Alternate translation: "then there would be no reason for you to bring me to your father" (See: [Rhetorical Question](#))

1 Samuel 20:9

Far be it from you!

This is an idiom that means it will never happen to you. Alternate translation: "This will never happen to you!" (See: [Idiom](#))

would I not tell you?

This rhetorical question can be translated as a statement. Alternate translation: "I would certainly tell you." (See: [Rhetorical Question](#))

ULT

⁹ And Jonathan said, "Far be it for you! For if I ever know that the evil has been completed from with my father to come on you, then will I not tell it to you?"

1 Samuel 20:10

(There are no notes for this verse.)

ULT

10 And David said to Jonathan, "Who will tell me if what your father answers you is harsh?"

1 Samuel 20:11

(There are no notes for this verse.)

ULT

11 And Jonathan said to David, "Come and let us go out to the field." And the two of them went out to the field.

1 Samuel 20:12

see

“look” or “listen” or “pay attention to what I am about to tell you”

if there is good will

“if my father wants to do good things for you”

will I not then send to you and make it known to you?

Jonathan uses this question to emphasize that he will tell David if Saul intends to harm him. This rhetorical question can be translated as a statement. Alternate translation: “then I will certainly send to you and make it known to you” (See: [Rhetorical Question](#))

ULT

12 And Jonathan said to David, “By Yahweh the God of Israel, surely I will sound out my father around this time tomorrow, or the third. If behold, good is to David, then will I not then send to you and uncover your ear?”

1 Samuel 20:13

may Yahweh do to Jonathan and more also

This is an idiom. Jonathan uses this oath for emphasis and speaks of himself as if he were another person. Alternate translation: “may Yahweh do to me whatever harm my father intends to do to you, and even more than that” (See: [Idiom](#) and [Pronouns](#))

ULT

13 Thus may Yahweh do to Jonathan and thus may he add if the evil on you is good to my father and I do not uncover your ear and send you away, so you may go in peace! And may Yahweh be with you just as he was with my father.

1 Samuel 20:14

General Information:

Jonathan asks David not to completely kill all his offspring so that a remnant will remain.

will you not show me the covenant faithfulness of Yahweh, that I may not die?

Jonathan asks this question to confirm that David will do this. This rhetorical question can be translated as a statement. Alternate translation: “please show me the covenant faithfulness of Yahweh, that I may not die” (See: [Rhetorical Question](#))

show me the covenant faithfulness of Yahweh

The abstract noun **faithfulness** can be stated as **faithful**. Here, **of Yahweh** could mean: (1) “be faithful to me as Yahweh is faithful” or (2) “be faithful to me as Yahweh requires” (See: [Abstract Nouns](#))

ULT

14 And if I am still alive, then you will do the covenant faithfulness of Yahweh with me, and I will not die. ^[1]

1 Samuel 20:15

(There are no notes for this verse.)

ULT

15 And you shall not cut off your covenant faithfulness from with my house until eternity, not even when Yahweh cuts off the enemies of David, a man from on the face of the ground.”

1 Samuel 20:16

house of David

The word “house” is a metonym for the people who live in the house. Alternate translation: “David’s family” (See: [Metonymy](#))

May Yahweh require an accounting from the hand of the enemies of David

The hand is a synecdoche for the person. This could mean: (1) “May Yahweh use David’s enemies to punish David if David breaks this promise” or (2) “May Yahweh destroy the enemies of David.” (See: [Synecdoche](#))

ULT

16 And Jonathan cut with the house of David, “And may Yahweh seek from the hand of the enemies of David!”

1 Samuel 20:17

he loved him as he loved his own soul

Here “his own soul” refers to himself. Alternate translation: “Jonathan loved David as much as he loved himself” (See: [Synecdoche](#))

ULT

17 And Jonathan caused David to swear again because he loved him. For he loved him like the loving of his self.

1 Samuel 20:18

You will be missed

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: “My father will miss you” (See: [Active or Passive](#))

ULT

18 And Jonathan said to him, “Tomorrow is the new moon. And you will be missed because your seat will be missing.”

1 Samuel 20:19

when the business was in hand

Here “business was in hand” is an idiom that refers to when everything happened. Alternate translation: “when everything happened” (See: [Idiom](#))

the stone Ezel

“Ezel” was the name of the stone. Alternate translation: “the stone that people call Ezel” (See: [How to Translate Names](#))

ULT

19 And the third day you shall go down greatly and come to the place there where you hid yourself on the day of the deed. And you shall stay beside the stone Ezel.

1 Samuel 20:20

Connecting Statement:

Jonathan continues to speak to David.

to the side of it

Here the word "it" refers to the stone by which David was to hide.

ULT

²⁰ And as for me, I will shoot three arrows to the side of it, as sending forth for me to a target.

1 Samuel 20:21

my young man ... the young boy

These refer to the same person.

Look

“Listen” or “Pay attention to what I am about to tell you”

then come

“then you, David, come”

ULT

²¹ And behold, I will send the boy, ‘Go find the arrows.’ If I say clearly to the boy, ‘Behold, the arrows are on this side from you; take them,’ then come; for peace is for you and there is no matter, as Yahweh is alive.

1 Samuel 20:22

Connecting Statement:

Jonathan continues to speak to David.

ULT

²² But if I say thus to the boy, 'Behold, the arrows are beyond from you,' go, for Yahweh has sent you away.

1 Samuel 20:23

see, Yahweh

This could mean: (1) “we know that Yahweh” or (2) “pay attention because this is important: Yahweh.”

Yahweh is between you and me

This could mean: (1) “Yahweh is a witness between you and me” or “Yahweh will be watching how we treat each other” or (2) “May Yahweh be a witness between you and me” or “May Yahweh watch how we treat each other”

ULT

²³ As for the word which I and you have spoken, behold, Yahweh is between me and you until eternity.”

1 Samuel 20:24

(There are no notes for this verse.)

ULT

²⁴ And David hid himself in the field.
And it was the new moon, and the king
sat at the food to eat.

1 Samuel 20:25

Jonathan stood up

Some ancient copies have “Jonathan sat across from him.” (See: [Original Manuscripts](#))

ULT

²⁵ And the king sat on his seat, as time by time, on the seat by the wall. And Jonathan rose, and Abner sat by the side of Saul. And the place of David was missing.

1 Samuel 20:26

He is not clean; surely he is not clean

According to the law of Moses, a person who is ceremonially unclean is not to participate in the feast until the priest declares that he is clean. Saul repeats this phrase as if he is trying to convince himself.

ULT

²⁶ And Saul did not speak anything on that day, for he said, "It is an accident. He is not clean, surely not clean."

1 Samuel 20:27

(There are no notes for this verse.)

ULT

²⁷ And it happened on the next day of the new moon, the second, that the place of David was missing. And Saul said to Jonathan his son, "Why has the son of Jesse not come to the food both yesterday and today?"

1 Samuel 20:28

asked permission from me to go

“asked me to allow him to go”

ULT

²⁸ And Jonathan answered Saul, “David earnestly asked from with me as far as Bethlehem.”

1 Samuel 20:29

if I have found favor in your eyes

Here the eyes represent seeing, and seeing represents thoughts or judgment. See how you translated this in [1 Samuel 20:3](#). Alternate translation: "I have pleased you" or "you consider me favorably" (See: [Metaphor](#))

the king's table

Jonathan speaks of Saul as if he is another person to show that he respects Saul. Alternate translation: "your table" (See: [Pronouns](#))

ULT

29 And he said, 'Please send me away. For the sacrifice of our clan is in the city, and he, my brother, has commanded me. And now, if I have found favor in your eyes, please let me slip away and let me see my brothers.' Therefore he has not come to the table of the king."

1 Samuel 20:30

Saul's anger burned against Jonathan

Here "anger burned" is a metonym that refers to becoming very angry. Alternate translation: "Saul became very angry with Jonathan" (See: [Metonymy](#))

You son of a perverse, rebellious woman!

This is an idiom. Saul uses this phrase as a harsh rebuke to Jonathan and his concern for David. Alternate translation: "You stupid son of a prostitute" or "You stupid traitor" (See: [Idiom](#))

Do I not know that you have chosen the son of Jesse ... mother's nakedness?

Saul uses this question to emphasize that he knows that Jonathan and David are friends. This rhetorical question can be translated as a statement. Alternate translation: "I know that you have chosen the son of Jesse ... mother's nakedness." (See: [Rhetorical Question](#))

to the shame of your mother's nakedness

Here "mother's nakedness" is an idiom that refers to the mother who gave birth to you. Alternate translation: "to the shame of your mother who gave birth to you" (See: [Idiom](#))

ULT

30 And the nose of Saul burned against Jonathan, and he said to him, "Son of a perverse, rebellious woman! Do I not know that you are choosing the son of Jesse to your shame, and to the shame of the nakedness of your mother?"

1 Samuel 20:31

neither you nor your kingdom will be established

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: “you will not become king and will not establish your kingdom” (See: [Active or Passive](#))

ULT

³¹ For all the days that the son of Jesse lives on the earth, you and your kingdom will not be established. And now, send and take him to me, for he is a son of death.”

1 Samuel 20:32

For what reason should he be put to death? What has he done?

Jonathan is trying to get Saul to think carefully about what he is doing. This can be translated as a statement, and the words "should he be put to death" can be translated in active form. Alternate translation: "You have no good reason to put him to death. He has done nothing wrong." or "You have no good reason to kill him. He has done nothing wrong." (See: [Rhetorical Question](#))

ULT

³² And Jonathan answered Saul his father, and he said to him, "Why should he be put to death? What has he done?"

1 Samuel 20:33

(There are no notes for this verse.)

ULT

³³ And Saul hurled the spear at him to strike him down. And Jonathan knew that it was completed from with his father to put David to death.

1 Samuel 20:34

the second day of the month

This “second” is an ordinal number which refers to two. Alternate translation: “the second day of the new moon festival” (See: [Ordinal Numbers](#))

he was grieved over David

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: “he was grieving over David” (See: [Active or Passive](#))

had dishonored him

Here “him” refers to David.

ULT

³⁴ And Jonathan rose from with the table with a burning nose. And he did not eat food on the second day of the new moon, for he was grieved for David, because his father had dishonored him.

1 Samuel 20:35

a young man was with him

Here "him" refers to Jonathan.

ULT

³⁵ And it happened in the morning, that Jonathan went out to the field to the appointment with David. And a small boy was with him.

1 Samuel 20:36

he shot an arrow beyond him

“Jonathan shot an arrow beyond the young man”

ULT

³⁶ And he said to his boy, “Run, find now the arrows that I am about to shoot.” The boy ran and he shot the arrow to pass over him.

1 Samuel 20:37

Is not the arrow beyond you?

Jonathan uses this question to emphasize that the arrow is farther ahead of the young man. The uses of litotes also emphasizes this. The rhetorical question can be translated as a statement. Alternate translation: "You should know that the arrow is beyond you." or "The arrow is far beyond you." (See: [Rhetorical Question](#) and [Litotes](#))

ULT

37 And the boy came as far as the place of the arrow that Jonathan had shot. And Jonathan called after the boy and said, "Is not the arrow beyond from you?"

1 Samuel 20:38

called after the young man, "Hurry

"called out to the young man, who was running away from him, 'Hurry"

ULT

38 And Jonathan called after the boy, "Quickly hurry! Do not stay!" And the boy of Jonathan picked up the arrows and came to his master.

1 Samuel 20:39

(There are no notes for this verse.)

ULT

³⁹ Now the boy did not know anything.
Only Jonathan and David knew the
matter.

1 Samuel 20:40

(There are no notes for this verse.)

ULT

⁴⁰ And Jonathan gave his weapons to the boy who was for him. And he said to him, "Go, bring to the city."

1 Samuel 20:41

the mound

It seems that David had hidden behind a pile of earth or stones.

lay facedown on the ground, and bowed himself three times.

David bowed before Jonathan, who was still the King's son, worthy of such respect. Also, this was the last time David met with Jonathan.

ULT

41 The boy went, and David rose from beside the south, and fell before his face to the ground, and bowed three times. And they kissed, a man with his companion. And they wept, a man with his companion, until David did the most. [\[2\]](#)

1 Samuel 20:42

May Yahweh be between you and me

This could mean: (1) “Yahweh is a witness between you and me” or “Yahweh will be watching how we treat each other” or (2) “May Yahweh be a witness between you and me” or “May Yahweh watch how we treat each other.” See how you translated this in [1 Samuel 20:23](#).

ULT

42 And Jonathan said to David, “Go in peace, because we, the two of us, have sworn in the name of Yahweh, saying, ‘Yahweh is between me and you, and between my seed and your seed until eternity.’” And he rose and went, and Jonathan came to the city. ^[3]

1 Samuel 21

1 Samuel 21 General Notes

Structure and formatting

Some translations set each line of poetry farther to the right than the rest of the text to make it easier to read. The ULT does this with the poetic song in 21:11.

Special concepts in this chapter

David and the chief priest

David visits the chief priest and lies to him about being on a special mission for the king. He asks for food, weapons, and prayer. The chief priest gives him some sacred bread and Goliath's sword and prays for him.

David and the king of Gath

David flees to Gath. The advisers to the king tell him that David is almost the king of Israel. David becomes afraid of the king and pretends to be insane.

Important figures of speech in this chapter

Rhetorical questions

The king of Gath's advisers use two rhetorical questions to warn him about how dangerous David could be: "Is not this David the king of the land? Did they not sing to one another about him in dances, 'Saul has killed his thousands, and David his ten thousands?'" (See: [Rhetorical Question](#))

1 Samuel 21:1

Nob

This is the name of a place. (See: [How to Translate Names](#))

Ahimelech

This is a man's name. (See: [How to Translate Names](#))

trembling

shaking in fear

ULT

¹ And David came to Nob to Ahimelech the priest. And Ahimelech trembled to meet David and said to him, "Why are you by yourself and there is no man with you?" ^[1]

1 Samuel 21:2

on a mission

“to do work for him”

I have directed the young men to a certain place

“I have told the young men to go to another place, and I will meet them there later”

ULT

² And David said to Ahimelech the priest, “The king has commanded me with a matter and has said to me, ‘Do not let a man know anything about the matter which I am sending you, and which I have commanded you.’ And I have caused the young men to know about a certain place, a certain one.”

1 Samuel 21:3

Now then

David is starting a new part of the conversation.

what do you have on hand?

Here “on hand” is a metonym meaning “available.” Alternate translation: “What food do you have that you can give me?” (See: [Metonymy](#))

Give me five loaves of bread

This is a polite request.

ULT

³ And now what is there under your hand? Give five bread loaves into my hand, or the found thing.”

1 Samuel 21:4

ordinary bread

bread that the priests have not used in worship

if the young men have kept themselves from women

This can be translated as a complete sentence. Alternate translation: "Your men may eat it if they have not slept with women recently" (See: [Ellipsis](#))

ULT

⁴ And the priest answered David and said, "There is no common bread toward under my hand. But there is the holy bread, if the young men have kept themselves only from women."

1 Samuel 21:5

women have been kept from us

This can be translated in active form. Alternate translation: “we have kept ourselves from women” (See: [Active or Passive](#))

three days

“3 days” (See: [Numbers](#))

when I set out

“when I begin a journey”

The things belonging to the men have been set apart

This can be translated in active form. Alternate translation: “The men have set what belongs to them apart” (See: [Active or Passive](#))

How much more today will what they have be set apart

This is a statement, not a question. It can be translated in active form. Alternate translation: “It is especially true today that they will set apart what they have” (See: [Active or Passive](#))

ULT

⁵ And David answered the priest and said to him, “Surely a woman has been kept away with respect to us as yesterday and three days ago, as whenever I have gone out. And the vessels of the men have been holy, even though it was a common journey. And how much more today will it be holy with the vessels!”

1 Samuel 21:6

the bread that was set apart

This can be translated in active form. Alternate translation: “the bread that the priests had set apart” (See: [Active or Passive](#))

which was removed from before Yahweh, in order to put

This can be translated in active form. Alternate translation: “which the priests had removed from before Yahweh so that they could put” (See: [Active or Passive](#))

ULT

⁶ And the priest gave to him the holy thing. For bread was not there except the bread of the face, which was removed from before the face of Yahweh, in order to put hot bread on the day it was taken away.

1 Samuel 21:7

detained before Yahweh

This could mean: (1) Doeg had some religious work regarding Yahweh to do there. Alternate translation: “for some work before Yahweh” or (2) Yahweh detained Doeg there. Alternate translation: “because Yahweh had detained him there” (See: [Active or Passive](#))

Doeg ... herdsman

You may need to say clearly that Doeg saw what David did. Alternate translation: “Doeg ... herdsman, and he saw what Ahimelech did” (See: [Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information](#))

Doeg the Edomite

This is the name of a man from the land of Edom. (See: [How to Translate Names](#))

herdsman

the keepers and protectors of a herd, especially of cattle or sheep

ULT

⁷ Now a man from the servants of Saul was there on that day, he was detained before the face of Yahweh. And his name was Doeg the Edomite, a powerful one of the herders who were for Saul.

1 Samuel 21:8

Now is there not here on hand any spear or sword?

Here “on hand” is a metonym meaning “available.” See how you translated this in [1 Samuel 21:3](#). Alternate translation: “Do you have a spear or sword that you can give me?” (See: [Metonymy](#))

weapons

a general name for such things as swords, knives, bows and arrows, and spears

ULT

⁸ And David said to Ahimelech, “Now is there not here under your hand a spear or sword? For both my sword and my weapons I did not take in my hand, because the matter of the king was urgent.”

1 Samuel 21:9

Valley of Elah

This is the name of a place in Israel. (See: [How to Translate Names](#))

ULT

⁹ And the priest said, "The sword of Goliath the Philistine, whom you struck down in the valley of Elah, behold, it is wrapped in the cloak behind the ephod. If you want to take it for yourself, take, for there is no other except it in this place." And David said, "There is none like it. Give it to me."

1 Samuel 21:10

(There are no notes for this verse.)

ULT

10 And David rose and fled on that day from the face of Saul. And he came to Achish the king of Gath.

1 Samuel 21:11

Is not this David, the king of the land?

They were probably exaggerating when they said that David was king of the land. They used this question to imply that David was a powerful enemy and Achish should not let him stay there. Alternate translation: "You know that this is David, who is as dangerous as the king of the land" (See: [Hyperbole](#) and [Rhetorical Question](#) and [Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information](#))

Did they not sing to one another about him in dances, 'Saul ... thousands?'

This rhetorical question can be translated as a statement. Alternate translation: "You know that when the people of the land were dancing, they sang to each other about him, 'Saul ... thousands.'" (See: [Rhetorical Question](#))

ULT

11 And the servants of Achish said to him, "Is this not David the king of the land? Did they not sing with respect to this one in the dances, saying, 'Saul has struck down his thousands, and David his ten thousands?'"

1 Samuel 21:12

David took these words to heart

Here “took ... to heart” is a metonym to think seriously about what was said. Alternate translation: “David thought seriously about what the servants said” (See: [Metonymy](#))

ULT

12 And David put these words in his heart and was very afraid from the face of Achish the king of Gath.

1 Samuel 21:13

in their hands

Here “hands” are a synecdoche for the person. Alternate translation: “in their presence” (See: [Synecdoche](#))

ULT

13 And he changed his behavior in their eyes and pretended to be insane in their hand. And he made marks on the doors of the gate and caused his saliva to go down to his beard.

1 Samuel 21:14

Why have you brought him to me?

This could mean: (1) Achish demands that his servants explain why they have brought David to him or (2) Achish is scolding them with a rhetorical question. Alternate translation: "You should have known not to bring him to me." (See: [Rhetorical Question](#))

ULT

14 And Achish said to his servants,
"Behold, you see a man being insane.
Why did you bring him to me?"

1 Samuel 21:15

Do I lack madmen, so that you have brought this fellow to behave like one in my presence?

This rhetorical question is a rebuke. Alternate translation: “There are enough madmen here who waste my time. You should not have brought this fellow to behave like one in my presence.” (See: [Rhetorical Question](#) and [Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information](#))

Will this fellow really come into my house?

This rhetorical question can be translated as a statement. Alternate translation: “Do not allow this fellow to enter my house.” (See: [Rhetorical Question](#))

ULT

¹⁵ Do I lack insane men, so that you have brought this one to be insane near me? Should this one enter into my house?”

1 Samuel 22

1 Samuel 22 General Notes

Structure and formatting

There are two stories in this chapter: David gathering a group of followers and Saul having all the priests and their families killed. (See: [priest](#), [priesthood](#))

Special concepts in this chapter

David assembles a force of unhappy people

David hides in the wilderness, and people in trouble come to him. Soon he has a force of 500 men. The prophet then tells him to leave the wilderness. (See: [prophet](#), [prophecy](#), [prophesy](#), [seer](#), [prophetess](#))

Saul and the chief priest's family

Doeg tells Saul that Ahimelech the priest gave David food and a sword and prayed for him. Saul accuses the priests of encouraging David to rebel. This is a serious accusation because the priests are God's representatives and are rebelling against God's king if the accusation is true. Saul has the priests and all their families killed except those who escape to David. (See: [high priest](#), [chief priests](#))

1 Samuel 22:1

cave

a hollow space under the ground, generally opening into the side of a hill, large enough for people to enter

Adullam

This is the name of a town near the city of Gath. (See: [How to Translate Names](#))

heard it

heard that David had gone to hide in the cave

ULT

1 And David went from there and slipped away to the cave of Adullam. And his brothers and all the house of his father heard, and they went down there to him.

1 Samuel 22:2

Everyone who was in distress ... everyone who was discontented

This is a generalization. Alternate translation: "Many people who were distressed ... many people who were unhappy" (See: [Hyperbole](#))

captain

military officer who leads soldiers

four hundred

"400" (See: [Numbers](#))

ULT

² And they gathered to him: every man of distress, and every man for whom was a creditor, and every man bitter of spirit. And he became commander over them. And they were with him, about 400 men.

1 Samuel 22:3

Then David went from there

“Then David went from the cave at Adullam”

Mizpah

This is the name of a city. (See: [How to Translate Names](#))

go out with you

David wanted his parents to live with the king of Moab so that King Saul would not be able to harm them. Translators can express his basic meaning by using the ideas of “come to stay with you,” “stay with you,” or “live here with you,” as in the UST.

ULT

³ And David went from there to Mizpah of Moab. And he said to the king of Moab, “Please let my father and my mother go out with you until when I know what God will do for me.”

1 Samuel 22:4

(There are no notes for this verse.)

ULT

⁴ And he led them into the face of the king of Moab. And they stayed with him all the days of David being in the stronghold.

1 Samuel 22:5

go into the land of Judah

“go to your home land of Judah”

Hereth

This is the name of a city. (See: [How to Translate Names](#))

ULT

⁵ And Gad the prophet said to David,
“Do not stay in the stronghold. Go and
come for yourself to the land of Judah.”
And David went and came to the forest
of Hereth.

1 Samuel 22:6

David had been discovered, along with the men who were with him

Saul was most interested in David, so the writer mentions the other men separately. This can be translated in active form. Alternate translation: "someone had discovered where David and all the men who were with him were hiding" (See: [Active or Passive](#))

the tamarisk tree

This is a type of tree. Alternate translation: "a large shade tree" (See: [Translate Unknowns](#))

in Ramah

Ramah is the name of a place in Gibeah. The name means "high place." This could mean: (1) it refers here to the place called Ramah, or (2) it refers to any high place. Alternate translation: "on a hill"

ULT

⁶ And Saul heard that David was known, and the men who were with him. Now Saul was sitting in the Gibeah under the tamarisk tree on the height, and his spear was in his hand, and all his servants were stationed beside him.

1 Samuel 22:7

Will the son of Jesse give every one of you fields and vineyards?

Saul uses a question to emphasize that David, who is from the tribe of Judah, does not desire to do this for the people of the tribe of Benjamin. Alternate translation: “The son of Jesse will not give you fields or vineyards.” (See: [Rhetorical Question](#))

Will the son of Jesse give

The time when he will give can be made explicit. Alternate translation: “When the son of Jesse becomes king, will he give” (See: [Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information](#))

the son of Jesse

“David”

Will he make you all captains of thousands and captains of hundreds

Saul uses a question to emphasize that David, who is from the tribe of Judah, does not desire to do this for the people of the tribe of Benjamin. Alternate translation: “He will not make you captains of thousands and captains of hundreds” (See: [Rhetorical Question](#))

Will he make you all captains

You may need to make explicit when he will make them captains. Alternate translation: “When he becomes king, will he make you all captains” (See: [Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information](#))

captains of thousands and captains of hundreds

This could mean: (1) these numbers represent the exact amount of soldiers that these captains led. Alternate translation: “captains of 1,000 soldiers and captains of 100 soldiers” or (2) the words translated as “thousands” and “hundreds” do not represent exact numbers, but are the names of larger and smaller military divisions. Alternate translation: “captains of large military divisions and captains of smaller military divisions” See how you translated a similar phrase in [1 Samuel 17:18](#). (See: [Numbers](#))

ULT

⁷ And Saul said to his servants who were stationed beside him, “Listen now, Benjaminites! Will the son of Jesse give fields and vineyards even to all of you? Will he make all of you commanders of thousands and commanders of hundreds?”

1 Samuel 22:8

Connecting Statement:

This continues what Saul said to his servants.

ULT

⁸ For all of you have conspired against me! And there was no uncovering my ear when my son cut with the son of Jesse. And there was no grieving from you for me or uncovering my ear that my son has raised up my servant against me to lie in ambush as this day."

1 Samuel 22:9

Doeg the Edomite

This is the name of a man. See how you translated this in [1 Samuel 21:7](#). (See: [How to Translate Names](#))

Nob ... Ahimelech

This is a place name and the name of a man. See how you translated this in [1 Samuel 21:1](#). (See: [How to Translate Names](#))

Ahitub

This is the name of a man. (See: [How to Translate Names](#))

ULT

⁹ And Doeg the Edomite answered (now he was stationed beside the servants of Saul) and said, "I saw the son of Jesse. He came to Nob, to Ahimelech the son of Ahitub.

1 Samuel 22:10

He prayed to Yahweh that he might help him, and he gave him

Ahitub prayed to Yahweh that Yahweh might help David, and Ahitub gave David

ULT

¹⁰ And he inquired of Yahweh for him, and he gave provisions to him. And he gave to him the sword of Goliath the Philistine.”

1 Samuel 22:11

(There are no notes for this verse.)

ULT

11 And the king sent to call Ahimelech the son of Ahitub the priest and all the house of his father, the priests who were in Nob. And all of them came to the king.

1 Samuel 22:12

(There are no notes for this verse.)

ULT

¹² And Saul said, "Listen now, son of Ahitub." And he said, "Here I am, my master."

1 Samuel 22:13

in that you have given

“by giving”

rise up

“rebel” or “fight”

ULT

13 And Saul said to him, “Why have you conspired against me, you and the son of Jesse, by your giving to him bread, and a sword, and inquiring of God for him, to rise up against me, to lie in ambush, as this day?”

1 Samuel 22:14

Who among all your servants is so faithful as David ... house?

This rhetorical question can be translated as a statement. Alternate translation: "None of your servants is as faithful as David ... house." (See: [Rhetorical Question](#))

bodyguard

a person or group of people who protect someone

is honored in your house

The word "house" is a metonym for the family that lives in the house. This can be translated in active form. Alternate translation: "whom your family honors" (See: [Metonymy](#) and [Active or Passive](#))

ULT

¹⁴ And Ahimelech answered the king and said, "Now who among all your servants is faithful like David, the son-in-law of the king, and commander over your guards, and is honored in your house?"

1 Samuel 22:15

Is today the first time I have prayed to God to help him?

Ahimelech asks himself this question before Saul can ask it, then immediately answers it. This rhetorical question can be translated as a statement. Alternate translation: "This is not the first time I have prayed to God to help David." (See: [Rhetorical Question](#))

Far be it from me!

This idiom means "Absolutely not!" (See: [Idiom](#))

Do not let the king impute anything to his servant or to all the house of my father. For your servant knows nothing

Ahimelech speaks of himself in the third person as the "servant." Ahimelech also refers to Saul in the third person as "the king." Ahimelech speaks this way to show respect to Saul. Alternate translation: "Please, King Saul, do not consider me, your servant, or anyone in the house of my father to be guilty. For I know nothing" (See: [First](#), [Second](#) or [Third Person](#))

impute

to consider someone guilty

to all the house of my father

Here "house" represents "family." Alternate translation: "to all my father's family" (See: [Metonymy](#))

ULT

¹⁵ Did I begin to inquire of God for him today? Far be it for me! Do not let the king set a word against his servant, against all the house of my father. For your servant does not know of any of this, small matter or great."

1 Samuel 22:16

your father's house

The word "house" is a metonym for the family that lives in the house. Alternate translation: "your father's family" or "your father's descendants" (See: [Metonymy](#))

ULT

16 And the king said, "You will surely die, Ahimelech, you and all the house of your father!"

1 Samuel 22:17

the guard that stood around him

“the soldiers standing nearby to protect him”

Turn and kill

Here “Turn” means to turn around or turn away from the king.
Alternate translation: “Go and kill” or “Kill” (See: [Idiom](#))

their hand also is with David

The word “hand” is a metonym for the work done with the hand.
Alternate translation: “they also help David” (See: [Synecdoche](#))

would not put out their hand to kill

The word “hand” is a metonym for the work done with the hand. Alternate translation: “did not do anything to kill” or “refused to kill” (See: [Metonymy](#))

ULT

17 And the king said to the ones who run, the ones who were stationed beside him, “Turn around and put to death the priests of Yahweh, because their hand also is with David, and because they knew that he was fleeing, but did not uncover my ear.” But the servants of the king were not willing to send forth their hand to attack the priests of Yahweh.

1 Samuel 22:18

Turn and kill the priests ... turned and attacked the priests

Here “Turn” means to turn around or turn away from the king. See how you translated this in [1 Samuel 22:17](#). Alternate translation: “Go and kill the priests ... went and attacked” or “Kill the priest ... attacked the priests” (See: [Idiom](#))

Doeg the Edomite turned and attacked ... he killed

This could mean: (1) Doeg killed all the priests himself or (2) the word “Doeg” is a synecdoche for Doeg and the men who went with him. Alternate translation: “Doeg the Edomite and his men turned and attacked ... they killed” (See: [Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information](#) and [Synecdoche](#))

Doeg the Edomite

This is the name of a man. See how you translated this in [1 Samuel 21:7](#). (See: [How to Translate Names](#))

eighty-five persons

“85 men” or “85 priests” (See: [Numbers](#))

ULT

18 And the king said to Doeg, “You turn around and attack the priests!” And Doeg the Edomite turned around and he himself attacked the priests. And on that day he put to death 85 men who carried the linen ephod.

1 Samuel 22:19

He also put to the sword ... he put to the sword

This could mean: (1) Doeg killed all the priests himself or (2) the word “Doeg” is a synecdoche for Doeg and the men who went with him. Alternate translation: “They also put to the sword ... they put to the sword” (See: [Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information](#) and [Synecdoche](#))

put to the sword

“killed with the sword”

Nob

Nob is the name of a city. Here the name “Nob” represents the people of that city. Alternate translation: “the people in the city of Nob” or “the people of Nob” (See: [How to Translate Names](#) and [Metonymy](#))

ULT

¹⁹ And Nob, the city of the priests, he struck down by the mouth of the sword, from man and as far as woman, from child and as far as infant, and ox and donkey and sheep by the mouth of the sword.

1 Samuel 22:20

Abiathar

This is a man's name. (See: [How to Translate Names](#))

ULT

²⁰ And one son of Ahimelech the son of Ahitub slipped away, and his name was Abiathar. And he fled after David.

1 Samuel 22:21

(There are no notes for this verse.)

ULT

²¹ And Abiathar told David that Saul had slain the priests of Yahweh.

1 Samuel 22:22

(There are no notes for this verse.)

ULT

²² And David said to Abiathar, "I knew on that day, when Doeg the Edomite was there, that he would surely tell Saul. I myself have turned around against all the life of the house of your father!"

1 Samuel 22:23

(There are no notes for this verse.)

ULT

²³ Stay with me, do not be afraid. For who seeks my life seeks your life. Surely you will be kept safe with me.”

1 Samuel 23

1 Samuel 23 General Notes

Special concepts in this chapter

Saul chases David

Saul wants to kill David, but David trusts in God who keeps rescuing him. David rescues the town of Keilah from the Philistines who are stealing their harvest. Saul goes to Keilah to capture David, but David flees to the wilderness near Ziph. When David goes deeper into the wilderness, Saul follows but he has to leave to fight the Philistines who have invaded the land. Saul's pursuit of David shows that Saul cares more about killing his enemies than pleasing God. (See: [trust](#), [trusted](#), [trustworthy](#), [trustworthiness](#))

Important figures of speech in this chapter

Synecdoche

Jonathan strengthens David with a synecdoche: "For the hand of Saul my father will not find you." This helps to strengthen David's faith. (See: [Synecdoche](#) and [faith](#))

1 Samuel 23:1

fighting against Keilah

“Keilah” is the name of a town. Here “Keilah” represents the people who live there. Alternate translation: “fighting against the people of Keilah” (See: [How to Translate Names](#) and [Metonymy](#))

threshing

separating the grain or seeds, generally from a cereal plant or wheat by some mechanical means

ULT

1 And they told David, saying, “Behold, the Philistines are fighting against Keilah and they are plundering the threshing floors.”

1 Samuel 23:2

(There are no notes for this verse.)

ULT

² And David inquired of Yahweh, saying, "Should I go and strike these Philistines?" And Yahweh said to David, "Go and strike the Philistines and save Keilah."

1 Samuel 23:3

How much more then if we go to Keilah against the armies of the Philistines?

This rhetorical question can be translated as a statement. Alternate translation: "We will be even more fearful if we go to Keilah to fight the armies of the Philistines." (See: [Rhetorical Question](#))

ULT

³ And the men of David said to him, "Behold, we are afraid here in Judah. And the more so if we go to Keilah against the ranks of the Philistines!"

1 Samuel 23:4

(There are no notes for this verse.)

ULT

⁴ And David did yet again inquire of Yahweh. And Yahweh answered him and said, "Rise, go down to Keilah, for I am about to give the Philistines into your hand."

1 Samuel 23:5

went ... fought ... led ... struck ... saved

The writer pays the most attention to David, so these words are all singular, though David's men helped him do all these things. (See: [Synecdoche](#))

ULT

⁵ And David and his men went to Keilah and fought with the Philistines. And he drove off their livestock and struck them a great blow. And David saved those who dwelled in Keilah.

1 Samuel 23:6

Ahimelech

This is the name of a man. See how you translated this in [1 Samuel 21:1](#). (See: [How to Translate Names](#))

ULT

⁶ And it happened that when Abiathar the son of Ahimelech fled to David at Keilah an ephod came down in his hand.

1 Samuel 23:7

Saul was told

This can be translated in active form. Alternate translation:
“Someone told Saul” or “They told Saul” (See: [Active or Passive](#))

ULT

⁷ And it was told to Saul that David had gone to Keilah. And Saul said, “God has alienated him into my hand. For he has shut himself in by entering into a city of doors and a bar.”

1 Samuel 23:8

summoned

officially called. The reader should understand that Saul probably told his officials to gather the soldiers. He did not call with a loud voice to get them to come.

all his forces

“all his soldiers”

ULT

⁸ And Saul caused all the people to hear for the battle, to go down to Keilah, to lay seige against David and against his men.

1 Samuel 23:9

(There are no notes for this verse.)

ULT

⁹ And David knew that Saul was plotting evil against him. And he said to Abiathar the priest, "Bring near the ephod."

1 Samuel 23:10

David said

“David asked” or “David prayed”

your servant has indeed heard

David speaks as if he were someone else to show his respect for Yahweh. Alternate translation: “I have indeed heard” (See: [Pronouns](#))

destroy the city

make the city so no one could live in it and kill all the people who live there

ULT

10 And David said, “Yahweh, the God of Israel, your servant has certainly heard that Saul is seeking to come to Keilah, to destroy the city because of me.”

1 Samuel 23:11

as your servant has heard ... tell your servant

David speaks as if he were someone else to show his respect for Yahweh. Alternate translation: “as I have heard ... tell me” (See: [Pronouns](#))

surrender me into his hand

Here “hand” represents power or control. Alternate translation: “give me over to Saul” (See: [Metonymy](#))

ULT

11 Will the masters of Keilah deliver me up into his hand? Will Saul come down, just as your servant has heard? Yahweh, the God of Israel, please tell your servant.” And Yahweh said, “He will come down.”

1 Samuel 23:12

David said

or “David asked” or “David prayed”

surrender me and my men into the hand of Saul

Here “hand” represents power or control. Alternate translation: “give me and my men over to Saul” (See: [Metonymy](#))

ULT

12 And David said, “Will the masters of Keilah deliver me and my men up into the hand of Saul?” And Yahweh said, “They will deliver up.”

1 Samuel 23:13

six hundred

“600” (See: [Numbers](#))

It was told Saul

This can be translated in active form. Alternate translation:
“Someone told Saul” or “They told Saul” (See: [Active or Passive](#))

had escaped

“had run away from”

ULT

13 And David and his men, about 600 men, rose and went out from Keilah, and they walked about in wherever they could walk about. And it was told to Saul that David had slipped away from Keilah, and he stopped going out.

1 Samuel 23:14

wilderness of Ziph

This is the name of a deserted area near the city of Ziph. (See: [How to Translate Names](#))

did not give him into his hand

The word “hand” is a metonym for power. Alternate translation: “did not allow Saul to have power over David” or “did not allow Saul to do as he desired with David” or “did not allow Saul to capture David” (See: [Metonymy](#))

ULT

14 And David stayed in the wilderness in the strongholds, and he stayed in the hill country in the wilderness of Ziph. And Saul sought him all the days, but God did not give him into his hand.

1 Samuel 23:15

seek his life

This is an idiom. Alternate translation: “try to kill him” (See: [Idiom](#))

Horesh

This is the name of city near Ziph. (See: [How to Translate Names](#))

ULT

15 And David saw that Saul had come out to seek his life. Now David was in the wilderness of Ziph in the wood.

1 Samuel 23:16

strengthened his hand in God

This is an idiom. AT “encouraged him to trust in God” (See: [Idiom](#))

ULT

16 And Jonathan the son of Saul rose and went to David at the wood. And he strengthened his hand in God.

1 Samuel 23:17

For the hand of Saul my father will not find you

Here “hand” is a metonym for Saul and his power. Alternate translation: “For Saul my father will not find you” or “For Saul my father will never be able to have power over you” (See: [Metonymy](#))

ULT

17 And he said to him, “Do not be afraid, for the hand of Saul my father will not find you. As for you, you will reign over Israel, but I will be as second to you. And even Saul my father knows so.”

1 Samuel 23:18

(There are no notes for this verse.)

ULT

18 And the two of them cut a covenant before the face of Yahweh. And David stayed in the wood, and Jonathan went to his house.

1 Samuel 23:19

Ziphites

This is the name of the people group from Ziph. (See: [How to Translate Names](#))

Is not David hiding among us in ... Jeshimon?

This rhetorical question can be translated as an exclamation.

Alternate translation: "David is hiding among us in ... Jeshimon!" (See: [Rhetorical Question](#))

the hill of Hakilah

This is the name of a hill in the wilderness of Judah. (See: [How to Translate Names](#))

Jeshimon

This is the name of a desert area near the Dead Sea. It can also be translated as "the Judean Wilderness" or "the wasteland." (See: [How to Translate Names](#))

ULT

19 And Ziphites went up to Saul at the Gibeah, saying, "Is not David hiding himself among us in the strongholds in the wood, on the hill of the Hakilah, which is south of the Jeshimon?"

1 Samuel 23:20

surrender him into the king's hand

The word "hand" is a metonym for power. The Ziphites speak to Saul as if he were another man to show him that they respect him.

Alternate translation: "give David to you so you can do whatever you desire with him" (See: [Pronouns](#) and [Metonymy](#))

ULT

20 And now, the king, according to all the desire of your soul to come down, come down! And it is for us to deliver him up into the hand of the king."

1 Samuel 23:21

May you be blessed by Yahweh

This can be translated in active form. Alternate translation: "I hope that Yahweh blesses you" (See: [Active or Passive](#))

you have had compassion on me

The abstract noun "compassion" can be translated with the adjective "kind." Saul says this because they had told him about David and they were willing to help Saul capture David. Alternate translation: "you have been kind to me" or "you have kindly told this to me" (See: [Abstract Nouns](#))

ULT

21 And Saul said, "May you be blessed by Yahweh. For you have had compassion on me."

1 Samuel 23:22

Learn and find out

These two words mean almost the same thing and can be translated as one phrase. Alternate translation: "Know for sure" (See: [Doublet](#))

who has seen him

"who saw him"

It is told to me

This can be translated in active form. Alternate translation: "People tell me" or "I have heard" (See: [Active or Passive](#))

ULT

²² Go now, confirm again, and know, and see his place where his foot is. Who has seen him there? For one has said to me, 'He is very crafty.'

1 Samuel 23:23

among all the thousands of Judah

This is an idiom. Alternate translation: “even if I have to arrest every man in Judah” or “among all the clans of Judah” (See: [Idiom](#))

ULT

23 And see and know of all the hiding places there where he hides himself. And return to me with certain information, and I will go with you. And it will happen that if there is he in the land, then I will search for him in all the thousands of Judah.”

1 Samuel 23:24

Then they rose up

They stopped what they had been doing. The reader should not believe that they were sitting or lying.

Then they

“Then the Ziphites”

Ziph

This is the name of a place. See how you translated this in [1 Samuel 23:14](#).

Jeshimon

This is the name of a desert area near the Dead Sea. It can also be translated as “the Judean Wilderness” or “the wasteland.” See how you translated this in [1 Samuel 23:19](#). (See: [How to Translate Names](#))

the wilderness of Maon

This is the name of the deserted area around the city of Maon in southern Judah. (See: [How to Translate Names](#))

ULT

24 And they rose and went to Ziph before the face of Saul. Now David and his men were in the wilderness of Maon, in the Arabah, to the south of the Jeshimon.

1 Samuel 23:25

David was told of it

This can be translated in active form. Alternate translation: "Someone told David that they were coming" or "David learned that they were coming" (See: [Active or Passive](#))

rocky hill

a hill covered with many rocks or boulders

ULT

²⁵ And Saul and his men went to seek. And they told David, and he went down to the crag and stayed in the wilderness of Maon. And Saul heard and pursued after David from the wilderness of Maon.

1 Samuel 23:26

(There are no notes for this verse.)

ULT

²⁶ And Saul went on this side of the mountain, and David and his men were on that side of the mountain. And it happened that David was hurrying away to go from the face of Saul. And Saul and his men were circling in on David and on his men to capture them.

1 Samuel 23:27

Hurry and come

The words “hurry” and “come” can be combined into one idea.
Alternate translation: “Come quickly” (See: [Hendiadys](#))

ULT

27 And a messenger came to Saul, saying, “Hurry and go, for the Philistines have raided against the land.”

1 Samuel 23:28

pursuing David

“chasing David, trying to catch him”

Rock of Escape

a memorial or marker of David’s escape from Saul

ULT

28 And Saul returned from pursuing after David and went to meet the Philistines. Therefore they called that place the crag of the divisions.

1 Samuel 23:29

(There are no notes for this verse.)

ULT

²⁹ And David went up from there and stayed in the strongholds of Engedi. ^[1]

1 Samuel 24

1 Samuel 24 General Notes

Special concepts in this chapter

Even though Saul tries again and again to kill David, David does not avenge himself on Saul because God had chosen Saul as king. This is meant to contrast with Saul's treatment of David, the future king. Saul represents the king the people wanted, a selfish man. David is the king God wanted, a godly man. (See: [avenge](#), [avenger](#), [revenge](#), [vengeance](#) and [chosen](#), [choose](#), [chosen people](#), [Chosen One](#), [elect](#) and [godly](#), [godliness](#), [ungodly](#), [godless](#), [ungodliness](#), [godlessness](#))

1 Samuel 24:1

he was told

This can be translated in active form. Alternate translation: "someone told him" (See: [Active or Passive](#))

wilderness of Engedi

Engedi is a place in Israel west of the Dead Sea where there is water with dry land all around it.

ULT

1 And it happened when Saul returned from after the Philistines, that they told him, saying, "Behold, David is in the wilderness of Engedi." ^[1]

1 Samuel 24:2

three thousand

3,000 (See: [Numbers](#))

chosen men

men whom he had chosen because of their superior military abilities

ULT

² And Saul took 3,000 men chosen from all Israel. And he went to seek David and his men on the face of the rocks of the wild goats.

1 Samuel 24:3

sheep pens

“sheep corrals” or “sheep enclosures”

cover his feet

This is a euphemism for “relieve himself” or “defecate” or “empty his intestines.” (See: [Euphemism](#))

cave

generally a natural hole under the ground, often with an opening in the side of a hill or cliff

ULT

³ And he came to the pens of the sheep on the way, and a cave was there. And Saul entered to cover his feet. Now David and his men were sitting in the innermost part of the cave.

1 Samuel 24:4

David arose and quietly crept

The word “arose” is an idiom for taking action. Alternate translation: “David took action; he quietly crept” (See: [Idiom](#))

crept

approached slowly, carefully or quietly

ULT

⁴ And the men of David said to him, “Behold, today is what Yahweh said to you, ‘Behold, I am about to give your enemy into your hand, and you will do to him as is good in your eyes.’” And David rose and cut off the edge of the robe which belonged to Saul in secrecy.

1 Samuel 24:5

David's heart afflicted him

This is an idiom. Alternate translation: "David was sad because he had done something wrong" (See: [Idiom](#))

ULT

⁵ And it happened after thus that the heart of David struck him because he had cut off the edge, which belonged to Saul.

1 Samuel 24:6

Yahweh's anointed

“the one whom Yahweh has chosen to lead his people” or “the one Yahweh has made king”

to put out my hand against him

The hand is a metonym for the ability to cause harm. Alternate translation: “to harm him in any way” (See: [Metonymy](#))

ULT

⁶ And he said to his men, “Far be it for me from Yahweh if I do this thing to my master, to the anointed one of Yahweh, to stretch out my hand against him. For he is the anointed one of Yahweh.”

1 Samuel 24:7

(There are no notes for this verse.)

ULT

⁷ And David divided his men with the words and did not give them to rise against Saul. And Saul rose from the cave and went in the way.

1 Samuel 24:8

(There are no notes for this verse.)

ULT

⁸ And David rose after thus and went out from the cave. And he called out behind Saul, saying, "My master the king!" And Saul looked behind him, and David bowed, nostrils to the ground, and he bowed down.

1 Samuel 24:9

Why do you listen to the men who say, 'See, David is seeking your harm?'

This is a rhetorical question. It can be translated as a statement.
Alternate translation: "You should not listen to the men who say, 'See, David is seeking to harm you.'" (See: [Rhetorical Question](#))

ULT

⁹ And David said to Saul, "Why do you listen to the words of a man, saying, 'Behold, David is seeking your harm?'

1 Samuel 24:10

your eyes have seen

Here “your eyes” represent King Saul. Alternate translation: “you have seen with your own eyes” (See: [Synecdoche](#))

put you into my hand

The word “hand” is a metonym for control. Alternate translation: “put you where I could kill you or allow you to live” (See: [Metonymy](#))

ULT

10 Behold, this day your eyes have seen that Yahweh gave you into my hand today in the cave. And some said to slay you, but it looked on you with compassion. And I said, ‘I will not stretch out my hand against my master, for he is the anointed one of Yahweh.’

1 Samuel 24:11

my father

Saul was not David's real father. David calls him "father" to show that he respects Saul.

there is no evil or treason in my hand

David speaks as if evil and treason were physical objects he could hold in his hand. Here "hand" represents a person acting or doing something. Alternate translation: "I have done no evil deed against you, nor have I rebelled against you" (See: [Metaphor](#) and [Metonymy](#))

ULT

11 And see, my father, even see the edge of your robe in my hand! For when I cut off the edge of your robe I did not slay you. Know and see that there is no evil or transgression in my hand, and I have not sinned against you, and you are lying in wait to take my life.

1 Samuel 24:12

my hand shall not be against you

The hand is a metonym for the ability to cause harm. See how you translated a similar phrase in [1 Samuel 24:6](#). Alternate translation: "I will not harm you in any way" (See: [Metonymy](#))

ULT

12 May Yahweh judge between you and me, and may Yahweh avenge me against you, but my hand will not be against you.

1 Samuel 24:13

ancients

This nominal adjective can be translated as a noun phrase. Alternate translation: "people who lived long ago" (See: [Nominal Adjectives](#))

ULT

13 As the proverb of the ancients says, 'From the wicked ones goes out wickedness.' But my hand will not be against you.

1 Samuel 24:14

After whom has the king of Israel come out? After whom do you pursue?

These rhetorical questions can be translated as statements. When David asks the questions, he knows that he will answer the questions himself. Alternate translation: "Let me tell you who the king of Israel has come out after. Let me tell you who it is that you are pursuing." (See: [Rhetorical Question](#))

After a dead dog

The words "dead dog" are a metaphor for a powerless person. This sentence can be made complete. Alternate translation: "You are pursuing a person who is as powerless as a dead dog" (See: [Metaphor](#) and [Ellipsis](#))

After a flea

The word "flea" is a metaphor for a person whom others do not consider important. Alternate translation: "You are pursuing a person who is as unimportant as a flea" (See: [Metaphor](#) and [Ellipsis](#))

ULT

¹⁴ After whom does the king of Israel come out? After whom are you pursuing? After a dead dog? After one flea?

1 Samuel 24:15

see to it, and plead my cause

This could mean: (1) “do what is right, and plead my cause” or (2) “see that my cause is right and fight for me.”

from your hand

The word “hand” is a metonym for power. Alternate translation: “so that you have no power over me” (See: [Metonymy](#))

ULT

15 And may Yahweh become judge and judge between me and you. And may he see and argue my case and judge me out of your hand.”

1 Samuel 24:16

my son David

Saul speaks as if David were his son to show David that he loves him. (See: [Metaphor](#))

lifted up his voice and wept

The writer writes as if a voice were something a person could lift up with his hands. Alternate translation: "wept loudly" (See: [Metaphor](#))

ULT

16 And it happened as soon as David had finished speaking these words to Saul, that Saul said, "Is this your voice, my son David?" And Saul lifted up his voice and wept.

1 Samuel 24:17

(There are no notes for this verse.)

ULT

17 And he said to David, "You are more righteous than I. For you did good to me, but I did evil to you."

1 Samuel 24:18

you have done good to me

Saul acknowledges that David did show that he supported King Saul and was loyal to him by not killing him.

for you did not kill me when Yahweh had put me at your mercy

Saul acknowledges that David chose to show mercy and demonstrated his loyalty to King Saul as Yahweh's anointed.

ULT

18 And you have declared today that you have done good with me, that Yahweh delivered me into your hand but you did not slay me.

1 Samuel 24:19

For if a man finds his enemy, will he let him go safely?

A rhetorical question with the answer included in the question.
Alternate translation: "For if a man finds his enemy, he will not let him go safely." (See: [Rhetorical Question](#))

For if a man finds his enemy, will he let him go safely?

Where Saul had believed David was his enemy, he learns that even though David will be king, David will not take over the throne from Saul by force, but will wait for Yahweh's appointed time.

ULT

¹⁹ And if a man finds his enemy, will he send him away on the good way? And may Yahweh reward you with good in return for what you have done for me this day.

1 Samuel 24:20

the kingdom of Israel will be established in your hand

This can be stated in active form. This could mean: (1) David will cause the kingdom of Israel to prosper through his power as king. Alternate translation: “the kingdom of Israel will prosper as you rule the Israelite people” or (2) Yahweh will cause David to have complete control over the kingdom of Israel. Alternate translation: “you will have complete rule over the kingdom of Israel” (See: [Active or Passive](#))

ULT

²⁰ And now, behold, I know that you will surely reign and the kingdom of Israel will rise in your hand.

in your hand

The word “hand” is a metonym that represents power or control. (See: [Metonymy](#))

1 Samuel 24:21

you will not cut off my descendants after me

“you will not kill my sons and their families.” It was common for a new king who was not from the previous family line to kill off all the children of the former king to prevent any of them from challenging him for the throne.

you will not destroy my name out of my father’s house

It is important for each family in Israel to have descendants from generation to generation carrying on the family name and land inheritance. Alternate translation: “you will not destroy my family and descendants” or “you will allow my family to live” (See: [Metonymy](#))

ULT

21 And now, swear to me by Yahweh, that you will not cut off my seed after me, and that you will not destroy my name from the house of my father.”

1 Samuel 24:22

David and his men

“David and his army”

ULT

²² And David swore to Saul. And Saul went to his house, and David and his men went up on the stronghold.

1 Samuel 25

1 Samuel 25 General Notes

Special concepts in this chapter

Revenge

When David decides to kill all of the men in Nabal's household, Abigail convinces David not to avenge himself but to leave revenge to God. (See: [avenge](#), [avenger](#), [revenge](#), [vengeance](#))

1 Samuel 25:1

All Israel gathered together and mourned for him

This is likely a generalization. A large number of the people of Israel were probably there, but some were probably unable to attend. (See: [Hyperbole](#))

gathered together

“met together”

buried him in his house at Ramah

This could mean that they buried Samuel: (1) in his home town of Ramah or (2) on his family’s land in Ramah but not physically in the house or (3) in his house in Ramah.

David rose and went down

“David and his men moved on and they went down”

ULT

¹ And Samuel died, and all Israel gathered and mourned for him, and they buried him in his house in the Ramah. And David rose and went down to the wilderness of Paran.

1 Samuel 25:2

There was a man in Maon, whose possessions were in Carmel. The man was very wealthy.

Some translators may need to put the ideas in these verses in a different order. Alternate translation: "There was a very wealthy man in Maon whose possessions were in Carmel."

Maon

This is the name of a town. (See: [How to Translate Names](#))

Carmel

This is the name of a town. This is different from Mount Carmel. (See: [How to Translate Names](#))

three thousand

3,000 (See: [Numbers](#))

one thousand

1,000 (See: [Numbers](#))

shearing his sheep

"shaving the wool off his sheep"

ULT

² Now a man was in Maon and his work was in the Carmel, and the man was very great. And for him were 3,000 sheep and 1,000 goats. And he was shearing his sheep in the Carmel.

1 Samuel 25:3

The man's name was Nabal, and the name of his wife was Abigail. The woman was intelligent and beautiful in appearance. But the man was harsh and evil in his dealings. He was a descendant of the house of Caleb.

This verse give some background information about the man Nabal and his character. Some translators may need to put the ideas in this verse in a different order. Alternate translation: "Now the man was a descendant of the house of Caleb. His name was Nabal, and the name of his wife was Abigail. She was intelligent and beautiful in appearance. But the man was harsh and evil in his dealings."

ULT

³ And the name of the man was Nabal, and the name of his wife was Abigail. Now the woman was good of insight and beautiful of form. But the man was harsh and evil of deeds, and he was a Calebite.

Nabal

This is the name of a man. (See: [How to Translate Names](#))

Abigail

This is the name of a woman. (See: [How to Translate Names](#))

He was a descendant of the house of Caleb

Here "house" represents family. Alternate translation: "He was a descendant of the family of Caleb" or "He was a descendant of Caleb" (See: [Metonymy](#))

1 Samuel 25:4

shearing his sheep

“shaving the wool off his sheep”

ULT

⁴ And David heard in the wilderness that Nabal was shearing his sheep.

1 Samuel 25:5

greet him in my name

“greet him as I would greet him if I were there”

ULT

⁵ And David sent ten young men. And David said to the young men, “Go up to Carmel, and go to Nabal, and ask him in my name with respect to well-being.”

1 Samuel 25:6

Live in prosperity

“I desire that you may live in prosperity.” The abstract noun “prosperity” can be translated as a verb. Alternate translation: “I desire that you possess many good things as long as you live” (See: [Abstract Nouns](#))

ULT

⁶ And you shall say thus, ‘To life! And peace to you and peace to your house and peace to all that is for you.’

Peace to you and peace to your house, and peace be to all that you have

“I desire that peace may come to you, your household and your possessions”

1 Samuel 25:7

you have shearers

“your shearers are working” or “your shearers have sheep to shear.”
David wants his men to speak so that Nabal understands that his sheep were well because David’s men helped guard them.

we did them no harm, and they missed nothing

David is pointing out how he and his men offered protection to Nabal’s servants and flocks. This can be stated in positive form. Alternate translation: “we kept them and all their property from harm” (See: [Litotes](#))

ULT

⁷ And now, I have heard that those who shear belong to you. Now the shepherds who belong to you have been with us. We have not harmed them and not anything of them was missing all the days of their being in the Carmel.

1 Samuel 25:8

let my young men find favor in your eyes

Here the eyes represent seeing, and seeing represents thoughts or judgment. Alternate translation: “may you be pleased with my young men” or “may you consider my young men favorably” (See: [Metaphor](#))

to your servants

David was expressing respect toward Nabal by calling his men Nabal’s servants.

your son David

David spoke as if he were Nabal’s son to show that he respected Nabal, who was an older man.

ULT

⁸ Ask your young men and they will tell you. And let the young men find favor in your eyes, for we have come on a good day. Please give whatever your hand finds to your servants and to your son, to David.”

1 Samuel 25:9

David's young men

"David's army"

said all of this to Nabal on David's behalf

"gave Nabal David's complete message"

ULT

⁹ And the young men of David came, and they spoke to Nabal according to all these words in the name of David. And they rested.

1 Samuel 25:10

Who is David, and who is the son of Jesse?

Nabal used questions to emphasize that he had no reason to help David. These two rhetorical questions can be translated as statements. Alternate translation: “This David son of Jesse you speak of—I do not know him.” or “I do not know who this David is, so I will not do as he says. I do not know who Jesse is, so I do not care what happens to his son.” (See: [Rhetorical Question](#) and [Parallelism](#))

breaking away from

“running away from” or “rebellious against”

ULT

10 And Nabal answered the servants of David. And he said, “Who is David? And who is the son of Jesse? Today there are many servants who are breaking away, a man from the face of his master.”

1 Samuel 25:11

my bread

Here “bread” is an idiom for any kind of food. (See: [Idiom](#))

men who come from I do not know where

“men when I do not know where they have come from” or “men whom I do not know”

ULT

11 And should I take my bread and my water and my slaughtered thing that I have slaughtered for my ones who shear, and give it to men whom I do not know where they are from?”

1 Samuel 25:12

that was said

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: “that Nabal had said” (See: [Active or Passive](#))

ULT

12 And the young men of David turned to their way. And they returned and came and told him according to all these words.

1 Samuel 25:13

said to his men

“said to his army”

“Every man strap on his sword.” So every man strapped on his sword. David also strapped on his sword

If swords are not known in your language, you can treat “strap on his sword” as a metonym meaning to prepare for war. Alternate translation: “‘Every man, prepare for war.’ And every man prepared for war. David also prepared for war” (See: [Metonymy](#))

four hundred

400 (See: [Numbers](#))

two hundred

200 (See: [Numbers](#))

stayed by the baggage

They remained at their base camp to prevent other raiders from stealing their possessions.

ULT

13 And David said to his men, “Strap on a man his sword.” And they strapped on, a man his sword. And David also strapped on his sword. And about 400 men went up behind David, and 200 stayed with the things.

1 Samuel 25:14

But one of the young men told Abigail, Nabal's wife

You may need to make explicit what the young man did before he spoke with Abigail. Alternate translation: "One of Nabal's servants found out what David and his men were planning to do, so he went to Nabal's wife Abigail" (See: [Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information](#))

ULT

¹⁴ But one young man from the young men told Abigail the wife of Nabal, saying, "Behold, David sent messengers from the wilderness to bless our master, and he screamed at them."

1 Samuel 25:15

We were not harmed

This can be translated in active form. Alternate translation: “Nobody harmed us” or “We were safe” (See: [Active or Passive](#))

did not miss anything as long as we went with them

“we did not lose anything when we were with them.” David’s men kept wild animals and other people from stealing Nabal’s flocks.

ULT

15 But the men were very good to us. And we were not harmed and did not miss anything all the days of our going about with them when we were in the field.

1 Samuel 25:16

They were a wall

David's men were like a wall around a city that protects the people in the city from their enemies. (See: [Metaphor](#))

ULT

16 They were a wall for us both night and day, all the days of our being with them tending the sheep.

1 Samuel 25:17

evil is plotted against our master

The speaker is careful not to name the one plotting the evil. This can be translated in active form. Alternate translation: "someone is plotting to do evil things to our master" (See: [Active or Passive](#))

our master

The speaker speaks of David as if David were another person to show that he respects David. Alternate translation: "you" (See: [Pronouns](#))

ULT

17 And now know and see what you should do, for evil is determined against our master and against all his house. And he is a son of worthlessness from speaking to him."

1 Samuel 25:18

two hundred

200 (See: [Numbers](#))

loaves

A loaf is like a cake. You may need to make explicit what the loaves consisted of. Alternate translation: “loaves of bread” (See: [Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information](#))

already prepared

“that someone had already cooked” or “ready for someone to cook”

measures

This is a generic term as none is given. (See: [Biblical Volume](#))

parched grain

“grain that someone had cooked”

clusters of raisins

“cakes of raisins” or “masses of raisins”

ULT

18 And Abigail hurried and took 200 bread loaves and two skins of wine and five prepared sheep and five seah of roasted grain and 100 bunches of raisins and 200 cakes of figs. And she put them on the donkeys.

1 Samuel 25:19

(There are no notes for this verse.)

ULT

19 And she said to her young men,
“Pass over before my face. Behold, I will
come behind you.” But she did not tell
her husband Nabal.

1 Samuel 25:20

David and his men

“David and his army”

by the cover of the mountain

This could mean: (1) into a low, narrow stream bed or (2) to where the men were hiding.

ULT

²⁰ And she was riding on the donkey and going down in the cover of the mountain, and behold, David and his men were coming down to meet her! And she encountered them.

1 Samuel 25:21

The writer gives background information before he continues with the story. (See: [Background Information](#))

Now David had said, “Surely ... for good.

The reader needs to understand that David had said these things before he said, “Every man strap on his sword” in [1 Samuel 25:13](#).

Now David

The word “Now” shows that the writer has stopped writing about Abigail and started writing about David.

nothing was missed of all that belonged to him

This can be stated positively and in active form. Alternate translation: “he still has everything that was his” (See: [Litotes](#) and [Active or Passive](#))

ULT

²¹ Now David had said, “Surely for a lie have I kept all that is for this one in the wilderness, and not anything was missed from all that is for him. And he has returned to me evil in place of good.

1 Samuel 25:22

May God do so to me ... belong to him

The reader needs to understand that David had said these things before he said, "Every man strap on his sword" in [1 Samuel 25:13](#).

May God do so to me, David

The Hebrew text has "May God strike the enemies of David," and some versions follow this. However, the reading of the ULT follows the main Greek tradition of the Old Testament, as some other modern versions do.

all who belong

"all the people who belong to him" or "those in his family"

ULT

²² Thus may God do to the enemies of David and thus may he add, if I leave over until the morning any who are for him who urinate against the wall!"

1 Samuel 25:23

The writer has finished giving background information, so he continues the story. (See: [Background Information](#))

lay before David facedown and bowed herself to the ground

Abigail was being humble and showing that she would obey David because he was a powerful leader.

ULT

²³ And Abigail saw David, and she hurried and got down from on the donkey. And fell before the face of David on her face and bowed down to the ground.

1 Samuel 25:24

listen to

“hear”

my master ... your servant ... words of your servant

“David ... me ... my words.” Abigail speaks of herself and David as if they are two other people, to show that she respects David. (See: [Pronouns](#))

ULT

²⁴ And she fell on his feet and said, “On me myself, my master, be the iniquity. Please let your female servant speak in your ears, and hear the words of your female servant.”

1 Samuel 25:25

Connecting Statement:

Abigail continues to advise David not to take revenge.

Let not my master regard ... I your servant ... the young men of my master

Abigail speaks of herself and David as if they are other people to show that she respects David. Alternate translation: "Do not regard ... I...your young men" (See: [Pronouns](#))

But I ... did not see ... whom you sent

You may need to make explicit what Abigail would have done. Alternate translation: "But if I ... had seen ... whom you sent, I would have given them food" (See: [Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information](#))

ULT

²⁵ Please do not let my master set his heart against this man of worthlessness, against Nabal, for as his name is, so he is. Nabal is his name, and senselessness is with him. But I your female servant did not see the young men of my master, whom you sent.

1 Samuel 25:26

Connecting Statement:

Abigail continues to advise David not to take revenge.

my master ... my master

Abigail speaks of David as if he is another person to show that she respects David. Alternate translation: "David ... you" (See: [Pronouns](#))

bloodshed

murder

avenging yourself with your own hand

The hand is a metonym for what a person does with the hand. Abigail assumes that David should allow Yahweh to take vengeance for him. Alternate translation: "taking vengeance yourself instead of letting Yahweh do it" (See: [Metonymy](#) and [Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information](#))

let your enemies ... be like Nabal

Abigail speaks as if Yahweh has already punished Nabal. Alternate translation: "I hope that Yahweh will punish your enemies ... as he will punish Nabal" (See: [Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information](#) and [Predictive Past](#))

ULT

²⁶ And now, my master, as Yahweh is alive, and as your spirit is alive, it is Yahweh who has withheld you from entering into bloodshed and your hand saving for yourself. And now may your enemies and the ones who seek evil against my master be like Nabal.

1 Samuel 25:27

Connecting Statement:

Abigail continues to tell David not to be angry.

let this present that your servant has brought to my master be given to the young men

Abigail uses the passive to show her respect for David. This can be translated in active form. Alternate translation: "please give this present, which your servant has brought to my master, to the young men" or "please let my master give this present, which your servant has brought to my master, to the young men" (See: [Active or Passive](#))

this present

"these gifts." The "present" was actually many different things.

your servant has ... my master ... my master

Abigail speaks of herself and David as if they are two other people to show that she respects David. Alternate translation: "I have ... you ... you" (See: [Pronouns](#))

ULT

²⁷ And now let this blessing that your female servant has brought to my master be given to the young men, the ones going about at the feet of my master.

1 Samuel 25:28

Connecting Statement:

Abigail continues to reason with David.

the trespass of your servant ... my master ... my master is

Abigail speaks of herself and David as if they are two other people, to show that she respects David. Alternate translation: "my trespass ... you ... you are" (See: [Pronouns](#))

Yahweh will certainly make my master a sure house

Here "house" is an idiom used for "descendants." Alternate translation: "Yahweh will ensure that my master always has a descendant who serves as king" (See: [Idiom](#))

fighting the battles of Yahweh

"fighting against Yahweh's enemies"

evil will not be found in you

This can be translated in active form. Alternate translation: "no one will ever see you do any evil thing" or "you will never do anything evil" (See: [Active or Passive](#))

ULT

²⁸ Please lift up the transgression of your female servant! For Yahweh will certainly make my master a sure house, because my master is fighting the battles of Yahweh. And evil will not be found in you from your days.

1 Samuel 25:29

Connecting Statement:

Abigail continues to reason with David.

pursue

chase and try to catch

the life of my master will be bound in the bundle of the living by Yahweh your God

Abigail speaks of David's life as if it were a long and thin object that a person could put with other long and thin objects and then tie together into a bundle with a rope. This can be translated in active form. Alternate translation: "Yahweh your God will bind the life of my master in the bundle of the living" or "Yahweh your God will keep you alive with those who are alive" (See: [Metaphor](#) and [Active or Passive](#))

the life of my master

Abigail speaks of herself and David as if they are two different people to show that she respects David. Alternate translation: "your life" (See: [Pronouns](#))

he will sling away the lives of your enemies, as from the pocket of a sling

Abigail speaks of David's enemies' lives as if they were small objects like a stone that could be put in a sling and shot a long distance. Alternate translation: "he will kill your enemies as easily as a man slings a stone a long distance" (See: [Metaphor](#))

a sling

a piece of animal skin with long cords at both ends in which a person can put a stone or other small, hard object and throw it a long distance

ULT

²⁹ If a man rises up to pursue you and to seek your life, then the life of my master will be bound in the bundle of the living ones by Yahweh your God. And he will sling away the life of your enemies in the midst of the palm of the sling.

1 Samuel 25:30

Connecting Statement:

Abigail continues to reason with David.

my master

Abigail speaks of David as if he is another person, to show that she respects David. Alternate translation: "you" (See: [Pronouns](#))

ULT

³⁰ And it will happen that when Yahweh does for my master according to all the good that he spoke concerning you, and has appointed you for a ruler over Israel,

1 Samuel 25:31

Connecting Statement:

Abigail finishes reasoning with David.

This will not be a staggering burden for you—that you have poured out innocent blood, or because my master attempted to rescue himself

ULT

³¹ then this will not become an obstacle for you or a stumbling block of heart for my master, or as the pouring out of blood without cause, or as my master saving himself. And Yahweh will do good for my master, and you will remember your female servant."

Abigail is stating that if David chooses not to take revenge he will have a clear conscience when Yahweh makes him king of Israel. This can be stated in positive form. Alternate translation: "You will always be glad you acted as you did—that you have not poured out innocent blood, or because my master did not attempt to rescue himself" (See: [Litotes](#))

my master ... himself ... my master ... your servant

Abigail speaks of herself and David as if they are two other people, to show that she respects David. "you ... yourself ... you ... me" (See: [Pronouns](#))

when Yahweh will do good for my master

That is, when Yahweh actually makes him king after Saul's reign is over.

1 Samuel 25:32

General Information:

David accepts Abigail's counsel and gifts.

May Yahweh ... be blessed, he who

This can be translated in active form. This could mean: (1) "I praise Yahweh ... who" or (2) "May all people praise Yahweh ... who." (See: [Active or Passive](#))

ULT

³² And David said to Abigail, "May Yahweh, the God of Israel, be blessed, who sent you this day to meet me."

1 Samuel 25:33

Your wisdom is blessed and you are blessed, because

This can be translated in active form. Alternate translation: "I thank Yahweh because he has blessed you by making you wise and because" (See: [Active or Passive](#))

bloodshed

murder. The same word appears in [1 Samuel 25:26](#).

with my own hand

The word "hand" here is a metonym for the action taken by the hand. Alternate translation: "by my own actions" (See: [Metonymy](#))

ULT

³³ And blessed be your discernment and blessed be you, who have withheld me this day from entering into bloodshed and my hand saving for myself!

1 Samuel 25:34

General Information:

David accepts Abigail's gifts and agrees to do as she has advised him.

there would certainly have not been left to Nabal so much as one male baby

This can be translated in active form. Alternate translation: "I would not have left to Nabal even one male baby" (See: [Active or Passive](#))

ULT

³⁴ But indeed, as Yahweh is alive, the God of Israel is he who has withheld me from doing evil to you. For if you had not hurried and come to meet me, surely there would not have been left over for Nabal until the light of the morning one who urinates against a wall."

1 Samuel 25:35

received from her hand

This is an idiom. Abigail did not unload all gifts from the donkeys herself. Alternate translation: “accepted all the gifts that she had brought” (See: [Idiom](#))

have listened to your voice

The word “voice” is a metonym for the message the person speaks and a synecdoche for the person who speaks. Alternate translation: “have listened to what you have told me” or “will do as you have advised me” (See: [Metonymy](#) and [Synecdoche](#))

ULT

35 And David took from her hand what she had brought to him. And to her he said, “Go up in peace to your house. See, I have listened to your voice and have lifted up your face.”

1 Samuel 25:36

morning light

dawn

Nabal's heart was merry within him

Nabal was very happy

ULT

³⁶ And Abigail came to Nabal, and behold, for him was a feast in his house, like the feast of a king. And the heart of Nabal was good with him and he was drunk to abundance. And she did not tell him a thing small or great until the light of the morning.

1 Samuel 25:37

General Information:

Yahweh's judgment on Nabal

the wine had gone out of Nabal

Nabal was no longer drunk and so was no longer feeling happy.

his heart died within him

Nabal was unable to move because was so afraid that he was no longer physically healthy, probably because he had suffered a stroke.

ULT

³⁷ And it happened in the morning, when the wine had gone out from Nabal, that his wife told him these things. And his heart died in his inner part and he became a stone.

1 Samuel 25:38

(There are no notes for this verse.)

ULT

³⁸ And it was about ten days then
Yahweh struck Nabal and he died.

1 Samuel 25:39

General Information:

David offers to protect Abigail by marrying her.

May Yahweh be blessed

This can be translated in active form. See how you translated this in [1 Samuel 25:32](#). This could mean: (1) Alternate translation: "I praise Yahweh" or (2) Alternate translation: "May all people praise Yahweh" (See: [Active or Passive](#))

ULT

³⁹ And David heard that Nabal had died, and he said, "Blessed be Yahweh, who has argued the case of my reproach from the hand of Nabal and has withheld his servant from evil. And Yahweh has returned the evil of Nabal on his head." And David sent and spoke with Abigail, to take her for himself for a wife.

has taken up the cause of my insult from the hand of Nabal

This is an idiom. Alternate translation: "has defended me after Nabal insulted me" (See: [Idiom](#))

has taken up the cause of my insult

The abstract nouns "cause" and "insult" can be translated as verbs. This could mean: (1) Alternate translation: "has shown that what I was doing was right by punishing Nabal for insulting me" or (2) Alternate translation: "has acted, when Nabal insulted me, as if Nabal had insulted him" (See: [Active or Passive](#))

has kept back his servant from evil

David speaks as if he were another person to show his respect for Yahweh. Alternate translation: "has kept me back from doing evil deeds" (See: [Pronouns](#))

has turned Nabal's evil action back on his own head

The abstract noun "action" can be translated as a verb. Alternate translation: "has done to Nabal what Nabal planned to do to me" (See: [Abstract Nouns](#))

on his own head

The head is a synecdoche for the person. Alternate translation: "on him" (See: [Synecdoche](#))

sent and spoke to Abigail, to take her to himself as wife

You may make clear the understood information. Alternate translation: "sent men to speak to Abigail and tell her that David wanted to take her to be his wife" (See: [Ellipsis](#))

1 Samuel 25:40

(There are no notes for this verse.)

ULT

⁴⁰ And the servants of David came to Abigail at the Carmel. And they spoke to her, saying, "David has sent us to you to take you for him for a wife."

1 Samuel 25:41

She arose, bowed herself

Abigail responded by bowing. The reader should understand that she was probably already standing when the men were talking to her in [1 Samuel 25:40](#), and so the word “arose” is a metonym for deciding to bow down. (See: [Metonymy](#))

See, your female servant is a servant to wash the feet of the servants of my master

Abigail speaks as if she were another person to show that she is humble. She shows that she desires to be David’s new wife by offering to wash the feet of David’s servants. Alternate translation: “See, I will serve you, the servants of my master David, by washing your feet” (See: [Pronouns](#))

ULT

41 And she rose and bowed down, nostrils to the earth, and she said, “Behold, your female servant is as a slave woman for washing the feet of the servants of my master.”

1 Samuel 25:42

hurried and arose, and rode

You may need to make explicit what Abigail did after she arose and before she rode. Alternate translation: "quickly did what she needed to do to prepare for the journey, and then she rode" (See: [Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information](#))

five servant girls of hers who followed her

Abigail was riding a donkey, but the servant girls were walking.

ULT

42 And Abigail hurried and rose and rode on the donkey, and five of her servant girls were going to her feet. And she went behind the messengers of David and became a wife for him.

1 Samuel 25:43

Now David had also taken Ahinoam

This event took place before David married Abigail. (See: [Background Information](#))

Ahinoam

This is the name of a woman. (See: [How to Translate Names](#))

ULT

43 And David took Ahinoam from Jezreel. And the two of them both became wives for him.

1 Samuel 25:44

Saul had given Michal

This event took place before David married Abigail. (See: [Background Information](#))

Michal

This is the name of a woman. (See: [How to Translate Names](#))

Paltiel ... Laish

These are names of men. (See: [How to Translate Names](#))

Gallim

This is a town north of Jerusalem. (See: [How to Translate Names](#))

ULT

44 Now Saul had given Michal his daughter, the wife of David, to Paltiel the son of Laish, who was from Gallim.

1 Samuel 26

1 Samuel 26 General Notes

Special concepts in this chapter

Vengeance

David has another opportunity to kill Saul but he refuses to kill the one God had chosen as king. This contrasts with Saul, who tried to find David and kill him. Saul came to admit that David was more righteous than he was because he did not kill his enemy. (See: [chosen](#), [choose](#), [chosen people](#), [Chosen One](#), [elect](#) and [righteous](#), [righteousness](#), [unrighteous](#), [unrighteousness](#), [upright](#), [uprightness](#))

Important figures of speech in this chapter

Rhetorical question

David put his reason for not killing Saul in a rhetorical question: "Do not destroy him; for who can extend his hand against Yahweh's anointed one and be guiltless?" (See: [Rhetorical Question](#))

1 Samuel 26:1

Is not David hiding ... Jeshimon?

This rhetorical question can be translated as an exclamation.
Alternate translation: "David is hiding ... Jeshimon!" (See: [Rhetorical Question](#))

before Jeshimon

"from which we can see Jeshimon"

Jeshimon

This is the name of a desert area near the Dead Sea. It can also be translated as "the Judean Wilderness" or "the wasteland." See how you translated this in [1 Samuel 23:19](#). (See: [How to Translate Names](#))

ULT

¹ And the Ziphites came to Saul at the Gibeah, saying, "Is not David hiding himself in the hill of the Hakilah, on the face of the Jeshimon?"

1 Samuel 26:2

Then Saul arose and went

The word “arose” is an idiom for taking action. Alternate translation: “Then Saul took action and he went” (See: [Idiom](#))

three thousand

3,000 (See: [Numbers](#))

chosen men

men whom he had chosen because of their superior military abilities

ULT

² And Saul rose and went down to the wilderness of Ziph, and with him were 3,000 men, chosen ones of Israel, to seek David in the wilderness of Ziph.

1 Samuel 26:3

before Jeshimon

“from which they could see Jeshimon”

Jeshimon

This is the name of a desert area near the Dead Sea. It can also be translated as “the Judean Wilderness” or “the wasteland.” See how you translated this in [1 Samuel 23:19](#). (See: [How to Translate Names](#))

ULT

³ And Saul camped in the hill of the Hakilah, which is on the face of the Jeshimon, by the road. But David was staying in the wilderness and he saw that Saul was coming after him to the wilderness.

1 Samuel 26:4

(There are no notes for this verse.)

ULT

⁴ And David sent spies and he knew that Saul had certainly come.

1 Samuel 26:5

David arose and went

“David took action and he went”

Abner ... Ner

These are the names of men. (See: [How to Translate Names](#))

ULT

⁵ And David rose and came to the place there where Saul had camped. And David saw the place there where Saul lay, and Abner the son of Ner, the commander of his army. And Saul lay in the entrenchment, and the people were camped around him.

1 Samuel 26:6

Ahimelech ... Abishai

These are the names of men. (See: [How to Translate Names](#))

Zeruiah

These are the names of women. (See: [How to Translate Names](#))

go down ... to

David and his men were probably on higher ground than Saul.

I! I will go down

"I want to be the one who goes down"

ULT

⁶ And David answered and said to Ahimelech the Hittite and to Abishai the son of Zeruiah, the brother of Joab, saying, "Who will go down with me to Saul, to the camp?" And Abishai said, "I! I will go down with you."

1 Samuel 26:7

(There are no notes for this verse.)

ULT

⁷ And David and Abishai came to the people at night. And behold, Saul lie asleep in the entrenchment, and his spear was pressed into the ground at the place of his head. And Abner and the people were lying around him.

1 Samuel 26:8

God has put your enemy into your hand

Abishai speaks as if the enemy were a small object that God had put into David's hand. The word "hand" is a metonym for the power the hand can wield. Alternate translation: "God has given you complete control over your enemy" (See: [Metonymy](#))

pin him to the ground with the spear

This is a metonym that refers to "kill with a spear" (See: [Metonymy](#))

I will not strike him a second time

"I will kill him the first time I strike him" or "I will not need to strike him a second time"

ULT

⁸ And Abishai said to David, "Today God has delivered your enemy into your hand. And now please let me strike him with the spear even into the earth one time. And I will not do it again to him."

1 Samuel 26:9

who can extend his hand against Yahweh's anointed one and be guiltless?

This rhetorical question can be translated as a statement. This can also be stated in positive form. Alternate translation: "No one can strike Yahweh's anointed one and be without guilt." or "Anyone who strikes Yahweh's anointed one will be guilty of murder." (See: [Rhetorical Question](#) and [Litotes](#))

ULT

⁹ And David said to Abishai, "Do not destroy him. For who has stretched out his hand against the anointed one of Yahweh and been innocent?"

1 Samuel 26:10

As Yahweh lives

“as certainly as Yahweh lives” or “as surely as Yahweh lives”

his day will come to die

“he will die a natural death”

ULT

10 And David said, “As Yahweh is alive, surely Yahweh will strike him, or his day will come and he will die, or he will go down into the battle and be swept away.”

1 Samuel 26:11

extend my hand against

The hand is a metonym for the harm a hand can do. Alternate translation: "do anything to harm" (See: [Metonymy](#))

let us go

David includes Abishai, so the word "us" here is inclusive. (See: [Exclusive and Inclusive 'We'](#))

ULT

11 Far be it for me from Yahweh to stretch out my hand against the anointed one of Yahweh. And now, please take the spear that is at the place of his head and the jug of water, and let us go for ourselves."

1 Samuel 26:12

a deep sleep from Yahweh had fallen on them

Yahweh had caused them to sleep deeply.

ULT

¹² And David took the spear and the jug of water from the place of the head of Saul, and they went for themselves. And there was no one who saw, and there was no one who knew, and there was no one who awoke, for all of them were sleeping, because a deep sleep of Yahweh had fallen on them.

1 Samuel 26:13

(There are no notes for this verse.)

ULT

13 And David passed over to the other side and stood on the head of the mountain from a distance. Great was the distance between them.

1 Samuel 26:14

Do you not answer, Abner?

David uses a question to shame Abner into answering. This rhetorical question can be translated as a statement. Alternate translation: "Answer me, Abner!" (See: [Rhetorical Question](#))

David shouted

"David spoke as loudly as he could" so Saul and his men could hear him

ULT

14 And David called out to the people and to Abner the son of Ner, saying, "Will you not answer, Abner?" And Abner answered and said, "Who are you who calls out to the king?"

1 Samuel 26:15

Are not you a courageous man?

David uses a question to rebuke Abner for not guarding Saul. Alternate translation: "You are a very brave man." (See: [Rhetorical Question](#))

Who is like you in Israel?

David uses a question to rebuke Abner for not guarding Saul. Alternate translation: "You are the greatest soldier in Israel." (See: [Rhetorical Question](#))

Why then have you not kept watch over your master the king?

This could mean: (1) this is a real question and David wants Abner to answer him or (2) this is a rhetorical question and David is rebuking Abner. Alternate translation: "Therefore you should have kept watch over your master the king!" (See: [Rhetorical Question](#))

ULT

15 And David said to Abner, "Are you not a man? And who is like you in Israel? But why did you not watch over your master the king? For one of the people came to destroy the king your master."

1 Samuel 26:16

(There are no notes for this verse.)

ULT

16 This thing that you have done is not good. As Yahweh is alive, surely sons of death are you who did not watch over your master, over the anointed one of Yahweh. And now see, where is the spear of the king and the jar of water that was at the place of his head?"

1 Samuel 26:17

my son

Saul was not David's true father. Saul speaks as if he were David's father to show David that he wants David to trust and respect him as David would trust and respect his own father. (See: [Metaphor](#))

ULT

17 And Saul recognized the voice of David and said, "Is this your voice, my son David?" And David said, "It is my voice, my master the king."

1 Samuel 26:18

Why does my master pursue his servant?

This could mean: (1) David really does want Saul to answer the question or (2) this rhetorical question can be translated as a statement. Alternate translation: "My master has no reason to pursue his servant." (See: [Rhetorical Question](#))

ULT

18 And he said, "Why is my master pursuing after his servant? For what have I done? And what evil is in my hand?"

Why does my master pursue his servant?

Here David speaks of Saul in third person calling him "my master," and he speaks of himself in third person calling himself "his servant." David speaks this way to show respect to Saul. Alternate translation: "Why are you, my master, pursuing me, your servant?" or "Why are you pursuing me?" (See: [First, Second or Third Person](#))

What have I done?

This could mean: (1) David really does want Saul to answer the question or (2) this rhetorical question can be translated as a statement. Alternate translation: "You know that I have done nothing to harm you." (See: [Rhetorical Question](#))

What evil is in my hand?

This speaks of evil as if it were an object that is held in the hand. Here "hand" represents a person acting or doing something. This could mean: (1) David really does want Saul to answer the question. Alternate translation: "What have I done wrong?" or (2) this rhetorical question can be translated as a statement. Alternate translation: "I have done nothing wrong!" (See: [Metonymy](#) and [Rhetorical Question](#))

1 Samuel 26:19

you, let my master the king listen to the words of his servant

David speaks as if he and the king were other people to show respect to Saul. Alternate translation: “you my king, listen to my words” (See: [Pronouns](#))

stirred you up against me

“caused you to be angry with me”

let him accept an offering

You may need to make explicit the reason he will give an offering. Alternate translation: “I will give him an offering so he will no longer cause you to be angry with me” (See: [Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information](#))

may they be cursed in the sight of Yahweh

This can be translated in active form. Alternate translation: “may Yahweh decide to punish them” (See: [Active or Passive](#))

for they have today driven me out, that I should not cling to the inheritance of Yahweh; they have said to me, ‘Go worship other gods.’

“for they have today driven me out. It is as if they want me to stop clinging to the inheritance of Yahweh. It is as if they have said to me, ‘Go worship other gods.’”

that I should not cling to the inheritance of Yahweh

“so that I will no longer trust that Yahweh will give me what he has promised me”

ULT

¹⁹ And now, please hear, my master the king, the words of his servant. If Yahweh has incited you against me, may he smell an offering; but if the sons of the man, cursed be them before the face of Yahweh. For they have today driven me out from joining oneself with the inheritance of Yahweh, saying, ‘Go serve other gods.’

1 Samuel 26:20

the king of Israel has

David speaks as if the king was another person to show respect to Saul. Alternate translation: “you have” (See: [Pronouns](#))

do not let my blood fall to the earth

This is a polite way of saying “do not kill me.” (See: [Euphemism](#))

the one flea

David uses the word “flea” as a metaphor for a person, himself, who cannot do any great harm. Alternate translation: “this single flea” or “me, and I cannot harm you any more than one flea can” (See: [Metaphor](#))

as when one hunts a partridge in the mountains

Saul is chasing David as if he were hunting a valuable wild bird. (See: [Simile](#) and [Translate Unknowns](#))

ULT

20 And now, do not let my blood fall to the earth from in front of the face of Yahweh. For the king of Israel has come out to seek one flea just as one pursues the partridge in the mountains.”

1 Samuel 26:21

Return

This could mean: (1) "Return to serve me in my palace" or (2) "Return to your home."

my son

Saul was not David's true father. Saul speaks as if he were David's father to show David that he wants David to trust and respect him as David would trust and respect his own father. (See: [Metaphor](#))

my life was precious in your eyes today

Here the eyes represent seeing, and seeing represents thoughts or judgment. Alternate translation: "today you have considered my life to be very valuable" or "today you showed me that you really do respect me" (See: [Metaphor](#))

played the fool

"been very foolish"

ULT

21 And Saul said, "I have sinned! Return, my son David! For I will not do evil to you again, because my life was precious in your eyes this day. Behold, I have acted foolishly and have gone very much astray!"

1 Samuel 26:22

(There are no notes for this verse.)

ULT

²² And David answered and said,
"Behold, the spear of the king! And let
one of the young men pass over and
take it.

1 Samuel 26:23

Yahweh put you into my hand today

The word “hand” is a metonym for the person’s power. “Yahweh gave me an opportunity to attack you today” or “Yahweh placed me where I could easily have killed you” (See: [Metonymy](#))

pay each man

“give what is proper to each man”

his anointed

David speaks as if Saul were another person to show that he respects Saul because Saul is king. Alternate translation: “the one he has chosen to be king” (See: [Pronouns](#))

ULT

23 And may Yahweh return to the man his righteousness and his faithfulness; because Yahweh gave you into a hand today, but I was not willing to stretch out my hand against the anointed one of Yahweh.

1 Samuel 26:24

your life was precious in my eyes today

Here the eyes represent seeing, and seeing represents thoughts or judgment. See how you translated similar words in [1 Samuel 26:21](#). Alternate translation: "I have considered your life to be very valuable" or "I showed you today that I really do respect you" (See: [Metaphor](#))

ULT

²⁴ And behold, just as your life was great in my eyes this day, so may my life be great in the eyes of Yahweh, and may he rescue me from all distress."

so may my life be much valued in the eyes of Yahweh

Here the eyes represent seeing, and seeing represents thoughts or judgment. Alternate translation: "so may Yahweh consider my life very valuable as well" or "so may Yahweh value my life as much as I have valued your life" (See: [Metaphor](#))

1 Samuel 26:25

May you be blessed

This can be translated in active form. Alternate translation: “May Yahweh bless you” (See: [Active or Passive](#))

my son

Saul was not David’s true father. Saul speaks as if he were David’s father to show David that he wants David to trust and respect him as David would trust and respect his own father. (See: [Metaphor](#))

ULT

25 And Saul said to David, “Blessed be you, my son David! You will certainly both do and also you will certainly be able.” And David went to his way, and Saul returned to his place.

1 Samuel 27

1 Samuel 27 General Notes

Structure and formatting

This begins a section about David living with the Philistines.

Special concepts in this chapter

David's move

David is afraid Saul will someday catch him and kill him, so he moves to the Philistine city of Gath. This is a type of exile David creates for himself out of fear. It is caused by his lack of trust in God. This is the same reason his descendants would come to be exiled. (See: [trust](#), [trusted](#), [trustworthy](#), [trustworthiness](#))

1 Samuel 27:1

David said in his heart

Here “his heart” is a metonym that means to himself. Alternate translation: “David thought to himself” (See: [Synecdoche](#))

escape out of his hand

The word “hand” is a synecdoche for the person. Alternate translation: “escape from him” (See: [Synecdoche](#))

ULT

¹ And David said to his heart, “Now I will be swept away one day by the hand of Saul. There is no good thing for me, but I will certainly slip away to the land of the Philistines. And Saul will despair of me, of seeking me again in all the territory of Israel, and I will slip away from his hand.”

1 Samuel 27:2

David arose and passed over

“David took action; he passed over”

passed over

“passed over the border between Israel and Philistia”

six hundred men

600 (See: [Numbers](#))

Achish

This is the name of a man. See how you translated this in [1 Samuel 21:10](#). (See: [How to Translate Names](#))

Maok

This is the name of a man. (See: [How to Translate Names](#))

ULT

² And David rose and passed over, he and 600 men who were with him, to Achish the son of Maok, the king of Gath.

1 Samuel 27:3

Ahinoam

This is the name of a woman. See how you translated this in [1 Samuel 14:50](#). (See: [How to Translate Names](#))

Abigail

This is the name of a woman. See how you translated this in [1 Samuel 25:3](#). (See: [How to Translate Names](#))

Nabal

This is the name of a man. See how you translated this in [1 Samuel 25:3](#). (See: [How to Translate Names](#))

ULT

³ And David dwelled with Achish in Gath, he and his men, a man and his house, David and the two of his wives, Ahinoam the Jezreelite woman and Abigail the Carmelite woman, the wife of Nabal.

1 Samuel 27:4

Saul was told

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: “Someone told Saul” or “Saul heard” (See: [Active or Passive](#))

ULT

⁴ And it was told to Saul that David had fled to Gath. And he did not again seek him more.

1 Samuel 27:5

If I have found favor in your eyes

Here the eyes represent seeing, and seeing represents thoughts or judgment. See how you translated this in [1 Samuel 20:3](#). Alternate translation: “If I have pleased you” or “If you consider me favorably” (See: [Metaphor](#))

let them give me a place

Since Achish was the one who would “give,” this is a metonym for “please give me a place.” (See: [Metonymy](#))

one of the cities in the country

“one of the outlying towns” or “one of the towns outside the city”

Why should your servant live in the royal city with you?

This rhetorical question can be translated as a statement. Alternate translation: “I do not need to live in the city with you.” or “I am not important enough to live here with you in the royal city.” (See: [Rhetorical Question](#))

your servant

David speaks as if he were another person to show that he respected Achish. (See: [Pronouns](#))

ULT

⁵ And David said to Achish, “If I have found favor in your eyes, let them give to me a place in one of the cities of the field, and I may dwell there. And why should your servant dwell in the city of the kingship with you?”

1 Samuel 27:6

Ziklag

This is the name of a city in the southwest part of Judah. (See: [How to Translate Names](#))

ULT

⁶ And on that day Achish gave to him Ziklag. Therefore Ziklag belongs to the kings of Judah until this day.

1 Samuel 27:7

(There are no notes for this verse.)

ULT

⁷ And the number of the days that David dwelled in the field of the Philistines was days and four months.

1 Samuel 27:8

making raids on

attacking and taking property many times (See: [Idiom](#))

Girzites

A people group who apparently lived somewhere between Philistia and Egypt. (See: [How to Translate Names](#))

as you go to Shur

Here “you” is being used as an indefinite pronoun that refers to anyone. Alternate translation: “on the way most people travel to Shur” (See: [Pronouns](#))

Shur

region on the northeast border of Egypt (See: [How to Translate Names](#))

ULT

⁸ And David and his men went up and raided against the Geshurites and the Girzites and the Amalekites. For they were dwelling in the land, which is from ancient times, as you go to Shur, and as far as the land of Egypt. ^[1]

1 Samuel 27:9

Achish

the king of Gath (See: [Pronouns](#))

ULT

⁹ And David struck the land and did not let a man or a woman live. And he took sheep and cattle and donkeys and camels and garments. And he returned and came to Achish.

1 Samuel 27:10

Achish

the king of Gath (See: [How to Translate Names](#))

Jerahmeelites

a clan from the tribe of Judah (See: [How to Translate Names](#))

Kenites

a people group who lived in the land of Midian (See: [How to Translate Names](#))

ULT

10 And Achish said, "Against whom did you raid today?" And David said, "Against the south of Judah and against the south of the Jerahmeelite and against the south of the Kenite."

1 Samuel 27:11

Gath

one of five Philistine city-states. (See: [How to Translate Names](#))

ULT

11 Now David did not let a man or a woman live to bring to Gath, saying, "Lest they tell about us, saying, 'Thus did David.'" And thus was his custom all the days that he dwelled in the field of the Philistines.

1 Samuel 27:12

Achish

the king of Gath (See: [Pronouns](#))

ULT

¹² And Achish trusted in David, saying, "He certainly stinks among his people in Israel, and he will become an eternal servant for me."

1 Samuel 28

1 Samuel 28 General Notes

Special concepts in this chapter

Talking to the dead

Talking to the dead was against the law of Moses. God or the Holy Spirit left Saul because of his sin and would not help him. (See: [die](#), [dead](#), [deadly](#), [death](#), [law](#), [law of Moses](#), [law of Yahweh](#), [law of God](#) and [Holy Spirit](#), [Spirit of God](#), [Spirit of the Lord](#), [Spirit](#) and [sin](#), [sinful](#), [sinner](#), [sinning](#))

Important figures of speech in this chapter

Rhetorical question

Samuel uses a rhetorical question to say it was useless to ask his advice since there was no way Saul could be successful with God against him: "What then do you ask me, since Yahweh has left you, and he has become your enemy?" (See: [Rhetorical Question](#))

1 Samuel 28:1

host

large assembly of armies

ULT

¹ And it happened in those days that the Philistines gathered their camps for the war to fight with Israel. And Achish said to David, "You certainly know that you will go out with me in the camp, you and your men."

1 Samuel 28:2

So you will know ... So I will

The word “so” shows that the speaker agrees with what the other person has just said. Alternate translation: “Yes, I will go with you so that you will know ... Very well, I will” (See: [Connecting Words and Phrases](#))

you will know what your servant can do

David probably wanted Achish to think that David would kill many Israelites, but “what your servant can do” could also mean that David was planning to kill Philistines instead. Try to translate so that the reader can see both of these possible meanings.

your servant

David speaks as if he is another person so that Achish will think David respects him. Alternate translation: “I” (See: [Pronouns](#))

make you

The word “you” refers to David and so is singular. (See: [Pronouns](#))

bodyguard

a person who protects another person

ULT

² And David said to Achish, “Therefore, you yourself will know what your servant can do.” And Achish said to David, “Therefore, I will appoint you the keeper of my head all the days.”

1 Samuel 28:3

Now Samuel ... with spirits

The writer provides background information to prepare the reader for the events that follow. (See: [Background Information](#))

banned from the land

officially removed from the country or region, or prevented from entering Alternate translation: “expel from Israel”

those who talked with the dead or with spirits

The words “those who talked with the dead” translate as one word in the original language, and the words “those who ... talked with spirits” also translate as one word in the original language. If your language has one word for those who talk with the dead and one word for those who talk with spirits, or if your language has only one word for those who talk with the dead and with spirits, you should use those words here.

ULT

³ Now Samuel had died, and all Israel had mourned for him and had buried him in the Ramah, even in his city. And Saul had removed the necromancers and the ones with familiar spirits from the land.

1 Samuel 28:4

Then the Philistines gathered

after David and Achish spoke ([1 Samuel 28:2](#))

gathered all Israel together

“gathered all his armies in Israel together”

Shunem ... Gilboa

these are names of places (See: [How to Translate Names](#))

ULT

⁴ And the Philistines gathered and came and camped at Shunem. And Saul gathered all Israel, and they camped at the Gilboa.

1 Samuel 28:5

he was afraid, and his heart trembled very much

These two phrases mean basically the same thing and emphasize the intensity of his fear. Here Saul is referred to by his "heart." Alternate translation: "he was terrified" (See: [Synecdoche](#) and [Parallelism](#))

ULT

⁵ And Saul saw the camp of the Philistines. And he was afraid, and his heart trembled greatly.

1 Samuel 28:6

Urim

The high priest carried the sacred lots called Urim and Thummin in his breastplate, in a marked pouch, next to his heart.

ULT

⁶ And Saul inquired of Yahweh, but Yahweh did not answer him—neither by the dreams, nor by the Urim, nor by the prophets.

1 Samuel 28:7

who talks with the dead

These words translate as one word in the original language. If your language has one word for a person who talks to the dead, you should use it here. See how you translated similar words in [1 Samuel 28:3](#).

Endor

This is the name of a place. (See: [How to Translate Names](#))

ULT

⁷ And Saul said to his servants, "Seek for me a woman of a mistress of necromancy, so I may go to her and inquire of her." And his servants said to him, "Behold, a woman of a mistress of necromancy is in Endor."

1 Samuel 28:8

Saul disguised himself ... and went ... to the woman by night

Saul disguised himself because the way from Gilboa ([1 Samuel 28:4](#)) to Endor ([1 Samuel 28:7](#)) was through land that the Philistines were living in. He traveled all day and reached the woman after the sun had gone down.

disguised

changed his usual appearance no one would know who he was

Divine for me ... with a spirit

“Talk to the dead for me”

ULT

⁸ And Saul disguised himself, and put on other clothes, and went, he and two of the men with him. And they came to the woman at night. And he said, “Please practice divination for me with a spirit of the dead, and bring up for me whom I say to you.”

1 Samuel 28:9

those who talk with the dead or with spirits

The words “those who talk with the dead” translate as one word in the original language, and the words “those who ... talk with spirits” also translate as one word in the original language. If your language has one word for those who talk with the dead and one word for those who talk with spirits, or if your language has only one word for those who talk with the dead and with spirits, you should use those words here. See how you translated similar words in [1 Samuel 28:3](#).

my life

The word “life” represents the person. Alternate translation: “me” (See: [Synecdoche](#))

ULT

⁹ And the woman said to him, “Behold, you yourself know what Saul has done, that he has cut off the necromancers and the ones with a familiar spirit from the land. And why are you setting a trap against my life, to put me to death?”

1 Samuel 28:10

(There are no notes for this verse.)

ULT

10 And Saul swore to her by Yahweh, saying, "As Yahweh is alive, no punishment will meet you by this matter."

1 Samuel 28:11

(There are no notes for this verse.)

ULT

11 And the woman said, "Whom will I bring up for you?" And he said, "Bring up Samuel for me."

1 Samuel 28:12

(There are no notes for this verse.)

ULT

12 And the woman saw Samuel and cried out with a loud voice. And the woman said to Saul, saying, "Why did you deceive me? And you are Saul!"

1 Samuel 28:13

a god

Other This could mean: (1) "one like God" or (2) "a judge" (1 Samuel 7:15).

ULT

13 And the king said to her, "Do not be afraid, but what did you see?" And the woman said to Saul, "I saw gods going up from the earth."

1 Samuel 28:14

(There are no notes for this verse.)

ULT

14 And he said to her, "What is his appearance?" And she said, "An old man is coming up and he is wrapped in a robe." And Saul knew that it was Samuel, and he bowed, nostrils to the ground, and he bowed down.

1 Samuel 28:15

(There are no notes for this verse.)

ULT

15 And Samuel said to Saul, "Why have you disturbed me by bringing me up?" And Saul said, "It is very narrow for me, and the Philistines are about to fight against me. And God has turned aside from on me and does not answer me anymore, neither by the hand of the prophets, nor by the dreams, so I have called to you, to cause me to know what I will do."

1 Samuel 28:16

(There are no notes for this verse.)

ULT

16 And Samuel said, “And why do you ask me while Yahweh has turned aside from on you and has become your enemy?”

1 Samuel 28:17

torn the kingdom out of your hand

Samuel speaks as if the kingdom were a physical object that could be held in the hand and grabbed out by another person. Alternate translation: “made you so you are no longer king” or “made another person king in your place” (See: [Metaphor](#))

ULT

17 And Yahweh has done for himself just as he spoke by my hand. And Yahweh has torn the kingdom from your hand and has given it to your companion, to David.

1 Samuel 28:18

(There are no notes for this verse.)

ULT

18 Because you did not listen to the voice of Yahweh and did not perform the burning of his nose against Amalek, therefore Yahweh has done this thing to you this day.

1 Samuel 28:19

Yahweh will give Israel along with you into the hand of the Philistines

Samuel speaks as if the people of Israel were a small object that Yahweh would give to the Philistines, whom he speaks of as if they were one person. Alternate translation: “Yahweh will allow the Philistines to do whatever they want to do to you and the people of Israel” (See: [Metaphor](#))

will be with me

This is a polite way to say that Saul will die. Alternate translation: “will be dead” (See: [Euphemism](#))

Yahweh will also give the army of Israel into the hand of the Philistines

Samuel speaks as if the army of Israel were a small object that Yahweh would give to the Philistines, whom he speaks of as if they were one person. Alternate translation: “Yahweh will allow the Philistines to do whatever they want to do to the army of Israel” (See: [Metaphor](#))

ULT

¹⁹ And Yahweh will also give Israel with you into the hand of the Philistines, and tomorrow you and your sons will be with me. Yahweh will also give the camp of Israel into the hand of the Philistines.”

1 Samuel 28:20

he had eaten no food all that day, neither that whole night

Saul had not eaten during the night before he traveled from Gilboa (1 Samuel 28:4) to Endor (1 Samuel 28:7), nor during the day as he journeyed, nor during the night on which he visited the woman.

ULT

²⁰ And Saul immediately fell with the fullness of his height to the ground and was very afraid from the words of Samuel. Also strength was not in him, for he had not eaten bread all the day and all the night.

1 Samuel 28:21

I have put my life in my hand and have listened

This is an idiom. "I could die because I listened" or "Someone could kill me because I listened" (See: [Idiom](#))

ULT

²¹ And the woman came to Saul and saw that he was very terrified, And she said to him, "Behold, your female servant has listened to your voice and I have put my life in my palm and have heard the words that you have spoken to me.

1 Samuel 28:22

the voice of your woman servant

The woman speaks as if she is another person to show that she respects Saul. She refers to herself by her “voice” to emphasize what she says. Alternate translation: “my voice” or “me speak to you” (See: [Pronouns](#) or [Synecdoche](#))

ULT

22 And now, please listen, even you, to the voice of your female servant, and let me set a bit of bread before your face and eat. And strength will be in you when you go in the way.”

1 Samuel 28:23

Saul refused

"Saul would not do what they asked"

compelled him

"forced him"

ULT

²³ And he refused and said, "I will not eat." But his servants and also the woman, urged him, and he listened to their voice. And he rose from the ground and sat on the bed.

1 Samuel 28:24

fatted calf

a calf that has been grown and fed to be available for a special feast

she ... kneaded it

She mixed flour and oil, working and rolling the mixture thoroughly with her hands to produce dough for baking.

ULT

24 Now a calf of the stall belonged to the woman in the house, and she hurried and sacrificed it. And she took flour and kneaded and baked it to unleavened bread.

1 Samuel 28:25

(There are no notes for this verse.)

ULT

²⁵ And she brought it near before the face of Saul and before the face of his servants, and they ate. And they rose and went in that night.

1 Samuel 29

1 Samuel 29 General Notes

Structure and formatting

Some translations set each line of poetry farther to the right than the rest of the text to make it easier to read. The ULT does this with the poetic song in 29:5.

Other possible translation difficulties

It is unclear whether David wanted to go into battle with the Philistines. He would have been fighting against Saul, but he also would have been fighting against Israel's soldiers. It is probably best to see that David is conflicted over this issue, but some scholars believe that David planned on turning against the Philistines in the battle.

1 Samuel 29:1

spring

a small stream of water flowing naturally from the Earth

ULT

¹ And the Philistines gathered all their camp at Aphek. And Israel was camping at the spring that is in Jezreel.

1 Samuel 29:2

passed on by hundreds and by thousands

“divided their men into groups; some groups had one hundred soldiers and some groups had one thousand soldiers”

hundreds ... thousands

100s...1,000s (See: [Numbers](#))

David and his men passed on in the rear guard with Achish

The groups of hundreds and thousands passed on first, then Achish and his helpers, and then David, his men, and the other Philistine soldiers, who were guarding Achish.

ULT

² And the rulers of the Philistines were passing over by hundreds and by thousands. And David and his men were passing over in the rear with Achish.

1 Samuel 29:3

What are these Hebrews doing here?

Possible ways to translate this rhetorical question as a statement are Alternate translation: (1) "You should not have allowed these Hebrews, our enemies, to be here with us." or (2) "Tell us who these Hebrews are." (See: [Rhetorical Question](#))

Is not this David ... these years, and I have found ... this day?

Another possible translation is "Is not this David,...these years? I have found ... this day." The rhetorical question can be translated as a statement. Alternate translation: "You should know that this is David ... these years. I have found ... this day." (See: [Rhetorical Question](#))

I have found no fault with him

This can be stated in positive form. Alternate translation: "I know of nothing that he has done wrong" or "I am very pleased with him" (See: [Litotes](#))

ULT

³ And the commanders of the Philistines said, "What are these Hebrews?" And Achish said to the commanders of the Philistines, "Is this not David, the servant of Saul the king of Israel, who has been with me these days or these years, and I have not found anything in him from the day of his falling until this day?"

1 Samuel 29:4

He will not go down with us into battle

The person here is a synecdoche for the army he commands. Alternate translation: "Do not let his army join with our army against our enemies" (See: [Synecdoche](#))

For how else could he make himself acceptable to his master than by taking the heads of our own men?

This rhetorical question can be translated as a statement. Here "taking the heads" is a metonym for killing. Alternate translation: "The best way for David to make peace with his master would be by killing our soldiers!" (See: [Rhetorical Question](#) and [Metonymy](#))

ULT

⁴ And the commanders of the Philistines were furious against him. And the commanders of the Philistines said to him, "Make the man return, that he may return to his place there where you assigned him. And he will not go down with us in the battle, and he will not become an adversary for us in the battle. And by what could this one make himself acceptable to his master? Is it not by the heads of these men?"

1 Samuel 29:5

Is this not David of whom they sang one to another in dances, saying, 'Saul ... ten thousands'?

This rhetorical question can be translated as a statement. Alternate translation: "You should not trust David—he is the one of whom they sang one to another in dances, saying, 'Saul ... ten thousands'!" (See: [Rhetorical Question](#))

thousands ... ten thousands

"1,000s...10,000s" (See: [Numbers](#))

ULT

⁵ Is this not David of whom they sang in the dances, saying, 'Saul has struck down his thousands, and David his ten thousands'?"

1 Samuel 29:6

As Yahweh lives

This is an idiom. "As certainly as Yahweh lives" or "This is a true statement" (See: [Idiom](#))

your going out and your coming in with me in the army is good

"I am happy to have you go out and come in with me and my army"
or "It is good that you go everywhere with me and my army"

ULT

6 And Achish called to David and said to him, "As Yahweh is alive, surely you are upright, and your going out and your coming in with me in the camp is good in my eyes, for I have not found evil in you from the day of your coming to me until this day. But in the eyes of the rulers you are not good."

1 Samuel 29:7

(There are no notes for this verse.)

ULT

⁷ And now return and go in peace, so you do not do evil in the eyes of the rulers of the Philistines.”

1 Samuel 29:8

my master the king

David speaks as if Achish were another person so that Achish will think David respects him. Alternate translation: “you, my master and king” (See: [Pronouns](#))

ULT

⁸ And David said to Achish, “But what have I done? And what have you found in your servant from the day when I was before your face until this day, that I may not come and fight against the enemies of my master the king?”

1 Samuel 29:9

nevertheless, the princes

“even though that is true, this is more important: the princes” or
“however, the princes”

ULT

⁹ And Achish answered and said to David, “I know that you are good in my eyes like a messenger of God. Nevertheless, the commanders of the Philistines have said, ‘He must not go up with us in the battle.’”

1 Samuel 29:10

your master

The reader should understand that Achish is speaking of Saul.

have light

“can see with the morning sun”

ULT

10 And now rise early in the morning with the servants of your master who came with you. And you shall rise early in the morning with light for you and go.”

1 Samuel 29:11

(There are no notes for this verse.)

ULT

11 And David rose early, he and his men, to go in the morning, to return to the land of the Philistines. And the Philistines went up to Jezreel.

1 Samuel 30

1 Samuel 30 General Notes

Special concepts in this chapter

David fights the Amalekites

When David and his men arrive home, they find the Amalekites have raided Ziklag and taken everything. They catch and destroy them and bring back all of their goods and families. Then David sends gifts to all the cities in Judah through which they had traveled.

1 Samuel 30:1

Ziklag

Ziklag is a city in the southern part of Judah. This was where David and his men kept their families.

ULT

1 And it happened, when David and his men came to Ziklag on the third day, that the Amalekites had raided against the Negev and against Ziklag. And they had struck Ziklag and had burned it with fire.

1 Samuel 30:2

they

the Amalekites

both small and great

This could mean: (1) “both unimportant people and important people” or (2) “both physically small and physically large.”

ULT

² And they had taken captive the women who were in it, from small and as far as great. They had not put a man to death, but had led them away and went to their way.

1 Samuel 30:3

their wives ... sons ... daughters

belonging to David and his men

it was burned, and their wives ... daughters were taken captive

This can be translated in active form. Alternate translation: "they saw that someone had burned it and taken their wives ... captive" (See: [Active or Passive](#))

ULT

³ And David and his men came to the city, and behold, it was burned with fire! And their wives and their sons and their daughters had been taken captive.

1 Samuel 30:4

the people that were with him

These were mainly his army of men.

ULT

⁴ And David and the people who were with him lifted up their voices and wept until there was no strength in them to weep.

1 Samuel 30:5

General Information:

David finds strength in Yahweh after the raid.

Ahinoam the Jezreelite woman

“Ahinoam from Jezreel”

Nabal the Carmelite

“Nabal the man from Carmel”

Ahinoam ... Abigail

women's names (See: [How to Translate Names](#))

ULT

⁵ And the two of the wives of David had been taken captive, Ahinoam the Jezreelite woman and Abigail the wife of Nabal the Carmelite.

1 Samuel 30:6

distressed

suffering

all the people were bitter in spirit

The word “bitter” is a metaphor for the desire to rebel. The word “spirit” is a synecdoche for the person. Alternate translation: “all the people were ready to rebel against David” or “all the people were very unhappy” (See: [Synecdoche](#))

David strengthened himself in Yahweh, his God

This could mean: (1) “David took courage because he knew Yahweh his God would help him” or (2) “Yahweh his God made David strong.”

ULT

⁶ And it was very narrow for David, for the people said to stone him, for the spirit of all the people was bitter, a man for his sons and for his daughters. And David strengthened himself in Yahweh, his God.

1 Samuel 30:7

General Information:

David seeks Yahweh's direction in dealing with the raid on his people.

ULT

⁷ And David said to Abiathar the priest, the son of Ahimelech, "Please bring near to me the ephod." And Abiathar brought near to David the ephod.

1 Samuel 30:8

David prayed to Yahweh for direction

The abstract noun “direction” can be translated as a clause.
Alternate translation: “David prayed that Yahweh would tell David what David should do” (See: [Abstract Nouns](#))

pursue

chase and try to catch

ULT

⁸ And David inquired of Yahweh, saying, “If I pursue after this troop, will I overtake it?” And he said to him, “Pursue, for you will certainly overtake and you will certainly rescue.”

1 Samuel 30:9

six hundred men

600 men (See: [Numbers](#))

brook

small stream

ULT

⁹ And David went, he and the 600 men who were with him, and they came as far as the wadi of the Besor. And the ones who were left behind stayed.

1 Samuel 30:10

kept pursuing

“kept chasing them, trying to catch them”

four hundred men

400 men (See: [Numbers](#))

two hundred

200 men (See: [Numbers](#))

who were so weak

They were tired from their own raids and now in pursuit of the Amalekites. They no longer had the strength to continue.

ULT

10 And David pursued, he and 400 men. And 200 men stayed, who were too exhausted to pass over the wadi of the Besor.

1 Samuel 30:11

an Egyptian in a field

He was left there to die from the Amalekite raiding party.

ULT

11 And they found an Egyptian man in the field and took him to David. And they gave to him bread, and he ate. And they caused him to drink water.

1 Samuel 30:12

clusters of raisins

“clusters of dried grapes”

ULT

12 And they gave to him a slice of a fig cake and two raisin clusters, and he ate and his spirit returned to him. For he had not eaten bread and had not drunk water three days and three nights.

1 Samuel 30:13

David said to him

David questioned the Egyptian slave.

three days ago

“three days in the past”

three days

3 days (See: [Numbers](#))

ULT

13 And David said to him, “To whom do you belong? And where are you from?” And he said, “I am an Egyptian young man, a slave of a man of the Amalekite. And my master left me because three days ago I became sick.”

1 Samuel 30:14

a raid

an attack on a town to take property

ULT

14 We raided the Negev of the Kerethites, and against what belongs to Judah, and against the Negev of Caleb. And we burned Ziklag with fire.”

1 Samuel 30:15

raiding party

a group of armed warriors who attack people or places unexpectedly

you will not ... betray me up into the hands of my master

Here “hands” refers to control. Alternate translation: “you will not ... violate the trust I have in you by allowing my master to control me again” (See: [Metonymy](#))

ULT

15 And David said to him, “Will you bring me down to this troop?” And he said, “Swear to me by God that you will not put me to death and not deliver me into the hand of my master, and I will bring you down to this troop.”

1 Samuel 30:16

booty

the goods they had stolen in the raid

ULT

16 And he brought him down, and behold, they were spread out over the face of all the land, eating and drinking and celebrating because of all the great spoil that they had taken from the land of the Philistines and from the land of Judah.

1 Samuel 30:17

twilight

the time just after the sun goes down until the sky is dark

four hundred

400 (See: [Numbers](#))

ULT

17 And David struck them down from the twilight and until the evening of their next day. And a man did not slip away from them except for 400 men, young men who rode on the camels and fled.

1 Samuel 30:18

recovered ... rescued

“got back ... got back.” These two words translate the same Hebrew word. Your language may also have a word for a person getting his own property back from the person who stole it that is different from the word for a person getting his wife back from those who have captured her.

rescued his two wives

“got his two wives back” or “saved his two wives from danger”

ULT

18 And David rescued all that Amalek had taken. And David rescued the two of his wives.

1 Samuel 30:19

Nothing was missing

“None of the items the Amalekites had stolen were lost”

neither small nor great

This could mean: (1) “neither unimportant people nor important people” or (2) “neither physically small nor physically large.” See how you translated similar words in [1 Samuel 30:2](#).

booty

goods that the Amalekites had stolen. See how you translated this in [1 Samuel 30:16](#).

ULT

19 And it was not missing for them from small and as far as great and as far as sons and daughters and from spoil and as far as all that they had taken for themselves. David brought back everything.

1 Samuel 30:20

(There are no notes for this verse.)

ULT

²⁰ And David took all the sheep and the cattle. They drove before the face of that livestock, and said, "This is the spoil of David."

1 Samuel 30:21

two hundred

200 (See: [Numbers](#))

the brook Besor

a small stream or creek named Besor. See how you translated this in [1 Samuel 30:9](#). (See: [How to Translate Names](#))

greeted them

spoke to them in a friendly way

ULT

²¹ And David came to the 200 men who had been too exhausted to go behind David, and they had caused them to stay at the wadi of the Besor. And they went out to meet David and to meet the people who were with him. And David came near the people and asked them with respect to well-being.

1 Samuel 30:22

the booty

the goods they had taken from the enemy in battle. See how you translated this in [1 Samuel 30:16](#).

we have recovered

“we have regained” or “we have gotten back”

ULT

22 And all the evil and worthless men from the men who had gone with David answered and said, “Because they did not go with us, we will not give to them from the spoil that we have rescued, except a man his wife and his sons, that they may lead away and go.”

1 Samuel 30:23

(There are no notes for this verse.)

ULT

²³ And David said, "You shall not do so, my brothers, with what Yahweh has given to us. And he has kept us and given into our hand the troop who came against us."

1 Samuel 30:24

Who will listen to you in this matter?

This rhetorical question can be translated as a statement: Alternate translation: "No one will listen to you in this matter." (See: [Rhetorical Question](#))

as the share is for anyone who goes

The abstract noun "share" can be translated as a verb. Alternate translation: "as what belongs to anyone who goes" (See: [Abstract Nouns](#))

anyone who goes into battle

the warriors who actually fought the enemy in war

will share and share alike

"will make sure that all receive the same amount"

anyone who waits by the baggage

the people who supported the warriors by managing and guarding their supplies

baggage

belongings that the soldiers left behind when they went into battle

ULT

24 And who will listen to you with respect to this matter? For as is the portion of the one who went down in the battle, so shall be the portion of the one who stayed with the things. They shall be apportioned together."

1 Samuel 30:25

(There are no notes for this verse.)

ULT

²⁵ And it happened from that day and beyond, that he set it for a statute and for a custom for Israel, until this day.

1 Samuel 30:26

Ziklag

This is the name of a town. (See: [How to Translate Names](#))

booty

goods that David had taken from the Amalekites after the battle. See how you translated this in [1 Samuel 30:16](#).

a present

“a gift”

ULT

26 And David came to Ziklag and sent some of the spoil to the elders of Judah, to his companions, saying, “Behold, a blessing for you: some of the spoil of the enemies of Yahweh.”

1 Samuel 30:27

Connecting Statement:

The writer begins a list of towns whose elders received gifts from David.

Bethel ... Jattir

These are names of towns. (See: [How to Translate Names](#))

ULT

²⁷ It was for he who was in Bethel and for he who was in Ramoth of the South and for he who was in Jattir

1 Samuel 30:28

Connecting Statement:

The writer continues the list that began in [1 Samuel 30:27](#) of towns whose elders received gifts from David.

Aroer ... Siphmoth ... Eshtemoa

These are names of towns. (See: [How to Translate Names](#))

ULT

²⁸ and for he who was in Aroer and for he who was in Siphmoth and for he who was in Eshtemoa

1 Samuel 30:29

Connecting Statement:

The writer continues the list that began in [1 Samuel 30:27](#) of towns whose elders received gifts from David.

Rakal

This is the name of a town. (See: [How to Translate Names](#))

Jerahmeelites ... Kenites

These are the names of people groups. (See: [How to Translate Names](#))

ULT

²⁹ and for he who was in Rakal and for he who was in the cities of the Jerahmeelite and for he who was in the cities of the Kenite

1 Samuel 30:30

Connecting Statement:

The writer continues the list that began in [1 Samuel 30:27](#) of towns whose elders received gifts from David.

Hormah ... Bor Ashan ... Athak

These are names of towns. (See: [How to Translate Names](#))

ULT

³⁰ and for he who was in Hormah and
for he who was in Bor Ashan and for he
who was in Athak

1 Samuel 30:31

Connecting Statement:

The writer finishes the list that began in [1 Samuel 30:27](#) of towns whose elders received gifts from David.

ULT

³¹ and for he who was in Hebron and for all the places there where David walked about, he and his men.

1 Samuel 31

1 Samuel 31 General Notes

Structure and formatting

This is the end of the section on Saul, but the book continues in 2 Samuel 1.

Special concepts in this chapter

Saul's punishment

Saul receives his punishment from God: death for his disobedience and resisting the will of God. (See: [will of God](#))

1 Samuel 31:1

Now the Philistines fought against Israel

This battle was the result of the conflict between David and the Philistines in [1 Samuel 29:11](#). The writer has finished telling the story of David that began in [1 Samuel 30:1](#), and now he tells about the battle between the Israelites and the Philistines.

against Israel

“Israel” refers to the people who live there. Alternate translation: “against the people of Israel” (See: [Metonymy](#))

Mount Gilboa

This is the name of a mountain (See: [How to Translate Names](#))

ULT

1 Now the Philistines were fighting against Israel. And the men of Israel fled from before the face of the Philistines and they fell pierced on Mount Gilboa.

1 Samuel 31:2

closely pursued Saul and his sons

“chased Saul and three of his sons”

Abinadab, and Malki-Shua

These are names of men. (See: [How to Translate Names](#))

ULT

² And the Philistines stuck close to Saul and his sons. And the Philistines struck down Jonathan and Abinadab and Malki-Shua, the sons of Saul.

1 Samuel 31:3

The battle went heavily against Saul

This is an idiom. "Saul's army began to lose the battle" (See: [Idiom](#))

ULT

³ And the battle was heavy against Saul and the archers, the men with the bow, found him. And he writhed in pain greatly because of the archers.

1 Samuel 31:4

armor bearer

The armor bearer carried the large shield of his commanding officer and other weapons. He protected the commanding officer during a battle.

these uncircumcised

The nominal adjective “uncircumcised” can be translated as an adjective. Not being circumcised is a metonym for being foreigners. Alternate translation: “these men who have not been circumcised” or “these non-Israelite men” (See: [Nominal Adjectives](#) and [Metonymy](#))

would not

The ellipsis can be filled in. Alternate translation: “would not do what Saul had told him to do” (See: [Ellipsis](#))

took his own sword and fell on it

“killed himself with his own sword”

ULT

⁴ And Saul said to the one who carried his equipment, “Draw out your sword and pierce me through with it, lest these uncircumcised ones come and pierce me through and deal severely with me.” But the one who carried his equipment was not willing, for he was very afraid. And Saul took the sword and fell on it.

1 Samuel 31:5

(There are no notes for this verse.)

ULT

⁵ And the one who carried his equipment saw that Saul had died. And he fell, he also, on his sword and died with him.

1 Samuel 31:6

that same day

“on that one day”

ULT

⁶ And Saul died and the three of his sons and the one who carried his equipment, even all his men together on that day.

1 Samuel 31:7

lived in them

lived in the cities the men of Israel had left

ULT

⁷ And the men of Israel who were on the other side of the valley and who were on the other side of the Jordan saw that the men of Israel had fled, and that Saul and his sons had died. And they left their cities and fled. And the Philistines came and dwelled in them.

1 Samuel 31:8

strip the dead

take the armor and weapons off the dead Israelites' bodies

Mount Gilboa

a mountain range overlooking the Valley of Jezreel in northern Israel, south of Nazareth (See: [How to Translate Names](#))

ULT

⁸ And it happened from the next day, that the Philistines came to strip the pierced ones. And they found Saul and the three of his sons fallen on Mount Gilboa.

1 Samuel 31:9

the land of the Philistines throughout

“all areas of the land of the Philistines”

to carry the news to their idols’ temples and to the people

“to speak the news inside the temples and to the people”

their idols’ temples

the buildings where they worshiped their idols

ULT

⁹ And they cut off his head and stripped off his equipment. And they sent into the land of the Philistines all around to bring news to the house of their idols and to the people.

1 Samuel 31:10

Ashtoreths

ancient false goddesses and idols, also called “Asherah” or “Astarte”

fastened

attached, probably with a large spike or nail

Beth Shan

the name of a city (See: [How to Translate Names](#))

ULT

10 And they put his equipment in the house of the Ashtoreths. And they thrust his corpse on the wall of Beth Shan.

1 Samuel 31:11

Jabesh

This is the name of a town. See how you translated this in [1 Samuel 11:1](#). (See: [How to Translate Names](#))

what the Philistines had done to Saul

“how the Philistines had dishonored Saul”

ULT

11 And those who dwelled in Jabesh Gilead heard about it, what the Philistines had done to Saul.

1 Samuel 31:12

all night

“throughout the whole night”

ULT

¹² And all the men of strength rose and went all the night and took the corpse of Saul and the corpses of his sons from the wall of Beth Shan. And they went to Jabesh and burned them there.

1 Samuel 31:13

a tamarisk tree

This is a type of tree. See how you translated this in [1 Samuel 22:6](#).
Alternate translation: "a large shade tree" (See: [Translate Unknowns](#))

ULT

13 And they took their bones and buried them under the tamarisk tree in Jabesh. And they fasted seven days.



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Version 24

Abstract Nouns

Description

Abstract nouns are nouns that refer to attitudes, qualities, events, or situations. These are things that cannot be seen or touched in a physical sense, such as happiness, weight, unity, friendship, health, and reason. This is a translation issue because some languages may express a certain idea with an abstract noun, while others would need a different way to express it.

This page answers the question: *What are abstract nouns and how do I deal with them in my translation?*

In order to understand this topic, it would be good to read:

[[rc://en/ta/man/translate/figs-partsofspeech]]
[[rc://en/ta/man/translate/figs-sentences]]

Remember that nouns are words that refer to a person, place, thing, or idea. Abstract nouns are the nouns that refer to ideas. These can be attitudes, qualities, events, situations, or even relationships between those ideas. These are things that cannot be seen or touched in a physical sense, such as joy, peace, creation, goodness, contentment, justice, truth, freedom, vengeance, slowness, length, weight, and many, many more.

Some languages, such as Biblical Greek and English, use abstract nouns a lot. They provide a way of giving names to actions or qualities. With names, people who speak these languages can talk about the concepts as though they were things. For example, in languages that use abstract nouns, people can say, "I believe in the forgiveness of sin."

But some languages do not use abstract nouns very much. In these languages, speakers may not have the two abstract nouns "forgiveness" and "sin," but they would express the same meaning in other ways. For example, they would express, "I believe that God is willing to forgive people after they have sinned," by using verb phrases instead of nouns for those ideas.

Reason This Is a Translation Issue

The Bible that you translate from may use abstract nouns to express certain ideas. Your language might not use abstract nouns for some of those ideas. Instead, it might use phrases to express those ideas. Those phrases will use other kinds of words such as adjectives, verbs, or adverbs to express the meaning of the abstract noun. For example, "What is its **weight**?" could be expressed as "How much does it **weigh**?" or "How **heavy** is it?"

Examples From the Bible

From **childhood** you have known the sacred writings ... (2 Timothy 3:15a ULT)

The abstract noun "childhood" refers to when someone was a child.

But **godliness** with **contentment** is great **gain**. (1 Timothy 6:6 ULT)

The abstract nouns "godliness" and "contentment" refer to being godly and content. The abstract noun "gain" refers to something that benefits or helps someone.

Today **salvation** has come to this house, because he too is a son of Abraham. (Luke 19:9 ULT)

The abstract noun "salvation" here refers to being saved.

The Lord does not move slowly concerning his promises, as some consider **slowness** to be (2 Peter 3:9a ULT)

The abstract noun "slowness" refers to the lack of speed with which something is done.

He will both bring to light the hidden things of darkness and reveal the **purposes** of the heart. (1 Corinthians 4:5b ULT)

The abstract noun “purposes” refers to the things that people want to do and the reasons they want to do them.

Translation Strategies

If an abstract noun would be natural and give the right meaning in your language, consider using it. If not, here is another option:

(1) Reword the sentence with a phrase that expresses the meaning of the abstract noun. Instead of a noun, the new phrase will use a verb, an adverb, or an adjective to express the idea of the abstract noun.

Examples of Translation Strategies Applied

(1) Reword the sentence with a phrase that expresses the meaning of the abstract noun. Instead of a noun, the new phrase will use a verb, an adverb, or an adjective to express the idea of the abstract noun. Alternative translations are indented below the Scripture example.

... from **childhood** you have known the sacred writings ... (2 Timothy 3:15a ULT)

Ever since **you were a child** you have known the sacred writings.

But **godliness** with **contentment** is great **gain**. (1 Timothy 6:6 ULT)

But **being godly** and **content** is very **beneficial**. But we **benefit** greatly when we **are godly** and **content**. But we **benefit** greatly when we **honor and obey God** and when we are **happy with what we have**.

Today **salvation** has come to this house, because he too is a son of Abraham. (Luke 19:9 ULT)

Today the people in this house **have been saved** ... Today God **has saved** the people in this house ...

The Lord does not move slowly concerning his promises, as some consider **slowness** to be. (2 Peter 3:9a ULT)

The Lord does not move slowly concerning his promises, as some consider **moving slowly** to be.

He will bring to light the hidden things of darkness and reveal the **purposes** of the heart. (1 Corinthians 4:5b ULT)

He will bring to light the hidden things of darkness and reveal **the things that people want to do and the reasons that they want to do them**.

(Go back to: 1 Samuel 1:6; 1:11; 1:16; 1:27; 8:11; 10:25; 14:15; 15:23; 16:21; 17:26; 20:14; 23:21; 25:6; 25:39; 30:8; 30:24)

Active or Passive

Some languages use both active and passive sentences. In active sentences, the subject does the action. In passive sentences, the subject is the one that receives the action. Here are some examples with their subjects bolded:

- Active: **My father** built the house in 2010.
- Passive: **The house** was built in 2010.

Translators whose languages do not use passive sentences will need to know how they can translate passive sentences that they find in the Bible. Other translators will need to decide when to use a passive sentence and when to use the active form.

This page answers the question: *What do active and passive mean, and how do I translate passive sentences?*

In order to understand this topic, it would be good to read:

[\[\[rc://en/ta/man/translate/figs-sentences\]\]](#)

[\[\[rc://en/ta/man/translate/figs-verbs\]\]](#)

Description

Some languages have both active and passive forms of sentences.

- In the active form, the subject does the action and is always mentioned.
- In the passive form, the action is done to the subject, and the one who does the action is not always mentioned.

In the examples of active and passive sentences below, we have bolded the subject.

- active: **My father** built the house in 2010.
- passive: **The house** was built by my father in 2010.
- passive: **The house** was built in 2010. (This does not tell who did the action.)

Reasons This Is a Translation Issue

All languages use active forms. Some languages use passive forms, and some do not. Some languages use passive forms only for certain purposes, and the passive form is not used for the same purposes in all of the languages that use it.

Purposes for the Passive

- The speaker is talking about the person or thing the action was done to, not about the person who did the action.
- The speaker does not want to tell who did the action.
- The speaker does not know who did the action.

Translation Principles Regarding the Passive

- Translators whose language does not use passive forms will need to find another way to express the idea.
- Translators whose language has passive forms will need to understand why the passive is used in a particular sentence in the Bible and decide whether or not to use a passive form for that purpose in his translation of the sentence.

Examples From the Bible

Then their shooters shot at your soldiers from off the wall, and some of the king's servants **were killed**, and your servant Uriah the Hittite **was killed** too. (2 Samuel 11:24 ULT)

This means that the enemy's shooters shot and killed some of the king's servants, including Uriah. The point is what happened to the king's servants and Uriah, not who shot them. The purpose of the passive form here is to keep the focus on the king's servants and Uriah.

When the men of the city arose early in the morning, and see, the altar of Baal **was torn down**. (Judges 6:28a ULT)

The men of the town saw what had happened to the altar of Baal, but they did not know who broke it down. The purpose of the passive form here is to communicate this event from the perspective of the men of the town.

It would be better for him if a millstone **were put** around his neck and he **were thrown** into the sea. (Luke 17:2a ULT)

This describes a situation in which a person ends up in the sea with a millstone around his neck. The purpose of the passive form here is to keep the focus on what happens to this person. Who does these things to the person is not important.

Translation Strategies

If your language would use a passive form for the same purpose as in the passage that you are translating, then use a passive form. If you decide that it is better to translate without a passive form, here are some strategies that you might consider.

- (1) Use the same verb in an active sentence and tell who or what did the action. If you do this, try to keep the focus on the person receiving the action.
- (2) Use the same verb in an active sentence, and do not tell who or what did the action. Instead, use a generic expression like "they" or "people" or "someone."
- (3) Use a different verb.

Examples of Translation Strategies Applied

- (1) Use the same verb in an active sentence and tell who did the action. If you do this, try to keep the focus on the person receiving the action.

A loaf of bread **was given** him every day from the street of the bakers. (Jeremiah 37:21b ULT)

The king's servants gave Jeremiah a loaf of bread every day from the street of the bakers.

- (2) Use the same verb in an active sentence, and do not tell who did the action. Instead, use a generic expression like "they" or "people" or "someone."

It would be better for him if a millstone **were put** around his neck and he **were thrown** into the sea. (Luke 17:2a ULT)

It would be better for him if **they were to put** a millstone around his neck and **throw** him into the sea.

It would be better for him if **someone were to put** a heavy stone around his neck and **throw** him into the sea.

- (3) Use a different verb in an active sentence.

A loaf of bread **was given** him every day from the street of the bakers. (Jeremiah 37:21 ULT)

He **received** a loaf of bread every day from the street of the bakers.

Next we recommend you learn about:

Abstract Nouns

[[rc://en/ta/man/translate/figs-order]]

(Go back to: 1 Samuel 1:28; 2:3; 2:4; 2:9; 2:10; 2:30; 3:7; 3:14; 3:20; 4:2; 4:10; 4:11; 4:17; 4:18; 4:19; 4:21; 4:22; 7:10; 7:13; 7:14; 10:20; 10:21; 13:4; 13:8; 13:19; 14:13; 14:41; 14:42; 16:23; 17:5; 17:31; 18:1; 18:19; 18:25; 18:30; 19:6; 19:11; 19:19; 19:21; 20:3; 20:18; 20:31; 20:34; 21:5; 21:6; 21:7; 22:6; 22:14; 23:7; 23:13; 23:21; 23:22; 23:25; 24:1; 24:20; 25:12; 25:15; 25:17; 25:21; 25:27; 25:28; 25:29; 25:32; 25:33; 25:34; 25:39; 26:19; 26:25; 27:4; 30:3)

Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information

Assumed knowledge is whatever a speaker assumes his audience knows before he speaks and gives them some kind of information. The speaker does not give the audience this information because he believes that they already know it.

This page answers the question: *How can I be sure that my translation communicates the assumed knowledge and implicit information along with the explicit information of the original message?*

When the speaker does give the audience information, he can do so in two ways. The speaker gives explicit information in what he states directly. Implicit Information is what the speaker does not state directly because he expects his audience to be able to learn it from other things he says.

Description

When someone speaks or writes, he has something specific that he wants people to know or do or think about. He normally states this directly. This is explicit information.

The speaker assumes that his audience already knows certain things that they will need to think about in order to understand this information. Normally he does not tell people these things, because they already know them. This is called assumed knowledge.

The speaker does not always directly state everything that he expects his audience to learn from what he says. Implicit information is information that he expects people to learn from what he says even though he does not state it directly.

Often, the audience understands this implicit information by combining what they already know (assumed knowledge) with the explicit information that the speaker tells them directly.

Reasons This Is a Translation Issue

All three kinds of information are part of the speaker's message. If one of these kinds of information is missing, then the audience will not understand the message. Because the target translation is in a language that is very different from the biblical languages and is made for an audience that lives in a very different time and place than the people in the Bible, many times the assumed knowledge or the implicit information is missing from the message. In other words, modern readers do not know everything that the original speakers and hearers in the Bible knew. When these things are important for understanding the message, it is helpful if you include this information in the text or in a footnote.

Examples From the Bible

Then a scribe came to him and said, "Teacher, I will follow you wherever you go." Jesus said to him, "Foxes **have holes**, and the birds of the sky **have nests**, but the Son of Man has nowhere to lay his head." (Matthew 8:19-20 ULT)

Jesus did not say what foxes and birds use holes and nests for, because he assumed that the scribe would have known that foxes sleep in holes in the ground and birds sleep in their nests. This is **assumed knowledge**.

Jesus did not directly say here "I am the Son of Man" but, if the scribe did not already know it, then that fact would be **implicit information** that he could learn because Jesus referred to himself that way. Also, Jesus did not state explicitly that he travelled a lot and did not have a house that he slept in every night. That is **implicit information** that the scribe could learn when Jesus said that he had nowhere to lay his head.

Woe to you, Chorazin! Woe to you, Bethsaida! If the mighty deeds had been done in **Tyre and Sidon** which were done in you, they would have repented long ago in sackcloth and ashes. But

I say to you, it will be more tolerable for Tyre and Sidon at the **day of judgment** than for you.
(Matthew 11:21-22 ULT)

Jesus assumed that the people he was speaking to knew that Tyre and Sidon were very wicked, and that the day of judgment is a time when God will judge every person. Jesus also knew that the people he was talking to believed that they were good and did not need to repent. Jesus did not need to tell them these things. This is all **assumed knowledge**.

An important piece of **implicit information** here is that the people he was speaking to would be judged more severely than the people of Tyre and Sidon would be judged **because** they did not repent.

Why do your disciples violate the traditions of the elders? For **they do not wash their hands when they eat bread**. (Matthew 15:2 ULT)

One of the traditions of the elders was a ceremony in which people would wash their hands in order to be ritually clean before eating. People thought that in order to be righteous, they had to follow all the traditions of the elders. This was **assumed knowledge** that the Pharisees who were speaking to Jesus expected him to know. By saying this, they were accusing his disciples of not following the traditions, and thus not being righteous. This is **implicit information** that they wanted him to understand from what they said.

Translation Strategies

If readers have enough assumed knowledge to be able to understand the message, along with any important implicit information that goes with the explicit information, then it is good to leave that knowledge unstated and leave the implicit information implicit. If the readers do not understand the message because one of these is missing for them, then follow these strategies:

(1) If readers cannot understand the message because they do not have certain assumed knowledge, then provide that knowledge as explicit information.

(2) If readers cannot understand the message because they do not know certain implicit information, then state that information clearly, but try to do it in a way that does not imply that the information was new to the original audience.

Examples of Translation Strategies Applied

(1) If readers cannot understand the message because they do not have certain assumed knowledge, then provide that knowledge as explicit information.

Jesus said to him, "Foxes **have holes**, and the birds of the sky **have nests**, but the Son of Man has nowhere to lay his head." (Matthew 8:20 ULT)

The assumed knowledge was that the foxes slept in their holes and birds slept in their nests.

Jesus said to him, "Foxes **have holes to live in**, and the birds of the sky **have nests to live in**, but the Son of Man has nowhere to lay his head and sleep."

It will be more tolerable for **Tyre and Sidon** at the day of judgment than for you (Matthew 11:22 ULT)

The assumed knowledge was that the people of Tyre and Sidon were very, very wicked. This can be stated explicitly.

>

At the day of judgment, it will be more tolerable for **those cities of Tyre and Sidon, whose people were very wicked**, than it will be for you. or At

the day of judgment, It will be more tolerable for those **wicked cities, Tyre and Sidon**, than for you.

Why do your disciples violate the traditions of the elders? For **they do not wash their hands** when they eat bread. (Matthew 15:2 ULT)

The assumed knowledge was that one of the traditions of the elders was a ceremony in which people would wash their hands in order to be ritually clean before eating, which they must do to be righteous. It was not to remove germs from their hands to avoid sickness, as a modern reader might think.

Why do your disciples violate the traditions of the elders? For **they do not go through the ceremonial handwashing ritual of righteousness** when they eat bread.

(2) If readers cannot understand the message because they do not know certain implicit information, then state that information clearly, but try to do it in a way that does not imply that the information was new to the original audience.

Then a scribe came to him and said, "Teacher, I will follow you wherever you go." Jesus said to him, "Foxes have holes, and the birds of the sky have nests, but the Son of Man has nowhere to lay his head." (Matthew 8:19-20 ULT)

The implicit information is that Jesus himself is the Son of Man. Other implicit information is that if the scribe wanted to follow Jesus, then, like Jesus, he would have to live without a house.

Jesus said to him, "Foxes have holes, and the birds of the sky have nests, but **I, the Son of Man, have no home to rest in. If you want to follow me, you will live as I live.**"

It will be more tolerable for Tyre and Sidon at the day of judgment than for you (Matthew 11:22 ULT)

The implicit information is that God would not only judge the people; he would punish them. This can be made explicit.

At the day of judgment, God will **punish Tyre and Sidon**, cities whose people were very wicked, **less severely than he will punish you.**

or:

At the day of judgment, God will **punish you more severely** than Tyre and Sidon, cities whose people were very wicked.

Modern readers may not know some of the things that the people in the Bible and the people who first read it knew. This can make it hard for them to understand what a speaker or writer says, and to learn things that the speaker left implicit. Translators may need to state some things explicitly in the translation that the original speaker or writer left unstated or implicit.

Next we recommend you learn about:

[\[\[rc://en/ta/man/translate/figs-explicitinfo\]\]](#)

(Go back to: [1 Samuel 1:9](#); [1:10](#); [1:11](#); [2:15](#); [4:4](#); [4:5](#); [5:3](#); [5:10](#); [5:12](#); [6:20](#); [7:6](#); [7:7](#); [Notes](#); [9:26](#); [10:12](#); [Notes](#); [12:3](#); [12:11](#); [12:20](#); [12:23](#); [14:13](#); [14:15](#); [14:22](#); [14:32](#); [14:33](#); [14:39](#); [14:41](#); [15:26](#); [15:27](#); [15:28](#); [16:4](#); [16:13](#); [17:14](#); [17:25](#); [17:52](#); [18:13](#); [19:15](#); [19:24](#); [Notes](#); [20:8](#); [21:7](#); [21:11](#); [21:15](#); [22:7](#); [22:18](#); [22:19](#); [25:14](#); [25:18](#); [25:25](#); [25:26](#); [25:42](#); [26:19](#))

Background Information

Description

When people tell a story, they normally tell the events in the order that they happened. This sequence of events makes up the storyline. The storyline is full of action verbs that move the story along in time. But sometimes a writer may take a break from the storyline and give some information to help his listeners understand the story better. This type of information is called background information. The background information might be about things that happened before the events he has already told about, or it might explain something in the story, or it might be about something that would happen much later in the story.

This page answers the question: *What is background information, and how can I show that some information is background information?*

In order to understand this topic, it would be good to read:

[Order of Events](#)

[[rc://en/ta/man/translate/writing-intro]]

Example — The bolded phrases in the story below are all background information.

Peter and John went on a hunting trip because **their village was going to have a feast the next day. Peter was the best hunter in the village. He once killed three wild pigs in one day!** They walked for hours through low bushes until they heard a wild pig. The pig ran, but they managed to shoot the pig and kill it. Then they tied up its legs with some rope **they had brought with them** and carried it home on a pole. When they brought it to the village, Peter’s cousin saw the pig and realized that it was his own pig. Peter had mistakenly killed his cousin’s pig.

Background information often tells about something that had happened earlier or something that would happen much later. Examples of these are: “their village was going to have a feast the next day,” “He once killed three wild pigs in one day,” and “that they had brought with them.”

Often background information uses “be” verbs like “was” and “were,” rather than action verbs. Examples of these are “their village was going to have a feast the next day,” and “Peter **was** the best hunter in the village.”

Background information can also be marked with words that tell the reader that this information is not part of the event line of the story. In this story, some of these words are “because,” “once,” and “had.”

A writer may use background information:

- to help their listeners be interested in the story
- to help their listeners understand something in the story
- to help the listeners understand why something is important in the story
- to tell the setting of a story
 - > * Setting includes:
 - > * where the story takes place
 - > * when the story takes place
 - > * who is present when the story begins
 - > * what is happening when the story begins

Reasons This Is a Translation Issue

- Languages have different ways of marking background information and storyline information.
- You (the translator) need to know the order of the events in the Bible, which information is background information, and which is storyline information.
- You will need to translate the story in a way that marks the background information in a way that your own readers will understand the order of events, which information is background information, and which is storyline information.

Examples From the Bible

Hagar gave birth to Abram’s son, and Abram named his son, whom Hagar bore, Ishmael. Abram **was 86 years old** when Hagar bore Ishmael to Abram. (Genesis 16:15-16 ULT)

The first sentence tells about two events. Hagar gave birth and Abraham named his son. The second sentence is background information about how old Abram was when those things happened.

And Jesus himself, when he began to teach, **was about 30 years of age**. He **was the son** (as was supposed) of Joseph, the son of Heli. (Luke 3:23 ULT)

And Jesus himself was beginning about 30 years old. He was the son (as it was assumed) of Joseph, of Heli,

The verses before this tell about when Jesus was baptized. This sentence introduces background information about Jesus’ age and ancestors. The story resumes in chapter 4 where it tells about Jesus going to the wilderness.

Then **it happened on a Sabbath** that he was **going through the grain fields**, and his **disciples were picking and eating the heads of grain**, rubbing them in their hands. But some of the Pharisees said ... (Luke 6:1-2a ULT)

These verses give the setting of the story. The events took place in a grain field on the Sabbath day. Jesus, his disciples, and some Pharisees were there, and Jesus’ disciples were picking heads of grain and eating them. The main action in the story starts with the phrase, “But some of the Pharisees said”

Translation Strategies

To keep translations clear and natural you will need to study how people tell stories in your language. Observe how your language marks background information. You may need to write down some stories in order to study this. Observe what kinds of verbs your language uses for background information and what kinds of words or other markers signal that something is background information. Do these same things when you translate, so that your translation is clear and natural and people can understand it easily.

(1) Use your language’s way of showing that certain information is background information.

(2) Reorder the information so that earlier events are mentioned first. (This is not always possible when the background information is very long.)

Examples of Translation Strategies Applied

(1) Use your language’s way of showing that certain information is background information. The examples below explain how this was done in the ULT English translations.

And Jesus himself **was** beginning about 30 years old. He **was** the son (as it was assumed) of Joseph, of Heli. (Luke 3:23 ULT)

English uses the word “and” to show that there is some kind of change in the story. The verb “was” shows that it is background information.

Therefore, also exhorting many other things, he preached the good news to the people. But Herod the tetrarch, **having been rebuked by him concerning Herodias, the wife of his brother**, and **concerning all the evil things that Herod had done**, added even this to them all: He locked John up in prison. (Luke 3:18-20 ULT)

The bolded phrases happened before John rebuked Herod. In English, the helping verb “had” in “had done” shows that Herod did those things before John rebuked him.

(2) Reorder the information so that earlier events are mentioned first.

Hagar gave birth to Abram’s son, and Abram named his son, whom Hagar bore, Ishmael. **Abram was 86 years old when Hagar bore Ishmael to Abram.** (Genesis 16:16 ULT)

“**When Abram was 86 years old,** Hagar gave birth to his son, and Abram named his son Ishmael.”

Therefore, also exhorting many other things, he preached the good news to the people. But Herod the tetrarch, **having been rebuked by him concerning Herodias, the wife of his brother,** and **concerning all the evil things that Herod had done,** added even this to them all: He locked John up in prison. (Luke 3:18-20 ULT)

The translation below reorders John’s rebuke and Herod’s actions.

“Now Herod the tetrarch married his brother’s wife, Herodias, and he did many other evil things, so John rebuked him. But then Herod did another very evil thing. He had John locked up in prison.”

Next we recommend you learn about:

[Connecting Words and Phrases](#)
 [[rc://en/ta/man/translate/writing-newevent]]

(Go back to: [1 Samuel 1:4](#); [5:5](#); [9:1](#); [9:9](#); [9:15](#); [25:21](#); [25:23](#); [25:43](#); [25:44](#); [28:3](#))

Biblical Distance

Description

The following terms are the most common measures for distance or length that were originally used in the Bible. Most of these are based on the sizes of the hand and forearm.

- The **handbreadth** was the width of the palm of a man’s hand.
- The **span** or handspan was the width of a man’s hand with the fingers spread out.
- The **cubit** was the length of a man’s forearm, from the elbow to the tip of the longest finger.
- The **“long” cubit** is used only in Ezekiel 40-48. It is the length of a normal cubit plus a span.
- The **stadium** (plural, **stadia**) referred to a certain footrace that was about 185 meters in length. Some older English versions translated this word as “furlong,” which referred to the average length of a plowed field.

This page answers the question: *How can I translate the lengths and distances that are in the Bible?*

In order to understand this topic, it would be good to read:

[\[\[rc://en/ta/man/translate/translate-decimal\]\]](#)
[Fractions](#)

The metric values in the table below are close but not exactly equal to the biblical measures. The biblical measures probably differed in exact length from time to time and place to place. The equivalents below are an attempt to give an average measurement.

Original Measure	Metric Measure
handbreadth	8 centimeters
span	23 centimeters
cubit	46 centimeters
“long” cubit	54 centimeters
stadia	185 meters

Translation Principles

The people in the Bible did not use modern measures such as meters, liters, and kilograms. Using the original measures can help readers know that the Bible really was written long ago in a time when people used those measures.

Using modern measures can help readers understand the text more easily.

Whatever measure you use, it would be good, if possible, to tell about the other kind of measure in the text or a footnote.

If you do not use the Biblical measures, try not to give the readers the idea that the measurements are exact. For example, if you translate one cubit as “.46 meters” or even as “46 centimeters,” readers might think that the measurement is exact. It would be better to say “half a meter,” “45 centimeters,” or “50 centimeters.”

Sometimes it can be helpful to use the word “about” to show that a measurement is not exact. For example, Luke 24:13 says that Emmaus was 60 stadia from Jerusalem. This can be translated as “about ten kilometers” from Jerusalem.

When God tells people how long something should be, and when people make things according to those lengths, do not use “about” in the translation. Otherwise it will give the impression that God did not care exactly how long something should be.

Translation Strategies

- (1) Use the measurements from the ULT. These are the same kinds of measurements that the original writers used. Spell them in a way that is similar to the way they sound or are spelled in the ULT. (See [Copy or Borrow Words](#).)
- (2) Use the metric measurements given in the UST. The translators of the UST have already figured how to represent the amounts in the metric system.
- (3) Use measurements that are already used in your language. In order to do this you would need to know how your measurements relate to the metric system and figure out each measurement.
- (4) Use the measurements from the ULT and include measurements that your people know in the text or a note.
- (5) Use measurements that your people know, and include the measurements from the ULT in the text or in a note.

Translation Strategies Applied

The strategies are all applied to Exodus 25:10 below.

They are to make an ark of acacia wood. Its length must be two and a half cubits; its width will be one cubit and a half; and its height will be one cubit and a half. (Exodus 25:10 ULT)

- (1) Use the measurements given in the ULT. These are the same kinds of measurements that the original writers used. Spell them in a way that is similar to the way they sound or are spelled in the ULT. (See [Copy or Borrow Words](#).)

“They are to make an ark of acacia wood. Its length must be **two and a half kubits**; its width will be **one kubit and a half**; and its height will be **one kubit and a half**.”

- (2) Use the metric measurements given in the UST. The translators of the UST have already figured how to represent the amounts in the metric system.

“They are to make an ark of acacia wood. Its length must be **one meter**; its width will be **two thirds of a meter**; and its height will be **two thirds of a meter**.”

- (3) Use measurements that are already used in your language. In order to do this you would need to know how your measurements relate to the metric system and figure out each measurement. For example, if you measure things using the standard meter length, you could translate it as below.

“They are to make an ark of acacia wood. Its length must be **one meter**; its width will be **two thirds of a meter**; and its height will be **two thirds of a meter**.”

- (4) Use the measurements from the ULT and include measurements that your people know in the text or a note. The following shows both measurements in the text.

“They are to make an ark of acacia wood. Its length must be **two and a half cubits (one meter)**; its width will be **one cubit and a half (two thirds of a meter)**; and its height will be **one cubit and a half (two thirds of a meter)**.”

- (5) Use measurements that your people know, and include the measurements from the ULT in the text or in a note. The following shows the ULT measurements in notes.

“They are to make an ark of acacia wood. Its length must be **one meter**; ¹ its width will be **two thirds of a meter**; ² and its height will be **two thirds of a meter**.”

The footnotes would look like:

“They are to make an ark of acacia wood. Its length must be **one meter**; ¹ its width will be **two thirds of a meter**; ² and its height will be **two thirds of a meter**.”

The footnotes would look like:

[1] two and a half cubits
[2] one cubit and a half

(Go back to: [1 Samuel 17:4](#))

Biblical Money

Description

This page answers the question: *How can I translate the values of money in the Bible?*

In early Old Testament times, people weighed their metals, such as silver and gold, and would pay a certain weight of that metal in order to buy things. Later, people started to make coins that each contained a standard amount of a certain metal. The daric is one such coin. In New Testament times, people used silver and copper coins.

The two tables below show some of the most well-known units of money found in the Old Testament (OT) and New Testament (NT). The table for Old Testament units shows what kind of metal was used and how much it weighed. The table for New Testament units shows what kind of metal was used and how much it was worth in terms of a day's wage.

Unit in OT	Metal	Weight
daric	gold coin	8.4 grams
shekel	various metals	11 grams
talent	various metals	33 kilograms

Unit in NT	Metal	Day's Wage
denarius/denarii	silver coin	1 day
drachma	silver coin	1 day
mite	copper coin	1/64 day
shekel	silver coin	4 days
talent	silver	6,000 days

Translation Principle

Do not use modern money values since these change from year to year. Using them will cause the Bible translation to become outdated and inaccurate.

Translation Strategies

The value of most money in the Old Testament was based on its weight. So when translating these weights in the Old Testament, see [Biblical Weight](#). The strategies below are for translating the value of money in the New Testament.

- (1) Use the Bible term and spell it in a way that is similar to the way it sounds. (See [Copy or Borrow Words](#).)
- (2) Describe the value of the money in terms of what kind of metal it was made of and how many coins were used.
- (3) Describe the value of the money in terms of what people in Bible times could earn in one day of work.
- (4) Use the biblical term and give the equivalent amount in the text or a footnote.

(5) Use the biblical term and explain it in a footnote.

Translation Strategies Applied

The translations strategies are all applied to Luke 7:41 below.

█ The one owed 500 denarii, and the other, 50. (Luke 7:41b ULT)

Use the Bible term and spell it in a way that is similar to the way it sounds. (See [Copy or Borrow Words](#).)

█ "The one owed **500 denali**, and the other, **50**."

Describe the value of the money in terms of what kind of metal it was made of and how many pieces or coins were used.

█ "The one owed **500 silver coins**, and the other, **50**."

(3) Describe the value of the money in terms of what people in Bible times could earn in one day of work.

█ "The one owed **500 days' wages**, and the other, **50**."

(4) Use the Bible term and give the equivalent amount in the text or a footnote.

█ "The one owed **500 denarii** ¹, and the other owed **50 denarii**. ²"

The footnotes would look like:

█ [1] 500 days' wages [2] 50 days' wages

(5) Use the Bible term and explain it in a footnote.

█ "The one owed **500 denarii**,¹ and the other, **50**." (Luke 7:41 ULT)

█ [1] A denarius was the amount of silver that people could earn in one day of work.

Next we recommend you learn about:

[Copy or Borrow Words](#)

[Translate Unknowns](#)

(Go back to: [1 Samuel 9:8](#); [13:21](#))

Biblical Volume

Description

The following terms are the most common units of volume used in the Bible to state how much a certain container could hold. The containers and measurements are given for both liquids (such as wine) and dry solids (such as grain). The metric values are not exactly equal to the biblical measures. The biblical measures probably differed in exact amount from time to time and place to place. The equivalents below are an attempt to give an average measurement.

This page answers the question: *How can I translate the measures of volume that are in the Bible?*

In order to understand this topic, it would be good to read:

[\[\[rc://en/ta/man/translate/translate-decimal\]\]](#)

Type	Original Measure	Liters
Dry	omer	2 liters
Dry	ephah	22 liters
Dry	homer	220 liters
Dry	cor	220 liters
Dry	seah	7.7 liters
Dry	letheke	114.8 liters
Liquid	metrete	40 liters
Liquid	bath	22 liters
Liquid	hin	3.7 liters
Liquid	kab	1.23 liters
Liquid	log	0.31 liters

Translation Principles

- The people in the Bible did not use modern measures such as meters, liters, and kilograms. Using the original measures can help readers know that the Bible really was written long ago in a time when people used those measures.
- Using modern measures can help readers understand the text more easily.
- Whatever measures you use, it would be good, if possible, to tell about the other kinds of measures in the text or a footnote.
- If you do not use the biblical measures, try not to give the readers the idea that the measurements are exact. For example, if you translate one hin as “3.7 liters,” readers might think that the measurement is exactly 3.7 liters, not 3.6 or 3.8. It would be better to use a more approximate measure such as “three and a half liters” or “four liters.”
- When God tells people how much of something to use, and when people use those amounts in obedience to him, do not say “about” in the translation. Otherwise it will give the impression that God did not care exactly how much they used.

When the unit of measure is stated

Translation Strategies

- (1) Use the measurements from the ULT. These are the same kinds of measurements that the original writers used. Spell them in a way that is similar to the way they sound or are spelled in the ULT. (See [Copy or Borrow Words](#).)
- (2) Use the metric measurements given in the UST. The translators of the UST have already figured how to represent the amounts in the metric system.
- (3) Use measurements that are already used in your language. In order to do this you would need to know how your measurements relate to the metric system and figure out each measurement.
- (4) Use the measurements from the ULT and include measurements that your people know in the text or a note.
- (5) Use measurements that your people know, and include the measurements from the ULT in the text or in a note.

Translation Strategies Applied

The strategies are all applied to Isaiah 5:10 below.

For a ten-yoke vineyard will yield only one bath, and one homer of seed will yield only an ephah. (Isaiah 5:10 ULT)

- (1) Use the measurements from the ULT. These are the same kinds of measurements that the original writers used. Spell them in a way that is similar to the way they sound or are spelled in the ULT. (See [Copy or Borrow Words](#).)

“For a ten-yoke vineyard will yield only one **bat**, and one **homer** of seed will yield only an **efa**.”

- (2) Use the measurements given in the UST. Usually they are metric measurements. The translators of the UST have already figured how to represent the amounts in the metric system.

“For a ten-yoke vineyard will yield only **22 liters** and **220 liters** of seed will yield only **22 liters**.”

“For a ten-yoke vineyard will yield only **22**, and **ten baskets** of seed will yield only **one basket**.”

- (3) Use measurements that are already used in your language. In order to do this you would need to know how your measurements relate to the metric system and figure out each measurement.

“For a ten-yoke vineyard will yield only **six gallons**, and **six and a half bushels** of seed will yield only **20 quarts**.”

- (4) Use the measurements from the ULT and include measurements that your people know in the text or a note. The following shows both measurements in the text.

“For a ten-yoke vineyard will yield only **one bath (six gallons)**, and **one homer (six and a half bushels)** of seed will yield only **an ephah (20 quarts)**.”

- (5) Use measurements that your people know, and include the measurements from the ULT in the text or in a note. The following shows the ULT measurements in footnotes.

“For a ten-yoke vineyard will yield only 22 liters¹, and 220 liters² of seed will yield only 22 liters³.”

The footnotes would look like:

[1] one bath
[2] one homer
[3] one ephah

When the unit of measure is implied

Sometimes the Hebrew does not specify a particular unit of volume but only uses a number. In these cases, many English versions, including the ULT and UST, add the word “measure.”

When you came to a heap of **20 measures** of grain, there were only **ten**, and when you came to the wine vat to draw out **50 measures** of wine, there were only 20. (Haggai 2:16 ULT)

Translation Strategies

- (1) Translate literally by using the number without a unit.
- (2) Use a generic word like “measure” or “quantity” or “amount.”
- (3) Use the name of an appropriate container, such as “basket” for grain or “jar” for wine.
- (4) Use a unit of measure that you are already using in your translation.

Translation Strategies Applied

The strategies are all applied to Haggai 2:16 below.

When you came to a heap of **20 measures** of grain, there were only **ten**, and when you came to the wine vat to draw out **fifty measures** of wine, there were only **20**. (Haggai 2:16 ULT)

- (1) Translate literally by using the number without a unit.

When you came to a heap of **20** of grain, there were only **ten**, and when you came to the wine vat to draw out **50** of wine, there were only **20**.

- (2) Use a generic word like “measure” or “quantity” or “amount.”

When you came to a heap of **20 amounts** of grain, there were only **ten**, and when you came to the wine vat to draw out **fifty amounts** of wine, there were only **20**.

- (3) Use the name of an appropriate container, such as “basket” for grain or “jar” for wine.

When you came to a heap of **20 baskets** of grain, there were only **ten**, and when you came to the wine vat to draw out **50 jars** of wine, there were only **20**.

- (4) Use a unit of measure that you are already using in your translation.

When you came to a heap for **20 liters** of grain, there were only **ten liters**, and when you came to the wine vat to draw out **50 liters** of wine, there were only **20 liters**.

Next we recommend you learn about:

[Fractions](#)

[[rc://en/ta/man/translate/figs-explicitinfo]]

(Go back to: [1 Samuel 1:24](#); [17:17](#); [25:18](#))

Biblical Weight

Description

This page answers the question: *How can I translate the values of weight in the Bible?*

The following terms are the most common units of weight in the Bible. The term “shekel” means “weight,” and many other weights are described in terms of the shekel. Some of these weights were used for money. The metric values in the table below are not exactly equal to the biblical measures. The biblical measures differed in exact amount from time to time and place to place. The equivalents below are only an attempt to give an average measurement.

Original Measure	Shekels	Grams	Kilograms
shekel	1 shekel	11 grams	-
bekah	1/2 shekel	5.7 grams	-
pim	2/3 shekel	7.6 grams	-
gerah	1/20 shekel	0.57 grams	-
mina	50 shekels	550 grams	1/2 kilogram
talent	3,000 shekels	-	34 kilograms

Translation Principles

The people in the Bible did not use modern measures such as meters, liters, and kilograms. Using the original measures can help readers know that the Bible really was written long ago in a time when people used those measures.

Using modern measures can help readers understand the text more easily.

Whatever measure you use, it would be good, if possible, to tell about the other kind of measure in the text or a footnote.

If you do not use the biblical measures, try not to give the readers the idea that the measurements are exact. For example, if you translate one gerah as “.57 grams,” readers might think that the measurement is exact. It would be better to say “half a gram.”

Sometimes it can be helpful to use the word “about” to show that a measurement is not exact. For example, 2 Samuel 21:16 says that Goliath’s spear weighed 300 shekels. Instead of translating this as “3300 grams” or “3.3 kilograms,” it can be translated as “about three and one half kilograms.”

When God tells people how much something should weigh, and when people use those weights, do not say “about” in the translation. Otherwise, it will give the impression that God did not care exactly how much the thing should weigh.

Translation Strategies

(1) Use the measurements from the ULT. These are the same kinds of measurements that the original writers used. Spell them in a way that is similar to the way they sound or are spelled in the ULT. (See [Copy or Borrow Words](#).)

(2) Use the metric measurements given in the UST. The translators of the UST have already figured how to represent the amounts in the metric system.

(3) Use measurements that are already used in your language. In order to do this, you would need to know how your measurements relate to the metric system and figure out each measurement.

(4) Use the measurements from the ULT and include measurements that your people know in the text or a note.

(5) Use measurements that your people know, and include the measurements from the ULT in the text or in a note.

Translation Strategies Applied

The strategies are all applied to Exodus 38:29 below.

█ The bronze from the wave offering weighed **70 talents and 2,400 shekels**. (Exodus 38:29 ULT)

(1) Use the measurements from the ULT. These are the same kinds of measurements that the original writers used. Spell them in a way that is similar to the way they sound or are spelled in the ULT. (See [Copy or Borrow Words](#).)

█ "The bronze from the wave offering weighed **70 talentes and 2,400 sekeles**."

(2) Use the metric measurements given in the UST. The translators of the UST have already figured how to represent the amounts in the metric system.

█ "The bronze from the wave offering weighed **2,400 kilograms**."

(3) Use measurements that are already used in your language. In order to do this you would need to know how your measurements relate to the metric system and figure out each measurement.

█ "The bronze from the wave offering weighed **5,300 pounds**."

(4) Use the measurements from the ULT and include measurements that your people know in the text or a footnote. The following shows both measurements in the text.

█ "The bronze from the wave offering weighed **70 talents (2,380 kilograms) and 2,400 shekels (26.4 kilograms)**."

(5) Use measurements that your people know, and include the measurements from the ULT in the text or in a footnote. The following shows the ULT measurements in notes.

█ "The bronze from the offering weighed **70 talents and 2,400 shekels**. ¹"

The footnote would look like:

█ ^[1] This was a total of about 2,400 kilograms.

Next we recommend you learn about:

[Fractions](#)

(Go back to: [1 Samuel 17:5](#); [17:7](#))

Connect — Goal (Purpose) Relationship

Logical Relationships

Some connectors establish logical relationships between two phrases, clauses, sentences, or chunks of text.

This page answers the question: *How can I translate a goal (purpose) relationship?*

Goal (or Purpose) Relationship

Description

A Goal Relationship is a logical relationship in which the second event is the purpose or goal of the first event. In order for something to be a goal relationship, someone must do the first event with the intention that it will cause the second event.

Reason This Is a Translation Issue

In Scripture, the goal or purpose may be stated either first or second. But in some languages, the goal or purpose must always occur in the same position (either first or second) in order for that logical relationship to be understood. You (the translator) need to understand the relationship between the two parts and communicate those accurately in your language. This may require changing the order of the two events. It may also require specific words to indicate that one is the goal or purpose of the other. Words commonly used to indicate a goal relationship in English are “in order to,” “in order that” or “so that.” It is important that the translator recognize the words that signal a goal relationship and translate that relationship in a natural way.

Examples From OBS and the Bible

She became angry and falsely accused Joseph **so that he was arrested and sent to prison.** (Story 8 Frame 5 OBS)

The goal or purpose of the woman’s false accusation was to get Joseph arrested and sent to prison.

Meanwhile Gideon, his son, was threshing out wheat at the winepress **in order to hide from the presence of Midian.** (Judges 6:11b ULT)

Here the prepositional phrase begins with “in order to.”

Now if I have found favor in your eyes, show me your ways **so that I may know you and continue to find favor in your eyes.** Remember that this nation is your people. (Exodus 33:13 ULT)

Moses wants God to show him God’s ways for the goal or purpose of Moses knowing God and continuing to find favor with God.

Even be sure to pull some out from the bundles for her and leave it **for her to glean,** and do not rebuke her! (Ruth 2:16 ULT)

The goal or purpose of Boaz instructing the men to pull out the grain from their bundles and leave it was for Ruth to gather (glean) it.

The shepherds said to each other, “Let us indeed go over as far as Bethlehem, **and let us see this thing that has happened,** which the Lord has made known to us.” (Luke 2:15 ULT)

The purpose of going to Bethlehem was to see the thing that had happened. Here the purpose is not marked and might be misunderstood.

“... if you want **to enter into life**, keep the commandments.” (Matthew 19:17b ULT)

The goal of keeping the commandments is to enter into life.

Do not turn from it to the right or to the left **so that you may be wise** in everything in which you walk. (Joshua 1:7c ULT)

The purpose of not turning away from the instructions that Moses gave to the Israelites was so that they would be wise.

But when the vine growers saw the son, they said among themselves, ‘This is the heir. Come, let us kill him **and take over his inheritance**.’ So they took him, threw him out of the vineyard and killed him. (Matt 21:38-39 ULT)

The purpose of the vine growers killing the heir was so they could take his inheritance. They state both events as a plan, joining them only with “and.” Then the word “so” marks the reporting of the first event, but the second event (the goal or purpose) is not stated.

Translation Strategies

If your language uses Goal or Purpose relationships in the same way as in the text, then use them as they are.

- (1) If the construction of the Goal statement is unclear, change it to one that is more clear.
- (2) If the order of the statements makes the Goal statement unclear or confusing for the reader, then change the order.

Examples of Translation Strategies Applied

- (1) If the construction of the goal statement is unclear, change it to one that is more clear.

“Even be sure to pull some out from the bundles for her and leave it **for her to glean**, and do not rebuke her!” (Ruth 2:16 ULT)

“Even be sure to pull some out from the bundles for her and leave it **so that she can glean it**, and do not rebuke her!”

The shepherds said to each other, “Let us indeed go over as far as Bethlehem, **and let us see this thing that has happened**, which the Lord has made known to us.” (Luke 2:15 ULT)

The shepherds said to each other, “Let us indeed go over as far as Bethlehem **so that we can see this thing that has happened**, which the Lord has made known to us.”

- (2) If the order of the statements makes the goal statement unclear or confusing for the reader, then change the order.

“... if you want **to enter into life**, keep the commandments.” (Matthew 19:17b ULT)

“... keep the commandments if you want **to enter into life**.” or: “... keep the commandments **so that you can enter into life**.”

But when the vine growers saw the son, they said among themselves, 'This is the heir. Come, let us kill him **and take over his inheritance.**' So they took him, threw him out of the vineyard and killed him. (Matt 21:38-39 ULT)

(1) and (2)

But when the vine growers saw the son, they said among themselves, 'This is the heir. Come, let us kill him **and take over his inheritance.**' So they took him, threw him out of the vineyard and killed him. (Matt 21:38-39 ULT)

But when the vine growers saw the son, they said among themselves, 'This is the heir. Come, let us kill him **so that we can take over his inheritance.**' So they took him, threw him out of the vineyard and killed him **so that they could take over his inheritance.**

(Go back to: [1 Samuel 1:13](#))

Connect — Reason-and-Result Relationship

Logical Relationships

Some connectors establish logical relationships between two phrases, clauses, sentences, or chunks of text.

This page answers the question: *How can I translate the reason-result relationship?*

Reason-and-Result Relationships

Description

A reason-and-result relationship is a logical relationship in which one event is the **reason** or cause for another event. The second event, then, is the **result** of the first event.

Reason This Is a Translation Issue

A reason-and-result relationship can look forward — “I did Y because I wanted X to happen.” But usually it is looking backward — “X happened, and so I did Y.” Also, it is possible to state the reason either before or after the result. Many languages have a preferred order for the reason and the result, and it will be confusing for the reader if they are in the opposite order. Common words used to indicate a reason-and-result relationship in English are “because,” “so,” “therefore,” and “for.” Some of these words can also be used to indicate a goal relationship, so translators need to be aware of the difference between a goal relationship and a reason-and-result relationship. It is necessary for translators to understand how the two events are connected, and then communicate them clearly in their language.

If the reason and result are stated in different verses, it is still possible to put them in a different order. If you change the order of the verses, then put the verse numbers together at the beginning of the group of verses that were rearranged like this: 1-2. This is called a Verse Bridge.

Examples From OBS and the Bible

The Jews were amazed, **because** Saul had tried to kill believers, and now he believed in Jesus!
(Story 46 Frame 6 OBS)

The **reason** is the change in Saul — that he had tried to kill people who believed in Jesus, and now he himself believed in Jesus. The **result** is that the Jews were amazed. “Because” connects the two ideas and indicates that what follows it is a reason.

Behold, a great storm arose on the sea, **so that** the boat was covered with the waves.
(Matthew 8:24a ULT)

The **reason** is the great storm, and the **result** is that the boat was covered with the waves. The two events are connected by “so that.” Notice that the term “so that” often indicates a goal relationship, but here the relationship is reason-and-result. This is because the sea cannot think and therefore does not have a goal.

God blessed the seventh day and sanctified it, **because** in it he rested from all his work which he had done in his creation. (Genesis 2:3 ULT)

The **result** is that God blessed and sanctified the seventh day. The **reason** is because he rested on the seventh day from his work.

“Blessed are the poor, **for** yours is the kingdom of God.” (Luke 6:20b ULT)

The **result** is that the poor are blessed. The **reason** is that the kingdom of God is theirs.

But he raised up in their place their sons that Joshua circumcised, being uncircumcised, **because** they had not been circumcised on the way. (Joshua 5:7 ULT)

The **result** is that Joshua circumcised the boys and men who had been born in the wilderness. The **reason** was that they had not been circumcised while they were journeying.

Translation Strategies

If your language uses reason-and-result relationships in the same way as in the text, then use them as they are.

- (1) If the order of the clauses is confusing for the reader, then change the order.
- (2) If the relationship between the clauses is not clear, then use a more clear connecting word.
- (3) If it is more clear to put a connecting word in the clause that does not have one, then do so.

Examples of Translation Strategies Applied

God blessed the seventh day and sanctified it, **because** in it he rested from all his work which he had done in his creation. (Genesis 2:3 ULT)

(1) God rested on the seventh day from all his work which he had done in his creation. **That is why** he blessed the seventh day and sanctified it.

Blessed are the poor, **for** yours is the kingdom of God. (Luke 6:20 ULT)

- (1) The kingdom of God belongs to you who are poor. **Therefore**, the poor are blessed.
- (2) Blessed are the poor, **because** yours is the kingdom of God.
- (3) **The reason that** the poor are blessed **is because** yours is the kingdom of God.

Behold, a great storm arose on the sea, **so that** the boat was covered with the waves. (Matthew 8:24a ULT)

- (1) Behold, the boat was covered with the waves **because** a great storm arose on the sea.
- (2) Behold, a great storm arose on the sea, **with the result that** the boat was covered with the waves.
- (3) Behold, **because** a great storm arose on the sea, the boat was covered with the waves.

Since he was not able to find out anything for certain because of the noise, he ordered that he be brought into the fortress. (Acts 21:34b ULT)

- (1) The captain ordered that Paul be brought into the fortress, **because** he could not tell anything because of all the noise.
- (2) **Because** the captain could not tell anything because of all the noise, he ordered that Paul be brought into the fortress.
- (3) The captain could not tell anything because of all the noise, **so** he ordered that Paul be brought into the fortress.

(Go back to: [1 Samuel 1:6](#))

Connecting Words and Phrases

Description

This page answers the question: *How do connecting words work to join parts of the text in different ways?*

As humans, we write our thoughts in phrases and sentences. We usually want to communicate a series of thoughts that are connected to each other in different ways. **Connecting words and phrases** show how these thoughts are related to each other. For example, we can show how the following thoughts are related by using the Connecting Words in bold type:

- It was raining, **so** I opened my umbrella.
- It was raining, **but** I did not have an umbrella. **So** I got very wet.

Connecting words or phrases can connect phrases or clauses within a sentence. They can connect sentences to each other. They can also connect entire chunks to one another in order to show how the chunk before relates to the chunk after the connecting word. Very often, the connecting words that connect entire chunks to one another are either conjunctions or adverbs.

It was raining, but I did not have an umbrella, so I got very wet.

Now I must change my clothes. Then I will drink a cup of hot tea and warm myself by the fire.

In the above example, the word **now** connects the two short chunks of text, showing the relationship between them. The speaker must change his clothes, drink hot tea, and warm himself because of something that happened earlier (that is, he got wet in the rain).

Sometimes people might not use a connecting word because they expect the context to help the readers understand the relationship between the thoughts. Some languages do not use connecting words as much as other languages do. They might say:

- It was raining. I did not have an umbrella. I got very wet.

You (the translator) will need to use the method that is most natural and clear in the target language. But in general, using connecting words whenever possible helps the reader to understand the ideas in the Bible most clearly.

Reasons This Is a Translation Issue

- You need to understand the relationship between paragraphs, between sentences, and between parts of sentences in the Bible, and how connecting words and phrases can help you to understand the relationship between the thoughts that they are connecting.
- Each language has its own ways of showing how thoughts are related.
- You need to know how to help readers understand the relationship between the thoughts in a way that is natural in your language.

Translation Principles

- You need to translate in a way that readers can understand the same relationship between thoughts that the original readers would have understood.
- Whether or not a connecting word is used is not as important as readers being able to understand the relationship between the ideas.

The Different Types of Connections

Listed below are different types of connections between ideas or events. These different types of connections can be indicated by using different connecting words. When we write or translate something, it is important to use the right connecting word so that these connections are clear for the reader. If you would like additional information, simply click the colored, hyperlinked word to be directed to a page containing definitions and examples for each type of connection.

- Sequential Clause — a time relationship between two events in which one happens and then the other happens.
- Simultaneous Clause — a time relationship between two or more events that occur at the same time.
- Background Clause — a time relationship in which the first clause describes a long event that is happening at the time when the beginning of the second event happens, which is described in the second clause.
- Exceptional Relationship — one clause describes a group of people or items, and the other clause excludes one or more items or people from the group.
- Hypothetical Condition — the second event will only take place if the first one takes place. Sometimes what takes place is dependent on the actions of other people.
- Factual Condition — a connection that sounds hypothetical but is already certain or true, so that the condition is guaranteed to happen.
- Contrary-to-Fact Condition — a connection that sounds hypothetical but is already certain that it is not true. See also: [Hypothetical Statements](#).
- [Goal Relationship](#) — a logical relationship in which the second event is the purpose or goal of the first.
- [Reason and Result Relationship](#) — a logical relationship in which one event is the reason for the other event, the result.
- Contrast Relationship — one item is being described as different or in opposition to another.

Examples from the Bible

I did not immediately consult with flesh and blood. I did not go up to Jerusalem to those who were apostles before me. **Instead**, I went to Arabia and then returned to Damascus. **Then** after three years, I went up to Jerusalem to visit Cephas, and I stayed with him 15 days. (Galatians 1:16b-18 ULT)

The word “instead” introduces something that contrasts with what was said before. The contrast here is between what Paul did not do and what he did do. The word “then” introduces a sequence of events. It introduces something that Paul did after he returned to Damascus.

Therefore, whoever breaks the least one of these commandments **and** teaches others to do so will be called least in the kingdom of heaven. **But** whoever keeps them and teaches them, that one will be called great in the kingdom of heaven. (Matthew 5:19 ULT)

The word “therefore” links this section with the section before it, signaling that the section that came before gave the reason for this section. “Therefore” usually links sections larger than one sentence. The word “and” links only two actions within the same sentence, that of breaking commandments and teaching others. In this verse the word “but” contrasts what one group of people will be called in God’s kingdom with what another group of people will be called.

We place nothing as a stumbling block in front of anyone, **so that** our ministry might not be discredited. **Instead**, we commend ourselves in everything as God’s servants. (2 Corinthians 6:3-4 ULT)

Here the words “so that” connect what follows as the reason for what came before; the reason that Paul does not place stumbling blocks is that he does not want his ministry brought into disrepute. “Instead” contrasts what Paul does (prove by his actions that he is God’s servant) with what he said he does not do (place stumbling blocks).

General Translation Strategies

See each type of Connecting Word above for specific strategies

If the way the relationship between thoughts is shown in the ULT would be natural and give the right meaning in your language, then consider using it. If not, here are some other options.

- (1) Use a connecting word (even if the ULT does not use one).
- (2) Do not use a connecting word if it would be strange to use one and people would understand the right relationship between the thoughts without it.
- (3) Use a different connecting word.

Examples of Translation Strategies Applied

- (1) Use a connecting word (even if the ULT does not use one).

Jesus said to them, “Come follow me, and I will make you to become fishers of men.” Then immediately they left the nets and followed him. (Mark 1:17-18 ULT)

They followed Jesus because he told them to. Some translators may want to mark this clause with the connecting word “so.”

Jesus said to them, “Come follow me, and I will make you to become fishers of men.” **So**, immediately they left the nets and followed him.

- (2) Do not use a connecting word if it would be odd to use one, and if people would understand the right relationship between the thoughts without it.

Therefore, whoever breaks the least one of these commandments **and** teaches others to do so will be called least in the kingdom of heaven. **But** whoever keeps them and teaches them, that one will be called great in the kingdom of heaven. (Matthew 5:19 ULT)

Some languages would prefer not to use connecting words here because the meaning is clear without them and using them would be unnatural. They might translate like this:

Therefore, whoever breaks the least one of these commandments, teaching others to do so as well, will be called least in the kingdom of heaven. Whoever keeps them and teaches them, that one will be called great in the kingdom of heaven.

I did not immediately consult with flesh and blood. I did not go up to Jerusalem to those who were apostles before me. **Instead**, I went to Arabia and then returned to Damascus. **Then** after three years, I went up to Jerusalem to visit Cephas, and I stayed with him 15 days. (Galatians 1:16b-18 ULT) (Galatians 1:16-18 ULT)

Some languages might not need the words “instead” or “then” here. They might translate like this:

I did not immediately consult with flesh and blood, nor did I go up to Jerusalem to those who had become apostles before me. I went to Arabia and then returned to Damascus. After three years I went up to Jerusalem to visit Cephas, and I stayed with him 15 days.

- (3) Use a different connecting word.

Therefore, whoever breaks the least one of these commandments **and** teaches others to do so will be called least in the kingdom of heaven. **But** whoever keeps them and teaches them, that one will be called great in the kingdom of heaven. (Matthew 5:19 ULT)

Instead of a word like “therefore,” a language might need a phrase to indicate that there was a section before it that gave the reason for the section that follows. Also, the word “but” is used here because of the contrast between the two groups of people. But in some languages, the word “but” would show that what comes after it is surprising because of what came before it. So “and” might be clearer for those languages. They might translate like this:

Because of that, whoever breaks the least one of these commandments and teaches others to do so will be called least in the kingdom of heaven. **And** whoever keeps them and teaches them, that one will be called great in the kingdom of heaven.

(Go back to: [1 Samuel 28:2](#))

Copy or Borrow Words

Description

Sometimes the Bible includes things that are not part of your culture and for which your language may not have a word. The Bible also includes people and places for which you may not have names.

When that happens you can “borrow” the word from the Bible in a familiar language and use it in your translation in your own language. This means that you basically copy it from the other language. This page tells how to “borrow” words. (There are also other ways to translate words for things that are not in your language. See [Translate Unknowns](#).)

This page answers the question: *What does it mean to borrow words from another language and how can I do it?*

In order to understand this topic, it would be good to read:

[Translate Unknowns](#)

Examples From the Bible

Seeing one fig tree along the roadside, he went to it. (Matthew 21:19a ULT)

If there are no fig trees where your language is spoken, there might not be a name for this kind of tree in your language.

Above him were the **seraphim**; each one had six wings; with two each covered his face, and with two he covered his feet, and with two he flew. (Isaiah 6:2 ULT)

Your language might not have a name for this kind of creature.

The declaration of the word of Yahweh to Israel by the hand of **Malachi**. (Malachi 1:1 ULT)

Malachi might not be a name that people who speak your language use.

Translation Strategies

There are several things to be aware of when borrowing words from another language.

- Different languages use different scripts, such as the Hebrew, Greek, Latin, Cyrillic, Devanagari, and Korean scripts. These scripts use different shapes to represent the letters in their alphabets.
- Languages that use the same script might pronounce the letters in that script differently. For example, when speaking German, people pronounce the letter “j” the same way that people pronounce the letter “y” when speaking English.
- Languages do not all have the same sounds or combinations of sounds. For example, many languages do not have the soft “th” sound in the English word “think,” and some languages cannot start a word with a combination of sounds like “st” as in “stop.”

There are several ways to borrow a word.

- (1) If your language uses a different script from the language you are translating from, you can simply substitute each letter shape with the corresponding letter shape of the script of your language.
- (2) You can spell the word as the Other Language spells it, and pronounce it the way your language normally pronounces those letters.
- (3) You can pronounce the word similarly to the way the Other Language does, and adjust the spelling to fit the rules of your language.

Examples of Translation Strategies Applied

(1) If your language uses a different script from the language you are translating from, you can simply substitute each letter shape with the corresponding letter shape of the script of your language.

.A man’s name in Hebrew letters — זְפַנְיָהּ
 “Zephaniah” — The same name in Roman letters

(2) You can spell the word as the Other Language spells it, and pronounce it the way your language normally pronounces those letters.

Zephaniah — This is a man’s name.
 “Zephaniah” — The name as it is spelled in English, but you can pronounce it according to the rules of your language.

(3) You can pronounce the word similarly to the way the Other Language does, and adjust the spelling to fit the rules of your language.

Zephaniah — If your language does not have the “z,” you could use “s.” If your writing system does not use “ph” you could use “f.” Depending on how you pronounce the “i” you could spell it with “i” or “ai” or “ay.”
 “Sefania”
 “Sefanaia”
 “Sefanaya”

(Go back to: [1 Samuel 14:41](#))

Direct and Indirect Quotations

Description

There are two kinds of quotations: direct quotations and indirect quotations.

A direct quotation occurs when someone reports what another person said from the viewpoint of that original speaker. People usually expect that this kind of quotation will represent the original speaker's exact words. In the example below, John would have said "I" when referring to himself, so the narrator, who is reporting John's words, uses the word "I" in the quotation to refer to John. To show that these are John's exact words, many languages put the words between quotation marks: "".

- John said, "I do not know at what time I will arrive."

An indirect quotation occurs when a speaker reports what someone else said, but in this case, the speaker is reporting it from his own point of view instead and not from the original person's point of view. This kind of quotation usually contains changes in pronouns, and it often includes changes in time, in word choices, and in length. In the example below, the narrator refers to John as "he" in the quotation and uses the word "would" to replace the future tense, indicated by "will."

- John said that he did not know at what time he would arrive.

Reason This Is a Translation Issue

In some languages, reported speech can be expressed by either direct or indirect quotations. In other languages, it is more natural to use one than the other. There may be a certain meaning implied by using one rather than the other. So for each quotation, translators need to decide whether it is best to translate it as a direct quotation or as an indirect quotation.

Examples From the Bible

The verses in the examples below contain both direct and indirect quotations. In the explanation below the verse, we have marked in bold the words that are quoted.

And he commanded him to tell no one, but, "Go, show yourself to the priest and offer a sacrifice for your cleansing, according to what Moses commanded, for a testimony to them."
(Luke 5:14 ULT)

- Indirect quote: He commanded him **to tell no one**,
- Direct quote: but told him, "**Go, show yourself to the priest ...**"

And being asked by the Pharisees when the kingdom of God was coming, he answered them and said, "The kingdom of God is not coming with careful observation. Neither will they say, 'Look, here it is!' or 'There it is!' For indeed, the kingdom of God is among you."
(Luke 17:20-21 ULT)

- Indirect quote: Being asked by the Pharisees **when the kingdom of God was coming**,
- Direct quote: he answered them and said, "**The kingdom of God is not coming with careful observation. Neither will they say, 'Look, here it is!' or 'There it is!' For indeed, the kingdom of God is among you.**"
- Direct quotes: Neither will they say, '**Look, here it is!**' or, '**There it is!**'

This page answers the question: *What are direct and indirect quotations?*

In order to understand this topic, it would be good to read:

[Pronouns](#)

[\[\[rc://en/ta/man/translate/figs-verbs\]\]](#)

[Quotations and Quote Margins](#)

Translation Strategies

If the kind of quote used in the source text would work well in your language, consider using it. If the kind of quote used in that context is not natural for your language, follow these strategies.

- (1) If a direct quote would not work well in your language, change it to an indirect quote.
- (2) If an indirect quote would not work well in your language, change it to a direct quote.

Examples of Translation Strategies Applied

- (1) If a direct quote would not work well in your language, change it to an indirect quote.

And he commanded him to tell no one, but, **“Go, show yourself to the priest and offer a sacrifice for your cleansing, according to what Moses commanded, for a testimony to them.”** (Luke 5:14 ULT)

He commanded him to tell no one, but **to go and show himself to the priest and offer a sacrifice for his cleansing according to what Moses commanded, for a testimony to them.**

- (2) If an indirect quote would not work well in your language, change it to a direct quote.

And he commanded him **to tell no one**, but, “Go, show yourself to the priest and offer a sacrifice for your cleansing, according to what Moses commanded, for a testimony to them.” (Luke 5:14 ULT)

He commanded him, **“Tell no one.** But go and show yourself to the priest and offer a sacrifice for your cleansing according to what Moses commanded, for a testimony to them.”

You may also want to watch the video at https://ufw.io/figs_quotations.

Next we recommend you learn about:

[Quotes within Quotes](#)

(Go back to: [1 Samuel 16:2](#))

Double Negatives

A double negative occurs when a clause has two words that each express the meaning of “not.” Double negatives mean very different things in different languages. To translate sentences that have double negatives accurately and clearly, you need to know what a double negative means in the Bible and how to express this idea in your language.

This page answers the question: *What are double negatives?*

In order to understand this topic, it would be good to read:

[[rc://en/ta/man/translate/figs-partsofspeech]]
[[rc://en/ta/man/translate/figs-sentences]]

Description

Negative words are words that have in them the meaning “not.” Examples in English are “no,” “not,” “none,” “no one,” “nothing,” “nowhere,” “never,” “nor,” “neither,” and “without.” Also, some words have prefixes or suffixes that mean “not,” such as the bolded parts of these words: “**un**happy,” “**im**possible,” and “**useless**.” Some other kinds of words also have a negative meaning, such as “lack” or “reject,” or even “fight” or “evil.”

A double negative occurs when a clause has two words that each have a negative meaning.

We did this **not** because we have **no** authority ... (2 Thessalonians 3:9a ULT)

And this was **not** done **without** an oath! (Hebrews 7:20a ULT)

Be sure of this—the wicked person will **not** go **un**punished. (Proverbs 11:21a ULT)

Reason This Is a Translation Issue

Double negatives mean very different things in different languages.

- In some languages, such as Spanish, a double negative emphasizes the negative. The Spanish sentence, “No vi a nadie,” literally says “I did not see no one.” It has both the word ‘no’ next to the verb and ‘nadie,’ which means “no one.” The two negatives are seen as in agreement with each other, and the sentence means, “I did not see anyone.”
- In some languages, a second negative cancels the first one, creating a positive sentence. So, “He is not unintelligent” means “He is intelligent.”
- In some languages the double negative creates a positive sentence, but it is a weak statement. So, “He is not unintelligent” means, “He is somewhat intelligent.”
- In some languages, such as the languages of the Bible, the double negative can create a positive sentence, and often strengthens the statement. So, “He is not unintelligent” can mean “He is intelligent” or “He is very intelligent.”

To translate sentences with double negatives accurately and clearly in your language, you need to know what a double negative means in the Bible and how to express the same idea in your language.

Examples From the Bible

... in order **not** to be **un**fruitful. (Titus 3:14b ULT)

This means “so that they will be fruitful.”

All things were made through him and **without** him there was **not** one thing made that has been made. (John 1:3 ULT)

By using a double negative, John emphasized that the Son of God created absolutely everything. The double negative makes a stronger statement than the simple positive.

Translation Strategies

If double negatives are natural and are used to express the positive in your language, consider using them. Otherwise, you could consider these strategies:

- (1) If the purpose of a double negative in the Bible is simply to make a positive statement, and if it would not do that in your language, remove the two negatives so that it is positive.
- (2) If the purpose of a double negative in the Bible is to make a strong positive statement, and if it would not do that in your language, remove the two negatives and put in a strengthening word or phrase such as “very” or “surely” or “absolutely.”

Examples of Translation Strategies Applied

- (1) If the purpose of a double negative in the Bible is simply to make a positive statement, and if it would not do that in your language, remove the two negatives so that it is positive.

For we do **not** have a high priest who **cannot** feel sympathy for our weaknesses. (Hebrews 4:15a ULT)

“For we have a high priest who can feel sympathy for our weaknesses.”

... in order **not** to be **unfruitful**. (Titus 3:14b ULT)

“... so that they may be fruitful.”

- (2) If the purpose of a double negative in the Bible is to make a strong positive statement, and if it would not do that in your language, remove the two negatives and put in a strengthening word or phrase such as “very” or “surely” or “absolutely.”

Be sure of this—the wicked person will **not** go **unpunished**. (Proverbs 11:21a ULT)

“Be sure of this—wicked people will **certainly** be punished.”

All things were made through him and **without** him there was **not** one thing made that has been made. (John 1:3 ULT)

“All things were made through him. He made **absolutely** everything that has been made.”

Next we recommend you learn about:

[\[\[rc://en/ta/man/translate/figs-verbs\]\]](#)

(Go back to: [1 Samuel 14:6](#))

Doublet

Description

We are using the word “doublet” to refer to two words or phrases that are used together and either mean the same thing or mean very close to the same thing. Often they are joined with the word “and.” Unlike [Hendiadys](#), in which one of the words modifies the other, in a doublet the two words or phrases are equal and are used to emphasize or intensify the one idea that is expressed by the two words or phrases.

This page answers the question: *What are doublets and how can I translate them?*

In order to understand this topic, it would be good to read:

[[rc://en/ta/man/translate/figs-intro]]

Reason This Is a Translation Issue

In some languages people do not use doublets. Or they may use doublets, but only in certain situations, so a doublet might not make sense in their language in some verses. People might think that the verse is describing two ideas or actions, when it is only describing one. In this case, translators may need to find some other way to express the meaning expressed by the doublet.

Examples From the Bible

He has one people **scattered** and **dispersed** among the peoples (Esther 3:8 ULT)

The bolded words mean the same thing. Together they mean the people were spread out.

He attacked two men **more righteous** and **better** than himself. (1 Kings 2:32b ULT)

This means that they were “much more righteous” than he was.

You have decided to prepare **false** and **deceptive** words. (Daniel 2:9b ULT)

This means that they had decided to lie, which is another way of saying that they intended to deceive people.

... like of a lamb **without blemish** and **without spot**. (1 Peter 1:19b ULT)

This means that he was like a lamb that did not have any defect—not even one.

Translation Strategies

If a doublet would be natural and give the right meaning in your language, consider using it. If not, consider these strategies.

- (1) Translate only one of the words or phrases.
- (2) If the doublet is used to intensify the meaning, translate one of the words or phrases and add a word that intensifies it such as “very” or “great” or “many.”
- (3) If the doublet is used to intensify or emphasize the meaning, use one of your language’s ways of doing that.

Translation Strategies Applied

(1) Translate only one of the words.

You have decided to prepare **false** and **deceptive** words. (Daniel 2:9b ULT)

“You have decided to prepare **false** things to say.”

(2) If the doublet is used to intensify the meaning, translate one of the words and add a word that intensifies it such as “very” or “great” or “many.”

He has one people **scattered** and **dispersed** among the peoples (Esther 3:8 ULT)

“He has one people **very spread out**.”

(3) If the doublet is used to intensify or emphasize the meaning, use one of your language’s ways of doing that.

... like a lamb **without blemish** and **without spot**. (1 Peter 1:19b ULT)

• English can emphasize this with “any” and “at all.”

“... like a lamb **without any blemish at all**.”

(Go back to: [1 Samuel 1:11](#); [17:11](#); [18:28](#); [23:22](#))

Ellipsis

Description

An ellipsis¹ occurs when a speaker or writer leaves out one or more words that normally should be in the sentence. The speaker or writer does this because he knows that the hearer or reader will understand the meaning of the sentence and supply the words in his mind when he hears or reads the words that are there. For example:

So the wicked will not stand in the judgment, **nor sinners in the assembly of the righteous.**
(Psalm 1:5 ULT)

There is ellipsis in the second part because “nor sinners in the assembly of the righteous” is not a complete sentence. The speaker assumes that the hearer will understand what it is that sinners will not do in the assembly of the righteous by filling in the action from the previous clause. With the action filled in, the complete sentence would read:

So the wicked will not stand in the judgment, nor **will sinners stand** in the assembly of the righteous.

[¹] English has a punctuation symbol which is also called an ellipsis. It is a series of three dots (...) used to indicate an intentional omission of a word, phrase, sentence or more from text without altering its original meaning. This translationAcademy article is not about the punctuation mark, but about the concept of omission of words that normally should be in the sentence.

Two Types of Ellipsis

A Relative Ellipsis happens when the reader has to supply the omitted word or words from the context. Usually the word is in the previous sentence, as in the example above.

An Absolute Ellipsis happens when the omitted word or words are not in the context, but the phrases are common enough in the language that the reader is expected to supply what is missing from this common usage or from the nature of the situation.

Reason This Is a Translation Issue

Readers who see incomplete sentences or phrases may not know that there is information missing that the writer expects them to fill in. Or readers may understand that there is information missing, but they may not know what information is missing because they do not know the original biblical language, culture, or situation as the original readers did. In this case, they may fill in the wrong information. Or readers may misunderstand the ellipsis if they do not use ellipsis in the same way in their language.

Examples From the Bible

Relative Ellipsis

He makes Lebanon skip like a calf **and Sirion like a young ox.** (Psalm 29:6 ULT)

The writer wants his words to be few and to make good poetry. The full sentence with the information filled in would be:

This page answers the question: *What is ellipsis ?* ([^1])

In order to understand this topic, it would be good to read:

[[rc://en/ta/man/translate/figs-intro]]

[[rc://en/ta/man/translate/figs-sentences]]

He makes Lebanon skip like a calf and **he makes** Sirion **skip** like a young ox.

Watch carefully, therefore, how you walk—**not as unwise but as wise**. (Ephesians 5:15b ULT)

The information that the reader must understand in the second parts of these sentences can be filled in from the first parts:

Watch carefully, therefore, how you walk—**walk** not as unwise but **walk** as wise,

Absolute Ellipsis

Then when he had come near, he asked him, “What do you want me to do for you?” And so he said, “Lord, **that I might recover my sight**.” (Luke 18:40b-41 ULT)

It seems that the man answered in an incomplete sentence because he wanted to be polite and not directly ask Jesus for healing. He knew that Jesus would understand that the only way he could receive his sight would be for Jesus to heal him. The complete sentence would be:

“Lord, **I want you to heal me so** that I might receive my sight.”

To Titus, a true son in our common faith. Grace and peace from God the Father and Christ Jesus our Savior. (Titus 1:4 ULT)

The writer assumes that the reader will recognize this common form of a blessing or wish, so he does not need to include the full sentence, which would be:

To Titus, a true son in our common faith. **May you receive** grace and peace from God the Father and Christ Jesus our Savior.

Translation Strategies

If ellipsis would be natural and give the right meaning in your language, consider using it. If not, here is another option:

(1) Add the missing words to the incomplete phrase or sentence.

Examples of Translation Strategies Applied

(1) Add the missing words to the incomplete phrase or sentence.

So the wicked will not stand in the judgment, nor **sinner in the assembly** of the righteous. (Psalm 1:5 ULT)

So the wicked will not stand in the judgment, and **sinner will not stand in the assembly** of the righteous.

Then when he had come near, he asked him, “What do you want me to do for you?” And so he said, “Lord, **that I might recover my sight**.” (Luke 18:40b-41 ULT)

Then when the man was near, Jesus asked him, “What do you want me to do for you?” He said, “Lord, **I want you to heal me** that I might receive my sight.”

He makes Lebanon skip like a calf **and Sirion like a young ox**. (Psalm 29:6 ULT)

He makes Lebanon skip like a calf, and **he makes** Sirion **skip** like a young ox.

(Go back to: [1 Samuel 16:2](#); [16:5](#); [16:9](#); [16:11](#); [18:7](#); [18:25](#); [21:4](#); [24:14](#); [25:39](#); [31:4](#))

Euphemism

Description

A euphemism is a mild or polite way of referring to something that is unpleasant, embarrassing, or socially unacceptable, such as death or activities usually done in private.

... they found Saul and his sons **fallen** on Mount Gilboa.
(1 Chronicles 10:8b ULT)

This means that Saul and his sons “were dead.” It is a euphemism because the important thing was not that Saul and his sons had fallen but that they were dead. Sometimes people do not like to speak directly about death because it is unpleasant.

This page answers the question: *What is a euphemism?*

In order to understand this topic, it would be good to read:

[[rc://en/ta/man/translate/figs-intro]]

Reason This Is a Translation Issue

Different languages use different euphemisms. If the target language does not use the same euphemism as in the source language, readers may not understand what it means and they may think that the writer means only what the words literally say.

Examples From the Bible

... where there was a cave. Saul went inside to **cover his feet**. (1 Samuel 24:3b ULT)

The original hearers would have understood that Saul went into the cave to use it as a toilet, but the writer wanted to avoid offending or distracting them, so **he did not say specifically** what Saul did or what he left in the cave.

But Mary said to the angel, “How will this be, since I have not **known a man?**” (Luke 1:34 ULT)

In order **to be polite**, Mary uses a euphemism to say that she has never had sexual intercourse with a man.

Translation Strategies

If euphemism would be natural and give the right meaning in your language, consider using it. If not, here are other options:

- (1) Use a euphemism from your own culture.
- (2) State the information plainly without a euphemism if it would not be offensive.

Examples of Translation Strategies Applied

- (1) Use a euphemism from your own culture.

... where there was a cave. Saul went inside to **cover his feet**. (1 Samuel 24:3b ULT) — Some languages might use euphemisms like these:

“... where there was a cave. Saul went into the cave to **dig a hole**”

“... where there was a cave. Saul went into the cave to **have some time alone**”

But Mary said to the angel, “How will this be, since I have not **known a man?**” (Luke 1:34 ULT)

But Mary said to the angel, “How will this be, since I have not **slept with a man?**”

(2) State the information plainly without a euphemism if it would not be offensive.

They found Saul and his sons **fallen** on Mount Gilboa. (1 Chronicles 10:8b ULT)

“They found Saul and his sons **dead** on Mount Gilboa.”

(Go back to: [1 Samuel 1:5](#); [1:6](#); [1:19](#); [2:9](#); [2:22](#); [2:30](#); [2:31](#); [9:16](#); [12:4](#); [12:5](#); [15:33](#); [18:17](#); [18:21](#); [18:25](#); [24:3](#); [26:20](#); [28:19](#))

Exclusive and Inclusive 'We'

Description

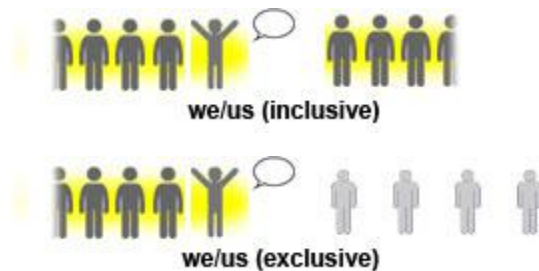
Some languages have more than one form of "we": an inclusive form that means "I and you" and an exclusive form that means "I and someone else but not you." The exclusive form excludes the person being spoken to. The inclusive form includes the person being spoken to and possibly others. This is also true for "us," "our," "ours," and "ourselves." Some languages have inclusive forms and exclusive forms for each of these. Translators whose language has separate exclusive and inclusive forms for these words will need to understand what the speaker meant so that they can decide which form to use.

This page answers the question: *What are the exclusive and inclusive forms of "we"?*

In order to understand this topic, it would be good to read:

[Pronouns](#)

See the pictures. The people on the right are the people that the speaker is talking to. The yellow highlight shows who the inclusive "we" and the exclusive "we" refer to.



Reason This Is a Translation Issue

The Bible was first written in the Hebrew, Aramaic, and Greek languages. Like English, these languages do not have separate exclusive and inclusive forms for "we." If your language has separate exclusive and inclusive forms of "we," then you will need to understand what the speaker meant so that you can decide which form of "we" to use.

Examples From the Bible

Exclusive

They said, "There are not more than five loaves of bread and two fish with us—unless **we** go and buy food for all these people." (Luke 9:13 ULT)

In the second clause, the disciples are talking about some of them going to buy food. They were speaking to Jesus, but Jesus was not going to buy food. So languages that have inclusive and exclusive forms of "we" would use the **exclusive** form there.

We have seen it, and **we** bear witness to it. **We** are announcing to you the eternal life, which was with the Father, and which has been made known to **us**. (1 John 1:2 ULT)

John is telling people who have not seen Jesus what he and the other apostles have seen. So languages that have inclusive and exclusive forms of "we" and "us" would use the **exclusive** forms in this verse.

Inclusive

The shepherds said one to each other, "Let **us** now go to Bethlehem, and see this thing that has happened, which the Lord has made known to **us**." (Luke 2:15b ULT)

The shepherds were speaking to one another. When they said "us," they were including the people they were speaking to, so languages that have inclusive and exclusive forms of "we" and "us" would use the **inclusive** form in this verse.

Now it happened that on one of those days, he indeed got into a boat with his disciples, and he said to them, "Let **us** go over to the other side of the lake." So they set sail. (Luke 8:22 ULT)

When Jesus said "us," he was referring to himself and to the disciples he was speaking to, so languages that have inclusive and exclusive forms of "we" and "us" would use the **inclusive** form in this verse.

Next we recommend you learn about:

[[rc://en/ta/man/translate/figs-gendernotations]]

(Go back to: [1 Samuel 26:11](#))

First, Second or Third Person

Normally a speaker refers to himself as “I” and the person he is speaking to as “you.” Sometimes in the Bible a speaker refers to himself or to the person he is speaking to with terms other than “I” or “you.”

Description

- First person — This is how a speaker normally refers to himself. English uses the pronouns “I” and “we.” (Also: me, my, mine; us, our, ours)
- Second person — This is how a speaker normally refers to the person or people he is speaking to. English uses the pronoun “you.” (Also: your, yours)
- Third person — This is how a speaker refers to someone else. English uses the pronouns “he,” “she,” “it,” and “they.” (Also: him, his, her, hers, its; them, their, theirs) Noun phrases like “the man” or “the woman” are also third person.

This page answers the question: *What are first, second, and third person, and how do I translate when a third person form does not refer to the third person?*

In order to understand this topic, it would be good to read:

[\[\[rc://en/ta/man/translate/figs-explicitinfo\]\]](#)

[Pronouns](#)

Reason This Is a Translation Issue

Sometimes in the Bible a speaker uses the third person to refer to himself or to the people he is speaking to. Readers might think that the speaker was referring to someone else. They might not understand that he meant “I” or “you.”

Examples From the Bible

Sometimes people used the third person instead of “I” or “me” to refer to themselves.

But David said to Saul, “**Your servant** used to keep **his** father’s sheep.” (1 Samuel 17:34 ULT)

David referred to himself in the third person as “your servant” and used “his.” He was calling himself Saul’s servant in order to show his humility before Saul.

Then Yahweh answered Job out of a fierce storm and said,
“... Do you have an arm like **God’s**? Can you thunder with a voice like **his**?” (Job 40:6, 9 ULT)

God referred to himself in the third person with the words “God’s” and “his.” He did this to emphasize that he is God, and he is powerful.

Sometimes people use the third person instead of “you” or “your” to refer to the person or people they are speaking to.

Abraham answered and said, “Look, I have undertaken to speak to my Lord, even though I am only dust and ashes!” (Genesis 18:27 ULT)

Abraham was speaking to the Lord, and referred to the Lord as “My Lord” rather than as “you.” He did this to show his humility before God.

So also my heavenly Father will do to you, if **each of you** does not forgive **his** brother from your heart. (Matthew 18:35 ULT)

After saying “each of you,” Jesus used the third person “his” instead of “your.”

Translation Strategies

If using the third person to mean “I” or “you” would be natural and give the right meaning in your language, consider using it. If not, here are some other options.

- (1) Use the third person phrase along with the pronoun “I” or “you.”
- (2) Simply use the first person (“I”) or second person (“you”) instead of the third person.

Examples of Translation Strategies Applied

- (1) Use the third person phrase along with the pronoun “I” or “you.”

But David said to Saul, “**Your servant** used to keep **his** father’s sheep.” (1 Samuel 17:34)

But David said to Saul, “**I, your servant**, used to keep **my** father’s sheep.”

- (2) Simply use the first person (“I”) or second person (“you”) instead of the third person.

Then Yahweh answered Job out of a fierce storm and said, “... Do you have an arm like **God’s**? Can you thunder with a voice like **his**?” (Job 40:6, 9 ULT)

Then Yahweh answered Job out of a fierce storm and said, “... Do you have an arm like **mine**? Can you thunder with a voice like **mine**?”

So also my heavenly Father will do to you if **each of you** does not forgive **his** brother from your heart. (Matthew 18:35 ULT)

So also my heavenly Father will do to you if **each of you** does not forgive **your** brother from your heart.

Next we recommend you learn about:

[Forms of You](#)

(Go back to: [1 Samuel 1:16](#); [1:18](#); [16:7](#); [16:16](#); [17:32](#); [17:34](#); [22:15](#); [26:18](#))

Forms of You

Singular, Dual, and Plural

Some languages have more than one word for “you” based on how many people the word “you” refers to. The **singular** form refers to one person, and the **plural** form refers to more than one person. Some languages also have a **dual** form which refers to two people, and some languages have other forms that refer to three or four people.

You may also want to watch the video at https://ufw.io/figs_younum.

Sometimes in the Bible a speaker uses a singular form of “you” even though he is speaking to a crowd.

- Singular Pronouns that Refer to Groups

Formal and Informal

Some languages have more than one form of “you” based on the relationship between the speaker and the person he is talking to. People use the **formal** form of “you” when speaking to someone who is older, or has higher authority, or is someone they do not know very well. People use the **informal** form when speaking to someone who is not older, or does not have higher authority, or is a family member or close friend.

You may also want to watch the video at https://ufw.io/figs_youform.

For help with translating these, we suggest you read:

- Forms of “You” — Formal or Informal

(Go back to: [1 Samuel 6:3](#))

This page answers the question: *What are the different forms of you?*

In order to understand this topic, it would be good to read:

[\[\[rc://en/ta/man/translate/figs-yousingular\]\]](#)

[\[\[rc://en/ta/man/translate/figs-youdual\]\]](#)

Fractions

Description

A fraction is a number that represents part of a whole. When an item is divided into several equal parts, a fraction refers to one or more of those parts.

For the drink offering, you must offer **a third** of a hin of wine. (Numbers 15:7a ULT)

A hin is a container of a set size which is used for measuring wine and other liquids. The people were to think about dividing a hin container into three equal parts, filling up only one of those parts and offering that amount.

... **a third** of the ships were destroyed. (Revelation 8:9b ULT)

There were many ships. If all those ships were divided into three equal groups of ships, one group of ships was destroyed.

Most fractions in English simply have the letters “th” added to the end of the number, such as fourth, sixth, ninth, tenth.

| Number of parts the whole is divided into | Fraction | | ----- | ----- | | four | fourth | | ten | tenth | | one hundred | one hundredth | | one thousand | one thousandth |

Some fractions in English do not follow that pattern.

| Number of parts the whole is divided into | Fraction | | ----- | ----- | | two | half | | three | third | | five | fifth |

Reason This is a Translation Issue

Some languages do not use fractions. They may simply talk about parts or groups, but they do not use fractions to tell how big a part is or how many parts are included in a group.

Examples From the Bible

Now to the **half-tribe** of Manasseh, Moses had given a possession in Bashan, but to the other **half**, Joshua gave a possession among their brothers across the Jordan on the west. (Joshua 22:7 ULT)

The tribe of Manasseh divided into two groups. The phrase “the half-tribe of Manasseh” refers one of those groups. The phrase “the other half” refers to the other group.

So the four angels who had been prepared for that hour, that day, that month, and that year, were released so that they would kill **a third** of mankind. (Revelation 9:15 ULT)

If all the people in the world were to be divided into three equal groups, then the number of people in one group would be killed.

You must also prepare **a fourth** of a hin of wine as the drink offering. (Numbers 15:5 ULT)

They were to imagine dividing a hin of wine into four equal parts and prepare the amount equal to one of them.

This page answers the question: *What are fractions and how can I translate them?*

In order to understand this topic, it would be good to read:

[Numbers](#)

Translation Strategies

If a fraction in your language would give the right meaning, consider using it. If not, you could consider these strategies.

- (1) Tell the number of parts or groups that the item would be divided into, and then tell the number of parts or groups that is being referred to.
- (2) For measurements such as for weight and length, use a unit that your people might know or the unit in the UST.
- (3) For measurements, use ones that are used in your language. In order to do that you would need to know how your measurements relates to the metric system and figure out each measurement.

Examples of These Translation Strategies Applied

- (1) Tell the number of parts or groups that the item would be divided into, and then tell the number of parts or groups that is being referred to.

A third of the ocean became red like blood (Revelation 8:8 ULT)

It was like they **divided** the ocean **into three parts**, and **one part** of the ocean became blood.

Then you must offer with the bull a grain offering of **three-tenths** of an ephah of fine flour mixed with **half a hin** of oil. (Numbers 15:9 ULT)

... then you must **divide** an ephah of fine flour **into ten parts** and **divide** a hin of oil **into two parts**. Then mix **three of those parts** of the flour with **one of the parts** of oil. Then you must offer that grain offering along with the bull.

- (2) For measurements, use the measurements that are given in the UST. The translators of the UST have already figured how to represent the amounts in the metric system.

... **two-thirds of a shekel** ... (1 Samuel 13:21b ULT)

... **eight grams** of silver ... (1 Samuel 13:21b UST)

... **three-tenths of an ephah** of fine flour mixed with **half a hin** of oil. (Numbers 15:9b ULT)

... **six and one-half liters** of finely ground flour mixed with **two liters** of olive oil. (Numbers 15:9b UST)

- (3) For measurements, use ones that are used in your language. In order to do that you would need to know how your measurements relates to the metric system and figure out each measurement.

... **three-tenths of an ephah** of fine flour mixed with **half a hin** of oil. (Numbers 15:9b ULT)

six quarts of fine flour mixed with **two quarts** of oil.

Next we recommend you learn about:

[Ordinal Numbers](#)

[Biblical Money](#)

(Go back to: [1 Samuel 8:15](#); [8:17](#); [9:8](#))

Go and Come

Description

This page answers the question: *What do I do if the word "go" or "come" is confusing in a certain sentence?*

Different languages have different ways of determining whether to use the words "go" or "come" and whether to use the words "take" or "bring" when talking about motion. For example, when saying that they are approaching a person who has called them, English speakers say "I'm coming," while Spanish speakers say "I'm going." You will need to study the context in order to understand what is meant by the words "go" and "come" (and also "take" and "bring"), and then translate those words in a way that your readers will understand which direction people are moving in.

Reason This Is a Translation Issue

Different languages have different ways of talking about motion. The biblical languages or your source language may use the words "go" and "come" or "take" and "bring" differently than your language uses them. If these words are not translated in the way that is natural in your language, your readers may be confused about which direction people are moving.

Examples From the Bible

Yahweh said to Noah, "**Come**, you and all your household, into the ark." (Genesis 7:1 ULT)

In some languages, this would lead people to think that Yahweh was in the ark.

But you will be free from my oath if you **come** to my relatives and they will not give her to you. Then you will be free from my oath. (Genesis 24:41 ULT)

Abraham was speaking to his servant. Abraham's relatives lived far away from where he and his servant were standing and he wanted his servant to **go** to them, not **come** toward Abraham.

When you have **come** to the land that Yahweh your God gives you, and when you take possession of it and begin to live in it ... (Deuteronomy 17:14a ULT)

Moses is speaking to the people in the wilderness. They had not yet gone into the land that God was giving them. In some languages, it would make more sense to say, "When you have **gone** into the land ..."

They **brought** him up to the temple in Jerusalem to present him to the Lord. (Luke 2:22b ULT)

In some languages, it might make more sense to say that they **took** or **carried** Jesus to the temple.

Then see, there was a man whose name was Jairus, and he was a leader of the synagogue. And falling at the feet of Jesus, he begged him to come to his house. (Luke 8:41 ULT)

The man was not at his house when he spoke to Jesus. He wanted Jesus to **go** with him to his house.

What did you go out into the desert to see? A reed shaken by the wind? (Luke 7:24b ULT)

In some languages, it might make more sense to ask what did you come out to see.

Translation Strategies

If the word used in the ULT would be natural and give the right meaning in your language, consider using it. If not, here are other strategies.

- (1) Use the word “go,” “come,” “take,” or “bring” that would be natural in your language.
- (2) Use another word that expresses the right meaning.

Examples of Translation Strategies Applied

- (1) Use the word “go,” “come,” “take,” or “bring” that would be natural in your language.

But you will be free from my oath if you **come** to my relatives and they will not give her to you. (Genesis 24:41 ULT)

But you will be free from my oath if you **go** to my relatives and they will not give her to you.

What did you go out into the desert to see? A reed shaken by the wind? (Luke 7:24b ULT)

What did you come out into the desert to see? A reed shaken by the wind?

- (2) Use another word that expresses the right meaning.

When you have **come** to the land that Yahweh your God gives you, and when you take possession of it and begin to live in it ... (Deuteronomy 17:14 ULT)

“When you have **arrived** in the land that Yahweh your God gives you, and when you take possession of it and begin to live in it ...”

Yahweh said to Noah, “**Come**, you and all your household, into the ark ...” (Genesis 7:1 ULT)

Yahweh said to Noah, “**Enter**, you and all your household, into the ark ...”

What did you go out into the desert to see? A reed shaken by the wind? (Luke 7:24b ULT)

What did you travel out into the desert to see? A reed shaken by the wind?

(Go back to: [1 Samuel 1:3](#); [1:7](#); [16:21](#))

Hendiadys

Description

When a speaker expresses a single idea by using two words that are connected with “and,” it is called a hendiadys. In a hendiadys, the two words work together. Usually one of the words is the primary idea and the other word further describes the primary one.

This page answers the question: *What is hendiadys and how can I translate phrases that have it?*

In order to understand this topic, it would be good to read:

[\[\[rc://en/ta/man/translate/figs-intro\]\]](#)

[\[\[rc://en/ta/man/translate/figs-partsofspeech\]\]](#)

... his own **kingdom and glory**. (1 Thessalonians 2:12b ULT)

Though “kingdom” and “glory” are both nouns, “glory” actually tells what kind of kingdom it is: it is a **kingdom of glory** or a **glorious kingdom**.

Two phrases connected by “and” can also be a hendiadys when they refer to a single person, thing, or event.

while we look forward to receiving **the blessed hope and appearing of the glory of our great God and Savior Jesus Christ**. (Titus 2:13b ULT)

Titus 2:13 contains two hendiadyses. “The blessed hope” and “appearing of the glory” refer to the same thing and serve to strengthen the idea that the return of Jesus Christ is greatly anticipated and wonderful. Also, “our great God” and “Savior Jesus Christ” refer to one person, not two.

Reasons This Is a Translation Issue

- Often a hendiadys contains an abstract noun. Some languages may not have a noun with the same meaning.
- Many languages do not use the hendiadys, so people may not understand that the second word is further describing the first one.
- Many languages do not use the hendiadys, so people may not understand that only one person or thing is meant, not two.

Examples From the Bible

For I will give you **a mouth and wisdom** ... (Luke 21:15a ULT)

“A mouth” and “wisdom” are nouns, but in this figure of speech “wisdom” describes what comes from the mouth.

If you are willing and obedient ... (Isaiah 1:19a ULT)

“Willing” and “obedient” are adjectives, but “willing” describes “obedient.”

Translation Strategies

If the hendiadys would be natural and give the right meaning in your language, consider using it. If not, here are other options:

- (1) Substitute the describing noun with an adjective that means the same thing.
- (2) Substitute the describing noun with a phrase that means the same thing.
- (3) Substitute the describing adjective with an adverb that means the same thing.

(4) Substitute other parts of speech that mean the same thing and show that one word or phrase describes the other.

(5) If it is unclear that only one thing is meant, change the phrase so that this is clear.

Examples of Translation Strategies Applied

(1) Substitute the describing noun with an adjective that means the same thing.

For I will give you **a mouth and wisdom** ... (Luke 21:15a ULT)

For I will give you **wise words** ...

Walk in a manner that is worthy of God, who calls you into **his own kingdom and glory**. (1 Thessalonians 2:12b ULT)

You should walk in a manner that is worthy of God, who calls you to **his own glorious kingdom**.

(2) Substitute the describing noun with a phrase that means the same thing.

For I will give you **a mouth and wisdom** ... (Luke 21:15a ULT)

for I will give you **words of wisdom**.

You should walk in a manner that is worthy of God, who calls you into **his own kingdom and glory**. (1 Thessalonians 2:12b ULT)

You should walk in a manner that is worthy of God, who calls you to **his own kingdom of glory**.

(3) Substitute the describing adjective with an adverb that means the same thing.

If you are willing and obedient ... (Isaiah 1:19a ULT)

If you are **willingly obedient** ...

(4) Substitute other parts of speech that mean the same thing and show that one word or phrase describes the other.

If you are willing and obedient ... (Isaiah 1:19a ULT)

The adjective “obedient” can be substituted with the verb “obey.”

if you **obey willingly** ...

(4) and (5) If it is unclear that only one thing is meant, change the phrase so that this is clear.

We look forward to receiving **the blessed hope and appearing of the glory of our great God and Savior Jesus Christ**. (Titus 2:13b ULT)

The noun “glory” can be changed to the adjective “glorious” to make it clear that Jesus’ appearing is what we hope for. Also, “Jesus Christ” can be moved to the front of the phrase and “great God and Savior” put into a relative clause that describes the one person, Jesus Christ.

We look forward to receiving **what we are longing for, the blessed and glorious appearing of Jesus Christ, who is our great God and Savior**.

Next we recommend you learn about:

[Doublet](#)

(Go back to: [1 Samuel 23:27](#))

How to Translate Names

Description

The Bible contains the names of many people, groups of people, and places. Some of these names may sound strange and be hard to say. Sometimes readers may not know what a name refers to, and sometimes they may need to understand what a name means. This page will help you see how you can translate these names and how you can help people understand what they need to know about them.

This page answers the question: *How can I translate names that are new to my culture?*

In order to understand this topic, it would be good to read:

[Translate Unknowns](#)

Meaning of names

Most names in the Bible have meaning. Most of the time, names in the Bible are used simply to identify the people and places they refer to, but sometimes the meaning of a name is especially important.

For this **Melchizedek**, king of Salem, priest of God Most High, was the one who met Abraham returning from the slaughter of the kings and blessed him. (Hebrews 7:1 ULT)

Here the writer uses the name “Melchizedek” primarily to refer to a man who had that name, and the title “king of Salem” tells us that he ruled over a certain city.

His name first indeed means “king of righteousness,” and then also “king of Salem,” that is, “king of peace.” (Hebrews 7:2b ULT)

Here the writer explains the meanings of Melchizedek’s name and title because those things tell us more about the person. Other times, the writer does not explain the meaning of a name because he expects the reader to already know the meaning. If the meaning of the name is important to understand the passage, you can include the meaning in the text or in a footnote.

Reasons This Is a Translation Issue

- Readers may not know some of the names in the Bible. They may not know whether a name refers to a person or place or something else.
- Readers may need to understand the meaning of a name in order to understand the passage.
- Some names may have different sounds or combinations of sounds that are not used in your language or are unpleasant to say in your language. For strategies to address this problem, see [Borrow Words](#).
- Some people and places in the Bible have two names. Readers may not realize that two names refer to the same person or place.

Examples From the Bible

Then you crossed over the **Jordan** and came to **Jericho**, and the men of Jericho, and the **Amorites** ... fought against you, but I gave them into your hand. (Joshua 24:11 ULT)

Readers might not know that “Jordan” is the name of a river, “Jericho” is the name of a city, and “Amorites” is the name of a group of people.

She said, “Do I really continue to see, even after he has seen me?” Therefore, the well was called **Beer Lahai Roi**. (Genesis 16:13b-14a ULT)

Readers may not understand the second sentence if they do not know that “Beer Lahai Roi” means “Well of the Living One who sees me.”

And she called his name **Moses** and she said, “For out of the water I drew him.” (Exodus 2:10b ULT)

Readers may not understand why she said this if they do not know that the name Moses sounds like the Hebrew words “pull out.”

Saul was in agreement with his execution. (Acts 8:1a ULT)

But when the apostles, Barnabas and **Paul**, heard of it, they tore their clothing. (Acts 14:14a ULT)

Readers may not know that the names Saul and Paul refer to the same person.

Translation Strategies

- (1) If readers cannot easily understand from the context what kind of a thing a name refers to, you can add a word to clarify it.
- (2) If readers need to understand the meaning of a name in order to understand what is said about it, copy the name and tell about its meaning either in the text or in a footnote.
- (3) Or if readers need to understand the meaning of a name in order to understand what is said about it, and that name is used only once, translate the meaning of the name instead of copying the name.
- (4) If a person or place has two different names, use one name most of the time and the other name only when the text tells about the person or place having more than one name or when it says something about why the person or place was given that name. Write a footnote when the source text uses the name that is used less frequently.
- (5) Or if a person or place has two different names, then use whatever name is given in the source text, and add a footnote that gives the other name.

Examples of Translation Strategies Applied

- (1) If readers cannot easily understand from the context what kind of a thing a name refers to, you can add a word to clarify it.

Then you crossed over the **Jordan** and came to **Jericho**, and the men of Jericho, and the **Amorites** ... fought against you, but I gave them into your hand. (Joshua 24:11 ULT)

You went over the **Jordan River** and came to the **city of Jericho**. The men of Jericho fought against you, along with **the tribe of the Amorites**.

At that hour, certain Pharisees approached, saying to him, “Leave and go away from here, because **Herod** wants to kill you.” (Luke 13:31 ULT)

At that hour, certain Pharisees approached, saying to him, “Go and leave here, because **King Herod** wants to kill you.”

- (2) If readers need to understand the meaning of a name in order to understand what is said about it, copy the name and tell about its meaning either in the text or in a footnote.

And she called his name **Moses** and she said, “For out of the water I drew him.” (Exodus 2:10b ULT)

She called his name **Moses (which sounds like 'drawn out')**, and she said, "For out of the water I drew him."

(3) Or if readers need to understand the meaning of a name in order to understand what is said about it, and that name is used only once, translate the meaning of the name instead of copying the name.

She said, "Do I really continue to see, even after he has seen me?" Therefore, the well was called **Beer Lahai Roi**. (Genesis 16:13b-14a ULT)

She said, "Do I really continue to see, even after he has seen me?"
Therefore, the well was called **Well of the Living One who sees me**.

(4) If a person or place has two different names, use one name most of the time and the other name only when the text tells about the person or place having more than one name or when it says something about why the person or place was given that name. Write a footnote when the source text uses the name that is used less frequently. For example, Paul is called "Saul" before Acts 13 and "Paul" after Acts 13. You could translate his name as "Paul" all of the time, except in Acts 13:9 where it talks about him having both names.

... a young man named **Saul**. (Acts 7:58b ULT)

... a young man named **Paul** ¹

The footnote would look like:

^[1] Most versions say "Saul" here, but most of the time in the Bible he is called "Paul."

Then later in the story, you could translate this way:

But **Saul**, who is also called **Paul**, was filled with the Holy Spirit; (Acts 13:9)

But **Saul**, who is also called **Paul**, was filled with the Holy Spirit;

(5) Or if a person or place has two names, use whatever name is given in the source text, and add a footnote that gives the other name. For example, you could write "Saul" where the source text has "Saul" and "Paul" where the source text has "Paul."

a young man named **Saul** (Acts 7:58 ULT)

a young man named **Saul**

The footnote would look like:

^[1] This is the same man who is called Paul beginning in Acts 13.

Then later in the story, you could translate this way:

But **Saul**, who is also called **Paul**, was filled with the Holy Spirit; (Acts 13:9)

But **Saul**, who is also called **Paul**, was filled with the Holy Spirit;

Then after the story has explained the name change, you could translate this way.

It came about in Iconium that **Paul** and Barnabas entered together into the synagogue (Acts 14:1 ULT)

It came about in Iconium that **Paul**¹ and Barnabas entered together into the synagogue

The footnote would look like:

[1] This is the same man who was called Saul before Acts 13.

Next we recommend you learn about:

[Copy or Borrow Words](#)

(Go back to: [Introduction to 1 Samuel](#); [1 Samuel 1:1](#); [1:2](#); [1:3](#); [1:5](#); [1:9](#); [1:12](#); [4:1](#); [4:21](#); [6:18](#); [6:21](#); [7:1](#); [7:11](#); [7:12](#); [9:1](#); [9:4](#); [9:5](#); [10:2](#); [10:3](#); [11:1](#); [11:4](#); [11:8](#); [12:8](#); [12:9](#); [12:11](#); [13:2](#); [13:3](#); [13:5](#); [13:17](#); [13:18](#); [14:2](#); [14:3](#); [14:4](#); [14:5](#); [14:16](#); [14:23](#); [14:31](#); [14:49](#); [14:50](#); [14:51](#); [15:6](#); [15:7](#); [15:20](#); [15:21](#); [15:34](#); [16:6](#); [16:8](#); [16:9](#); [17:2](#); [17:19](#); [19:22](#); [20:19](#); [21:1](#); [21:7](#); [21:9](#); [22:1](#); [22:3](#); [22:5](#); [22:9](#); [22:18](#); [22:19](#); [22:20](#); [23:1](#); [23:6](#); [23:14](#); [23:15](#); [23:19](#); [23:24](#); [25:2](#); [25:3](#); [25:43](#); [25:44](#); [26:1](#); [26:3](#); [26:5](#); [26:6](#); [27:2](#); [27:3](#); [27:6](#); [27:8](#); [27:10](#); [27:11](#); [28:4](#); [28:7](#); [30:5](#); [30:21](#); [30:26](#); [30:27](#); [30:28](#); [30:29](#); [30:30](#); [31:1](#); [31:2](#); [31:8](#); [31:10](#); [31:11](#))

Hyperbole

Description

A speaker or writer can use exactly the same words to say something that he means as completely true, or as generally true, or as a hyperbole. This is why it can be hard to decide how to understand a statement. For example, the sentence below could mean three different things.

It rains here every night.

The speaker means this as literally true if he means that it really does rain here every night.

The speaker means this as a **generalization** if he means that it rains here most nights.

The speaker means this as a **hyperbole** if he wants to say that it rains more than it actually does, usually in order to express a strong attitude toward the amount or frequency of rain, such as being annoyed or being happy about it.

This page answers the question: *What are hyperboles? What are generalizations? How can I translate them?*

In order to understand this topic, it would be good to read:

[[rc://en/ta/man/translate/figs-intro]]

Hyperbole

In hyperbole, a figure of speech that uses exaggeration, a speaker deliberately describes something with an extreme or even unreal statement, usually to show his strong feeling or opinion about it. He expects people to understand that he is exaggerating.

They will not leave **stone upon stone in you**. (Luke 19:44b ULT)

This is an exaggeration. It means that the enemies will completely destroy Jerusalem.

Moses was educated in **all the wisdom of the Egyptians**. (Acts 7:22a ULT)

This hyperbole means that he had learned everything an Egyptian education could offer.

Generalization

This is a statement that is true most of the time or in most situations that it could apply to.

The one who ignores instruction **will have poverty and shame**, but **honor will come** to him who learns from correction. (Proverbs 13:18)

These generalizations tell about what normally happens to people who ignore instruction and what normally happens to people who learn from correction. There may be some exceptions to these statements, but they are generally true.

And when you pray, do not make useless repetitions as **the Gentiles do, for they think that they will be heard because of their many words**. (Matthew 6:7)

This generalization tells about what Gentiles were known for doing. Many Gentiles did this. It does not matter if a few did not. The point was that the hearers should not join in this well-known practice.

Even though a hyperbole or a generalization may have a strong-sounding word like "all," "always," "none," or "never," it does not necessarily mean **exactly** "all," "always," "none," or "never." It simply means "most," "most of the time," "hardly any," or "rarely."

Reason This Is a Translation Issue

Readers need to be able to understand whether or not a statement is literally true.

If readers realize that a statement is not literally true, they need to be able to understand whether it is a hyperbole, a generalization, or a lie. (Though the Bible is completely true, it tells about people who did not always tell the truth.)

Examples From the Bible

Examples of Hyperbole

If your hand causes you to stumble, **cut it off**. It is better for you to enter into life maimed ... (Mark 9:43a ULT)

When Jesus said to cut off your hand, he meant that we should **do whatever extreme things** we need to do in order not to sin. He used this hyperbole to show how extremely important it is to try to stop sinning.

The Philistines gathered together to fight against Israel with 3,000 chariots, 6,000 men to drive the chariots, and troops **as numerous as the sand on the seashore**. (1 Samuel 13:5a ULT)

The bolded phrase is an exaggeration for the purpose of expressing the emotion that the Philistine army was overwhelming in number. It means that there were **many, many** soldiers in the Philistine army.

But as his anointing teaches you **everything** and is true and is not a lie, and just as it has taught you, remain in him. (1 John 2:27b ULT)

This is a hyperbole. It expresses the assurance that God's Spirit teaches us about **all things that we need to know**. God's Spirit does not teach us about everything that it is possible to know.

When they found him, they also said to him, "**Everyone** is looking for you." (Mark 1:37 ULT)

The disciples probably did not mean that everyone in the city was looking for Jesus, but that **many people** were looking for him, or that all of Jesus' closest friends there were looking for him. This is an exaggeration for the purpose of expressing the emotion that they and many others were worried about him.

Examples of Generalization

Can **any good thing** come out of Nazareth? (John 1:46b ULT)

This rhetorical question is meant to express the generalization that there is nothing good in Nazareth. The people there had a reputation for being uneducated and not strictly religious. Of course, there were exceptions.

One of them, of their own prophets, has said, "**Cretans are always liars, evil beasts, lazy bellies**." (Titus 1:12 ULT)

This is a generalization that means that Cretans had a reputation to be like this because, in general, this is how Cretans behaved. It is possible that there were exceptions.

A lazy hand causes a person to be poor, but the hand of the diligent person gains riches. (Proverbs 10:4 ULT)

This is generally true, and it reflects the experience of most people. It is possible that there are exceptions in some circumstances.

Caution

- Do not assume that something is an exaggeration just because it seems to be impossible. God does miraculous things.

They saw Jesus **walking on the sea** and coming near the boat. (John 6:19b ULT)

This is not hyperbole. Jesus really walked on the water. It is a literal statement.

- Do not assume that the word “all” is always a generalization that means “most.”
 - > Yahweh is righteous in **all** his ways
 - > and gracious in **all** he does. (Psalms 145:17 ULT)

Yahweh is always righteous. This is a completely true statement.

Translation Strategies

If the hyperbole or generalization would be natural and people would understand it and not think that it is a lie, consider using it. If not, here are other options.

- (1) Express the meaning without the exaggeration.
- (2) For a generalization, show that it is a generalization by using a phrase like “in general” or “in most cases.”
- (3) For a hyperbole or a generalization, add a word like “many” or “almost” to show that the hyperbole or generalization is not meant to be exact.
- (4) For a hyperbole or a generalization that has a word like “all,” “always,” “none,” or “never,” consider deleting that word.

Examples of Translation Strategies Applied

- (1) Express the meaning without the exaggeration.

The Philistines gathered together to fight against Israel: 3,000 chariots, 6,000 men to drive the chariots, and troops **as numerous as the sand on the seashore**. (1 Samuel 13:5a ULT)

The Philistines gathered together to fight against Israel: 3,000 chariots, 6,000 men to drive the chariots, and **a great number of troops**.

- (2) For a generalization, show that it is a generalization by using a phrase like “in general” or “in most cases.”

The one who ignores instruction will have poverty and shame. (Proverbs 13:18a ULT)

In general, the one who ignores instruction will have poverty and shame

When you pray, do not make useless repetitions as the **Gentiles do**, for they think that they will be heard because of their many words. (Matthew 6:7 ULT)

And when you pray, do not make useless repetitions as the Gentiles **generally** do, for they think that they will be heard because of their many words.

- (3) For a hyperbole or a generalization, add a word like “many” or “almost” to show that the hyperbole or generalization is not meant to be exact.

The **whole** country of Judea and **all** the people of Jerusalem went out to him. (Mark 1:5a ULT)

Almost all the country of Judea and **almost all** the people of Jerusalem went out to him.

or:

Many of the country of Judea and **many** of the people of Jerusalem went out to him.

(4) For a hyperbole or a generalization that has a word like “all,” “always,” “none,” or “never,” consider deleting that word.

The **whole** country of Judea and **all** the people of Jerusalem went out to him. (Mark 1:5a ULT)

The country of Judea and the people of Jerusalem went out to him.

(Go back to: [1 Samuel 1:8](#); [1:11](#); [Notes](#); [13:5](#); [14:26](#); [14:33](#); [14:40](#); [14:45](#); [18:6](#); [21:11](#); [22:2](#); [25:1](#))

Hypothetical Situations

Consider these phrases: “If the sun stopped shining ...” “What if the sun stopped shining ...” “Suppose the sun stopped shining ...” and “If only the sun had not stopped shining.” We use such expressions to set up hypothetical situations, imagining what might have happened or what could happen in the future but probably will not. We also use them to express regret or wishes. Hypothetical expressions occur often in the Bible. You (the translator) need to translate them in a way that people will know that the event did not actually happen and so that they will understand why the event was imagined.

This page answers the question: *What is a hypothetical situation?*

In order to understand this topic, it would be good to read:

[\[\[rc://en/ta/man/translate/writing-intro\]\]](#)

Description

Hypothetical situations are situations that are not real. They can be in the past, present, or future. Hypothetical situations in the past and present have not happened, are not happening now, and ones in the future are not expected to happen.

People sometimes tell about conditions and what would happen if those conditions were met, but they know that these things have not happened or probably will not happen. (The conditions comprise a phrase that starts with “if.”)

- If he had lived to be 100 years old, he would have seen his grandson’s grandson. (But he did not.)
- If he lived to be 100 years old, he would still be alive today. (But he is not.)
- If he lives to be 100 years old, he will see his grandson’s grandson. (But he probably will not.)

People sometimes express wishes about things that have not happened or that are not expected to happen.

- I wish he had come.
- I wish he were here.
- I wish he would come.

People sometimes express regrets about things that have not happened or that are not expected to happen.

- If only he had come.
- If only he were here.
- If only he would come.

Reason This Is a Translation Issue

- Translators need to recognize the different kinds of hypothetical situations in the Bible and understand that they are unreal.
- Translators need to know their own language’s ways of talking about different kinds of hypothetical situations.

Examples From the Bible

Hypothetical Situations in the Past

“Woe to you, Chorazin! Woe to you, Bethsaida! **If the mighty deeds had been done** in Tyre and Sidon which were done in you, **they would have repented** long ago in sackcloth and ashes.” (Matthew 11:21 ULT)

Here in Matthew 11:21, Jesus said that **if** the people living in the ancient cities of Tyre and Sidon had been able to see the miracles that he performed, they would have repented long ago. The people of Tyre and Sidon did not actually see his miracles, and they did not repent. He said this to rebuke the people of Chorazin and Bethsaida who had seen his miracles and yet did not repent.

Martha then said to Jesus, “Lord, **if you had been here, my brother would not have died.**” (John 11:21 ULT)

Martha said this to express her wish that Jesus would have come sooner so that her brother would not have died. But Jesus did not come sooner and her brother did die.

Hypothetical Situations in the Present

And no man puts new wine into old wineskins. **But if he did do that, the new wine would burst the wineskins, and it would be spilled out, and the wineskins would be destroyed.** (Luke 5:37 ULT)

Jesus told about what would happen if a person were to put new wine into old wineskins. But no one would do that. He used this imaginary situation as an example to show that there are times when it is unwise to mix new things with old things. He did this so that people could understand why his disciples were not fasting as people traditionally did.

Jesus said to them, “What man would there be among you, who, **if he had just one sheep, and if this sheep fell into a deep hole on the Sabbath, would not grasp hold of it and lift it out?**” (Matthew 12:11 ULT)

Jesus asked the religious leaders what they would do on the Sabbath if one of their sheep fell into a hole. He was not saying that their sheep would fall into a hole. He used this imaginary situation to show them that they were wrong to judge him for healing people on the Sabbath.

Hypothetical Situation in the Future

Unless those days are shortened, no flesh would be saved. But for the sake of the elect, those days will be shortened. (Matthew 24:22 ULT)

Jesus was talking about a future time when very bad things would happen. He told what would happen if those days of trouble were to last a long time. He did this to show how bad those days will be—so bad that if they lasted a long time, no one would be saved. But then he clarified that God will shorten those days of trouble so that the elect (those he has chosen) will be saved.

Expressing Emotion About a Hypothetical Situation

People sometimes talk about hypothetical situations in order to express regrets and wishes. Regrets are about the past and wishes are about the present and future.

The Israelites said to them, “**If only we had died by Yahweh’s hand in the land of Egypt when we were sitting by the pots of meat and were eating bread to the full.** For you have brought us out into this wilderness to kill our whole community with hunger.” (Exodus 16:3 ULT)

Here the Israelites were afraid that they would have to suffer and die of hunger in the wilderness, and so they wished that they had stayed in Egypt and died there with full stomachs. They were complaining, expressing regret that this had not happened.

I know what you have done, and that you are neither cold nor hot. **I wish that you were either cold or hot!** (Revelation 3:15 ULT)

Jesus wished that the people were either hot or cold, but they are neither. He was rebuking them, expressing anger at this.

Translation Strategies

Find out how people speaking your language show:

- that something could have happened, but did not.
- that something could be true now, but is not.
- that something could happen in the future, but will not unless something changes.
- that they wish for something, but it does not happen.
- that they regret that something did not happen.

Use your language's ways of showing these kinds of things.

You may also want to watch the video at https://ufw.io/figs_hypo.

(Go back to: [1 Samuel 14:30](#); [14:39](#))

Idiom

An idiom is a figure of speech made up of a group of words that, as a whole, has a meaning that is different from what one would understand from the meanings of the individual words. Someone from outside of the culture usually cannot understand an idiom without someone inside the culture explaining its true meaning. Every language uses idioms. Some English examples are:

- You are pulling my leg. (This means, “You are teasing me by telling me something that is not true.”)
- Do not push the envelope. (This means, “Do not take a matter to its extreme.”)
- This house is under water. (This means, “The debt owed for this house is greater than its actual value.”)
- We are painting the town red. (This means, “We are going around town tonight celebrating very intensely.”)

This page answers the question: *What are idioms and how can I translate them?*

In order to understand this topic, it would be good to read:

[[rc://en/ta/man/translate/figs-intro]]

Description

An idiom is a phrase that has a special meaning to the people of the language or culture who use it. Its meaning is different than what a person would understand from the meanings of the individual words that form the phrase.

He **set his face** to go to Jerusalem. (Luke 9:51b ULT)

The words “set his face” is an idiom that means “decided.”

Sometimes people may be able to understand an idiom from another culture, but it might sound like a strange way to express the meaning.

I am not worthy that you would **come under my roof**. (Luke 7:6b ULT)

The phrase “come under my roof” is an idiom that means “enter my house.”

Put these words **into your ears**. (Luke 9:44a ULT)

This idiom means “Listen carefully and remember what I say.”

Purpose: An idiom is probably created in a culture somewhat by accident when someone describes something in an unusual way. But, when that unusual way communicates the message powerfully and people understand it clearly, other people start to use it. After a while, it becomes a normal way of talking in that language.

Reasons This Is a Translation Issue

- People can easily misunderstand idioms in the original languages of the Bible if they do not know the cultures that produced the Bible.
- People can easily misunderstand idioms that are in the source language Bibles if they do not know the cultures that made those translations.
- It is useless to translate idioms literally (according to the meaning of each word) when the target language audience will not understand what they mean.

Examples From the Bible

Then all Israel came to David at Hebron and said, “Look, we are your **flesh and bone**.” (1 Chronicles 11:1 ULT)

This means, “We and you belong to the same race, the same family.”

█ The children of Israel went out **with a high hand**. (Exodus 14:8b ASV)

This means, "The Israelites went out defiantly."

█ the one who **lifts up my head** (Psalm 3:3b ULT)

This means, "the one who helps me."

Translation Strategies

If the idiom would be clearly understood in your language, consider using it. If not, here are some other options.

- (1) Translate the meaning plainly without using an idiom.
- (2) Use a different idiom that people use in your own language that has the same meaning.

Examples of Translation Strategies Applied

- (1) Translate the meaning plainly without using an idiom.

█ Then all Israel came to David at Hebron and said, "Look, we are your **flesh and bone**." (1 Chronicles 11:1 ULT)

█ Look, we all **belong to the same nation**.

█ Then he **set his face** to go to Jerusalem. (Luke 9:51b ULT)

█ He started to travel to Jerusalem, **determined to reach it**.

█ I am not worthy that you would come **under my roof**. (Luke 7:6b ULT)

█ I am not worthy that you should enter **my house**.

- (2) Use an idiom that people use in your own language that has the same meaning.

█ Put these words **into your ears**. (Luke 9:44a ULT)

█ **Be all ears** when I say these words to you.

█ My **eyes grow dim** from grief. (Psalm 6:7a ULT)

█ I am crying my **eyes out**

(Go back to: [1 Samuel 1 General Notes](#); [1:3](#); [1:12](#); [1:15](#); [1:27](#); [2:9](#); [2:10](#); [2:30](#); [2:35](#); [Notes](#); [3:11](#); [3:17](#); [4:9](#); [4:13](#); [Notes](#); [5:6](#); [5:9](#); [5:12](#); [6:3](#); [6:6](#); [6:13](#); [Notes](#); [7:3](#); [7:10](#); [8:5](#); [Notes](#); [10:6](#); [10:9](#); [10:26](#); [Notes](#); [12:2](#); [13:14](#); [13:15](#); [14:12](#); [14:19](#); [14:27](#); [14:29](#); [Notes](#); [15:10](#); [15:24](#); [15:29](#); [15:32](#); [16:18](#); [16:22](#); [17:35](#); [18:13](#); [18:15](#); [18:16](#); [18:25](#); [19:5](#); [19:11](#); [20:1](#); [20:2](#); [20:3](#); [20:9](#); [20:13](#); [20:19](#); [20:30](#); [22:15](#); [22:17](#); [22:18](#); [23:15](#); [23:16](#); [23:23](#); [24:4](#); [24:5](#); [25:11](#); [25:28](#); [25:35](#); [25:39](#); [26:2](#); [27:8](#); [28:21](#); [29:6](#); [31:3](#))

Irony

Description

Irony is a figure of speech in which the sense that the speaker intends to communicate is actually the opposite of the literal meaning of the words. Sometimes a person does this by using someone else's words, but in a way that communicates that he does not agree with them. People do this to emphasize how different something is from what it should be, or how someone else's belief about something is wrong or foolish. It is often humorous.

This page answers the question: *What is irony and how can I translate it?*

In order to understand this topic, it would be good to read:

[[rc://en/ta/man/translate/figs-intro]]

Then Jesus answered and said to them, "People who are well do not have need of a physician, but those who have sickness. I did not come to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance."
(Luke 5:31-32 ULT)

When Jesus spoke of "righteous people," he was not referring to people who were truly righteous, but to people who wrongly believed that they were righteous. By using irony, Jesus communicated that they were wrong to think that they were better than others and did not need to repent.

Reason This Is a Translation Issue

If someone does not realize that a speaker is using irony, he will think that the speaker actually believes what he is saying. He will understand the passage to mean the opposite of what it was intended to mean.

Examples From the Bible

How well you reject the commandment of God so that you may keep your tradition! (Mark 7:9b ULT)

Here Jesus praises the Pharisees for doing something that is obviously wrong. Through irony, he communicates the opposite of praise: He communicates that the Pharisees, who take great pride in keeping the commandments, are so far from God that they do not even recognize that their traditions are breaking God's commandments. The use of irony makes the Pharisee's sin more obvious and startling.

"Present your case," says Yahweh; "present your best arguments for your idols," says the King of Jacob. **"Let them bring us their own arguments; have them come forward and declare to us what will happen, so we may know these things well. Have them tell us of earlier predictive declarations, so we can reflect on them and know how they were fulfilled."** (Isaiah 41:21-22 ULT)

People worshiped idols as if their idols had knowledge or power, and Yahweh was angry at them for doing that. So he used irony and challenged their idols to tell what would happen in the future. He knew that the idols could not do this, but by speaking as if they could, he mocked the idols, making their inability more obvious, and rebuked the people for worshiping them.

Can you lead light and darkness to their places of work?
Can you find the way back to their houses for them?
Undoubtedly you know, for you were born then; "the number of your days is so large!" (Job 38:20-21 ULT)

Job thought that he was wise. Yahweh used irony to show Job that he was not so wise. The two phrases in bold above are irony. They emphasize the opposite of what they say, because they are so obviously false. They emphasize that Job could not possibly answer God's questions about the creation of light because Job was not born until many, many years later.

Already you are satisfied! Already you have become rich! **You began to reign** apart from us, and I wish you really did reign, so that we also might reign with you. (1 Corinthians 4:8 ULT)

The Corinthians considered themselves to be very wise, self-sufficient, and not in need of any instruction from the Apostle Paul. Paul used irony, speaking as if he agreed with them, to show how proudly they were acting and how far from being wise they really were.

Translation Strategies

If the irony would be understood correctly in your language, translate it as it is stated. If not, here are some other strategies.

- (1) Translate it in a way that shows that the speaker is saying what someone else believes.
- (2) The irony is **not** found in the literal words of the speaker, but instead the true meaning is found in the opposite of the literal meaning of the speaker's words.

Examples of Translation Strategies Applied

- (1) Translate it in a way that shows that the speaker is saying what someone else believes.

How well you reject the commandment of God so that you may keep your tradition! (Mark 7:9a ULT)

You think that you are doing well when you reject God's commandment so you may keep your tradition!
You act like it is good to reject God's commandment so you may keep your tradition!

I did not come to call **the righteous**, but sinners to repentance. (Luke 5:32 ULT)

I did not come to call **people who think that they are righteous** to repentance, but to call sinners to repentance.

- (2) Translate the actual, intended meaning of the statement of irony.

How well you reject the commandment of God so that you may keep your tradition! (Mark 7:9a ULT)

You are doing a terrible thing when you reject the commandment of God so you may keep your tradition!

"Present your case," says Yahweh; "present your best arguments for your idols," says the King of Jacob. "**Let them bring us their own arguments; have them come forward and declare to us what will happen, so we may know these things well. Have them tell us of earlier predictive declarations, so we can reflect on them and know how they were fulfilled.**" (Isaiah 41:21-22 ULT)

'Present your case,' says Yahweh; 'present your best arguments for your idols,' says the King of Jacob. Your idols **cannot bring us their own arguments or come forward to declare to us what will happen** so we may know these things well. We cannot hear them because **they cannot**

speak to tell us their earlier predictive declarations, so we cannot reflect on them and know how they were fulfilled.

Can you lead light and darkness to their places of work?
Can you find the way back to their houses for them?

**Undoubtedly you know, for you were born then;
the number of your days is so large!** (Job 38:20-21 ULT)

Can you lead light and darkness to their places of work? Can you find the way back to their houses for them? **You act like you know how light and darkness were created, as if you were there; as if you are as old as creation, but you are not!**

Next we recommend you learn about:

[Litotes](#)

(Go back to: [1 Samuel 2:30](#))

Litotes

Description

Litotes is a figure of speech in which the speaker expresses a strong positive meaning by using two negative words or a negative word with a word that means the opposite of the meaning he intends. A few examples of negative words are “no,” “not,” “none,” and “never.” The opposite of “good” is “bad.” Someone could say that something is “not bad” to mean that it is extremely good.

This page answers the question: *What is litotes?*

In order to understand this topic, it would be good to read:

[[rc://en/ta/man/translate/figs-intro]]

Reason This Is a Translation Issue

Some languages do not use litotes. People who speak those languages might not understand that a statement using litotes actually strengthens the positive meaning. Instead, they might think that it weakens or even cancels the positive meaning.

Examples From the Bible

For you yourselves know, brothers, that our coming to you was **not useless**, (1 Thessalonians 2:1 ULT)

By using litotes, Paul emphasized that his visit with them was **very** useful.

Now when it became day, there was **no small disturbance** among the soldiers over what therefore had happened to Peter. (Acts 12:18 ULT)

By using litotes, Luke emphasized that there was a **lot** of excitement or anxiety among the soldiers about what happened to Peter. (Peter had been in prison, and even though there were soldiers guarding him, he escaped when an angel let him out. So they were very agitated.)

But you, Bethlehem, in the land of Judah,
are **not the least** among the leaders of Judah,
for from you will come a ruler
who will shepherd my people Israel. (Matthew 2:6 ULT)

By using litotes, the prophet emphasized that Bethlehem would be a **very important city**.

Translation Strategies

If the litotes would be understood correctly, consider using it.

(1) If the meaning with the negative would not be clear, give the **positive** meaning in a strong way.

Examples of Translation Strategies Applied

(1) If the meaning with the negative would not be clear, give the **positive** meaning in a strong way.

For you yourselves know, brothers, that our coming to you was **not useless**. (1 Thessalonians 2:1 ULT)

“For you yourselves know, brothers, our visit to you **did much good**.”

Now when it became day, there was **no small disturbance** among the soldiers over what therefore had happened to Peter. (Acts 12:18 ULT)

“Now when it became day, there was **great excitement** among the soldiers, regarding what had happened to Peter.”

or:

“Now when it became day, the soldiers were **very concerned** because of what had happened to Peter.”

(Go back to: [1 Samuel 3:19](#); [13:14](#); [14:36](#); [14:45](#); [15:3](#); [15:29](#); [20:37](#); [25:7](#); [25:21](#); [25:31](#); [26:9](#); [29:3](#))

Merism

Definition

Merism is a figure of speech in which a person refers to something by speaking of two extreme parts of it. By referring to the extreme parts, the speaker intends to include also everything in between those parts.

This page answers the question: *What does the word merism mean and how can I translate phrases that have it?*

In order to understand this topic, it would be good to read:

[[rc://en/ta/man/translate/figs-intro]]

“I am **the alpha and the omega**,” says the Lord God, “the one who is, and who was, and who is to come, the Almighty.” (Revelation 1:8 ULT)

I am **the alpha and the omega, the first and the last, the beginning and the end**. (Revelation 22:13, ULT)

Alpha and omega are the first and last letters of the Greek alphabet. This is a merism that includes everything from the beginning to the end. It means eternal.

... I praise you, Father, Lord of **heaven and earth** ..., (Matthew 11:25b ULT)

Heaven and earth is a merism that includes everything that exists.

Reason This is a Translation Issue

Some languages do not use merism. The readers of those languages may think that the phrase only applies to the items mentioned. They may not realize that it refers to those two things and everything in between.

Examples From the Bible

From the rising of the sun to its setting, Yahweh’s name should be praised. (Psalm 113:3 ULT)

This bolded phrase is a merism because it speaks of the east and the west and everywhere in between. It means “everywhere.”

He will bless those who honor him, both **young and old**. (Psalm 115:13)

The bolded phrase is merism because it speaks of old people and young people and everyone in between. It means “everyone.”

Translation Strategies

If the merism would be natural and give the right meaning in your language, consider using it. If not, here are other options:

- (1) Identify what the merism refers to without mentioning the parts.
- (2) Identify what the merism refers to and include the parts.

Examples of Translation Strategies Applied

- (1) Identify what the merism refers to without mentioning the parts.

I praise you, Father, Lord of **heaven and earth**. (Matthew 11:25b ULT)

I praise you, Father, Lord of **everything**.

From the rising of the sun to its setting, Yahweh's name should be praised. (Psalm 113:3 ULT)

In all places, people should praise Yahweh's name.

(2) Identify what the merism refers to and include the parts.

I praise you, Father, Lord of **heaven and earth**. (Matthew 11:25b ULT)

I praise you, Father, Lord of **everything, including both what is in heaven and what is on earth**.

He will bless those who honor him, both **young and old**. (Psalm 115:13 ULT)

He will bless **all those** who honor him, regardless of whether they are **young or old**.

(Go back to: [1 Samuel 2:6](#); [2:7](#); [3:12](#); [3:20](#); [5:9](#); [14:6](#); [20:2](#))

Metaphor

Description

A metaphor is a figure of speech in which someone speaks of one thing as if it were a different thing because he wants people to think about how those two things are alike.

For example, someone might say, “The girl I love is a red rose.”

A girl and a rose are very different things, but the speaker considers that they are alike in some way. The hearer’s task is to understand in what way they are alike.

This page answers the question: *What is a metaphor and how can I translate a Bible passage that has one?*

In order to understand this topic, it would be good to read:

[\[\[rc://en/ta/man/translate/figs-intro\]\]](#)

[Simile](#)

The Parts of a Metaphor

The example above shows us that a metaphor has three parts. In this metaphor, the speaker is talking about “the girl I love.” This is the **Topic**. The speaker wants the hearer to think about what is similar between her and “a red rose.” The red rose is the **Image** to which he compares the girl. Most probably, he wants the hearer to consider that they are both beautiful. This is the **Idea** that the girl and the rose both share, and so we may also call it the **Point of Comparison**.

Every metaphor has three parts:

- The **Topic**, the item being immediately discussed by the writer/speaker.
- The **Image**, the physical item (object, event, action, etc.) which the speaker uses to describe the topic.
- The **Idea**, the abstract concept or quality that the physical **Image** brings to the mind of the hearer when he thinks of how the **Image** and the **Topic** are similar. Often, the **Idea** of a metaphor is not explicitly stated in the Bible, but it is only implied from the context. The hearer or reader usually needs to think of the **Idea** himself.

Using these terms, we can say that a metaphor is a figure of speech that uses a physical **Image** to apply an abstract **Idea** to the speaker’s **Topic**.

Usually, a writer or speaker uses a metaphor in order to express something about a **Topic**, with at least one **Point of Comparison (Idea)** between the **Topic** and the **Image**. Often in metaphors, the **Topic** and the **Image** are explicitly stated, but the **Idea** is only implied. The writer/speaker often uses a metaphor in order to invite the readers/listeners to think about the similarity between the **Topic** and the **Image** and to figure out for themselves the **Idea** that is being communicated.

Speakers often use metaphors in order to strengthen their message, to make their language more vivid, to express their feelings better, to say something that is hard to say in any other way, or to help people remember their message.

Sometimes speakers use metaphors that are very common in their language. However, sometimes speakers use metaphors that are uncommon, and even some metaphors that are unique. When a metaphor has become very common in a language, often it becomes a “passive” metaphor, in contrast to uncommon metaphors, which we describe as being “active.” Passive metaphors and active metaphors each present a different kind of translation problem, which we will discuss below.

Passive Metaphors

A passive metaphor is a metaphor that has been used so much in the language that its speakers no longer regard it as one concept standing for another. Linguists often call these “dead metaphors.” Passive metaphors are extremely common. Examples in English include the terms “table **leg**,” “family **tree**,” “book **leaf**” (meaning a page

in a book), or the word “crane” (meaning a large machine for lifting heavy loads). English speakers simply think of these words as having more than one meaning. Examples of passive metaphors in Biblical Hebrew include using the word “hand” to represent “power,” using the word “face” to represent “presence,” and speaking of emotions or moral qualities as if they were “clothing.”

Patterned Pairs of Concepts Acting as Metaphors

Many ways of metaphorical speaking depend on pairs of concepts, where one underlying concept frequently stands for a different underlying concept. For example, in English, the direction “up” (the Image) often represents the concepts of “more” or “better” (the Idea). Because of this pair of underlying concepts, we can make sentences such as “The price of gasoline is going **up**,” “A **highly** intelligent man,” and also the opposite kind of idea: “The temperature is going **down**,” and “I am feeling very **low**.”

Patterned pairs of concepts are constantly used for metaphorical purposes in the world’s languages because they serve as convenient ways to organize thought. In general, people like to speak of abstract qualities (such as power, presence, emotions, and moral qualities) as if they were body parts, or as if they were objects that could be seen or held, or as if they were events that could be watched as they happened.

When these metaphors are used in normal ways, it is rare that the speaker and audience regard them as figurative speech. Examples of metaphors in English that go unrecognized are:

- “Turn the heat **up**.” More is spoken of as up.
- “Let us **go ahead** with our debate.” Doing what was planned is spoken of as walking or advancing.
- “You **defend** your theory well.” Argument is spoken of as war.
- “A **flow** of words.” Words are spoken of as liquids.

English speakers do not view these as metaphorical expressions or figures of speech, so it would be wrong to translate them into other languages in a way that would lead people to pay special attention to them as figurative speech. For a description of important patterns of this kind of metaphor in biblical languages, please see [Biblical Imagery — Common Patterns](#) and the pages it will direct you to.

When translating something that is a passive metaphor into another language, do not treat it as a metaphor. Instead, just use the best expression for that thing or concept in the target language.

Active Metaphors

These are metaphors that people recognize as one concept standing for another concept, or one thing for another thing. Metaphors make people think about how the one thing is like the other thing, because in most ways the two things are very different. People also easily recognize these metaphors as giving strength and unusual qualities to the message. For this reason, people pay attention to these metaphors. For example,

But for you who fear my name, the sun of righteousness will rise with healing in its wings.
(Malachi 4:2a ULT)

Here, God speaks about his salvation as if it were the sun rising in order to shine its rays on the people whom he loves. He also speaks of the sun’s rays as if they were wings. Also, he speaks of these wings as if they were bringing medicine that would heal his people. Here is another example:

And he said to them, “Go and tell that fox ...” (Luke 13:32a ULT)

Here, “that fox” refers to King Herod. The people listening to Jesus certainly understood that Jesus was intending for them to apply certain characteristics of a fox to Herod. They probably understood that Jesus intended to communicate that Herod was evil, either in a cunning way or as someone who was destructive, murderous, or who took things that did not belong to him, or all of these.

Active metaphors require the translator's special care to make a correct translation. To do so, you need to understand the parts of a metaphor and how they work together to produce meaning.

Jesus said to them, "I am the bread of life; he who comes to me will not be hungry, and he who believes in me will never be thirsty." (John 6:35 ULT)

In this metaphor, Jesus called himself the bread of life. The **Topic** is "I" (meaning Jesus himself) and the **Image** is "bread." Bread was the primary food that people ate in that place and time. The similarity between bread and Jesus is that people need both to live. Just as people need to eat food in order to have physical life, people need to trust in Jesus in order to have eternal life. The **Idea** of the metaphor is "life." In this case, Jesus stated the central Idea of the metaphor, but often the Idea is only implied.

Purposes of Metaphor

- One purpose of metaphor is to teach people about something that they do not know (the **Topic**) by showing that it is like something that they already do know (the **Image**).
- Another purpose is to emphasize that something (the **Topic**) has a particular quality (the **Idea**) or to show that it has that quality in an extreme way.
- Another purpose is to lead people to feel the same way about the **Topic** as they would feel about the **Image**.

Reasons This Is a Translation Issue

- People may not recognize that something is a metaphor. In other words, they may mistake a metaphor for a literal statement, and thus, misunderstand it.
- People may not be familiar with the thing that is used as an image, and so, not be able to understand the metaphor.
- If the topic is not stated, people may not know what the topic is.
- People may not know the points of comparison that the speaker wants them to understand. If they fail to think of these points of comparison, they will not understand the metaphor.
- People may think that they understand the metaphor, but they do not. This can happen when they apply points of comparison from their own culture, rather than from the biblical culture.

Translation Principles

- Make the meaning of a metaphor as clear to the target audience as it was to the original audience.
- Do not make the meaning of a metaphor more clear to the target audience than you think it was to the original audience.

Examples From the Bible

Listen to this word, **you cows of Bashan**, (Amos 4:1q ULT)

In this metaphor Amos speaks to the upper-class women of Samaria ("you," the Topic) as if they were cows (the Image). Amos does not say what similarity(s) he intends between these women and cows. He wants the reader to think of them, and he fully expects that readers from his culture will easily do so. From the context, we can see that he means that the women are like cows in that they are fat and interested only in feeding themselves. If we were to apply similarities from a different culture, such as that cows are sacred and should be worshiped, we would get the wrong meaning from this verse.

NOTE: Amos does not actually mean that the women are cows. He speaks to them as human beings.

Yet, Yahweh, you are our father; **we are the clay. You are our potter**; and we all are the work of your hand. (Isaiah 64:8 ULT)

The example above has two related metaphors. The Topic(s) are “we” and “you,” and the Image(s) are “clay” and “potter.” The similarity between a potter and God is the fact that both make what they wish out of their material. The potter makes what he wishes out of the clay, and God makes what he wishes out of his people. The Idea being expressed by the comparison between the potter’s clay and “us” is that **neither the clay nor God’s people have a right to complain about what they are becoming.**

Jesus said to them, “Take heed and beware of **the yeast of the Pharisees and Sadducees.**”
The disciples reasoned among themselves and said, “It is because we did not take bread.”
(Matthew 16:6-7 ULT)

Jesus used a metaphor here, but his disciples did not realize it. When he said “yeast,” they thought he was talking about bread, but “yeast” was the Image in his metaphor, and the Topic was the teaching of the Pharisees and Sadducees. Since the disciples (the original audience) did not understand what Jesus meant, it would not be good to state clearly here what Jesus meant.

Translation Strategies

If people would understand the metaphor in the same way that the original readers would have understood it, go ahead and use it. Be sure to test the translation to make sure that people do understand it in the right way.

If people do not or would not understand it, here are some other strategies.

(1) If the metaphor is a common expression in the source language or expresses a patterned pair of concepts in a biblical language (that is, it is a passive metaphor), then express the **Idea** in the simplest way preferred by your language.

(2) If the metaphor seems to be an active metaphor, you can translate it literally **if you think that the target language also uses this metaphor in the same way to mean the same thing as in the Bible.** If you do this, be sure to test it to make sure that the language community understands it correctly.

(3) If the target audience does not realize that it is a metaphor, then change the metaphor to a simile. Some languages do this by adding words such as “like” or “as.” See [Simile](#).

(4) If the target audience would not know the **Image**, see [Translate Unknowns](#) for ideas on how to translate that image.

(5) If the target audience would not use that **Image** for that meaning, use an image from your own culture instead. Be sure that it is an image that could have been possible in Bible times.

(6) If the target audience would not know what the **Topic** is, then state the topic clearly. (However, do not do this if the original audience did not know what the Topic was.)

(7) If the target audience would not know the intended similarity (the **Idea**) between the topic and the image, then state it clearly.

(8) If none of these strategies is satisfactory, then simply state the **Idea** plainly without using a metaphor.

Examples of Translation Strategies Applied

(1) If the metaphor is a common expression in the source language or expresses a patterned pair of concepts in a biblical language (that is, a passive metaphor), then express the Idea in the simplest way preferred by your language.

Then, see, one of the leaders of the synagogue, named Jairus, came, and when he saw him, **fell at his feet**. (Mark 5:22 ULT)

Then one of the leaders of the synagogue, named Jairus, came, and when he saw him, **immediately bowed down in front of him**.

(2) If the metaphor seems to be an active metaphor, you can translate it literally **if you think that the target language also uses this metaphor in the same way to mean the same thing as in the Bible**. If you do this, be sure to test it to make sure that the language community understands it correctly.

But Jesus said to them, “He wrote this commandment to you because of your **hardness of heart**.” (Mark 10:5 ULT)

It was because of your **hard hearts** that he wrote you this law.

We made no change to this one, but it must be tested to make sure that the target audience correctly understands this metaphor.

(3) If the target audience does not realize that it is a metaphor, then change the metaphor to a simile. Some languages do this by adding words such as “like” or “as.”

Yet, Yahweh, you are our father; we **are the clay**. You **are our potter**; and we all are the work of your hand. (Isaiah 64:8 ULT)

And yet, Yahweh, you are our father; we are **like** clay. You are **like** a potter; and we all are the work of your hand.

(4) If the target audience would not know the **Image**, see [Translate Unknowns](#) for ideas on how to translate that image.

Saul, Saul, why do you persecute me? It is hard for you **to kick against a goad**. (Acts 26:14b ULT)

Saul, Saul, why do you persecute me? It is hard for you to **kick against a pointed stick**.

(5) If the target audience would not use that **Image** for that meaning, use an image from your own culture instead. Be sure that it is an image that could have been possible in Bible times.

Yet, Yahweh, you are our father; we are the **clay**. You are our **potter**; and we all are the work of your hand. (Isaiah 64:8 ULT)

“And yet, Yahweh, you are our father; we are the **wood**. You are our **carver**; and we all are the work of your hand.”

“And yet, Yahweh, you are our father; we are the **string**. You are the **weaver**; and we all are the work of your hand.”

(6) If the target audience would not know what the **Topic** is, then state the topic clearly. (However, do not do this if the original audience did not know what the topic was.)

Yahweh lives; may **my rock** be praised. May the God of my salvation be exalted. (Psalm 18:46 ULT)

Yahweh lives; **He is my rock**. May he be praised. May the God of my salvation be exalted.

(7) If the target audience would not know the intended similarity between the Topic and the Image, then state it clearly.

Yahweh lives; may **my rock** be praised. May the God of my salvation be exalted. (Psalm 18:46 ULT)

Yahweh lives; may he be praised because he is the rock **under which I can hide from my enemies**. May the God of my salvation be exalted.

Saul, Saul, why do you persecute me? It is hard for you **to kick against a goad**. (Acts 26:14 ULT)

Saul, Saul, why do you persecute me? You **fight against me and hurt yourself like an ox that kicks against its owner's pointed stick**.

(8) If none of these strategies are satisfactory, then simply state the idea plainly without using a metaphor.

I will make you to become **fishers of men**. (Mark 1:17b ULT)

I will make you to become **people who gather men**.
Now you gather fish. I will make you **gather people**.

To learn more about specific metaphors, see Biblical Imagery — Common Patterns.

(Go back to: [1 Samuel 1:13](#); [1:18](#); [Notes](#); [2:1](#); [2:2](#); [2:4](#); [2:8](#); [2:9](#); [2:10](#); [3:6](#); [3:16](#); [3:19](#); [4:16](#); [8:3](#); [13:4](#); [14:11](#); [14:27](#); [15:11](#); [15:17](#); [15:19](#); [16:7](#); [16:22](#); [17:28](#); [17:43](#); [17:44](#); [17:46](#); [18:1](#); [18:5](#); [18:17](#); [18:21](#); [Notes](#); [20:3](#); [20:29](#); [24:11](#); [24:14](#); [24:16](#); [25:8](#); [25:16](#); [25:29](#); [26:17](#); [26:20](#); [26:21](#); [26:24](#); [26:25](#); [27:5](#); [28:17](#); [28:19](#))

Metonymy

Description

Metonymy is a figure of speech in which an item (either physical or abstract) is called not by its own name, but by the name of something closely associated with it. A metonym is a word or phrase used as a substitute for something that it is associated with.

This page answers the question: *What is a metonymy?*

In order to understand this topic, it would be good to read:

[[rc://en/ta/man/translate/figs-intro]]

... and **the blood** of Jesus his Son cleanses us from every sin. (1 John 1:7b ULT)

The blood represents Christ's death.

And he took **the cup** in the same way after supper, saying, "**This cup** is the new covenant in my blood, which is poured out for you." (Luke 22:20 ULT)

The cup represents the wine that is in the cup.

Metonymy can be used

- as a shorter way of referring to something
- to make an abstract idea more meaningful by referring to it with the name of a physical object associated with it

Reason This Is a Translation Issue

The Bible uses metonymy very often. Speakers of some languages are not familiar with metonymy and they may not recognize it when they read it in the Bible. If they do not recognize the metonymy, they will not understand the passage or, worse yet, they will get a wrong understanding of the passage. Whenever a metonym is used, people need to be able to understand what it represents.

Examples From the Bible

The Lord God will give to him **the throne** of his father David. (Luke 1:32b ULT)

A throne represents the authority of a king. "Throne" is a metonym for "kingly authority," "kingship," or "reign." This means that God would make him become a king who would follow King David.

Then immediately his **mouth** was opened (Luke 1:64a ULT)

The mouth here represents the power to speak. This means that he was able to talk again.

Who warned you to flee from **the wrath** that is coming? (Luke 3:7b ULT)

The word "wrath" or "anger" is a metonym for "punishment." God was extremely angry with the people and, as a result, he would punish them.

Translation Strategies

If people would easily understand the metonym, consider using it. Otherwise, here are some options.

- (1) Use the metonym along with the name of the thing it represents.
- (2) Use only the name of the thing the metonym represents.

Examples of Translation Strategies Applied

- (1) Use the metonym along with the name of the thing it represents.

And he took the cup in the same way after the supper, saying, “**This cup** is the new covenant in my blood, which is poured out for you.” (Luke 22:20 ULT)

He took the cup in the same way after supper, saying, “**The wine in this cup** is the new covenant in my blood, which is poured out for you.”

This verse also contains a second metonym: The cup, (representing the wine it contains) also represents the new covenant made with the blood Christ shed for us.

- (2) Use the name of the thing the metonym represents.

The Lord God will give him **the throne** of his father David. (Luke 1:32b ULT)

“The Lord God will give him **the kingly authority** of his father, David.”
or:
“The Lord God will **make him king** like his ancestor, King David.”

Who warned you to flee from **the wrath** that is coming? (Luke 3:7b ULT)

“Who warned you to flee from God’s coming **punishment**?”

To learn about some common metonymies, see [Biblical Imagery — Common Metonymies](#).

(Go back to: [1 Samuel 1:18](#); [1:21](#); [Notes](#); [2:9](#); [2:27](#); [2:28](#); [2:30](#); [2:31](#); [Notes](#); [4:13](#); [5:6](#); [5:11](#); [5:12](#); [6:3](#); [6:5](#); [7:3](#); [7:8](#); [7:13](#); [7:14](#); [8:7](#); [8:22](#); [9:16](#); [10:18](#); [12:10](#); [12:15](#); [12:22](#); [13:14](#); [14:7](#); [14:10](#); [14:12](#); [14:26](#); [14:27](#); [14:29](#); [14:36](#); [14:37](#); [14:47](#); [14:48](#); [15:14](#); [15:19](#); [15:20](#); [15:22](#); [15:24](#); [15:29](#); [15:30](#); [16:7](#); [16:22](#); [17:25](#); [17:32](#); [17:37](#); [17:45](#); [17:46](#); [17:47](#); [18:16](#); [18:30](#); [19:5](#); [19:20](#); [20:16](#); [20:30](#); [21:3](#); [21:8](#); [21:12](#); [22:14](#); [22:15](#); [22:16](#); [22:17](#); [22:19](#); [23:1](#); [23:11](#); [23:12](#); [23:14](#); [23:17](#); [23:20](#); [24:6](#); [24:10](#); [24:11](#); [24:12](#); [24:15](#); [24:20](#); [24:21](#); [25:3](#); [25:13](#); [25:26](#); [25:33](#); [25:35](#); [25:41](#); [26:8](#); [26:11](#); [26:18](#); [26:23](#); [27:5](#); [29:4](#); [30:15](#); [31:1](#); [31:4](#))

Nominal Adjectives

Description

In some languages an adjective can be used to refer to a class of things that the adjective describes. When it does, it acts like a noun. For example, the word “rich” is an adjective. Here are two sentences that show that “rich” is an adjective.

The rich man had huge numbers of flocks and herds. (2 Samuel 12:2 ULT)

The adjective “rich” comes before the word “man” and describes “man.”

He will not be rich; his wealth will not last. (Job 15:29a ULT)

The adjective “rich” comes after the verb “be” and describes “He.”

Here is a sentence that shows that “rich” can also function as a noun.

The rich must not give more than the half shekel, and **the poor** must not give less. (Exodus 30:15b ULT)

In Exodus 30:15, the word “rich” acts as a noun in the phrase “the rich,” and it refers to rich people. The word “poor” also acts as a noun and refers to poor people.

This page answers the question: *How do I translate adjectives that act like nouns?*

In order to understand this topic, it would be good to read:

[[rc://en/ta/man/translate/figs-partsofspeech]]

Reason This Is a Translation Issue

- Many times in the Bible adjectives are used as nouns to describe a group of people.
- Some languages do not use adjectives in this way.
- Readers of these languages may think that the text is talking about one particular person when it is really talking about the group of people whom the adjective describes.

Examples From the Bible

The scepter of wickedness must not rule in the land of **the righteous**. (Psalms 125:3a ULT)

“The righteous” here are people who are righteous, not one particular righteous person.

Blessed are **the meek**. (Matthew 5:5a ULT)

“The meek” here are all people who are meek, not one particular meek person.

Translation Strategies

If your language uses adjectives as nouns to refer to a class of people, consider using the adjectives in this way. If it would sound strange, or if the meaning would be unclear or wrong, here is another option:

(1) Use the adjective with a plural form of the noun that the adjective describes.

Examples of Translation Strategies Applied

(1) Use the adjective with a plural form of the noun that the adjective describes.

The scepter of wickedness must not rule in the land of **the righteous**. (Psalms 125:3a ULT)

The scepter of wickedness must not rule in the land of **righteous people**.

Blessed are **the meek**. (Matthew 5:5a ULT)

Blessed are **people who are meek**.

(Go back to: [1 Samuel 24:13](#); [31:4](#))

Numbers

Description

There are many numbers in the Bible. They can be written as words (“five”) or as numerals (“5”). Some numbers are very large, such as “two hundred” (200), “twenty-two thousand” (22,000), or “one hundred million” (100,000,000). Some languages do not have words for all of these numbers. Translators need to decide how to translate numbers and whether to write them as words or numerals.

This page answers the question: *How do I translate numbers?*

In order to understand this topic, it would be good to read:

[Translate Unknowns](#)

Some numbers are exact and others are rounded.

▮ Abram was **86** years old when Hagar bore Ishmael to Abram. (Genesis 16:16 ULT)

Eighty-six (86) is an exact number.

▮ That day about **3,000** of the people died. (Exodus 32:28b ULT)

Here the number three thousand (3,000) is a round number. It may have been a little more than that or a little less than that. The word “about” shows that it is not an exact number.

Reason This Is a Translation Issue

Some languages do not have words for some of these numbers.

Translation Principles

- Exact numbers should be translated as closely and specifically as they can be.
- Rounded numbers can be translated more generally.

Examples From the Bible

▮ When Jared had lived **162** years, he became the father of Enoch. After he became the father of Enoch, Jared lived **800** years. He became the father of more sons and daughters. Jared lived **962** years, and then he died. (Genesis 5:18-20 ULT)

The numbers 162, 800, and 962 are exact numbers and should be translated with something as close to those numbers as possible.

▮ Our sister, may you be the mother of **thousands of ten thousands**. (Genesis 24:60b ULT)

This is a rounded number. It does not say exactly how many descendants she should have, but it was a huge number of them.

Translation Strategies

- (1) Write numbers using numerals.
- (2) Write numbers using your language’s words or the Gateway Language words for those numbers.
- (3) Write numbers using words, and put the numerals in parentheses after them.

(4) Combine words for large numbers.

(5) Use a very general expression for very large rounded numbers and write the numeral in parentheses afterward.

Examples of Translation Strategies Applied

We will use the following verse in our examples:

Now, see, at great effort I have prepared for Yahweh's house **100,000** talents of gold, **1,000,000** talents of silver, and bronze and iron in large quantities. (1 Chronicles 22:14a ULT)

(1) Write numbers using numerals.

I have prepared for Yahweh's house **100,000** talents of gold, **1,000,000** talents of silver, and bronze and iron in large quantities.

(2) Write numbers using your language's words or the Gateway Language words for those numbers.

I have prepared for Yahweh's house **one hundred thousand** talents of gold, **one million** talents of silver, and bronze and iron in large quantities.

(3) Write numbers using words, and put the numerals in parenthesis after them.

I have prepared for Yahweh's house one **hundred thousand (100,000)** talents of gold, **one million (1,000,000)** talents of silver, and bronze and iron in large quantities.

(4) Combine words for large numbers.

I have prepared for Yahweh's house **one hundred thousand** talents of gold, **a thousand thousand** talents of silver, and bronze and iron in large quantities.

(5) Use a very general expression for very large rounded numbers and write the numeral in parentheses afterward.

I have prepared for Yahweh's house **a great amount of gold (100,000 talents), ten times that amount of silver (1,000,000 talents)**, and bronze and iron in large quantities.

Consistency

Be consistent in your translations. Decide how the numbers will be translated, using numbers or numerals. There are different ways of being consistent.

- Use words to represent numbers all of the time. (You might have very long words.)
- Use numerals to represent numbers all of the time.
- Use words to represent the numbers that your language has words for and use numerals for the numbers that your language does not have words for.
- Use words for low numbers and numerals for high numbers.
- Use words for numbers that require few words and numerals for numbers that require more than a few words.
- Use words to represent numbers, and write the numerals in parentheses after them.

Consistency in the ULT and UST

The *unfoldingWord*® *Literal Text* (ULT) and the *unfoldingWord*® *Simplified Text* (UST) use words for the numbers one through ten and use numerals for all numbers above ten.

When Adam had lived **130** years, he became the father of a son in his own likeness, after his image, and he called his name Seth. After Adam became the father of Seth, he lived **800** years. He became the father of more sons and daughters. Adam lived **930** years, and then he died.
(Genesis 5:3-5 ULT)

Next we recommend you learn about:

[Ordinal Numbers](#)

[Fractions](#)

(Go back to: 1 Samuel 4:2; 6:19; 7:2; 9:22; 11:3; 11:8; 13:2; 13:5; 13:15; 14:2; 15:4; 17:16; 17:18; 18:13; 18:25; 18:27; 21:5; 22:2; 22:7; 22:18; 23:13; 24:2; 25:2; 25:13; 25:18; 26:2; 27:2; 29:2; 29:5; 30:9; 30:10; 30:13; 30:17; 30:21)

Order of Events

Description

In the Bible, events are not always told in the order in which they occurred. Sometimes the author wanted to discuss something that happened at an earlier time than the event that he just talked about. This can be confusing to the reader.

This page answers the question: *Why are some events not listed in the order they happened, and how do I translate them?*

In order to understand this topic, it would be good to read:

[[rc://en/ta/man/translate/writing-intro]]

[[rc://en/ta/man/translate/figs-verbs]]

Reason This Is a Translation Issue

Readers might think that the events happened in the order that they are told. It is important to help them understand the correct order of events.

Examples From the Bible

He even added this to them all: he locked John up in prison. Now it came about, when all the people were baptized, Jesus also was baptized. (Luke 3:20-21 ULT)

This could sound like John baptized Jesus after John was locked up in prison, but John baptized Jesus before John was locked up in prison.

Just as Joshua had said to the people, the seven priests carrying seven trumpets of rams' horns before Yahweh went forward and blew the trumpets, and the ark of the covenant of Yahweh followed after them. But Joshua commanded the people, saying, "Do not shout nor let your voice be heard, nor let any word leave your mouth until the day I tell you to shout. Then you must shout." (Joshua 6:8,10 ULT)

This could sound like Joshua gave the order not to shout after the army had already started their march, but he had given that order before they started marching.

Who is worthy to open the scroll and break its seals? (Revelation 5:2b ULT)

This sounds like a person must first open the scroll and then break its seals, but the seals that lock the scroll must be broken before the scroll can be unrolled.

Translation Strategies

(1) If your language uses phrases or time words to show that an event happened before one that was already mentioned, consider using one of them.

(2) If your language uses verb tense or aspect to show that an event happened before one that was already mentioned, consider using that. (See the section on "Aspect" of Verbs.)

(3) If your language prefers to tell events in the order that they occurred, consider reordering the events so they are in that order. This may require putting two or more verses together (like 5-6). (See Verse Bridges.)

Examples of Translation Strategies Applied

(1) If your language uses phrases, time words or tenses to show that an event happened before the one just mentioned, consider using one of them.

20 he even added this to them all: he locked John up in prison. Now it came about, when all the people were baptized, Jesus also was baptized. (Luke 3:20-21 ULT)

20 But then Herod ... had John locked up in prison. 21 **Before John was put in prison**, while all the people were being baptized by John, Jesus also was baptized.

Who is worthy to open the scroll and break its seals? (Revelation 5:2b ULT)

Who is worthy to open the scroll **after** breaking its seals?

(2) If your language uses verb tense or aspect to show that an event happened before one that was already mentioned, consider using that.

Just as Joshua had said to the people, the seven priests carrying seven trumpets of rams' horns before Yahweh went forward and blew the trumpets, But Joshua commanded the people, saying, "Do not shout nor let your voice be heard, nor let any word leave your mouth until the day I tell you to shout. Then you must shout." (Joshua 6:8,10 ULT)

8 Just as Joshua had said to the people, the seven priests carried the seven trumpets of rams' horns before Yahweh, as they advanced, they gave a blast on the trumpets 10 But Joshua **had commanded** the people, saying, "Do not shout. No sound must leave your mouths until the day I tell you to shout. Only then must you shout."

(3) If your language prefers to tell events in the order that they occur, consider reordering the events. This may require putting two or more verses together (like 5-6).

8 Just as Joshua had said to the people, the seven priests carrying seven trumpets of rams' horns before Yahweh went forward and blew the trumpets, But Joshua commanded the people, saying, "Do not shout nor let your voice be heard, nor let any word leave your mouth until the day I tell you to shout. Then you must shout." (Joshua 6:8,10 ULT)

8,10 Joshua commanded the people, saying, "Do not shout. No sound must leave your mouths until the day I tell you to shout. Only then must you shout." Then just as Joshua had said to the people, the seven priests carried the seven trumpets of rams horns before Yahweh, as they advanced, they gave a blast on the trumpets...

Who is worthy to open the scroll and break its seals? (Revelation 5:2b ULT)

Who is worthy to break the seals and open the scroll?

You may also want to watch the video at https://ufw.io/figs_events.

Next we recommend you learn about:

[Background Information](#)

[Connecting Words and Phrases](#)

[\[\[rc://en/ta/man/translate/writing-newevent\]\]](#)

[\[\[rc://en/ta/man/translate/translate-versebridge\]\]](#)

(Go back to: [1 Samuel 17:55](#))

Ordinal Numbers

Description

Ordinal numbers are used in the Bible mainly to tell the position of something in a list.

And God has indeed appointed some in the church, **first** apostles, **second** prophets, **third** teachers, then miracles. (1 Corinthians 12:28a ULT)

This page answers the question: *What are ordinal numbers and how can I translate them?*

In order to understand this topic, it would be good to read:

[Numbers](#)

This is a list of workers that God gave to the church in their order.

Ordinal Numbers in English

Most ordinal numbers in English simply have “-th” added to the end.

Numeral	Number	Ordinal Number
4	four	fourth
10	ten	tenth
100	one hundred	one hundredth
1,000	one thousand	one thousandth

Some ordinal numbers in English do not follow that pattern.

Numeral	Number	Ordinal Number
1	one	first
2	two	second
3	three	third
5	five	fifth
12	twelve	twelfth

Reason This Is a Translation Issue

Some languages do not have special numbers for showing the order of items in a list. There are different ways to deal with this.

Examples From the Bible

The **first** lot went to Jehoiarib, the **second** to Jedaiah, the **third** to Harim, the **fourth** to Seorim ... the **twenty-third** to Delaiah, and the **twenty-fourth** to Maaziah. (1 Chronicles 24:7-18 ULT)

The people cast lots and one went to each of these people in the order given.

You must place in it four rows of precious stones. The **first** row must have a ruby, a topaz, and a garnet. The **second** row must have an emerald, a sapphire, and a diamond. The **third** row must have a jacinth, an agate, and an amethyst. The **fourth** row must have a beryl, and an onyx, and a jasper. They must be mounted in gold settings. (Exodus 28:17-20 ULT)

This describes four rows of stones. The first row is probably the top row, and the fourth row is probably the bottom row.

Translation Strategies

If your language has ordinal numbers and using them would give the right meaning, consider using them. If not, here are some strategies to consider:

- (1) Use “one” with the first item and “another” or “the next” with the rest.
- (2) Tell the total number of items and then list them or the things associated with them.

Examples of Translation Strategies Applied

- (1) Tell the total number of items, and use “one” with the first item and “another” or “the next” with the rest.

The first lot went to Jehoiarib, the second to Jedaiah, the third to Harim, the fourth to Seorim ... the twenty-third to Delaiah, and the twenty-fourth to Maaziah. (1 Chronicles 24:7-18 ULT)

There were **24** lots. **One lot** went to Jehoiarib, **another** to Jedaiah, **another** to Harim ... **another** to Delaiah, **and the last** went to Maaziah.

There were **24** lots. **One lot** went to Jehoiarib, **the next** to Jedaiah, **the next** to Harim ... **the next** to Delaiah, **and the last** went to Maaziah.

A river went out of Eden to water the garden. From there it divided and became **four** rivers. The name of **the first** is Pishon. It is the one which flows throughout the whole land of Havilah, where there is gold. The gold of that land is good. There is also bdellium and the onyx stone there. The name of **the second** river is Gihon. This one flows throughout the whole land of Cush. The name of **the third** river is Tigris, which flows east of Asshur. **The fourth** river is the Euphrates. (Genesis 2:10-14 ULT)

A river went out of Eden to water the garden. From there it divided and became **four** rivers. The name of **one** is Pishon. It is the one which flows throughout the whole land of Havilah, where there is gold. The gold of that land is good. There is also bdellium and the onyx stone there. The name of **the next** river is Gihon. This one flows throughout the whole land of Cush. The name of **the next** river is Tigris, which flows east of Asshur. **The last** river is the Euphrates.

- (2) Tell the total number of items and then list them or the things associated with them.

The **first** lot went to Jehoiarib, the **second** to Jedaiah, the **third** to Harim, the **fourth** to Seorim ... the **twenty-third** to Delaiah, and the **twenty-fourth** to Maaziah. (1 Chronicles 24:7-18 ULT)

They cast **24** lots. The lots went to Jerhoiarib, Jedaiah, Harim, Seorim ... Delaiah, and Maaziah.

Next we recommend you learn about:

[Fractions](#)

(Go back to: [1 Samuel 20:34](#))

Original Manuscripts

The Writing of the Original Manuscripts

The Bible was written many hundreds of years ago by God's prophets and apostles as God directed them to write it. The people of Israel spoke Hebrew, so most of the Old Testament books were written in Hebrew. When they lived as strangers in Assyria and Babylon, they learned to speak Aramaic, so some later parts of the Old Testament were written in Aramaic.

About 300 years before Christ was born, Greek became the language of wider communication. Many people in Europe and the Middle East spoke Greek as a second language. So the Old Testament was translated into Greek. When Christ was born, many people in those areas of the world still spoke Greek as a second language, and the New Testament books were all written in Greek.

Back then there were no printers, so the authors wrote these books by hand. These were the original manuscripts. The scribes who copied these manuscripts also did so by hand. These were also manuscripts. These books are extremely important, so the scribes got special training and were very careful to try to copy them accurately.

Over hundreds of years, scribes (and other people as well) made thousands of copies of the Bible books. The manuscripts that the authors originally wrote have all been lost or have fallen apart, so we do not have them. But we do have many of the copies that were written by hand long ago. Some of these copies have survived for many hundreds and even thousands of years.

Next we recommend you learn about:

[\[\[rc://en/ta/man/translate/translate-chapverse\]\]](#)

[Original Manuscripts](#)

[\[\[rc://en/ta/man/translate/translate-original\]\]](#)

[\[\[rc://en/ta/man/translate/translate-terms\]\]](#)

[Textual Variants](#)

This page answers the question: *Is there more information about the Original Language text?*

In order to understand this topic, it would be good to read:

[\[\[rc://en/ta/man/translate/translate-source-text\]\]](#)

(Go back to: [1 Samuel 20:25](#))

Parallelism

Description

Parallelism is a poetic device in which two phrases or clauses that are similar in structure or idea are used together. The following are some of the different kinds of parallelism.

- The second clause or phrase means the same as the first. This is called synonymous parallelism.
- The second clarifies or strengthens the meaning of the first.
- The second completes what is said in the first.
- The second says something that contrasts with the first, but adds to the same idea.

Parallelism is most commonly found in Old Testament poetry, such as in the books of Psalms and Proverbs. It also occurs in Greek in the New Testament, both in the four gospels and in the apostles' letters.

This article will only discuss synonymous parallelism, the kind in which the two parallel phrases mean the same thing, because that is the kind that presents a problem for translation. Note that we use the term "synonymous parallelism" for long phrases or clauses that have the same meaning. We use the term "**doublet**" for words or very short phrases that mean basically the same thing and are used together.

In the poetry of the original languages, synonymous parallelism has several effects:

- It shows that something is very important by saying it more than once and in more than one way.
- It helps the hearer to think more deeply about the idea by saying it in different ways.
- It makes the language more beautiful and raises it above the ordinary way of speaking.

Reason This Is a Translation Issue

Some languages would not use synonymous parallelism. They would either think it odd that someone said the same thing twice, or, since it is in the Bible, they would think that the two phrases must have some difference in meaning. For them it would be confusing, rather than beautiful. They would not understand that the repetition of the idea in different words serves to emphasize the idea.

Examples From the Bible

Your word is a lamp to my feet
and a light for my path. (Psalm 119:105 ULT)

Both parts of the sentence are metaphors saying that God's word teaches people how to live. That is the single idea. The words "lamp" and "light" are similar in meaning because they refer to light. The words "my feet" and "my path" are related because they refer to a person walking. Walking is a metaphor for living.

You make him to rule over the works of your hands;
you have put all things under his feet (Psalm 8:6 ULT)

Both lines say that God made man the ruler of everything. "To rule over" is the same idea as putting things "under his feet," and "the works of your [God's] hands" is the same idea as "all things."

This page answers the question: *What is parallelism?*

In order to understand this topic, it would be good to read:

[[rc://en/ta/man/translate/figs-intro]]

Yahweh sees everything a person does
and watches all the paths he takes. (Proverbs 5:21 ULT)

The first phrase and the second phrase mean the same thing. There are three ideas that are the same between these two phrases. "Sees" corresponds to "watches," "everything...does" corresponds to "all the paths...takes," and "a person" corresponds to "he."

Praise Yahweh, all you nations;
exalt him, all you peoples! (Psalm 117:1 ULT)

Both parts of this verse tell people everywhere to praise Yahweh. The words 'Praise' and 'exalt' mean the same thing. The words 'Yahweh' and 'him' refer to the same person. The terms 'all you nations' and 'all you peoples' refer to the same people.

For Yahweh has a lawsuit with his people,
and he will fight in court against Israel. (Micah 6:2b ULT)

The two parts of this verse say that Yahweh has a serious disagreement with his people, Israel. These are not two different disagreements or two different groups of people.

Translation Strategies

For most kinds of parallelism, it is good to translate both of the clauses or phrases. For synonymous parallelism, it is good to translate both clauses if people in your language understand that the purpose of saying something twice is to strengthen a single idea. But if your language does not use parallelism in this way, then consider using one of the following translation strategies.

- (1) Combine the ideas of both clauses into one.
- (2) If it appears that the clauses are used together to show that what they say is really true, you could combine the ideas of both clauses into one and include words that emphasize the truth such as "truly" or "certainly."
- (3) If it appears that the clauses are used together to intensify an idea in them, you could combine the ideas of both clauses into one and use words like "very," "completely," or "all."

Examples of Translation Strategies Applied

- (1) Combine the ideas of both clauses into one.

Until now you have dealt deceitfully with me and you have spoken lies to me. (Judges 16:13, ULT)

Delilah expressed this idea twice to emphasize that she was very upset.

Until now you have deceived me with your lies.
Yahweh sees everything a person does and watches all the paths he takes. (Proverbs 5:21 ULT)

The phrase "all the paths he takes" is a metaphor for "all he does."

Yahweh pays attention to everything a person does.
For Yahweh has a lawsuit with his people, and he will fight in court against Israel. (Micah 6:2 ULT)

This parallelism describes one serious disagreement that Yahweh had with one group of people. If this is unclear, the phrases can be combined:

For Yahweh has a lawsuit with his people, Israel.

(2) If it appears that the clauses are used together to show that what they say is really true, you could combine the ideas of both clauses into one and include words that emphasize the truth such as “truly” or “certainly.”

Yahweh sees everything a person does and watches all the paths he takes. (Proverbs 5:21 ULT)
Yahweh truly sees everything a person does.

You make him to rule over the works of your hands; you have put all things under his feet (Psalm 8:6 ULT)

You have certainly made him to rule over everything that you have created.

(3) If it appears that the clauses are used together to intensify an idea in them, you could combine the ideas of both clauses into one and use words like “very,” “completely” or “all.”

Until now you have dealt deceitfully with me and you have spoken lies to me. (Judges 16:13, ULT)
All you have done is lie to me.

Yahweh sees everything a person does and watches all the paths he takes. (Proverbs 5:21 ULT)
Yahweh sees absolutely everything that a person does.

Next we recommend you learn about:

[Personification](#)

(Go back to: [1 Samuel 2:1; 2:2; 2:3; 2:4; 2:5; 2:6; 2:7; 2:8; 2:9; 2:10; 12:13; 12:14; 14:16; 15:3; 15:14; 15:33; 17:12; 17:28; 20:1; 25:10; 28:5](#))

Personification

Description

Personification is a figure of speech in which someone speaks of something as if it could do things that animals or people can do. People often do this because it makes it easier to talk about things that we cannot see:

Such as wisdom:

Does not Wisdom call out? (Proverbs 8:1a ULT)

Or sin:

Sin crouches at the door. (Genesis 4:7b ULT)

People also use personification because it is sometimes easier to talk about people's relationships with non-human things such as wealth as if they were relationships between people.

You cannot serve God and wealth. (Matthew 6:24b ULT)

In each case, the purpose of the personification is to highlight a certain characteristic of the non-human thing. As in metaphor, the reader needs to think of the way that the thing is like a certain kind of person.

Reasons This Is a Translation Issue

- Some languages do not use personification.
- Some languages use personification only in certain situations.

Examples From the Bible

You cannot **serve** God and wealth. (Matthew 6:24b ULT)

Jesus speaks of wealth as if it were a master whom people might serve. Loving money and basing one's decisions on it is like serving it as a slave would serve his master.

Does not Wisdom **call** out? Does not Understanding **raise her voice**? (Proverbs 8:1 ULT)

The author speaks of wisdom and understanding as if they were woman who calls out to teach people. This means that they are not something hidden, but something obvious that people should pay attention to.

Translation Strategies

If the personification would be understood clearly, consider using it. If it would not be understood, here are some other ways for translating it.

- (1) Add words or phrases to make the human (or animal) characteristic clear.
- (2) In addition to Strategy (1), use words such as "like" or "as" to show that the sentence is not to be understood literally.
- (3) Find a way to translate it without the personification.

This page answers the question: *What is personification?*

In order to understand this topic, it would be good to read:

[[rc://en/ta/man/translate/figs-intro]]

Examples of Translation Strategies Applied

(1) Add words or phrases to make the human (or animal) characteristic clear.

Sin crouches at the door. (Genesis 4:7b ULT) — God speaks of sin as if it were a wild animal that is waiting for the chance to attack. This shows how dangerous sin is. An additional phrase can be added to make this danger clear.

Sin is at your door, waiting to attack you.

(2) In addition to Strategy (1), use words such as “like” or “as” to show that the sentence is not to be understood literally.

Sin crouches at the door. (Genesis 4:7b ULT) — This can be translated with the word “as.”

Sin is crouching at the door, **just as a wild animal does as it waits to attack a person..**

(3) Find a way to translate it without the personification.

Even the **winds and the sea obey him**. (Matthew 8:27b ULT) — The men speak of the “wind and the sea” as if they are able to hear and obey Jesus, just as people can. This could also be translated without the idea of obedience by speaking of Jesus controlling them.

He even **controls the winds and the sea.**

NOTE: We have broadened our definition of “personification” to include “zoomorphism” (speaking of other things as if they had animal characteristics) and “anthropomorphism” (speaking of non-human things as if they had human characteristics) because the translation strategies for them are the same.

Next we recommend you learn about:

[[rc://en/ta/man/translate/figs-apostrophe]]
[[rc://en/ta/man/translate/bita-part1]]

(Go back to: [1 Samuel 6:18](#); [10:7](#); [10:10](#); [14:20](#))

Predictive Past

Description

The predictive past is a figure of speech that uses the past tense to refer to things that will happen in the future. This is sometimes done in prophecy to show that the event will certainly happen. It is also called the prophetic perfect.

Therefore my people have gone into captivity for lack of understanding; their honored leaders go hungry, and their common people have nothing to drink. (Isaiah 5:13 ULT)

In the example above, the people of Israel had not yet gone into captivity, but God spoke of their going into captivity as if it had already happened because he had decided that they certainly would go into captivity.

Reason This Is a Translation Issue:

Readers who are not aware of the past tense being used in prophecy to refer to future events may find it confusing.

Examples From the Bible

Now Jericho was tightly closed because of the sons of Israel. No one went out and no one came in. Yahweh said to Joshua, "See, I have delivered Jericho, and its king, and its powerful soldiers into your hand." (Joshua 6:1-2 ULT)

For to us a child has been born, to us a son has been given; and the rule will be on his shoulder. (Isaiah 9:6a ULT)

In the examples above, God spoke of things that would happen in the future as if they had already happened.

But even Enoch, the seventh from Adam, prophesied about them, saying, "Look! The Lord came with thousands and thousands of his holy ones." (Jude 1:14 ULT)

Enoch was speaking of something that would happen in the future, but he used the past tense when he said "the Lord came."

Translation Strategies

If the past tense would be natural and give the right meaning in your language, consider using it. If not, here are some other options.

- (1) Use the future tense to refer to future events.
- (2) If it refers to something in the immediate future, use a form that would show that.
- (3) Some languages may use the present tense to show that something will happen very soon.

Examples of Translation Strategies Applied

- (1) Use the future tense to refer to future events.

This page answers the question: *What is the predictive past?*

In order to understand this topic, it would be good to read:

[[rc://en/ta/man/translate/figs-intro]]

[[rc://en/ta/man/translate/figs-verbs]]

For to us a child **has been born**, to us a son **has been given**. (Isaiah 9:6a ULT)

For to us a child **will be born**, to us a son **will be given**.

(2) If it refers to something that would happen very soon, use a form that shows that.

Yahweh said to Joshua, "See, I have delivered Jericho, and its king, and its powerful soldiers into your hand." (Joshua 6:2 ULT)

Yahweh said to Joshua, "See, I **am about to deliver** over to you Jericho, its king, and its powerful soldiers."

(3) Some languages may use the present tense to show that something will happen very soon.

Yahweh said to Joshua, "See, I have delivered Jericho, and its king, and its powerful soldiers into your hand." (Joshua 6:2 ULT)

Yahweh said to Joshua, "See, I **am delivering** over to you Jericho, its king, and its powerful soldiers."

(Go back to: [1 Samuel 25:26](#))

Pronouns

Description

Pronouns are words that people might use instead of using a noun when referring to someone or something. Some examples are “I,” “you,” “he,” “it,” “this,” “that,” “himself,” “someone,” and others. The personal pronoun is the most common type of pronoun.

This page answers the question: *What are pronouns, and what kinds of pronouns are in some languages?*

In order to understand this topic, it would be good to read:

[[rc://en/ta/man/translate/figs-partsofspeech]]

Personal Pronouns

Personal pronouns refer to people or things and show whether the speaker is referring to himself, the person he is speaking to, or someone or something else. The following are kinds of information that personal pronouns may provide. Other types of pronouns may give some of this information, as well.

Person

- First Person — The speaker and possibly others (I, me, we, us)
 - [Exclusive and Inclusive “We”](#)
- Second Person — The person or people that the speaker is talking to and possibly others (you)
 - [Forms of You](#)
- Third Person — Someone or something other than the speaker and those he is talking to (he, she, it, they)

Number

- Singular — one (I, you, he, she, it)
- Plural — more than one (we, you, they)
 - [Singular Pronouns that Refer to Groups](#)
- Dual — two (Some languages have pronouns specifically for two people or two things.)

Gender

- Masculine — he
- Feminine — she
- Neuter — it

Relationship to other words in the sentence

- Subject of the verb: I, you, he, she, it, we, they
- Object of the verb or preposition: me, you, him, her, it, us, them
- Possessor with a noun: my, your, his, her, its, our, their
- Possessor without a noun: mine, yours, his, hers, its, ours, theirs

Other Types of pronouns

Reflexive Pronouns refer to another noun or pronoun in the same sentence: myself, yourself, himself, herself, itself, ourselves, yourselves, themselves.

- John saw **himself** in the mirror. The word “himself” refers to John.

Interrogative Pronouns are used to make a question that needs more than just a yes or no for an answer: what, which, who, whom, whose.

- **Who** built the house?

Relative Pronouns mark a relative clause. The relative pronouns, who, whom, whose, which and that give more information about a noun in the main part of the sentence. Sometimes, the relative adverbs when and where can also be used as relative pronouns.

- I saw the house **that John built**. The clause “that John built” tells which house I saw.
- I saw the man **who built the house**. The clause “who built the house” tells which man I saw.

Demonstrative Pronouns are used to draw attention to someone or something and to show distance from the speaker or something else. The demonstrative pronouns are: this, these, that, and those.

- Have you seen **this** here?
- Who is **that** over there?

Indefinite pronouns are used when no particular noun is being referred to. The indefinite pronouns are: any, anyone, someone, anything, something, and some. Sometimes a personal pronoun is used in a generic way to do this: you, they, he or it.

- He does not want to talk to **anyone**.
- **Someone** fixed it, but I do not know who.
- **They** say that **you** should not wake a sleeping dog.

In the last example, “they” and “you” just refer to people in general.

(Go back to: [1 Samuel 3:9](#); [3:10](#); [4:7](#); [4:8](#); [19:4](#); [20:7](#); [20:8](#); [20:13](#); [20:29](#); [23:10](#); [23:11](#); [23:20](#); [25:17](#); [25:24](#); [25:25](#); [25:26](#); [25:27](#); [25:28](#); [25:29](#); [25:30](#); [25:31](#); [25:39](#); [25:41](#); [26:19](#); [26:20](#); [26:23](#); [27:5](#); [27:8](#); [27:9](#); [27:12](#); [28:2](#); [28:22](#); [29:8](#))

Pronouns — When to Use Them

Description

When we talk or write, we use pronouns to refer to people or things without always having to repeat the noun or name. Usually, the first time we refer to someone in a story, we use a descriptive phrase or a name. The next time we might refer to that person with a simple noun or by name. After that we might refer to him simply with a pronoun as long as we think that our listeners will be able to understand easily to whom the pronoun refers.

This page answers the question: *How do I decide whether or not to use a pronoun?*

In order to understand this topic, it would be good to read:

[Pronouns](#)

[[rc://en/ta/man/translate/figs-sentences]]

Now there was **a man from the Pharisees whose name was Nicodemus, a Jewish leader**. **This man** came to Jesus at night. Jesus replied and said to **him** ... (John 3:1, 2a, 3a ULT)

In John 3, Nicodemus is first referred to with noun phrases and his name. Then he is referred to with the noun phrase “this man.” Then he is referred to with the pronoun “him.”

Each language has its rules and exceptions to this usual way of referring to people and things.

- In some languages, the first time something is referred to in a paragraph or chapter, it is referred to with a noun rather than a pronoun.
- The main character is the person whom a story is about. In some languages, after a main character is introduced in a story, he is usually referred to with a pronoun. Some languages have special pronouns that refer only to the main character.
- In some languages, marking on the verb helps people know who the subject is. (See Verbs.) In some of these languages, listeners rely on this marking to help them understand who the subject is. Speakers will use a pronoun, noun phrase, or proper name only when they want either to emphasize or to clarify who the subject is.

Reasons This Is a Translation Issue

- If translators use a pronoun at the wrong time for their language, readers might not know about whom the writer is talking.
- If translators too frequently refer to a main character by name, listeners of some languages might not realize that the person is a main character, or they might think that there is a new character with the same name.
- If translators use pronouns, nouns, or names at the wrong time, people might think that there is some special emphasis on the person or thing to which it refers.

Examples From the Bible

The example below occurs at the beginning of a chapter. In some languages it might not be clear to whom the pronouns refer.

Then Jesus entered into the synagogue again, and there was a man who had a withered hand. Some people watched **him** closely to see if **he** would heal **him** on the Sabbath so that they might accuse **him**. (Mark 3:1-2 ULT)

In the example below, two men are named in the first sentence. It might not be clear whom “he” in the second sentence refers to.

Now after some days had passed, **King Agrippa** and Bernice came down to Caesarea to pay their respects to **Festus**. After **he** had been there for many days, Festus presented to the king the things concerning Paul. (Acts 25:13-14)

Jesus is the main character of the book of Matthew, but in the verses below he is referred to four times by name. This may lead speakers of some languages to think that Jesus is not the main character. Or it might lead them to think that there is more than one person named Jesus in this story. Or it might lead them to think that there is some kind of emphasis on him, even though there is no emphasis.

At that time **Jesus** went on the Sabbath day through the grainfields. **His** disciples were hungry and began to pluck heads of grain and eat them. But when the Pharisees saw that, they said to **Jesus**, “See, your disciples do what is unlawful to do on the Sabbath.” But **Jesus** said to them, “Have you never read what David did, when he was hungry, and the men who were with him?” Then **Jesus** left from there and went into their synagogue. (Matthew 12:1-3,9 ULT)

Translation Strategies

- (1) If it would not be clear to your readers to whom or to what a pronoun refers, use a name or a noun.
- (2) If repeating a noun or name would lead people to think that a main character is not a main character, or that the writer is talking about more than one person with that name, or that there is some kind of emphasis on someone when there is no emphasis, use a pronoun instead.

Examples of Translation Strategies Applied

- (1) If it would not be clear to your readers to whom or to what a pronoun refers, use a name or a noun.

Again **he** walked into the synagogue, and a man with a withered hand was there. Some Pharisees watched **him** to see if **he** would heal the man on the Sabbath. (Mark 3:1-2)

Again **Jesus** walked into the synagogue, and a man with a withered hand was there. Some Pharisees watched **Jesus** to see if **he** would heal the man on the Sabbath.

- (2) If repeating a noun or name would lead people to think that a main character is not a main character, or that the writer is talking about more than one person with that name, or that there is some kind of emphasis on someone when there is no emphasis, use a pronoun instead.

At that time **Jesus** went on the Sabbath day through the grainfields. **His** disciples were hungry and began to pluck heads of grain and eat them. But when the Pharisees saw that, they said to **Jesus**, “See, your disciples do what is unlawful to do on the Sabbath.” But **Jesus** said to them, “Have you never read what David did, when he was hungry, and the men who were with him?” Then **Jesus** left from there and went into their synagogue. (Matthew 12:1-3,9 ULT)

This may be translated as:

At that time **Jesus** went on the Sabbath day through the grainfields. **His** disciples were hungry and began to pluck heads of grain and eat them. But when the Pharisees saw that, they said to **him**, “See, your disciples do what is unlawful to do on the Sabbath.” But **he** said to them, “Have you never read what David did, when he was hungry, and the men who were with him?” Then **he** left from there and went into their synagogue.

(Go back to: [1 Samuel 1:2](#); [1:3](#); [1:7](#))

Proverbs

Description

Proverbs are short sayings that give wise advice or teach something that is generally true about life. People enjoy proverbs because they give a lot of wisdom in few words. Proverbs in the Bible often use metaphor and parallelism. Proverbs should not be understood as absolute and unchangeable laws. Rather, proverbs offer general advice to a person about how to live his life.

Hatred stirs up conflicts, but love covers over all offenses. (Proverbs 10:12 ULT)

Here is another example from the book of Proverbs.

Look at the ant, you lazy person, consider her ways, and be wise. It has no commander, officer, or ruler, yet it prepares its food in the summer, and during the harvest it stores up what it will eat. (Proverbs 6:6-8 ULT)

This page answers the question: *What are proverbs, and how can I translate them?*

In order to understand this topic, it would be good to read:

[Metaphor](#)

[Parallelism](#)

[\[\[rc://en/ta/man/translate/writing-intro\]\]](#)

Reason This Is a Translation Issue

Each language has its own ways of saying proverbs. There are many proverbs in the Bible. They need to be translated in the way that people say proverbs in your language so that people recognize them as proverbs and understand what they teach.

Examples From the Bible

A good name is to be chosen over great riches,
and favor is better than silver and gold. (Proverbs 22:1 ULT)

This means that it is better to be a good person and to have a good reputation than it is to have a lot of money.

Like vinegar on the teeth and smoke in the eyes,
so is the sluggard to those who send him. (Proverbs 10:26 ULT)

This means that a lazy person is very annoying to those who send him to do something.

The way of Yahweh protects those who have integrity,
but it is destruction for the wicked. (Proverbs 10:29 ULT)

This means that Yahweh protects people who do what is right, but he destroys those who are wicked.

Translation Strategies

If translating a proverb literally would be natural and give the right meaning in your language, consider doing that. If not, here are some options:

- (1) Find out how people say proverbs in your language, and use one of those ways.
- (2) If certain objects in the proverb are not known to many people in your language group, consider replacing

them with objects that people know and that function in the same way in your language.

(3) Substitute a proverb in your language that has the same teaching as the proverb in the Bible.

(4) Give the same teaching but not in a form of a proverb.

Examples of Translation Strategies Applied

(1) Find out how people say proverbs in your language, and use one of those ways.

A good name is to be chosen over great riches,
and favor is better than silver and gold. (Proverbs 22:1 ULT)

Here are some ideas for ways that people might say a proverb in their language.

It is better to have a good name than to have great riches,
and to be favored by people than to have silver and gold.

Wise people choose a good name over great riches,
and favor over silver and gold.

Try to have a good reputation rather than great riches.

Will riches really help you?

I would rather have a good reputation.

(2) If certain objects in the proverb are not known to many people in your language group, consider replacing them with objects that people know and that function in the same way in your language.

Like **snow in summer** or rain in harvest,
so a fool does not deserve honor. (Proverbs 26:1 ULT)

It is not natural for **a cold wind to blow in the hot season** or for it to rain
in the harvest season;

And it is not natural to honor a foolish person.

(3) Substitute a proverb in your language that has the same teaching as the proverb in the Bible.

Do not boast about tomorrow,
for you do not know what a day may bring. (Proverbs 27:1a ULT)

Do not count your chickens before they hatch.

(4) Give the same teaching but not in a form of a proverb.

There is a generation that curses their father
and does not bless their mother.

There is a generation that is pure in their own eyes,

and yet they are not washed of their filth. (Proverbs 30:11-12 ULT)

People who do not respect their parents think that they are righteous,
and they do not turn away from their sin.

(Go back to: [1 Samuel 10:12](#); [19:24](#))

Quotations and Quote Margins

Description

This page answers the question: *What are quote margins and where should I put them?*

When saying that someone said something, we often tell who spoke, whom they spoke to, and what they said. The information about who spoke and whom they spoke to is called the quote margin. What the person said is the quotation. (This is also called a quote.) In some languages the quote margin may come first, last, or even in between two parts of the quotation.

The quote margins are bolded below.

- **She said**, “The food is ready. Come and eat.”
- “The food is ready. Come and eat,” **she said**.
- “The food is ready,” **she said**. “Come and eat.”

Also in some languages, the quote margin may have more than one verb meaning “said.”

But his mother **answered** and **said**, “No. Rather, he will be called John.” (Luke 1:60 ULT)

When writing that someone said something, some languages put the quote (what was said) in quotation marks called inverted commas (“ ”). Some languages use other symbols around the quotation, such as these angle quote marks (« »), or something else.

Reasons This Is a Translation Issue

- Translators need to put the quote margin where it is most clear and natural in their language.
- Translators need to decide whether they want the quote margin to have one or two verbs meaning “said.”
- Translators need to decide which marks to use around the quotation.

Examples From the Bible

Quote margin before the quote

Then Zechariah said to the angel, “How will I know this? For I am an old man and my wife is advanced in her days.” (Luke 1:18 ULT)

Then tax collectors also came to be baptized, and **they said to him**, “Teacher, what should we do?” (Luke 3:12 ULT)

So **he said to them**, “Collect nothing more than what you have been ordered.” (Luke 3:13 ULT)

Quote margin after the quote

Yahweh relented concerning this. “It will not happen,” **he said**. (Amos 7:3 ULT)

Quote margin between two parts of the quote

“I will hide my face from them,” **he said**, “and I will see what their end will be; for they are a perverse generation, children who are unfaithful.” (Deuteronomy 32:20 ULT)

For look, days are coming—**this is Yahweh’s declaration**—when I will restore the fortunes of my people, Israel and Judah. (Jeremiah 30:3a ULT)

Translation Strategies

- (1) Decide where to put the quote margin.
- (2) Decide whether to use one or two words meaning “said.”

Examples of Translation Strategies Applied

- (1) Decide where to put the quote margin.

He said, “Therefore, those among you who are leaders should go down with us. If there is something wrong with the man, let them accuse him.” (Acts 25:5 ULT)

“Therefore, those who can should go there with us,” **he said**. “If there is something wrong with the man, you should accuse him.”

“Therefore, those who can should go there with us. If there is something wrong with the man, you should accuse him,” **he said**.

“Therefore, those who can,” **he said**, “should go there with us. If there is something wrong with the man, you should accuse him.”

- (2) Decide whether to use one or two words meaning “said.”

But his mother **answered and said**, “No. Rather, he will be called John.” (Luke 1:60 ULT)

But his mother **replied**, “No. Rather, he will be called John.”

But his mother **said**, “No. Rather, he will be called John.”

But his mother **answered** like this. “No. Rather, he will be called John,” she **said**.

Next we recommend you learn about:
[Direct and Indirect Quotations](#)

(Go back to: [1 Samuel 1:11](#))

Quotes within Quotes

Description

A quotation may have a quote within it, and quotes that are inside of other quotes can also have quotes within them. When a quote has quotes within it, we say there are “layers” of quotation, and each of the quotes is a layer. When there are many layers of quotes inside of quotes, it can be hard for listeners and readers to know who is saying what. Some languages use a combination of direct quotes and indirect quotes to make it easier.

This page answers the question: *What is a quote within a quote, and how can I help the readers understand who is saying what?*

In order to understand this topic, it would be good to read:

[Direct and Indirect Quotations](#)

Reasons This Is a Translation Issue

When there is a quote within a quote, the listener needs to know who the pronouns refer to. For example: if a quote that is inside a quote has the word “I,” the listener needs to know whether “I” refers to the speaker of the inner quote or the outer quote.

Some languages make this clear by using different kinds of quotes when there are quotes within quotes.

They may use direct quotes for some and indirect quotes for others.

Some languages do not use indirect quotes.

Examples From the Bible

A quotation with only one layer

But Paul said, “I, however, was indeed born a citizen.” (Acts 22:28b ULT)

Quotations with two layers

Jesus answered and said to them, “Be careful that no one leads you astray. For many will come in my name. They will say, ‘I am the Christ,’ and will lead many astray.” (Matthew 24:4-5 ULT)

The outermost layer is what Jesus said to his disciples. The second layer is what other people will say.

Jesus answered, “You say that I am a king.” (John 18:37b ULT)

The outermost layer is what Jesus said to Pilate. The second layer is what Pilate said about Jesus.

A quotation with three layers

Abraham said, “... I said to her, ‘You must show me this faithfulness as my wife: At every place where we go, say about me, **“He is my brother.”**’” (Genesis 20:11a, 13 ULT)

The outermost layer is what Abraham responded to Abimelech. The second layer is what Abraham had told his wife. The third layer is what he wanted his wife to say. (We have bolded the third layer.)

A quotation with four layers

They said to him, "A man came to meet us who said to us, 'Go back to the king who sent you, and say to him, "Yahweh says this: **'Is it because there is no God in Israel that you sent men to consult with Baal- Zebub, the god of Ekron? Therefore you will not come down from the bed to which you have gone up; instead, you will certainly die.'**"'" (2 Kings 1:6 ULT)

The outermost layer is what the messengers said to the king. The second layer is what the man who had met the messengers told them. The third is what that man wanted the messengers to say to the king. The fourth is what Yahweh said. (We have bolded the fourth layer.)

Translation Strategies

Some languages use only direct quotes. Other languages use a combination of direct quotes and indirect quotes. In those languages it might sound strange and perhaps even be confusing if there are many layers of direct quotes.

- (1) Translate all of the quotes as direct quotes.
- (2) Translate one or some of the quotes as indirect quotes. (See [Direct and Indirect Quotations](#).)

Examples of Translation Strategies Applied

- (1) Translate all of the quotes as direct quotes. In the example below we have bolded the indirect quotes in the ULT and the quotes that we have changed to direct quotes below it.

Festus presented to the king the things concerning Paul, saying, "There is a certain man was left here as a prisoner by Felix. So I am uncertain about the things concerning this matter. I asked **if he was willing to go to Jerusalem and there to be judged concerning these things**. But when Paul appealed **to keep him in custody for the decision of the emperor**, I ordered him **to be held in custody until when I could send him to Caesar**." (Acts 25:14b, 20-21 ULT)

Festus presented Paul's case to the king. He said, "A certain man was left behind here by Felix as a prisoner. I was uncertain about the things concerning this matter. I asked him, **'Will you go to Jerusalem to be judged there concerning these things?'** But when Paul said, **'I want to be kept in custody for the emperor's decision,'** I told the guard, **'Keep him in custody until when I can send him to Caesar.'**"

- (2) Translate one or some of the quotes as indirect quotes. In English the word "that" can come before indirect quotes. It is bolded in the examples below. The pronouns that changed because of the indirect quote are also bolded.

And Yahweh spoke to Moses, saying, "I have heard the complaints of the sons of Israel. Speak to them and say, 'During the evenings you will eat meat, and in the morning you will be satisfied with bread. And you will know that I am Yahweh your God.'" (Exodus 16:11-12 ULT)

And Yahweh spoke to Moses, saying, "I have heard the complaints of the sons of Israel. Tell them **that** during the evenings **they** will eat meat, and in the morning **they** will be satisfied with bread. And **they** will know that I am Yahweh **their** God."

They said to him, "A man came to meet us who said to us, 'Go back to the king who sent you, and say to him, "Yahweh says this: 'Is it because there is no God in Israel that you sent men to consult with Baal-Zebub, the god of Ekron? Therefore you will not come down from the bed to which you have gone up; instead, you will certainly die.'""'" (2 Kings 1:6 ULT)

They told him **that** a man had come to meet **them** who said to **them**, "Go back to the king who sent you, and tell him **that** Yahweh says this: 'Is it because there is no God in Israel that you sent men to consult with Baal Zebub, the god of Ekron? Therefore you will not come down from the bed to which you have gone up; instead, you will certainly die.'"

Next we recommend you learn about:

[\[\[rc://en/ta/man/translate/figs-quotemarks\]\]](#)

(Go back to: [1 Samuel 16:2](#))

Rhetorical Question

A rhetorical question is a question that a speaker asks when he is more interested in expressing his attitude about something than in getting information about it. Speakers use rhetorical questions to express deep emotion or to encourage hearers to think deeply about something. The Bible contains many rhetorical questions, often to express surprise, to rebuke or scold the hearer, or to teach. Speakers of some languages use rhetorical questions for other purposes as well.

This page answers the question: *What are rhetorical questions and how can I translate them?*

In order to understand this topic, it would be good to read:

[\[\[rc://en/ta/man/translate/figs-intro\]\]](#)

[\[\[rc://en/ta/man/translate/figs-sentencetypes\]\]](#)

Description

A rhetorical question is a question that strongly expresses the speaker's attitude toward something. Often the speaker is not looking for information at all. Or, if he is asking for information, it is not usually the information that the question appears to ask for. The speaker is more interested in expressing his attitude than in getting information.

But those who stood by said, **“Are you insulting the high priest of God?”** (Acts 23:4 ULT)

The people who asked Paul this question were not asking if he was insulting God's high priest. Rather, they used this question to accuse Paul of insulting the high priest.

The Bible contains many rhetorical questions. These rhetorical questions might be used for the purposes: of expressing attitudes or feelings, rebuking people, teaching something by reminding people of something they know and encouraging them to apply it to something new, or introducing something they want to talk about.

Reasons This Is a Translation Issue

- Some languages do not use rhetorical questions; for them a question is always a request for information.
- Some languages use rhetorical questions, but for purposes that are different or more limited than in the Bible.
- Because of these differences between languages, some readers might misunderstand the purpose of a rhetorical question in the Bible.

Examples From the Bible

Do you not still rule the kingdom of Israel? (1 Kings 21:7b ULT)

Jezebel used the question above to remind King Ahab of something he already knew: he still ruled the kingdom of Israel. The rhetorical question made her point more strongly than if she had merely stated it, because it forced Ahab to admit the point himself. She did this in order to rebuke him for being unwilling to take over a poor man's property. She was implying that, since he was the king of Israel, he had the power to take the man's property.

Will a virgin forget her jewelry, a bride her veils? Yet my people have forgotten me for days without number! (Jeremiah 2:32 ULT)

God used the question above to remind his people of something they already knew: a young woman would never forget her jewelry or a bride forget her veils. He then rebuked his people for forgetting him who is so much greater than those things.

Why did I not die when I came out from the womb? (Job 3:11a ULT)

Job used the question above to show deep emotion. This rhetorical question expresses how sad he was that he did not die as soon as he was born. He wished that he had not lived.

And how has this happened to me that the mother of my Lord would come to me? (Luke 1:43 ULT)

Elizabeth used the question above to show how surprised and happy she was that the mother of her Lord came to her.

Or what man is there among you, of whom his son will ask for a loaf of bread, but he will give him a stone? (Matthew 7:9 ULT)

Jesus used the question above to remind the people of something they already knew: a good father would never give his son something bad to eat. By introducing this point, Jesus could go on to teach them about God with his next rhetorical question:

Therefore, if you who are evil know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your Father who is in heaven give good things to those who ask him? (Matthew 7:11 ULT)

Jesus used this question to teach the people in an emphatic way that God gives good things to those who ask him.

What is the kingdom of God like, and what can I compare it to? It is like a mustard seed that a man took and threw into his garden ... (Luke 13:18b-19a ULT)

Jesus used the question above to introduce what he was going to talk about. He was about to compare the kingdom of God to something. In this case, he compared the kingdom of God to a mustard seed.

Translation Strategies

In order to translate a rhetorical question accurately, first be sure that the question you are translating truly is a rhetorical question and is not an information question. Ask yourself, "Does the person asking the question already know the answer to the question?" If so, it is a rhetorical question. Or, if no one answers the question, did the person who asked it expect to receive an answer? If not, it is a rhetorical question.

When you are sure that the question is rhetorical, then be sure that you understand the purpose for the rhetorical question. Is it to encourage or rebuke or shame the hearer? Is it to bring up a new topic? Is it to do something else?

When you know the purpose of the rhetorical question, then think of the most natural way to express that purpose in the target language. It might be as a question, or a statement, or an exclamation.

If using the rhetorical question would be natural and give the right meaning in your language, consider doing so. If not, here are other options:

- (1) Add the answer after the question.
- (2) Change the rhetorical question to a statement or exclamation.
- (3) Change the rhetorical question to a statement, and then follow it with a short question.
- (4) Change the form of the question so that it communicates in your language what the original speaker communicated in his.

Examples of Translation Strategies Applied

- (1) Add the answer after the question.

Will a virgin forget her jewelry, a bride her veils? Yet my people have forgotten me for days without number! (Jeremiah 2:32 ULT)

Will a virgin forget her jewelry, a bride her veils? **Of course not!** Yet my people have forgotten me for days without number!

Or what man is there among you, of whom his son will ask for a loaf of bread, but he will give him a stone? (Matthew 7:9 ULT)

Or what man is there among you, of whom his son will ask for a loaf of bread, but he will give him a stone? **None of you would do that!**

(2) Change the rhetorical question to a statement or exclamation.

What is the kingdom of God like, and what can I compare it to? It is like a mustard seed. (Luke 13:18-19a ULT)

This is what the kingdom of God is like. It is like a mustard seed ...

Are you insulting the high priest of God? (Acts 23:4b ULT) (Acts 23:4 ULT)

You should not insult God's high priest!

Why did I not die when I came out from the womb? (Job 3:11a ULT)

I wish I had died when I came out from the womb!

And how has this happened to me that the mother of my Lord should come to me? (Luke 1:43 ULT)

How wonderful it is that the mother of my Lord has come to me!

(3) Change the rhetorical question to a statement, and then follow it with a short question.

Do you not still rule the kingdom of Israel? (1 Kings 21:7b ULT)

You still rule the kingdom of Israel, **do you not?**

(4) Change the form of the question so that it communicates in your language what the original speaker communicated in his.

Or what man is there among you, of whom his son will ask for a loaf of bread, but he will give him a stone? (Matthew 7:9 ULT)

If your son asks you for a loaf of bread, **would you give him a stone?**

Will a virgin forget her jewelry, a bride her veils? Yet my people have forgotten me for days without number! (Jeremiah 2:32 ULT)

What virgin would forget her jewelry, and what bride would forget her veils? Yet my people have forgotten me for days without number

(Go back to: 1 Samuel 1:8; 1:14; Notes; 2:23; 2:25; 2:27; 2:29; Notes; 4:8; 6:6; 6:20; Notes; 9:20; 9:21; Notes; 10:1; 10:11; 10:12; 10:27; 12:3; 12:17; 13:11; 14:30; 14:45; Notes; 15:17; 15:19; 15:22; Notes; 16:1; 16:2; Notes; 17:8; 17:25; 17:26; 17:28; 17:29; 17:43; 18:8; 18:18; 18:23; 19:5; 19:17; 20:1; 20:2; 20:8; 20:9; 20:12; 20:14; 20:30; 20:32; 20:37; Notes; 21:11; 21:14; 21:15; 22:7; 22:14; 22:15; 23:3; 23:19; 24:9; 24:14; 24:19; 25:10; Notes; 26:1; 26:9; 26:14; 26:15; 26:18; 27:5; Notes; 29:3; 29:4; 29:5; 30:24)

Simile

Description

A simile is a comparison of two things that are not normally thought to be similar. The simile focuses on a particular trait the two items have in common, and it includes the words “like,” “as,” or “than.”

This page answers the question: *What is a simile?*

In order to understand this topic, it would be good to read:

[[rc://en/ta/man/translate/figs-intro]]

When he saw the crowds, he had compassion for them, because they were troubled and discouraged, **like sheep not having a shepherd**. (Matthew 9:36)

Jesus compared the crowds of people to sheep without a shepherd. Sheep grow frightened when they do not have a good shepherd to lead them in safe places. The crowds were like that because they did not have good religious leaders.

See, I send you out **as sheep in the midst of wolves**, so be as wise **as the serpents** and harmless **as the doves**. (Matthew 10:16 ULT)

Jesus compared his disciples to sheep and their enemies to wolves. Wolves attack sheep; Jesus' enemies would attack his disciples.

For the word of God is living and active and sharper **than any two-edged sword**. (Hebrews 4:12a ULT)

God's word is compared to a two-edged sword. A two-edged sword is a weapon that can easily cut through a person's flesh. God's word is very effective in showing what is in a person's heart and thoughts.

Purposes of Simile

- A simile can teach about something that is unknown by showing how it is similar to something that is known.
- A simile can emphasize a particular trait, sometimes in a way that gets people's attention.
- Similes help form a picture in the mind or help the reader experience what he is reading about more fully.

Reasons This Is a Translation Issue

- People may not know how the two items are similar.
- People may not be familiar with both of the items being compared.

Examples From the Bible

Suffer hardship with me, **as a good soldier** of Christ Jesus. (2 Timothy 2:3 ULT)

In this simile, Paul compares suffering with what soldiers endure, and he encourages Timothy to follow their example.

Just as the lightning flashing from a place under the sky shines to another place under the sky, so will the Son of Man be. (Luke 17:24b ULT)

This verse does not tell how the Son of Man will be like the lightning. But in context we can understand from the verses before it that just as lighting flashes suddenly and everyone can see it, the Son of Man will come suddenly and everyone will be able to see him. No one will have to be told about it.

Translation Strategies

If people would understand the correct meaning of a simile, consider using it. If they would not, here are some strategies you can use:

- (1) If people do not know how the two items are alike, tell how they are alike. However, do not do this if the meaning was not clear to the original audience.
- (2) If people are not familiar with the item that something is compared to, use an item from your own culture. Be sure that it is one that could have been used in the cultures of the Bible. If you use this strategy, you may want to put the original item in a footnote.
- (3) Simply describe the item without comparing it to another.

Examples of Translation Strategies Applied

- (1) If people do not know how the two items are alike, tell how they are alike. However, do not do this if the meaning was not clear to the original audience.

See, I send you out **as sheep in the midst of wolves**. (Matthew 10:16a ULT) — This compares the danger that Jesus' disciples would be in with the danger that sheep are in when they are surrounded by wolves.

See, I send **you out among wicked people** and you will be in danger from them **as sheep are in danger when they are among wolves**.

For the word of God is living and active and sharper **than any two-edged sword**. (Hebrews 4:12a ULT)

For the word of God is living and active and **more powerful than a very sharp two-edged sword**.

- (2) If people are not familiar with the item that something is compared to, use an item from your own culture. Be sure that it is one that could have been used in the cultures of the Bible. If you use this strategy, you may want to put the original item in a footnote.

See, I send you out **as sheep in the midst of wolves**, (Matthew 10:16a ULT) — If people do not know what sheep and wolves are, or that wolves kill and eat sheep, you could use some other animal that kills another.

See, I send you out **as chickens in the midst of wild dogs**.

How often did I long to gather your children together, just **as a hen gathers her chickens under her wings**, but you were not willing! (Matthew 23:37b ULT)

How often I wanted to gather your children together, **as a mother closely watches over her infants**, but you refused!

If you have faith **as a grain of mustard** ... (Matthew 17:20)

If you have faith even as small **as a tiny seed**,

- (3) Simply describe the item without comparing it to another.

See, I send you out **as sheep in the midst of wolves**. (Matthew 10:16a ULT)

See, I send you out among **people who will want to harm you**.

How often did I long to gather your children together, just **as a hen gathers her chickens under her wings**, but you were not willing! (Matthew 23:37b ULT)

How often I wanted to **protect you**, but you refused!

Next we recommend you learn about:

[Metaphor](#)

[[rc://en/ta/man/translate/bita-part1]]

(Go back to: [1 Samuel 1:6](#); [1:10](#); [26:20](#))

Synecdoche

Description

Synecdoche is a figure of speech in which a speaker uses a part of something to refer to the whole thing, or uses the whole to refer to a part.

■ **My soul** magnifies the Lord. (Luke 1:46b ULT)

Mary was very happy about what the Lord was doing, so she said “my soul,” which means the inner, emotional part of herself, to refer to her whole self.

■ So **the Pharisees** said to him, “Look, why are they doing that which is not lawful?” (Mark 2:24a ULT)

The Pharisees who were standing there did not all say the same words at the same time. Instead, it is more likely that one man representing the group said those words.

Reasons This Is a Translation Issue

- Some readers may not recognize the synecdoche and thus misunderstand the words as a literal statement.
- Some readers may realize that they are not to understand the words literally, but they may not know what the meaning is.

Example From the Bible

■ Then I looked on all the deeds that **my hands** had accomplished. (Ecclesiastes 2:11a ULT)

“My hands” is a synecdoche for the whole person because clearly the arms and the rest of the body and the mind were also involved in the person’s accomplishments. The hands are chosen to represent the person because they are the parts of the body most directly involved in the work.

Translation Strategies

If the synecdoche would be natural and give the right meaning in your language, consider using it. If not, here is another option:

(1) State specifically what the synecdoche refers to.

Examples of Translation Strategies Applied

(1) State specifically what the synecdoche refers to.

■ **“My soul** magnifies the Lord.” (Luke 1:46b ULT)

■ **“I** magnify the Lord.”

So **the Pharisees** said to him ... (Mark 2:24a ULT)

■ **A representative of the Pharisees** said to him ...

Then I looked on all the deeds that **my hands** had accomplished. (Ecclesiastes 2:11a ULT)

This page answers the question: *What is a synecdoche, and how can I translate such a thing into my language?*

In order to understand this topic, it would be good to read:

[[rc://en/ta/man/translate/figs-intro]]

I looked on all the deeds that I had accomplished

Next we recommend you learn about:

[Metonymy](#)

[[rc://en/ta/man/translate/bit-part2]]

(Go back to: [1 Samuel 1:18](#); [1:28](#); [Notes](#); [2:25](#); [2:36](#); [4:10](#); [8:21](#); [10:4](#); [12:16](#); [15:8](#); [18:1](#); [18:3](#); [20:16](#); [20:17](#); [21:13](#); [22:17](#); [22:18](#); [22:19](#); [Notes](#); [23:5](#); [24:10](#); [25:35](#); [25:39](#); [27:1](#); [28:5](#); [28:9](#); [28:22](#); [29:4](#); [30:6](#))

Textual Variants

Description

Thousands of years ago, people wrote the books of the Bible. Other people then copied them by hand and translated them. They did this work very carefully, and over the years many people made thousands of copies. However, people who looked at them later saw that there were small differences between them. Some copiers accidentally left out some words, or some mistook one word for another that looked like it. Occasionally, they added words or even whole sentences, either by accident or because they wanted to explain something. Modern Bibles are translations of the old copies. Some modern Bibles include some of these sentences that were added. In the ULT, these added sentences are usually written in footnotes.

This page answers the question: *Why does the ULT have missing or added verses, and should I translate them?*

In order to understand this topic, it would be good to read:

[\[\[rc://en/ta/man/translate/translate-source-text\]\]](#)

[Original Manuscripts](#)

Bible scholars have read many old copies and compared them with each other. For each place in the Bible where there was a difference, they have figured out which wordings are most likely correct. The translators of the ULT based the ULT on wordings that scholars say are most likely correct. Because people who use the ULT may have access to Bibles that are based on other copies, the ULT translators have sometimes included information about some of the differences between them, either in the ULT footnotes or in the unfoldingWord® Translation Notes.

Translators are encouraged to translate the text in the ULT and to write about added sentences in footnotes, as is done in the ULT. However, if the local church really wants those sentences to be included in the main text, translators may put them in the text and include a footnote about them.

Examples From the Bible

Matthew 18:10-11 ULT has a footnote about verse 11.

¹⁰ See that you do not despise one of these little ones. For I say to you that in heaven their angels always look on the face of my Father who is in heaven. ¹¹ ^[1]

[1] Many authorities, some ancient, insert v. 11: **For the Son of Man came to save that which was lost.**

John 7:53-8:11 is not in the best earliest manuscripts. It has been included in the ULT, but it is marked off with square brackets ([]) at the beginning and end, and there is a footnote after verse 11.

53 [Then everyone went to his own house ... 11 She said, "No one, Lord." Jesus said, "Neither do I condemn you. Go and sin no more."] ^[2]

[2] Some ancient manuscripts include John 7:53-8:11

Translation Strategies

When there is a textual variant, you may choose to follow the ULT or another version that you have access to.

- (1) Translate the verses as they are in the ULT and include the footnote that the ULT provides.
- (2) Translate the verses as another version has them, and change the footnote so that it fits this situation.

Examples of Translation Strategies Applied

The translation strategies are applied to Mark 7:14-16 ULT, which has a footnote about verse 16.

¹⁴ He called the crowd again and said to them, “Listen to me, all of you, and understand. ¹⁵ There is nothing from outside the man that can defile him when it enters into him. But the things that come out of the man are the things that defile the man.” ¹⁶ ^[1]

^[1] Some ancient manuscripts include verse 16: **If any man has ears to hear, let him hear.**

(1) Translate the verses as they are in the ULT and include the footnote that the ULT provides.

¹⁴ He called the crowd again and said to them, “Listen to me, all of you, and understand. ¹⁵ There is nothing from outside the man that can defile him when it enters into him. But the things that come out of the man are the things that defile the man.” ¹⁶ ^[1]

^[1] Some ancient manuscripts include verse 16: **If any man has ears to hear, let him hear.**

(2) Translate the verses as another version has them, and change the footnote so that it fits this situation.

¹⁴ He called the crowd again and said to them, “Listen to me, all of you, and understand. ¹⁵ There is nothing from outside the man that can defile him when it enters into him. But the things that come out of the man are the things that defile the man. ¹⁶ If any man has ears to hear, let him hear.” ^[1]

^[1] Some ancient manuscripts do not include verse 16.

Next we recommend you learn about:

[\[\[rc://en/ta/man/translate/translate-chapverse\]\]](#)

[Original Manuscripts](#)

[\[\[rc://en/ta/man/translate/translate-terms\]\]](#)

[\[\[rc://en/ta/man/translate/translate-original\]\]](#)

(Go back to: [1 Samuel 14:18](#))

Translate Unknowns

While working to translate the Bible, you (the translator) might find yourself asking: “How do I translate words like lion, fig tree, mountain, priest, or temple when people in my culture have never seen these things and we do not have a word for them?”

This page answers the question: *How can I translate ideas that my readers are not familiar with?*

In order to understand this topic, it would be good to read:

[\[\[rc://en/ta/man/translate/figs-sentences\]\]](#)

Description

Unknowns are things that occur in the source text that are not known to the people of your culture. The unfoldingWord® Translation Words pages and the unfoldingWord® Translation Notes will help you understand what they are. After you understand them, you will need to find ways to refer to those things so that people who read your translation will understand what they are.

They said to him, “We have nothing here except five loaves of **bread** and two fish.” (Matthew 14:17 ULT)

Bread is a particular food made by mixing finely crushed grains with oil, and then cooking the mixture so that it is dry. (Grains are the seeds of a kind of grass.) In some cultures people do not have bread and do not know what it is.

Reason This Is a Translation Issue

- Readers may not know some of the things that are in the Bible because those things are not part of their own culture.
- Readers may have difficulty understanding a text if they do not know some of the things that are mentioned in it.

Translation Principles

- Use words that are already part of your language if possible.
- Keep expressions short if possible.
- Represent God’s commands and historical facts accurately.

Examples From the Bible

So I will turn Jerusalem into piles of ruins, a hideout for **jackals**. (Jeremiah 9:11a ULT)

Jackals are wild animals like dogs that live in only a few parts of the world. So they are not known in many places.

Beware of false prophets, who come to you in sheep’s clothing, but inwardly they are ravenous **wolves**. (Matthew 7:15 ULT)

If wolves do not live where the translation will be read, the readers may not understand that they are fierce, wild animals like dogs that attack and eat sheep.

They offered him wine mixed with **myrrh**, but he did not drink it. (Mark 15:23 ULT)

People may not know what myrrh is and that it was used as a medicine.

... to him who made **great lights** ... (Psalm 136:7a ULT)

Some languages have terms for things that give light, like the sun and fire, but they have no general term for lights.

Your sins ... will be white like **snow**. (Isaiah 1:18b ULT)

People in many parts of the world have not seen snow, but they may have seen it in pictures.

Translation Strategies

Here are ways you might translate a term that is not known in your language:

- (1) Use a phrase that describes what the unknown item is, or what is important about the unknown item for the verse being translated.
- (2) Substitute something similar from your language if doing so does not falsely represent a historical fact.
- (3) Copy the word from another language, and add a general word or descriptive phrase to help people understand it.
- (4) Use a word that is more general in meaning.
- (5) Use a word or phrase that is more specific in meaning.

Examples of Translation Strategies Applied

(1) Use a phrase that describes what the unknown item is, or what is important about the unknown item for the verse being translated.

Beware of false prophets, who come to you in sheep's clothing, but are inwardly they are **ravenous wolves**. (Matthew 7:15 ULT)

Beware of false prophets, who come to you in sheep's clothing, but **inwardly they are very hungry and dangerous animals**.

"Ravenous wolves" is part of a metaphor here, so the reader needs to know that they are very dangerous to sheep in order to understand this metaphor. (If sheep are also unknown, then you will need to also use one of the translation strategies to translate sheep, or change the metaphor to something else, using a translation strategy for metaphors. See [Translating Metaphors](#).)

"We have nothing here except five **loaves of bread** and two fish." (Matthew 14:17 ULT)

We have nothing here except five **loaves of baked grain seeds** and two fish.

(2) Substitute something similar from your language if doing so does not falsely represent a historical fact.

Your sins ... will be white like **snow**. (Isaiah 1:18b ULT) This verse is not about snow. It uses snow in a figure of speech to help people understand how white something will be.

Your sins ... will be white like **milk**.

Your sins ... will be white like **the moon**.

(3) Copy the word from another language, and add a general word or descriptive phrase to help people understand it.

Then they tried to give Jesus wine that was mixed with **myrrh**. But he refused to drink it. (Mark 15:23 ULT) — People may understand better what myrrh is if it is used with the general word “medicine.”

Then they tried to give Jesus wine that was mixed with **a medicine called myrrh**. But he refused to drink it.

“We have nothing here except five **loaves of bread** and two fish.” (Matthew 14:17 ULT) — People may understand better what bread is if it is used with a phrase that tells what it is made of (seeds) and how it is prepared (crushed and baked).

We have nothing here except five loaves of **baked crushed seed bread** and two fish.

(4) Use a word that is more general in meaning.

I will turn Jerusalem into piles of ruins, a hideout for **jackals** (Jeremiah 9:11a ULT)

I will turn Jerusalem into piles of ruins, a hideout for **wild dogs**

“We have nothing here except five **loaves of bread** and two fish.” (Matthew 14:17 ULT)

We have nothing here except five **loaves of baked food** and two fish.

(5) Use a word or phrase that is more specific in meaning.

... to him who made **great lights** ... (Psalm 136:7a ULT)

to him who made **the sun and the moon**

Next we recommend you learn about:

[Copy or Borrow Words](#)

[How to Translate Names](#)

(Go back to: [1 Samuel 1:5](#); [1:9](#); [10:5](#); [22:6](#); [26:20](#); [31:13](#))



unfoldingWord® Translation Words

Version 27

anoint, anointed, anointing

Definition:

The term “anoint” means to rub or pour oil on a person or object. Sometimes the oil was mixed with spices, giving it a sweet, perfumed smell. In biblical times, there were several reasons for anointing someone with oil.

- In the Old Testament, priests, kings, and prophets were anointed with oil to set them apart for special service to God.
- Objects such as altars or the tabernacle were also anointed with oil to show that they were to be used to worship and glorify God.
- In the New Testament, sick people were anointed with oil for their healing.
- The New Testament records two times that Jesus was anointed with perfumed oil by a woman, as an act of worship. One time Jesus commented that in doing this she was preparing him for his future burial.
- After Jesus died, his friends prepared his body for burial by anointing it with oils and spices.
- The titles “Messiah” (Hebrew) and “Christ” (Greek) mean “the Anointed (One).”
- Jesus the Messiah is the one who was chosen and anointed as a Prophet, High Priest, and King.
- In biblical times, a woman might anoint herself with perfume to make herself more sexually attractive.

Translation Suggestions:

- Depending on the context, the term “anoint” could be translated as “pour oil on” or “put oil on” or “consecrate by pouring perfumed oil on.”
- To “be anointed” could be translated as “be consecrated with oil.” or “be appointed” or “be consecrated.”
- In some contexts the term “anoint” could be translated as “appoint.”
- A phrase like “the anointed priest,” could be translated as “the priest who was consecrated with oil” or “the priest who was set apart by the pouring on of oil.”

(See also: [Christ](#), consecrate, [high priest](#), King of the Jews, [priest](#), [prophet](#))

Bible References:

- 1 John 2:20
- 1 John 2:27
- 1 Samuel 16:2-3
- Acts 4:27-28
- Amos 6:5-6
- Exodus 29:5-7
- James 5:13-15

Word Data:

- Strong’s: H0047, H0430, H1101, H1878, H3323, H4397, H4398, H4473, H4886, H4888, H4899, H5480, H8136, G00320, G02180, G07430, G14720, G20250, G34620, G55450, G55480

(Go back to: [Introduction to 1 Samuel](#))

appoint, appointed

Definition:

The terms “appoint” and “appointed” refer to choosing someone to fulfill a specific task or role.

- To “be appointed” can also refer to being “chosen” to receive something, as in “appointed to eternal life.” That people were “appointed to eternal life” means they were chosen to receive eternal life.
- The phrase “appointed time” refers to God’s “chosen time” or “planned time” for something to happen.
- The word “appoint” may also mean to “command” or “assign” someone to do something.

Translation Suggestions:

- Depending on the context, ways to translate “appoint” could include “choose” or “assign” or “formally choose” or “designate.”
- The term “appointed” could be translated as “assigned” or “planned” or “specifically chose.”
- The phrase “be appointed” could also be translated as “be chosen.”

Bible References:

- 1 Samuel 8:11
- Acts 3:20
- Acts 6:2
- Acts 13:48
- Genesis 41:33-34
- Numbers 3:9-10

Word Data:

- Strong’s: H0561, H0977, H2163, H2296, H2706, H2708, H2710, H3198, H3245, H3259, H3677, H3983, H4150, H4151, H4152, H4483, H4487, H4662, H5324, H5344, H5414, H5567, H5975, H6310, H6485, H6565, H6635, H6680, H6923, H6942, H6966, H7760, H7896, G03220, G06060, G12990, G13030, G19350, G25250, G27490, G42870, G42960, G43840, G49290, G50210, G50870

([Go back to: 1 Samuel 8 General Notes](#))

avenge, avenger, revenge, vengeance

Definition:

To “avenge” or “take revenge” or “execute vengeance” is to punish someone in order to pay him back for the harm he did. The act of avenging or taking revenge is “vengeance.”

- Usually “avenge” implies an intent to see justice done or to right a wrong,
- When referring to people, the expression “take revenge” or “get revenge” usually involves wanting to get back at the person who did the harm.
- When God “takes vengeance” or “executes vengeance,” he is acting in righteousness because he is punishing sin and rebellion.

Translation Suggestions:

- The expression to “avenge” could also be translated as to “right a wrong” or to “get justice for.”
- When referring to human beings, to “take revenge” could be translated as “pay back” or “hurt in order to punish” or “get back at.”
- Depending on the context, “vengeance” could be translated as “punishment” or “punishment of sin” or “payment for wrongs done.” If a word meaning “retaliation” is used, this would apply to human beings only.
- When God says, “take my vengeance,” this could be translated by “punish them for wrongs done against me” or “cause bad things to happen because they have sinned against me.”
- When referring to God’s vengeance, make sure it is clear that God is right in his punishment of sin.

(See also: punish, just, [righteous](#))

Bible References:

- 1 Samuel 24:12-13
- Ezekiel 25:15
- Isaiah 47:3-5
- Leviticus 19:17-18
- Psalms 18:47
- Romans 12:19

Word Data:

- Strong’s: H1350, H3467, H5358, H5359, H5360, H8199, G15560, G15570, G15580, G37090

(Go back to: [1 Samuel 24 General Notes](#); [Notes](#))

believe, believer, belief, unbeliever, unbelief

Definition:

The terms “believe” and “believe in” are closely related, but have slightly different meanings:

1. believe

- To believe something is to accept or trust that it is true.
- To believe someone is to acknowledge that what that person has said is true.

2. believe in

- To “believe in” someone means to “trust in” that person. It means to trust that the person is who he says he is, that he always speaks the truth, and that he will do what he has promised to do.
- When a person truly believes in something, he will act in such a way that shows that belief.
- The phrase “have faith in” usually has the same meaning as “believe in.”
- To “believe in Jesus” means to believe that he is the Son of God, that he is God himself who also became human and who died as a sacrifice to pay for our sins. It means to trust him as Savior and live in a way that honors him.

3. believer

In the Bible, the term “believer” refers to someone who believes in and relies on Jesus Christ as Savior.

- The term “believer” literally means “person who believes.”
- The term “Christian” eventually came to be the main title for believers because it indicates that they believe in Christ and obey his teachings.

4. unbelief

The term “unbelief” refers to not believing something or someone.

- In the Bible, “unbelief” refers to not believing in or not trusting in Jesus as one’s Savior.
- A person who does not believe in Jesus is called an “unbeliever.”

Translation Suggestions:

- To “believe” could be translated as to “know to be true” or “know to be right.”
- To “believe in” could be translated as “trust completely” or “trust and obey” or “completely rely on and follow.”
- Some translations may prefer to say “believer in Jesus” or “believer in Christ.”
- This term could also be translated by a word or phrase that means “person who trusts in Jesus” or “someone who knows Jesus and lives for him.”
- Other ways to translate “believer” could be “follower of Jesus” or “person who knows and obeys Jesus.”
- The term “believer” is a general term for any believer in Christ, while “disciple” and “apostle” were used more specifically for people who knew Jesus while he was alive. It is best to translate these terms in different ways, in order to keep them distinct.
- Other ways to translate “unbelief” could include “lack of faith” or “not believing.”

- The term “unbeliever” could be translated as “person who does not believe in Jesus” or “someone who does not trust in Jesus as Savior.”

(See also: [believe](#), apostle, Christian, disciple, [faith](#), [trust](#))

Bible References:

- Genesis 15:6
- Genesis 45:26
- Job 9:16-18
- Habakkuk 1:5-7
- Mark 6:4-6
- Mark 1:14-15
- Luke 9:41
- John 1:12
- Acts 6:5
- Acts 9:42
- Acts 28:23-24
- Romans 3:3
- 1 Corinthians 6:1
- 1 Corinthians 9:5
- 2 Corinthians 6:15
- Hebrews 3:12
- 1 John 3:23

Examples from the Bible stories:

- **3:4** Noah warned the people about the coming flood and told them to turn to God, but they did not **believe** him.
- **4:8** Abram **believed** God’s promise. God declared that Abram was righteous because he **believed** God’s promise.
- **11:2** God provided a way to save the firstborn of anyone who **believed in** him.
- **11:6** But the Egyptians did not **believe** God or obey his commands.
- **37:5** Jesus replied, “I am the Resurrection and the Life. Whoever **believes in** me will live, even though he dies. Everyone who **believes in** me will never die. Do you **believe** this?”
- **43:1** After Jesus returned to heaven, the disciples stayed in Jerusalem as Jesus had commanded them to do. The **believers** there constantly gathered together to pray.
- **43:3** While the **believers** were all together, suddenly the house where they were was filled with a sound like a strong wind. Then something that looked like flames of fire appeared over the heads of all the **believers**.
- **43:13** Every day, more people became **believers**.
- **46:6** That day many people in Jerusalem started persecuting the followers of Jesus, so the **believers** fled to other places. But in spite of this, they preached about Jesus everywhere they went.
- **46:1** Saul was the young man who guarded the robes of the men who killed Stephen. He did not believe in Jesus, so he persecuted the **believers**.
- **46:9** Some **believers** who fled from the persecution in Jerusalem went far away to the city of Antioch and preached about Jesus.
- **46:9** It was at Antioch that **believers** in Jesus were first called “Christians.”
- **47:14** They also wrote many letters to encourage and teach the **believers** in the churches.

Word Data:

- Strong’s: H0539, H0540, G05430, G05440, G05690, G05700, G05710, G39820, G41000, G41020, G41030, G41350

(Go back to: [1 Samuel 17 General Notes](#))

chosen, choose, chosen people, Chosen One, elect

Definition:

The term “the elect” literally means “chosen ones” or “chosen people” and refers to those whom God has appointed or selected to be his people. “Chosen One” or “Chosen One of God” is a title that refers to Jesus, who is the chosen Messiah.

- The term “choose” means to select something or someone or to decide something. It is often used to refer to God appointing people to belong to him and to serve him.
- To be “chosen” means to be “selected” or “appointed” to be or do something.
- God chose people to be holy, to be set apart by him for the purpose of bearing good spiritual fruit. That is why they are called “the chosen (ones)” or “the elect.”
- The term “chosen one” is sometimes used in the Bible to refer to certain people such as Moses and King David whom God had appointed as leaders over his people. It is also used to refer to the nation of Israel as God’s chosen people.
- The phrase “the elect” is an older term that literally means “the chosen ones” or “the chosen people.” This phrase in the original language is plural when referring to believers in Christ.
- In older English Bible versions, the term “elect” is used in both the Old and New Testaments to translate the word for “chosen one(s).” More modern versions use “elect” only in the New Testament, to refer to people who have been saved by God through faith in Jesus. Elsewhere in the Bible text, they translate this word more literally as “chosen ones.”

Translation Suggestions:

- It is best to translate “elect” with a word or phrase that means “chosen ones” or “chosen people.” This could also be translated as “people whom God chose” or “the ones God appointed to be his people.”
- The phrase “who were chosen” could also be translated as “who were appointed” or “who were selected” or “whom God chose.”
- “I chose you” could be translated as “I appointed you” or “I selected you.”
- In reference to Jesus, “Chosen One” could also be translated as “God’s chosen One” or “God’s specially appointed Messiah” or “the One God appointed (to save people).”

(See also: [appoint](#), [Christ](#))

Bible References:

- 2 John 1:1
- Colossians 3:12
- Ephesians 1:3-4
- Isaiah 65:22-23
- Luke 18:7
- Matthew 24:19-22
- Romans 8:33

Word Data:

- Strong’s: H0970, H0972, H0977, H1262, H1305, H4005, H6901, G01380, G01400, G15860, G15880, G15890, G19510, G37240, G44000, G44010, G47580, G48990, G55000

(Go back to: [1 Samuel 24 General Notes](#); [Notes](#))

Christ, Messiah

Facts:

The terms “Messiah” and “Christ” mean “Anointed One” and refer to Jesus, God’s Son.

- Both “Messiah” and “Christ” are used in the New Testament to refer to God’s Son, whom God the Father appointed to rule as king over his people, and to save them from sin and death.
- In the Old Testament, the prophets wrote prophecies about the Messiah hundreds of years before he came to earth.
- Often a word meaning “anointed (one)” is used in the Old Testament to refer to the Messiah who would come.
- Jesus fulfilled many of these prophecies and did many miraculous works that proves he is the Messiah; the rest of these prophecies will be fulfilled when he returns.
- The word “Christ” is often used as a title, as in “the Christ” and “Christ Jesus.”
- “Christ” also came to be used as part of his name, as in “Jesus Christ.”

Translation Suggestions:

- This term could be translated using its meaning, “the Anointed One” or “God’s Anointed Savior.”
- Many languages use a transliterated word that looks or sounds like “Christ” or “Messiah.” (See: [How to Translate Unknowns](#))
- The transliterated word could be followed by the definition of the term as in, “Christ, the Anointed One.”
- Be consistent in how this is translated throughout the Bible so that it is clear that the same term is being referred to.
- Make sure the translations of “Messiah” and “Christ” work well in contexts where both terms occur in the same verse (such as John 1:41).

(See also: [How to Translate Names](#))

(See also: Son of God, David, Jesus, [anoint](#))

Bible References:

- 1 John 5:1-3
- Acts 2:35
- Acts 5:40-42
- John 1:40-42
- John 3:27-28
- John 4:25
- Luke 2:10-12
- Matthew 1:16

Examples from the Bible stories:

- **17:7** The **Messiah** was God’s Chosen One who would save the people of the world from sin.
- **17:8** As it happened, the Israelites would have to wait a long time before the **Messiah** came, almost 1,000 years.
- **21:1** From the very beginning, God planned to send the **Messiah**.
- **21:4** God promised King David that the **Messiah** would be one of David’s own descendants.
- **21:5** The **Messiah** would start the New Covenant.
- **21:6** God’s prophets also said that the **Messiah** would be a prophet, a priest, and a king.

- **21:9** The prophet Isaiah prophesied that the **Messiah** would be born from a virgin.
- **43:7** "But God raised him to life again to fulfill the prophecy which says, 'You will not let your **Holy One** rot in the grave.'"
- **43:9** "But know for certain that God has caused Jesus to become both Lord and **Messiah!**"
- **43:11** Peter answered them, "Every one of you should repent and be baptized in the name of Jesus **Christ** so that God will forgive your sins."
- **46:6** Saul reasoned with the Jews, proving that Jesus was the **Messiah**.

Word Data:

- Strong's: H4899, G33230, G55470

(Go back to: [Introduction to 1 Samuel](#))

circumcise, circumcised, circumcision, uncircumcised, uncircumcision

Definition:

The term “circumcise” means to cut off the foreskin of a man or male child. A circumcision ceremony may be performed in connection with this.

- God commanded Abraham to circumcise every male among his family and servants as a sign of God’s covenant with them.
- God also commanded Abraham’s descendants to continue to do this for every baby boy born into their households.
- The phrase, “circumcision of the heart” refers figuratively to the “cutting away” or removal of sin from a person.
- In a spiritual sense, “the circumcised” refers to people whom God has purified from sin through the blood of Jesus and who are his people.
- The term “uncircumcised” refers to those who have not been circumcised physically. It can also refer figuratively to those who have not been circumcised spiritually, who do not have a relationship with God.

The terms “uncircumcised” and “uncircumcision” refer to a male who has not been physically circumcised. These terms are also used figuratively.

- Egypt was a nation that also required circumcision. So when God talks about Egypt being defeated by the “uncircumcised,” he is referring to people whom the Egyptians despised for not being circumcised.
- The Bible refers to people who have an “uncircumcised heart” or who are “uncircumcised in heart.” This a figurative way of saying that these people are not God’s people, and are stubbornly disobedient to him.
- If a word for circumcision is used or known in the language, “uncircumcised” could be translated as “not circumcised.”
- The expression “the uncircumcision” could be translated as “people who are not circumcised” or “people who do not belong to God,” depending on the context.
- Other ways to translate figurative senses of this term could include “not God’s people” or “rebellious like those who don’t belong to God” or “people who have no sign of belonging to God.”
- The expression “uncircumcised in heart” could be translated as “stubbornly rebellious” or “refusing to believe.” However, if possible it is best to keep the expression or a similar one since spiritual circumcision is an important concept.

Translation Suggestions:

- If the culture of the target language performs circumcisions on males, the word used to refer to this should be used for this term.
- Other ways to translate this term would be, “cut around” or “cut in a circle” or “cut off the foreskin.”
- In cultures where circumcision is not known, it may be necessary to explain it in a footnote or glossary.
- Make sure the term used to translate this does not refer to females. It may be necessary to translate this with a word or phrase that includes the meaning of “male.”

(See also: [How to Translate Unknowns](#))

(See also: Abraham, covenant)

Bible References:

- Genesis 17:11
- Genesis 17:14
- Exodus 12:48

- Leviticus 26:41
- Joshua 5:3
- Judges 15:18
- 2 Samuel 1:20
- Jeremiah 9:26
- Ezekiel 32:25
- Acts 10:44-45
- Acts 11:3
- Acts 15:1
- Acts 11:3
- Romans 2:27
- Galatians 5:3
- Ephesians 2:11
- Philippians 3:3
- Colossians 2:11
- Colossians 2:13

Examples from the Bible stories:

- **5:3** “You must **circumcise** every male in your family.”
- **5:5** That day Abraham **circumcised** all the males in his household.

Word Data:

- Strong’s: H4135, H4139, H5243, H6188, H6189, H6190, G02030, G05640, G19860, G40590, G40610

(Go back to: [1 Samuel 14 General Notes; Notes](#))

curse, cursed, cursing

Definition:

The term “curse” means to cause negative things to happen to the person or thing that is being cursed.

- A curse can be a statement that harm will happen to someone or something.
- To curse someone can also be an expression of desire that bad things will happen to them.
- It can also refer to the punishment or other negative things that someone causes to happen to someone.

Translation Suggestions:

- This term could be translated as “cause bad things to happen to” or “declare that something bad will happen to” or “swear to cause evil things to happen to.”
- In the context of God sending curses on his disobedient people, it could be translated as “punish by allowing bad things to happen.”
- The term “cursed” when used to describe people could be translated as “(this person) will experience much trouble.”
- The phrase “cursed be” could be translated as “May (this person) experience great difficulties.”
- The phrase, “Cursed is the ground” could be translated as “The soil will not be very fertile.”
- However, if the target language has the phrase “cursed be” and it has the same meaning, then it is good to keep the same phrase.

(See also: bless)

Bible References:

- 1 Samuel 14:24-26
- 2 Peter 2:12-14
- Galatians 3:10
- Galatians 3:14
- Genesis 3:14
- Genesis 3:17
- James 3:10
- Numbers 22:6
- Psalms 109:28

Examples from the Bible stories:

- **2:9** God said to the snake, “You are **cursed!**”
- **2:11** “Now the ground is **cursed**, and you will need to work hard to grow food.”
- **4:4** “I will bless those who bless you and **curse** those who **curse** you.”
- **39:7** Then Peter vowed, saying, “May God **curse** me if I know this man!”
- **50:16** Because Adam and Eve disobeyed God and brought sin into this world, God **cursed** it and decided to destroy it.

Word Data:

- Strong’s: H0422, H0423, H0779, H1288, H2763, H2764, H3994, H5344, H6895, H7043, H7045, H7621, H8381, G03310, G03320, G06850, G19440, G25510, G26520, G26530, G26710, G26720, G60350

(Go back to: [1 Samuel 3 General Notes](#))

die, dead, deadly, death

Definition:

The term “death” refers to being physically dead instead of alive.

1. Physical death

- To “die” means to stop living. Death is the end of physical life.
- The expression “put to death” refers to killing or murdering someone, especially when a king or other ruler gives an order for someone to be killed.

2. Eternal death

- Eternal death is the separation of a person from God.
- This is the kind of death that happened to Adam when he sinned and disobeyed God. His relationship with God was broken. He became ashamed and tried to hide from God.
- This same kind of death happens to every person, because we sin. But God gives us eternal life when we have faith in Jesus Christ.

Translation Suggestions:

- To translate this term, it is best to use the everyday, natural word or expression in the target language that refers to death.
- In some languages, to “die” may be expressed as to “not live.” The term “dead” may be translated as “not alive” or “not having any life” or “not living.”
- Many languages use figurative expressions to describe death, such as to “pass away” in English. However, in the Bible it is best to use the most direct term for death that is used in everyday language.
- In the Bible, eternal life and eternal death are often compared to physical life and physical death. It is important in a translation to use the same word or phrase for both physical death and eternal death.
- In some languages it may be more clear to say “eternal death” when the context requires that meaning. Some translators may also feel it is best to say “physical death” in contexts where it is being contrasted to spiritual death.
- The expression “the dead” is a nominal adjective that refers to people who have died. Some languages will translate this as “dead people” or “people who have died.” (See: [nominal adjective](#))
- The expression “put to death” could also be translated as “kill” or “murder” or “execute.”

(See also: [believe](#), [faith](#), life)

Bible References:

- 1 Corinthians 15:21
- 1 Thessalonians 4:17
- Acts 10:42
- Acts 14:19
- Colossians 2:15
- Colossians 2:20
- Genesis 2:15-17
- Genesis 34:27
- Matthew 16:28
- Romans 5:10

- Romans 5:12
- Romans 6:10

Examples from the Bible stories:

- **1:11** God told Adam that he could eat from any tree in the garden except from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. If he ate from this tree, he would **die**.
- **2:11** "Then you will **die**, and your body will return to dirt."
- **7:10** Then Isaac **died**, and Jacob and Esau buried him.
- **37:5** Jesus replied, "I am the Resurrection and the Life. Whoever believes in me will live, even though he **dies**. Everyone who believes in me will never **die**."
- **40:8** Through his **death**, Jesus opened a way for people to come to God.
- **43:7** "Although Jesus **died**, God raised him from the dead."
- **48:2** Because they sinned, everyone on earth gets sick and everyone **dies**.
- **50:17** He (Jesus) will wipe away every tear and there will be no more suffering, sadness, crying, evil, pain, or **death**.

Word Data:

- Strong's: H0006, H1478, H1826, H1934, H2491, H4191, H4192, H4193, H4194, H4463, H5038, H5315, H6297, H6757, H7496, H7523, H8045, H8546, H8552, G03360, G03370, G05200, G05990, G06150, G06220, G16340, G19350, G20790, G22530, G22860, G22870, G22880, G22890, G23480, G28370, G29660, G34980, G34990, G35000, G44300, G48800, G48810, G50530, G50540

(Go back to: [1 Samuel 28 General Notes](#))

faith

Definition:

In general, the term “faith” refers to a belief, trust or confidence in someone or something.

- To “have faith” in someone is to believe that what he says and does is true and trustworthy.
- To “have faith in Jesus” means to believe all of God’s teachings about Jesus. It especially means that people trust in Jesus and his sacrifice to cleanse them from their sin and to rescue them from the punishment they deserve because of their sin.
- True faith or belief in Jesus will cause a person to produce good spiritual fruits or behaviors because the Holy Spirit is living in him.
- Sometimes “faith” refers generally to all the teachings about Jesus, as in the expression “the truths of the faith.”
- In contexts such as “keep the faith” or “abandon the faith,” the term “faith” refers to the state or condition of believing all the teachings about Jesus.

Translation Suggestions:

- In some contexts, “faith” can be translated as “belief” or “conviction” or “confidence” or “trust.”
- For some languages these terms will be translated using forms of the verb “believe.” (See: [abstractnouns](#))
- The expression “keep the faith” could be translated by “keep believing in Jesus” or “continue to believe in Jesus.”
- The sentence “they must keep hold of the deep truths of the faith” could be translated by “they must keep believing all the true things about Jesus that they have been taught.”
- The expression “my true son in the faith” could be translated by something like “who is like a son to me because I taught him to believe in Jesus” or “my true spiritual son, who believes in Jesus.”

(See also: [believe](#), [faithful](#))

Bible References:

- 2 Timothy 4:7
- Acts 6:7
- Galatians 2:20-21
- James 2:20

Examples from the Bible stories:

- **5:6** When Isaac was a young man, God tested Abraham’s **faith** by saying, “Take Isaac, your only son, and kill him as a sacrifice to me.”
- **31:7** Then he (Jesus) said to Peter, “You man of little **faith**, why did you doubt?”
- **32:16** Jesus said to her, “Your **faith** has healed you. Go in peace.”
- **38:9** Then Jesus said to Peter, “Satan wants to have all of you, but I have prayed for you, Peter, that your **faith** will not fail.”

Word Data:

- Strong’s: H0529, H0530, G16800, G36400, G41020, G60660

(Go back to: [1 Samuel 23 General Notes](#))

faithful, faithfulness, trustworthy

Definition:

To be “faithful” to God means to consistently live according to God’s teachings. It means to be loyal to him by obeying him. The state or condition of being faithful is “faithfulness.”

- A person who is faithful can be trusted to always keep his promises and to always fulfill his responsibilities to other people.
- A faithful person perseveres in doing a task, even when it is long and difficult.
- Faithfulness to God is the consistent practice of doing what God wants us to do.

Translation Suggestions:

- In many contexts, “faithful” can be translated as “loyal” or “dedicated” or “dependable.”
- In other contexts, “faithful” can be translated by a word or phrase that means “continuing to believe” or “persevering in believing and obeying God.”
- Ways that “faithfulness” could be translated could include “persevering in believing” or “loyalty” or “trustworthiness” or “believing and obeying God.”

(See also: [believe](#), [faith](#), [believe](#))

Bible References:

- Genesis 24:49
- Leviticus 26:40
- Numbers 12:7
- Joshua 2:14
- Judges 2:16-17
- 1 Samuel 2:9
- Psalm 12:1
- Proverbs 11:12-13
- Isaiah 1:26
- Jeremiah 9:7-9
- Hosea 5:7
- Luke 12:46
- Luke 16:10
- Colossians 1:7
- 1 Thessalonians 5:24
- 3 John 1:5

Examples from the Bible stories:

- **8:5** Even in prison, Joseph remained **faithful** to God, and God blessed him.
- **14:12** Even so, God was still **faithful** to His promises to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob.
- **15:13** The people promised to remain **faithful** to God and follow his laws.
- **17:9** David ruled with justice and **faithfulness** for many years, and God blessed him. However, toward the end of his life he sinned terribly against God.
- **35:12** “The older son said to his father, ‘All these years I have worked **faithfully** for you!’”
- **49:17** But God is **faithful** and says that if you confess your sins, he will forgive you.
- **50:4** “If you remain **faithful** to me to the end, then God will save you.”

Word Data:

- Strong's: H0529, H0530, H0539, H0540, H0571, H0898, H2181, H4603, H4604, H4820, G05690, G05710, G41030

(**Go back to:** [1 Samuel 12 General Notes](#))

godly, godliness, ungodly, godless, ungodliness, godlessness

Definition:

The term “godly” is used to describe a person who acts in a way that honors God and shows what God is like. “Godliness” is the character quality of honoring God by doing his will.

- A person who has godly character will show the fruits of the Holy Spirit, such as love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, and self control.
- The quality of godliness shows that a person has the Holy Spirit and is obeying him.

The terms “ungodly” and “godless” describe people who are in rebellion against God. Living in an evil way, without thought of God, is called “ungodliness” or “godlessness.”

- The meanings of these words are very similar. However, “godless” and “godlessness” may describe a more extreme condition in which people or nations do not even acknowledge God or his right to rule them.
- God pronounces judgment and wrath on ungodly people, on everyone who rejects him and his ways.

Translation Suggestions:

- The phrase “the godly” could be translated as “godly people” or “people who obey God.” (See: [nominaladj](#))
- The adjective “godly” could be translated as “obedient to God” or “righteous” or “pleasing to God.”
- The phrase “in a godly manner” could be translated as “in a way that obeys God” or “with actions and words that please God.”
- Ways to translate “godliness” could include “acting in a way that pleases God” or “obeying God” or “living in a righteous manner.”
- Depending on the context, the term “ungodly” could be translated as “displeasing to God” or “immoral” or “disobeying God.”
- The terms “godless” and “godlessness” literally mean that the people are “without God” or “having no thought of God” or “acting in a way that does not acknowledge God.”
- Other ways to translate “ungodliness” or “godlessness” could be “wickedness” or “evil” or “rebellion against God”.

(See also evil, honor, obey, [righteous](#), [righteous](#))

Bible References:

- Job 27:10
- Proverbs 11:9
- Acts 3:12
- 1 Timothy 1:9-11
- 1 Timothy 4:7
- 2 Timothy 3:12
- Hebrews 12:14-17
- Hebrews 11:7
- 1 Peter 4:18
- Jude 1:16

Word Data:

- Strong’s: H0430, H1100, H2623, H5760, H7563, G05160, G07630, G07640, G07650, G21240, G21500, G21520, G21530, G23160, G23170

(**Go back to:** [1 Samuel 2 General Notes](#); [Notes](#))

high priest, chief priests

Definition:

The term “high priest” refers to a special priest who was appointed to serve for one year as the leader of all of the other Israelite priests. In New Testament times, some other priests were also considered very important Jewish religious leaders, with authority over other priests and the people. These were the chief priests.

- The high priest had special responsibilities. He was the only one who was permitted to go into the most holy part of the tabernacle or the temple to offer a special sacrifice once per year.
- The Israelites had many priests, but only one high priest at a time.
- After high priests retired, they still kept the title, along with some of the responsibilities of the office. For example, Annas was still referred to as high priest during the priesthood of Caiaphas and others.
- The chief priests were responsible for everything needed for the worship services at the temple. They were also in charge of the money that was given to the temple.
- The chief priests were higher in rank and power than the ordinary priests. Only the high priest had more authority.
- The chief priests were some of Jesus’ main enemies and they strongly influenced the Roman leaders to arrest and kill him.

Translation Suggestions:

- “High priest” could be translated as “supreme priest” or “highest ranking priest.”
- The term “chief priests” could be translated as “head priests” or “leading priests” or “ruling priests.”

(See also: Annas, Caiaphas, [priest](#), [temple](#))

Bible References:

- Acts 5:27
- Acts 7:1
- Acts 9:1
- Exodus 30:10
- Hebrews 6:19-20
- Leviticus 16:32
- Luke 3:2
- Mark 2:25-26
- Matthew 26:3-5
- Matthew 26:51-54

Examples from the Bible stories:

- **13:8** No one could enter the room behind the curtain except the **high priest**, because God lived there.
- **21:7** The Messiah who would come would be the perfect **high priest** who would offer himself as a perfect sacrifice to God.
- **38:3** The Jewish leaders, led by the **high priest**, paid Judas thirty silver coins to betray Jesus.
- **39:1** The soldiers led Jesus to the house of the **high priest** in order for the **high priest** to question him.
- **39:3** Finally, the **high priest** looked directly at Jesus and said, “Tell us, are you the Messiah, the Son of the living God?”
- **44:7** The next day, the Jewish leaders brought Peter and John to the **high priest** and the other religious leaders.

- **45:2** So the religious leaders arrested Stephen and brought him to the **high priest** and the other leaders of the Jews, where more false witnesses lied about Stephen.
- **46:1** The **high priest** gave Saul permission to go to the city of Damascus to arrest Christians there and bring them back to Jerusalem.
- **48:6** Jesus is the Great **High Priest**. Unlike other priests, he offered himself as the only sacrifice that could take away the sin of all the people in the world. Jesus was the perfect **high priest** because he took the punishment for every sin that anyone has ever committed.

Word Data:

- Strong's: H7218, H1419, H3548, G07480, G07490

(Go back to: [1 Samuel 22 General Notes](#))

Holy Spirit, Spirit of God, Spirit of the Lord, Spirit

Facts:

These terms all refer to the Holy Spirit, who is God. The one true God exists eternally as the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit.

- The Holy Spirit is also referred to as “the Spirit” and “Spirit of Yahweh” and “Spirit of truth.”
- Because the Holy Spirit is God, he is absolutely holy, infinitely pure, and morally perfect in all his nature and in everything he does.
- Along with the Father and the Son, the Holy Spirit was active in creating the world.
- When God’s Son, Jesus, returned to heaven, God sent the Holy Spirit to his people to lead them, teach them, comfort them, and enable them to do God’s will.
- The Holy Spirit guided Jesus and he guides those who believe in Jesus.

Translation Suggestions:

- This term could simply be translated with the words used to translate “holy” and “spirit.”
- Ways to translate this term could also include “Pure Spirit” or “Spirit who is Holy” or “God the Spirit.”

(See also: [holy](#), spirit, God, Lord, God the Father, Son of God, gift)

Bible References:

- 1 Samuel 10:10
- 1 Thessalonians 4:7-8
- Acts 8:17
- Galatians 5:25
- Genesis 1:1-2
- Isaiah 63:10
- Job 33:4
- Matthew 12:31
- Matthew 28:18-19
- Psalms 51:10-11

Examples from the Bible stories:

- **1:1** But **God’s Spirit** was there over the water.
- **24:8** When Jesus came up out of the water after being baptized, **the Spirit of God** appeared in the form of a dove and came down and rested on him.
- **26:1** After overcoming Satan’s temptations, Jesus returned in the power of **the Holy Spirit** to the region of Galilee where he lived.
- **26:3** Jesus read, “God has given me **his Spirit** so that I can proclaim good news to the poor, freedom to captives, recovery of sight for the blind, and release to the oppressed.”
- **42:10** “So go, make disciples of all people groups by baptizing them in the name of the Father, the Son, and **the Holy Spirit** and by teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you.”
- **43:3** They were all filled with the **Holy Spirit** and they began to speak in other languages.
- **43:8** “And Jesus has sent the **Holy Spirit** just as he promised he would do. The **Holy Spirit** is causing the things that you are now seeing and hearing.”
- **43:11** Peter answered them, “Every one of you should repent and be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ so that God will forgive your sins. Then he will also give you the gift of the **Holy Spirit.**”
- **45:1** He (Stephen) had a good reputation and was full of the **Holy Spirit** and of wisdom.

Word Data:

- Strong's: H3068, H6944, H7307, G00400, G41510

(Go back to: [1 Samuel 10 General Notes](#); [Notes](#); [Notes](#))

holy, holiness, unholy, sacred

Definition:

The terms “holy” and “holiness” refer to the character of God that is totally set apart and separated from everything that is sinful and imperfect.

- Only God is absolutely holy. He makes people and things holy.
- A person who is holy belongs to God and has been set apart for the purpose of serving God and bringing him glory.
- An object that God has declared to be holy is one that he has set apart for his glory and use, such as an altar that is for the purpose of offering sacrifices to him.
- People cannot approach him unless he allows them to, because he is holy and they are merely human beings, sinful and imperfect.
- In the Old Testament, God set apart the priests as holy for special service to him. They had to be ceremonially cleansed from sin in order to approach God.
- God also set apart as holy certain places and things that belonged to him or in which he revealed himself, such as his temple.

Literally, the term “unholy” means “not holy.” It describes someone or something that does not honor God.

- This word is used to describe someone who dishonors God by rebelling against him.
- A thing that is called “unholy” could be described as being common, profane or unclean. It does not belong to God.

The term “sacred” describes something that relates to worshiping God or to the pagan worship of false gods.

- In the Old Testament, the term “sacred” was often used to describe the stone pillars and other objects used in the worship of false gods. This could also be translated as “religious.”
- “Sacred songs” and “sacred music” refer to music that was sung or played for God’s glory. This could be translated as “music for worshiping Yahweh” or “songs that praise God.”
- The phrase “sacred duties” referred to the “religious duties” or “rituals” that a priest performed to lead people in worshiping God. It could also refer to the rituals performed by a pagan priest to worship a false god

Translation Suggestions:

- Ways to translate “holy” might include “set apart for God” or “belonging to God” or “completely pure” or “perfectly sinless” or “separated from sin.”
- To “make holy” is often translated as “sanctify” in English. It could also be translated as “set apart (someone) for God’s glory.”
- Ways to translate “unholy” could include “not holy” or “not belonging to God” or “not honoring to God” or “not godly.”
- In some contexts, “unholy” could be translated as “unclean.”

(See also: [Holy Spirit](#), consecrate, sanctify, set apart)

Bible References:

- Genesis 28:22
- 2 Kings 3:2
- Lamentations 4:1
- Ezekiel 20:18-20
- Matthew 7:6

- Mark 8:38
- Acts 7:33
- Acts 11:8
- Romans 1:2
- 2 Corinthians 12:3-5
- Colossians 1:22
- 1 Thessalonians 3:13
- 1 Thessalonians 4:7
- 2 Timothy 3:15

Examples from the Bible stories:

- **1:16** He (God) blessed the seventh day and made it **holy**, because on this day he rested from his work.
- **9:12** "You are standing on **holy** ground."
- **13:1** "If you will obey me and keep my covenant, you will be my prized possession, a kingdom of priests, and a **holy** nation."
- **13:5** "Always be sure to keep the Sabbath day **holy**."
- **22:5** "So the baby will be **holy**, the Son of God."
- **50:2** As we wait for Jesus to return, God wants us to live in a way that is **holy** and that honors him.

Word Data:

- Strong's: H0430, H2455, H2623, H4676, H4720, H6918, H6922, H6942, H6944, H6948, G00370, G00380, G00400, G00400, G00410, G00420, G04620, G18590, G21500, G24120, G24130, G28390, G37410, G37420

(Go back to: [1 Samuel 12 General Notes](#))

Israel, Israelites

Facts:

The term "Israel" is the name that God gave to Jacob. Often it refers to the nation that is descended from him.

- The name Israel probably means "He struggles with God."
- The descendants of Jacob became known as the "sons of Israel" or the "people of Israel" or the "nation of Israel" or the "Israelites."
- God formed his covenant with the people of Israel. They were his chosen people.
- The nation of Israel consisted of twelve tribes.
- Soon after King Solomon died, Israel was divided into two kingdoms: the southern kingdom, called "Judah," and the northern kingdom, called "Israel."
- Often the term "Israel" can be translated as "the people of Israel" or "the nation of Israel," depending on the context.

(See also: Jacob, kingdom of Israel, Judah, nation, twelve tribes of Israel)

Bible References:

- 1 Chronicles 10:1
- 1 Kings 8:2
- Acts 2:36
- Acts 7:24
- Acts 13:23
- John 1:49-51
- Luke 24:21
- Mark 12:29
- Matthew 2:6
- Matthew 27:9
- Philippians 3:4-5

Examples from the Bible stories:

- **8:15** The descendants of the twelve sons became the twelve tribes of **Israel**.
- **9:3** The Egyptians forced the **Israelites** to build many buildings and even whole cities.
- **9:5** A certain **Israelite** woman gave birth to a baby boy.
- **10:1** They said, "This is what the God of **Israel** says, 'Let my people go!'"
- **14:12** But despite all this, the people of *_Israel_* complained and grumbled against God and against Moses.
- **15:9** God fought for **Israel** that day. He caused the Amorites to be confused and he sent large hailstones that killed many of the Amorites.
- **15:12** After this battle, God gave each tribe of **Israel** *its own section of the Promised Land. Then God gave _Israel_ peace along all its borders.*
- **16:16** So God punished *_Israel_* again for worshipping idols.
- **43:6** "Men of **Israel**, Jesus was a man who did many mighty signs and wonders by the power of God, as you have seen and already know."

Word Data:

- Strong's: H3478, H3479, H3481, H3482, G09350, G24740, G24750

(Go back to: [Introduction to 1 Samuel](#))

jealous, jealousy

Definition:

The terms “jealous” and “jealousy” refer to a strong desire to protect the purity of a relationship. They can also refer to a strong desire to keep possession of something or someone.

- These terms are often used to describe the angry feeling that a person has toward a spouse who has been unfaithful in their marriage.
- When used in the Bible, these terms often refer to God’s strong desire for his people to remain pure and unstained by sin.
- God is also “jealous” for his name, desiring that it be treated with honor and reverence.
- Another meaning of jealous involves being angry that someone else is successful or more popular. This is close in meaning to the word “envious.”

Translation Suggestions:

- Ways to translate “jealous” could include “strong protective desire” or “possessive desire.”
- The term “jealousy” could be translated as “strong protective feeling” or “possessive feeling.”
- When talking about God, make sure the translation of these terms does not give a negative meaning of being resentful of someone else.
- In the context of people’s wrong feelings of anger toward other people who are more successful, the terms “envious” and “envy” could be used. But these terms should not be used for God.

(See also: [envy](#))

Bible References:

- 2 Corinthians 12:20
- Deuteronomy 5:9
- Exodus 20:5
- Ezekiel 36:5
- Joshua 24:19
- Nahum 1:2-3
- Romans 13:13

Word Data:

- Strong’s: H7065, H7067, H7068, H7072, G22050, G38630

([Go back to: 1 Samuel 1 General Notes; Notes](#))

judge, judgment

Definition:

The terms “judge” and “judgment” often refer to making a decision about whether or not something is good, wise, or right. However, these terms can also refer to actions performed by a person as the result of a decision, usually in the context of deciding that something is bad, wrong, or evil.

- The terms “judge” and “judgment” can also mean “to cause harm to” (usually because God has decided a person or nation’s actions are wicked).
- The “judgment of God” often refers to his decision to condemn something or someone as sinful.
- God’s judgment usually includes punishing people for their sin.
- The term “judge” can also mean “condemn.” God instructs his people not to judge each other in this way.
- Another meaning is “arbitrate between” or “judge between,” as in deciding which person is right in a dispute between them.
- In some contexts, God’s “judgments” are what he has decided is right and just. They are similar to his decrees, laws, or precepts.
- “Judgment” can refer to wise decision-making ability. A person who lacks “judgment” does not have the wisdom to make wise decisions.

Translation Suggestions:

- Depending on the context, ways to translate to “judge” could include to “decide” or to “condemn” or to “punish” or to “decree.”
- The term “judgment” could be translated as “punishment” or “decision” or “verdict” or “decree” or “condemnation.”
- In some contexts, the phrase “in the judgment” could also be translated as “on judgment day” or “during the time when God judges people.”

(See also: decree, judge, judgment day, just, law, [law](#))

Bible References:

- 1 John 4:17
- 1 Kings 3:9
- Acts 10:42-43
- Isaiah 3:14
- James 2:4
- Luke 6:37
- Micah 3:9-11
- Psalm 54:1

Examples from the Bible stories:

- **19:16** The prophets warned the people that if they did not stop doing evil and start obeying God, then God would **judge** them as guilty, and he would punish them.
- **21:8** A king is someone who rules over a kingdom and **judges** the people. The Messiah would come would be the perfect king who would sit on the throne of his ancestor David. He would reign over the whole world forever, and who would always **judge** honestly and make the right decisions.
- **39:4** The high priest tore his clothes in anger and shouted to the other religious leaders, “We do not need any more witnesses! You have heard him say that he is the Son of God. What is your **judgment?**”

- **50:14** But God will **judge** everyone who does not believe in Jesus. He will throw them into hell, where they will weep and grind their teeth in anguish forever.

Word Data:

- Strong's: H0148, H0430, H1777, H1778, H1779, H1780, H1781, H1782, H2940, H4055, H4941, H6414, H6415, H6416, H6417, H6419, H6485, H8196, H8199, H8201, G01440, G03500, G09680, G11060, G12520, G13410, G13450, G13480, G13490, G29170, G29190, G29200, G29220, G29230, G42320

(Go back to: [1 Samuel 16 General Notes](#))

law, law of Moses, law of Yahweh, law of God

Definition:

Most simply, the term “law” refers to a rule or instruction that should be followed. In the Bible, the term “law” is often used generally to refer to anything and everything God wants his people to obey and do. The specific term “law of Moses” refers to the commandments and instructions that God gave Moses for the Israelites to obey.

- Depending on the context, the “law” can refer to:
 - the Ten Commandments that God wrote on stone tablets for the Israelites
 - all the laws given to Moses
 - the first five books of the Old Testament
 - the entire Old Testament (also referred to as “scriptures” in the New Testament).
 - all of God’s instructions and will
- The phrase “the Law and the Prophets” is used in the New Testament to refer to the Hebrew scriptures (or “Old Testament”)

Translation Suggestions:

- These terms could be translated using the plural, “laws,” since they refer to many instructions.
- The term “law of Moses” could be translated as “the laws that God told Moses to give to the Israelites.”
- Depending on the context, “the law of Moses” could also be translated as “the law that God told to Moses” or “God’s laws that Moses wrote down” or “the laws that God told Moses to give to the Israelites.”
- Ways to translate “the law” or “law of God” or “God’s laws” could include “laws from God” or “God’s commands” or “laws that God gave” or “everything that God commands” or “all of God’s instructions.”
- The phrase “law of Yahweh” could also be translated as “Yahweh’s laws” or “laws that Yahweh said to obey” or “laws from Yahweh” or “things Yahweh commanded.”

(See also: instruct, Moses, Ten Commandments, lawful, Yahweh)

Bible References:

- Acts 15:6
- Daniel 9:13
- Exodus 28:42-43
- Ezra 7:25-26
- Galatians 2:15
- Luke 24:44
- Matthew 5:18
- Nehemiah 10:29
- Romans 3:20

Examples from the Bible stories:

- **13:7** God also gave many other **laws** and rules to follow. If the people obeyed these **laws**, God promised that he would bless and protect them. If they disobeyed them, God would punish them.
- **13:9** Anyone who disobeyed **God’s law** could bring an animal to the altar in front of the Tent of Meeting as a sacrifice to God.
- **15:13** Then Joshua reminded the people of their obligation to obey the covenant that God had made with the Israelites at Sinai. The people promised to remain faithful to God and follow **his laws**.
- **16:1** After Joshua died, the Israelites disobeyed God and did not drive out the rest of the Canaanites or obey **God’s laws**.

- **21:5** In the New Covenant, God would write **his law** on the people's hearts, the people would know God personally, they would be his people, and God would forgive their sins.
- **27:1** Jesus answered, "What is written in **God's law**?"
- **28:1** Jesus said to him, "Why do you call me 'good?' There is only one who is good, and that is God. But if you want to have eternal life, obey **God's laws**."

Word Data:

- Strong's: H0430, H1881, H1882, H2706, H2710, H3068, H4687, H4872, H4941, H8451, G23160, G35510, G35650

(Go back to: [1 Samuel 1 General Notes](#); [Notes](#))

love, beloved

Definition:

To love another person is to care for that person and do things that will benefit him. There are different meanings for “love” some languages may express using different words:

The kind of love that comes from God is focused on the good of others even when it doesn’t benefit oneself. This kind of love cares for others, no matter what they do. God himself is love and is the source of true love.

- Jesus showed this kind of love by sacrificing his life in order to rescue us from sin and death. He also taught his followers to love others sacrificially.
- When people love others with this kind of love, they act in ways that show they are thinking of what will cause the others to thrive. This kind of love especially includes forgiving others.
- In the ULT, the word “love” refers to this kind of sacrificial love, unless a Translation Note indicates a different meaning.

Another word in the New Testament refers to brotherly love, or love for a friend or family member.

- This term refers to natural human love between friends or relatives.
- The term can also be used in such contexts as, “They love to sit in the most important seats at a banquet.” This means that they “like very much” or “greatly desire” to do that.

The word “love” can also refer to romantic love between a man and a woman.

Translation Suggestions:

- Unless indicated otherwise in a Translation Note, the word “love” in the ULT refers to the kind of sacrificial love that comes from God.
- Some languages may have a special word for the kind of unselfish, sacrificial love that God has. Ways to translate this might include, “devoted, faithful caring” or “care for unselfishly” or “love from God.” Make sure that the word used to translate God’s love can include giving up one’s own interests to benefit others and loving others no matter what they do.
- Sometimes the English word “love” describes the deep caring that people have for friends and family members. Some languages might translate this with a word or phrase that means “like very much” or “care for” or “have strong affection for.”
- In contexts where the word “love” is used to express a strong preference for something, this could be translated by “strongly prefer” or “like very much” or “greatly desire.”
- Some languages may also have a separate word that refers to romantic or sexual love between a husband and wife.
- Many languages must express “love” as an action. So for example, they might translate “love is patient, love is kind” as, “when a person loves someone, he is patient with him and kind to him.”

(See also: covenant, [death](#), sacrifice, [save](#), [sin](#))

Bible References:

- 1 Corinthians 13:7
- 1 John 3:2
- 1 Thessalonians 4:10
- Galatians 5:23
- Genesis 29:18
- Isaiah 56:6
- Jeremiah 2:2

- John 3:16
- Matthew 10:37
- Nehemiah 9:32-34
- Philippians 1:9
- Song of Songs 1:2

Examples from the Bible stories:

- **27:2** The law expert replied that God's law says, "**Love** the Lord your God with all your heart, soul, strength, and mind. And **love** your neighbor as yourself."
- **33:8** "The thorny ground is a person who hears God's word, but, as time passes, the cares, riches, and pleasures of life choke out his **love** for God."
- **36:5** As Peter was talking, a bright cloud came down on top of them and a voice from the cloud said, "This is my Son whom I **love**."
- **39:10** "Everyone who **loves** the truth listens to me."
- **47:1** She (Lydia) **loved** and worshiped God.
- **48:1** When God created the world, everything was perfect. There was no sin. Adam and Eve **loved** each other, and they **loved** God.
- **49:3** He (Jesus) taught that you need to **love** other people the same way you love yourself.
- **49:4** He (Jesus) also taught that you need to **love** God more than you **love** anything else, including your wealth.
- **49:7** Jesus taught that God **loves** sinners very much.
- **49:9** But God **loved** everyone in the world so much that he gave his only Son so that whoever believes in Jesus will not be punished for his sins, but will live with God forever.
- **49:13** God **loves** you and wants you to believe in Jesus so he can have a close relationship with you.

Word Data:

- Strong's: H0157, H0158, H0159, H0160, H2245, H2617, H2836, H3039, H4261, H5689, H5690, H5691, H7355, H7356, H7453, H7474, G00250, G00260, G53600, G53610, G53620, G53630, G53650, G53670, G53680, G53690, G53770, G53810, G53820, G53830, G53880

(Go back to: [1 Samuel 16 General Notes](#); [Notes](#))

oppress, oppressed, oppression, oppressor, dominate

Definition:

The terms “oppress” and “oppression” refer to treating people harshly. An “oppressor” is a person who oppresses people.

- The term “oppression” especially refers to a situation where people of greater strength mistreat or enslave people who are under their power or rule.
- The term “oppressed” describes the people who are being harshly treated.
- Often enemy nations and their rulers were oppressors to the people of Israel.

Translation Suggestions:

- Depending on the context, “oppress” could be translated as “severely mistreat” or “cause to be heavily burdened” or “put under miserable bondage” or “rule harshly.”
- Ways to translate “oppression” could include “heavy suppression and bondage” or “burdensome control.”
- The phrase “the oppressed” could be translated as “oppressed people” or “people in terrible bondage” or “those who are treated harshly.”
- The term “oppressor” could be translated as “person who oppresses” or “nation who controls and rules harshly” or “persecutor.”

(See also: bind, enslave, persecute)

Bible References:

- 1 Samuel 10:17-19
- Deuteronomy 26:7
- Ecclesiastes 4:1
- Job 10:3
- Judges 2:18-19
- Nehemiah 5:14-15
- Psalms 119:134

Word Data:

- Strong’s: H1790, H1792, H2541, H2555, H3238, H3905, H3906, H4642, H5065, H6031, H6125, H6184, H6206, H6216, H6217, H6231, H6233, H6234, H6693, H7429, H7533, H7701, G26160, G26690

(Go back to: [1 Samuel 8 General Notes](#))

people of God

Definition:

The concept of the “people of God” in the Bible refers to people with whom God has established a covenant relationship.

- In the Old Testament, the phrase “people of God” refers to the nation of Israel. The nation of Israel was chosen by God and set apart from the other nations of the world in order to serve and obey him.
- In the New Testament, the phrase “people of God” refers to the “Church,” meaning everyone who believes in Jesus. This includes both Jews and Gentiles. In the New Testament, sometimes this group of people is called the “sons of God” or “children of God.”
- When God uses the phrase “my people,” he is referring to people who have a covenant relationship with him. God’s people are chosen by him, and he wants them to live in a way that is pleasing to him.

Translation Suggestions:

- The term “people of God” could be translated as “God’s people” or “the people who worship God” or “people who serve God” or “people who belong to God.”
- When God says “my people” other ways to translate it could include “the people I have chosen” or “the people who worship me” or “the people who belong to me.”
- Similarly, “your people” could be translated as “the people who belong to you” or “the people you chose to belong to you.”
- Also “his people” could be translated as “the people who belong to him” or “the people God chose to belong to himself.”

(See also: [Israel](#), people group)

Bible References:

- 1 Chronicles 11:2
- Acts 7:34
- Acts 7:51-53
- Acts 10:36-38
- Daniel 9:24-25
- Isaiah 2:5-6
- Jeremiah 6:20-22
- Joel 3:16-17
- Micah 6:3-5
- Revelation 13:7-8

Word Data:

- Strong’s: H0430, H5971, G23160, G29920

(Go back to: [Introduction to 1 Samuel](#))

priest, priesthood

Definition:

In the Bible, a priest was someone who was chosen to offer sacrifices to God on behalf of God's people. The "priesthood" was the name for the office or condition of being a priest.

- In the Old Testament, God chose Aaron and his descendants to be his priests for the people of Israel.
- The "priesthood" was a right and a responsibility that was passed down from father to son in the Levite clan.
- The Israelite priests had the responsibility of offering the people's sacrifices to God, along with other duties in the temple.
- Priests also offered regular prayers to God on behalf of his people and performed other religious rites.
- The priests pronounced formal blessings on people and taught them God's laws.
- In Jesus' time, there were different levels of priests, including the chief priests and the high priest.
- Jesus is our "great high priest" who intercedes for us in God's presence. He offered himself as the ultimate sacrifice for sin. This means that the sacrifices made by human priests are no longer needed.
- In the New Testament, every believer in Jesus is called a "priest" who can come directly to God in prayer to intercede for himself and other people.
- In ancient times, there were also pagan priests who presented offerings to false gods such as Baal.

Translation Suggestions:

- Depending on the context, the term "priest" could be translated as "sacrifice person" or "God's intermediary" or "sacrificial mediator" or "person God appoints to represent him."
- The translation of "priest" should be different from the translation of "mediator."
- Some translations may prefer to always say something like "Israelite priest" or "Jewish priest" or "Yahweh's priest" or "priest of Baal" to make it clear that this does not refer to a modern-day type of priest.
- The term used to translate "priest" should be different from the terms for "chief priest" and "high priest" and "Levite" and "prophet."

(See also: Aaron, [high priest](#), mediator, sacrifice)

Bible References:

- 2 Chronicles 6:41
- Genesis 14:17-18
- Genesis 47:22
- John 1:19-21
- Luke 10:31
- Mark 1:44
- Mark 2:25-26
- Matthew 8:4
- Matthew 12:4
- Micah 3:9-11
- Nehemiah 10:28-29
- Nehemiah 10:34-36
- Revelation 1:6

Examples from the Bible stories:

- **4:7** "Melchizedek, the **priest** of God Most High"

- **13:9** Anyone who disobeyed God's law could bring an animal to the altar in front of the Tent of Meeting as a sacrifice to God. A **priest** would kill the animal and burn it on the altar. The blood of the animal that was sacrificed covered the person's sin and made that person clean in God's sight. God chose Moses' brother, Aaron, and Aaron's descendants to be his **priests**.
- **19:7** So the **priests** of Baal prepared a sacrifice but did not light the fire.
- **21:7** An Israelite **priest** was someone who made sacrifices to God on behalf of the people as a substitute for the punishment of their sins. **Priests** also prayed to God for the people.

Word Data:

- Strong's: H3547, H3548, H3549, H3550, G07480, G07490, G24050, G24060, G24070, G24090, G24200

(Go back to: [1 Samuel 22 General Notes](#))

prophet, prophecy, prophesy, seer, prophetess

Definition:

A “prophet” is a man who speaks God’s messages to people. A woman who does this is called a “prophetess.”

- Often prophets warned people to turn away from their sins and obey God.
- A “prophecy” is the message that the prophet speaks. To “prophesy” means to speak God’s messages.
- Often the message of a prophecy was about something that would happen in the future.
- Many prophecies in the Old Testament have already been fulfilled.
- In the Bible the collection of books written by prophets are sometimes referred to as “the prophets.”
- For example the phrase, “the law and the prophets” is a way of referring to all the Hebrew scriptures, which are also known as the “Old Testament.”
- An older term for a prophet was “seer” or “someone who sees.”
- Sometimes the term “seer” refers to a false prophet or to someone who practices divination.

Translation Suggestions:

- The term “prophet” could be translated as “God’s spokesman” or “man who speaks for God” or “man who speaks God’s messages.”
- A “seer” could be translated as “person who sees visions” or “man who sees the future from God.”
- The term “prophetess” could be translated as “spokeswoman for God” or “woman who speaks for God” or “woman who speaks God’s messages.”
- Ways to translate “prophecy” could include, “message from God” or “prophet message.”
- The term “prophesy” could be translated as “speak words from God” or “tell God’s message.”
- The figurative expression, “law and the prophets” could also be translated as “the books of the law and of the prophets” or “everything written about God and his people, including God’s laws and what his prophets preached.” (See: [synecdoche](#))
- When referring to a prophet (or seer) of a false god, it may be necessary to translate this as “false prophet (seer)” or “prophet (seer) of a false god” or “prophet of Baal,” for example.

(See also: Baal, divination, false god, false prophet, fulfill, [law](#), vision)

Bible References:

- 1 Thessalonians 2:14-16
- Acts 3:25
- John 1:43-45
- Malachi 4:4-6
- Matthew 1:23
- Matthew 2:18
- Matthew 5:17
- Psalm 51:1

Examples from the Bible stories:

- **12:12** When the Israelites saw that the Egyptians were dead, they trusted in God and believed that Moses was a **prophet** of God.
- **17:13** God was very angry about what David had done, so he sent the **prophet** Nathan to tell David how evil his sin was.
- **19:1** Throughout the history of the Israelites, God sent them **prophets**. The **prophets** heard messages from God and then told the people God’s messages.

- **19:6** All the people of the entire kingdom of Israel, including the 450 **prophets** of Baal, came to Mount Carmel.
- **19:17** Most of the time, the people did not obey God. They often mistreated the **prophets** and sometimes even killed them.
- **21:9** The **prophet** Isaiah **prophesied** that the Messiah would be born from a virgin.
- **43:5** "This fulfills the **prophecy** made by the **prophet** Joel in which God said, 'In the last days, I will pour out my Spirit.'"
- **43:7** "This fulfills the **prophecy** which says, 'You will not let your Holy One rot in the grave.'"
- **48:12** Moses was a great **prophet** who proclaimed the word of God. But Jesus is the greatest **prophet** of all. He is the Word of God.

Word Data:

- Strong's: H2372, H2374, H4853, H5012, H5013, H5016, H5017, H5029, H5030, H5031, H5197, G24950, G43940, G43950, G43960, G43970, G43980, G55780

(Go back to: [1 Samuel 2 General Notes](#); [Notes](#); [Notes](#); [Notes](#); [Notes](#))

repent, repentance

Definition:

The terms “repent” and “repentance” refer to turning away from sin and turning back to God.

- To “repent” literally means to “change one’s mind.”
- In the Bible, “repent” usually means to turn away from a sinful, human way of thinking and acting, and to turn to God’s way of thinking and acting.
- When people truly repent of their sins, God forgives them and helps them start obeying him.

Translation Suggestions:

- The term “repent” can be translated with a word or phrase that means “turn back (to God)” or “turn away from sin and toward God” or “turn toward God, away from sin.”
- Often the term “repentance” can be translated using the verb “repent.” For example, “God has given repentance to Israel” could be translated as “God has enabled Israel to repent.”
- Other ways to translate “repentance” could include “turning away from sin” or “turning to God and away from sin.”

(See also: forgive, [sin](#), turn)

Bible References:

- Acts 3:19-20
- Luke 3:3
- Luke 3:8
- Luke 5:32
- Luke 24:47
- Mark 1:14-15
- Matthew 3:3
- Matthew 3:11
- Matthew 4:17
- Romans 2:4

Examples from the Bible stories:

- **16:2** After many years of disobeying God and being oppressed by their enemies, the Israelites **repented** and asked God to rescue them.
- **17:13** David **repented** of his sin and God forgave him.
- **19:18** They (prophets) warned people that God would destroy them if they did not **repent**.
- **24:2** Many people came out to the wilderness to listen to John. He preached to them, saying, “**Repent**, for the kingdom of God is near!”
- **42:8** “It was also written in the scriptures that my disciples will proclaim that everyone should repent in order to **receive** forgiveness for their sins.”
- **44:5** “So now, **repent** and turn to God so that your sins will be washed away.”

Word Data:

- Strong’s: H5150, H5162, H5164, G02780, G33380, G33400, G33410

(**Go back to:** [1 Samuel 12 General Notes](#))

righteous, righteousness, unrighteous, unrighteousness, upright, uprightness

Definition:

The term “righteousness” refers to God’s absolute goodness, justice, faithfulness, and love. Having these qualities makes God “righteous.” Because God is righteous, he must condemn sin.

- These terms are also often used to describe a person who obeys God and is morally good. However, because all people have sinned, no one except God is completely righteous.
- Examples of people the Bible who were called “righteous” include Noah, Job, Abraham, Zachariah, and Elisabeth.
- When people trust in Jesus to save them, God cleanses them from their sins and declares them to be righteous because of Jesus’ righteousness.

The term “unrighteous” means to be sinful and morally corrupt. “Unrighteousness” refers to sin or the condition of being sinful.

- These terms especially refer to living in a way that disobeys God’s teachings and commands.
- Unrighteous people are immoral in their thoughts and actions.
- Sometimes “the unrighteous” refers specifically to people who do not believe in Jesus.

The terms “upright” and “uprightness” refer to acting in a way that follows God’s laws.

- The meaning of these words includes the idea of standing up straight and looking directly ahead.
- A person who is “upright” is someone who obeys God’s rules and does not do things that are against his will.
- Terms such as “integrity” and “righteous” have similar meanings and are sometimes used in parallelism constructions, such as “integrity and uprightness.” (See: [parallelism](#))

Translation Suggestions:

- When it describes God, the term “righteous” could be translated as “perfectly good and just” or “always acting rightly.”
- God’s “righteousness” could also be translated as “perfect faithfulness and goodness.”
- When it describes people who are obedient to God, the term “righteous” could also be translated as “morally good” or “just” or “living a God-pleasing life.”
- The phrase “the righteous” could also be translated as “righteous people” or “God-fearing people.”
- Depending on the context, “righteousness” could also be translated with a word or phrase that means “goodness” or “being perfect before God” or “acting in a right way by obeying God” or “doing perfectly good.”
- The term “unrighteous” could simply be translated as “not righteous.”
- Depending on the context, other ways to translate this could include “wicked” or “immoral” or “people who rebel against God” or “sinful.”
- The phrase “the unrighteous” could be translated as “unrighteous people.”
- The term “unrighteousness” could be translated as “sin” or “evil thoughts and actions” or “wickedness.”
- If possible, it is best to translate this in a way that shows its relationship to “righteous, righteousness.”
- Ways to translate “upright” could include “acting rightly” or “one who acts rightly” or “following God’s laws” or “obedient to God” or “behaving in a way that is right.”
- The term “uprightness” could be translated as “moral purity” or “good moral conduct” or “rightness.”
- The phrase “the upright” could be translated as “people who are upright” or “upright people.”

(See also: evil, [faithful](#), good, [holy](#), integrity, just, law, [law](#), obey, pure, [righteous](#), [sin](#), unlawful)

Bible References:

- Deuteronomy 19:16
- Job 1:8
- Psalms 37:30
- Psalms 49:14
- Psalms 107:42
- Ecclesiastes 12:10-11
- Isaiah 48:1-2
- Ezekiel 33:13
- Malachi 2:6
- Matthew 6:1
- Acts 3:13-14
- Romans 1:29-31
- 1 Corinthians 6:9
- Galatians 3:7
- Colossians 3:25
- 2 Thessalonians 2:10
- 2 Timothy 3:16
- 1 Peter 3:18-20
- 1 John 1:9
- 1 John 5:16-17

Examples from the Bible stories:

- **3:2** But Noah found favor with God. He was a **righteous** man, living among wicked people.
- **4:8** God declared that Abram was **righteous** because he believed in God's promise.
- **17:2** David was a humble and **righteous** man who trusted and obeyed God.
- **23:1** Joseph, the man Mary was engaged to, was a **righteous** man.
- **50:10** Then the **righteous** ones will shine like the sun in the kingdom of God their Father.

Word Data:

- Strong's: H0205, H1368, H2555, H3072, H3474, H3476, H3477, H3483, H4334, H4339, H4749, H5228, H5229, H5324, H5765, H5766, H5767, H5977, H6662, H6663, H6664, H6665, H6666, H6968, H8535, H8537, H8549, H8552, G00930, G00940, G04580, G13410, G13420, G13430, G13440, G13450, G13460, G21180, G37160, G37170

(Go back to: [1 Samuel 26 General Notes](#))

save, saved, safe, salvation

Definition:

The term “save” refers to keeping someone from experiencing something bad or harmful. To “be safe” means to be protected from harm or danger.

- In a physical sense, people can be saved or rescued from harm, danger, or death.
- In a spiritual sense, if a person has been “saved,” then God, through Jesus’ death on the cross, has forgiven him and rescued him from being punished in hell for his sin.
- People can save or rescue people from danger, but only God can save people from being punished eternally for their sins.

The term “salvation” refers to being saved or rescued from evil and danger.

- In the Bible, “salvation” usually refers to the spiritual and eternal deliverance granted by God to those who repent of their sins and believe in Jesus.
- The Bible also talks about God saving or delivering his people from their physical enemies.

Translation Suggestions:

- Ways to translate “save” could include “deliver” or “keep from harm” or “take out of harm’s way” or “keep from dying.”
- In the expression “whoever would save his life,” the term “save” could also be translated as “preserve” or “protect.”
- The term “safe” could be translated as “protected from danger” or “in a place where nothing can harm.”
- The term “salvation” could also be translated using words related to “save” or “rescue,” as in “God’s saving people (from being punished for their sins)” or “God’s rescuing his people (from their enemies).”
- “God is my salvation” could be translated as “God is the one who saves me.”
- “You will draw water from the wells of salvation” could be translated as “You will be refreshed as with water because God is rescuing you.”

(See also: cross, deliver, punish, [sin](#), Savior)

Bible References:

- Genesis 49:18
- Genesis 47:25-26
- Psalms 80:3
- Jeremiah 16:19-21
- Micah 6:3-5
- Luke 2:30
- Luke 8:36-37
- Acts 4:12
- Acts 28:28
- Acts 2:21
- Romans 1:16
- Romans 10:10
- Ephesians 6:17
- Philippians 1:28
- 1 Timothy 1:15-17
- Revelation 19:1-2

Examples from the Bible stories:

- **9:8** Moses tried to **save** his fellow Israelite.
- **11:2** God provided a way to **save** the firstborn son of anyone who believed in him.
- **12:5** Moses told the Israelites, "Stop being afraid! God will fight for you today and **save** you."
- **12:13** The Israelites sang many songs to celebrate their new freedom and to praise God because he **saved** them from the Egyptian army.
- **16:17** This pattern repeated many times: the Israelites would sin, God would punish them, they would repent, and God would send a deliverer to **save** them.
- **44:8** "You crucified Jesus, but God raised him to life again! You rejected him, but there is no other way to be **saved** except through the power of Jesus!"
- **47:11** The jailer trembled as he came to Paul and Silas and asked, "What must I do to be **saved**?" Paul answered, "Believe in Jesus, the Master, and you and your family will be **saved**."
- **49:12** Good works cannot **save** you.
- **49:13** God will **save** everyone who believes in Jesus and receives him as their Master. But he will not **save** anyone who does not believe in him.

Word Data:

- Strong's: H0983, H2421, H2502, H3444, H3467, H3468, H4190, H4422, H4931, H5338, H6308, H6403, H7682, H7951, H7965, H8104, H8199, H8668, G08030, G08040, G08060, G12950, G15080, G49820, G49910, G49920, G51980

(Go back to: [1 Samuel 11 General Notes](#); [Notes](#))

sin, sinful, sinner, sinning

Definition:

The term “sin” refers to actions, thoughts, and words that are against God’s will and laws. Sin can also refer to not doing something that God wants us to do.

- Sin includes anything we do that does not obey or please God, even things that other people don’t know about.
- Thoughts and actions that disobey God’s will are called “sinful.”
- Because Adam sinned, all human beings are born with a “sinful nature,” a nature that that controls them and causes them to sin.
- A “sinner” is someone who sins, so every human being is a sinner.
- Sometimes the word “sinners” was used by religious people like the Pharisees to refer to people who didn’t keep the law as well as the Pharisees thought they should.
- The term “sinner” was also used for people who were considered to be worse sinners than other people. For example, this label was given to tax collectors and prostitutes.

Translation Suggestions:

- The term “sin” could be translated with a word or phrase that means “disobedience to God” or “going against God’s will” or “evil behavior and thoughts” or “wrongdoing.”
- To “sin” could also be translated as to “disobey God” or to “do wrong.”
- Depending on the context “sinful” could be translated as “full of wrongdoing” or “wicked” or “immoral” or “evil” or “rebellious against God.”
- Depending on the context the term “sinner” could be translated with a word or phrase that means “person who sins” or “person who does wrong things” or “person who disobeys God” or “person who disobeys the law.”
- The term “sinners” could be translated by a word or phrase that means “very sinful people” or “people considered to be very sinful” or “immoral people.”
- Ways to translate “tax collectors and sinners” could include “people who collect money for the government, and other very sinful people” or “very sinful people, including (even) tax collectors.”
- Make sure the translation of this term can include sinful behavior and thoughts, even those that other people don’t see or know about.
- The term “sin” should be general, and different from the terms for “wickedness” and “evil.”

(See also: disobey, evil, flesh, tax collector)

Bible References:

- 1 Chronicles 9:1-3
- 1 John 1:10
- 1 John 2:2
- 2 Samuel 7:12-14
- Acts 3:19
- Daniel 9:24
- Genesis 4:7
- Hebrews 12:2
- Isaiah 53:11
- Jeremiah 18:23
- Leviticus 4:14
- Luke 15:18
- Matthew 12:31

- Romans 6:23
- Romans 8:4

Examples from the Bible stories:

- **3:15** God said, "I promise I will never again curse the ground because of the evil things people do, or destroy the world by causing a flood, even though people are **sinful** from the time they are children."
- **13:12** God was very angry with them because of their **sin** and planned to destroy them.
- **20:1** The kingdoms of Israel and Judah both **sinned** against God. They broke the covenant that God made with them at Sinai.
- **21:13** The prophets also said that the Messiah would be perfect, having no **sin**. He would die to receive the punishment for other people's **sin**.
- **35:1** One day, Jesus was teaching many tax collectors and other **sinner**s who had gathered to hear him.
- **38:5** Then Jesus took a cup and said, "Drink this. It is my blood of the New Covenant that is poured out for the forgiveness of **sins**."
- **43:11** Peter answered them, "Every one of you should repent and be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ so that God will forgive your **sins**."
- **48:8** We all deserve to die for our **sins**!
- **49:17** Even though you are a Christian, you will still be tempted to **sin**. But God is faithful and says that if you confess your **sins**, he will forgive you. He will give you strength to fight against **sin**.

Word Data:

- Strong's: H0817, H0819, H2398, H2399, H2400, H2401, H2402, H2403, H2408, H2409, H5771, H6588, H7683, H7686, G02640, G02650, G02660, G02680, G03610, G37810, G39000, G42580

(Go back to: [1 Samuel 1 General Notes](#); [Notes](#); [Notes](#); [Notes](#))

temple, house, house of God

Facts:

The temple was a building surrounded by walled courtyards where the Israelites came to pray and to offer sacrifices to God. It was located on Mount Moriah in the city of Jerusalem.

- Often the term “temple” referred to the whole temple complex, including the courtyards that surrounded the main building. Sometimes it referred only to the building.
- The temple building had two rooms, the Holy Place and the Most Holy Place.
- God referred to the temple as his dwelling place.
- King Solomon built the Temple during his reign. It was supposed to be the permanent place of worship in Jerusalem.
- In the New Testament, the term “temple of the Holy Spirit” is used to refer to believers in Jesus as a group, because the Holy Spirit lives in them.

Translation Suggestions:

- Usually when the text says that people were “in the temple,” it is referring to the courtyards outside the building. This could be translated as “in the temple courtyards” or “in the temple complex.”
- Where it refers specifically to the building itself, some translations translate “temple” as “temple building,” to make it the reference clear.
- Ways to translate “temple” could include, “God’s holy house” or “sacred worship place.”
- Often in the Bible, the temple is referred to as “the house of Yahweh” or “the house of God.”

(See also: sacrifice, Solomon, Babylon, [Holy Spirit](#), tabernacle, courtyard, Zion, house)

Bible References:

- Acts 3:2
- Acts 3:8
- Ezekiel 45:18-20
- Luke 19:46
- Nehemiah 10:28
- Psalm 79:1-3

Examples from the Bible stories:

- **17:6** David wanted to build a **temple** where all the Israelites could worship God and offer him sacrifices.
- **18:2** In Jerusalem, Solomon built the **Temple** for which his father David had planned and gathered materials. Instead of at the Tent of Meeting, people now worshiped God and offered sacrifices to him at the **Temple**. God came and was present in the **Temple**, and he lived there with his people.
- **20:7** They (Babylonians) captured the city of Jerusalem, destroyed the **Temple**, and took away all the treasures.
- **20:13** When the people arrived in Jerusalem, they rebuilt the **Temple** and the wall around the city of the city and the **Temple**.
- **25:4** Then Satan took Jesus to the highest point on the **Temple** and said, “If you are the Son of God, throw yourself down, for it is written, ‘God will command his angels to carry you so your foot does not hit a stone.’”
- **40:7** When he died, there was an earthquake and the large curtain that separated the people from the presence of God in the **Temple** was torn in two, from the top to the bottom.

Word Data:

- Strong's: H1004, H1964, H1965, G14930, G24110, G34850

([Go back to: 1 Samuel 5 General Notes](#))

trust, trusted, trustworthy, trustworthiness

Definition:

To “trust” something or someone is to believe that the thing or person is true or dependable. That belief is also called “trust.” A “trustworthy” person is one you can trust to do and say what is right and true, and therefore one who has the quality of “trustworthiness.”

- Trust is closely related to faith. If we trust someone, we have faith in that person to do what they promised to do.
- Having trust in someone also means depending on that person.
- To “trust in” Jesus means to believe that he is God, to believe that he died on the cross to pay for our sins, and to rely on him to save us.
- A “trustworthy saying” refers to something that is said that can be counted on to be true.

Translation Suggestions:

- Ways to translate “trust” could include “believe” or “have faith” or “have confidence” or “depend on.”
- The phrase “put your trust in” is very similar in meaning to “trust in.”
- The term “trustworthy” could be translated as “dependable” or “reliable” or “can always be trusted.”

(See also: [believe](#), confidence, [faith](#), [faithful](#), true)

Bible References:

- 1 Chronicles 9:22-24
- 1 Timothy 4:9
- Hosea 10:12-13
- Isaiah 31:1-2
- Nehemiah 13:13
- Psalm 31:5
- Titus 3:8

Examples from the Bible stories:

- **12:12** When the Israelites saw that the Egyptians were dead, they **trusted** in God and believed that Moses was a prophet of God.
- **14:15** Joshua was a good leader because he **trusted** and obeyed God.
- **17:2** David was a humble and righteous man who **trusted** and obeyed God.
- **34:6** Then Jesus told a story about people who **trusted** in their own good deeds and despised other people.

Word Data:

- Strong’s: H0539, H0982, H1556, H2620, H2622, H3176, H4009, H4268, H7365, G16790, G38720, G39820, G40060, G41000, G42760

(Go back to: [1 Samuel 12 General Notes](#); [Notes](#); [Notes](#); [Notes](#))

VOW

Definition:

A “vow” is a solemn promise or oath that a person makes to God.

- If a person in ancient Israel made a vow to God, that person was obligated to fulfill the vow. The ancient Israelites believed that God might punish a person who did not fulfill a vow that he made.
- In ancient Israel, sometimes a person would ask God to protect him or provide for him in exchange for making the vow. However, the ancient Israelites did not believe that God was obligated to fulfill these requests.
- Depending on the context, the term “vow” can be translated as “solemn promise” or “solemn oath” or “promise made to God.”

(See also: promise, oath)

Bible References:

- 1 Corinthians 7:27-28
- Acts 21:23
- Genesis 28:21
- Genesis 31:12-13
- Jonah 1:14-16
- Jonah 2:9-10
- Proverbs 7:14

Word Data:

- Strong’s: H5087, H5088, G21710

([Go back to: 1 Samuel 1 General Notes](#))

will of God

Definition:

The “will of God” refers to God’s desires and plans.

- God’s will especially relates to his interactions with people and how he wants people to respond to him.
- It also refers to his plans or desires for the rest of his creation.
- The term to “will” means to “determine” or to “desire.”

Translation Suggestions:

- The “will of God” could also be translated as “what God desires” or “what God has planned” or “God’s purpose” or “what is pleasing to God.”

Bible References:

- 1 John 2:15-17
- 1 Thessalonians 4:3-6
- Colossians 4:12-14
- Ephesians 1:1-2
- John 5:30-32
- Mark 3:33-35
- Matthew 6:8-10
- Psalms 103:21

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- Strong’s: H6310, H6634, H7522, G10120, G10130, G23070, G23080, G23090, G25960

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