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Psalms

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Psalms

Introduction to Psalms

Part 1: General Introduction

Outline of Psalms

Book One (Psalms 1-41)
Book Two (Psalms 42-72)
Book Three (Psalms 73-89)
Book Four (Psalms 90-106)
Book Five (Psalms 107-150)

What is the Book of Psalms?

The Book of Psalms is a collection of songs. People called psalmists wrote them for different reasons. In some psalms, the psalmists expressed their praise for God. In other psalms, they asked God for help and expressed confidence in his love and power. In others, they confessed their sins and begged for mercy. The Israelites wrote some psalms to ask Yahweh to defeat their enemies. Other psalms celebrated the event of a new king beginning his reign. Psalmists also wrote to praise the city of Jerusalem. They wrote some psalms to instruct people on how to be wise by honoring Yahweh and obeying his law. Also, pilgrims sang some of the psalms while traveling to Jerusalem to worship there. Some psalms became songs of praise in the temple worship of Yahweh.

How should the title of this book be translated?

Translators can use the traditional title of this book, “The Book of Psalms” or just “Psalms.” Another title of this book is “Songs of Praise.” Translators may express this meaning in their own languages, or they may choose to use or transliterate the name from another language version if it is well known. For example, the French title “Les Psaumes” might be understood by everyone in a project language, if French is the language of wider communication in the region. (See: Copy or Borrow Words)

When was the Book of Psalms written?

The Psalms were written over a long period of time. Moses probably wrote the earliest psalm around 1400 B.C. David and Asaph wrote their psalms between 1020 and 975 B.C. The Korahites may have written their psalms before Jerusalem was destroyed and the Jews were exiled to Babylon in 587 B.C. Psalm 126 appears to come from the period after the exile, which ended in 538 B.C.

What are the Messianic psalms?

Some psalms are called “Messianic psalms.” New Testament writers considered these psalms to prophesy about the Messiah, Jesus Christ. They cited Psalms 2, 8, 16, 22, 34, 40, 41, 45, 68, 69, 89, 102, 109, 110, and 118 at least one time each in the New Testament.

What are superscriptions in the Psalms?

Many psalms give some information called superscriptions before the beginning of the psalm. Some of the expressions in the superscriptions are difficult to understand, so modern versions often have different interpretations of them.

Seventy-three psalms are called “A psalm of David.” This may mean they were written by King David. Or, it could mean someone wrote them for David or in the style that David used when he composed poetry. The superscriptions of some psalms give the historical situations in which they were written.

Some superscriptions give instructions about how they should be played and sung. They tell which instruments, singers, or melodies that should be used for that psalm. Fifty-five psalms are addressed “to the choirmaster” or “chief musician.” The psalmists seem to have meant them to be used in temple worship.

Traditionally, English versions do not give verse numbers to the superscriptions. But many versions in other languages do. Whether or not translators give them verse numbers, they should consider the superscriptions in the Psalms as part of the divinely inspired biblical text.

Part 2: Important Religious and Cultural Concepts

What are some important ways in which Yahweh is pictured in the Book of Psalms?

The psalmists often pictured Yahweh as:

- a king who rules over the nation of Israel and over all the nations
- a shepherd who leads the people of Israel and also the individual psalm writers
- a “rock,” that is, a high rocky mountain on which people can be completely safe from their enemies
- a strong warrior who always defeats his enemies.

What is the importance of honor and shame in the Book of Psalms?

When people honor someone, they think well of him and may even admire him. On the other hand, if people shame someone, that person loses honor and is disgraced.

Psalmists often expressed a great desire that Yahweh would be honored by the Israelites and also by the rest of the world.

Also, psalmists often expressed fear that they would be shamed by their enemies. When they felt this way, the psalmists wrote of their trust that Yahweh would not allow this to happen.

Part 3: Important Translation Issues

Why do the ULT and UST display the Book of Psalms as poetry, but some modern versions do not?

The psalmists wrote the Psalms as Hebrew poetry. The ULT and UST set each line farther to the right on the page than regular text is placed to show that the writing is poetry rather than prose.

This style typically uses pairs of poetic lines that relate to each other in different ways. Usually, poetic lines are said to be “parallel” to each other. A line that is indented farther to the right is paired with the line above it. (See: Parallelism)

Translators will have to decide whether to present the Psalms as poetry or as prose in their own language. Translators will need to consider whether their language has poetic forms that are suitable for expressing the Psalms.

Why do some versions number the Psalms differently than others?

From ancient times, people have numbered the Psalms in different ways. The Jews numbered the Psalms in Hebrew in one way. When they translated the Psalms into Greek, they numbered them in a different way. As a result, the Hebrew numbering and the Greek numbering of Psalms were both passed down through the centuries. They are both still in use today. Translators will probably want to number the Psalms in the same way that most versions in their own country do.

How should the translator view the terms Selah and Higgaion that occur in various psalms?

“Selah” and “Higgaion” seem to be musical terms inserted as directions for singers and musicians. Scholars do not agree as to their meaning. For this reason, translators may decide to transliterate them or leave them out but not try to translate them.

Psalms 1

Psalm 1 General Notes

Type of psalm

Psalm 1 is usually considered to be a “wisdom psalm,” which gives advice to those who hear it read or sung. (See: wise, wisdom)

Special concepts in this chapter

Blessed

A main theme in this psalm is what it means to be blessed. Here “blessed” refers to anyone who is well off because of a good relationship to God. The contrasting theme is that there are ungodly people, those who refuse to honor God. (See: bless, blessed, blessing and godly, godliness, ungodly, godless, ungodliness, godlessness)

People who opposed Yahweh

There are several words in this psalm for those who oppose God: “the wicked” (those who do evil), “sinners” (those who ignore God’s law), and “mockers” (those who mock God and the righteous people). (See: evil, wicked, unpleasant, sin, sinful, sinner, sinning and law, law of Moses, law of Yahweh, law of God and righteous, righteousness, unrighteous, unrighteousness, upright, uprightness)

Psalms 1:1

General Information:

Parallelism is common in Hebrew poetry. (See: Poetry and Parallelism)

ULT

1 Blessed is the man who does not walk in the advice of the wicked, or stand in the pathway with sinners, or sit in the assembly of mockers.

who does not walk in the advice of the wicked

The “advice of the wicked” is spoken of as if it were a path to follow. Alternate translation: “who does not follow the advice of the wicked” or “who does not do what wicked people advise” (See: Metaphor)

stand in the pathway with sinners

Here the word “pathway” represents the way people live. The word “stand” is in parallel with “walk.” Alternate translation: “imitate the behavior of sinful people” (See: Metaphor)

or sit in the assembly of mockers

Sitting with people who mock God represents joining people who mock God. Alternate translation: “or join those who mock God” or “or mock God with others who mock him” (See: Metonymy)

Psalms 1:2

his delight is in the law of Yahweh

The word “delight” is an abstract noun that can be stated as a verb. A person who can “delight … in the law” is happy because the law is good and because one is obeying it. Alternate translation: “what makes him truly happy is the law of Yahweh” or “what makes him truly happy is to know that he is obeying the law of Yahweh” (See: Abstract Nouns)

ULT

2 But his delight is in the law of Yahweh,
and on his law he meditates day and
night.

Yahweh

This is the name of God that he revealed to his people in the Old Testament. See the translationWord page about Yahweh concerning how to translate this.

Psalms 1:3

General Information:

This passage introduces an elaborate image in which a righteous person is thought of in terms of a flourishing tree.

ULT

3 He will be like a tree planted by the streams of water that produces its fruit in its season, whose leaves do not wither; whatever he does will prosper.

He will be like a tree ... fruit in its season

In the Bible, people are often spoken of as trees. People who delight in Yahweh's law can do all God wants them to do just as a tree that is planted by water produces good fruit. Alternate translation: "He will be prosperous like a tree ... fruit in its season" (See: Simile)

planted by the streams of water

A tree that is planted by a stream can get enough water to be healthy.

that produces its fruit in its season

Healthy trees produce good fruit at the right time.

whose leaves do not wither

If a tree gets enough water, its leaves do not dry out and die.

whatever he does will prosper

"He will be successful at whatever he does"

Psalms 1:4

The wicked are not so

How they are not like that can be stated clearly. “The wicked are not prosperous” or “The wicked do not prosper” (See: Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information)

ULT

4 The wicked are not so, but are instead like the chaff that the wind drives away.

but are instead like the chaff

How they are like chaff can be stated clearly. Alternate translation: “but instead they are worthless like the chaff” (See: Simile)

Psalms 1:5

> **ULT**
> **5** So the wicked will not stand in the judgment, nor sinners in the assembly of the righteous.

will not stand in the judgment

This could mean: (1) not standing in the judgment is a metonym for being judged by God and having to leave his presence. Alternate translation: “will not continue to stay before God when he judges them” or “will have to leave God’s presence when he judges them as guilty” or (2) not standing in the judgment is a metaphor for being condemned in the judgment. “Alternate translation: “will be condemned in the judgment” or “will be condemned when God judges them” (See: Metaphor)

in the judgment

The noun judgment can be expressed as a verb. This probably refers to the final judgment when God judges all people. Alternate translation: “when God judges everyone”

nor sinners in the assembly of the righteous

Translators can supply the verb “stand.” Alternate translation: “neither will sinners stand in the assembly of the righteous” or “and sinners will not stand in the assembly of the righteous” (See: Ellipsis)

nor sinners in the assembly of the righteous

Being accepted by God as righteous is spoken of as standing with the group of righteous people. Alternate translation: “and God will not accept sinners along with the righteous people” (See: Metonymy)

Psalms 1:6

For Yahweh approves of the way of the righteous, but the way of the wicked will perish

ULT

6 For Yahweh approves of the way of the righteous, but the way of the wicked will perish.

These two clauses contrast what happens to righteous people with what happens to wicked people. (See: Parallelism)

the way of the righteous

How people live is spoken of as if it were a “way” or “road” that they are walking on. Alternate translation: “how the righteous live” (See: Metaphor)

the way of the wicked will perish

How people live and what they do is spoken of as if it were a “way” or “road” that they walk on. This could mean: (1) the way perishing represents the wicked perishing because of how they live. Alternate translation: “The wicked will die because of how they live” or (2) the way perishing is a metaphor for no longer being able to live the way they do. Alternate translation: “the wicked will no longer be able to live the way they live” (See: Metaphor and Metonymy)

Psalms 2

Psalm 2 General Notes

Type of psalm

Psalm 2 is usually considered a royal psalm because it is about the king. It was probably first sung when a new person became the king. It is often thought to be about the Messiah because of verse 6 and 7 reference the Son of God. (See: Christ, Messiah and Son of God, the Son)

Special concepts in this chapter

Yahweh's protection

The main theme of this psalm is that God is protecting and empowering the king he has appointed and that it is useless for the foreign nations to oppose God and his king.

Important figures of speech in this chapter

Metaphor

"Today I have begotten you" here is a metaphor meaning that God acknowledges the king as his special person. (See: Metaphor)

Psalms 2:1

General Information:

Parallelism is common in Hebrew poetry. (See: Poetry and Parallelism)

ULT

1 Why are the nations in turmoil, and why do the peoples make plots that will fail?

Why are the nations in turmoil, and why do the peoples make plots that will fail?

These questions are used to show surprise that the people are doing things that are so wrong and foolish. Alternate translation: “The nations are in turmoil and the peoples are making plots that will fail.” (See: Rhetorical Question)

are the nations in turmoil

This probably means that the nations were making a noisy and angry commotion.

the nations

This represents either the leaders or the people of the nations. (See: Metonymy)

plots that will fail

These are probably plots against God and his people.

Psalms 2:2

The kings of the earth take their stand together ... the rulers conspire together

These two clauses have similar meanings. (See: Parallelism)

take their stand together ... conspire together

These phrases mean the same thing, implying that the leaders stand together in order to fight against Yahweh and his Messiah. This can be stated explicitly. Alternate translation: “gather to fight ... plan together to revolt” (See: Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information)

ULT

2 The kings of the earth take their stand together and the rulers conspire together against Yahweh and against his Messiah, saying,

Psalms 2:3

Let us tear off the shackles ... throw off their chains

ULT

3 “Let us tear off the shackles they put on us and throw off their chains.”

The people of other nations speak of Yahweh and the Messiah’s rule over them as if it were shackles and chains. Alternate translation: “We should free ourselves from their control; we should not let them rule over us any longer” (See: Metaphor)

Psalms 2:4

He ... the Lord

These phrases refer to Yahweh. Yahweh is often called “the Lord” but the words for “Yahweh” and “the Lord” are different.

ULT

4 He who sits in the heavens will sneer at them; the Lord mocks them.

sits in the heavens

Here sitting represents ruling. What he sits on can be stated clearly. Alternate translation: “rules in the heavens” or “sits on his throne in heaven” (See: Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information and Metonymy)

the Lord mocks them

“the Lord mocks those people.” Why he mocks them can be stated clearly. Alternate translation: “The Lord mocks them for their foolish plans” (See: Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information)

Psalms 2:5

terrify them in his rage

The abstract noun “rage” can be stated as “furious.” Alternate translation: “he will be furious and terrify them” (See: Abstract Nouns)

terrify

greatly frighten

ULT

5 Then he will speak to them in his anger and terrify them in his rage, saying,

Psalms 2:6

I myself

Yahweh is emphasizing that he, and not someone else, has anointed his king.

anointed my king

“appointed my king to rule”

ULT

6 “I myself have anointed my king on Zion, my holy mountain.”

Psalms 2:7

I will announce a decree of Yahweh. He

The person saying this is the king. This can be stated clearly. Alternate translation: “The king says, ‘I will announce a decree of Yahweh.’ He” (See: Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information)

ULT

7 I will announce a decree of Yahweh.
He said to me, “You are my son! This
day I have become your father.

He said to me

“Yahweh said to me”

You are my son! This day I have become your father

Among many peoples in that part of the world then, men could decide to legally adopt children, who would become their heirs. Here Yahweh adopts a man and makes him king of Israel. Alternate translation: “I make you my son. This day I have become your father” or “Now you are my son and am your father”

Psalms 2:8

Connecting Statement:

Yahweh continues speaking to the new king of Israel.

the nations for your inheritance ... the farthermost regions of the earth for your possession

These phrases express very similar ideas. (See: Parallelism)

the farthermost regions of the earth

“the lands that are very far away”

ULT

8 Ask me, and I will give you the nations
for your inheritance and the
farthermost regions of the earth for
your possession.

Psalms 2:9

You will break them with an iron rod; like a jar of a potter, you will smash them to pieces

ULT

9 You will break them with an iron rod;
like a jar of a potter, you will smash
them to pieces.”

These phrases express very similar ideas. (See: Parallelism)

You will break them with an iron rod

Defeating the nations is spoken of as breaking them, and his power is spoken of as an iron rod. Alternate translation: “You will defeat them completely by your power” (See: Metaphor)

you will smash them to pieces

Destroying nations is spoken of as if they could be smashed like a clay jar. Alternate translation: you will completely destroy them like a clay pot” (See: Metaphor and Simile)

a jar of a potter

A potter is a person who makes clay pots and jars. These are fragile and can be broken easily. Alternate translation: “a clay jar” or “a clay pot” (See: Translate Unknowns)

Psalms 2:10

So now, you kings, be warned; be corrected, you rulers of the earth

ULT

10 So now, you kings, be warned; be corrected, you rulers of the earth.

These two phrases have similar meanings. Alternate translation: “So now, you kings and rulers of the earth, be warned and corrected” (See: Parallelism)

be warned

This can be stated with an active form. Alternate translation: “listen to this warning” or “be wise” (See: Active or Passive)

be corrected

This can be stated with an active form. Alternate translation: “listen to this correction” or “take this correction” (See: Active or Passive)

Psalms 2:11

(There are no notes for this verse.)

ULT

11 Worship Yahweh in fear and rejoice
with trembling.

Psalms 2:12

Kiss the son

People would show their king that they were loyal to him by kissing him, perhaps on the feet. Alternate translation: “Show the son that you are truly loyal to him” or “Bow down humbly before his son” (See: Symbolic Action)

ULT

12 Kiss the son or he will be angry with you, and you will die in the way when his anger burns for just a moment. How blessed are all those who seek refuge in him.

you will die in the way

This may refer to dying right there, before the person has a chance to go away. Alternate translation: “you will die immediately”

when his anger burns for just a moment

The king’s anger is spoken of as if it were a fire that could burn. Alternate translation: “when he suddenly becomes very angry” (See: Metaphor)

seek refuge in him

Asking the king for protection is spoken of as seeking refuge in him. Alternate translation: “ask the king to protect them” (See: Metaphor)

Psalms 3

Psalm 3 General Notes

Type of psalm

Psalm 3 is a psalm of deliverance. It is a morning song intended to be sung in the temple accompanied by musical instruments during morning worship. (See: temple, house, house of God)

Special concepts in this chapter

Yahweh’s protection

Although the psalmist has many enemies and is saying he is without help, God is protecting him and delivering him from danger.

Psalms 3:1

General Information:

Parallelism is common in Hebrew poetry. (See: Poetry and Parallelism)

ULT

1 Yahweh, how many are my enemies!
Many have risen against me.

A psalm of David

This could mean: (1) David wrote the psalm or (2) the psalm is about David or (3) the psalm is in the style of David's psalms.

Yahweh, how many are my enemies!

This exclamation shows that David is afraid of his enemies. Alternate translation: "Oh Yahweh, I have so many enemies!" (See: Exclamations)

have risen against me

Fighting against someone is spoken of as rising against him. Alternate translation: "come against me" (See: Idiom)

Psalms 3:2

(There are no notes for this verse.)

ULT

2 Many say about me, “There is no help for him from God.” *Selah*

Psalms 3:3

you, Yahweh, are a shield around me

A shield protects a soldier. David speaks as if God were a shield protecting him. Alternate translation: “you, Yahweh, protect me like a shield” (See: Metaphor)

ULT

3 But you, Yahweh, are a shield around me, my glory, and the one who lifts up my head.

my glory

“you are my glory.” By calling God his glory, David says that God is the one who gives him glory. Since David has just spoken about his enemies and God being his protector, he probably meant that God gives him glory by giving him victory over his enemies. Alternate translation: “you are the one who gives me glory” or “you are the one who gives me victory” (See: Metonymy)

the one who lifts up my head

“you are the one who lifts up my head.” Giving someone courage is spoken of as lifting up his head. Alternate translation: “the one who encourages me” (See: Metaphor)

Psalms 3:4

I lift up my voice

Using one's voice to cry out is spoken of as lifting up his voice. Alternate translation: "I cry out" (See: Metonymy)

ULT

4 I lift up my voice to Yahweh, and he answers me from his holy hill. *Selah*

Psalms 3:5

(There are no notes for this verse.)

ULT

5 I lay down and slept; I awoke, for
Yahweh protected me.

Psalms 3:6

have set themselves against me on every side

“have surrounded me to destroy me”

ULT

6 I will not be afraid of the multitudes of people who have set themselves against me on every side.

Psalms 3:7

Rise up

David speaks of starting to do something as getting up. Alternate translation: “Take action” or “Do something” (See: Metonymy)

hit all my enemies ... break the teeth of the wicked

These phrases say very similar things. The phrases “my enemies” and “the wicked” refer to the same group of people. (See: Parallelism)

For you will hit all my enemies on the jaw

This was a way of insulting people. David speaks as if Yahweh would come and physically hit his enemies. Alternate translation: “For you will insult all my enemies like someone hitting them on the jaw” (See: Symbolic Action and Metaphor)

you will break the teeth of the wicked

Animals attack with their teeth. Breaking their teeth takes away their power to attack. David speaks as if Yahweh would come and physically fight against the wicked. Alternate translation: “you will make the wicked unable to harm me like someone breaking the teeth of a ferocious animal” (See: Metaphor)

ULT

7 Rise up, Yahweh! Save me, my God!
For you will hit all my enemies on the
jaw; you will break the teeth of the
wicked.

Psalms 3:8

Salvation comes from Yahweh

The abstract noun “salvation” can be expressed with the verb “save.” Alternate translation: “Yahweh saves his people” (See: Abstract Nouns)

ULT

8 Salvation comes from Yahweh. May your blessings be on your people. *Selah*

Psalms 4

Psalm 4 General Notes

Type of psalm

Psalm 4 is a psalm of deliverance. It is an evening song, intended to be sung in the temple accompanied by musical instruments during evening worship. (See: deliver, hand over, turn over, release, rescue and temple, house, house of God)

Special concepts in this chapter

Trust

God protects all those who truly trust in him for protection. (See: trust, trusted, trustworthy, trustworthiness)

Psalms 4:1

General Information:

Parallelism is common in Hebrew poetry. (See: Poetry and Parallelism)

ULT

1 Answer me when I call, God of my righteousness; give me room when I am hemmed in. Have mercy on me and listen to my prayer.

For the chief musician

“This is for the director of music to use in worship”

on stringed instruments

“people should play stringed instruments with this song”

Answer me when I call

“Respond to me when I call” or “Help me when I call”

God of my righteousness

“God, who shows that I am righteous”

give me room when I am hemmed in

Being in danger is spoken of as being in a narrow space. Alternate translation: “rescue me when I am in danger” (See: Metaphor)

Psalms 4:2

General Information:

David sings this part of the song as if he is speaking to his enemies.

ULT

2 You people, how long will you turn my honor into shame? How long will you love that which is worthless and seek after lies? *Selah*

You people, how long will you turn my honor into shame?

David uses this question to rebuke his enemies. Alternate translation: “You people continually turn my honor into shame!” (See: Rhetorical Question)

turn my honor into shame

Shaming him instead of honoring him is spoken of as making his honor become shame. Alternate translation: “shame me instead of honoring me” or “bring me shame when you should be honoring me”

How long will you love that which is worthless and seek after lies?

David uses this question to rebuke his enemies. Alternate translation: “You continue to love things that are worthless and seek after lies.” (See: Rhetorical Question)

love that which is worthless ... seek after lies

These two phrases are very similar in meaning. The lies are worthless. Alternate translation: “love worthless lies” (See: Parallelism)

Psalms 4:3

Yahweh has set apart the faithful ones for himself

“Yahweh chooses godly people for himself”

ULT

3 But know that Yahweh has set apart the faithful ones for himself. Yahweh will hear when I call to him.

Psalms 4:4

Tremble in fear

The relationship between “tremble” and “fear” and who people should fear can be stated clearly. Alternate translation: “Fear Yahweh so much that you tremble” or “Stand in awe of Yahweh” (See: Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information)

ULT

4 Tremble in fear, but do not sin!
Meditate in your heart on your bed and
be silent. *Selah*

Tremble

shake from fear

Meditate in your heart

The heart represents a person’s thoughts. Thinking carefully is spoken of as meditating in one’s heart. Alternate translation: “Think carefully” (See: Metonymy)

Psalms 4:5

Offer the sacrifices of righteousness

“Offer the right sacrifices”

put your trust in Yahweh

Here “trust” is spoken of as if it were an object that could be put somewhere. The abstract noun “trust” can be stated as a verb. Alternate translation: “trust in Yahweh” or “trust Yahweh” (See: Metaphor and Abstract Nouns)

ULT

5 Offer the sacrifices of righteousness
and put your trust in Yahweh.

Psalms 4:6

Who will show us anything good?

This question is used either to ask for something or to express a wish about something that has not happened. Alternate translation: “Please show us something good!” or “We wish someone would show us something good!” (See: Rhetorical Question)

ULT

6 Many say, “Who will show us anything good?” Yahweh, lift up the light of your face on us.

Who will show us anything good?

This could mean: (1) showing something good represents bringing good things. Alternate translation: “Who will bring good things to us?” or (2) showing something good represents saying that good things have happened. Alternate translation: “Who will say that anything good has happened?” (See: Metonymy)

lift up the light of your face on us

The writer speaks of Yahweh acting favorably towards them as if Yahweh’s face shone a light on them. Alternate translation: “act favorably towards us” (See: Metaphor)

Psalms 4:7

You have given my heart more gladness

The heart represents the person. Alternate translation: “You have given me more gladness” (See: Synecdoche)

ULT

7 You have given my heart more gladness than others have when their grain and new wine abound.

You have given my heart more gladness than others have

Here “gladness” is spoken of as if it is an object that can be given. The abstract noun “gladness” can be stated as “glad.” Alternate translation: “You have made me more glad than others are” (See: Metaphor and Abstract Nouns)

when their grain and new wine abound

“New wine” may represent grapes. Alternate translation: “when they reap plentiful harvests of grain and grapes” (See: Metonymy)

Psalms 4:8

It is in peace that I will lie down and sleep

Peace is spoken of as if it were a place. This can be restated to remove the abstract noun “peace.” Alternate translation: “I will be peaceful when I lie down and sleep” or “I will not be afraid of danger when I lie down and sleep” (See: Metaphor and Abstract Nouns)

ULT

8 It is in peace that I will lie down and sleep, for you alone, Yahweh, make me safe and secure.

make me safe and secure

The words “safe” and “secure” mean basically the same thing and emphasize complete safety. Alternate translation: “make me completely safe” (See: Doublet)

Psalms 5

Psalm 5 General Notes

Type of psalm

Psalm 5 is a psalm of deliverance. Notice how the psalmist both praises God and asks Him for help in defeating the wicked. It was intended to be sung accompanied by flutes. (See: deliver, hand over, turn over, release, rescue and evil, wicked, unpleasant)

Special concepts in this chapter

Yahweh's help

God does not help people who do evil but he blesses those who are good and trust in him. (See: bless, blessed, blessing and trust, trusted, trustworthy, trustworthiness)

Psalms 5:1

General Information:

Parallelism is common in Hebrew poetry. (See: Poetry and Parallelism)

ULT

1 Listen to my call to you, Yahweh; think about my groanings.

For the chief musician

“This is for the director of music to use in worship”

with wind instruments

“This song should be accompanied by people who play wind instruments.”

Listen to my call to you

This is a call for help. Alternate translation: “Listen to me as I call to you for help” (See: Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information)

groanings

low sounds that people make with the voice when they are suffering

Psalms 5:2

(There are no notes for this verse.)

ULT

2 Listen to the sound of my call, my King
and my God, for it is to you that I pray.

Psalms 5:3

in the morning you hear my cry ... in the morning I will bring my petition to you

These two phrases are very similar in meaning. (See: Parallelism)

I will bring my petition to you

“I will make my request” or “I will ask you for what I need”

wait expectantly

“wait, expecting you to do what I ask you to do”

ULT

3 Yahweh, in the morning you hear my cry; in the morning I will bring my petition to you and wait expectantly.

Psalms 5:4

(There are no notes for this verse.)

ULT

4 Certainly you are not a God who approves of evil; evil people will not be your guests.

Psalms 5:5

(There are no notes for this verse.)

ULT

5 The arrogant will not stand in your presence; you hate all who behave wickedly.

Psalms 5:6

Yahweh despises violent and deceitful men

Since David is speaking to God in this psalm, this sentence can be stated with the word “you.” Alternate translation: “Yahweh, you despise violent and deceitful men” or “Yahweh, you hate men who do violent acts and deceive others” (See: First, Second or Third Person)

ULT

6 You will destroy liars; Yahweh despises violent and deceitful men.

Psalms 5:7

because of your great covenant faithfulness

The abstract noun “faithfulness” can be translated as an adjective. Alternate translation: “because you are faithful to your covenant” (See: Abstract Nouns)

your house

This refers to God’s temple. Alternate translation: “your temple”

ULT

7 But as for me, because of your great covenant faithfulness, I will come into your house; in reverence I will bow down toward your holy temple.

Psalms 5:8

lead me in your righteousness

David speaks of righteousness as if it were a path and of teaching as leading. The phrase “your righteousness” means that God is righteous Alternate translation: “teach me to do what is righteous as you do” (See: Metaphor)

ULT

8 Oh Lord, lead me in your righteousness because of my enemies;
make your path straight before me.

make your path straight before me

David speaks of righteousness as if it were a path. A straight path is easy to see or walk on. Alternate translation: “show me clearly how to live in the right way” or “make it easy for me to do what is right” (See: Metaphor)

Psalms 5:9

General Information:

David talks about his enemies.

ULT

9 For there is no truth in their mouth;
their inward being is wicked; their
throat is an open tomb; they flatter with
their tongue.

For there is no truth in their mouth

Truth being in the mouth represents speaking truthfully. Alternate translation: “For they never say what is true” (See: Metonymy)

their inward being is wicked

The inward being represents people’s thoughts and desires. Alternate translation: “their thoughts and desires are wicked” (See: Metonymy)

their throat

The throat represents people’s speech. Alternate translation: “their speech” or “what they say” (See: Metonymy)

their throat is an open tomb

Their throat is spoken of as if it were an open tomb, ready for dead bodies to put into it. This could mean: (1) “they say that they will kill people” or (2) “What they say kills people” (See: Metaphor)

they flatter with their tongue

“they say nice things about people without really meaning it”

their tongue

The tongue represents what people say. (See: Metonymy)

Psalms 5:10

may their schemes be their downfall

“may their schemes cause them to experience disasters” or “may they become less important because of their schemes”

schemes

plans to harm people

downfall

This is something that causes a person to experience disasters or to lose power. Experiencing disaster or becoming less important is spoken of as falling. (See: Metaphor)

ULT

10 Declare them guilty, God; may their schemes be their downfall! Drive them out for their many transgressions, for they have rebelled against you.

Psalms 5:11

may all those who take refuge in you rejoice

God is spoken of as if he were a refuge, a place where people can be protected. Alternate translation: “May all those who go to you for protection rejoice” (See: Metaphor)

those who take refuge in you rejoice ... shout for joy because you defend them

These two clauses express similar thoughts. (See: Parallelism)

take refuge in you

Going to Yahweh for protection is spoken of as taking refuge in him. Alternate translation: “go to you for protection” (See: Metaphor)

those who love your name

God’s name represents him. Alternate translation: “those who love you” (See: Metonymy)

ULT

11 But may all those who take refuge in you rejoice; let them always shout for joy because you defend them; let them be joyful in you, those who love your name.

Psalms 5:12

you will surround them with favor as with a shield

God’s favor is spoken of as if it were a shield. Alternate translation: “you will favor them and protect them as a soldier protects himself with his shield” or “because you are kind to them, you will protect them (See: Simile)

ULT

12 For you will bless the righteous,
Yahweh; you will surround them with favor as with a shield.

Psalms 6

Psalm 6 General Notes

Type of psalm

Psalm 6 is a deliverance psalm: a call to God for help. (See: deliver, hand over, turn over, release, rescue)

Special concepts in this chapter

Trouble

He is in deep trouble and needs God to help him in his difficult situation. But then God hears his prayer and scatters his enemies.

First Person

This psalm is written using first person making its perspective very personal. There are many uses of the first person in this Psalm.

Psalms 6:1

General Information:

Parallelism is common in Hebrew poetry. (See: Poetry and Parallelism)

For the chief musician

“This is for the director of music to use in worship”

on stringed instruments

“people should play stringed instruments with this song”

set to the Sheminith style

This may refer to a style of music.

ULT

1 Yahweh, do not rebuke me in your anger or discipline me in your wrath.

Psalms 6:2

my bones are shaking

The bones represent the whole body. His body may have been shaking because he was sick or extremely tired. Alternate translation: “my whole body is shaking” (See: Synecdoche)

ULT

2 Have mercy on me, Yahweh, for I am frail; heal me, Yahweh, for my bones are shaking.

Psalms 6:3

very troubled

“terrified” or “worried”

how long will this continue?

David uses this question to show that he does not want to continue feeling weak and troubled. Alternate translation: please, do not let this continue!” (See: Rhetorical Question)

ULT

3 My soul also is very troubled. But you,
Yahweh—how long will this continue?

Psalms 6:4

Return, Yahweh

David speaks of God being kind to him as God returning to him. Alternate translation: “Yahweh, come back to me” or “Have mercy on me, Yahweh” (See: Metaphor)

ULT

4 Return, Yahweh! rescue me. Save me because of your covenant faithfulness!

Save me because of your covenant faithfulness

The abstract noun “faithfulness” can be translated as an adjective. Alternate translation: “Save me because you are faithful to your covenant” (See: Abstract Nouns)

Psalms 6:5

For in death there is no remembrance of you. In Sheol who will give you thanks?

ULT

5 For in death there is no remembrance of you. In Sheol who will give you thanks?

These two sentences express similar meanings. (See: Parallelism)

For in death there is no remembrance of you

The abstract noun “remembrance” represents praise. Alternate translation: “For when people die, they no longer praise you” (See: Metonymy and Abstract Nouns)

In Sheol who will give you thanks?

David uses this question to emphasize that no one in Sheol thanks God. Alternate translation: “No one in Sheol will give you thanks!” or “The dead cannot praise you!” (See: Rhetorical Question)

Psalms 6:6

ULT

6 I am weary with my groaning. All night
I drench my bed with tears; I wash my
couch away with my tears.

I am weary with my groaning

His groaning represents the pain or distress that he feels. Alternate translation: “I am very tired because of my pain” (See: Metonymy)

I drench my bed with tears; I wash my couch away with my tears

These two sentences express the same meaning. (See: Parallelism)

I drench my bed with tears

“I make my bed wet with my tears” or “My bed is very wet because of my tears”

I wash my couch away with my tears

“I make my couch wet with my tears”

Psalms 6:7

My eyes grow dim

The ability to see is spoken of in terms of the eyes. Alternate translation: “My vision is blurry” or “I cannot see clearly” (See: Metonymy)

ULT

7 My eyes grow dim from grief; they grow weak because of all my adversaries.

from grief

Grief here represents crying. Alternate translation: “from crying” or “because I cry so much” (See: Metonymy)

Psalms 6:8

(There are no notes for this verse.)

ULT

8 Get away from me, all you who practice iniquity; for Yahweh has heard the sound of my weeping.

Psalms 6:9

Yahweh has heard my appeal for mercy ... Yahweh has accepted my prayer

These two lines have very similar meanings. (See: Parallelism)

ULT

9 Yahweh has heard my appeal for mercy; Yahweh has accepted my prayer.

Yahweh has accepted my prayer

Being willing to do what David has prayed for is spoken of as accepting his prayer. Alternate translation: “Yahweh will respond to my prayer” (See: Metaphor)

Psalms 6:10

(There are no notes for this verse.)

ULT

10 All my enemies will be ashamed and
greatly troubled. They will turn back
and be suddenly humiliated.

Psalms 7

Psalm 7 General Notes

Type of psalm

Psalm 7 is a deliverance psalm. (See: deliver, hand over, turn over, release, rescue)

Special concepts in this chapter

Yahweh’s protection

The author had not wronged anyone, yet his enemy was trying to attack him. But he knew that God would protect him.

Cush the Benjamite

Note the superscription and the specific circumstances. There is no other reference to this incident in the Scriptures. But there are references to David being opposed by those of the tribe of Benjamin during the time he was serving King Saul.

Psalms 7:1

General Information:

Parallelism is common in Hebrew poetry. (See: Poetry and Parallelism)

A musical composition of David

“This is a song that David wrote”

take refuge in you!

Going to Yahweh for protection is spoken of as taking refuge in him. Alternate translation: “go to you for protection!” (See: Metaphor)

ULT

1 Yahweh my God, I take refuge in you!
Save me from all who chase me, and
rescue me.

Psalms 7:2

they will rip me apart like a lion, tearing me in pieces

David speaks of his enemies attacking him as if they would rip his body apart and tear it in pieces as a lion would. Alternate translation: “they will violently kill me like a lion ripping apart its victim’s body and tearing it in pieces” or “they will violently kill me” (See: Simile)

with no one else able to bring me to safety

“and no one else will be able to save me”

ULT

2 Otherwise, they will rip me apart like a lion, tearing me in pieces with no one else able to bring me to safety.

Psalms 7:3

(There are no notes for this verse.)

ULT

3 Yahweh my God, if I have done this,
and there is guilt on my hands—

Psalms 7:4

(There are no notes for this verse.)

ULT

4 if I have done evil to him who was at peace with me, or senselessly harmed my enemy without cause, then hear my words.

Psalms 7:5

ULT

5 Then let my enemy pursue my life and overtake me; let him trample my life to the ground and lay my honor in the dust. *Selah*

my life

The life represents the person. Alternate translation: “me” (See: Metonymy)

overtake me

This represents capturing him. Alternate translation: “capture me” (See: Metonymy)

let him trample my life to the ground

Here “my life” represents the writer. Alternate translation: “allow him to destroy me” (See: Metonymy)

lay my honor in the dust

This refers to lying dead and unburied in disgrace.

Psalms 7:6

Arise, Yahweh, in your anger

Arising represents doing something or taking action. Alternate translation: “Do something in your anger” or “Be angry at my enemies and take action: (See: Metonymy)

stand up against the rage of my enemies

Fighting against people is spoken of as standing up against them. Alternate translation: “fight against the rage of my enemies” or “attack my enemies who rage against me” (See: Metonymy)

the rage of my enemies

Their rage represents their attacks. Alternate translation: “the attacks of my enemies” or “my enemies who attack me” (See: Metonymy)

wake up

Waking up represents starting to do something or take action. Alternate translation: “Take action” or “Do something” (See: Metaphor)

for my sake

“for me” or “to help me”

ULT

6 Arise, Yahweh, in your anger; stand up against the rage of my enemies; wake up for my sake and carry out the righteous decrees that you have commanded for them.

Psalms 7:7

The countries are assembled

Here the word “countries” represents all of the armies that have gathered to attack. (See: Synecdoche)

take once more your rightful place over them

Ruling people is spoken of as being over them. Yahweh’s rightful place refers either to heaven or to ruling in general. Alternate translation: “Rule over them from heaven” or “Rule over them” (See: Metaphor)

ULT

7 The countries are assembled all around you; take once more your rightful place over them.

Psalms 7:8

vindicate me

“show them that I am not guilty”

ULT

8 Yahweh, judge the nations; vindicate me, Yahweh, because I am righteous and innocent, Most High.

Psalms 7:9

establish the righteous people

“make the righteous people strong” or “make the righteous people prosper”

you who examine hearts and minds

The hearts and minds represent people’s desires and thoughts. Alternate translation: “you who know our inner thoughts” (See: Metonymy)

ULT

9 May the evil deeds of the wicked come to an end, but establish the righteous people, righteous God, you who examine hearts and minds.

Psalms 7:10

My shield comes from God

The word “shield” represents God’s protection. (See: Metaphor)

ULT

10 My shield comes from God, the one who saves the upright in heart.

Psalms 7:11

a God who is indignant each day

Who God is angry with can be stated explicitly. Alternate translation: “a God who is angry with the wicked every day” (See: Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information)

ULT

11 God is a righteous judge, a God who is indignant each day.

Psalms 7:12

God will sharpen his sword and will prepare his bow for battle

ULT

12 If a person does not repent, God will sharpen his sword and will prepare his bow for battle.

In verses 12 and 13, David speaks of God deciding to punish the wicked as if God were a warrior preparing to fight against them with weapons. Alternate translation: “God will take action against him like a warrior who sharpens his sword and prepares his bow for battle” (See: Metaphor)

Psalms 7:13

(There are no notes for this verse.)

ULT

13 He prepares to use weapons against him; he makes his arrows flaming shafts.

Psalms 7:14

one who is pregnant with wickedness ... conceives destructive plans ... gives birth to harmful lies

David speaks of the things that a wicked person does as if the person were pregnant and wickedness was the baby. Alternate translation: “the wicked person. He makes plans to destroy people and produces harmful lies” (See: Metaphor)

ULT

14 Think about the one who is pregnant with wickedness, who conceives destructive plans, who gives birth to harmful lies.

Psalms 7:15

(There are no notes for this verse.)

ULT

15 He digs a pit and hollows it out and
then falls into the hole he has made.

Psalms 7:16

His own destructive plans return to his own head, for his violence comes down on his own head

ULT

16 His own destructive plans return to his own head, for his violence comes down on his own head.

Destruction and violence are spoken of as if they hit a person's head or fall down on it. Alternate translation: "His own destructive plans destroy him, for his violence attacks him" or "When he plans to destroy others, others destroy him; when he attacks others, others attack him" (See: Metaphor)

Psalms 7:17

(There are no notes for this verse.)

ULT

17 I will give thanks to Yahweh for his justice; I will sing praise to Yahweh Most High.

Psalms 8

Psalm 8 General Notes

Type of psalm

Psalm 8 is a psalm of worship and praise to God. This was to be sung by a choir.

Special concepts in this chapter

Yahweh's creation

God has made awesome things in the universe and has exalted humans to be rulers over this creation. (See: exalt, exalted, exaltation)

A Little Lower than the Heavenly Beings

Psalms Psalm 8:4-6 is quoted in Hebrews 2:6-8, where it is applied to Jesus. (See: heaven, sky, heavens, heavenly and glory, glorious, glorify)

Psalms 8:1

General Information:

Parallelism is common in Hebrew poetry. (See: Poetry and Parallelism)

ULT

1 Yahweh our Lord, how magnificent is your name in all the earth, you who reveal your glory in the heavens above.

For the chief musician

“This is for the director of music to use in worship”

set to the gittith style

This may refer to a style of music.

how magnificent is your name in all the earth

God’s “name” represents his whole being. Alternate translation: “people all over the world know that you are very great” (See: Metonymy)

Psalms 8:2

Out of the mouth of babies and infants you have established praise

This could mean: (1) praise is spoken of as a solid object that God takes out of babies' mouths and sets up as a defensive wall or (2) God has created the world so that true praise comes to him from babies. Alternate translation: "You have given babies and infants the ability to praise you" or "It is babies and infants who truly praise you" (See: Metaphor)

ULT

2 Out of the mouth of babies and infants you have established praise *[1]* because of your enemies, so that you might silence both the enemy and the avenger.

Psalms 8:3

your heavens, which your fingers have made

God's fingers represent him. Alternate translation: "the heavens which you have made" (See: Synecdoche)

ULT

3 When I look up at your heavens, which your fingers have made, the moon and the stars, which you have set in place,

Psalms 8:4

Of what importance is the human race that you notice them, or mankind that you pay attention to them?

These remarks have been expressed in the form of a question to add emphasis. Alternate translation: “It is amazing that you think about people and are concerned about them!” (See: Rhetorical Question)

the human race ... mankind

Both of these phrases refer to people in general.

ULT

4 Of what importance is the human race that you notice them, or mankind that you pay attention to them?

Psalms 8:5

have crowned them with glory and honor

Glory and honor are spoken of as if they were crowns. The words “glory” and “honor” are similar in meaning. Alternate translation: “have given them glory and honor” or “have caused them to be like kings” (See: Metaphor and Doublet)

ULT

5 Yet you have made them only a little lower than the heavenly beings and have crowned them with glory and honor.

Psalms 8:6

You make him to rule over the works ... you have put all things under his feet

ULT

6 You make him to rule over the works of your hands; you have put all things under his feet:

These two clauses express similar meanings. (See: Parallelism)

You make him ... under his feet

“you make them ... under their feet.” The words “him” and “his” here refer to people.

the works of your hands

The hands represent what God has done. Alternate translation: “the things that you made” (See: Metonymy)

you have put all things under his feet

Having authority to rule others or control things is spoken of as having them under one’s feet. This means God gave people authority over all that he created. Alternate translation: “you have given him authority over all things” (See: Metaphor)

Psalms 8:7

(There are no notes for this verse.)

ULT

7 all sheep and oxen, and even the animals of the field,

Psalms 8:8

(There are no notes for this verse.)

ULT

8 the birds of the heavens, and the fish
of the sea, everything that passes
through the currents of the seas.

Psalms 8:9

how magnificent is your name in all the earth

ULT
9 Yahweh our Lord, how magnificent is your name in all the earth!

With this exclamation, David shows his joy and awe about how great God is. Alternate translation: “your name is wonderfully magnificent in all the earth” or “people in all the earth know how magnificent you are” (See: Exclamations)

your name

God’s “name” represents him or his reputation. Alternate translation: “your reputation” (See: Metonymy)

magnificent

excellent, great

Psalms 9

Psalm 9 General Notes

Type of psalm

Psalm 9 is a psalm of praise.

Special concepts in this chapter

Yahweh’s protection

God is a protector. He is all-powerful and his enemies cannot withstand him.

Acrostic Psalm

This psalm along with Psalm 10 form an acrostic. Which means that each unit begins with a successive letter of the Hebrew alphabet.

One Psalm or two

This psalm has a superscription but Psalm 10 doesn’t. This fact and the acrostic nature of the two psalms has lead some scholars to believe these two psalms may have originally been written as one psalm.

Psalms 9:1

General Information:

Parallelism is common in Hebrew poetry. (See: Poetry and Parallelism)

ULT

1 I will give thanks to Yahweh with my whole heart; I will tell about all your marvelous deeds.

For the chief musician

“This is for the director of music to use in worship”

set to Muth Labben

This may refer to a style of music.

I will give thanks to Yahweh with my whole heart

Since this song is addressed to Yahweh, Yahweh can be referred to as “you.” Alternate translation: “Yahweh, I will give thanks to you with all my heart” (See: First, Second or Third Person)

all your marvelous deeds

The noun “deeds” can be expressed with the verb “do.” Alternate translation: “all the marvelous things you do” or “all the marvelous things you have done” (See: Abstract Nouns)

Psalms 9:2

I will sing praise to your name

Here God's name represents God. Alternate translation: "I will sing praise to you" (See: Metonymy)

ULT

2 I will be glad and rejoice in you; I will sing praise to your name, Most High!

Psalms 9:3

turn back

“retreat” or “flee in fear”

ULT

3 When my enemies turn back, they
stumble and perish before you.

Psalms 9:4

you sit on your throne, a righteous judge

Kings had authority to judge people, and they would sit on their throne when they judged. David speaks as if God were an earthly king. Alternate translation: “you judge like a king who sits on his throne, and you are righteous” (See: Metonymy)

ULT

4 For you have defended my just cause;
you sit on your throne, a righteous judge!

Psalms 9:5

you have blotted out their name forever and ever

Causing people to be forgotten is spoken of as blotting out their name. Alternate translation: “you have caused them to be forgotten as if their name was blotted out” or “no one will ever remember them again” (See: Metaphor)

blotted out

“erased”

ULT

5 You rebuked the nations; you have destroyed the wicked; you have blotted out their name forever and ever.

Psalms 9:6

The enemy crumbled like ruins

The enemy is spoken of as if it were a city full of broken down buildings. Alternate translation: “Our enemies were destroyed” (See: Simile)

ULT

6 The enemy crumbled like ruins when you overthrew their cities. All remembrance of them has perished.

when you overthrew their cities

“when you destroyed their cities”

All remembrance of them has perished

Here “remembrance” is spoken of as if it were a living being that could die. Alternate translation: “All remembrance of them has stopped” or “There is no longer any remembrance of them” (See: Metaphor)

All remembrance of them has perished

The abstract noun “remembrance” can be expressed with the verb “remember.” Alternate translation: “No one remembers them at all” (See: Abstract Nouns)

Psalms 9:7

Yahweh remains forever

“Remain” probably represents sitting on the throne as king. Alternate translation: “Yahweh sits on his throne forever” or “Yahweh rules forever” (See: Metonymy)

ULT

7 But Yahweh remains forever; he has established his throne for justice.

he has established his throne for justice

The phrase “his throne” represents God’s rule. This could mean: (1) “He rules in order to judge people” or (2) “He rules over people justly” (See: Metonymy)

Psalms 9:8

He will judge the world with righteousness ... he will execute judgment for the nations with fairness

These two clauses express the same meaning. (See: Parallelism)

ULT

8 He will judge the world with righteousness, and he will execute judgment for the nations with fairness.

He will judge the world with righteousness

Here “the world” refers to all the people in the world. Alternate translation: “He will judge all the people of the world righteously” (See: Metonymy)

Psalms 9:9

Yahweh also will be a stronghold for the oppressed

God is spoken of as if he were a place that people could go to for safety. Alternate translation: “Yahweh will also protect the oppressed” or “Yahweh will also provide safety for those who are oppressed” (See: Metaphor)

ULT

9 Yahweh also will be a stronghold for the oppressed, a stronghold in times of trouble.

Psalms 9:10

Those who know your name

Here the words “your name” represent God. Alternate translation: “Those who know you” (See: Metonymy)

do not abandon

“do not forsake” or “do not leave”

ULT

10 Those who know your name trust in you, for you, Yahweh, do not abandon those who seek you.

Psalms 9:11

who rules in Zion

"who lives in Jerusalem"

tell the nations

Here "the nations" represents the people of the nations. (See: Metonymy)

ULT

11 Sing praises to Yahweh, who rules in Zion; tell the nations what he has done.

Psalms 9:12

For the God who avenges bloodshed remembers

What he remembers can be stated clearly. Alternate translation: “For the God who avenges bloodshed remembers those who were killed” or “For God remembers those who were killed and he punishes the killers” (See: Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information)

he does not forget the cry

“He does not ignore the cry”

ULT

12 For the God who avenges bloodshed remembers; he does not forget the cry of the oppressed.

Psalms 9:13

ULT

13 Have mercy on me, Yahweh; see how I am oppressed by those who hate me, you who can snatch me from the gates of death.

see how I am oppressed by those who hate me

This can be expressed in active form. Alternate translation: “see how those who hate me oppress me” or “see how badly my enemies treat me” (See: Active or Passive)

you who can snatch me from the gates of death

Death is spoken of as if it were a city that had gates through which people enter it. If someone is near the gates of death, it means that he will die soon. Keeping someone from dying is spoken of as taking him away from the gates of that city. Alternate translation: “you who can rescue me from death” or “you who can keep me from dying” (See: Metaphor)

Psalms 9:14

(There are no notes for this verse.)

ULT

14 Oh, that I might proclaim all your praise. In the gates of the daughter of Zion I will rejoice in your salvation!

Psalms 9:15

The nations have sunk down into the pit that they made

People dig pits so they can catch animals that fall into them. Here digging a pit represents making plans to destroy people. Alternate translation: “The nations are like people who dig a pit for others and then fall into it” (See: Metaphor)

ULT

15 The nations have sunk down into the pit that they made; their feet are caught in the net that they hid.

their feet are caught in the net that they hid

People hide nets so they can catch animals that get caught in them. Here hiding a net represents making plans to destroy people. Alternate translation: “they are like people who hide a net and get trapped in it” (See: Metaphor)

Psalms 9:16

the wicked is ensnared by his own actions

ULT

16 Yahweh has made himself known; he has executed judgment; the wicked is ensnared by his own actions. *Selah*

Here “wicked” is a nominal adjective that refers to any wicked person. A wicked person acting to harm other people is spoken of as if the wicked person had made a trap and then fallen into it and been unable to escape. This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: “when a wicked person tries to harm other people, his actions will end up harming him” (See: Nominal Adjectives and Metaphor)

is ensnared

“is trapped”

Psalms 9:17

turned back

“rejected”

all the nations that forget God

This refers to “the wicked.”

ULT

17 The wicked are turned back and sent
to Sheol, all the nations that forget God.

Psalms 9:18

For the needy will not always be forgotten

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: “God will not always forget the needy” or “God will remember the needy” (See: Active or Passive)

ULT

18 For the needy will not always be forgotten, nor will the hope of the oppressed be forever dashed.

nor will the hope of the oppressed be forever dashed

Hopes are spoken of as if they were objects that could be broken or destroyed. Hopes being destroyed represents the things that people hope for never happening. Alternate translation: “and the oppressed will not hope forever without results” or “and someday what the oppressed hope for will happen” (See: Metaphor)

Psalms 9:19

ULT

19 Arise, Yahweh; do not let man win against you; may the nations be judged in your sight.

Arise

Getting up represents starting to do something. Alternate translation: “Do something” or “Take action” (See: Metonymy)

man

people

be judged

Here judging represents punishing. Alternate translation: “be punished” (See: Metonymy)

in your sight

Here sight represents presence. Alternate translation: “in your presence” (See: Metonymy)

may the nations be judged in your sight

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: “judge the nations in your presence” or “take the nations into your presence and punish them” (See: Active or Passive)

Psalms 9:20

(There are no notes for this verse.)

ULT

20 Terrify them, Yahweh; may the
nations know that they are mere men.
Selah

Psalms 10

Psalm 10 General Notes

Type of psalm

Psalm 10 is a psalm of deliverance. (See: deliver, hand over, turn over, release, rescue)

Special concepts in this chapter

Evil people

The wicked people are prospering and think that God does not care. They think that he is not involved in these affairs. They destroy the innocent. The godly need God to come to their rescue and to punish the wicked people for the evil that they are doing to the good people. (See: evil, wicked, unpleasant, innocent and godly, godliness, ungodly, godless, ungodliness, godlessness and good, right, pleasant, better, best)

Second half of Psalm 9

As noted in the intro to the last psalm, this one is part of an acrostic poem. This psalm covers the last half on the Hebrew alphabet. It also does not have a superscription to introduce it. However, the psalms do separate well on the subjects they address. One addresses thanksgiving and praise whereas Psalm 10 is a lament. (See: lament, lamentation)

Psalms 10:1

General Information:

Parallelism is common in Hebrew poetry. (See: Poetry and Parallelism)

ULT

1 Why, Yahweh, do you stand far off?
Why do you hide yourself in times of trouble?

Why, Yahweh, do you stand far off? Why do you hide yourself in times of trouble?

The speaker uses these questions to express his distress that God has not helped him. Alternate translation: “Yahweh, it seems as though you are far away from me and you hide from me whenever I am in trouble” (See: Rhetorical Question and Metaphor)

Psalms 10:2

schemes

evil plans

ULT

2 Because of their arrogance, wicked
people chase the oppressed; but please
let the wicked be trapped by their own
schemes that they have devised.

Psalms 10:3

ULT

3 For the wicked person boasts of his deepest desires; he blesses the greedy and insults Yahweh.

the wicked person

This refers to wicked people in general. Alternate translation: “wicked people” (See: Generic Noun Phrases)

his deepest desires

The noun “desires” can be expressed with the verb “want. “Alternate translation: “the things that he wants very much to do” (See: Abstract Nouns)

the greedy

“greedy people”

Psalms 10:4

The wicked man

This refers here to wicked people in general. Alternate translation: “the wicked person” (See: Generic Noun Phrases)

has a raised face

A raised face represents pride or arrogance. Alternate translation: “has an arrogant attitude” or “is proud” (See: Metaphor)

he does not seek God

Here, seeking **God** could mean: (1) asking God for help or (2) thinking about God and obeying him. Alternate translation: “he does not ask God for help” or “he does not think about God” (See: Metaphor)

ULT

4 The wicked man has a raised face; he does not seek God. He never thinks about God because he does not care at all about him.

Psalms 10:5

He is secure at all times

“He is safe at all times.” He is not really safe, but he thinks that he is.

your righteous decrees are too high for him

Something that is hard to understand is spoken of as if it were too high to reach. Alternate translation: “he cannot understand your righteous decrees” (See: Metaphor)

he snorts at all his enemies

People snort at their enemies when they think that their enemies are weak and worthless. Alternate translation: “he thinks that all his enemies are weak and worthless” or “he sneers at all his enemies” (See: Symbolic Action)

he snorts

This means that he blows air out noisily through his nose.

ULT

5 He is secure at all times, but your righteous decrees are too high for him; he snorts at all his enemies.

Psalms 10:6

He says

"The wicked man says"

throughout all generations

This probably simply means "forever."

I will not meet adversity

Experiencing adversity is spoken of as meeting it. Alternate translation: "I will not have any troubles" (See: Metaphor)

ULT

6 He says in his heart," I will never fail;
throughout all generations I will not
meet adversity."

Psalms 10:7

His mouth is full of curses and lies and oppression

What people say is spoken of as being in their mouth. Alternate translation: “He always curses people, tells lies, and threatens to harm people” (See: Metonymy)

ULT

7 His mouth is full of curses and lies and oppression; under his tongue are mischief and evil.

under his tongue are mischief and evil

Here the tongue represents speaking. Alternate translation: or “what he says injures and destroys people” or “he speaks words that threaten and hurt people” (See: Metonymy)

Psalms 10:8

He waits in ambush

The word “he” refers to the wicked man.

his eyes look for some helpless victim

The eyes represent him. Alternate translation: “he looks for some helpless victim” (See: Synecdoche)

ULT

8 He waits in ambush near the villages;
in the secret places he murders the innocent; his eyes look for some helpless victim.

Psalms 10:9

He lurks in secret like a lion in the thicket

This speaks of the wicked person as if he were a lion. Alternate translation: “He hides while he waits for the weak to walk near him, the same way a lion quietly waits in the bush for the animal it wants to attack” (See: Simile)

ULT

9 He lurks in secret like a lion in the thicket; he lies in wait to catch the oppressed. He catches the oppressed when he pulls in his net.

lurks

This means to hide or wait with intent to harm or kill.

he lies in wait

“lies down waiting” or “he hides and waits”

He catches the oppressed when he pulls in his net

The writer speaks of the wicked person catching people as if he were a hunter using a net to catch animals. Alternate translation: “He catches the oppressed like a hunter that catches an animal in a net and drags it away” (See: Metaphor)

Psalms 10:10

they fall into his strong nets

The writer continues to speak of the wicked person catching people as if he were a hunter, his plans were nets, and the people were animals that fall into his net. Alternate translation: “his victims are caught by his plans like animals that fall into a hunter’s strong nets” (See: Metaphor)

ULT

10 His victims are crushed and beaten down; they fall into his strong nets.

Psalms 10:11

He says

The word “He” refers to the wicked person, and to wicked people in general. (See: Generic Noun Phrases)

ULT

11 He says in his heart, “God has forgotten; he covers his face; he will not bother to look.”

God has forgotten

Refusing to pay attention to what people do is spoken of as forgetting. Alternate translation: “God does not pay attention” or “God does not care about what I do” (See: Metaphor)

he covers his face

Refusing to pay attention to what someone does is spoken of as covering one’s face. Alternate translation: “God refuses to see what is happening” (See: Metaphor)

he will not bother to look

Paying attention to what someone does is spoken of as looking at it. Alternate translation: “he will not bother to pay attention” or “he will not care” (See: Metaphor)

Psalms 10:12

ULT

12 Arise, Yahweh! Lift up your hand,
God! Do not forget the oppressed.

Arise

Starting to do something is spoken of as getting up. Alternate translation: “Do something” (See: Metaphor)

Lift up your hand

Here lifting the hand to hit someone represents punishing him. Alternate translation: “Hit him hard” or “Punish the wicked person” (See: Metonymy)

Psalms 10:13

Why does the wicked man reject God and say…“You will not hold me accountable”?

The speaker uses this question to show that he is very sad that wicked people do these things. Alternate translation: “Wicked people are always rejecting God and saying…‘You will not hold me accountable.’” (See: Rhetorical Question)

ULT

13 Why does the wicked man reject God and say in his heart, “You will not hold me accountable”?

You will not hold me accountable

“You will not require me to tell you why I do what I do.” Holding someone accountable here represents punishing him. Alternate translation: “You will not punish me” (See: Metonymy)

Psalms 10:14

(There are no notes for this verse.)

ULT

14 You have taken notice, for you always
see the one who inflicts the misery and
sorrow. The helpless entrusts himself to
you; you rescue the fatherless.

Psalms 10:15

Break the arm of the wicked and evil man

Here “arm” represents power. Alternate translation: “Destroy the power of the wicked and evil man” or “Make the wicked and evil man weak” (See: Metonymy)

ULT

15 Break the arm of the wicked and evil man. Make him account for his evil deeds, which he thought you would not discover.

wicked and evil

These words have the same meaning. You can use one word to express both concepts. (See: Doublet)

Make him account for his evil deeds

Making someone account for his evil deeds represents punishing him. Alternate translation: “Punish him for the evil things he has done” (See: Metonymy)

Psalms 10:16

the nations are driven out of his land

This can be stated in active form. “Yahweh forces the people of other nations to leave his land” (See: Active or Passive)

ULT

16 Yahweh is King forever and ever; the nations are driven out of his land.

Psalms 10:17

you have heard the needs of the oppressed

It is implied that the oppressed people cried out to God. Alternate translation: “when oppressed people cried out to you, you listened to them tell you what they need” (See: Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information)

ULT

17 Yahweh, you have heard the needs of the oppressed; you strengthen their heart, you listen to their prayer;

you strengthen their heart

A strong heart represents courage, and making people’s hearts strong represents encouraging them. Alternate translation: “you encourage them” or “you make them confident” (See: Metonymy)

Psalms 10:18

no man ... will cause terror again

“no one ... will cause people to be afraid again”

ULT

18 You defend the fatherless and the oppressed so that no man on the earth will cause terror again.

Psalms 11

Psalm 11 General Notes

Type of psalm

Psalm 11 is a worship psalm. It tells how great God is and that God delivers the good people from the evil people. (See: deliver, hand over, turn over, release, rescue and good, right, pleasant, better, best and evil, wicked, unpleasant)

Special concepts in this chapter

Justice

The wicked people try to destroy the good people but God knows everything that is being done and he saves the good people and destroys the evil people. (See: just, justice, unjust, injustice, justify, justification and save, saved, safe, salvation)

Psalms 11:1

General Information:

Parallelism is common in Hebrew poetry. (See: Poetry and Parallelism)

ULT

1 I take refuge in Yahweh; how will you say to me, “Flee like a bird to the mountain”?

For the chief musician

“This is for the director of music to use in worship.”

take refuge in Yahweh

Going to Yahweh for protection is spoken of as taking refuge in him. Alternate translation: “go to Yahweh for protection” (See: Metaphor)

how will you say to me, “Flee like a bird to the mountain”?

This question is asked to provide emphasis. It can be translated as a statement. Alternate translation: “So do not ask me to run away!” (See: Rhetorical Question)

Psalms 11:2

For see! The wicked prepare their bows. They make ready their arrows on the strings to shoot in the darkness at the upright in heart

“Look! the wicked are preparing to attack upright people”

upright in heart

Here “upright in heart” refers to godly or righteous people.

ULT

2 For see! The wicked prepare their bows. They make ready their arrows on the strings to shoot in the darkness at the upright in heart.

Psalms 11:3

For if the foundations are ruined, what can the righteous do?

ULT

3 For if the foundations are ruined, what can the righteous do?

Here “the foundations” may refer to law and order. This rhetorical question is asked to add emphasis. It can be translated as a statement. Alternate translation: “Righteous people cannot do anything when evil people are not punished when they disobey the laws!” (See: Rhetorical Question)

Psalms 11:4

his eyes watch, his eyes examine the children of mankind

Here Yahweh is represented by his “eyes.” Yahweh is aware of everything that happens. Alternate translation: “He examines all that humanity does” (See: Synecdoche)

children of mankind

“humanity”

ULT

4 Yahweh is in his holy temple; his eyes watch, his eyes examine the children of mankind.

Psalms 11:5

Yahweh examines

"Yahweh watches carefully"

do violence

"hurt others"

ULT

5 Yahweh examines both the righteous and the wicked, but he hates those who love to do violence.

Psalms 11:6

He rains burning coals and brimstone upon the wicked; a scorching wind will be their portion from his cup!

God's punishment is described as if it were burning coals and brimstone from a volcano. Alternate translation: "He punishes the wicked; there will be no relief for them!" (See: Metaphor)

brimstone

sulphur

ULT

6 He rains burning coals and brimstone upon the wicked; a scorching wind will be their portion from his cup!

Psalms 11:7

see his face

“be in his presence”

ULT

7 For Yahweh is righteous, and he loves righteousness; the upright will see his face.

Psalms 12

Psalm 12 General Notes

Type of psalm

Psalm 12 is a judgment psalm, where the author asks God to judge and punish the wicked people. (See: judge, judgment and evil, wicked, unpleasant)

Special concepts in this chapter

Yahweh saves

There are so many wicked people now and they are proud of their evil. But God will save the poor who call out to him. (See: save, saved, safe, salvation and call, call out)

Words

This relatively short psalm focuses on the words people use.

Psalms 12:1

General Information:

Parallelism is common in Hebrew poetry. (See: Poetry and Parallelism)

ULT

1 Help, Yahweh, for the faithful ones have disappeared; those who have integrity have vanished from the children of men.

For the chief musician

“This is for the director of music to use in worship”

set to the Sheminith

This may refer to a style of music. See how you translated this in Psalms 6:1.

Help, Yahweh

“Yahweh, come to my aid”

those who have integrity have vanished

“faithful people have all vanished”

Psalms 12:2

Everyone says ... everyone speaks

The two occurrences of “everyone” are exaggerations, used to emphasize that this is true of very many people. (See: Hyperbole)

everyone speaks with flattering lips and a double heart

Here “lips” is a metonym for what people say, and “a double heart” is a metaphor for deception. Alternate translation: “everyone speaks with flattering words and deception” or “everyone praises people falsely and tells lies” (See: Metonymy and Metaphor)

ULT

2 Everyone says empty words to his neighbor; everyone speaks with flattering lips and a double heart.

Psalms 12:3

cut off all flattering lips

Here “flattering lips” is a metonym for people who flatter others. This could mean: (1) “cut off” is a metaphor for killing. Alternate translation: “kill all who flatter others” or (2) “cut off” is a metaphor for stopping something. Alternate translation: “stop all those who flatter others” (See: Metaphor and Metonymy)

ULT

3 Yahweh, cut off all flattering lips, every tongue declaring great things.

every tongue declaring great things

Here “every tongue” represents every person who declares great things. Alternate translation: “every person who boasts” (See: Synecdoche)

Psalms 12:4

ULT

4 These are those who have said, “With our tongues will we prevail. When our lips speak, who can be master over us?”

With our tongues will we prevail

Here the word “tongues” represents what people say. Alternate translation: “We will prevail because of what we say” (See: Metonymy)

will we prevail

“we will succeed” or “we will win” or “we will be victorious”

When our lips speak

Here the “lips” represents the people who speak. Alternate translation: “When we speak” (See: Synecdoche)

who can be master over us?

This rhetorical question is asked to emphasize that they believed no one could rule over them. It can be translated as a statement. Alternate translation: “no one can rule over us!” (See: Rhetorical Question)

Psalms 12:5

groans

These are deep sounds that people make because of pain or some strong emotion.

I will arise," says Yahweh

This means Yahweh will do something to help the people.

ULT

5 "Because of violence against the poor,
because of the groans of the needy, I
will arise," says Yahweh. "I will provide
the safety for which they long."

Psalms 12:6

like silver purified in a furnace on the earth, refined seven times

Yahweh's words are compared to silver that has been purified. Alternate translation: "they are without any imperfection" (See: Simile)

ULT

6 The words of Yahweh are pure words, like silver purified in a furnace on the earth, refined seven times.

Psalms 12:7

You keep them

“You keep the righteous people safe”

ULT

7 You are Yahweh! You keep them. You preserve the godly people from this wicked generation and forever.

Psalms 12:8

ULT

8 The wicked walk on every side when evil is exalted among the children of mankind.

walk on every side

“surround us”

when evil is exalted among the children of mankind

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: “when people everywhere are praising evil” (See: Active or Passive)

children of mankind

“human beings” or “people”

Psalms 13

Psalm 13 General Notes

Type of psalm

Psalm 13 is a psalm of deliverance because the psalmist is calling on God to deliver him from death and his enemies. (See: deliver, hand over, turn over, release, rescue and call, call out)

Special concepts in this chapter

Yahweh's help

The author needs God to help him because his enemies will rejoice if they are able to defeat him. The string of rhetorical questions is very effective at heightening the fear David is feeling. (See: Rhetorical Question and fear, afraid, frighten)

Psalms 13:1

General Information:

Parallelism is common in Hebrew poetry. (See: Poetry and Parallelism)

ULT

1 How long, Yahweh, will you keep forgetting about me? How long will you hide your face from me?

For the chief musician

“This is for the director of music to use in worship.”

How long, Yahweh, will you keep forgetting about me?

This question is asked to get the reader’s attention and to add emphasis. It can be translated as a statement. Alternate translation: “Yahweh, it seems that you have forgotten about me!” (See: Rhetorical Question)

How long ... face from me?

The words “your face” represent God’s whole being. This rhetorical question is asked to add emphasis. It can be translated as a statement. Alternate translation: “It seems like you are hiding from me!” (See: Synecdoche and Rhetorical Question)

Psalms 13:2

How long will my enemy triumph over me?

This rhetorical question is asked to add emphasis. It can be translated as a statement. Alternate translation: “Surely my enemies will not always defeat me!” (See: Rhetorical Question)

ULT

2 How long must I worry and have grief in my heart all day? How long will my enemy triumph over me?

Psalms 13:3

Look at me and answer me

“Give me your attention and listen to me”

ULT

3 Look at me and answer me, Yahweh my God! Give light to my eyes, or I will sleep in death.

Give light to my eyes

This is a way of asking for strength. Alternate translation: “Make me strong again” (See: Idiom)

or I will sleep in death

To “sleep in death” means to die. (See: Euphemism)

Psalms 13:4

Do not let my enemy say ... so that my enemy may not say

"Do not let my enemy say about me ... so that my enemy may not say about me"

when I am brought down

"when I fall" or "when they defeat me"

ULT

4 Do not let my enemy say, "I have defeated him," so that my enemy may not say, "I have prevailed over my adversary"; otherwise, my enemies will rejoice when I am brought down.

Psalms 13:5

I have trusted in your covenant faithfulness

The abstract noun “faithfulness” can be translated as an adjective. Alternate translation: “I have trusted that you are faithful to your covenant” or “I have trusted you because you are faithful to your covenant” (See: Abstract Nouns)

ULT

5 But I have trusted in your covenant faithfulness; my heart rejoices in your salvation.

my heart rejoices in your salvation

Here “my heart” represents the whole person. Alternate translation: “I will rejoice because you have rescued me” (See: Synecdoche)

Psalms 13:6

(There are no notes for this verse.)

ULT

6 I will sing to Yahweh because he has treated me very generously.

Psalms 14

Psalm 14 General Notes

Type of psalm

Psalm 14 is a deliverance psalm because he is trusting God to deliver the poor. (See: deliver, hand over, turn over, release, rescue and trust, trusted, trustworthy, trustworthiness)

Special concepts in this chapter

Evil people

Wicked people do not even consider God when they make their plans. (See: evil, wicked, unpleasant)

Psalms 14:1

General Information:

Parallelism is common in Hebrew poetry. (See: Poetry and Parallelism)

ULT

1 A fool says in his heart, “There is no God.” They are corrupt and have done abominable iniquity; there is no one who does good.

For the chief musician

“This is for the director of music to use in worship.”

A fool says in his heart

This is an idiom that means to say to oneself or to think to oneself. Alternate translation: “A foolish person says to himself” (See: Idiom)

They are corrupt

The word “they” refers to all foolish human beings who say there is no God.

Psalms 14:2

children of mankind

This phrase refers to all humans.

who seek after him

This describes those who desire to know God as if they were actually following him on a path. Alternate translation: “who desire to know him” (See: Metaphor)

ULT

2 Yahweh looks down from heaven on the children of mankind to see if there are any who understand, who seek after him.

Psalms 14:3

They have all turned away

This describes people who have rejected God as if they had stopped walking on the right path and had gone in another direction. Alternate translation: “They have all turned away from Yahweh” (See: Metaphor)

ULT

3 They have all turned away. Together they have become corrupt. There is no one who does good, no, not one.

Psalms 14:4

Do they not know anything ... who do not call on Yahweh?

This rhetorical question is asked to add emphasis. It can be translated as a statement. Alternate translation: “They act as if they do not know anything ... who do not call on Yahweh. But they know what they are doing!” (See: Rhetorical Question)

ULT

4 Do they not know anything, those who commit iniquity, those who eat up my people as they eat bread, but who do not call on Yahweh?

those who commit iniquity

The abstract nouns “iniquity” can be stated as “evil deeds.” Alternate translation: “those who do evil deeds” (See: Abstract Nouns)

those who eat up my people

This refers to those who do evil things and destroy God’s people as if they were eating food. (See: Metaphor)

Psalms 14:5

They tremble

The word “they” refers to those who do evil things.

ULT

5 They tremble with dread, for God is with the righteous assembly!

God is with the righteous assembly

To say that “God is with” those who are righteous means that he helps them. This can be stated clearly in the translation. Alternate translation: “God helps those who act righteously” or “God helps those who do the right things” (See: Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information)

Psalms 14:6

ULT

6 You want to humiliate the poor person
even though Yahweh is his refuge.

You want

The word “you” here refers to the wicked people.

to humiliate the poor person

“to make the person who is poor feel ashamed”

Yahweh is his refuge

This speaks of the protection that Yahweh provides as if he were a shelter that one might seek in a storm. Alternate translation: “Yahweh is like a shelter of protection to him” (See: Metaphor)

Psalms 14:7

Oh, that the salvation of Israel would come from Zion!

This is an exclamation. The writer is saying what he wishes or longs for God to do. Alternate translation: “I wish so much that the salvation of Israel would come from Zion!” (See: Exclamations)

ULT

7 Oh, that the salvation of Israel would come from Zion! When Yahweh brings back his people from the captivity, then Jacob will rejoice and Israel will be glad!

Oh, that the salvation of Israel would come from Zion!

Here “the salvation of Israel” is a metonym for Yahweh, the one who saves Israel. Alternate translation: “Oh, that Yahweh would come from Zion and save Israel!” or “I wish that Yahweh would come from Zion and rescue his people Israel!” (See: Metonymy)

then Jacob will rejoice and Israel will be glad

These two phrases mean the same thing. Here both “Jacob” and “Israel” represent the people of Israel. The two phrases can be combined in the translation. Alternate translation: “then all the people of Israel will rejoice greatly” (See: Parallelism and Synecdoche)

Psalms 15

Psalm 15 General Notes

Type of psalm

Psalm 15 is a wisdom psalm telling how people who honor God should live. (See: wise, wisdom and life, live, living, alive)

Special concepts in this chapter

Godliness

This psalm outlines a person who is godly and sees others from a godly perspective. There are several good actions mentioned. Such a person treats his neighbor right, does not slander him, does not take a bribe or interest from him, and keeps his promises even when it is difficult to do so. (See: godly, godliness, ungodly, godless, ungodliness, godlessness and good, right, pleasant, better, best and promise, promised)

Moral Conditions for Worship

Scholars have noted that this psalm contains a list of ten different conditions for those who want to participate in worship at the temple. The list consists of three positives in verse 2, 3 negatives in verse 3, two positives in verse 4, followed by two negatives in verse 5. (See: temple, house, house of God)

Psalms 15:1

General Information:

Parallelism is common in Hebrew poetry. (See: Poetry and Parallelism)

ULT

1 Yahweh, who may stay in your tabernacle? Who may live on your holy hill?

Who may live on your holy hill?

God's "holy hill" represents God's temple, which was on Mount Zion. Alternate translation: "Who may live in your holy place?" (See: Metonymy)

Psalms 15:2

speaks truth from his heart

“speaks honestly”

ULT

2 Whoever walks blamelessly, does what is right and speaks truth from his heart.

Psalms 15:3

He does not slander with his tongue

Here “tongue” represents what a person says. The word “he” refers to the “righeous person” (Psalms 15:2). Alternate translation: “He does not slander people with his speech” or “He does not say evil things about innocent people” (See: Metonymy)

harm

hurt

ULT

3 He does not slander with his tongue,
he does not harm others, and he does
not insult his neighbor.

Psalms 15:4

The worthless person is despised in his eyes, but he honors those who fear Yahweh

"Righteous people hate those who have rejected God, but they honor those who respect God"

The worthless person

"The wicked person" or "The person who has rejected Yahweh"

ULT

4 The worthless person is despised in his eyes, but he honors those who fear Yahweh. He swears to his own disadvantage and does not take back his promises.

Psalms 15:5

will never be shaken

Here “to be shaken” represents not living safely any longer. This can be stated in positive form. Alternate translation: “will live in safety” (See: Metaphor)

ULT

5 He does not charge interest when he lends money. He does not take bribes to testify against the innocent. He who does these things will never be shaken.

Psalms 16

Psalm 16 General Notes

Type of psalm

Psalm 16 is a psalm of praise, thanking God for all his mercies. The New Testament considers this psalm to be a messianic psalm: a psalm about Christ. (See: mercy, merciful and Christ, Messiah)

Special concepts in this chapter

Messiah

God has been so good to the psalmist, who will worship no other god. The New Testament considers the tenth verse to be about Christ's resurrection when it says that he is God's anointed one, and that God will not leave his body in the grave to decay. (See: good, right, pleasant, better, best, god, false god, goddess, idol, idolater, idolatrous, idolatry and resurrection and anoint, anointed, anointing)

Superscription

The term "Michtam" is used in the superscription for this psalm. There is much discussion about this term, but in the end no one is certain what it means. So it is easiest to transliterate this word into your language, or you are welcome to translate it as "psalm."

Psalms 16:1

General Information:

Parallelism is common in Hebrew poetry. (See: Poetry and Parallelism)

ULT

1 Protect me, God, for I take refuge in you.

take refuge in you

Going to Yahweh for protection is spoken of as taking refuge in him. Alternate translation: “go to you for protection” (See: Metaphor)

Psalms 16:2

(There are no notes for this verse.)

ULT

2 I say to Yahweh, “You are my Lord; my goodness is nothing apart from you.

Psalms 16:3

the holy people who are on the earth

Here “holy people” refers to God’s own people who trust him. Alternate translation: “your people who live in this land” (See: Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information)

ULT

3 As for the holy people who are on the earth, they are noble people; all my delight is in them.

Psalms 16:4

Their troubles will be ... gods

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: “The troubles of those who seek other gods will increase” (See: Active or Passive)

pour out ... blood to their gods

“pour out blood as a sacrifice to their gods”

or lift up their names with my lips

Lifting up their names is a metaphor for praising them, and “lips” is a metonym for what one says. Alternate translation: “or praise them with my words” or “and I will not praise their gods” (See: Biblical Imagery — Extended Metaphors and Metonymy)

ULT

4 Their troubles will be increased, those who seek out other gods. I will not pour out drink offerings of blood to their gods or lift up their names with my lips.

Psalms 16:5

ULT

5 Yahweh, you are my chosen portion
and my cup. You hold onto my lot.

my chosen portion

Here David speaks of Yahweh as if he were a portion of land that has been given to him. (See: Metaphor)

my cup

Here David speaks of Yahweh as if he were a cup that contains many blessings. Alternate translation: “the one who blesses me” (See: Metaphor)

You hold onto my lot

“You determine my future” or “You control what will happen to me”

Psalms 16:6

Measuring lines ... in pleasant places

ULT

6 Measuring lines have been laid for me in pleasant places; surely a pleasing inheritance is mine.

Here laying down measuring lines is a metonym for measuring land and giving it to someone, and here this is a metaphor for God blessing David in many great ways. This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: “You have measured off land for me in pleasant places” or “You have given me land in pleasant places” or “You bless me like one who gives land in pleasant places” (See: Metonymy and Metaphor and Active or Passive)

Measuring lines

These are ropes that people use to measure a plot of land and mark its boundaries.

surely a pleasing inheritance is mine

Here David speaks of Yahweh’s blessings as if they were an inheritance that he has received. Alternate translation: “I am delighted with all the things that he has given me” (See: Metaphor)

Psalms 16:7

(There are no notes for this verse.)

ULT

7 I will bless Yahweh, who counsels me;
even at night my mind instructs me.

Psalms 16:8

I set Yahweh before me at all times

“I always remember that Yahweh is with me”

so I will not be shaken from his right hand

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: “nothing will take me away from his side” (See: Active or Passive)

ULT

8 I set Yahweh before me at all times, so
I will not be shaken from his right hand!

Psalms 16:9

General Information:

David continues to speak to God.

ULT

9 Therefore my heart is glad; my glory is rejoicing. Surely I will live in security.

my heart is glad

Here the “heart” represents the speaker’s thoughts and emotions. Alternate translation: “Therefore I am glad” (See: Metonymy)

my glory is rejoicing

This could mean: (1) the word “glory” represents the honor a person feels. Alternate translation: “I am honored to rejoice in God” or (2) the word translated “glory” really means “liver” and represents the speaker’s emotions. Alternate translation: “I am rejoicing”

Psalms 16:10

(There are no notes for this verse.)

ULT

10 For you will not abandon my soul to
Sheol. You will not let your faithful one
see the pit.

Psalms 16:11

abundant joy

“great joy” or “a large amount of joy”

joy resides in your presence

The writer speaks of “joy” as if it were a person. (See: Personification)

in your right hand

The words “right hand” indicate being in God’s special presence. Alternate translation: “when I am near you” (See: Idiom)

ULT

11 You teach me the path of life;
abundant joy resides in your presence;
delights abide in your right hand
forever!”

Psalms 17

Psalm 17 General Notes

Type of psalm

Psalm 17 is a prayer for deliverance from all his enemies. (See: deliver, hand over, turn over, release, rescue)

Special concepts in this chapter

Innocence

The psalmist is innocent and needs God to rescue him from these enemies. (See: innocent)

Psalms 17:1

General Information:

Parallelism is common in Hebrew poetry. (See: Poetry and Parallelism)

ULT

1 Listen to my plea for justice, Yahweh;
pay attention to my call for help! Give
ear to my prayer from lips without
deceit.

Give ear to my prayer from lips without deceit

The phrase “give ear” is a metaphor for listening, and “lips without deceit” is synecdoche for a person who does not lie. Alternate translation: “Listen to my prayer for I speak without deceit” (See: Metaphor and Synecdoche)

Psalms 17:2

Let my vindication come from your presence

Vindication coming from God represents God judging someone and declaring him innocent. God's "presence" is a metonym for God himself. Alternate translation: "Let my vindication come from you" or "Declare that I am innocent" (See: Metaphor and Metonymy)

ULT

2 Let my vindication come from your presence; let your eyes see what is right!

let your eyes see what is right!

Here "your eyes" is synecdoche for God himself, and "see" is a metaphor for paying attention and firmly deciding to do something. Alternate translation: "please see what is right" or "do what is right" (See: Synecdoche and Metaphor)

Psalms 17:3

If you test my heart, if you come to me in the night

Here “test my heart” means to examine my thoughts and motives. Alternate translation: “If you examine my thoughts in the night” (See: Idiom)

ULT

3 If you test my heart, if you come to me in the night, you will purify me and will not find any evil plans; my mouth will not transgress.

my mouth will not transgress

Here the mouth is spoken of as if it were capable of acting on its own. It also represents the words that a person speaks. Alternate translation: “I will not tell lies or sin with my words” (See: Personification and Synecdoche)

Psalms 17:4

it is at the word of your lips that I have kept myself from the ways of the lawless

ULT

4 As for the deeds of mankind, it is at the word of your lips that I have kept myself from the ways of the lawless.

Here “the word of your lips” is a metonym for God’s instruction, and “the ways of the lawless” is a metaphor for the things that lawless people do. Alternate translation: “it is by obeying your instruction that I have kept myself from doing the things that lawless people do” or “your instruction has caused me to avoid doing wicked things” (See: Metonymy and Metaphor)

Psalms 17:5

My steps have held firmly to your tracks; my feet have not slipped

Both of these clauses mean the same thing. The repetition adds emphasis. (See: Parallelism)

ULT

5 My steps have held firmly to your tracks; my feet have not slipped.

my feet have not slipped

The writer speaks of his obedience to God as if he were walking on a path. Alternate translation: “I am determined to follow your ways” (See: Metaphor and Litotes)

Psalms 17:6

turn your ear to me ... listen when I speak

These phrases mean the same thing. Here “your ear” refers to God’s willingness to hear someone who prays to him. Alternate translation: “pay attention to me ... listen when I speak” (See: Parallelism and Metonymy)

ULT

6 I call to you, for you answer me, God;
turn your ear to me and listen when I
speak.

Psalms 17:7

Show your covenant faithfulness in a wonderful way

The abstract noun “faithfulness” can be translated as an adjective. Alternate translation: “Show in a wonderful way that you are faithful to your covenant” (See: Abstract Nouns)

ULT

7 Show your covenant faithfulness in a wonderful way, you who save by your right hand those who take refuge in you from their enemies!

your right hand

The “right hand” refers to God’s power. Alternate translation: “your mighty power” (See: Metonymy)

take refuge in you

Going to Yahweh for protection is spoken of as taking refuge in him. Alternate translation: “go to you for protection” (See: Metaphor)

Psalms 17:8

Protect me like the apple of your eye

The “apple of your eye” refers to something that is valuable. Alternate translation: “Protect me as you would something most valuable and precious” (See: Simile)

ULT

8 Protect me like the apple of your eye;
hide me under the shadow of your
wings

hide me under the shadow of your wings

David speaks of God’s protection as if he were a bird protecting its young under its wings. Alternate translation: “Keep me safe as a mother bird protects her babies by gathering them under her wing” (See: Metaphor)

Psalms 17:9

(There are no notes for this verse.)

ULT

9 from the presence of the wicked ones
who assault me, my enemies who
surround me.

Psalms 17:10

their mouths speak with pride

Here “their mouths speak” represents his enemies when they speak. Alternate translation: “they speak with pride” or “they are always boasting” (See: Synecdoche)

ULT

10 They have no mercy on anyone; their mouths speak with pride.

Psalms 17:11

They have surrounded my steps

Here “surrounded my steps” represents how David’s enemies have followed him everywhere he goes in order to capture him. Alternate translation: “My enemies have surrounded me” (See: Metonymy)

ULT

11 They have surrounded my steps.
They set their eyes to strike me to the ground.

Psalms 17:12

like a lion eager for a victim, like a young lion crouching in hidden places

These two phrases express very similar ideas. The repetition adds intensity. (See: Parallelism)

They are like a lion ... like a young lion

The writer feels pursued the way a lion hunts its prey (See: Simile)

ULT

12 They are like a lion eager for a victim,
like a young lion crouching in hidden
places.

Psalms 17:13

by your sword

This is a metaphor for Yahweh's power and for violent death in war. Alternate translation: "by having them die in war" or "by killing them in battle" (See: Metaphor)

ULT

13 Arise, Yahweh! Attack them! Throw them down on their faces! Rescue my life from the wicked by your sword!

Psalms 17:14

Rescue me from men by your hand, Yahweh, from men of this world

This clause adds intensity to the words “Rescue my life from the wicked by your sword” (Psalms 17:13). (See: Parallelism)

by your hand

These words represent the power of Yahweh and add intensity to the words “by your sword” (Psalms 17:13). (See: Metonymy)

ULT

14 Rescue me from men by your hand, Yahweh, from men of this world whose prosperity is in this life alone! You will fill the bellies of your treasured ones with riches; they will have many children and will leave their wealth to their children.

You will fill the bellies of your treasured ones with riches

The ancient text is hard to understand. This could mean: (1) “treasured” is a metaphor for loved, and “your treasured ones” refers to the people whom God loves. Alternate translation: “you will fill the bellies of the people you love with riches” or (2) “your treasured ones” refers to treasures that God gives to people, the “men of this world” Alternate translation: “you will fill their bellies with rich treasures” (See: Metaphor)

You will fill the bellies ... with riches

Here “fill the bellies ... with riches” is a metaphor for giving them many valuable things. This could mean: (1) “You will give many riches to the people you love” or (2) “you will give the men of this world many riches” (See: Metaphor)

Psalms 17:15

I will see your face in righteousness

Here “face” represents Yahweh in all of his being. David is confident he will see Yahweh. Alternate translation: “because I act in the right way, I will be with you one day” (See: Synecdoche)

ULT

15 As for me, I will see your face in righteousness; I will be satisfied, when I awake, with a sight of you.

I will be satisfied, when I awake, with a sight of you

David believes that after he dies, he will be with Yahweh. This can be made clear in the translation. Alternate translation: “After I die, I will be happy to wake up in your presence” (See: Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information)

Psalms 18

Psalm 18 General Notes

Type of psalm

Psalm 18 is a psalm of praise to God for his strengthening David for war.

Special concepts in this chapter

Yahweh’s power

God has tremendous power and he enabled David to prosper in war. This psalm, and its superscription, also appears in 1 Samuel 22 with some minor differences.

Psalms 18:1

General Information:

Parallelism is common in Hebrew poetry. (See: Poetry and Parallelism)

ULT

1 I love you, Yahweh, my strength.

For the chief musician

“This is for the director of music to use in worship.”

A psalm of David

This could mean: (1) David wrote the psalm or (2) the psalm is about David or (3) the psalm is in the style of David’s psalms.

he sang to Yahweh the words of this song

“he sang this song to Yahweh”

on the day that Yahweh rescued him

“after Yahweh had rescued him”

from the hand of Saul

Here “hand” stands for the power of Saul. Alternate translation: “from Saul’s power” (See: Metonymy)

Psalms 18:2

Yahweh is my rock

David speaks of Yahweh as if he were a rock. The word “rock” is a picture of a safe place. (See: Metaphor)

ULT

2 Yahweh is my rock, my fortress, the one who brings me to safety; he is my God, my rock; I take refuge in him. He is my shield, the horn of my salvation, and my stronghold.

my rock, my fortress

Here the words “rock” and “fortress” share similar meanings and emphasize that Yahweh provides safety from enemies. (See: Doublet and Metaphor)

take refuge in him

Going to Yahweh for protection is spoken of as taking refuge in him. Alternate translation: “go to him for protection” (See: Metaphor)

my shield, the horn of my salvation, and my stronghold

David speaks of Yahweh as if he were a “shield,” “the horn” of his salvation, and his “stronghold.” Yahweh is the one who protects him from harm. Here a similar idea is repeated three ways for emphasis. (See: Metaphor)

Psalms 18:3

I will be saved from my enemies

“I will be rescued from my enemies”

ULT

3 I will call on Yahweh who is worthy to be praised, and I will be saved from my enemies.

Psalms 18:4

The cords of death surrounded me

David speaks of death as if it were a person who could capture him and bind him with ropes. Alternate translation: “I was about to be killed” (See: Metaphor and Personification)

ULT

4 The cords of death surrounded me,
and the rushing waters of
worthlessness overwhelmed me.

rushing waters of worthlessness

David is as helpless as if he were being carried away by a rushing flood of waters. Alternate translation: “I felt completely helpless” (See: Metaphor)

Psalms 18:5

The cords of Sheol surrounded me; the snares of death trapped me

ULT

5 The cords of Sheol surrounded me;
the snares of death trapped me.

Here “Sheol,” the place of the dead, and “death” are spoken of as if they were people who could surround and trap him. These two clauses have similar meanings and the idea is repeated for emphasis. Alternate translation: “I felt trapped and thought I was going to die” (See: Personification and Metaphor and Parallelism)

Psalms 18:6

In my distress

“In my great need” or “In my despair”

my call for help went into his presence

Here David speaks of his “call for help” as if it were a person who could come into the presence of Yahweh. Alternate translation: “I prayed to him” (See: Personification)

it went into his ears

Here David speaks of how Yahweh heard his cry for help. The idea is repeated for emphasis. Alternate translation: “he heard my appeal” (See: Parallelism)

ULT

6 In my distress I called to Yahweh; I called for help to my God. He heard my voice from his temple; my call for help went into his presence; it went into his ears.

Psalms 18:7

Then the earth ... shaken because God was angry

God's being angry is spoken of as if the there was a terrible earthquake. Alternate translation: "God was so angry that it was as if the earth ... shaken" (See: Metaphor)

ULT

7 Then the earth shook and trembled;
the foundations of the mountains also trembled and were shaken because God was angry.

the earth shook and trembled

The words "shook" and "trembled" mean basically the same thing and emphasize how greatly the earth shook. Alternate translation: "the land moved back and forth" or "the ground moved up and down" or "there was a violent earthquake" (See: Doublet)

the foundations of the mountains also trembled and were shaken

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "the foundations of the mountains also trembled and shook" (See: Active or Passive)

Psalms 18:8

Smoke went up from out of his nostrils ... Coals were ignited by it

David speaks of Yahweh as if he were breathing fire. This is a picture of how angry God was. (See: Metaphor)

ULT

[8] Smoke went up from out of his nostrils, and blazing fire came out of his mouth. Coals were ignited by it.

blazing fire came out of his mouth. Coals were ignited by it

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: “blazing fire came out of his mouth and ignited coals” (See: Active or Passive)

Psalms 18:9

He opened

The word “He” refers to Yahweh.

thick darkness was under his feet

Though Yahweh does not actually have feet, the Psalmist gives him human characteristics. Alternate translation: “thick darkness was beneath him” (See: Personification)

ULT

9 He opened the heavens and came down, and thick darkness was under his feet.

Psalms 18:10

wings of the wind

Here the Psalmist speaks of the wind as if it had wings like an angel. (See: Personification and Metaphor)

ULT

10 He rode on a cherub and flew; he glided on the wings of the wind.

Psalms 18:11

ULT
11 He made darkness a tent around him,
heavy rainclouds in the skies.

He made darkness ... him

Here the words “He” and “him” refer to Yahweh.

He made darkness a tent

Here darkness is spoken of as if it were a tent. Alternate translation: “He made darkness a covering” or “He made darkness a hiding place” (See: Metaphor)

heavy rainclouds

“clouds heavy with rain” or “thick, dark rainclouds”

Psalms 18:12

Hailstones

stones made of ice

ULT

12 Hailstones and coals of fire fell from the lightning before him.

Psalms 18:13

Yahweh thundered in the heavens

Yahweh's voice sounded like thunder. (See: Simile)

the Most High

"the Most High" refers to Yahweh.

ULT

13 Yahweh thundered in the heavens!
The voice of the Most High shouted. *[1]*

Psalms 18:14

He shot his arrows and scattered his enemies ... lightning bolts dispersed them

Both of these clauses have similar meanings. (See: Parallelism)

ULT

14 He shot his arrows and scattered his enemies; many lightning bolts dispersed them.

He shot his arrows and scattered his enemies

Here lighting strikes are being spoken of as if they were arrows (See: Metaphor)

dispersed them

“sent them in different directions”

Psalms 18:15

General Information:

The writer continues to speak of Yaweh's great power.

ULT

15 Then the water channels appeared;
the foundations of the world were laid
bare at your rebuke, Yahweh, at the
blast of the breath of your nostrils.

Then the water channels appeared; the foundations of the world were laid bare

These two clauses have similar meanings. This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "Then the water channels appeared and the bottom of the ocean became visible; you exposed the foundations of the world" (See: Parallelism and Active or Passive)

at the blast of the breath of your nostrils

Though God does not have human physical characteristics as described here, this pictures his mighty strength. The wind is spoken of here as if it came as a mighty blast from God's nostrils. (See: Personification and Metaphor)

Psalms 18:16

He reached down ... he took hold ... He pulled me

The word “He” in these verses refers to Yahweh.

ULT

16 He reached down from above; he took hold of me! He pulled me out of the surging water.

surging water

Here the Psalmist speaks of the dangers of his enemies as if they were huge waves or forceful waters, from which Yahweh has rescued him. (See: Metaphor)

Psalms 18:17

(There are no notes for this verse.)

ULT

17 He rescued me from my strong enemy, from those who hated me, for they were too strong for me.

Psalms 18:18

ULT

18 They came against me on the day of my distress but Yahweh was my support!

They came against me

Here “They” refers to the strong enemies in verse 17.

They came against me on the day of my distress but Yahweh was my support

The abstract noun “distress” can be stated as an adjective. The abstract noun “support” can be stated as “protected.” Alternate translation: “Strong enemies attacked me on a day when I was distressed, but Yahweh protected me” (See: Abstract Nouns)

Psalms 18:19

(There are no notes for this verse.)

ULT

19 He set me free in a wide open place;
he saved me because he was pleased with me.

Psalms 18:20

my hands were clean

Here having clean hands represents being innocent of wrongdoing. Alternate translation: “I was innocent” or “my actions were right” (See: Metonymy)

ULT

20 Yahweh has rewarded me because of my righteousness; he has restored me because my hands were clean.

Psalms 18:21

I have kept the ways of Yahweh

The laws of Yahweh are spoken of as if they were the paths on which one should walk. Alternate translation: “I have obeyed Yahweh’s laws” (See: Metaphor)

ULT

21 For I have kept the ways of Yahweh
and have not wickedly turned away
from my God.

have not wickedly turned away from my God

Here being wicked is spoken of as if one left the right path and took the wrong path. Alternate translation: “have not done wickedly by turning away from my God” (See: Metaphor)

Psalms 18:22

For all his righteous decrees ... I have not turned away from them

Both of these clauses have similar meanings. The writer repeats these ideas for emphasis. (See: Parallelism)

have been before me

“have guided me” or “I have remembered”

ULT

22 For all his righteous decrees have been before me; as for his statutes, I have not turned away from them.

Psalms 18:23

innocent before him

“innocent according to him”

I have kept myself from sin

“I have not sinned”

ULT

23 I have also been innocent before him,
and I have kept myself from sin.

Psalms 18:24

my hands were clean

To have “clean hands” means that one is innocent of wrongdoing. See how you translated this in Psalms 18:20: Alternate translation: “I was innocent” or “my actions were right” (See: Metonymy)

ULT

24 Therefore Yahweh has restored me
because of my righteousness, because
my hands were clean before his eyes.

before his eyes

This refers to God’s presence. Alternate translation: “before him” or “according to him” (See: Synecdoche)

Psalms 18:25

General Information:

The writer speaks to Yahweh.

ULT

25 To the one who is faithful, you show yourself to be faithful; to a man who is blameless, you show yourself to be blameless.

To the one who is faithful

Here “faithful” means to do what God commands one to do. You can state this clearly. Alternate translation: “to those who faithfully obey your commandments” or “to those who faithfully do your covenant” (See: Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information)

Psalms 18:26

you are clever toward anyone who is twisted

“you outwit anyone who is not honest”

ULT

26 To anyone who is pure, you show yourself pure; but you are clever toward anyone who is twisted.

Psalms 18:27

you bring down

"you humiliate"

with proud, uplifted eyes

This idiom refers to those who are proud. Alternate translation: "who are proud" (See: Idiom)

ULT

27 For you save afflicted people, but you bring down those with proud, uplifted eyes!

Psalms 18:28

For you give light to my lamp; Yahweh my God lights up my darkness

The writer speaks of Yahweh's presence as if he were a light. These clauses have similar meanings. (See: Metaphor and Parallelism)

ULT

28 For you give light to my lamp;
Yahweh my God lights up my darkness.

Psalms 18:29

For by you I can run over a barricade

“For with your help I can cross any obstacle”

ULT

29 For by you I can run over a barricade;
by my God I can leap over a wall.

Psalms 18:30

He is a shield to everyone who takes refuge in him

A shield protects a soldier. David speaks as if God were a shield protecting him. See how you translated this in Psalms 3:3. Alternate translation: “You, Yahweh, protect like a shield everyone who takes refuge in you” (See: Metaphor)

ULT

30 As for God—his way is perfect! The word of Yahweh is pure! He is a shield to everyone who takes refuge in him.

Psalms 18:31

For who is God except Yahweh? Who is a rock except our God?

ULT

31 For who is God except Yahweh? Who is a rock except our God?

The implied answer is no one. Alternate translation: “Only Yahweh is God! Only our God is a rock!” (See: Rhetorical Question)

a rock

David speaks of Yahweh as if he were a rock that he could climb to get away from his enemies. See how you translated this in Psalms 18:2. (See: Metaphor)

Psalms 18:32

puts strength on me like a belt

God gives strength to David as if it were a piece of clothing. (See: Simile)

places the blameless person on his path

Here David speaks of living a life that is pleasing to God as if he were being placed on the right path. Alternate translation: “causes the blameless person to live a righteous life” (See: Metaphor)

ULT

32 It is God who puts strength on me like a belt, who places the blameless person on his path.

Psalms 18:33

makes my feet swift

This refers to enabling a person to run fast. Alternate translation: “makes me run very fast” (See: Synecdoche)

like a deer and places me on the heights

The deer is especially quick and stable in the mountains. (See: Simile)

ULT

33 He makes my feet swift like a deer
and places me on the heights!

Psalms 18:34

He trains my hands

Here “my hands” refers to the person. Alternate translation: “He trains me” (See: Synecdoche)

my arms

This refers to the person. Alternate translation: “me” (See: Synecdoche)

ULT

34 He trains my hands for war and my arms to bend a bow of bronze.

Psalms 18:35

the shield of your salvation

Here the writer speaks of God's protection as if it were a shield. The abstract noun "salvation" can be stated with the verb "save." Alternate translation: "your protection and saved me" (See: Metaphor and Abstract Nouns)

ULT

35 You have given me the shield of your salvation. Your right hand has supported me, and your favor has made me great.

Your right hand has supported me

Here God's right hand represents his power. Alternate translation: "Your power has supported me" or "You have supported me by your power" (See: Metonymy)

your favor has made me great

Here God's favor represents him acting according to his favor. Alternate translation: "You have made me great according to your favor" or "By your kindness, you have made me great" (See: Metonymy)

Psalms 18:36

a wide place for my feet beneath me

The writer speaks of the safety that God has provided as if it were a wide place for him to stand. Here “my feet” represent the person. Alternate translation: “a safe place for me” (See: Metaphor and Synecdoche)

ULT

36 You have made a wide place for my feet beneath me so that my feet have not slipped.

my feet have not slipped

Here “my feet” refers to the person. The writer refers to the safety of God’s protection as if he were standing on a place where he will not slip or fall. Alternate translation: “I have not slipped” or “I am doing well” (See: Synecdoche and Metaphor)

Psalms 18:37

(There are no notes for this verse.)

ULT

37 I pursued my enemies and caught them; I did not turn back until they were destroyed.

Psalms 18:38

ULT

38 I smashed them so that they were unable to rise; they have fallen under my feet.

I smashed them

“I crushed them” or “I broke them to pieces”

unable to rise

“unable to stand”

they have fallen under my feet

This idiom means the Psalmist has defeated his enemies. Alternate translation: “I have defeated all of them” (See: Idiom)

Psalms 18:39

put strength on me like a belt

The Psalmist says that Yahweh has given him strength that surrounds and supports him like a belt. See how you translated this in Psalms 18:32. (See: Simile)

ULT

39 For you put strength on me like a belt
for battle; you put under me those who
rise up against me.

you put under me

Here the Psalmist speaks of the defeat of his enemies as if he were standing on them. Alternate translation: “you defeat for me” (See: Idiom)

those who rise up against me

This refers to those who oppose the Psalmist. Alternate translation: “those who are my enemies” (See: Idiom)

Psalms 18:40

You gave me the back of my enemies' necks

This represents God giving David victory over his enemies. Alternate translation: "You gave me victory over my enemies" (See: Metonymy)

ULT

40 You gave me the back of my enemies' necks; I annihilated those who hated me.

You gave me the back of my enemies' necks

This represents God giving David victory over his enemies. Possible images are: (1) David could cut his enemies' heads off at the neck or (2) David could put his foot down on his enemies' necks or (3) David could see his enemies' backs when they ran away from him. (See: Metonymy)

I annihilated those who hated me

"I defeated those who hated me" or "I destroyed completely those who hated me"

Psalms 18:41

but he did not answer them

This means Yahweh did not provide any help. Alternate translation: “but he did not help them” (See: Idiom)

ULT

41 They called for help, but no one saved them; they called out to Yahweh, but he did not answer them.

Psalms 18:42

I beat them into fine pieces like dust before the wind

The psalmists enemies are compared to dust to show how defeated they are. (See: Simile)

ULT

42 I beat them into fine pieces like dust before the wind; I threw them out like mud in the streets.

I threw them out like mud in the streets

The psalmist's enemies are compared to mud in the streets to show how defeated they are. (See: Simile)

Psalms 18:43

disputes

disagreements, arguments

have made me the head over nations

Here “head” represents the ruler. Alternate translation: “appointed me to be the ruler over many nations” (See: Metonymy)

ULT

43 You rescued me from the disputes of people. You have made me the head over nations. People that I have not known serve me.

Psalms 18:44

foreigners were forced to bow

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: “God forced foreigners to bow” (See: Active or Passive)

ULT

44 As soon as they heard of me, they obeyed me; foreigners were forced to bow to me.

Psalms 18:45

foreigners came trembling

Here “trembling” shows that they were very afraid. This can be stated clearly in the translation. Alternate translation: “foreigners came shaking, showing that they were very afraid” (See: Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information)

ULT

45 The foreigners came trembling out of their strongholds.

Psalms 18:46

may my rock be praised

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: “he is my rock and he should be praised” or “may people praise my rock” (See: Active or Passive)

ULT

46 Yahweh lives; may my rock be praised. May the God of my salvation be exalted.

my rock

Here the writer speaks of Yahweh’s protection as if he were a rock that prevented his enemies from reaching him. See how you translated this in Psalms 18:2. (See: Metaphor)

May the God of my salvation be exalted

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: “May people exalt the God of my salvation” (See: Active or Passive)

the God of my salvation

The abstract nouns “salvation” can be stated as “saved” or “rescued.” Alternate translation: “the God who rescued me” (See: Abstract Nouns)

Psalms 18:47

the God who executes vengeance for me

To “execute vengeance” means to punish people for their evil actions. This can be restated to remove the abstract noun “vengeance.” Alternate translation: “the God who punishes people for the evil things they have done to me” (See: Abstract Nouns)

ULT

47 He is the God who executes vengeance for me, who subdues the nations under me.

Psalms 18:48

ULT

48 I am set free from my enemies!
Indeed, you lifted me above the ones
who rose against me! You rescued me
from violent men.

I am set free

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: “God has set me free” (See: Active or Passive)

you lifted me above

Yahweh’s protection of the writer is spoken of as if he lifted the writer up so high that his enemies could not reach him to harm him. Alternate translation: “you put me in a safe place high above” (See: Metaphor)

who rose against me

“who attacked me” or “who rebelled against me”

violent men

“cruel men” or “savage men”

Psalms 18:49

among the nations

Here the writer means that he will give thanks to Yahweh so that all people will hear of Yahweh's greatness. Alternate translation: "so all the nations will hear about it" (See: Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information)

ULT

49 Therefore I will give thanks to you,
Yahweh, among the nations; I will sing
praises to your name!

to your name

Here "name" represents God himself. Alternate translation: "in honor of your name" or "to you" (See: Metonymy)

Psalms 18:50

victory to his king

By using the words “his king,” David is referring to himself as king. (See: First, Second or Third Person)

he shows his covenant loyalty to his anointed one ... to his descendants forever

“he faithfully loves me as he promised in his covenant, and he will love my descendants forever”

ULT

50 God gives great victory to his king, and he shows his covenant loyalty to his anointed one, to David and to his descendants forever.

Psalms 19

Psalm 19 General Notes

Type of psalm

Psalm 19 is a praise psalm, praising God for his creation and for his law.

Special concepts in this chapter

God’s law

God’s law keeps people from sinning. There are two distinct themes in this psalm. Verses 1-6 are God’s glory in the heavens and the second is praising God for his law. (See: law, law of Moses, law of Yahweh, law of God and glory, glorious, glorify and heaven, sky, heavens, heavenly)

Psalms 19:1

General Information:

Parallelism is common in Hebrew poetry. (See: Poetry and Parallelism)

ULT

1 The heavens declare the glory of God,
and the skies make his handiwork known!

For the chief musician

“This is for the director of music to use in worship.”

The heavens declare

The heavens are described as if they were a person. Alternate translation: “The heavens show” or “The heavens look like they declare”

the skies make his handiwork known

The skies are described as if they were a teacher. Alternate translation: “The skies seem to make God’s handiwork known to us” (See: Personification)

his handiwork

“his creation” or “the world that he has made”

Psalms 19:2

speech pours out

What is beautiful about creation is compared to speaking, as if creation were a person. Then those words are compared to water that flows everywhere. Alternate translation: “creation is like a person speaking to everyone” (See: Personification and Metaphor)

ULT

2 Day after day speech pours out; night after night it reveals knowledge.

Psalms 19:3

There is no speech or spoken words; their voice is not heard

ULT

3 There is no speech or spoken words; their voice is not heard.

These phrases express clearly that the first two verses were a metaphor. Alternate translation: “There is no real speech or spoken words; no one hears an actual voice with their ears”

their voice is not heard

Other translations read “where their voice is not heard,” emphasizing that creation’s “speech” is available everywhere.

Psalms 19:4

General Information:

David has just said that creation shows God's glory.

ULT

4 Yet their words go out over all the earth, and their speech to the end of the world. He has pitched a tent for the sun among them.

their words ... their speech

This refers to the unspoken "words" of creation that show God's glory.

their words go out

The words are described as if they were people who go out with a message. Alternate translation: "the words that creation speaks are like people who go out" (See: Personification)

their speech to the end of the world

The implied words can be included in the translation. Alternate translation: "their speech goes out to the end of the world" (See: Ellipsis)

He has pitched a tent for the sun

Here the writer speaks of the place that Yahweh created for the sun as if it were a tent. Alternate translation: "He created a place for the sun" (See: Metaphor)

among them

The word "them" probably refers to the heavens.

Psalms 19:5

The sun is like a bridegroom coming out of his chamber

The writer speaks of the sun's coming out as if it were a bridegroom. Alternate translation: "The sun is like a bridegroom walking joyfully toward his bride" (See: Simile)

ULT

5 The sun is like a bridegroom coming out of his chamber and like a strong man who rejoices when he runs his race.

like a strong man who rejoices when he runs his race

This compares the sun to an athlete to emphasize the strength and brightness of the sun. (See: Simile)

a strong man

"a fast runner"

Psalms 19:6

horizon

the line where the earth and the sky meet

ULT

6 The sun rises from the one horizon
and crosses the sky to the other;
nothing escapes its heat.

to the other

Here “other” refers to the other horizon. This can be stated clearly in the translation. Alternate translation: “to the other horizon” (See: Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information)

nothing escapes its heat

This can be stated in positive form. Alternate translation: “everything feels its heat” (See: Double Negatives)

Psalms 19:7

restoring the soul

The words “the soul” refer to the whole person. Alternate translation: “making a person strong again” (See: Synecdoche)

the simple

“those who have no experience” or “those who have not learned”

ULT

7 The law of Yahweh is perfect, restoring the soul; the testimony of Yahweh is reliable, making the simple wise.

Psalms 19:8

the heart

These words refer to the whole person. Alternate translation: “a person” (See: Synecdoche)

are right

“are true” or “are correct”

bringing light to the eyes

This could mean: (1) “bringing understanding to a person” or (2) “making a person healthy again”

ULT

8 The instructions of Yahweh are right,
making the heart glad; the commandment of Yahweh is pure,
bringing light to the eyes.

Psalms 19:9

altogether right

“completely right”

ULT

9 The fear of Yahweh is pure, enduring
forever; the righteous decrees of
Yahweh are true and altogether right!

Psalms 19:10

They are of greater value than gold ... they are sweeter than honey

Yahweh's decrees are spoken of as if they could be bought and tasted. Alternate translation: "If you could buy them, they would be of greater value than gold ... if you could taste them, they would be sweeter than honey" (See: Metaphor)

ULT

10 They are of greater value than gold, even more than much fine gold; they are sweeter than honey and the dripping honey from the honeycomb.

even more than much fine gold

The word "valuable" is understood from the previous phrase and can be repeated. Alternate translation: "even more valuable than a lot of fine gold" (See: Ellipsis)

fine gold

"pure gold" or "expensive gold"

Psalms 19:11

ULT
11 Yes, by them your servant is warned;
in obeying them there is great reward.

Yes

This word marks that there is more to the truth than what has just been said. Alternate translation: “Moreover”

by them your servant is warned

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: “they warn your servant” or “they are a warning for your servant” (See: Active or Passive)

by them ... in obeying them

The word “them” refers to Yahweh’s righteous decrees.

your servant is warned

David calls himself “your servant” when speaking to God as a sign of respect. Alternate translation: “I am warned” (See: First, Second or Third Person)

Psalms 19:12

Who can discern all his own errors?

This appears in the form of a question to add emphasis and can be translated as a strong statement. Alternate translation: No one can be aware of his own errors!” (See: Rhetorical Question)

from hidden faults

“from secret mistakes I have made”

ULT

12 Who can discern all his own errors?
Cleanse me from hidden faults.

Psalms 19:13

Keep your servant also from

This idiom pictures the servant as being removed from the sins he does not wish to commit. Alternate translation: “Also, protect your servant from doing” or “Also, make sure that I do not commit” (See: Idiom)

ULT

13 Keep your servant also from arrogant sins; let them not rule over me. Then I will be perfect, and I will be innocent from many transgressions.

your servant

David calls himself “your servant” when speaking to God as a sign of respect. See how you translated this in Psalms 19:11. Alternate translation: “I” (See: First, Second or Third Person)

let them not rule over me

Sins are described as if they were a king that could rule over someone. Alternate translation: “do not let my sins become like a king who rules over me” (See: Personification)

innocent from many transgressions

“innocent of rebelling against you” or “innocent of committing many sins”

Psalms 19:14

the words of my mouth and the thoughts of my heart

These expressions taken together describe everything a person says and thinks. Alternate translation: “the things I say and the things I think about” (See: Metonymy)

ULT

14 May the words of my mouth and the thoughts of my heart be acceptable in your sight, Yahweh, my rock and my redeemer.

be acceptable in your sight

“receive approval in your sight” or “be pleasing to you”

in your sight

Here sight represents judgment or evaluation. Alternate translation: “in your judgment” (See: Metaphor)

Yahweh, my rock

The writer speaks of God as if he were a rock that one could climb and be protected from his enemies. Alternate translation: “Yahweh, you are like my rock” (See: Metaphor)

Psalms 20

Psalm 20 General Notes

Type of psalm

Psalm 20 is a royal psalm. It is probably a prayer for the king, perhaps when he first became king.

Special concepts in this chapter

Trust

Trusting God is much better than trusting in military might. (See: trust, trusted, trustworthy, trustworthiness)

Psalms 20:1

General Information:

This Psalm begins with a group of people speaking to the king of Israel. Parallelism is common in Hebrew poetry. (See: Poetry and Parallelism)

ULT

1 May Yahweh help you in the day of trouble; may the name of the God of Jacob protect you

For the chief musician

“This is for the director of music to use in worship”

help you

The word “you” in this Psalm is singular and refers to the king.

in the day of trouble

“in times of trouble” or “when you are in trouble”

may the name of the God of Jacob protect you

This could mean: (1) here “name” is a metonym for God’s power. Alternate translation: “may the power of the God of Jacob protect you” or “may the God of Jacob protect you by his power” or (2) here “name” is a metonym for God himself. Alternate translation: “may the God of Jacob protect you” (See: Metonymy)

Psalms 20:2

send help from the holy place

God helping from his holy place is spoken of as if God were sending help. Alternate translation: “may Yahweh help you from his holy place” (See: Metaphor)

holy place ... Zion

Both of these refer to God’s temple in Jerusalem. (See: Doublet)

ULT

2 and send help from the holy place to support you from Zion.

Psalms 20:3

May he call to mind

The phrase “call to mind” is a way of saying “remember.” It does not mean God forgot. It means to consider or think about. Alternate translation: “May he remember” (See: Idiom)

May he

The word “he” refers to Yahweh.

ULT

3 May he call to mind all your offerings
and accept your burnt sacrifice. *Selah*

Psalms 20:4

May he grant

“May he give”

your heart’s desire

Here “heart” stands for the entire person. The abstract noun “desire” can be stated as a verb. Alternate translation: “what you desire” or “what you want” (See: Synecdoche and Abstract Nouns)

fulfill all your plans

The abstract noun “plans” can be stated as a verb. Alternate translation: “may he help you to accomplish everything that you plan to do” (See: Abstract Nouns)

ULT

4 May he grant you your heart’s desire and fulfill all your plans.

Psalms 20:5

we will rejoice in your victory

Here “we” refers to the people. They will rejoice in the king’s victory. (See: Exclusive and Inclusive ‘We’)

ULT

5 Then we will rejoice in your victory,
and, in the name of our God, we will raise banners. May Yahweh grant all your petitions.

in the name of our God

Here “name” represents honor or reputation. Alternate translation: “in honor of our God” or “for the reputation of our God” (See: Metonymy)

we will raise banners

“we will raise victory flags.” They would do this to show that they were praising God because he gave their king victory over his enemies. (See: Symbolic Action)

grant all your petitions

“give you everything you request from him”

Psalms 20:6

ULT

6 Now I know that Yahweh will rescue his anointed one; he will answer him from his holy heaven with the strength of his right hand that can rescue him.

Now

This word is used here to mark a break in the psalm. It transitions from the people speaking to the king speaking.

I know

The word “I” probably refers to the king who is speaking in this section.

his anointed one ... answer him ... rescue him

The king is speaking about himself in the third person. This can be stated in first person. Alternate translation: “me, his anointed one ... answer me ... rescue me” (See: First, Second or Third Person)

from his holy heaven

God dwells in heaven as well as in the temple in Jerusalem (Psalms 20:2).

with the strength of his right hand that can rescue him

God’s right hand represents his power. Alternate translation: “with his great strength he will rescue him” (See: Metonymy)

Psalms 20:7

Some trust in chariots and others in horses

Here “chariots” and “horses” represent a king’s army. (See: Metonymy)

ULT

7 Some trust in chariots and others in horses, but we call on Yahweh our God.

others in horses

The word “trust” is understood. Alternate translation: “other trust in horses” (See: Ellipsis)

we call

Here “we” refers to the writer and the readers. (See: Exclusive and Inclusive ‘We’)

Psalms 20:8

ULT

8 They will be brought down and fall,
but we will rise and stand upright!

we will rise

Here “we” refers to the writer and the readers. (See: Exclusive and Inclusive ‘We’)

They will be brought down and fall

The word “They” refers to the people who trust in chariots and horses. This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: “God will bring them down and make them fall” (See: Active or Passive)

brought down and fall

Both these verbs mean basically the same thing. Both of these stand for losing in battle. (See: Doublet)

we will rise and stand upright

“we will get up and stand up straight.” These two phrases mean basically the same thing. Both of these stand for victory in battle. (See: Doublet)

Psalms 20:9

Yahweh, rescue the king

This could mean: (1) the people ask God to protect the king or (2) the king continues to speak about himself in the third person.

ULT

9 Yahweh, rescue the king; help us when we call.

the king; help us when we call

Some translations understand the Hebrew differently. Some translate it as the people speaking to Yahweh their king. Alternate translation: “King, help us when we call you”

Psalms 21

Psalm 21 General Notes

Type of psalm

Psalm 21 is a royal psalm. The king is praying for victory. Victory in war comes from the power and help from God.

Special concepts in this chapter

Pronouns

There is a shift in pronouns in this psalm. In verses 1-6 the psalm addresses Yahweh in second person but in verse 7 the psalmist uses third person before moving back to second person in the latter part.

Psalms 21:1

General Information:

Parallelism is common in Hebrew poetry. (See: Poetry and Parallelism)

ULT

1 The king rejoices in your strength,
Yahweh! How greatly he rejoices in the
salvation you provide!

For the chief musician

“This is for the director of music to use in worship.”

in your strength, Yahweh

It is implied that this is strength Yahweh has given the king to defeat his enemies. Alternate translation: because you, Yahweh, have made him strong enough to defeat his enemies”

How greatly he rejoices

“He rejoices greatly”

in the salvation you provide

It is implied that God has saved the king from his enemies. The abstract noun “salvation” can be stated as a verb. Alternate translation: “because you have saved him from his enemies” (See: Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information and Abstract Nouns)

Psalms 21:2

his heart’s desire

“his heart’s wish.” Here “heart” stands for the whole person. Alternate translation: “his desire” or “what he wished for” (See: Synecdoche)

ULT

2 You have given him his heart’s desire
and have not held back the request of
his lips. *Selah*

have not held back

“have not refused him.” This can be stated in positive form. Alternate translation: “you have given him” (See: Double Negatives)

the request of his lips

Here “lips” stands for the whole person. Alternate translation: “his request” or “what he requested of you” (See: Synecdoche)

Psalms 21:3

you bring him rich blessings

The abstract noun “blessings” can be stated as “bless” or “good things.” Alternate translation: “you bless him greatly” or “you give him many good things” (See: Abstract Nouns)

ULT

3 For you bring him rich blessings; you placed on his head a crown of purest gold.

you placed on his head a crown of purest gold

To place a crown on a person’s head is a symbol of making him a king. (See: Symbolic Action)

a crown of purest gold

Here “purest gold” represents the great honor given to the king.

Psalms 21:4

He asked you for life; you gave it to him

The abstract noun “life” can be stated as a verb. Alternate translation: “He asked that you cause him to live for a long time; you caused it to happen” (See: Abstract Nouns)

ULT

4 He asked you for life; you gave it to him; you gave him the length of his days forever and ever.

the length of his days forever and ever

The idiom “the length of his days” refers to the duration of his life. Alternate translation: “a long life that lasts forever” (See: Idiom)

Psalms 21:5

His glory

“The king’s honor” or “The king’s fame”

you have bestowed on him splendor and majesty

“you have placed on him splendor and majesty.” Causing the king to be wealthy and powerful is spoken of as if splendor and majesty are objects that are placed on him. Alternate translation: “you have made him wealthy and powerful” (See: Metaphor)

ULT

5 His glory is great because of your victory; you have bestowed on him splendor and majesty.

Psalms 21:6

ULT

6 For you grant him lasting blessings;
you make him glad with the joy of your presence.

you grant him

“you allow him to have” or “you agree to give him”

lasting blessings

“a blessings that will last” or “a blessings that will stay”

the joy of your presence

“the joy of being in your presence” or “the joy that comes from you being near to you”

Psalms 21:7

through the covenant faithfulness of the Most High

The abstract noun “faithfulness” can be translated as an adjective. Alternate translation: “because the Most High is faithful to his covenant” (See: Abstract Nouns)

he will not be moved

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: “no one will remove him as king” (See: Active or Passive)

ULT

7 For the king trusts in Yahweh; through the covenant faithfulness of the Most High he will not be moved.

Psalms 21:8

Your hand will seize

Here “hand” represents power. Alternate translation: “Your power will seize” or “You will powerfully seize” (See: Metonymy)

ULT

8 Your hand will seize all your enemies;
your right hand will seize those who
hate you.

Your hand ... hate you

Possible meaning of all occurrences of **your** and **you** are: (1) they refer to the king or (2) they refer to God.

your right hand will seize those who hate you

This means the same thing as the first part of the sentence. It emphasizes that God will give the king the power to stop his enemies. (See: Parallelism)

Psalms 21:9

> **ULT**
> **9** At the time of your anger, you will burn them up as in a fiery furnace. Yahweh will consume them in his wrath, and the fire will devour them.

At the time of your anger

"When you are angry and begin to act"

your anger ... you will burn

The words **your** and **you** refers to either: (1) God or (2) the king.

you will burn them up as in a fiery furnace

Yahweh or the king destroying their enemies is spoken of as if their enemies are wood and Yahweh or the king will throw them into a furnace. (See: Metaphor)

Yahweh will consume them in his wrath, and the fire will devour them

Both clauses mean basically the same thing. Yahweh completely destroying his enemies is spoken of as if his wrath is a fire that completely burns up his enemies. (See: Parallelism and Metaphor)

Psalms 21:10

You will destroy

The word **you** refers to either: (1) God or (2) the king.

from the earth ... from among the human race

Both phrases mean the same thing. They emphasize that absolutely none of their enemies will survive. (See: Parallelism)

ULT

10 You will destroy their offspring from the earth and their descendants from among the human race.

Psalms 21:11

they intended

"they planned." The word "they" refers to the enemies of God and the king.

evil against you

"to do evil things to you"

they conceived a plot

"they made a plan" or "they created a scheme"

ULT

11 For they intended evil against you;
they conceived a plot with which they will not succeed!

Psalms 21:12

For you will turn them back; you will draw your bow before them

ULT

12 For you will turn them back; you will draw your bow before them.

Possible meanings for **your** and **you** are: (1) they refer to the king or (2) they refer to God and speak about him as if he were a warrior with a bow and arrows. (See: Metaphor)

you will turn them back

This is a way of saying that God and the king will defeat their enemies in battle. (See: Idiom)

you will draw your bow before them

This implies that he actually shoots his arrows at his enemies. (See: Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information)

Psalms 21:13

Be exalted, Yahweh, in your strength

This could mean: (1) “Yahweh, show us that you are very strong” or (2) “Yahweh, because you are strong we will exalt you”

ULT

13 Be exalted, Yahweh, in your strength;
we will sing and praise your power.

we will sing and praise your power

The words “sing” and “praise” share similar meanings. Here the word “power” represents God and his power. Alternate translation: “with singing we will praise you because you are powerful” (See: Doublet and Metonymy)

Psalms 22

Psalm 22 General Notes

Type of psalm

Psalm 22 is a messianic psalm. It contains references to events during the crucifixion of Christ. It is also a psalm of individual lament and praise. (See: Christ, Messiah and crucify, crucified and lament, lamentation)

Special concepts in this chapter

Messiah

Christ was despised and taunted by his enemies; but finally people all over the earth will bow down to him.

New Testament usage

This psalm is quoted in different places in the New Testament. Verse 1a is cited in Matthew 27:46 and Mark 15:34 as the words of Christ on the cross. Many of the events in the narratives of the crucifixion are mentioned in this psalm. (See: cross)

Psalms 22:1

ULT

1 My God, my God, why have you abandoned me? Why are you so far from saving me and far from the words of my anguish?

General Information:

Parallelism is common in Hebrew poetry. (See: Poetry and Parallelism)

For the chief musician

“This is for the director of music to use in worship”

The rhythm of the deer

This may refer to a style of music.

My God, my God

The writer repeats “My God” to emphasize that he is desperate for God to hear him.

my God, why have you abandoned me?

The writer uses a question to emphasize that he feels like God has abandoned him. It may be best to leave this as a question. It can also be translated as a statement. Alternate translation: “my God, I feel like you have abandoned me!” (See: Rhetorical Question)

you abandoned me

“you left me all alone”

Why are you so far from saving me and far from the words of my anguish?

Again the writer uses a question to emphasize that he feels like God is far away from him. It may be best to leave this as a question. It can also be translated as a statement. Alternate translation: “You are far from saving me and far from the words of my anguish!” (See: Rhetorical Question)

far from the words of my anguish

The writer feeling like God is not listening to him is spoken of as if God were far from his words of anguish. Alternate translation: “why do you not listen when I speak to you about the anguish I feel” or “I have told you about my suffering but you do not come to me” (See: Metaphor)

Psalms 22:2

in the daytime ... at night

The writer uses the words “daytime” and “night” to mean he prays to God all the time. (See: Merism)

I am not silent

This can be stated in positive form. Alternate translation: “I still speak” (See: Litotes)

ULT

2 My God, I cry out in the daytime, but you do not answer, and at night I am not silent!

Psalms 22:3

you sit as king with the praises of Israel

“the praises of Israel are the throne on which you sit as king.” The praises of Israel are described as if they are a throne upon which God can sit and rule, or as a house in which God can live. Alternate translation: “you are king and the people of Israel praise you” (See: Metaphor)

of Israel

Here “Israel” represents the people of Israel. (See: Metonymy)

ULT

3 Yet you are holy; you sit as king with the praises of Israel.

Psalms 22:4

(There are no notes for this verse.)

ULT

4 Our ancestors trusted in you; they
trusted in you, and you rescued them.

Psalms 22:5

were not disappointed

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: “you did not disappoint them” or “you did not fail them” (See: Active or Passive)

ULT

5 They cried to you and they were rescued. They trusted in you and were not disappointed.

were not disappointed

This can be stated in positive form. Alternate translation: “you saved them” or “you did for them what they needed you to do” (See: Double Negatives)

Psalms 22:6

I am a worm and not a man

The writer speaks of himself as if he were a worm. This emphasizes that he feels worthless or that the people treat him as if he were worthless. Alternate translation: “But it is like I am a worm and not a man” (See: Metaphor)

ULT

6 But I am a worm and not a man, a disgrace to humanity and despised by the people.

disgrace to humanity and despised by the people

Both of these phrase mean basically the same thing. The phrase “despised by the people” can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: “everyone thinks I am worthless and the people hate me” (See: Parallelism and Active or Passive)

Psalms 22:7

taunt me; they mock me; they shake their heads at me

These three phrases share similar meanings and emphasize how much people disrespect him. (See: Parallelism)

ULT

7 All those who see me taunt me; they mock me; they shake their heads at me.

they shake their heads at me

This describes an action used to mock someone. (See: Symbolic Action)

Psalms 22:8

He trusts in Yahweh ... delights in him

The people are saying this to mock the writer. They do not really believe Yahweh will rescue him. (See: Irony)

ULT

8 They say, “He trusts in Yahweh; let Yahweh rescue him. Let him rescue him, for he delights in him.”

Let him rescue him

“Let Yahweh rescue him”

for he delights in him

This could mean: (1) “for Yahweh delights in him” or (2) “for he delights in Yahweh”

Psalms 22:9

For you

The writer uses the word “For” to begin explaining why he is confused and asking God why he is not coming to help. (See: Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information)

ULT

9 For you brought me from the womb;
you made me trust you when I was on
my mother’s breasts.

you brought me from the womb

This is a way of saying “you caused me to be born.” (See: Idiom)

when I was on my mother’s breasts

This means that he has been trusting in Yahweh since he was very young. Alternate translation: “even from the time that I drank milk from my mother’s breasts” (See: Idiom)

Psalms 22:10

I have been thrown on you from the womb

The phrase “have been thrown on” is a way of saying that Yahweh has taken care of him as if Yahweh had adopted him as his own child. This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: “It was as though you had adopted me right when I was born” (See: Idiom and Active or Passive)

ULT

10 I have been thrown on you from the womb; you are my God since I was in my mother’s womb!

you are my God

This implies that Yahweh has always taken care of the writer. Alternate translation: “you, God, have taken care of me” (See: Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information)

since I was in my mother’s womb

“since before I was born”

Psalms 22:11

Do not be far away from me

This can be stated in positive form. Alternate translation: “Come close to me” (See: Litotes)

ULT

11 Do not be far away from me, for trouble is near; there is no one to help.

for trouble is near

The writer speaks about “trouble” as if it were an object that is near him. Alternate translation: “for my enemies are near me” (See: Metaphor)

there is no one to help

“there is no helper”

Psalms 22:12

Many bulls surround me; strong bulls of Bashan surround me

ULT

12 Many bulls surround me; strong bulls of Bashan surround me.

The writer speaks about his enemies as if they were bulls. This emphasizes how dangerous and powerful his enemies are. Alternate translation: “I have many enemies and they are like bulls that surround me; they are like strong bulls from Bashan that surround me” (See: Metaphor and Parallelism)

Psalms 22:13

They open their mouths wide against me

The writer speaks about his enemies as if they were lions with the mouths open ready to eat him. His enemies may be speaking lies to discredit him. Or they may be threatening him and attacking him. (See: Metaphor)

ULT

13 They open their mouths wide against me like a roaring lion ripping its victim.

like a roaring lion ripping its victim

The writer speaks about his enemies as if they were lions. This emphasizes how powerful and dangerous his enemies are. (See: Simile)

Psalms 22:14

I am being poured out like water

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: “It is like someone is pouring me out like water” (See: Active or Passive)

ULT

14 I am being poured out like water, and all my bones are dislocated. My heart is like wax; it melts away within my inner parts.

I am being poured out like water

The writer speaks about feeling completely exhausted and weak as if he were water being poured out of a jar. (See: Simile)

all my bones are dislocated

“all my bones are out of place.” It is possible the writer is in some kind of physical pain. Or he may be speaking of his emotional pain as if it were physical pain. (See: Metaphor)

My heart is like wax ... inner parts

The writer speaks about no longer having courage as if his heart melted like wax. Here “heart” represents “courage.” (See: Simile and Metonymy)

wax

a soft substance that melts at a relatively low temperature

within my inner parts

“inside of me”

Psalms 22:15

My strength has dried up like a piece of pottery

The writer speaks about feeling weak as if his strength were like a dry piece of pottery that can easily break. (See: Simile)

ULT

15 My strength has dried up like a piece of pottery; my tongue sticks to the roof of my mouth. You have laid me in the dust of death.

piece of pottery

an object made of baked clay that can be used in the house

my tongue sticks to the roof of my mouth

“my tongue sticks to the top of my mouth.” The writer may be describing his extreme thirst. Or he may be continuing to speak about being weak as if he were completely dry. (See: Metaphor)

You have laid me in the dust of death

Possible meanings for **dust of death** are: (1) it refers to a person turning to dust after they die. Alternate translation: “You are about to let me die and become dust” or (2) it is a way of speaking about the grave, which would mean God is causing the writer to die. Alternate translation: “You have laid me in my grave” (See: Metaphor)

You have laid me

The “you” is singular and refers to God. (See: Forms of You)

Psalms 22:16

dogs have surrounded me

The writer speaks about his enemies as if they were dogs. His enemies are coming close to him like wild dogs do to a dying animal. Alternate translation: “my enemies are like dogs that have surrounded me” (See: Metaphor)

ULT

16 For dogs have surrounded me; a company of evildoers has encircled me; they have pierced my hands and my feet.

a company of evildoers

“a group of evildoers” or “a gang of evildoers”

encircled

stood in a circle

they have pierced my hands and my feet

This continues the dog metaphor. The writer speaks about his enemies as if they were dogs that are biting and piercing his hands and feet with their teeth. (See: Metaphor)

pierced

stabbed through something with a sharp object

Psalms 22:17

I can count all my bones

This could mean: (1) the writer is so thin that he can see his bones. Alternate translation: “I can see all of my bones” or “I can feel each of my bones” or (2) this continues the dog metaphor and the writer can see his bones after the dogs have ripped his flesh. (See: Metaphor)

ULT

17 I can count all my bones. They look and stare at me.

look and stare at me

The words “look” and “stare” mean basically the same thing and emphasize that people look at him awkwardly and make fun of him. (See: Doublet)

Psalms 22:18

my garments

“my clothes”

ULT

18 They divide my garments among themselves, they cast lots for my clothes.

Psalms 22:19

Do not be far away

This can be stated in positive form. Alternate translation: “Be very close” (See: Litotes)

ULT

19 Do not be far away, Yahweh; please hurry to help me, my strength!

my strength

Here “strength” represents Yahweh who gives him strength. Alternate translation: “you who give me strength” (See: Metonymy)

Psalms 22:20

ULT

20 Rescue my soul from the sword, my only life from the claws of wild dogs.

Rescue my soul

Here “soul” stands for the whole person. Alternate translation: “Rescue me” (See: Synecdoche)

the sword

The sword is a common way of referring to a violent enemy. Alternate translation: “those who want to kill me” or “my enemies” (See: Metonymy)

my only life

“my precious life” or “the only life I have”

claws of wild dogs

The writer speaks about his enemies as if they were dogs to emphasize how dangerous his enemies are. Also, the claws stand for the animals as a whole in a synecdoche. The writer emphasizes this part of the animal because it is what the animals would use to kill someone. (See: Metaphor and Synecdoche)

wild dogs

The word “wild” here means that no one has captured and tamed the animal.

Psalms 22:21

lion’s mouth ... horns of the wild oxen

The writer speaks about his enemies as if they were lions and wild oxen to emphasize how dangerous his enemies are. Also, the mouth and horns stand for the animals as a whole in a synecdoche. The writer emphasizes these parts of the animals because they are what the animals would use to kill someone. (See: Metaphor and Synecdoche)

ULT

21 Save me from the lion’s mouth;
rescue me from the horns of the wild oxen.

wild oxen

The word “wild” here means that no one has captured and tamed the animal.

Psalms 22:22

I will declare your name

“I will make known your name.” Here “name” stands for God’s character or reputation. Alternate translation: “I will talk about your character” (See: Metonymy)

ULT

22 I will declare your name to my brothers; in the midst of the assembly I will praise you.

my brothers

Here “brothers” means “my fellow Israelites” or “my fellow worshipers of Yahweh”

in the midst of the assembly

“when my fellow Israelites and I gather together” or “when I am surrounded by my fellow worshipers of Yahweh”

Psalms 22:23

You who fear

Here “You” is plural. (See: Forms of You)

you descendants of Jacob ... you descendants of Israel

Both of these refer to the same group of people. (See: Parallelism)

Stand in awe of him

“Be full of awe for him” or “Let God’s power amaze you”

ULT

23 You who fear Yahweh, praise him! All you descendants of Jacob, honor him! Stand in awe of him, all you descendants of Israel!

Psalms 22:24

he has not despised or abhorred the suffering of the afflicted one

This could mean: (1) he has not despised the afflicted one because he is suffering or (2) he has not belittled the suffering of the afflicted one

ULT

24 For he has not despised or abhorred the suffering of the afflicted one;
Yahweh has not hidden his face from him; when the afflicted one cried to him, he heard.

despised or abhorred

These two words mean basically the same thing and emphasize that God has not forgotten the one who is afflicted and suffering. (See: Doublet)

despised

strongly disliked or hated

he has not ... abhorred the suffering of the afflicted one

Here, suffering is a metonym for the person who suffers. To abhor something is to think of it as horrible. Alternate translation: “he has not ... thought of the afflicted one who suffers as horrible” (See: Metonymy)

the suffering of the afflicted one ... from him ... the afflicted one cried

This could mean: (1) the author was speaking about how God treats people who are suffering. Alternate translation: “those who suffer ... from them ... those who are suffering cried” or (2) the author was speaking specifically about how God treated him. Alternate translation: “my suffering because of my affliction ... from me ... I cried” (See: Generic Noun Phrases and First, Second or Third Person)

has not hidden his face from him

Hiding one’s face from someone represents ignoring him. Alternate translation: “has not turned his attention away from him” or “has not ignored him” (See: Metaphor)

he heard

“he listened.” It is implied that he responded when he heard their cry. Alternate translation: “he answered” or “he helped” (See: Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information)

Psalms 22:25

ULT

25 My praise will be because of you in the great assembly; I will fulfill my vows before those who fear him.

because of you

Here “you” refers to Yahweh. (See: Forms of You)

I will fulfill my vows

This refers to sacrifices the writer promised to offer to God. (See: Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information)

before those who fear him

Here “him” refers to Yahweh. It can be stated as “you.” Alternate translation: “in the presence of those who fear you” (See: First, Second or Third Person)

Psalms 22:26

The oppressed will eat and be satisfied

This refers to the fellowship meal which occurs after the writer offers to God the sacrifices that he promised. He will invite those who were suffering to eat a part of the animal he sacrificed. (See: Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information)

ULT

26 The oppressed will eat and be satisfied; those who seek Yahweh will praise him. May your hearts live forever.

those who seek Yahweh

Those who want to know Yahweh and please him are spoken of as if they are literally seeking to find Yahweh. (See: Metaphor)

May your hearts live forever

Here “hearts” represent the whole person. Alternate translation: “May you live forever” (See: Synecdoche)

May your hearts

Here “your” is plural and refers to the oppressed people. (See: Forms of You)

Psalms 22:27

ULT

27 All the peoples of the earth will remember and turn to Yahweh; all the families of the nations will bow down before you.

will remember and turn to Yahweh

Starting to obey Yahweh is spoken of as if the people physically turn toward Yahweh. Alternate translation: “will remember Yahweh and obey him” (See: Metaphor)

all the families of the nations will bow down before you

This means the same thing as the first part of the sentence. The writer is emphasizing that everyone from every place will worship and obey Yahweh. (See: Parallelism)

will bow down before you

This is a sign of giving honor and respect to someone. (See: Symbolic Action)

before you

Here “you” refers to Yahweh. It can be translated in the third person to match the first part of the sentence. Alternate translation: “before him” (See: Forms of You and First, Second or Third Person)

Psalms 22:28

For the kingdom is Yahweh’s

“For the kingdom belongs to Yahweh.” Here “kingdom” represents God’s rule as king. Alternate translation: “For Yahweh is king” (See: Metonymy)

ULT

28 For the kingdom is Yahweh’s; he is the ruler over the nations.

he is the ruler over the nations

Here “nations” represents the people of the nations. Alternate translation: “he rules the people of the nations” (See: Metonymy)

Psalms 22:29

will feast

The people will eat together at the feast. Alternate translation: “will eat together” or “will eat a festive meal together”

all those who are descending into the dust ... those who cannot preserve their own lives

Both phrases refers to the same group. They both refer to all people because all people will die. (See: Parallelism)

those who are descending into the dust

Here “dust” represents the grave. The phrase “descending into the dust” is a way of referring to someone dying. Alternate translation: “those who are dying” or “those who die” (See: Metonymy and Idiom)

those who cannot preserve their own lives

“those who cannot save their own lives” or “those who cannot keep themselves from dying”

ULT

29 All the prosperous people of the earth will feast and will worship; all those who are descending into the dust will bow before him, those who cannot preserve their own lives.

Psalms 22:30

A generation to come

Here “A generation” represents the people of a generation. The phrase “to come” speaks about a future time as if it were something that travels and arrives somewhere. Alternate translation: “People in the future generations” (See: Metonymy and Metaphor)

ULT

30 A generation to come will serve him;
they will tell the next generation of the Lord.

the next generation

Here “generation” represents the people of that generation. Alternate translation: “the people of the next generation” or “their children” (See: Metonymy)

of the Lord

“about the Lord” or “about what the Lord has done”

Psalms 22:31

tell of his righteousness

The abstract noun “righteousness” can be stated as an adjective. Alternate translation: “tell of the righteous things he has done” (See: Abstract Nouns)

ULT

31 They will come and tell of his righteousness; they will tell to a people not yet born what he has done!

Psalms 23

Psalm 23 General Notes

Type of psalm

Psalm 23 is a psalm of praise to God for his continued care and protection. The psalmist praises God for always being with him and for caring for him.

Important figures of speech in this chapter

Metaphor

Psalm 23 is an extended metaphor speaking of God as if he were a shepherd, and of the psalmist as if he were a sheep. (See: Metaphor)

Psalms 23:1

General Information:

In much of this psalm, David writes as if he were a sheep and the Lord were his shepherd. Parallelism is common in Hebrew poetry. (See: Poetry and Parallelism and Biblical Imagery — Extended Metaphors)

ULT

1 Yahweh is my shepherd; I will lack nothing.

Yahweh is my shepherd

The writer speaks about Yahweh as if he were a shepherd. This emphasizes how God cares for people as a shepherd cares for his sheep. Alternate translation: “Yahweh is like a shepherd to me” or “Yahweh cares for me as a shepherd cares for his sheep” (See: Metaphor)

I will lack nothing

This can be stated in positive form. Alternate translation: “I have everything that I need” (See: Litotes)

Psalms 23:2

He makes me to lie down in green pastures

The writer speaks about himself as if he were a sheep, and he speaks about Yahweh as if he were a shepherd. Alternate translation: He gives me rest like a shepherd who leads his sheep to lie down in green pastures" (See: Metaphor)

ULT

2 He makes me to lie down in green pastures; he leads me beside tranquil water.

he leads me beside tranquil water

The writer speaks about himself as if he were a sheep, and he speaks about Yahweh as if he were a shepherd. Alternate translation: "he provides what I need like a shepherd who leads his sheep beside tranquil water" (See: Metaphor)

tranquil water

"calm water" or "water that flows gently." This water is safe to drink.

Psalms 23:3

General Information:

This psalm continues to tell about how God cares for us as a shepherd cares for his sheep. (See: Biblical Imagery — Extended Metaphors)

ULT

3 He brings back my life; he guides me along right paths for his name’s sake.

He brings back my life

This means God makes a person who is weak and tired to be strong and rested again.

he guides me along right paths

Showing a person how to live in a way that pleases God is spoken of as if it were a shepherd showing a sheep the right path to take. Alternate translation: “He shows me how to live right” (See: Metaphor)

for his name’s sake

The phrase “his name” here refers to his reputation. Alternate translation: “for his reputation” or “so that people will honor him” (See: Metonymy)

Psalms 23:4

General Information:

This psalm continues to tell about how God cares for us as a shepherd cares for his sheep. (See: Biblical Imagery — Extended Metaphors)

ULT

4 Even though I walk through a valley of darkest shadow, I will not fear harm since you are with me; your rod and your staff comfort me.

Even though I walk through a valley of darkest shadow

The writer describes a person experiencing terrible trouble as if he were a sheep walking through a dark and dangerous valley. There a sheep could get lost or attacked by a wild animal. Alternate translation: “Though my life is like walking through a dark and dangerous valley” (See: Metaphor)

I will not fear harm

The abstract noun “harm” can be stated as a verb. Alternate translation: “I will not be afraid of something harming me” (See: Abstract Nouns)

you are with me

Here “you” refers to Yahweh. (See: Forms of You)

your rod and your staff comfort me

The rod and staff represent protection because shepherds use them to protect their sheep from danger. Alternate translation: “I am not afraid because you protect me like a shepherd who protects his sheep with his rod and staff” (See: Metonymy)

Psalms 23:5

General Information:

Now the writer tells how God is like someone who welcomes a guest into his home and protects him. (See: Biblical Imagery — Extended Metaphors)

ULT

5 You prepare a table before me in the presence of my enemies; you have anointed my head with oil; my cup runs over.

You prepare a table

A table represents a feast because people would put all the food on a table. (See: Metonymy)

in the presence of my enemies

The meaning here is that the writer is not worried about his enemies because he is an honored guest of the Lord and therefore protected from harm. Alternate translation: “despite the presence of my enemies”

anointed my head with oil

People sometimes put oil on their guests’ heads in order to honor them.

my cup runs over

Here a cup of wine that overflows represents many blessings. Alternate translation: “You fill my cup so much that it overflows” or “You give me many blessings” (See: Idiom)

Psalms 23:6

Surely goodness and covenant faithfulness will pursue me

Yahweh being good and faithful to a person is spoken of as if goodness and covenant faithfulness are things that pursue after a person. The abstract nouns “goodness” and “faithfulness” can be translated as adjectives. Alternate translation: “Surely you will be good and faithful to me” (See: Metaphor and Abstract Nouns)

ULT

6 Surely goodness and covenant faithfulness will pursue me all the days of my life; and I will live in the house of Yahweh for the length of my days!

all the days of my life

The abstract noun “life” can be stated as a verb. Alternate translation: “as long as I live” (See: Abstract Nouns)

the house of Yahweh

This could mean: (1) this refers to Yahweh’s eternal home, or (2) this refers to Yahweh’s temple in Jerusalem. If possible, translate it so that both meanings could be understood.

for the length of my days

This idiom refers to the duration of his life. Alternate translation: “as long as I live” or “forever” (See: Idiom)

Psalms 24

Psalm 24 General Notes

Type of psalm

Psalm 24 is a psalm of praise to God as the almighty God. (See: Almighty)

Special concepts in this chapter

Righteous people

Only the righteous come to worship God. (See: righteous, righteousness, unrighteous, unrighteousness, upright, uprightness)

Important figures of speech in this chapter

Rhetorical Questions

The psalmists uses several rhetorical questions. Each question forms a unit with a response. (See: Rhetorical Question)

Psalms 24:1

General Information:

Parallelism is common in Hebrew poetry. (See: Poetry and Parallelism)

ULT

1 The earth is Yahweh's, and its fullness,
the world, and all who live in it.

its fullness

The abstract noun "fullness" can be stated with the verb "fills." Alternate translation: "everything that fills it" (See: Abstract Nouns)

Psalms 24:2

For he has founded it upon the seas and established it on the rivers

ULT

2 For he has founded it upon the seas and established it on the rivers.

Here “founded it upon the seas” and “established it on the rivers” mean basically the same thing. The Hebrews of that time believed their land was supported by the oceans and deep underground rivers. Alternate translation: For he formed its foundation on the seas and built it on the deep waters” (See: Parallelism and Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information)

the seas ... the rivers

These phrases are used together to refer to the huge deep ocean below the earth.

on the rivers

“the water that is deep below”

Psalms 24:3

Who will ascend the mountain ... in his holy place?

Both of these questions mean basically the same thing. The speaker is asking about who is allowed to go and worship Yahweh. (See: Parallelism)

ULT

3 Who will ascend the mountain of Yahweh? Who will stand in his holy place?

will ascend

“will go up” or “will climb”

the mountain of Yahweh

This refers to Mount Zion in Jerusalem.

his holy place

This refers Yahweh’s temple. His temple is on Mount Zion in Jerusalem.

Psalms 24:4

ULT

4 He who has clean hands and a pure heart; who has not lifted up a falsehood, and has not sworn an oath in order to deceive.

He who has ... who has ... and has not

Here “He” does not refer to a specific person. Alternate translation: “Those who have ... who have ... and have not” (See: Generic Noun Phrases)

who has clean hands

The word “hands” represents what a person does. For his “hands” to be clean means he does what is right. Alternate translation: “who does what is right” (See: Metonymy)

a pure heart

Here “heart” represents a person’s thoughts or motives. Alternate translation: “thinks good thoughts” or “does not think about doing what is wrong” (See: Metonymy)

who has not lifted up a falsehood

Here “falsehood” represents a false idol. To “lift up” means to worship. Alternate translation: “who has not worshiped an idol” (See: Metonymy and Idiom)

Psalms 24:5

He will receive a blessing from Yahweh

The word “he” does not refer to a specific person. It refers to the ones with pure hearts mentioned in previous verse. The abstract noun “blessing” can be stated as a verb. Alternate translation: “Yahweh will bless them” (See: Generic Noun Phrases and Abstract Nouns)

ULT

5 He will receive a blessing from Yahweh and righteousness from the God of his salvation.

righteousness from the God of his salvation

The abstract noun “righteousness” can be stated as “righteously.” And, “salvation” can be stated as “save.” Alternate translation: “God will deal righteously with him and save him” (See: Abstract Nouns)

Psalms 24:6

Such is the generation of those who seek him

Here “generation” represents people in general. Alternate translation: “The people who seek him are like this” (See: Metonymy)

ULT

6 Such is the generation of those who seek him, those who seek the face of the God of Jacob. *Selah*

those who seek him, those who seek the face of the God of Jacob

Both statements mean the same thing. They both refer to those who go to the temple to worship God. Alternate translation: “the ones who approach God, they are the ones who may worship God, the one we Israelites worship” (See: Parallelism)

those who seek him

Going to the temple to worship Yahweh is spoken of as if the person is literally seeking to find him. (See: Metaphor)

the face of the God of Jacob

Here “face” stands for the whole person. Alternate translation: “the God of Jacob” (See: Synecdoche)

Psalms 24:7

Lift up your heads, you gates; be lifted up, everlasting doors

ULT

7 Lift up your heads, you gates; be lifted up, everlasting doors, so that the King of glory may come in!

The two phases are very similar in meaning. The words “gates” and “doors” refer to the gates of the temple. The writer is speaking to the gates as if they were a person. A gatekeeper would be the one to open the gates. Alternate translation: “Open up, you ancient gates” or “Open these ancient gates” (See: Parallelism and Personification)

Lift up your heads

It is uncertain what specific part of the gate is the “head.” But, it stands for the gate as a whole. (See: Synecdoche)

Psalms 24:8

Yahweh, strong and mighty; Yahweh, mighty in battle

The writer speaks about Yahweh as if he were a mighty warrior who fights in battles. (See: Metaphor)

ULT

8 Who is this King of glory? Yahweh, strong and mighty; Yahweh, mighty in battle.

Psalms 24:9

Lift up your heads, you gates; be lifted up, everlasting doors

ULT

9 Lift up your heads, you gates; be lifted up, everlasting doors, so that the King of glory may come in!

The two phases are very similar in meaning. The words “gates” and “doors” refer to the gates of the temple. The writer is speaking to the gates as if they were a person. A gatekeeper would be the one to open the gates. See how you translated this in Psalms 24:7. Alternate translation: “Open up, you ancient gates” or “Open these ancient gates” (See: Parallelism and Personification)

Lift up your heads

It is uncertain what specific part of the gate is the “head.” But, it stands for the gate as a whole. (See: Synecdoche)

Psalms 24:10

(There are no notes for this verse.)

ULT

10 Who is this King of glory? Yahweh of hosts, he is the King of glory. *Selah*

Psalms 25

Psalm 25 General Notes

Type of psalm

Psalm 25 is a prayer for God’s help.

Special concepts in this chapter

The humble

God is very good to humble people who seek to obey him.

Psalms 25:1

General Information:

Parallelism is common in Hebrew poetry. (See: Poetry and Parallelism)

ULT

1 To you, Yahweh, I lift up my life!

I lift up my life

The phrase “lift up my life” is a metaphor. This could mean: (1) the writer is giving himself to Yahweh, which means he is completely depending on Yahweh. Alternate translation: “I give myself to you” or (2) he is offering prayer and adoration to Yahweh. Alternate translation: “I worship and adore you” (See: Metaphor)

Psalms 25:2

Do not let me be humiliated

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: “Do not let my enemies humiliate me” (See: Active or Passive)

ULT

2 My God, I trust in you. Do not let me be humiliated; do not let my enemies rejoice triumphantly over me.

rejoice triumphantly over me

“rejoice in triumph over me.” The phrase “over me” implies that his enemies have defeated him and stand above in victory. Alternate translation: “defeat me and rejoice about it” (See: Idiom)

Psalms 25:3

May no one who hopes in you be disgraced

“Do not let those who hope in you be disgraced.” Disgrace could come from being defeated by their enemies. This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: “Do not let enemies defeat those who hope in you” (See: Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information and Active or Passive)

who hopes in you

“who trusts you”

act treacherously

“act deceitfully” or “act with trickery”

without cause

“without a reason”

ULT

3 May no one who hopes in you be disgraced may those who act treacherously without cause be ashamed!

Psalms 25:4

Make known to me your ways, Yahweh; teach me your paths

ULT

4 Make known to me your ways,
Yahweh; teach me your paths.

Both statements mean the same thing. God teaching a person how they should behave is spoken of as if he were showing a person the correct path on which a person should travel. (See: Parallelism and Metaphor)

Psalms 25:5

I hope in you

“I depend on you” or “I wait patiently for you”

ULT

5 Guide me into your truth and teach
me, for you are the God of my salvation;
I hope in you all day long.

Guide me into your truth and teach me

Guide and teach mean the same thing, to give instruction. Alternate translation: “Instruct me to conduct my life by obeying your truth” (See: Doublet)

the God of my salvation

The abstract noun “salvation” can be stated as “saves.” Alternate translation: “the one who saves me” (See: Abstract Nouns)

Psalms 25:6

Call to mind

This is an idiom. This does not mean God forgot something. The writer is asking God to think about and consider his acts of compassion and faithfulness. Alternate translation: “Remember” or “Think about” (See: Idiom)

ULT

6 Call to mind, Yahweh, your acts of compassion and of covenant faithfulness; for they have always existed.

your acts of compassion and of covenant faithfulness

The abstract nouns “compassion” and “faithfulness” can be stated as adjectives. Alternate translation: “how you have been compassionate and faithful to your covenant” (See: Abstract Nouns)

for they have always existed

Here “they” personifies God’s compassion and covenant faithfulness. Alternate translation: “for that is how you have always been” (See: Personification)

Psalms 25:7

Do not think about the sins of my youth

The abstract noun “sins” can be stated as “sinned.” Alternate translation: “Do not think about how I sinned against you when I was young” (See: Abstract Nouns)

ULT

7 Do not think about the sins of my youth or my rebelliousness; Call me to mind with covenant faithfulness because of your goodness, Yahweh!

or my rebelliousness

The abstract noun “rebelliousness” can be stated as “rebelled.” Alternate translation: or about how I have rebelled against you” (See: Abstract Nouns)

Call me to mind

This is an idiom. This does not mean God forgot something. The writer is asking God to think about him. Alternate translation: “Remember me” or “Think about me” (See: Idiom)

with covenant faithfulness because of your goodness

The abstract nouns “faithfulness” and “goodness” can be stated as adjectives. Alternate translation: “and be faithful to me because of your covenant, because you are good” (See: Abstract Nouns)

Psalms 25:8

the way

How God wants a person to behave is spoken of as if it were a way or path on which a person travels. (See: Metaphor)

ULT

8 Yahweh is good and upright; therefore he teaches sinners the way.

Psalms 25:9

the humble

This nominal adjective can be stated as an adjective. Alternate translation: “humble people” or “those who are humble” (See: Nominal Adjectives)

ULT

9 He guides the humble in what is right and he teaches them his way.

his way

How God wants a person to behave is spoken of as if it were a way or path on which a person travels. (See: Metaphor)

Psalms 25:10

All the paths of Yahweh are steadfast love and faithfulness

The word “paths” is a metaphor for ways. Alternate translation: “Yahweh always loves us because of his covenant and he is always trustworthy” (See: Metaphor)

ULT

10 All the paths of Yahweh are steadfast love and faithfulness to those who keep his covenant and his solemn commands.

Psalms 25:11

For your name’s sake

The phrase “your name” here refers to Yahweh’s reputation. Alternate translation: “For your reputation” or “So that people will honor you” (See: Metonymy)

ULT

11 For your name’s sake, Yahweh,
pardon my sin, for it is great.

pardon my sin, for it is great

The abstract noun “sin” can be stated as “sinned.” Alternate translation: “please forgive me, for I have sinned much” (See: Abstract Nouns)

Psalms 25:12

ULT

12 Who is the man who fears Yahweh?
The Lord will instruct him in the way
that he should choose.

Who is the man who fears Yahweh?

This question introduces “the man who fears Yahweh” as a new topic. Alternate translation: “I will tell you about the man who fears Yahweh.” (See: Rhetorical Question)

is the man who fears ... instruct him ... he should

These words refer to any person who fears Yahweh, not a specific person. Alternate translation: “are those who fear ... instruct them ... they should” (See: Generic Noun Phrases)

The Lord will instruct him in the way that he should choose

Yahweh teaching people how they should behave is spoken of as if Yahweh were teaching the people what way or path they should travel. (See: Metaphor)

Psalms 25:13

His life ... his descendants

These words refer to any person who fears Yahweh, not a specific person. Alternate translation: “Their lives ... their descendants” (See: Generic Noun Phrases)

His life will go along in goodness

“God will cause him to prosper” or “God will cause them to prosper”

ULT

13 His life will go along in goodness; and his descendants will inherit the land.

Psalms 25:14

The friendship of Yahweh is for those

“Yahweh is a friend to those.” Some translate it as “Yahweh confides in those.” His confiding in them shows the intimate friendship he has with them.

ULT

14 The friendship of Yahweh is for those who honor him, and he makes his covenant known to them.

Psalms 25:15

My eyes are always on Yahweh

Here “eyes” represents looking. It is implied that he looks to Yahweh for help. Alternate translation: “I always look to Yahweh to help me” or “I always depend on Yahweh to help me” (See: Metonymy and Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information)

ULT

15 My eyes are always on Yahweh, for he will free my feet from the net.

for he will free my feet from the net

A net is a trap. A person who is in danger is spoken of as if their feet are tangled in a net. Alternate translation: He will rescue me from danger” (See: Metaphor)

Psalms 25:16

Turn toward me

Yahweh paying attention to a person and considering him is spoken of as if Yahweh were physically turning towards the person. (See: Metaphor)

ULT

16 Turn toward me and have mercy on me; for I am alone and afflicted.

Psalms 25:17

The troubles of my heart are enlarged

Here “heart” represents a person’s emotions. Alternate translation: “I feel more and more troubled” (See: Metonymy)

ULT

17 The troubles of my heart are enlarged; draw me out from my distress!

draw me out from my distress

“bring me out of my distress.” This speaks of distress as if it were a place that a person can be brought out of. Alternate translation: “rescue me from my distress” or “relieve me of my distress” (See: Metaphor)

my distress

The word “distress” is an abstract noun. Alternate translation: “the things that distress me” or “the things that cause me to be afraid” (See: Abstract Nouns)

Psalms 25:18

See my affliction

“Notice my affliction”

ULT

18 See my affliction and my toils; forgive all my sins.

my affliction

The abstract noun “affliction” can be stated as a verb. Alternate translation: “the things that afflict me” or “how afflicted I am” (See: Abstract Nouns)

my toils

The word “toils” is an abstract noun. Alternate translation: “the things that trouble me” (See: Abstract Nouns)

Psalms 25:19

they hate me with cruel hatred

“they hate me cruelly” or “they hate me fiercely”

ULT

19 See my enemies, for they are many;
they hate me with cruel hatred.

Psalms 25:20

do not let me be humiliated

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: “Do not let my enemies humiliate me” (See: Active or Passive)

take refuge in you!

Going to Yahweh for protection is spoken of as taking refuge in him. Alternate translation: “go to you for protection!” (See: Metaphor)

ULT

20 Protect my life and rescue me; do not let me be humiliated, for I take refuge in you!

Psalms 25:21

May integrity and uprightness preserve me

ULT

21 May integrity and uprightness preserve me, for I hope in you.

This speaks about “integrity” and “uprightness” as if they were persons who could keep another person safe. These abstract nouns can be stated as adjectives. Alternate translation: “May being honest and doing what is right preserve me” or “Preserve me, Lord, because I am honest and do what is right” (See: Personification and Abstract Nouns)

preserve me

“keep me safe”

Psalms 25:22

Rescue Israel

“Save Israel” or “Redeem Israel”

ULT

22 Rescue Israel, God, from all of his troubles!

Israel ... his troubles

Here “Israel” represents the people of Israel. Alternate translation: “the people of Israel ... our troubles” (See: Metonymy)

Psalms 26

Psalm 26 General Notes

Type of psalm

Psalm 26 is a teaching psalm; showing people how they should live by the example of the psalmsist.

Special concepts in this chapter

Praise

The psalmist delights in praising God and doing good deeds. It is striking how this psalm uses the first person pronoun. This is an individual psalm of petition. Each of the four petitions are accompanied with various claims. (See: good, right, pleasant, better, best and work, works, deeds)

Psalms 26:1

General Information:

Parallelism is common in Hebrew poetry. (See: Poetry and Parallelism)

ULT

1 Judge me, Yahweh, for I have walked with integrity; I have trusted in Yahweh without wavering.

I have walked

The word “walked” is a metaphor for behavior. Alternate translation: “I have behaved” (See: Metaphor)

in Yahweh

The third person use of “Yahweh” can be stated in the second person. Alternate translation: “in you” (See: First, Second or Third Person)

without wavering

Doubting is spoken of as if it were losing balance and waving back and forth. Alternate translation: “without doubting” (See: Metaphor)

Psalms 26:2

Examine me

“Try me”

test the purity of my inner parts and my heart

ULT

2 Examine me, Yahweh, and test me;
test the purity of my inner parts and my heart!

Here “inner parts” and “heart” mean motives. Alternate translation: “test whether my motives are good” (See: Doublet)

Psalms 26:3

For your covenant faithfulness is before my eyes

ULT

3 For your covenant faithfulness is before my eyes, and I walk about in your faithfulness.

Here “eyes” represent a person’s thoughts and having something before one’s eyes represents being aware of that thing. The abstract noun “faithfulness” can be translated as an adjective. Alternate translation: “For I am always aware of your covenant faithfulness” or “For I am always aware that you are faithful to your covenant” (See: Metaphor and Abstract Nouns)

I walk about in your faithfulness

The word “walk” is a metaphor for behavior. The abstract noun “faithfulness” can be translated with an adjective. Alternate translation: “I conduct my life according to your faithfulness” or “I behave the way I do because you are faithful” (See: Metaphor and Abstract Nouns)

Psalms 26:4

ULT

4 I do not associate with deceitful people, nor do I mingle with dishonest people.

I do not associate with

“I do not keep company with” or “I do not sit with”

with deceitful people

“with those who deceive others”

nor do I mingle with dishonest people

This means the same as the first part of the sentence. Alternate translation: “and I do not join with dishonest people” (See: Parallelism)

dishonest people

“hypocrites” or “those who lie to others”

Psalms 26:5

the assembly of evildoers

“those who gather to do evil”

the wicked

This is a nominal adjective. Alternate translation: “wicked people” or “those who are wicked” (See: Nominal Adjectives)

ULT

5 I hate the assembly of evildoers, and I
do not live with the wicked.

Psalms 26:6

I wash my hands in innocence

This seems to refer to a ritual washing of hands in water to symbolize freedom from sin and guilt. (See: Symbolic Action)

ULT

6 I wash my hands in innocence, and I
go around your altar, Yahweh,

I go around your altar

This was an action of worship that the Israelites were accustomed to doing.

Psalms 26:7

(There are no notes for this verse.)

ULT

7 to sing a loud song of praise and report all your wonderful deeds.

Psalms 26:8

the house where you live

This could mean: (1) if a person wrote this after the time of David, then the writer is referring to the temple in Jerusalem or (2) if David wrote this, then this refers to the tent that God told his people to set up so that they could worship him there.

ULT

8 Yahweh, I love the house where you live, the place where your glory lives!

the place where your glory lives

Here “glory” represents the presence and power of God, which is similar to a very bright light. Alternate translation: “the place where people can see the glorious light of your presence” (See: Metonymy)

Psalms 26:9

Do not sweep me away with sinners

“Sweep away” here is a metaphor for destruction. Alternate translation: “Do not destroy me along with sinners” (See: Metaphor)

ULT

9 Do not sweep me away with sinners,
or my life with people who are
bloodthirsty,

or my life

The word “sweep” is understood. Alternate translation: “or sweep my life” (See: Ellipsis)

people who are bloodthirsty

The word “bloodthirsty” represents wanting to kill people. Alternate translation: “people who are eager to shed others’ blood” or “murderers” (See: Metonymy)

Psalms 26:10

in whose hands

“Hands” refers to the whole person. Alternate translation: “people in which” (See: Synecdoche)

a plot

“a wicked plan”

ULT

10 in whose hands there is a plot, and whose right hand is full of bribes.

Psalms 26:11

But as for me

This phrase shows that the writer is changing from speaking about wicked people to talking about himself.

ULT
11 But as for me, I will walk in integrity;
redeem me and have mercy on me.

I will walk in integrity

“Walk” here is a metaphor for behavior. Alternate translation: “I will behave with integrity” (See: Metaphor)

Psalms 26:12

My foot stands

Here “foot” represents the whole person. Alternate translation: “I stand” (See: Synecdoche)

ULT

12 My foot stands on level ground; in the assemblies will I bless Yahweh!

level ground

Here, **level ground** could mean: (1) a safe place or (2) right behavior (See: Metaphor)

in the assemblies will I bless Yahweh

“when I gather with the people of Israel I will praise you”

Psalms 27

Psalm 27 General Notes

Type of psalm

Psalm 27 is a psalm of praise to God because God keeps the psalmist safe from all his enemies.

Special concepts in this chapter

Yahweh’s help

Because of God’s help, he has nothing to fear, no matter what happens. The psalmist shows his confidence in God; he also asks God for help.

Psalms 27:1

General Information:

Parallelism is common in Hebrew poetry. (See: Poetry and Parallelism)

ULT

1 Yahweh is my light and my salvation;
whom should I fear? Yahweh is my life's refuge;
whom should I dread?

Yahweh is my light

Here "light" represents life. Alternate translation: "Yahweh is the source of my life" (See: Metonymy)

whom should I fear?

This question emphasizes that there is no one that David should fear. Alternate translation: "I will not be afraid of anyone" (See: Rhetorical Question)

Yahweh is my life's refuge

This speaks about Yahweh as if he were a place where people can go for safety. Alternate translation: "Yahweh is the one who keeps me safe" (See: Metaphor)

whom should I dread?

This question emphasizes that there is no one that David should be afraid of. Alternate translation: "I will not dread anyone" (See: Rhetorical Question)

Psalms 27:2

to devour my flesh

Destroying someone completely is spoken of as if it were devouring a person's flesh. He did not mean that they wanted to eat his body. Alternate translation: "to destroy me" (See: Metaphor)

ULT

2 When evildoers approached me to devour my flesh, my adversaries and my enemies stumbled and fell.

my adversaries and my enemies

These words mean the same thing. These are the evildoers who came near to him. (See: Doublet)

stumbled and fell

This represents the writer's enemies failing to fulfill their plans to harm the writer. Alternate translation: "did not succeed" or "failed" (See: Metaphor)

Psalms 27:3

Though an army encamps against me

“though an army surrounds me” or “though an army puts its tents around me”

my heart will not fear

Here “heart” represents the whole person. Alternate translation: “I will not be afraid” (See: Synecdoche)

though war rises up against me

The writer’s enemies are spoken of as if they themselves were a war. Alternate translation: “though my enemies come to fight against me” (See: Metaphor)

I will remain confident

“I will continue to trust God to help me”

ULT

3 Though an army encamps against me,
my heart will not fear; though war rises
up against me, even then I will remain
confident.

Psalms 27:4

have I asked of Yahweh

"I have asked Yahweh to let me do"

I will seek that

A person really wanting something and continually asking God for it is spoken of as if he were seeking to find something. (See: Metaphor)

ULT

4 One thing have I asked of Yahweh,
and I will seek that: that I may live in the house of Yahweh all the days of my life,
to see the beauty of Yahweh and to meditate in his temple.

to see the beauty of Yahweh

The wonderful character of God is spoken of as if it were physical beauty. Alternate translation: "to see how wonderful Yahweh is" (See: Metaphor)

to meditate in his temple

This could mean: (1) "to ask God what he wants me to do" or (2) "to think carefully about God in his temple."

Psalms 27:5

ULT

5 For in the day of trouble he will hide me in his shelter; in the cover of his tent he will conceal me. He will lift me high on a rock!

in the day of trouble

“in times of trouble” or “when I have troubles”

he will hide me

“he will protect me”

his shelter ... his tent

Both of these refer to the tabernacle where the writer is worshiping God. (See: Parallelism)

in the cover of his tent

The word “cover” represents something that hides and protects.

He will lift me high on a rock

God keeping the writer safe from his enemies is spoken of as if God were placing him on a high rock where his enemies cannot reach him. (See: Metaphor)

Psalms 27:6

my head will be lifted up above my enemies

This represents the writer receiving pride or honor when he defeats his enemies. It can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: “people will honor me when I win the fight against my enemies” or “God will honor me by enabling me to defeat my enemies” (See: Metonymy and Active or Passive)

ULT

6 Then my head will be lifted up above my enemies all around me, and I will offer sacrifices of joy in his tent! I will sing and make songs to Yahweh!

Psalms 27:7

Hear, Yahweh, my voice

The “voice” often represents a person who speak or calls out. Alternate translation: “Yahweh, hear me” (See: Metonymy)

answer me

This implies that Yahweh hears the writer’s prayer and Yahweh will do what the writer asks. Alternate translation: “answer my prayer” or “do what I request of you” (See: Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information)

ULT

7 Hear, Yahweh, my voice when I cry out! Have mercy on me, and answer me!

Psalms 27:8

My heart says

Here “heart” represents a person’s mind or thoughts. Alternate translation: “In my heart I say” or “I say to myself” (See: Metonymy)

ULT

8 My heart says about you, “Seek his face!” I seek your face, Yahweh!

Seek his face

A person going to the temple to pray to Yahweh is spoken of as if the person were seeking to find Yahweh. Here “face” represents all of God. Alternate translation: “Go and pray to Yahweh” (See: Metaphor and Synecdoche)

I seek your face, Yahweh

A person going to the temple to pray to Yahweh is spoken of as if the person were seeking to find Yahweh. Here “face” represents all of God. Alternate translation: “I will come to your temple to pray to you” (See: Metaphor and Synecdoche)

Psalms 27:9

Do not hide your face from me

The face here represents Yahweh's attention, and hiding the face represents rejecting someone. Alternate translation: "Do not reject me" or "Do not stop taking care of me" (See: Metonymy and Metaphor)

ULT

9 Do not hide your face from me; do not turn your servant away in anger! You have been my helper; do not forsake me or abandon me, God of my salvation!

do not turn your servant away in anger

David said "your servant" to refer to himself in a humble way. Alternate translation: "do not be angry with me" (See: First, Second or Third Person)

forsake me or abandon me

The words "forsake" and "abandon" mean the same thing. The writer is emphasizing that he does not want God to leave him. (See: Doublet)

or abandon me

The words "and do not" are understood. Alternate translation: "and do not abandon me" or "and do not leave me" (See: Ellipsis)

God of my salvation

The abstract noun "salvation" can be stated as "saves." Alternate translation: God who saves me" or "because you are the God who saves me" (See: Abstract Nouns)

Psalms 27:10

Even if my father and my mother forsake me

“Even if my father and my mother were to forsake me.” He is not saying that they actually have done this or that they would do it. His point is that even if they did that, God would not abandon him. (See: Hypothetical Situations)

Yahweh will take me in

“Yahweh will keep me” or “Yahweh will take care of me”

ULT

10 Even if my father and my mother forsake me, Yahweh will take me in.

Psalms 27:11

Teach me your way

How a person should behave is spoken of as if it were a way or path that person should travel. Alternate translation: “Teach me how you want me to live” or “Teach me to do what you want me to do” (See: Metaphor)

ULT

11 Teach me your way, Yahweh! Lead me on a level path because of my enemies.

Lead me on a level path

Yahweh keeping the writer safe from his enemies is spoken of as if Yahweh leads the writer on a level path where he will not stumble and fall. Alternate translation: “Keep me safe” (See: Metaphor)

Psalms 27:12

Do not give me up to the desires of my enemies

The abstract noun “desires” can be stated as a verb. Alternate translation: “Do not let my enemies do to me what they desire” (See: Abstract Nouns)

ULT

12 Do not give me up to the desires of my enemies, for false witnesses have risen up against me, and they breathe out violence!

have risen up against me

“Risen up” here is an idiom meaning that a witness stood in court to present testimony. Alternate translation: “have stood up in order to speak against me” (See: Idiom)

they breathe out violence

Here violence is spoken for as if it was something a person could breathe out. Alternate translation: “they say that they will do violent things to me” (See: Metaphor)

Psalms 27:13

ULT

13 What would have happened to me if I had not believed that I would see the goodness of Yahweh in the land of the living?

What would have happened to me

This rhetorical question can be stated positively. Alternate translation: “Something bad would have happened to me” (See: Rhetorical Question)

the goodness of Yahweh

The abstract noun “goodness” can be stated as an adjective. Alternate translation: “the good things that Yahweh does” (See: Abstract Nouns)

in the land of the living

This refers to being alive. Alternate translation: “while I am alive” (See: Idiom)

Psalms 27:14

ULT

14 Wait for Yahweh; be strong, and let your heart be courageous! Wait for Yahweh!

Wait for Yahweh ... Wait for Yahweh!

This verse may be: (1) the writer speaking to himself or (2) the writer speaking to others or (3) someone speaking to the writer.

let your heart be courageous

Here “heart” represents the whole person. Alternate translation: “be courageous” (See: Synecdoche)

Wait for Yahweh!

This line is repeated at the end of the psalm as a way of ending the psalm.

Psalms 28

Psalm 28 General Notes

Type of psalm

Psalm 28 is a psalm of prayer to God that he is not be punished along with the wicked people. (See: evil, wicked, unpleasant)

Special concepts in this chapter

Trust

The psalmist trusted God completely and God rescued him. This is similar to psalm 7 and 17 because it is an individual lament psalm. (See: lament, lamentation)

Psalms 28:1

General Information:

Parallelism is common in Hebrew poetry. (See: Poetry and Parallelism)

ULT

1 To you, Yahweh, I cry out; my rock, do not ignore me. If you do not respond to me, I will join those who go down to the grave.

I cry out

“I call out loudly”

my rock

This is a metaphor for strength. Alternate translation: “my strength” (See: Metaphor)

do not ignore me

“do not be silent to me” or “do not leave me alone”

I will join those who go down to the grave

People who die are spoken of as if they are going down into the grave. Alternate translation: “I will die like those who are in the grave” (See: Metaphor)

Psalms 28:2

Hear the sound of my pleading

Here “sound” refers to the content of his request. Alternate translation: “Hear my strong request” (See: Metonymy)

ULT

2 Hear the sound of my pleading when I
call for help from you, when I lift up my
hands toward your most holy place!

I lift up my hands toward your most holy place

Lifting up hands is a symbol of worship. The writer is not worshiping the holy place, but Yahweh who lives in the holy place. (See: Symbolic Action)

your most holy place

This could mean: (1) if David wrote this, then this refers to the tent that God told his people to set up so that they could worship him there, or (2) if a person wrote this after the time of David, then the writer is referring to the temple in Jerusalem.

Psalms 28:3

Do not drag me away

God punishing people is spoken of as if he physically drags them away. In this metaphor Yahweh may be dragging them to prison, exile, or death. Alternate translation: “Do not remove me” (See: Metaphor)

ULT

3 Do not drag me away with the wicked,
those who do iniquity, who speak peace
with their neighbors but have evil in
their hearts.

who speak peace with their neighbors

Here “neighbors” refers to people in general. Alternate translation: “who speak peacefully with other people”

but have evil in their hearts

Here “hearts” represents a person’s mind or thoughts. Alternate translation: “but are thinking something evil about them” (See: Metonymy)

Psalms 28:4

Give them what their deeds deserve ... repay them what their wickedness demands

These two phrases mean the same thing. They are used together to emphasize that they deserve for God to punish them. (See: Parallelism)

ULT

4 Give them what their deeds deserve and repay them what their wickedness demands, repay them for the work of their hands and render to them their due.

the work of their hands

Here “hands” represent what the person has done. Alternate translation: “the things they have done” (See: Metonymy)

render to them their due

“give them what they deserve”

Psalms 28:5

Because they do not understand ... never rebuild them

This could mean: (1) David is confident about what God will do to wicked people or (2) David is asking God to destroy the wicked people.

ULT

5 Because they do not understand the deeds of Yahweh or the work of his hands, he will tear them down and never rebuild them.

they do not understand the deeds of Yahweh

It is implied that “do not understand” means they ignore or do not honor Yahweh’s works. Alternate translation: “they do not regard with honor what Yahweh has done” (See: Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information)

the work of his hands

Here “hands” represents what Yahweh has done or created. Alternate translation: “what he has created” (See: Metonymy)

he will tear them down and never rebuild them

The punishment of the wicked people is spoken of as if they were a building or a city that God would destroy. (See: Metaphor)

Psalms 28:6

he has heard the sound of my pleading

Here “sound” represents what the writer said. Alternate translation: “has heard what I said when I pleaded to him” (See: Metonymy)

ULT

6 Blessed be Yahweh because he has heard the sound of my pleading!

Psalms 28:7

Yahweh is my strength

The abstract noun “strength” can be stated as “strong.” Alternate translation: “Yahweh makes me strong” (See: Abstract Nouns)

ULT

7 Yahweh is my strength and my shield;
my heart trusts in him, and I am helped.
Therefore my heart greatly rejoices, and
I will praise him with singing.

my shield

This represents Yahweh’s protecting the writer. Alternate translation: “he protects me” (See: Metaphor)

my heart trusts

Here “heart” represents the whole person. Alternate translation: “I trust” (See: Synecdoche)

I am helped

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: “he helps me” (See: Active or Passive)

my heart greatly rejoices

Here “heart” represents the whole person. Alternate translation: “I greatly rejoice” (See: Synecdoche)

Psalms 28:8

Yahweh is the strength of his people

The abstract noun “strength” can be stated as “strong.” Alternate translation: “Yahweh makes his people strong” (See: Abstract Nouns)

ULT

8 Yahweh is the strength of his people,
and he is the saving refuge of his anointed one.

he is the saving refuge of his anointed one

Yahweh keeping the king safe is spoken of as if Yahweh were a place that the king could go for safety. Alternate translation: “he keeps safe the one he appointed to be king” (See: Metaphor)

his anointed one

The represents the king. (See: Metonymy)

Psalms 28:9

your inheritance

This speaks about the people of God as if they were something God inherited. Alternate translation: “your possession” or “those who belong to you” (See: Metaphor)

ULT

9 Save your people and bless your inheritance. Be their shepherd and carry them forever.

Be their shepherd and carry them forever

The writer speaks about Yahweh as if he were a shepherd and the people are his sheep. A shepherd would carry a sheep if it needed help or protection. Alternate translation: “Be like their shepherd and protect them forever” (See: Metaphor)

Psalms 29

Psalm 29 General Notes

Type of psalm

Psalm 29 is a worship psalm. It tells how Yahweh rules all nature.

Special concepts in this chapter

Yahweh's power

God is powerful. All he has to do is to speak in order to control nature.

Important figures of speech in this chapter

Metonymy

The voice of the Yahweh stands for Yahweh himself. (See: Metonymy)

Psalms 29:1

General Information:

Parallelism is common in Hebrew poetry. (See: Poetry and Parallelism)

ULT

1 Ascribe to Yahweh, you sons of God,
ascribe to Yahweh glory and strength!

you sons of God

The phrase “sons of” is a way of saying “having the characteristics of.” Alternate translation: “you mighty men” (See: Idiom)

ascribe to Yahweh glory and strength

The abstract nouns “glory” and “strength” can be stated as adjectives. Alternate translation: “praise Yahweh because he is glorious and strong” (See: Abstract Nouns)

Psalms 29:2

Ascribe to Yahweh the glory his name deserves

ULT
2 Ascribe to Yahweh the glory his name deserves. Bow down to Yahweh in the splendor of holiness!

The abstract noun “glory” can be stated as a verb or adjective. Alternate translation: “Honor Yahweh just as his name deserves” or “Proclaim that Yahweh is glorious just as his name deserves” (See: Abstract Nouns)

his name deserves

The phrase “his name” refers to Yahweh or his reputation. Alternate translation: “as is proper because of who he is” (See: Metonymy)

Bow down to Yahweh

The implied information is that the people were to bow down in worship. Alternate translation: “Bow down to worship Yahweh” (See: Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information and Symbolic Action)

in the splendor of holiness

The abstract nouns “splendor” and “holiness” can be translated as adjectives. Alternate translation: “because he is gloriously beautiful and holy” (See: Abstract Nouns)

Psalms 29:3

General Information:

The psalm shows Yahweh's power and glory.

ULT

3 The voice of Yahweh is heard over the waters; the God of glory thunders, Yahweh thunders over many waters.

The voice of Yahweh is heard over the waters

God's voice is louder and clearer than all other sounds and noises. It can be heard over other loud sounds such as the sound of the waters. This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "When Yahweh speaks his voice is louder than the sound of the sea" or "Yahweh shouts louder than the sound of the waters" (See: Active or Passive)

over the waters

This refers to the seas or the oceans. These waters make a very loud noise as the waves rise and fall.

The voice of Yahweh

All occurrences of "voice" here represent Yahweh speaking. The writer is emphasizing that when Yahweh speaks, the sound is so loud it is heard over the waters, and it is so powerful it can destroy the largest trees. Alternate translation: "When Yahweh speaks, his voice" (See: Metonymy)

the God of glory thunders

This speaks about God speaking as if it were the sound of thunder. Just like the sound of thunder, Yahweh's voice can be heard over large distances. Alternate translation: "The voice of the glorious God is loud like thunder" or "When the glorious God speaks it rumbles like thunder" (See: Metaphor)

over many waters

"over the large bodies of water"

Psalms 29:4

(There are no notes for this verse.)

ULT

4 The voice of Yahweh is powerful; the
voice of Yahweh is majestic.

Psalms 29:5

(There are no notes for this verse.)

ULT

5 The voice of Yahweh breaks the cedars; Yahweh breaks in pieces the cedars of Lebanon.

Psalms 29:6

Connecting Statement:

The writer continues describing the power of God's voice.

ULT
6 He makes Lebanon skip like a calf and
Sirion like a young ox.

He makes Lebanon skip like a calf

The ground of Lebanon shaking is spoken of as if it were a young calf skipping. This emphasizes that when Yahweh speaks, the power of his voice shakes the ground. Alternate translation: "He makes the land of Lebanon shake like a calf skipping" (See: Simile)

skip

jump lightly back and forth

Sirion like a young ox

The words "he makes" and "skip" are understood from the first phrase. They can be repeated here. The ground of Sirion shaking is spoken of as if it were a young ox skipping. This emphasizes that when Yahweh speaks, the power of his voice shakes the ground. Alternate translation: "he makes Sirion skip like a young ox" (See: Ellipsis and Simile)

Sirion

This is a mountain in Lebanon. It is also called Mount Hermon. (See: How to Translate Names)

Psalms 29:7

The voice of Yahweh sends out flames of fire

All occurrences of “voice” here represent Yahweh speaking. Alternate translation: “When Yahweh speaks he causes lightning to flash in the sky” (See: Metonymy)

flames of fire

This refers to lightning.

ULT

7 The voice of Yahweh sends out flames of fire.

Psalms 29:8

(There are no notes for this verse.)

ULT

8 The voice of Yahweh shakes the wilderness; Yahweh shakes the wilderness of Kadesh.

Psalms 29:9

The voice of Yahweh causes

Here “voice” represents Yahweh speaking. Alternate translation: “When Yahweh speaks, the sound causes” (See: Metonymy)

the oaks to twist

“the large trees to shake”

strips the forests bare

Removing the leaves of the trees is spoken of as if it was removing their clothing. Alternate translation: “strips off the leaves from the trees” (See: Metaphor)

ULT

9 The voice of Yahweh causes the oaks to twist and strips the forests bare. Everyone in his temple says, “Glory!”

Psalms 29:10

Yahweh sits as king

This means that Yahweh rules. Alternate translation: “Yahweh rules” or “Yahweh is king” (See: Metonymy)

over the flood

Here “flood” refers to waters that cover the earth.

ULT

10 Yahweh sits as king over the flood;
Yahweh sits as king forever.

Psalms 29:11

Yahweh blesses his people with peace

The word “peace” is an abstract noun. Alternate translation: “Yahweh blesses his people by causing them to prosper and to live peacefully” (See: Metonymy)

ULT

11 Yahweh gives strength to his people;
Yahweh blesses his people with peace.

Psalms 30

Psalm 30 General Notes

Type of psalm

Psalm 30 is a psalm of praise and thanksgiving to God. The psalmist was near death but God rescued him.

Special concepts in this chapter

The psalmist’s death

If he had died, it would not have been a help to God. But since God rescued him he can praise God.

Psalms 30:1

General Information:

Parallelism is common in Hebrew poetry. (See: Poetry and Parallelism)

ULT

1 I will exalt you, Yahweh, for you have raised me up and have not allowed my enemies to rejoice over me.

a song at the dedication of the temple

“This song was sung when the temple was dedicated”

you have raised me up

The writer speaks of God rescuing him and keeping him from dying as if God had drawn him up from a deep well. Alternate translation: “you rescued me” (See: Metaphor)

Psalms 30:2

(There are no notes for this verse.)

ULT

2 Yahweh my God, I cried to you for help, and you healed me.

Psalms 30:3

brought up my soul from Sheol

Since “Sheol” was the place where dead people go, it refers to death. Alternate translation: “kept me from dying” (See: Metonymy)

ULT

3 Yahweh, you have brought up my soul from Sheol; you have kept me alive from going down to the grave.

brought up my soul

Here “my soul” refers to the writer. Alternate translation: “brought me up” (See: Synecdoche)

from going down to the grave

The “grave” represents death. Alternate translation: “from dying” (See: Metonymy)

Psalms 30:4

Give thanks when you remember his holiness

The abstract nouns “thanks” and “holiness” can be stated as “thank” and “holy.” Alternate translation: “Remember that God is holy and thank him” or “Remember what God has done because he is holy and thank him” (See: Abstract Nouns)

ULT

4 Sing praises to Yahweh, you his faithful ones! Give thanks when you remember his holiness.

Psalms 30:5

his anger is only for a moment

“his anger lasts only a moment.” The abstract noun “anger” can be stated as “angry.” Alternate translation: “he is angry for only a moment” (See: Abstract Nouns)

ULT

5 For his anger is only for a moment;
but his favor is for a lifetime. Weeping comes for a night, but joy comes in the morning.

a moment

Here “moment” represents a short amount of time. Alternate translation: “a short time” (See: Metonymy)

but his favor is for a lifetime

The abstract noun “favor” can be stated as the adjective “good.” Alternate translation: “but he is good to us all of our lives” (See: Abstract Nouns)

Weeping comes for a night, but joy comes in the morning

This speaks about “weeping” and “joy” as if they were something that travels and arrives at a certain time. Alternate translation: “We may cry during the night, but the next morning we will be joyful” (See: Metaphor)

Psalms 30:6

In confidence

The word “confidence” is an abstract noun. The writer recalls a time when he was prospering and felt confident and safe. Alternate translation: “When I was confident” or “When I felt safe” (See: Abstract Nouns)

ULT

6 In confidence I said, “I will never be shaken.”

I will never be shaken

The word “shaken” is a metaphor for defeat. Alternate translation: “No one will defeat me” (See: Metaphor)

Psalms 30:7

by your favor

The abstract noun “favor” can be stated as the verb “favored” or the adjective “kind.” Alternate translation: “when you favored me” or “when you were kind to me” (See: Abstract Nouns)

ULT

7 Yahweh, by your favor you established me as a strong mountain; but when you hid your face, I was troubled.

you established me as a strong mountain

The writer’s security is spoken of as if he were a strong mountain. Alternate translation: “you made me as secure as a high mountain” (See: Metaphor)

when you hid your face

This is an idiom. Alternate translation: “when you stopped helping me” or “when you rejected me” (See: Idiom)

I was troubled

“I was fearful” or “I was worried”

Psalms 30:8

sought favor from my Lord

The phrase “sought favor” means to ask for help. Alternate translation: “I pleaded for you to help me” (See: Metaphor)

ULT

8 I cried to you, Yahweh, and sought favor from my Lord!

from my Lord

The writer is referring to Yahweh in third person. It can be stated in second person. Alternate translation: “from you, my Lord” (See: First, Second or Third Person)

Psalms 30:9

What advantage is there in my death, if I go down to the grave?

The writer uses this question to emphasize that he would be of no value to God if he were dead. Alternate translation: “There is no advantage if I die and go down to the grave.” (See: Rhetorical Question)

ULT

9 What advantage is there in my death, if I go down to the grave? Will the dust praise you? Will it declare your trustworthiness?

Will the dust praise you? Will it declare your trustworthiness?

The writer uses these questions to emphasize that his dead and decayed body cannot praise God. Alternate translation: “The dust will certainly not praise you or tell others about how trustworthy you are.” (See: Rhetorical Question)

the dust

This refers to the body of the writer which will decay and become dust when he is dead. Alternate translation: “my decayed body” (See: Metonymy)

Psalms 30:10

(There are no notes for this verse.)

ULT

10 Hear, Yahweh, and have mercy on me! Yahweh, be my helper.

Psalms 30:11

You have turned my mourning into dancing

It was customary for the Jews to dance when they were very happy. The abstract nouns “mourning” and “dancing” can be stated as verbs. Alternate translation: “You have caused me to stop mourning and to dance with joy instead” (See: Abstract Nouns)

ULT

11 You have turned my mourning into dancing; you have removed my sackcloth and clothed me with gladness.

you have removed my sackcloth

Sackcloth was associated with mourning and sorrow. Alternate translation: “You have caused me to no longer be sad” (See: Metonymy)

clothed me with gladness

The writer speaks of gladness as if it were a garment that he could put on. Alternate translation: “caused me to be glad” (See: Metaphor)

Psalms 30:12

my glory will sing praise to you

Here “my glory” refers to the writer’s soul or heart or inner being. This represents the entire person of the writer, who worships God because God has made him glad. Alternate translation: “I will sing praise to you” (See: Synecdoche)

ULT

12 So now my glory will sing praise to you and not be silent; Yahweh my God, I will give thanks to you forever!

Psalms 31

Psalm 31 General Notes

Type of psalm

Psalm 31 is a psalm of deliverance. The psalmist's enemies thought they had defeated him, but God protected him. (See: deliver, hand over, turn over, release, rescue)

Special concepts in this chapter

Abandonment

Even though everyone deserted and despised the psalmist, God did not abandon him.

Psalms 31:1

General Information:

Parallelism is common in Hebrew poetry. (See: Poetry and Parallelism)

ULT

1 In you, Yahweh, I take refuge; never let me be humiliated. Rescue me in your righteousness.

For the chief musician

“This is for the director of music to use in worship”

In you, Yahweh, I take refuge

Going to Yahweh for protection is spoken of as taking refuge in him. Alternate translation: “I go to you, Yahweh, for protection” (See: Metaphor)

never let me be humiliated

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: “do not let others humiliate me” (See: Active or Passive)

Psalms 31:2

be my rock of refuge, a stronghold to save me

The phrase “be my rock of refuge” is a request for protection. The second phrase emphasizes the first phrase. (See: Parallelism)

ULT

2 Listen to me; rescue me quickly; be my rock of refuge, a stronghold to save me.

my rock of refuge

Yahweh is spoke of as if he were a huge rock that would protect the writer from attack. Alternate translation: “like a huge rock on which I can be safe” (See: Metaphor)

a stronghold to save me

Yahweh is spoken of as if he were a strong fortress in which the writer would be protected from his enemies. (See: Metaphor)

Psalms 31:3

ULT

3 For you are my rock and my fortress;
therefore for your name's sake, lead
and guide me.

my rock

Yahweh is spoke of as if he were a huge rock that would protect the writer from attack. Alternate translation: "like a huge rock on which I can be safe" (See: Metaphor)

my fortress

Yahweh is spoken of as if he were a strong fortress in which the writer would be protected from his enemies. (See: Metaphor)

for your name's sake

In this phrase "name" represents Yahweh. Alternate translation: "so that your name may be honored" or "so that I may worship you" (See: Metonymy)

lead and guide me

The words "lead" and "guide" mean basically the same thing and strengthen the request that Yahweh lead him. Alternate translation: "lead me where you want me to go" (See: Doublet)

Psalms 31:4

Pluck me out of the net that they have hidden for me

ULT

4 Pluck me out of the net that they have hidden for me, for you are my refuge.

The writer is spoken of as if he were a bird caught in a hidden net, and waiting for Yahweh to free him from the trap. (See: Metaphor)

you are my refuge

Yahweh is spoken of as if he is a place where the writer can hide from people who are attacking him. Alternate translation: “you always protect me” or “you give me constant protection” (See: Metaphor)

Psalms 31:5

Into your hands

God is spirit, but he is here spoken of as if he has hands. Here “your hands” refers to Yahweh’s care. Alternate translation: “Into your care” (See: Personification and Metonymy)

ULT

5 Into your hands I entrust my spirit;
you will redeem me, Yahweh, God of trustworthiness.

I entrust my spirit

Here “my spirit” refers to the writer. Alternate translation: “I place myself” (See: Synecdoche)

God of trustworthiness

“you are a God I can trust”

Psalms 31:6

I hate those who serve worthless idols

Here the word “worthless” refers to all idols. This can be clarified in translation. Alternate translation: “Idols are worthless. I hate those who serve them” (See: Distinguishing Versus Informing or Reminding)

ULT

6 I hate those who serve worthless idols,
but I trust in Yahweh.

Psalms 31:7

I will be glad and rejoice in your covenant faithfulness

The words “glad” and “rejoice” share similar meanings and emphasize the intensity of joy. The abstract noun “faithfulness” can be translated as an adjective. Alternate translation: “I will be very glad because you are faithful to your covenant” (See: Doublet and Abstract Nouns)

ULT

7 I will be glad and rejoice in your covenant faithfulness, for you saw my affliction; you knew the distress of my soul.

you saw my affliction ... you knew the distress of my soul

Both of these phrases express the idea that God knows about the writer’s troubles. (See: Parallelism)

the distress of my soul

Here “my soul” refers to the writer. Alternate translation: “my distress” (See: Synecdoche)

Psalms 31:8

You have set my feet

Here “my feet” refers to the writer. Alternate translation: “You have set me” (See: Synecdoche)

a wide open place

The Hebrews thought of wide open spaces as a metaphor for safety and freedom. Alternate translation: “a place where I am free” (See: Metaphor)

ULT

8 You have not given me into the hand of my enemy. You have set my feet in a wide open place.

Psalms 31:9

I am in distress

“I am suffering greatly”

my soul and my body

ULT

9 Have mercy upon me, Yahweh, for I am in distress; my eyes grow weary with grief with my soul and my body.

The terms “soul” and “body” are used to describe the complete person. (See: Synecdoche)

Psalms 31:10

ULT

10 For my life is weary with sorrow and my years with groaning. My strength fails because of my sin, and my bones are wasting away.

For my life is weary

Here “my life” refers to the writer. Alternate translation: “I have become very weak” (See: Metonymy)

with sorrow ... with groaning

“because of my sorrow ... because of my groaning”

my years with groaning

The phrase “is weary” is missing, but is implied. Alternate translation: “my years are weary with groaning” (See: Ellipsis)

My strength fails

Here “My strength” refers to the writer. Alternate translation: “I have become weak” (See: Metonymy)

my bones are wasting away

Here “my bones” refers to the physical health of the writer. Alternate translation: “my health is failing” (See: Metonymy)

Psalms 31:11

people disdain me

“people insult me”

are appalled at my situation

“are shocked at my condition”

ULT

11 Because of all my enemies, people disdain me; my neighbors are appalled at my situation, and those who know me are horrified. Those who see me in the street run from me.

Psalms 31:12

as a dead man whom no one thinks about

People do not think about dead people. The writer does not think people think about him. (See: Simile)

like a broken pot

The writer speaks of himself as if he was completely useless. “as useless as a broken pot” (See: Simile)

ULT

12 I am forgotten as a dead man whom no one thinks about. I am like a broken pot.

Psalms 31:13

the whispering of many

It is implied that “many” refers to people. Alternate translation: “many people talking about me” (See: Ellipsis)

terrifying news from every side

“scary reports from many sources”

take away my life

This idiom means to kill someone. Alternate translation: “kill me” (See: Idiom)

ULT

13 For I have heard the whispering of many, terrifying news from every side as they plot together against me. They plot to take away my life.

Psalms 31:14

(There are no notes for this verse.)

ULT

14 But I trust in you, Yahweh; I say, “You are my God.”

Psalms 31:15

My times are in your hand

Here “your hand” refers to Yahweh’s power. Alternate translation: “You have the power to decide my future” (See: Metonymy)

from those who pursue me

“from people who try to capture me”

ULT

15 My times are in your hand. Rescue me from the hands of my enemies and from those who pursue me.

Psalms 31:16

Make your face shine on your servant

The writer speaks of Yahweh acting favorably towards him as if Yahweh's face shone a light on him. Alternate translation: "Act favorably towards your servant" (See: Metaphor)

ULT

16 Make your face shine on your servant; save me in your covenant faithfulness.

save me in your covenant faithfulness

The abstract noun "faithfulness" can be translated as an adjective. Alternate translation: "save me because you are faithful to your covenant" (See: Abstract Nouns)

Psalms 31:17

Do not let me be humiliated

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: “Do not let others make me feel ashamed” (See: Active or Passive)

May the wicked be humiliated!

“I wish that God would disgrace wicked people!”

the wicked

This refers to “wicked people. (See: Nominal Adjectives)

May they be silent in Sheol

Here “in Sheol” represents death. Alternate translation: “Let them die so they cannot speak” (See: Metonymy)

ULT

17 Do not let me be humiliated, Yahweh;
for I call out to you! May the wicked be
humiliated! May they be silent in Sheol.

Psalms 31:18

May lying lips be silenced

This can be translated in active form. Alternate translation: “May someone make these lying lips silent” (See: Active or Passive)

ULT

18 May lying lips be silenced that speak against the righteous defiantly with arrogance and contempt.

lying lips

These represent lying people. Alternate translation: “people who lie” (See: Metonymy)

that speak against the righteous defiantly

Here “the righteous” refers to people who are righteous. Alternate translation: “that say terrible things about righteous people” (See: Nominal Adjectives)

with arrogance and contempt

These terms have similar meanings. Alternate translation: “with a complete lack of respect”

Psalms 31:19

ULT

19 How great is your goodness that you have stored up for those who revere you, that you perform for those who take refuge in you before all the children of mankind!

is your goodness

This can be expressed with a verb. Alternate translation: “are the good things you do” (See: Abstract Nouns)

that you have stored up

Yahweh’s goodness is spoken of as if it was something that could be stored up like a harvest. Alternate translation: “that you are keeping ready to use” (See: Metaphor)

those who revere you

“those who respect you greatly”

take refuge in you

Going to Yahweh for protection is spoken of as taking refuge in him. See how you translated this in Psalms 31:1. Alternate translation: “those who go to you for protection” (See: Metaphor)

Psalms 31:20

In the shelter of your presence, you hide them ... You hide them in a shelter

These phrases both mean that God protects them. (See: Parallelism)

ULT

20 In the shelter of your presence, you hide them from the plots of men. You hide them in a shelter from the violence of tongues.

In the shelter

Yahweh's presence is spoken of as if it is a strong building where the writer would be safe. (See: Metaphor)

You hide them in a shelter

Here a "shelter" represents a safe place. Alternate translation: "You provide a safe place for them" (See: Metonymy)

from the violence of tongues

Here "tongues" refer to the people who are speaking violent things against the writer. Alternate translation: "where their enemies cannot speak evil at them" (See: Metonymy)

Psalms 31:21

he showed me his marvelous covenant faithfulness

The abstract noun “faithfulness” can be translated as an adjective. Alternate translation: “he showed me that he is wonderfully faithful to his covenant” (See: Abstract Nouns)

ULT

21 Blessed be Yahweh, for he showed me his marvelous covenant faithfulness when I was in a besieged city.

Psalms 31:22

ULT

22 Though I said in my haste, “I am cut off from your eyes,” yet you heard my plea for help when I cried to you.

I am cut off from your eyes

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: “You have removed me from your presence” (See: Active or Passive and Idiom)

your eyes

Here Yahweh is represented by his “eyes.” Alternate translation: “you” (See: Synecdoche)

you heard my plea for help

Here “plea” can be expressed with a verb. Alternate translation: “you heard me plead for help” (See: Abstract Nouns)

Psalms 31:23

the faithful

This refers to the faithful people. Alternate translation: “the people who are faithful” (See: Nominal Adjectives)

he pays back the arrogant in full

Here “pay back” is an idiom that refers to punishment. Alternate translation: “he gives the proud people all of the punishment that they deserve” (See: Idiom)

ULT

23 Love Yahweh, all you faithful ones.
Yahweh protects the faithful, but he
pays back the arrogant in full.

Psalms 31:24

(There are no notes for this verse.)

ULT

24 Be strong and confident, all you who trust in Yahweh for help.

Psalms 32

Psalm 32 General Notes

Type of psalm

Psalm 32 is a psalm of confession of sin. (See: confess, confession and sin, sinful, sinner, sinning)

Special concepts in this chapter

Confession of sin

This psalm tells of the sorrow of unconfessed sin; it also tells of the blessing of confession and of receiving God's forgiveness. It is such a blessing when God forgives sin. Trouble comes when sin is hidden and not confessed. (See: bless, blessed, blessing and forgive, forgiven, forgiveness, pardon, pardoned)

Psalms 32:1

General Information:

Parallelism is common in Hebrew poetry. (See: Poetry and Parallelism)

ULT

1 Blessed is the person whose transgression is forgiven, whose sin is covered.

A psalm of David

This could mean: (1) David wrote the psalm or (2) the psalm is about David or (3) the psalm is in the style of David's psalms.

whose transgression is forgiven, whose sin is covered

These phrases have similar meanings. They can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "who God forgives his transgression and covers his sin" (See: Parallelism and Active or Passive)

whose sin is covered

Here sin that is forgiven is spoken of as if it were covered so that it can not be seen. Alternate translation: "whose sin is ignored" or "whose sin is deliberately forgotten" (See: Metaphor)

Psalms 32:2

to whom Yahweh reckons no guilt

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: “whom Yahweh sees as innocent” or “who is not guilty according to Yahweh” (See: Active or Passive)

ULT

2 Blessed is the man to whom Yahweh reckons no guilt and in whose spirit there is no deceit.

in whose spirit there is no deceit

Here “spirit” refers to the person. Alternate translation: “in whom there is not deceit” or “who is completely honest” (See: Synecdoche)

Psalms 32:3

my bones were wasting away

Here “my bones” refers to the writer. Alternate translation: “I was wasting away” or “I was getting weaker” (See: Synecdoche)

all day long

This idiom means “continually.” Alternate translation: “all the time” (See: Idiom)

ULT

3 When I remained silent, my bones were wasting away while I groaned all day long.

Psalms 32:4

ULT

4 For day and night your hand was heavy upon me. My strength withered as in summer drought. *Selah*

day and night

These extremes include everything in between. Alternate translation: “all the time” (See: Merism)

your hand was heavy upon me

Here “hand” refers to Yahweh. The entire phrase is an idiom that means “you afflicted me.” Alternate translation: “you made me suffer greatly” (See: Synecdoche and Idiom)

My strength withered as in summer drought

David’s strength is compared to a small, green plant that turns brown and crumbles in the dry season. (See: Simile)

Psalms 32:5

(There are no notes for this verse.)

ULT

5 Then I acknowledged my sin to you,
and I no longer hid my iniquity. I said, “I will confess my transgressions to Yahweh,”
and you forgave the guilt of my sin. *Selah*

Psalms 32:6

at a time of great distress

“when they are in great trouble.”

When the surging waters overflow, the waters will not reach them

Difficulties are spoken of as if they were a flood of water. Alternate translation: “Then when difficulties come like a flood of water, those people will be safe” (See: Metaphor)

ULT

6 For this reason every one of your faithful followers should pray to you at a time of great distress. When the surging waters overflow, the waters will not reach them.

Psalms 32:7

You are my hiding place

Yahweh is spoken of as if he was a safe place from the attacks of the writer's enemies. Alternate translation: "You are like a place where I can hide myself from my enemies" (See: Metaphor)

ULT

7 You are my hiding place; you will guard me from trouble. You will surround me with the songs of victory. *Selah*

You will surround me with the songs of victory

This metaphor apparently means that Yahweh's protection of the writer is the cause for songs of victory to be sung. Alternate translation: "Because of you I will sing songs of victory" (See: Metaphor)

Psalms 32:8

I will instruct you and teach you in the way

The words “instruct” and “teach” mean basically the same thing and emphasize careful instruction. Alternate translation: “I will teach you everything about the way” (See: Doublet)

ULT

8 I will instruct you and teach you in the way which you should go. I will instruct you with my eye upon you.

I will instruct

Here the “I” is probably Yahweh who talks directly to David.

in the way which you should go

Living in the correct way is spoken of as if it were a path that the writer should walk. Alternate translation: “how you should live your life” (See: Metaphor)

with my eye upon you

Here “my eye” refers to Yahweh’s attention. Alternate translation: “and direct my attention to you” or “and watch over you” (See: Metonymy)

Psalms 32:9

Do not be like a horse ... no understanding

The writer compares people with no understanding to horses and mules. This could mean: (1) the writer is speaking Yahweh's words to his readers, "You all must not be like a horse ... no understanding" or (2) Yahweh is speaking to the writer as though to a group of people. (See: Simile)

ULT

9 Do not be like a horse or like a mule,
which have no understanding; it is only
with bridle and bit to control them that
they will go where you want them to.

bridle and bit

Two tools that are used by people to guide horses and mules go where the rider wants them to go.

where you want them to

"where anyone wants them to go." The "you" here is singular and refers to no one in particular.

Psalms 32:10

Yahweh’s covenant faithfulness will surround the one who trusts in him

ULT

10 The wicked have many sorrows, but Yahweh’s covenant faithfulness will surround the one who trusts in him.

Yahweh being faithful to a person and protecting that person is spoken of as if Yahweh’s covenant faithfulness surrounded the person. The abstract noun “faithfulness” can be translated as an adjective. Alternate translation: “Because Yahweh is faithful to his covenant, he will protect the one who trusts in him” (See: Metaphor and Abstract Nouns)

Psalms 32:11

Be glad in Yahweh

Here “in Yahweh” refers to what Yahweh has done for them. “Be glad because of what Yahweh has done” (See: Idiom)

ULT

11 Be glad in Yahweh, and rejoice, you righteous; shout for joy, all you who are upright in heart.

you righteous

This refers to people. Alternate translation: “you righteous people” (See: Nominal Adjectives)

shout for joy

“shout joyfully” or “shout because of joy”

who are upright in heart

Here “heart” refers to the person. Alternate translation: “people who are upright” (See: Synecdoche)

Psalms 33

Psalm 33 General Notes

Type of psalm

Psalm 33 is a worship song. It tells how great God is.

Special concepts in this chapter

God’s power

God is the creator and also the God of his people, Israel. Whatever he plans works out. He alone provides safety in battle.

Psalms 33:1

General Information:

Parallelism is common in Hebrew poetry. (See: Poetry and Parallelism)

ULT

1 Rejoice in Yahweh, you righteous;
praise is appropriate for the upright.

Rejoice in Yahweh

Here “in Yahweh” refers to what Yahweh has done for them. “Rejoice because of what Yahweh has done” (See: Idiom)

praise is appropriate for the upright

“to praise Yahweh is appropriate for upright people”

Psalms 33:2

(There are no notes for this verse.)

ULT

2 Give thanks to Yahweh with the harp;
sing praises to him with the harp of ten strings.

Psalms 33:3

(There are no notes for this verse.)

ULT

3 Sing to him a new song; play skillfully
and sing with joy.

Psalms 33:4

General Information:

Each verse consists of two lines that have very similar meanings. (See: Parallelism)

ULT

4 For Yahweh's word is upright, and everything he does is fair.

Yahweh's word is upright

Here "upright" is used as a metaphor for something that is true. Alternate translation: "Yahweh always does what he says that he will do" (See: Metaphor)

Psalms 33:5

He loves righteousness and justice

These abstract nouns can be stated as actions. Alternate translation: “He loves doing what is right and just” or “He loves those who do what is right and just” (See: Abstract Nouns)

ULT

5 He loves righteousness and justice.
The earth is full of Yahweh’s covenant faithfulness.

The earth is full of Yahweh’s covenant faithfulness

People everywhere in the world being able to see evidence of Yahweh’s covenant faithfulness is spoken of as if his covenant faithfulness filled the earth. The abstract noun “covenant faithfulness” can be translated as an adjective. Alternate translation: “People everywhere on earth can see that Yahweh is faithful to his covenant” or “Throughout the earth, there is evidence that Yahweh is faithful to his covenant” (See: Metaphor and Abstract Nouns)

Psalms 33:6

By the word of Yahweh the heavens were made

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: “By using his word, Yahweh made the heavens” (See: Active or Passive)

by the breath of his mouth

This refers to Yahweh’s word. Alternate translation: “by his word” (See: Metonymy)

ULT

6 By the word of Yahweh the heavens were made, and all the stars were made by the breath of his mouth.

Psalms 33:7

General Information:

Each verse consists of two lines that have very similar meanings. (See: Parallelism)

ULT

7 He gathers the waters of the sea together like a heap; he puts the oceans in storehouses.

like a heap

“like behind a dam.” The writer describes the creation of the sea as if God piles up all the waters together. (See: Simile)

he puts the oceans in storehouses

The writer describes the creation of the oceans as if God put them in a storehouse. Alternate translation: “he puts the oceans in their place, just like a man puts grain in a storehouse” (See: Metaphor)

Psalms 33:8

Let the whole earth

This refers to the people on the earth. Alternate translation: “Let everyone on earth” (See: Metonymy)

stand in awe of him

Here “stand in awe” is an idiom that means “be in awe.” Alternate translation: “honor him” (See: Idiom)

ULT

8 Let the whole earth fear Yahweh; let all the inhabitants of the world stand in awe of him.

Psalms 33:9

stood in place

Here “stood in place” is an idiom that means “was created.” Alternate translation: “started to exist” (See: Idiom)

ULT

9 For he spoke, and it was done; he commanded, and it stood in place.

Psalms 33:10

General Information:

Each verse consists of two lines that have very similar meanings. (See: Parallelism)

ULT

10 Yahweh frustrates the alliances of nations; he overrules the plans of the peoples.

Yahweh frustrates

“Yahweh destroys” or “Yahweh breaks”

the alliances of nations

Here “nations” refers to the people of these nations. Alternate translation: “the alliances of the people of different nations” (See: Metonymy)

alliances

An alliance is an agreement between two or more nations to support each other in a war against a common enemy.

the plans of the peoples

“the intentions of the peoples” Alternate translation: “the evil plans of the peoples”

Psalms 33:11

ULT

11 The plans of Yahweh stand forever,
the plans of his heart for all generations.

stand forever

Here “stand” is an idiom that means “endure.” (See: Idiom)

the plans of his heart for all generations

The missing term “stand” is implied. Alternate translation: “the plans of his heart stand for all generations” (See: Ellipsis)

the plans of his heart

Here “his heart” refers to Yahweh. Alternate translation: “his plans” (See: Synecdoche)

for all generations

“for all future generations.” This is an idiom that means “forever.” (See: Idiom)

Psalms 33:12

Blessed is the nation

Here “the nation” refers to the people of the nation. Alternate translation: “Blessed are the people of the nation” (See: Metonymy)

whose God is Yahweh

“who worship Yahweh as God”

as his own inheritance

The people Yahweh has chosen to worship him are described here as if they were an inheritance that he has received. (See: Metaphor)

ULT

12 Blessed is the nation whose God is Yahweh, the people whom he has chosen as his own inheritance.

Psalms 33:13

(There are no notes for this verse.)

ULT

13 Yahweh looks from heaven; he sees
all the people.

Psalms 33:14

he looks down

The place where Yahweh lives is spoken of as if it is above the earth where people live. (See: Metaphor)

ULT

14 From the place where he lives, he looks down on all who live on the earth.

Psalms 33:15

shapes the hearts of them all

Here “hearts” refers to the thinking of these people. The writer speaks of Yahweh guiding the thinking of the people as if he were a potter who was shaping a bowl. Alternate translation: “guides their thinking as a potter shapes a bowl” (See: Metonymy and Metaphor)

ULT

15 He who shapes the hearts of them all observes all their deeds.

Psalms 33:16

No king is saved by a vast army

This could be stated in active form. Alternate translation: “A large army is not what saves a king” (See: Active or Passive)

ULT

16 No king is saved by a vast army; a warrior is not saved by his great strength.

Psalms 33:17

A horse is a false hope for victory

Here “a horse” represents the strongest part of the army. Alternate translation: “Having an army with strong horses does not provide security” (See: Synecdoche)

ULT

17 A horse is a false hope for victory; in spite of his great strength, he cannot rescue.

Psalms 33:18

See

This word shows that a new theme begins in this Psalm. Alternate translation: “Look” or “Listen” or “Pay attention to what I am about to tell you”

ULT

18 See, Yahweh’s eye is on those who fear him, on those who hope in his covenant faithfulness

Yahweh’s eye

Here “eye” refers to Yahweh’s attention. Alternate translation: “Yahweh’s attention” (See: Metonymy)

those who hope in his covenant faithfulness

The idiom to “count on” means to “wait for” or to “expect.” The abstract noun “faithfulness” can be translated as an adverb. Alternate translation: “those who expect him to act faithfully because of his covenant” or “those who wait for him to act because he is faithful to his covenant” (See: Idiom and Abstract Nouns)

Psalms 33:19

to deliver their lives from death

Here “their lives” refers to the people. Alternate translation: “to keep them from dying” (See: Synecdoche)

ULT

19 to deliver their lives from death and to keep them alive in times of famine.

Psalms 33:20

We wait for Yahweh

Here “wait” is an idiom that refers to trust. Alternate translation: “We trust in Yahweh” or “We hope in Yahweh” (See: Idiom)

ULT

20 We wait for Yahweh; he is our help and our shield.

he is our help and our shield

Here Yahweh is spoken of as if he is a shield that protects soldiers in battle. Alternate translation: “he is our helper and protects us like a shield” (See: Metaphor)

Psalms 33:21

Our hearts rejoice

Here “hearts” refer to the people. Alternate translation: “We rejoice” (See: Synecdoche)

ULT

21 Our hearts rejoice in him, for we trust in his holy name.

in his holy name

Here “holy name” refers to Yahweh’s holy character. Alternate translation: “in his holy character” or “in him because he is holy” (See: Metonymy)

Psalms 33:22

Let your covenant faithfulness, Yahweh, be with us

ULT

22 Let your covenant faithfulness, Yahweh, be with us as we put our hope in you.

Yahweh acting faithfully towards the people is spoken of as if Yahweh's covenant faithfulness were with them. The abstract noun "faithfulness" can be translated with an adverb. Alternate translation: "May you always act faithfully towards us because of your covenant, Yahweh" (See: Metaphor and Abstract Nouns)

as we put our hope in you

"as we hope for your help"

Psalms 34

Psalm 34 General Notes

Type of psalm

Psalm 34 is a teaching psalm and includes thanksgiving. It teaches that living right leads to a good life. (See: life, live, living, alive)

The psalm does not relate directly to the superscription given about Abimelech.

Special concepts in this chapter

Yahweh's help

Good people can have problems, but God brings them through these. (See: good, right, pleasant, better, best)

Psalms 34:1

General Information:

Parallelism is common in Hebrew poetry. (See: Poetry and Parallelism)

ULT

1 I will praise Yahweh at all times, his praise will always be in my mouth.

A psalm of David

This could mean: (1) David wrote the psalm or (2) the psalm is about David or (3) the psalm is in the style of David's psalms.

pretended to be insane

"acted like a crazy person"

before Abimelech

This refers to a specific historical event that the Hebrews knew well. Alternate translation: "when he was in Abimelech's house" or "when he was Abimelech's prisoner" (See: Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information)

his praise will always be in my mouth

Here "in my mouth" refers to David speaking about Yahweh. Alternate translation: "I will always praise him out loud" (See: Metonymy)

Psalms 34:2

the oppressed

This refers to people who are oppressed. Alternate translation: “the oppressed people” (See: Nominal Adjectives)

ULT

2 I will praise Yahweh! May the
oppressed hear and rejoice.

Psalms 34:3

Praise Yahweh with me

The verb “praise” is a command to a group. Alternate translation: “Everyone should praise Yahweh with me”

ULT

3 Praise Yahweh with me, let us lift up his name together.

lift up his name

Here “lift up” is an idiom that refers to exalting Yahweh. Alternate translation: “tell people how great he is” (See: Idiom)

his name

Here “his name” refers to Yahweh’s character. Alternate translation: “his character” (See: Metonymy)

Psalms 34:4

I sought Yahweh

Here “sought Yahweh” means David was asking Yahweh for help. Alternate translation: “I prayed to Yahweh” or “I asked Yahweh for help” (See: Metaphor)

ULT

4 I sought Yahweh and he answered me,
and he gave me victory over all my fears.

Psalms 34:5

Those who look to him

Here “look to” represents seeking help from him. Alternate translation: “Those who look at him for help” or “those who expect help only from him” (See: Metaphor)

ULT

5 Those who look to him are radiant,
and their faces are not ashamed.

are radiant

This idiom refers to their appearance as being joyful. Alternate translation: “are joyful” (See: Idiom)

their faces are not ashamed

Here “their faces” refers to the people who look to Yahweh. It can also be stated in positive form. Alternate translation: “they are not ashamed” or “they are proud” (See: Synecdoche and Litotes)

Psalms 34:6

This oppressed man

David describes himself as an oppressed man. Alternate translation: “I was oppressed and” (See: First, Second or Third Person)

Yahweh heard him

Here “heard” means that Yahweh helped him. Alternate translation: “Yahweh heard me” or “Yahweh helped him” (See: Idiom)

ULT

6 This oppressed man cried and Yahweh heard him and saved him from all his troubles.

Psalms 34:7

camps around

The angel of Yahweh is spoken of as if he were an army that camps around someone in order to protect them. Alternate translation: “guards” (See: Metaphor)

ULT

7 The angel of Yahweh camps around those who fear him and rescues them.

Psalms 34:8

Taste and see that Yahweh is good

Yahweh's goodness is spoken of as something that can be tasted and seen. Alternate translation: "Try and experience that Yahweh is good" (See: Metaphor)

ULT

8 Taste and see that Yahweh is good.
Blessed is the man who takes refuge in him.

takes refuge

Yahweh is spoken of as if he were a place where people can hide for protection from their enemies. Alternate translation: "trust him to protect them" (See: Metaphor)

Psalms 34:9

There is no lack for those who fear him

This can be stated in positive form. Alternate translation: “Those who fear him will always have what they need” (See: Litotes)

ULT

9 Fear Yahweh, you his holy people.
There is no lack for those who fear him.

Psalms 34:10

will not lack anything good

This can be stated in positive form. Alternate translation: “will always have the good things they need” (See: Litotes)

ULT

10 The young lions sometimes lack food
and suffer hunger, but those who seek
Yahweh will not lack anything good.

Psalms 34:11

sons

Here this does not refer to literal sons of the writer, but to the people he is teaching about Yahweh. Alternate translation: “my students”

ULT

11 Come, sons, listen to me. I will teach you the fear of Yahweh.

Psalms 34:12

What man is there who desires life and loves many days, that he may see good?

The implicit answer to this question is “every man.” This rhetorical question can be translated as a statement. Alternate translation: “Every man desires life and desires to live many days and have a good life” (See: Rhetorical Question)

ULT

12 What man is there who desires life and loves many days, that he may see good?

Psalms 34:13

keep your tongue from evil ... keep your lips from speaking lies

These two phrases refer to the same thing and it is said in different ways to emphasize its importance. (See: Parallelism)

ULT

13 Then keep your tongue from evil and keep your lips from speaking lies.

Then keep your tongue from evil

Here “tongue” refers to the whole person. Alternate translation: “Therefore, do not speak evil” (See: Synecdoche)

keep your lips from speaking lies

Here “lips” refers to the person speaking. Alternate translation: “do not speak lies” (See: Synecdoche)

Psalms 34:14

Turn away from evil

Here “Turn away” is a metaphor for avoiding evil. Alternate translation: “Refuse to do evil” (See: Metaphor)

ULT

14 Turn away from evil and do good.
Seek peace and go after it.

Seek peace

Here “seek” means to be concerned about peace. Alternate translation: “Try hard to live in peace with other people” (See: Metaphor)

Psalms 34:15

The eyes of Yahweh are on the righteous

Here “the eyes of Yahweh” refer to his careful watching. “The righteous” is a reference to righteous people. Alternate translation: “Yahweh carefully watches over the righteous people” (See: Metonymy and Nominal Adjectives)

ULT

15 The eyes of Yahweh are on the righteous and his ears are directed toward their cry.

his ears are directed toward their cry

Here Yahweh is represented by his “ears.” To be directed toward something means to pay attention to it. Alternate translation: “he pays attention to their cry” or “he answers their cry” (See: Synecdoche)

Psalms 34:16

to cut off the memory of them from the earth

Yahweh will cause people to so completely forget them when they die that it is as if he used a knife to cut off any memory of them. Alternate translation: “so that when they are dead, people will forget them completely” (See: Metaphor)

ULT

16 The face of Yahweh is against those who do evil, to cut off the memory of them from the earth.

Psalms 34:17

Yahweh hears

Here “hears” means that Yahweh desires to respond to them. Alternate translation: “Yahweh pays attention to them” (See: Idiom)

ULT

17 The righteous cry out and Yahweh hears and he rescues them from all their troubles.

Psalms 34:18

Yahweh is close

Here “is close” means “ready to help.” Alternate translation: “Yahweh is always ready to help” (See: Idiom)

ULT

18 Yahweh is close to the brokenhearted, and he saves those who are crushed in spirit.

the brokenhearted

This is a nominal adjective that refers to people who are brokenhearted. Deep sadness is spoken of as if the person’s heart is broken. Alternate translation: “people who are very sad” (See: Metaphor and Nominal Adjectives)

those who are crushed in spirit

People who are deeply discouraged are spoken of as if their spirits are crushed. Alternate translation: “people who are deeply discouraged” (See: Metaphor)

Psalms 34:19

the righteous

This refers to people who are righteous. Alternate translation: “the righteous people” (See: Nominal Adjectives)

ULT

19 Many are the troubles of the righteous, but Yahweh delivers them out of them all.

Psalms 34:20

He keeps all his bones, not one of them will be broken

ULT

20 He keeps all his bones, not one of them will be broken.

Here “all his bones” is literal, but it also implies that Yahweh takes care of the entire person. Alternate translation: “He provides complete protection for him, he will not be harmed in any way” (See: Synecdoche)

Psalms 34:21

Evil will kill the wicked

Evil is described as if it were a man who can kill people. Alternate translation: “The evil deeds of wicked people will kill them” (See: Personification)

ULT

21 Evil will kill the wicked. Those who hate the righteous will be condemned.

the wicked

This refers to wicked people. (See: Nominal Adjectives)

Those who hate the righteous will be condemned

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: “Yahweh will condemn those who hate the righteous” (See: Active or Passive)

the righteous

This refers to righteous people. (See: Nominal Adjectives)

Psalms 34:22

None of those who take refuge in him will be condemned

This can be stated in active form. It can also be stated in positive form. Alternate translation: “Yahweh will forgive everyone who takes refuge in him” (See: Active or Passive and Litotes)

ULT

22 Yahweh rescues the lives of his servants. None of those who take refuge in him will be condemned.

take refuge in him

Going to Yahweh for protection is spoken of as taking refuge in him. Alternate translation: “go to him for protection” (See: Metaphor)

Psalms 35

Psalm 35 General Notes

Type of psalm

Psalm 35 is a prayer for deliverance. His enemies are coming against him. (See: deliver, hand over, turn over, release, rescue)

Special concepts in this chapter

Enemies

When his enemies were sick, he tried to comfort them, but when he was in trouble his enemies use this as a time to attack him.

Psalms 35:1

General Information:

Parallelism is common in Hebrew poetry. (See: Poetry and Parallelism)

ULT

1 Yahweh, work against those who work against me; fight against those who fight against me.

Psalms 35:2

Grab your small shield and large shield

The writer describes God as a warrior who is preparing himself for battle. (See: Metaphor)

small shield and large shield

these are defensive weapons

ULT

2 Grab your small shield and large shield; rise up and help me.

Psalms 35:3

Use your spear and battle ax

The writer describes God as a warrior who is preparing himself for battle. (See: Metaphor)

ULT

3 Use your spear and battle ax against those who chase me; say to my soul, “I am your salvation.”

spear and battle ax

these are offensive weapons

those who chase me

This could mean: (1) these enemies are literally chasing the writer or (2) this is a metaphor for people who are enemies of the writer. (See: Metaphor)

say to my soul

This refers to the writer. Alternate translation: “say to me” (See: Synecdoche)

I am your salvation

This can be stated without the abstract noun. Alternate translation: “I am your savior” or “I will save you” (See: Abstract Nouns)

Psalms 35:4

May those who seek my life be shamed and dishonored

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: “May Yahweh shame and dishonor those who seek my life” (See: Active or Passive)

ULT

4 May those who seek my life be shamed and dishonored. May those who plan to harm me be turned back and confounded.

May those

“I desire that”

who seek my life

Here “seek my life” means they desire to kill the writer. The writer is represented by his “life.” Alternate translation: “who are trying to kill me” (See: Metaphor and Synecdoche)

May those who plan to harm me be turned back and confounded

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: “May Yahweh turn back and confound those who plan to harm me” (See: Active or Passive)

be turned back

“be turned back” here is a metaphor for being unable to accomplish their goal. Alternate translation: “be unsuccessful” (See: Metaphor)

confounded

“confused”

Psalms 35:5

as chaff before the wind

The writer's enemies are spoken of as if they are chaff that is easily blown away. Alternate translation: "blown away by the wind like chaff" (See: Simile)

ULT

5 May they be as chaff before the wind,
as the angel of Yahweh drives them away.

Psalms 35:6

their way

Here “their way” refers to their lives. Alternate translation: “their lives” (See: Metonymy)

ULT

6 May their way be dark and slippery, as the angel of Yahweh chases them.

dark and slippery

This refers to a way that is hidden and dangerous. Alternate translation: “hidden and full of dangers” (See: Metaphor)

chases them

This refers to the angel of Yahweh being opposed to the writer’s enemies. Alternate translation: “works against them” or “opposes them” (See: Metaphor)

Psalms 35:7

they set their net for me

The schemes of the wicked are spoken of as if they were a net that they set to catch the writer. Alternate translation: “they want to catch me in a net like a small animal” (See: Metaphor)

ULT

7 Without cause they set their net for me; without cause they dug a pit for my life.

they dug a pit for my life

The schemes of the wicked are spoken of as if they were a pit that they dug to catch the writer. Alternate translation: “they wanted to capture me in a pit like a big animal” (See: Metaphor)

my life

This refers to the writer. Alternate translation: “me” (See: Synecdoche)

Psalms 35:8

Let destruction overtake them by surprise

Destruction is spoken of as if it was a dangerous animal that would suddenly attack them. Alternate translation: “Let them be destroyed suddenly” or “Let them be surprised because you destroy them suddenly” (See: Personification)

ULT

8 Let destruction overtake them by surprise. Let the net that they have set catch them. Let them fall into it, to their destruction.

the net that they have set

The schemes of the wicked are spoken of as if they were a net that they place to catch the writer. Alternate translation: “the net that they placed in order to capture me like an animal and harm me” (See: Metaphor)

Let them fall into it

This is the same metaphor as in verse 7. The net is intended to catch the writer. Alternate translation: “Let them fall into the pit that they dug for me” (See: Metaphor and Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information)

fall into it

This could mean: (1) fall into the pit of verse 7 or (2) fall into destruction.

to their destruction

The abstract noun “destruction” can be stated as a verb. Alternate translation: “so that they will be destroyed” or “that is how you should destroy them” (See: Abstract Nouns)

Psalms 35:9

in his salvation

The abstract noun “salvation” can be stated as a verb. Alternate translation: “because you save me” (See: Abstract Nouns)

ULT

9 But I will be joyful in Yahweh and
rejoice in his salvation.

Psalms 35:10

All my bones

Here “bones” refers to the deepest inner being of a person. Alternate translation: “My whole inner being” (See: Metonymy)

Yahweh, who is like you ... those who try to rob them?

The implicit answer to this question is that no one is like Yahweh. Alternate translation: “Yahweh, there is no one like you ... those who try to rob them.” (See: Rhetorical Question)

the poor and needy

The words “poor” and “needy” mean basically the same thing and emphasize that Yahweh saves many who need his help. (See: Doublet)

ULT

10 All my bones will say, “Yahweh, who is like you, who rescues the oppressed from those who are too strong for them and the poor and needy from those who try to rob them?”

Psalms 35:11

rise up

This means they testify in a trial. Alternate translation: “volunteer to give a testimony” (See: Idiom)

ULT

11 Unrighteous witnesses rise up; they accuse me falsely.

Psalms 35:12

They repay me evil for good

This is a metaphor which means they give back evil in exchange for the good they have received. Alternate translation: “In return for my doing good things for them, they do evil things to me” (See: Metaphor)

ULT

12 They repay me evil for good. I am sorrowful.

evil ... good

These abstract nouns can be stated in other forms. Alternate translation: “evil things ... good things” (See: Abstract Nouns)

I am sorrowful

“I am extremely sad”

Psalms 35:13

ULT

13 But, when they were sick, I wore sackcloth; I fasted for them with my head bowed on my chest.

when they were sick

The word “they” refers to the “unrighteous witnesses” (Psalms 35:11).

I wore sackcloth

“I showed that I was sad”

with my head bowed on my chest

This was a symbol of prayer. “with my head bent down in prayer” (See: Symbolic Action)

Psalms 35:14

ULT

14 I went about in grief as for my brother; I bent down in mourning as for my mother.

in grief as for my brother

The writer was as sad as if his own brother had died. Alternate translation: “grieving as if my own brother was ill” (See: Simile)

I bent down in mourning as for my mother

The writer mourned as if his own mother had died. Alternate translation: “I mourned as if my own mother had died” (See: Simile)

I bent down

This was a symbol of pain and suffering. (See: Symbolic Action)

Psalms 35:15

gathered together

“assembled together” or “came together”

against me

This means they came together for the purpose of attacking the writer. Alternate translation: “to make plans against me” or “to plan my destruction” (See: Idiom)

ULT

15 But when I stumbled, they rejoiced
and gathered together; they gathered
together against me, and I was
surprised by them. They tore at me
without stopping.

They tore at me

Here the treated the writer as if he were a piece of cloth that they could tear to pieces. Alternate translation: “They attacked me” (See: Metaphor)

Psalms 35:16

With no respect at all they mocked me

(1) “With the worthless people they ridiculed me” or (2) “Without respect they made fun of me”

ULT

16 With no respect at all they mocked me; they grind their teeth at me in rage.

they grind their teeth at me in rage

This is a sign of anger and hate. “they made grinding noises with their teeth at me” (See: Symbolic Action)

Psalms 35:17

how long will you look on?

This rhetorical question indicates that the writer wants God to stop simply looking on and to start to help him. Alternate translation: “how long will you only watch them doing this?” or “when will you help me?” (See: Rhetorical Question)

ULT

17 Lord, how long will you look on?
Rescue my soul from their destructive attacks, my life from the lions.

Rescue my soul

Here “soul” refers to the writer. Alternate translation: “Rescue me” (See: Synecdoche)

my life from the lions

The word “save” is implied. Alternate translation: “save my life from the lions” (See: Ellipsis)

my life

This refers to the writer. Alternate translation: “me” (See: Synecdoche)

from the lions

Here the writer speaks of his enemies as if they were vicious lions. Alternate translation: “from my enemies who attack me like wild animals” (See: Metaphor)

Psalms 35:18

(There are no notes for this verse.)

ULT

18 Then I will thank you in the great assembly; I will praise you among many people.

Psalms 35:19

Do not let my deceitful enemies

“Do not let my enemies, who tell lies about me,”

their wicked schemes

“their evil plans”

ULT

19 Do not let my deceitful enemies
rejoice over me; do not let them carry
out their wicked schemes.

Psalms 35:20

they do not speak peace

The abstract noun “peace” can be stated as “peacefully.” Alternate translation: “they do not speak peacefully to people” (See: Abstract Nouns)

ULT

20 For they do not speak peace, but they devise deceitful words against those in our land who live in peace.

devise deceitful words

“look for ways to tell lies”

those in our land who live in peace

“those who live peacefully in our land”

live in peace

The abstract noun “peace” can be stated in other forms. Alternate translation: “live peacefully with others” or “do no harm to anyone” (See: Abstract Nouns)

Psalms 35:21

They open their mouths wide against me

The reason they open their mouths is to accuse the writer. Alternate translation: “They shout at me in order to accuse me” (See: Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information)

ULT

21 They open their mouths wide against me; they said, “Aha, Aha, our eyes have seen it.”

Aha, Aha

This is something an excited person says when he has suddenly seen or understood something, especially something other people did not expect him to see. It emphasizes the statement that follows. (See: Exclamations)

our eyes have seen it

Here “our eyes” refers to the enemies’ eyes. It is implied that they are saying they saw the writer do something wrong. Alternate translation: “we have seen it” or “we saw the wrong things that you did” (See: Synecdoche and Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information)

Psalms 35:22

You have seen it

Here “it” refers to the false accusations of the writer’s enemies. Alternate translation: “You have seen how they falsely accused me” (See: Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information)

ULT

22 You have seen it, Yahweh, do not be silent; Lord, do not be far from me.

do not be silent

“do not ignore what they did” This can be stated in positive form. Alternate translation: “judge them because of what they did” (See: Litotes)

do not be far from me

This can be stated in positive form. Alternate translation: “be very close to me” (See: Litotes)

Psalms 35:23

ULT

23 Arouse yourself and awake to my defense; My God and my Lord, defend my cause.

Arouse yourself and awake

This does not mean that God is actually asleep. The writer wants God to intervene. Both words mean basically the same thing and emphasize the urgency of this request. Alternate translation: “I feel like you are sleeping! Wake up” (See: Metaphor and Doublet)

to my defense

This abstract noun “defense” can be stated as “defend.” Alternate translation: “to defend me” (See: Abstract Nouns)

my cause

This refers to the writer. Alternate translation: “me” (See: Metonymy)

Psalms 35:24

do not let them rejoice over me

“do not let them be glad because I am suffering”

ULT

24 Defend me, Yahweh my God, because of your righteousness; do not let them rejoice over me.

Psalms 35:25

say in their heart

This is an idiom that means to say to oneself. Alternate translation: “say to themselves” (See: Idiom)

ULT

25 Do not let them say in their heart, “Aha, we have what we wanted.” Do not let them say, “We have devoured him.”

Aha

This is an exclamation that is used when something is suddenly seen or understood. It emphasizes what follows. Alternate translation: “Yes” (See: Exclamations)

we have what we wanted

It is implied that the writer’s enemies wanted him to be declared guilty. Alternate translation: “he has been declared guilty just as we desired” (See: Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information)

We have devoured him

The writer’s enemies speak of his destruction as if they were wild animals who had eaten him. Alternate translation: “We have swallowed him up” or “We have destroyed him” (See: Metaphor)

Psalms 35:26

May they be put to shame and may they be confounded who rejoice at my distress

“May those who rejoice at my distress be put to shame and confounded”

May they be put to shame

“May they feel shame”

may they be confounded

“may they be confused” or “may they be humiliated”

May those who exalt themselves over me be clothed with shame and dishonor

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: “May you clothe with shame and dishonor those who exalt themselves over me” (See: Active or Passive)

exalt themselves over me

“consider themselves better than I am” or “think they have the right to treat me badly”

clothed with shame and dishonor

Here shame and dishonor are spoken of as if they were shameful clothes that the writer could wear. These abstract nouns can be stated as verbs. Alternate translation: “shamed and dishonored” (See: Abstract Nouns and Metaphor)

shame and dishonor

These terms mean about the same thing and are used to emphasize how degraded they will be. (See: Doublet)

ULT

26 May they be put to shame and may they be confounded who rejoice at my distress. May those who exalt themselves over me be clothed with shame and dishonor.

Psalms 35:27

my vindication

Here “vindication” refers to Yahweh proclaiming or judging the psalmist innocent.

may they say continually

“may they always say”

Yahweh be praised

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: “Let us praise Yahweh” (See: Active or Passive)

who delights in

“who is happy with” or “who is glad for”

welfare

well-being, happiness

ULT

27 Let those who desire my vindication
shout for joy and be glad; may they say
continually, “Yahweh be praised, he
who delights in the welfare of his
servant.”

Psalms 35:28

tell of your justice

The abstract noun “justice” can be stated as “right.” Alternate translation: “proclaim that you act in the right way” (See: Abstract Nouns)

ULT

28 Then I will tell of your justice and
praise you all day long.

Psalms 36

Psalm 36 General Notes

Formatting in this chapter

Psalm 36 is a psalm of praise. It speaks of how good God is to those who love him. (See: good, right, pleasant, better, best and love, beloved)

Special concepts in this chapter

God and man

Evil people do not think about God; but he is such a pleasure to all who honor him. (See: evil, wicked, unpleasant)

Psalms 36:1

General Information:

Parallelism is common in Hebrew poetry. (See: Poetry and Parallelism)

ULT

1 An evil man speaks of his
transgression from deep in his heart,
there is no fear of God in his eyes.

For the chief musician

“This is for the director of music to use in worship.”

An evil man

This does not refer to a specific man, but to evil people in general. Alternate translation: “Evil people” (See: Generic Noun Phrases)

from deep in his heart

Here “heart” refers to the inner being of a person. Alternate translation: “from his inner being” (See: Metonymy)

in his eyes

Here “eyes” refers to the wicked person. Alternate translation: “in him” (See: Synecdoche)

Psalms 36:2

he comforts himself, thinking

“he prefers to believe” or “he wants to think”

his sin will not be discovered and be hated

ULT

2 For he comforts himself, thinking that his sin will not be discovered and be hated.

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: “God will not discover and hate his sin” (See: Active or Passive)

Psalms 36:3

His words are

“What he says is”

do good

“do things that are good”

ULT

3 His words are sinful and deceitful; he does not want to be wise and do good.

Psalms 36:4

he sets out on an evil way

The sinful actions of the man are spoken of as if he was walking along a path that was evil. Alternate translation: “he begins to do evil things” (See: Metaphor)

ULT

4 While he lies in bed, he plans ways to sin; he sets out on an evil way; he does not reject evil.

he does not reject evil

Here “evil” can be stated in another form. Alternate translation: “he does not reject evil behavior” (See: Abstract Nouns)

Psalms 36:5

Your covenant faithfulness ... reaches to the heavens

ULT

5 Your covenant faithfulness, Yahweh,
reaches to the heavens; your loyalty
reaches to the clouds.

The greatness of God's covenant faithfulness is spoken of as if it were an object that reached as high as the heavens. The abstract noun "faithfulness" can be translated as an adjective. Alternate translation: "Your covenant faithfulness ... is very great" or "You ... are as faithful to your covenant as the heavens are high above the earth" (See: Metaphor and Abstract Nouns)

reaches to the clouds

The greatness of God's loyalty is spoken of as if it was very high. Alternate translation: "is as high as the clouds" or "is enormously great" (See: Metaphor)

Psalms 36:6

like the mountains of God ... like the great deep

These phrases describe the greatness of God's righteousness and judgments as if they were very high and deep. Alternate translation: "as high as the highest mountains ... as deep as the deepest sea" (See: Simile)

you preserve

"you help" or "you save"

ULT

6 Your righteousness is like the mountains of God; your judgments are like the great deep. Yahweh, you preserve both mankind and the animals.

Psalms 36:7

How precious is your covenant faithfulness

The word “precious” refers to how greatly the writer values Yahweh’s covenant faithfulness. The abstract noun “faithfulness” can be translated as an adjective. Alternate translation: “I greatly value how you are faithful to your covenant” (See: Abstract Nouns)

ULT

7 How precious is your covenant faithfulness, God! Humanity takes refuge under the shadow of your wings.

Psalms 36:8

They feast upon the abundance of your house

Eating much food as guests in a house is a metaphor for God providing all his people need. Alternate translation: “They will have all they need because you will provide it to them” or “You have plenty to give, and you will provide them with all they need” (See: Metaphor)

ULT

8 They feast upon the abundance of your house; you let them drink from the river of your delights.

you let them drink from the river of your delights

There are two metaphors here. God’s abundant blessings are spoken of as if they are the water in a flowing river. Also, those who receive those blessings are spoken of as if they are drinking them like water. Alternate translation: “your precious blessings are like a river from which you will let them drink” (See: Metaphor)

Psalms 36:9

fountain of life

“source of life”

in your light we will see light

Here “light” is a metaphor for true knowledge. Alternate translation: “when you enlighten us, we will know the truth” or “your light is what enables us to know the truth about you” (See: Metaphor)

ULT

9 For with you is the fountain of life; in your light we will see light.

Psalms 36:10

Extend your covenant faithfulness fully to those who know you

ULT

10 Extend your covenant faithfulness fully to those who know you, your defense to the upright of heart.

The writer speaks of Yahweh continuing to act faithfully towards the people as if Yahweh were to extend his covenant faithfulness or make it longer. The abstract noun “faithfulness” can be translated with an adverb. Alternate translation: “Continue to act faithfully to those who know you” (See: Metaphor and Abstract Nouns)

your defense to the upright of heart

The abstract noun “defense” can be stated as a verb. “Continue” is implied from the previous phrase. Alternate translation: “Continue to protect the upright of heart” (See: Abstract Nouns and Ellipsis)

the upright of heart

Here “heart” refers to the people. Alternate translation: “the upright” or “people who act righteously” (See: Synecdoche)

Psalms 36:11

the foot of the arrogant man ... the hand of the wicked

Here “foot” and “hand” refer to the evil people. These are not specific men. This refers to evil people in general. Alternate translation: “arrogant people ... wicked people” (See: Synecdoche and Generic Noun Phrases)

drive me away

“send me away” or “make me leave my place”

ULT

11 Do not let the foot of the arrogant man come near to me. Do not let the hand of the wicked drive me away.

Psalms 36:12

evildoers have fallen; they are knocked down and are not able to get up

All three phrases describe the evildoers as defeated. (See: Metaphor)

ULT

12 Over there the evildoers have fallen; they are knocked down and are not able to get up.

they are knocked down

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: “you have knocked them down” or “you have destroyed them” (See: Active or Passive)

are not able to get up

“cannot get up”

Psalms 37

Psalm 37 General Notes

Type of psalm

Psalm 37 is a teaching psalm. It provides guidance about how to live a moral and God-fearing life. It teaches that evil people do not prosper in the future. (See: evil, wicked, unpleasant)

Special concepts in this chapter

Envy

Do not envy evil people. Although it appears as though they prosper, soon they will be destroyed and the good people will continue on living. (See: good, right, pleasant, better, best and life, live, living, alive)

Psalms 37:1

General Information:

Parallelism is common in Hebrew poetry. (See: Poetry and Parallelism)

ULT

1 Do not be irritated because of evildoers; do not be envious of those who act unrighteously.

Do not be irritated because of evildoers

“Do not let wicked people upset you” or “Do not be bothered by what wicked people do”

Psalms 37:2

dry up as the grass ... wither as the green plants

ULT

2 For they will soon dry up as the grass and wither as the green plants.

Evildoers are spoken of as if they are grass and plants that dry up and die in the hot weather. These two similes both mean they will die. Alternate translation: “die” or “come to an end” (See: Simile and Parallelism)

Psalms 37:3

graze in faithfulness

Faithfulness is spoken of as if it was an animal that would be strengthened by feeding in good pasture. Alternate translation: “nourish faithfulness” or “increase your faithfulness” (See: Metaphor)

ULT

3 Trust in Yahweh and do what is good;
settle in the land and graze in faithfulness.

Psalms 37:4

the desires of your heart

Here “heart” represents the person’s inner being and thoughts. Alternate translation: “your deepest, inner desires” or “the things that you desire the most” (See: Metonymy)

ULT

4 Then delight yourself in Yahweh, and he will give you the desires of your heart.

Psalms 37:5

Give your ways to Yahweh

Here “give your ways” is an idiom that means to ask Yahweh to control your life. Alternate translation: “Ask Yahweh to guide your actions in life” (See: Idiom)

ULT

5 Give your ways to Yahweh; trust in him, and he will act on your behalf.

act on your behalf

This is to represent another in legal issues. Here, when one trusts in Yahweh, he will defend that person and grant justice to that person. (See: Idiom)

Psalms 37:6

like the daylight ... like the day at noon

Both of these phrases mean about the same thing. (See: Parallelism)

ULT

6 He will display your justice like the daylight and your innocence like the day at noon.

like the daylight

This means “in full view of everyone.” Alternate translation: “as clear to see as the light of day” (See: Simile)

like the day at noon

This means “as visible as the noon sun.” Alternate translation: “as visible as the light at the brightest time of day” (See: Simile)

Psalms 37:7

Be still

“Be quiet”

ULT

7 Be still before Yahweh and wait patiently for him. Do not be angry if someone succeeds in what he does, or when he makes evil plots.

Psalms 37:8

(There are no notes for this verse.)

ULT

8 Do not be angry and frustrated. Do not worry. This only makes trouble.

Psalms 37:9

will be cut off

The destruction of the wicked is spoken of as if they were a branch of a plant that was cut off and thrown away. (See: Metaphor)

ULT

9 Evildoers will be cut off, but those who wait for Yahweh will inherit the land.

but those who wait for Yahweh

“but those who trust in Yahweh”

will inherit the land

The possession of the land is spoken of as if it will be received as an inheritance. Alternate translation: “will receive the land as their own possession” or “will live safely in the land” (See: Metaphor)

Psalms 37:10

will disappear

This idiom refers to the death of the evil man. Alternate translation: “will die and you will no longer see him” (See: Idiom)

ULT

10 In a little while the evil man will disappear; you will look at his place, but he will be gone.

Psalms 37:11

the meek

This refers to the people who are meek. Alternate translation: “the meek people” (See: Nominal Adjectives)

ULT

11 But the meek will inherit the land and will delight in great prosperity.

will inherit the land

The possession of the land is spoken of as if it will be received as an inheritance. See how you translated this in Psalms 37:9. Alternate translation: “will receive the land as their own possession” or “will live safely in the land” (See: Metaphor)

Psalms 37:12

The wicked man

This does not refer to a specific man. It refers to wicked people in general. Alternate translation: “The wicked person” (See: Generic Noun Phrases)

ULT

12 The wicked man plots against the righteous and he grinds his teeth in rage against him.

the righteous

This does not refer to specific people. This refers to people who are righteous. Alternate translation: “the righteous person” (See: Nominal Adjectives)

grinds his teeth

The wicked man hates the righteous person so much that he grinds his teeth together to show his anger. (See: Symbolic Language)

Psalms 37:13

his day is coming

It is implied that “his day” will be a day of judgment. Alternate translation: “the day is coming when Yahweh will judge and punish him” or “the day is coming when Yahweh will judge and punish the wicked person” (See: Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information)

ULT

13 The Lord laughs at him, for he sees that his day is coming.

Psalms 37:14

ULT

14 The wicked have drawn out their swords and have bent their bows to cast down the oppressed and needy, to kill those who are upright.

The wicked

This refers to the wicked people. Alternate translation: “The wicked people” (See: Nominal Adjectives)

have drawn out their swords ... have bent their bows

Both “swords” and “bows” are weapons used to attack people. The fact that they are “drawn” and “bent” means they are ready to start attacking. Alternate translation: “have prepared their weapons in order to attack” (See: Synecdoche)

to cast down

This destruction of the needy people is spoken of as if they were clay pots that would break into pieces when thrown down on the ground. Alternate translation: “to destroy” (See: Metaphor)

the oppressed and needy

These terms both refer to people who are powerless to defend themselves. Alternate translation: “people who are not able to resist them” (See: Doublet)

Psalms 37:15

Their swords will pierce their own hearts

Swords are examples of weapons and “hearts” represent the people. To “pierce the heart” is an idiom that means “to kill.” Alternate translation: “Their weapons will be turned against them and they will kill themselves” (See: Synecdoche and Idiom)

ULT

15 Their swords will pierce their own hearts, and their bows will be broken.

Psalms 37:16

Better is the little that the righteous has than the abundance of many wicked people

“It is better to be poor and righteous than to be wicked with great wealth”

ULT

16 Better is the little that the righteous has than the abundance of many wicked people.

Better is the little that the righteous has

The nominal adjective “the little” refers to few possessions. The nominal adjective “the righteous” refers to a righteous person. Alternate translation: “Better are the few possessions that a righteous person has” (See: Nominal Adjectives)

the abundance

This refers to the wealth of the wicked people. (See: Nominal Adjectives)

Psalms 37:17

For the arms of the wicked people will be broken

Here “arms” represent the strength of the wicked people. Breaking their arms represents taking away their power. This could be stated in active form. Alternate translation: “For Yahweh will remove the strength of the wicked people” (See: Metonymy and Active or Passive)

ULT

17 For the arms of the wicked people will be broken, but Yahweh supports the righteous people.

Psalms 37:18

watches over the blameless

To “watch over” means to protect someone. Here “the blameless” refers to the blameless people. Alternate translation: “protects the blameless people” (See: Idiom and Nominal Adjectives)

ULT

18 Yahweh watches over the blameless
day by day, and their heritage will be
forever.

day by day

This is an idiom that means “continually.” Alternate translation: “every day” (See: Idiom)

Psalms 37:19

when times are bad

This phrase refers to disasters, such as famine. Alternate translation: “when calamities occur” (See: Idiom)

ULT

19 They will not be ashamed when times are bad. When famine comes, they will have enough to eat.

Psalms 37:20

Yahweh’s enemies will be like the glory of the pastures

The writer compares Yahweh’s enemies to the flowers blooming in the fields. (See: Simile)

be consumed and disappear in the smoke

The writer speaks of the destruction of the wicked as if they were weeds or wilted flowers in the field that are burned off after the harvest. This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: “Yahweh will destroy them as fire turns the weeds of the field into smoke” (See: Metaphor and Active or Passive)

ULT

20 But evil men will perish. Yahweh’s enemies will be like the glory of the pastures; they will be consumed and disappear in the smoke.

Psalms 37:21

is generous and gives

These mean the same thing and emphasize the generosity of the righteous. (See: Doublet)

ULT

21 The wicked person borrows but does
not repay, but the righteous person is
generous and gives.

Psalms 37:22

Those who are blessed by God will inherit the land; those who are cursed by him will be cut off

This is a contrastive form of Parallelism. Those who are blessed by God in contrast to those who are cursed by God. (See: Parallelism)

ULT

22 Those who are blessed by God will inherit the land; those who are cursed by him will be cut off.

Those who are blessed by God

This can be stated as active. Alternate translation: “Those whom God blesses” (See: Active or Passive)

will inherit the land

The possession of the land is spoken of as if it had been received as an inheritance. See how you translated this in Psalms 37:9. Alternate translation: “will receive the land as their own possession” or “will be allowed to live safely in the land” (See: Metaphor)

those who are cursed by him

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: “those whom Yahweh curses” (See: Active or Passive)

will be cut off

The destruction of the wicked is spoken of as if they were a branch of plant that was cut off and thrown away. See how you translated this in Psalms 37:9. (See: Metaphor)

Psalms 37:23

It is by Yahweh that a man’s steps are established ... commendable in God’s sight

ULT

23 It is by Yahweh that a man’s steps are established, the man whose way is commendable in God’s sight.

These can be stated to show the logical connection and clarify the passive clause. Alternate translation: “If a man lives in a commendable way in Yahweh’s sight, Yahweh will establish his steps” (See: Active or Passive)

It is by Yahweh that a man’s steps are established

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: “Yahweh is the one who enables a man to be successful” (See: Active or Passive)

a man ... the man

This does not refer to a specific man, but to people in general. (See: Generic Noun Phrases)

a man’s steps

Steps represent the way a person lives. Alternate translation: “the way a man lives” (See: Metonymy)

Psalms 37:24

Though he stumbles, he will not fall down

Here “stumble” and “fall” refer to the man’s reaction to difficult times. Alternate translation: “Though he has difficult times, he will not utterly fail” (See: Metaphor)

ULT

24 Though he stumbles, he will not fall down, for Yahweh is holding him with his hand.

holding him with his hand

Here “his hand” refers to Yahweh’s power, and “holding him” refers to protecting him. Alternate translation: “protecting him with his power” (See: Metonymy)

Psalms 37:25

the righteous person abandoned

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: “Yahweh forsake the righteous person” (See: Active or Passive)

the righteous person

This does not refer to a specific person. It is a general statement. (See: Generic Noun Phrases)

begging for bread

Here “bread” represents food in general. Alternate translation: begging for food” (See: Synecdoche)

ULT

25 I was young and now am old; I have never seen the righteous person abandoned or his children begging for bread.

Psalms 37:26

All the day long he is

This idiom means this action is a habit of his life. Alternate translation: “He is always (See: Idiom)

his children become a blessing

“his children grow up to bless others”

ULT

26 All the day long he is gracious and lends, and his children become a blessing.

Psalms 37:27

Turn away from

To stop doing something is spoken of as if the person turned away from it. Alternate translation: “Stop doing” (See: Metaphor)

ULT

27 Turn away from evil and do what is right; then you will be safe forever.

Psalms 37:28

They are preserved forever

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: “Yahweh will protect them forever” (See: Active or Passive)

will be cut off

The destruction of the wicked is spoken of as if they were a branch of plant that was cut off and thrown away. See how you translated this in Psalms 37:9. (See: Metaphor)

ULT

28 For Yahweh loves justice and does not abandon his faithful ones. They are preserved forever, but the descendants of the wicked will be cut off.

Psalms 37:29

will inherit the land

The possession of the land is spoken of as if it had been received as an inheritance. See how you translated this in Psalms 37:9. Alternate translation: “will receive the land as their own possession” or “will be allowed to live safely in the land” (See: Metaphor)

ULT

29 The righteous will inherit the land
and live there forever.

Psalms 37:30

the righteous

This refers to the people who are righteous. Alternate translation: “the righteous people” (See: Nominal Adjectives)

ULT

30 The mouth of the righteous person speaks wisdom and increases justice.

The mouth of the righteous person

Here “mouth” represents the whole person who speaks. Alternate translation: “The righteous person” (See: Synecdoche)

speaks wisdom

The abstract noun “wisdom” can be stated as “wise.” Alternate translation: “gives wise advice to others” (See: Abstract Nouns)

increases justice

The abstract noun “justice” can be stated as an action. Alternate translation: “encourages other people to live rightly” (See: Abstract Nouns)

Psalms 37:31

The law of his God is in his heart

Here “in his heart” refers to his deepest inner being. Alternate translation: “He treasures the commands of his God in his inner being” (See: Metonymy)

ULT

31 The law of his God is in his heart; his feet will not slip.

his feet will not slip

Here failure to obey Yahweh is spoken of as slipping off a safe path and falling. Alternate translation: “he will walk safely in the way God wants him to walk” or “he will safely do the things God wants him to do” (See: Metaphor)

Psalms 37:32

The wicked person ... the righteous person

These words refer to any wicked or righteous person or to wicked and righteous people in general, not to specific people. Alternate translation: “Wicked people ... righteous people” or “Any wicked person” or “any righteous person” (See: Generic Noun Phrases)

ULT

32 The wicked person watches the righteous person and seeks to kill him.

watches the righteous person

Here the watching implies observing the righteous in order to do them harm. Alternate translation: “waits in ambush for the righteous person” (See: Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information)

Psalms 37:33

the evil person’s hand

These words refer to the hand of any evil person, not of any specific person. Here “hand” represents power or control. Alternate translation: “evil people’s hands” or “the power of the evil person” (See: Generic Noun Phrases and Metonymy)

ULT

33 Yahweh will not abandon him into the evil person’s hand or condemn him when he is judged.

when he is judged

This refers to Yahweh judging the righteous man. Alternate translation: “When Yahweh judges him” (See: Active or Passive)

Psalms 37:34

he will raise you up to possess the land

Here “raise you up” refers to God giving honor to those who wait for him. Alternate translation: “he will honor you by giving you the land” (See: Metaphor)

ULT

34 Wait for Yahweh and keep his way,
and he will raise you up to possess the land. You will see when the wicked are cut off.

the wicked

This refers to wicked people. Alternate translation: “the wicked people” (See: Nominal Adjectives)

are cut off

The destruction of the wicked is spoken of as if they were a branch of a plant that was cut off and thrown away. See how you translated a similar phrase in Psalms 37:9. (See: Metaphor)

Psalms 37:35

the wicked and terrifying person

This does not refer to a specific person. It is a general statement. (See: Generic Noun Phrases)

spread out like a green tree in its native soil

Here the prosperity of the wicked man is spoken of as if he were a healthy tree growing in good soil. (See: Simile)

ULT

35 I have seen the wicked and terrifying person spread out like a green tree in its native soil.

Psalms 37:36

he could not be found

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: “I could not find him” or “Yahweh had taken him away” (See: Active or Passive)

ULT

36 But when I passed by again, he was not there. I looked for him, but he could not be found.

Psalms 37:37

the man of integrity

This does not refer to a specific person. It is a general statement. (See: Generic Noun Phrases)

mark the upright

“note carefully the good people” or “notice the good people”

ULT

37 Observe the man of integrity, and
mark the upright; there is a good future
for a man of peace.

Psalms 37:38

the future for the wicked man is cut off

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: “God will end his family line” or “he will not have any descendants” (See: Active or Passive)

ULT

38 Sinners will be totally destroyed; the future for the wicked man is cut off.

the future

This refers to his descendants. Alternate translation: “his descendants” (See: Metonymy)

the wicked man

This does not refer to a specific person. It is a general statement. (See: Generic Noun Phrases)

is cut off

The destruction of the wicked is spoken of as if they were a branch of a plant that was cut off and thrown away. See how you translated a similar phrase in Psalms 37:9. (See: Metaphor)

Psalms 37:39

Salvation of the righteous comes from Yahweh

The abstract noun “Salvation” can be expressed as an action. Alternate translation: “Yahweh rescues the righteous people” (See: Abstract Nouns)

ULT

39 Salvation of the righteous comes from Yahweh; he protects them in the times of trouble.

the righteous

This refers to the righteous people. Alternate translation: “the righteous people” (See: Nominal Adjectives)

Psalms 37:40

helps ... rescues ... saves

This same idea is repeated in several different ways to emphasize that Yahweh is dependable and able to give aid. (See: Parallelism)

they have taken refuge in him

Going to Yahweh for protection is spoken of as taking refuge in him. Alternate translation: “they have gone to him for protection” (See: Metaphor)

ULT

40 Yahweh helps them and rescues them. He rescues them from evil men and saves them because they have taken refuge in him.

Psalms 38

Psalm 38 General Notes

Type of psalm

Psalm 38 is a confession of sin and a prayer for deliverance. (See: confess, confession and sin, sinful, sinner, sinning and deliver, hand over, turn over, release, rescue)

Special concepts in this chapter

Author’s sickness

The author was very sick and his enemies were seeking ways to destroy him.

Psalms 38:1

General Information:

Parallelism is common in Hebrew poetry. (See: Poetry and Parallelism)

ULT

1 Yahweh, do not rebuke me in your anger; do not punish me in your wrath.

A psalm of David

This could mean: (1) David wrote the psalm or (2) the psalm is about David or (3) the psalm is in the style of David's psalms.

do not rebuke me in your anger ... do not punish me in your wrath

These phrases mean basically the same thing and the idea is repeated for emphasis. (See: Parallelism)

Psalms 38:2

your arrows pierce me

The severity of Yahweh's punishment of the writer is spoken of as if Yahweh had shot arrows into the writer. Alternate translation: "Your punishment is as painful as if you had shot arrows into me" (See: Metaphor)

ULT

2 For your arrows pierce me, and your hand presses me down.

your hand presses me down

Yahweh's punishment of the writer is spoken of as if Yahweh was smashing the writer with his hand. Here, "hand" refers to Yahweh's power. Alternate translation: "your power knocks me down" (See: Metaphor and Metonymy)

Psalms 38:3

General Information:

David continues describing what his guilt and shame does to his body. He uses hyperbole to emphasize the effects of this lesson.

ULT

3 My whole body is sick because of your anger; there is no health in my bones because of my sin.

there is no health in my bones because of my sin

Here “my bones” represents the body of the writer. Alternate translation: “my whole body is diseased because of my sin” (See: Synecdoche)

Psalms 38:4

my iniquities overwhelm me

The writer's iniquities are spoken of as if they are a flood of water that covers him. Alternate translation: "my iniquities cover me like a flood" (See: Metaphor)

ULT

4 For my iniquities overwhelm me; they are a burden too heavy for me.

they are a burden too heavy for me

The writer's iniquities are spoken of as if they are a heavy load that he cannot lift. Alternate translation: "they are like a load that is too heavy for me to lift" (See: Metaphor)

Psalms 38:5

General Information:

David continues describing what his guilt and shame does to his body. He uses hyperbole to emphasize the effects of this lesson.

ULT

5 My wounds are infected and smell because of my foolish sins.

My wounds are infected and smell

Here “smell” refer to his sores having a bad smell that is associated with rotting flesh. Alternate translation: “My wounds are infected and stink as they rot” (See: Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information)

Psalms 38:6

I am stooped over

The pain of the writer's wounds have caused him to be bent over as if he were an old, feeble man. Alternate translation: "I am bent over in pain" (See: Metaphor)

ULT

6 I am stooped over and humiliated
every day; I go about mourning all day
long.

Psalms 38:7

I am filled with burning

The writer's is so sick with fever that it is as if he is burning inside. Alternate translation: "My body is burning with fever" (See: Metaphor)

ULT

7 For within me, I am filled with burning;
there is no health in my flesh.

there is no health in my flesh

Here "my flesh" refers to the writer. Alternate translation: "I am completely sick" (See: Synecdoche)

Psalms 38:8

utterly crushed

The writer's illness is so severe that it is as if a huge weight is pressing down on him. (See: Metaphor)

anguish of my heart

Here "my heart" refers to the writer. Alternate translation: "my anguish" (See: Synecdoche)

ULT

8 I am numb and utterly crushed; I
groan because of the anguish of my
heart.

Psalms 38:9

my heart’s deepest yearnings

Here “my heart” refers to the writer. It may be helpful to state that the writer desires good health. Alternate translation: “My strongest desires” or “that I desire you to heal me” (See: Synecdoche and Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information)

ULT

9 Lord, you understand my heart’s deepest yearnings, and my groanings are not hidden from you.

my groanings are not hidden from you

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: “you are able to see all my moans of sorrow” (See: Active or Passive)

Psalms 38:10

My heart pounds

This idiom means his heart beats intensely. Alternate translation: “My heart beats loudly” (See: Idiom)

my strength fades

“I become very weak”

my eyesight dims

“I can no longer see well”

ULT

10 My heart pounds, my strength fades,
and my eyesight dims.

Psalms 38:11

(There are no notes for this verse.)

ULT

11 My friends and companions shun me
because of my condition; my neighbors
stand far off.

Psalms 38:12

lay snares for me

The plots of the writer's enemies are spoken of as if they were traps that they had set to catch him like an animal. Alternate translation: "set traps to catch me" (See: Metaphor)

ULT

12 Those who seek my life lay snares for me. They who seek my harm speak destructive words and say deceitful words all day long.

speak destructive words and say deceitful words

These two phrases mean basically the same thing and emphasize the hurtful nature of what these people say. (See: Parallelism)

Psalms 38:13

ULT

13 But I, I am like a deaf man and hear nothing; I am like a mute man who says nothing.

I am like a deaf man ... hear nothing

The writer does not listen to what his enemies are saying. (See: Simile)

I am like a mute man ... says nothing

The writer does not speak evil words to or about his enemies. (See: Simile)

a mute man

a person who cannot speak

Psalms 38:14

does not hear

The writer does not listen to what his enemies are saying. (See: Simile)

has no reply

The writer does not speak evil words to or about his enemies. (See: Simile)

ULT

14 I am like a man who does not hear
and who has no reply.

Psalms 38:15

you will answer

This could mean: (1) “you will answer me” or (2) “you will answer my enemies.”

ULT

15 Surely I wait for you, Yahweh; you will answer, Lord my God.

Psalms 38:16

will not gloat over me

“will not delight over my trouble”

If my foot slips

ULT

16 I say this so that my enemies will not gloat over me. If my foot slips, they will do terrible things to me.

Here “my foot” represents the writer. The slipping of his foot is a metaphor that refers to the writer’s troubles and misfortunes. Alternate translation: “If I make mistakes that cause me trouble” (See: Synecdoche and Metaphor)

Psalms 38:17

I am about to stumble

This metaphor could mean: (1) “I am so sick that I am about to die” or (2) “I will soon be ruined.” It may be best not to interpret the metaphor in the text. (See: Metaphor)

I am in constant pain

“I am always in pain”

ULT

17 For I am about to stumble, and I am in constant pain.

Psalms 38:18

(There are no notes for this verse.)

ULT

18 I confess my guilt; I am concerned about my sin.

Psalms 38:19

But my enemies are numerous ... are many

These two phrases mean basically the same thing. (See: Parallelism)

ULT

19 But my enemies are numerous; those who hate me wrongfully are many.

Psalms 38:20

They repay me evil for good

ULT

20 They repay me evil for good; they hurl accusations at me although I have pursued what is good.

The actions of the writer's enemies are spoken of as a financial transaction where they gave him evil things in exchange for good things. The abstract nouns "evil" and "good" can be stated as adjectives. Alternate translation: "They do evil thing to me after I was good to them" (See: Metaphor and Abstract Nouns)

hurl accusations at me

The way the writer's enemies accuse him is spoken of as if they were throwing accusations at him like rocks. (See: Metaphor)

pursued what is good

The writers desire for what is good is spoken of as if he were running after good things. (See: Metaphor)

Psalms 38:21

Do not abandon me ... do not stay far away from me

These two phrases have very similar meanings. (See: Parallelism)

ULT

21 Do not abandon me, Yahweh; my God, do not stay far away from me.

do not stay far away from me

Because Yahweh has not yet answered the writer's request, he speaks of Yahweh as if Yahweh were standing far away from the writer. (See: Metaphor)

Psalms 38:22

Come quickly to help me

God is spoken of as if he is running to the writer to help him. (See: Metaphor)

ULT

22 Come quickly to help me, Lord, my salvation.

my salvation

The abstract noun “salvation” can be stated as an action. Alternate translation: “you are the one who saves me” (See: Abstract Nouns)

Psalms 39

Psalm 39 General Notes

Type of psalm

Psalm 39 is a psalm of deliverance from sickness. (See: deliver, hand over, turn over, release, rescue)

Special concepts in this chapter

Life

Life on earth is short. The psalmist wanted God's healing so he can enjoy the rest of his life. (See: life, live, living, alive)

This psalm shares some characteristics of another wisdom book called Ecclesiastes or Koheleth but is more positive.

Psalms 39:1

General Information:

Parallelism is common in Hebrew poetry. (See: Poetry and Parallelism)

ULT

1 I decided, “I will watch what I say so that I do not sin with my tongue. I will muzzle my mouth while in the presence of an evil man.”

For the chief musician

“This is for the director of music to use in worship,”

Jeduthun

One of David’s chief musicians had this same name. This may refer to him. (See: How to Translate Names)

I will watch what I say

Here “watch” is an idiom that mean “pay attention to.” Alternate translation: “I will pay attention to the things that I say” (See: Idiom)

so that I do not sin with my tongue

Here “tongue” refers to the writer’s speech. Alternate translation: “so that I do not speak an offense against Yahweh” (See: Metonymy)

muzzle

To “muzzle” means to keep a mouth shut. Here David means that he will not speak while he is with an evil person. (See: Metaphor)

Psalms 39:2

I kept silent; I kept back my words

These two phrases mean the same thing and emphasize that the writer did not speak at all. Alternate translation: “I was completely silent” (See: Doublet)

I kept back my words

“I did not speak”

ULT

2 I kept silent; I kept back my words
even from saying anything good, and
my pain grew worse.

Psalms 39:3

My heart became hot ... it burned like a fire

Here “heart” represents the whole person. The anxious thoughts of the writer are spoken of as if they were a fire burning inside him. Alternate translation: “I became very anxious when I thought about these things” (See: Synecdoche and Metaphor)

ULT

3 My heart became hot; when I thought
about these things, it burned like a fire.
Then finally I spoke.

Psalms 39:4

the end of my life ... the extent of my days

These phrases mean basically the same thing. (See: Parallelism)

Show me how transient I am

“Show me how brief my life is” or “Show me how soon I will die”

ULT

4 “Yahweh, make me know when will be the end of my life and the extent of my days. Show me how transient I am.

Psalms 39:5

only the width of my hand

The writer speaks of his lifespan is if it could be measured by the width of his hand. Alternate translation: “only a very short time” (See: Metaphor)

ULT

5 See, you have made my days only the width of my hand, and my lifetime is like nothing before you. Surely every man is a single breath. *Selah*

my lifetime is like nothing before you

This simile states that the length of the writer’s life is so short that it does not exist. This is an exaggeration to stress how short it is. Alternate translation: “the length of my life is barely any time at all” (See: Simile and Hyperbole)

Surely every man is a single breath

Life is short, and the psalmist speaks of it here as if it were only as long as the time it takes for a person to breathe one breath. Alternate translation: “The time that humans live is as short as a single breath of a person” (See: Metaphor)

Psalms 39:6

Surely every man walks about like a shadow

The lives of people are spoken of as if they are as insignificant as shadows. Alternate translation: “Everyone disappears like shadows do” (See: Simile)

although they do not know who will receive them

Here it is implied that they do not know what will happen to their wealth after they die. The full meaning of this statement can be made explicit. (See: Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information)

ULT

6 Surely every man walks about like a shadow. Surely everyone hurries about to accumulate riches although they do not know who will receive them.

Psalms 39:7

Now, Lord, for what am I waiting?

The writer asks this question to emphasize that people cannot help him. This rhetorical question can be translated as a statement. Alternate translation: “So now, Yahweh, I can expect to receive nothing from anyone else.” (See: Rhetorical Question)

ULT

7 Now, Lord, for what am I waiting? You are my only hope.

Psalms 39:8

(There are no notes for this verse.)

ULT

8 Rescue me from my sins; do not make
me the reproach of fools.

Psalms 39:9

I am silent ... cannot open my mouth

These phrases mean basically the same thing. (See: Parallelism)

because it is you who has done it

“because my punishment comes from you”

ULT

9 I am silent and cannot open my mouth, because it is you who has done it.

Psalms 39:10

Stop wounding me

God’s punishment of the writer is spoken of as if God was wounding him with a weapon. Alternate translation: “Please stop punishing me” (See: Metaphor)

ULT

10 Stop wounding me; I am overwhelmed by the blow of your hand.

I am overwhelmed

“I am defeated completely”

the blow of your hand

God’s punishment of the writer is spoken of as if God was striking him with his fist. Here “hand” represents God’s judgment. Alternate translation: “your judgment on me” (See: Metaphor)

Psalms 39:11

consume the things they desire like a moth

God will take away the things they value in the same way as a moth eats a piece of cloth. Alternate translation: “consume the things they desire like a moth eats away at clothing” (See: Simile)

all people are nothing but vapor

The writer speaks of the frailty of people as if they were mist that disappears quickly. Alternate translation: “everyone is completely fragile” (See: Metaphor)

ULT

11 When you discipline people for sin,
you consume the things they desire like a moth; surely all people are nothing but vapor. *Selah*

Psalms 39:12

Hear my prayer ... listen to me ... listen to my weeping

These three phrases mean basically the same thing and show how strongly the writer wants God to respond to him. (See: Parallelism)

Do not be deaf to me

The writer speaks of Yahweh's lack of response to him as if Yahweh was deaf. Alternate translation: "Do not ignore me as if you could not hear me" (See: Metaphor)

I am like a foreigner with you, a refugee

The writer speaks of Yahweh's lack of response as if Yahweh considered him to be a total stranger to him. Alternate translation: "I am like a complete stranger to you" (See: Simile)

ULT

12 Hear my prayer, Yahweh, and listen to me; listen to my weeping! Do not be deaf to me, for I am like a foreigner with you, a refugee like all my ancestors were.

Psalms 39:13

Turn your gaze from me

Here “your gaze” represents Yahweh’s punishment. Alternate translation: “Please stop punishing me” (See: Metonymy)

ULT

13 Turn your gaze from me so that I may smile again before I die.”

so that I may smile again

Here “smile” is associated with being happy. Alternate translation: “so that I can be happy again” (See: Metonymy)

Psalms 40

Psalm 40 General Notes

Type of psalm

Psalm 40 is a psalm of praise. Many also see it as a messianic psalm, a psalm about Christ. (See: Christ, Messiah)

Special concepts in this chapter

Sacrifices

God is not interested in sacrifices but wants people to obey him and fulfill his plans for them.

Psalms 40:1

General Information:

Parallelism is common in Hebrew poetry. (See: Poetry and Parallelism)

ULT

1 I waited patiently for Yahweh; he listened to me and heard my cry.

For the chief musician

“This is for the director of music to use in worship.”

I waited patiently for Yahweh

This means the writer was waiting for Yahweh to help him.

he listened to me ... heard my cry

These mean the same thing, and can be combined into one statement. Alternate translation: “he listened to me when I called out to him” (See: Doublet)

Psalms 40:2

out of a horrible pit, out of the miry clay

These two metaphors mean the same thing. The writer's danger is spoken of as if it was a deadly pit full of mud. This emphasizes the danger. Alternate translation: "from being trapped in a horrible pit full of sticky mud" (See: Parallelism and Metaphor)

ULT

2 He brought me up out of a horrible pit, out of the miry clay, and he set my feet on a rock and made my steps secure.

he set my feet on a rock

Here "my feet" refers to the writer, and "a rock" refers a place of safety. Alternate translation: "he provided safety for me" (See: Synecdoche and Metonymy)

Psalms 40:3

He has put a new song in my mouth

This could mean: (1) “He has taught me the words to a new song” or (2) “He has given me a new reason to sing.”

ULT

3 He has put a new song in my mouth,
praise to our God. Many will see it and
honor him and will trust in Yahweh.

in my mouth

Here “my mouth” refers to the writer. Alternate translation: “in me” (See: Synecdoche)

praise to our God

The noun “praise” can be stated as a verb. Alternate translation: “a song to praise our God” (See: Abstract Nouns)

Many will see it

Here “see it” refers to hearing the writer sing his song about what God has done for him. Alternate translation: “Many people will hear me tell what Yahweh has done” (See: Metonymy)

Psalms 40:4

Blessed is the man who makes Yahweh his trust

“Blessed is the man who trusts in Yahweh” or “Those who trust in Yahweh are blessed”

ULT

4 Blessed is the man who makes Yahweh his trust and does not honor the proud or those who turn away from him to lies.

the proud

This refers to the people who are proud. Alternate translation: “proud people” (See: Nominal Adjectives)

to lies

The Hebrew word is unclear. This could mean: (1) “lies” or (2) “false gods.”

Psalms 40:5

your thoughts which are about us cannot be numbered

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: “no one can count all the things you think about us” (See: Active or Passive)

cannot be numbered ... more than could be counted

These phrases mean essentially the same thing. The first is stated in negative form, and the second is stated in positive form. (See: Parallelism and Litotes)

ULT

5 Many, Yahweh my God, are the wonderful deeds that you have done, and your thoughts which are about us cannot be numbered; if I declared and spoke of them, they would be more than could be counted.

Psalms 40:6

You have no delight in sacrifice or offering

This is an exaggeration to express that other things are much more important to God. Alternate translation: “Sacrifices and other offerings are not the things that delight you most” (See: Hyperbole)

ULT

6 You have no delight in sacrifice or offering, but you have opened my ears; you have not required burnt offerings or sin offerings.

you have opened my ears

Here “ears” refers to the ability to hear. Alternate translation: “you have enabled me to hear your commands” (See: Metonymy)

you have not required burnt offerings or sin offerings

This is an exaggeration to show that these things were not the most important to God. Alternate translation: “animals burned on the altar and other offerings for our sins are not what you require most” (See: Hyperbole)

Psalms 40:7

the scroll of the document

This refers to a scroll on which was written the word of Yahweh. Alternate translation: “the written scroll” (See: Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information)

ULT

7 Then said I, “See, I have come; it is written about me in the scroll of the document.

Psalms 40:8

your laws are in my heart

Here “my heart” refers to the inner being of the writer. Alternate translation: “I am always thinking about your laws within my inner being” (See: Metonymy)

ULT

8 I delight to do your will, my God; your laws are in my heart.”

Psalms 40:9

I have proclaimed good news of your righteousness in the great assembly

"I have told a large assembly of people the good news of your righteousness."

ULT

9 I have proclaimed good news of your righteousness in the great assembly;
Yahweh, you know that my lips have not kept back from doing this.

good news of your righteousness

This refers to the good news that God rescues his people. Alternate translation: "good news that because you are righteous, you rescue your people" (See: Ellipsis)

my lips have not kept back from doing this

Here "my lips" represents the writer, emphasizing his speech. Alternate translation: "I have not stopped myself from proclaiming these things" (See: Metonymy)

Psalms 40:10

I have not concealed your righteousness in my heart

“I have not kept your righteousness a secret.” This can also be stated in positive form. Alternate translation: “I have openly told every one about your righteousness” (See: Litotes)

in my heart

Here this refers to the writer’s inner being. (See: Metonymy)

ULT

10 I have not concealed your righteousness in my heart; I have declared your faithfulness and your salvation; I have not concealed your covenant faithfulness or your trustworthiness from the great assembly.

I have not concealed your covenant faithfulness or your trustworthiness from the great assembly

This can be stated in positive form. Alternate translation: “I have told everyone in the great assembly about your covenant faithfulness or your trustworthiness” (See: Litotes)

your covenant faithfulness

The abstract noun “faithfulness” can be stated as “faithful.” Alternate translation: “how faithful you are to your covenant” (See: Abstract Nouns)

your trustworthiness

This abstract noun “trustworthiness” can be stated as “trustworthy.” Alternate translation: “how trustworthy you are” (See: Abstract Nouns)

Psalms 40:11

let your covenant faithfulness and your trustworthiness always preserve me

Here “covenant faithfulness” and “trustworthiness” are spoken of as if they were living people who could protect the writer. Alternate translation: “I want your covenant faithfulness and your trustworthiness to always preserve” (See: Personification)

ULT

11 Do not keep back your acts of mercy from me, Yahweh; let your covenant faithfulness and your trustworthiness always preserve me.

Psalms 40:12

Troubles that cannot be numbered surround me

Here troubles are spoken of as if they were objects that surround and trap the speaker. Alternate translation: “there are more troubles around me than I can count” or “more troubles come to me than I can count” (See: Metaphor)

ULT

12 Troubles that cannot be numbered surround me; my iniquities have caught up with me so that I am no longer able to see anything; they are more than the hairs on my head, and my heart has failed me.

that cannot be numbered

This is stated in negative form to intensify the number.See how you translated this in Psalms 40:5. Alternate translation: “that are vast in number” (See: Litotes)

my iniquities

This refers to the consequences of his sin. Alternate translation: “the consequences of my iniquities” (See: Metonymy)

have caught up with me

The writer’s iniquities are spoken of as if they were his enemies who were harming him. (See: Personification)

I am no longer able to see anything

Versions differ in how to understand this difficult passage. It may mean that the speaker is crying so much that he cannot see anything because of his tears.

my heart has failed me

Here “heart” refers to the writer’s inner confidence. Alternate translation: “I am very discouraged” (See: Metonymy)

Psalms 40:13

(There are no notes for this verse.)

ULT

13 Be pleased, Yahweh, to rescue me;
hurry to help me, Yahweh.

Psalms 40:14

Let them be ashamed and completely disappointed who pursue my life to take it away

This can be reordered and stated in active form. Alternate translation: “Let those who pursue my life to take it awy be ashamed and completely disappointed” (See: Active or Passive)

ULT

14 Let them be ashamed and completely disappointed who pursue my life to take it away. Let them be turned back and brought to dishonor, those who delight in hurting me.

Let them be ashamed and completely disappointed

“Please make them ashamed and completely disappointed”

who pursue my life to take it away

Here “pursue my life” means they desire to kill the writer. The writer is represented by his “life.” Alternate translation: “who are trying to kill me” (See: Metaphor)

Let them be turned back and brought to dishonor, those who delight in hurting me

This can be reordered and stated in active form. Alternate translation: “Let those who delight in hurting me be turned back and brought to dishonor” or “Please have someone turn back those who delight in hurting me and bring them to dishonor” (See: Active or Passive)

turned back

“unable to continue”

Psalms 40:15

Let them be shocked because of their shame, those who say to me, “Aha, aha!”

“Let those who say to me, ‘Aha, aha!’ be shocked because of their shame”

ULT

15 Let them be shocked because of their shame, those who say to me, “Aha, aha!”

Let them be shocked because of their shame

“I hope that they will be shocked when you shame them”

Aha, aha!

These words indicate that the speaker has seen the hearer doing evil that the hearer did not think anyone knew about. You can use here words in your language that mean the same thing but sound different. See how this is translated in Psalms 35:21. (See: Exclamations)

Psalms 40:16

rejoice and be glad

These two phrases mean the same thing and emphasize the intensity of joy. Alternate translation: “be very joyful” (See: Doublet)

loves your salvation

The abstract noun “salvation” can be stated as an action. Alternate translation: “love you because you saved them” (See: Abstract Nouns)

ULT

16 But may all those who seek you
rejoice and be glad in you; let everyone
who loves your salvation say
continually, “May Yahweh be praised.”

Psalms 40:17

poor and needy

These words mean the same thing and emphasize how helpless the writer is. Alternate translation: “very needy” (See: Doublet)

the Lord thinks about me

“the Lord cares for me”

You are my help ... you come to my rescue

These phrases mean the same thing. (See: Parallelism)

You are my help

“You are the one who helps me”

you come to my rescue

“you come to save me”

do not delay

This can be stated in positive form. Alternate translation: “respond quickly” (See: Litotes)

ULT

17 I am poor and needy; yet the Lord thinks about me. You are my help and you come to my rescue; do not delay, my God.

Psalms 41

Psalm 41 General Notes

Type of psalm

Psalm 41 is a psalm of deliverance. The author's friends had become his enemies who wanted to see him die but he trusted God to rescue him. (See: deliver, hand over, turn over, release, rescue and trust, trusted, trustworthy, trustworthiness)

Special concepts in this chapter

Enemies

The author's best friend had become an enemy. His enemies were happy because they were sure his sickness would result in death.

Psalms 41:1

General Information:

Parallelism is common in Hebrew poetry. (See: Poetry and Parallelism)

ULT

1 Blessed is he who is concerned for the weak; in the day of trouble, Yahweh will rescue him.

For the chief musician

“This is for the director of music to use in worship.”

he who is concerned for the weak ... rescue him

The words “he” and “him” refer to anyone who is concerned for the weak.

the weak

“weak people” or “poor people”

Psalms 41:2

he ... him ... his

These words refer to anyone who is concerned for the weak.

ULT

2 Yahweh will preserve him and keep him alive, and he will be blessed on the earth; Yahweh will not turn him over to the will of his enemies.

Psalms 41:3

Yahweh will support him on the bed of suffering

ULT

[3] Yahweh will support him on the bed of suffering; you will make his bed of sickness into a bed of healing.

The phrase “the bed of suffering” refers to when a person lies in bed because he is sick. Alternate translation: “When he is sick and in bed, Yahweh will support him” (See: Metonymy)

you will make his bed of sickness into a bed of healing

The phrase “a bed of healing” refers to when a person rests in bed and recovers from his sickness. Alternate translation: “you, Yahweh, will heal him of his sickness” (See: Metonymy)

Psalms 41:4

(There are no notes for this verse.)

ULT

4 I said, “Yahweh, have mercy on me!
Heal me, for I have sinned against you.”

Psalms 41:5

his name perish

If a person's name dies, it means that people forget that he had ever lived. Alternate translation: "when will his name perish" or "when will people forget about him" (See: Ellipsis and Idiom)

ULT

5 My enemies speak evil against me,
saying, 'When will he die and his name perish?'

Psalms 41:6

If my enemy comes to see me

The words “my enemy” refers to any enemy in general, and not to one specific enemy.

ULT

6 If my enemy comes to see me, he says worthless things; his heart gathers up my disaster for itself; when he goes away from me, he tells others about it.

he says worthless things

This could mean: (1) “he says meaningless things” or (2) his enemies say things to make him think that they are his friends when they are not. Alternate translation: “he says deceitful things” or “they pretend to be concerned about me” (See: Idiom)

his heart gathers up my disaster for itself

His enemies try to learn all of the bad things about him. Here the word “heart” refers the whole person. Bad circumstances are spoken of as if they were objects that can be gathered. Alternate translation: “he tries to learn about all of my disasters” (See: Synecdoche and Metaphor)

Psalms 41:7

against me they hope for my hurt

This could mean: (1) “they hope that very bad things will happen to me” or (2) “they are planning to hurt me.”

ULT

7 All who hate me whisper together
against me; against me they hope for
my hurt.

Psalms 41:8

An evil disease ... to him

His enemies speak of “disease” as if it were a person who has captured him. Alternate translation: “He is sick with a fatal disease” (See: Personification and Metaphor)

ULT

8 They say, “An evil disease holds on tightly to him; now that he is lying down, he will rise up no more.”

An evil disease

This could mean: (1) “A fatal disease” or (2) “Something evil”

now that he is lying down, he will rise up no more

Here the words “lying down” refer to lying in bed because of illness. That he will not “rise up” means that he will continue to lie down, which is a euphemism for death. Alternate translation: “now that he is sick in bed, he will die there” (See: Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information and Euphemism)

Psalms 41:9

has lifted up his heel against me

This is an idiom that means his friend betrayed him. Alternate translation: “has betrayed me” or “has turned against me” (See: Idiom)

ULT

9 Indeed, even my own close friend, in whom I trusted, who ate my bread, has lifted up his heel against me.

Psalms 41:10

But you, Yahweh, have mercy on me and raise me up

This is a request. Alternate translation: “Please, Yahweh, have mercy on me and raise me up” (See: Statements — Other Uses)

ULT

10 But you, Yahweh, have mercy on me and raise me up so that I may pay them back.

raise me up

This means to raise him up from his bed, or to make him recover from his disease. Alternate translation: “make me well” (See: Idiom)

so that I may pay them back

The writer speaks of revenge on his enemies as if it were paying to them what he owes. Alternate translation: “so that I may take revenge on them” (See: Metaphor)

Psalms 41:11

By this I know that you delight in me, for my enemy does not triumph over me

ULT

11 By this I know that you delight in me, for my enemy does not triumph over me.

The word “this” refers to what the writer will say next. For clarity, the clauses may be reversed. Alternate translation: “Because my enemy does not triumph over me, I know that you delight in me” (See: Order of Events)

By this I know that you delight in me, for my enemy does not triumph over me

This can also be translated in future tense, since Yahweh has not yet healed him. Alternate translation: “If you enable me to do that, with the result that my enemies do not defeat me, I will know that you are pleased with me” (See: Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information)

Psalms 41:12

you support me in my integrity

“you support me because of my integrity”

will keep me before your face

ULT

12 As for me, you support me in my integrity and will keep me before your face forever.

The writer speaks of being in Yahweh’s presence as being in a place where Yahweh can see him and he can see Yahweh’s face. Alternate translation: “will keep me with you” (See: Metaphor)

Psalms 41:13

General Information:

This verse is more than the end of this psalm. It is the closing statement for all of Book 1 of the Psalms, which starts at Psalm 1 and ends with Psalm 41.

from everlasting to everlasting

This refers to two extremes and means for all time. Alternate translation: “for all eternity” (See: Merism)

Amen and Amen

The word “Amen” is repeated to emphasize approval of what has been said. Alternate translation: “May it certainly be so” (See: Doublet)

ULT

13 May Yahweh, the God of Israel be praised from everlasting to everlasting. Amen and Amen.

Book Two

Psalms 42

Psalm 42 General Notes

Type of psalm

Psalm 42 is a psalm of praise for all that God has done and a prayer for deliverance from the psalmist's enemies. (See: deliver, hand over, turn over, release, rescue)

Special concepts in this chapter

Yahweh's deliverance

The psalmist praises God as he remembers what God has done for him in the past, and he puts his trust in him. He needs rescuing from his enemies. Scholars believe that this psalm is about a man in exile longing for Jerusalem.

Psalm 42 and Psalm 43

Some scholars believe that these two psalms were originally written together as one psalm.

Superscription

This psalm is called "a Maschil of the sons of Korah." The word "Maschil" in the original language has caused scholars to have various opinions about its meaning. Some say it means to instruct, while others say that the word is referring to the skill used in creating the psalm. Still others think it means that meditation should be used in reading this psalm.

Psalms 42:1

General Information:

Parallelism is common in Hebrew poetry. (See: Poetry and Parallelism)

ULT

1 As the deer pants after streams of water, so I thirst for you, God.

For the chief musician

“This is for the director of music to use in worship.”

A maschil

This may refer to a style of music. See how you translated this in Psalms 32:1.

As the deer pants after streams of water, so I thirst for you, God

The author compares his desire for God to the desire of a thirsty deer for water.

pants

heavy breathing from an animal or person that is very tired or thirsty

I thirst for you, God

The author speaks of his strong desire for God as if it were a strong thirst for water. (See: Metaphor)

Psalms 42:2

I thirst for God

The author speaks of his strong desire for God as if it were a strong thirst for water. (See: Metaphor)

ULT

2 I thirst for God, for the living God,
when will I come and appear before
God?

when will I come and appear before God?

The author does not ask this question to get an answer but to show his strong desire to be before God. (See: Rhetorical Question)

Psalms 42:3

My tears have been my food

The author refers to his tears as if they are food that he eats. This means that he is so sad that he cannot eat. Alternate translation: “My tears are like my food and I eat nothing else” (See: Metaphor and Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information)

ULT

3 My tears have been my food day and night, while my enemies are always saying to me, “Where is your God?”

day and night

This phrase refers to the entire day by referring to both its beginning and end. Alternate translation: “all day long” (See: Merism)

my enemies are always saying to me

This is an exaggeration. His enemies are not saying this constantly; they are saying it often. (See: Hyperbole)

Where is your God?

The author’s enemies use this question to mock him and to express that they do not see his God helping him. Alternate translation: “Your God is not here to help you” (See: Rhetorical Question)

Psalms 42:4

call to mind

This is an idiom that means to remember or think about something. Alternate translation: “remember” (See: Idiom)

ULT

4 These things I call to mind as I pour out my soul: how I went with the throng and led them to the house of God with the voice of joy and praise, a multitude celebrating a festival.

I pour out my soul

Here the word “soul” refers to the emotions. The author speaks of his soul as if it is a liquid that he pours out. The phrase means that he is expressing his emotional grief. Alternate translation: “I express my sorrow” (See: Metonymy and Metaphor)

the throng

“the crowd of people”

joy and praise

This phrase uses two different words to express one idea. Alternate translation: “joyful praise” (See: Hendiadys)

Psalms 42:5

Why are you bowed down, my soul? Why are you upset within me?

The author refers to his inner self as his "soul," which represents himself. He asks these questions to rebuke himself. Alternate translation: "I should not be bowed down. I should not be worried" (See: Rhetorical Question and Synecdoche)

ULT

5 Why are you bowed down, my soul?
Why are you upset within me? Hope in God, for again I will praise him who is my salvation.

bowed down

The writer speaks of depression or discouragement as if it were his soul being bent over. Alternate translation: "discouraged" (See: Metaphor)

Hope in God

The writer continues to speak to his own soul and commands it to trust God. (See: Imperatives — Other Uses)

Psalms 42:6

My God, my soul

The writer begins to speak to God about his soul.

I call you to mind

This phrase means to remember or to think about something. Alternate translation: “I think of you” (See: Idiom)

ULT

6 My God, my soul is bowed down within me, therefore I call you to mind from the land of the Jordan, from the three peaks of Mount Hermon, and from the hill of Mizar.

the land of the Jordan

This is probably a reference to northern Israel, where the Jordan river originates. Alternate translation: “the land where the Jordan river begins” (See: Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information)

peaks

mountain tops

hill of Mizar

This is the name of a hill at the base of Mount Hermon. (See: How to Translate Names)

Psalms 42:7

Deep calls to deep at the noise of your waterfalls

ULT

7 Deep calls to deep at the noise of your waterfalls; all your waves and your billows have gone over me.

The word “deep” refers to deep waters, which here are likely the streams rushing down Mount Hermon. The writer speaks of them as if they are people calling out to one another as they hear the sound of their own descent from the mountain. (See: Personification)

all your waves ... have gone over me

The author speaks of his great misfortune and sadness as if they are deep waters that drown him with one wave after another. (See: Metaphor)

your waves and your billows

The word “billows” is another word for “waves.” Together the two words emphasize the greatness of the waves. Alternate translation: “all of your great waves” (See: Doublet)

Psalms 42:8

Yahweh will command his covenant faithfulness in the daytime

ULT

8 Yet Yahweh will command his covenant faithfulness in the daytime; in the night his song will be with me, a prayer to the God of my life.

The writer speaks of Yahweh's covenant faithfulness as if it were a person whom he commands to be with him. The abstract noun "faithfulness" can be translated as an adjective. Alternate translation: "Yahweh will show me his covenant faithfulness in the daytime" or "Yahweh will show me in the daytime how faithful he is to his covenant" (See: Metaphor)

his song

This could mean: (1) "the song that he gives me" or (2) "the song about him"

the God of my life

"the God who gives me life"

Psalms 42:9

I will say to God, my rock

The writer speaks of God as if he were a huge rock that would provide protection from enemy attack. (See: Metaphor)

Why do I go mourning

To “go mourning” is to perform customs related to being very sad.

ULT

9 I will say to God, my rock, “Why have you forgotten me? Why do I go mourning because of the oppression of the enemy?”

Psalms 42:10

As with a sword in my bones

The writer describes his adversaries' rebukes as his receiving a fatal wound. (See: Simile)

ULT

10 As with a sword in my bones, my adversaries rebuke me, while they always say to me, "Where is your God?"

they always say to me

This is an exaggeration; his enemies are not saying this constantly but are saying it often. (See: Hyperbole)

Where is your God?

The writer's enemies use this question to mock him and to express that they do not see God helping him. Alternate translation: "Your God is not here to help you" (See: Rhetorical Question)

Psalms 42:11

Why are you bowed down, my soul? Why are you upset within me?

ULT

11 Why are you bowed down, my soul? Why are you upset within me? Hope in God, for again I will praise him who is my salvation and my God.

The author refers to his inner self as his “soul,” which represents himself. He asks these questions to rebuke himself. See how you translated this in Psalms 42:5. Alternate translation: “I should not be bowed down, I should not be worried” (See: Rhetorical Question and Synecdoche)

bowed down

The writer speaks of depression or discouragement as if it were his soul being bent over. See how you translated this in Psalms 42:5. Alternate translation: “discouraged” (See: Metaphor)

Hope in God

The writer continues to speak to his own soul and commands it to trust God. See how you translated this in Psalms 42:5. (See: Imperatives — Other Uses)

Psalms 43

Psalm 43 General Notes

Type of psalm

Psalm 43 is a psalm of deliverance. It is a plea for rescue from the psalmist's enemies. (See: deliver, hand over, turn over, release, rescue)

Special concepts in this chapter

Encouragement

The author should not be discouraged because he trusts in God to deliver him. (See: trust, trusted, trustworthy, trustworthiness)

Psalm 42 and Psalm 43

Some scholars believe that these two psalms were originally written together as one psalm.

Psalms 43:1

General Information:

Parallelism is common in Hebrew poetry. (See: Poetry and Parallelism)

ULT

1 Bring me justice, God, and plead my cause against a nation that is not faithful.

Psalms 43:2

the God of my strength

This could mean: (1) “the God who protects me” or (2) “the God who gives me strength.”

Why have you rejected me? Why do I go about in mourning because of the oppression of the enemy?

The writer asks these questions in order to complain to God and express his emotions, not to receive an answer. (See: Rhetorical Question)

Why do I go about in mourning

To “go about in mourning” is to perform customs related to being very sad.

because of the oppression of the enemy

The word “oppression” can be translated as a verb. Alternate translation: “because my enemy oppresses me” (See: Abstract Nouns)

ULT

2 For you are the God of my strength.
Why have you rejected me? Why do I go
about in mourning because of the
oppression of the enemy?

Psalms 43:3

send out your light and your truth

The writer speaks of God's deliverance as if it were a light that shows him the way and truth that teaches him how to live. Alternate translation: "guide me with your light and truth" (See: Metaphor)

ULT

3 Oh, send out your light and your truth,
let them lead me. Let them bring me to
your holy hill and to your dwelling.

holy hill

This refers to the hill in Jerusalem where the temple is located and thus to the temple itself. (See: Metonymy)

to your dwelling

"to the place where you live"

Psalms 43:4

God my exceeding joy

“God who is my very great joy” or “God who gives me very great joy”

ULT

4 Then I will go to the altar of God, to
God my exceeding joy. I will praise you
with the harp, God, my God.

Psalms 43:5

Why are you bowed down, my soul? Why are you upset within me?

The author refers to his inner self as his “soul,” which represents himself. He asks these questions to rebuke himself. See how you translated this in Psalms 42:5. Alternate translation: “I should not be bowed down. I should not be worried” (See: Rhetorical Question and Synecdoche)

ULT

5 Why are you bowed down, my soul?
Why are you upset within me? Hope in
God, for again I will praise him who is
my salvation and my God.

bowed down

The writer speaks of depression or discouragement as if it were his soul being bent over. See how you translated this in Psalms 42:5. Alternate translation: “discouraged” (See: Metaphor)

Hope in God

The writer continues to speak to his own soul and commands it to trust God. See how you translated this in Psalms 42:5. (See: Imperatives — Other Uses)

my salvation and my God

The phrase “my salvation” refers to God. If necessary the two phrases can be combined. Alternate translation: “my God who saves me” (See: Doublet)

Psalms 44

Psalm 44 General Notes

Type of psalm

Psalm 44 is a deliverance psalm. It is a prayer for God's help against enemies. (See: deliver, hand over, turn over, release, rescue)

Special concepts in this chapter

Enemies

When Israel entered the Promised Land, God fought for them and drove out their enemies. Since their enemies have now defeated them, they are in need of God's help. (See: Promised Land)

Superscription

This psalm is called "a Maschil." The word "Maschil" in the original language has caused scholars to have various opinions about its meaning. Some say it means to instruct, while others say that the word is referring to the skill used in creating the psalm. Still others think it means that meditation should be used in reading this psalm.

Psalms 44:1

General Information:

Parallelism is common in Hebrew poetry. (See: Poetry and Parallelism)

ULT

1 We have heard with our ears, God, our fathers have told us what work you did in their days, in the days of old.

For the chief musician

“This is for the director of music to use in worship.”

A psalm of the sons of Korah

“This is a psalm that the sons of Korah wrote.”

We have heard with our ears, God

The word “ears” adds emphasis to the statement that they have heard and understood the things that the writer is about to describe. The writer addresses this statement to God. Alternate translation: “God, we have heard clearly” (See: Idiom)

in their days, in the days of old

Both of these phrases use the word “days” to refer to the time period when the ancestors of the people of Israel were alive. (See: Parallelism)

Psalms 44:2

You drove out the nations

"You forced the people from other nations to leave"

with your hand

Here the word "hand" refers to God's power. Alternate translation: "by your power" (See: Metonymy)

you planted our people

The writer speaks of God's causing the Israelites to live in the land as if he were planting them in the soil like he would a tree. Alternate translation: "you caused our people to live there" (See: Metaphor)

ULT

2 You drove out the nations with your hand, but you planted our people; you afflicted the peoples, but you spread our people out in the land.

Psalms 44:3

by their own sword

The word “sword” refers to military power. Alternate translation: “by fighting with their own swords” or “by their own army’s strength” (See: Metonymy)

their own arm

Here the word “arm” refers to power. Alternate translation: “their own power” (See: Metonymy)

ULT

3 For they did not obtain the land for their possession by their own sword, neither did their own arm save them; but your right hand, your arm, and the light of your face, because you were favorable to them.

the light of your face

You may supply a verb for this phrase. Alternate translation: “the light of your face obtained the land for their possession” (See: Ellipsis)

your right hand, your arm

Here the words “hand” and “arm” both refer to God’s power. Combined, they emphasize the greatness of God’s power. Alternate translation: “your great power” (See: Metonymy and Doublet)

the light of your face

The writer speaks of Yahweh looking with favor upon them and being kind to them as if Yahweh’s face shone a light on them. Alternate translation: “your kindness” or “your good favor” (See: Metaphor)

Psalms 44:4

victory for Jacob

The people of Israel are referred to by the name of their ancestor “Jacob.” (See: Metonymy)

ULT

4 God, You are my King; command victory for Jacob.

Psalms 44:5

Through you ... through your

"By you ... by your"

push down ... tread them under ... rise up

The writer speaks of his enemies' defeat as if they are "down" and of their preparing to fight as if they are "up." (See: Metaphor)

ULT

5 Through you we will push down our adversaries; through your name we will tread them under, those who rise up against us.

through your name

Here the word "name" refers to God's power and authority. Alternate translation: "by your power" (See: Metonymy)

tread them under

"tread them under our feet" or "walk on top of them"

Psalms 44:6

(There are no notes for this verse.)

ULT

6 For I will not trust in my bow, neither
will my sword save me.

Psalms 44:7

(There are no notes for this verse.)

ULT

7 But you have saved us from our adversaries, and have put to shame those who hate us.

Psalms 44:8

we have made our boast

The word “boast” can be translated with a verb. Alternate translation: “we have boasted” (See: Abstract Nouns)

we will give thanks to your name

Here the word “name” refers to God, himself. Alternate translation: “we will give thanks to you” (See: Metonymy)

ULT

8 In God we have made our boast all the day long, and we will give thanks to your name forever. *Selah*

Psalms 44:9

thrown us off

The writer speaks of God's rejection of Israel as if he were discarding an unwanted piece of clothing. Alternate translation: "rejected us" (See: Metaphor)

ULT

9 But now you have thrown us off and brought us dishonor, and you do not go out with our armies.

Psalms 44:10

spoil

resources and treasures that an army collects after winning a battle

ULT

10 You make us turn back from the adversary; and those who hate us take spoil for themselves.

Psalms 44:11

You have made us like sheep to be slaughtered

ULT

11 You have made us like sheep to be slaughtered and have scattered us among the nations.

The writer compares the Israelites to sheep that people kill and eat. As sheep are helpless before those who kill them, so the Israelites are helpless before their enemies. This can be translated in active form. Alternate translation: “You have allowed our enemies to kill us like they would kill a sheep and eat it” (See: Simile and Active or Passive)

scattered us among the nations

“caused us to live in many different nations”

Psalms 44:12

sell your people for nothing

The writer speaks of Yahweh allowing Israel's enemies to conquer them as if he were selling the people of Israel to their enemies but does not require any payment from their enemies. (See: Metaphor)

ULT

12 You sell your people for nothing; you have not increased your wealth by doing so.

Psalms 44:13

You make us a rebuke to our neighbors, scoffed and mocked by those around us

These two phrases are parallel emphasizing how the people among whom they live mock them. (See: Parallelism)

ULT

13 You make us a rebuke to our neighbors, scoffed and mocked by those around us.

You make us a rebuke to our neighbors

The word “rebuke” can be translated as a verb. Alternate translation: “You make us something that our neighbors rebuke” (See: Abstract Nouns)

scoffed and mocked by those around us

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: “those around us scoff at us and mock us” (See: Active or Passive)

Psalms 44:14

ULT

14 You make us an insult among the nations, a shaking of the head among the peoples.

an insult among ... a shaking of the head

These phrases are parallel emphasizing how intensely the nations around them mock them. (See: Parallelism)

You make us an insult among the nations

The word “insult” can be translated as a verb. Alternate translation: “You make the nations around us insult us” (See: Abstract Nouns)

a shaking of the head among the peoples

The phrase “a shaking of the head” can be translated in verbal form. Alternate translation: “something at which the peoples shake their heads” (See: Abstract Nouns)

a shaking of the head

This was a gesture that people used to show scorn to others.

Psalms 44:15

my dishonor is before me

The writer speaks of his dishonor as if it were an object that is always in front of him for him to see. The phrase means that he is always thinking about his dishonor. Alternate translation: “I think about my dishonor” (See: Metaphor)

ULT

15 All the day long my dishonor is before me, and the shame of my face has covered me

the shame of my face has covered me

The writer speaks of his shame as if it is an object that covers him like a blanket would cover him. Alternate translation: “the shame of my face has overwhelmed me” (See: Metaphor)

the shame of my face

“the shame that shows on my face.” This refers to his facial expressions that his shame causes.

Psalms 44:16

because of the voice of him who rebukes and insults

Here the words “the voice” represents the person insulting him. Alternate translation: “because of what the person says who rebukes and insults me” (See: Synecdoche)

ULT

16 because of the voice of him who rebukes and insults, because of the enemy and the avenger.

rebukes and insults

These words have similar meanings and emphasize the harsh nature of what this person says. (See: Doublet)

Psalms 44:17

(There are no notes for this verse.)

ULT

17 All this has come on us; yet we have not forgotten you or dealt falsely with your covenant.

Psalms 44:18

Our heart has not turned back ... have not gone from your way

ULT

18 Our heart has not turned back; our steps have not gone from your way.

These two phrases are parallel. The writer speaks of loyalty to God as if it were following him, and disloyalty as if it were turning away from him. (See: Parallelism and Metaphor)

Our heart has not turned back

Here the word “heart” refers to the emotions, and specifically to loyalty and devotion. Alternate translation: “We have not stopped being loyal to you” (See: Metonymy)

Psalms 44:19

you have severely broken us

The writer speaks of God's punishment as if it were breaking a fragile object. Alternate translation: "you have punished us severely" (See: Metaphor)

ULT

19 Yet you have severely broken us in the place of jackals and covered us with the shadow of death.

in the place of jackals

The writer speaks of Israel after God's punishment as if it were a wild, uninhabitable place. Alternate translation: "and made our land like a place where jackals live" (See: Metaphor)

jackals

a type of wild dog

covered us with the shadow of death

The writer speaks of death as if it is an object that casts a shadow over those who are about to die. Alternate translation: "made us so that we are about to die" (See: Metaphor)

Psalms 44:20

If we have forgotten the name of our God

Here the word “name” refers to God, himself. To forget God is to stop worshiping him. This is something that did not happen. Alternate translation: “If we had forgotten our God” or “If we had stopped worshiping our God” (See: Metonymy and Hypothetical Situations)

ULT

20 If we have forgotten the name of our God or spread out our hands to a strange god,

spread out our hands to a strange god

Spreading out the hands is a gesture that people used to worship and pray to a god. Alternate translation: “worshiped a strange god” or “prayed to a strange god” (See: Symbolic Action)

Psalms 44:21

would not God search this out?

The writer uses this question to express that God would know if they worshiped another god. Alternate translation: “God would certainly find out” (See: Rhetorical Question)

ULT

21 would not God search this out? For he knows the secrets of the heart.

he knows the secrets of the heart

Here the word “heart” refers to the mind and thoughts. Alternate translation: “he knows what a person secretly thinks” (See: Metonymy)

Psalms 44:22

we are being killed all day long

The phrase “all day long” is an exaggeration to emphasize that their people are being killed frequently. This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: “we are always in danger of people killing us” (See: Hyperbole and Active or Passive)

ULT

22 Indeed, for your sake we are being killed all day long; we are considered to be sheep for the slaughter.

we are considered to be sheep for the slaughter

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: “people consider us to be sheep for the slaughter” (See: Active or Passive)

sheep for the slaughter

The writer compares the Israelites to sheep that people kill and eat. As sheep are helpless before those who kill them, so the Israelites are helpless before their enemies. (See: Metaphor)

Psalms 44:23

Awake, why do you sleep, Lord?

This does not mean that God is actually asleep. The writer speaks of God's seeming inactivity as if God is sleeping. He asks the question to rebuke God for appearing not to be concerned about their troubles. Alternate translation: "Wake up! I feel like you are sleeping, Lord!" (See: Rhetorical Question and Metaphor)

ULT

23 Awake, why do you sleep, Lord? Arise, do not throw us off permanently.

do not throw us off

The writer speaks of God's rejection of Israel as if he were discarding an unwanted piece of clothing. See how you translated a similar phrase in Psalms 44:9. Alternate translation: "do not reject us" (See: Metaphor)

Psalms 44:24

Why do you hide your face ... our oppression?

The writer uses this question to complain that God appears to be ignoring them. Alternate translation: “Do not hide your face ... our oppression.” (See: Rhetorical Question)

ULT

24 Why do you hide your face and forget our affliction and our oppression?

hide your face

The writer speaks of God ignoring them as if God were hiding his face so that he could not see them. Alternate translation: “ignore us” (See: Metaphor)

forget our affliction and our oppression

The words “affliction” and “oppression” mean basically the same thing and emphasize the severity of their affliction. These words may also be translated as verbs. Alternate translation: “forget that people afflict us and oppress us” or “forget that people greatly afflict us” (See: Abstract Nouns and Doublet)

Psalms 44:25

For we have sunk down into the dust; our bodies cling to the earth

ULT

25 For we have sunk down into the dust; our bodies cling to the earth.

These parallel phrases share similar meanings. The writer describes his people as lying on the ground in a posture of defeat and humiliation. (See: Parallelism)

For we have sunk down into the dust

The writer speaks of their humiliation as if their bodies were objects, such as ice, that melt and soak into the dirt. (See: Metaphor)

our bodies cling to the earth

The writer speaks of their humiliation as if their bodies were stuck to the ground and they could not raise themselves up. (See: Metaphor)

Psalms 44:26

ULT

26 Rise up for our help and redeem us for the sake of your covenant faithfulness.

Rise up

This is a command to stand. This phrase refers to beginning to act on something. Alternate translation: “Take action” (See: Idiom)

for the sake of your covenant faithfulness

The abstract noun “faithfulness” can be translated as an adjective. Alternate translation: “to show that you are faithful to your covenant” (See: Abstract Nouns)

Psalms 45

Psalm 45 General Notes

Type of psalm

Psalm 45 is a royal psalm written for the king’s wedding day.

Special concepts in this chapter

Beauty

The king has a beautiful palace, and his bride is also beautiful.

Superscription

This psalm is called “a Maschil.” The word “Maschil” in the original language has caused scholars to have various opinions about its meaning. Some say it means to instruct, while others say that the word is referring to the skill used in creating the psalm. Still others think it means that meditation should be used in reading this psalm.

Psalms 45:1

General Information:

Parallelism is common in Hebrew poetry. (See: Poetry and Parallelism)

ULT

1 My heart overflows on a good subject;
I will read aloud the words I have composed about the king; my tongue is the pen of a ready writer.

For the chief musician

“This is for the director of music to use in worship”

set to Shoshannim

This may refer to a style or the tune of the music. Sometimes it is translated as “set to the tune of ‘Lilies.’”

A psalm of the sons of Korah

“This is a psalm that the sons of Korah wrote.”

A maschil

This may refer to a style of music. See how you translated this in Psalms 32:1.

My heart overflows on a good subject

The writer speaks of his heart as if it were a container that overflows with liquid. The word “heart” represents his emotions, which are excited by the song that he sings. Alternate translation: “My emotions are excited about a good subject” (See: Metaphor and Metonymy)

a good subject

“a noble theme” or “a beautiful word.” This refers to the song that he has written.

composed

to have written or created a song

my tongue is the pen of a ready writer

The writer speaks of his tongue as if it were a pen. He speaks words as skillfully as an experienced writer writes words. Alternate translation: “my tongue is like the pen of person who writes well” or “I speak words as skillfully as an experienced writer can write words” (See: Metaphor)

Psalms 45:2

You are fairer than the children of mankind

This phrase is an exaggeration that emphasizes that the king is better looking than anyone else. The phrase “children of mankind” is an idiom and refers to all humans. Alternate translation: “You are more handsome than any other man” (See: Hyperbole and Idiom)

ULT

2 You are fairer than the children of mankind; grace is poured onto your lips; therefore we know that God has blessed you forever.

grace is poured onto your lips

The writer speaks of grace as if it were oil that someone has used to anoint the king’s lips. The word “lips” refers to the king’s speech. The phrase means that the king speaks eloquently. Alternate translation: “it is as if someone has anointed your lips with oil” or “you speak eloquently” (See: Metaphor and Metonymy)

Psalms 45:3

Put your sword on your side

Warriors carried their swords in a sheath that hung from a belt around their waist. The sword would rest against their side. This phrase describes an action of someone preparing for battle. Alternate translation: “Prepare yourself for battle” (See: Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information)

ULT

3 Put your sword on your side, mighty one, in your glory and your majesty.

Psalms 45:4

ride on triumphantly

The writer tells the king to ride his horse or chariot to victory.

because of trustworthiness, meekness, and righteousness

ULT

4 In your majesty ride on triumphantly
because of trustworthiness, meekness,
and righteousness; your right hand will
teach you fearful things.

The abstract nouns “trustworthiness,” “meekness,” and “righteousness” can be stated as adjectives. This could mean: (1) these are qualities of the mighty one. Alternate translation: “because you are trustworthy, meek, and righteous” or (2) these are virtues that he fights to uphold for the people whom he rules. Alternate translation: “in order to fight for what is trustworthy, meek, and right” (See: Abstract Nouns)

your right hand will teach you fearful things

Most soldiers held their swords with their right hands when they fought. Here, the phrase “right hand” refers to his ability to fight, which the writer speaks of as if it were a person who can teach the king through the experience he gains in battle. Alternate translation: “You will learn to accomplish great military feats by fighting in many battles” (See: Metonymy and Personification)

fearful things

“awesome deeds.” This refers to military victories that cause his enemies to fear him and his allies to revere him.

Psalms 45:5

the peoples fall under you

This phrase refers to the king defeating his enemies. This could mean: (1) “the peoples fall at your feet in surrender” or (2) “the peoples fall dead at your feet.”

ULT

5 Your arrows are sharp; the peoples fall under you; your arrows are in the hearts of the king’s enemies.

your arrows are in the hearts of the king’s enemies

“your arrows have pierced the hearts of your enemies.” The writer speaks to the king while referring to the king in the third person.

Psalms 45:6

Your throne ... is forever and ever

The word “throne” represents the kingdom and rule of the king. Alternate translation: “Your kingdom ... is forever and ever” or “You will reign ... forever and ever” (See: Metonymy)

ULT

6 Your throne, God, is forever and ever;
a scepter of justice is the scepter of your kingdom.

Your throne, God

Possible meanings are that the word **God**: (1) is a title for the king, who is God’s representative or (2) modifies the word “throne” and means “Your kingdom that God has given you.”

a scepter of justice is the scepter of your kingdom

The word “scepter” represents the king’s authority to rule his kingdom. Alternate translation: “you rule your kingdom with justice” (See: Metonymy)

Psalms 45:7

God, your God, has anointed you with the oil of gladness

The writer speaks of gladness as if it were an oil that God used to anoint the king. That God has anointed him is a symbolic action that represents God's choosing him to be king. Alternate translation: "when God appointed you as king, he made you very glad" (See: Metaphor and Symbolic Action)

ULT

7 You have loved righteousness and hated wickedness; therefore God, your God, has anointed you with the oil of gladness more than your companions.

Psalms 45:8

General Information:

Here the writer begins to describe what appears to be the wedding ceremony of the king and his bride.

ULT

8 All your garments smell of myrrh, aloes, and cassia; out of ivory palaces stringed instruments have made you glad.

myrrh, aloes, and cassia

These are aromatic plant substances that people used to make perfumes. (See: Translate Unknowns)

ivory palaces

Ivory is a hard white substance that forms animal's tusks. This phrase describes a palace with walls and furniture that people have decorated with ivory.

stringed instruments have made you glad

The words "stringed instruments" refers to the music that people make by playing the stringed instruments. Alternate translation: "the music of stringed instruments has made you glad" (See: Metonymy)

Psalms 45:9

honorable women

These women are wives of the king who receive his approval.

ULT

9 Kings’ daughters are among your honorable women; at your right hand stands the queen clothed in gold of Ophir.

the queen

This is a reference to the woman who will become queen. Alternate translation: “your bride, the queen” or “your bride, who will be the queen” (See: Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information)

Ophir

This is the name of a place that had a reputation for its fine gold. The location is unknown. (See: How to Translate Names)

Psalms 45:10

ULT

10 Listen, daughter, consider and incline your ear; forget your own people and your father’s house.

Listen, daughter

The writer begins to speak to the queen and refers to her as “daughter” because she is a young woman.

incline your ear

The writer speaks of listening carefully to something as if it were bending one’s ear towards the person who is speaking. Alternate translation: “listen carefully” (See: Metaphor)

forget your own people

The writer speaks of the queen no longer following the beliefs and customs of her native people as if it were forgetting them. Alternate translation: “no longer follow the customs of your people” (See: Metaphor)

your father’s house

Here the word “house” refers to family. Alternate translation: “your relatives” (See: Metonymy)

Psalms 45:11

ULT

11 In this way the king will desire your beauty; he is your master; revere him.

In this way

“and” or “so”

the king will desire your beauty

This is a polite way to say that the king will want to sleep with the queen as his wife. (See: Euphemism)

Psalms 45:12

General Information:

The writer continues to speak to the queen.

The daughter of Tyre

The writer speaks of the people who live in Tyre as if they are Tyre's children. Alternate translation: "The people of Tyre" (See: Metaphor)

ULT

12 The daughter of Tyre will be there with a gift; the rich among the people will beg for your favor.

Psalms 45:13

The royal daughter

This is a reference to the woman whom the king will marry. Alternate translation: “The king’s bride” (See: Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information)

ULT

13 The royal daughter in the palace is all glorious; her clothing is worked with gold.

all glorious

“very beautiful.” This refers to the woman’s appearance.

her clothing is worked with gold

Her clothing is decorated or embroidered with gold. This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: “she wears clothing that someone has embroidered with golden thread” (See: Active or Passive)

Psalms 45:14

General Information:

The author continues to speak about the queen but begins to address the king again.

ULT

14 She will be led to the king in embroidered dress; the virgins, her companions who follow her, will be brought to you.

She will be led to the king in embroidered dress

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: “People will lead her to the king as she wears an embroidered dress” (See: Active or Passive)

embroidered

a design made by sewing colored threads into cloth

the virgins, her companions who follow her, will be brought to you

Here the word “you” refers to the king. This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: “people will bring to you the virgins, her companions who follow her” (See: Active or Passive)

Psalms 45:15

They will be led by gladness and rejoicing

This phrase describes “gladness and rejoicing” as a person who leads others to celebrate. This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: “Gladness and rejoicing will lead them” or “They will proceed with gladness and rejoicing” (See: Personification and Active or Passive)

ULT

15 They will be led by gladness and rejoicing; they will enter into the king’s palace.

gladness and rejoicing

These two words mean basically the same thing and emphasize the intensity of gladness. Alternate translation: “great gladness” (See: Doublet)

Psalms 45:16

Connecting Statement:

The writer continues to address the king.

ULT

16 In the place of your fathers will be your children, whom you will make princes in all the earth.

In the place of your fathers will be your children

This means that the king's sons will replace him as king, just as he replaced his ancestors as king.

you will make princes in all the earth

The phrase "in all the earth" is an exaggeration to emphasize that they will rule over many nations. Alternate translation: "you will make rulers over many nations" (See: Hyperbole)

Psalms 45:17

I will make your name to be remembered in all generations

Here the word “I” refers to the writer. The word “name” refers to the king’s character and reputation. This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: “I will cause people in every generation to know about your greatness” (See: Metonymy and Active or Passive)

ULT

17 I will make your name to be remembered in all generations; therefore the peoples will give you thanks forever and ever.

Psalms 46

Psalm 46 General Notes

Type of psalm

Psalm 46 is a psalm of praise to God.

Special concepts in this chapter

God is all-powerful, controls nature, and protects his people. (See: people of God)

Psalms 46:1

General Information:

Parallelism is common in Hebrew poetry. (See: Poetry and Parallelism)

ULT

1 God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble.

For the chief musician

“This is for the director of music to use in worship.”

A psalm of the sons of Korah

“This is a psalm that the sons of Korah wrote”

set to Alamoth

This may refer to a style of music. (See: Translate Unknowns)

God is our refuge and strength

The writer speaks of God as if he were a place where people can go for safety. Alternate translation: “God gives us safety and strength” (See: Metaphor)

Psalms 46:2

the mountains should be shaken into the heart of the seas

ULT

2 Therefore we will not fear, though the earth should change, though the mountains should be shaken into the heart of the seas,

The writer speaks of the deepest part of the sea as if it were the sea's heart. Here he describes an earthquake that causes the mountains to crumble and fall into the sea. This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "the mountains should shake so violently that they fall into the depths of the sea" (See: Metaphor and Active or Passive)

Psalms 46:3

though its waters roar and rage

“though the waters of the sea roar and rage.” The words “roar” and “rage” describe the violent movements of the sea during a strong storm.

ULT

3 though its waters roar and rage, and
though the mountains tremble with
their swelling. *Selah*

mountains tremble with their swelling

The phrase “their swelling” refers to the waters of the sea as they rise and crash against the mountains. Alternate translation: “the swelling waters cause the mountains to tremble” (See: Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information)

Psalms 46:4

There is a river whose streams make the city of God happy

The imagery of a running river symbolizes peace and prosperity for the city of God. (See: Symbolic Language)

ULT

4 There is a river whose streams make the city of God happy, the holy place where the Most High dwells.

make the city of God happy

The phrase “the city of God” refers to Jerusalem, and represents the people who live in that city. Alternate translation: “make the people who live in Jerusalem happy” (See: Metonymy)

the holy place where the Most High dwells

This phrase describes “the city of God.” Alternate translation: “the holy place where the Most High lives” (See: Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information)

Psalms 46:5

in the middle of her; she will not be moved ... help her

The words “her” and “she” refer to “the city of God.”

ULT

5 God is in the middle of her; she will not be moved; God will help her, and he will do so at the dawn of morning.

she will not be moved

Here, the word “moved” is the same word translated as “shaken” in Psalms v. 2. The writer speaks of the destruction of Jerusalem by armies as if an earthquake were to destroy it. This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: “nothing will be able destroy her” (See: Metaphor and Active or Passive)

Psalms 46:6

The nations raged

Here, the word “raged” is the same word that the writer used in Psalms v. 3 to describe the waters of the sea. The writer speaks of the fear of the nations as if it was the violent movements of the sea during a strong storm. Alternate translation: “The nations are terrified” (See: Metaphor)

ULT

6 The nations raged and the kingdoms were shaken; he lifted up his voice, and the earth melted.

the kingdoms were shaken

Here, the word “shaken” is the same word that the writer used in Psalms v. 2 to describe the effect of an earthquake on the mountains. The writer speaks of the overthrow of kingdoms by armies as if an earthquake were to destroy them. This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: “armies overthrew the kingdoms” (See: Metaphor and Active or Passive)

he lifted up his voice

“God lifted up his voice.” The writer speaks of the “voice” as an object that a person can pick up and raise into the air. This means that the voice becomes louder. Alternate translation: “God shouted” (See: Metaphor)

the earth melted

The writer speaks of the earth as an object, such as ice, that can melt. Here “the earth” represents mankind, and to melt represents fear. Alternate translation: “the people of the earth tremble with fear” (See: Metonymy and Metaphor)

Psalms 46:7

the God of Jacob is our refuge

The writer speaks of God as if he were a place where people can go for safety. Alternate translation: “the God of Jacob gives us safety” (See: Metaphor)

ULT

7 Yahweh of hosts is with us; the God of Jacob is our refuge. *Selah*

the God of Jacob

This could mean: (1) “the God whom Jacob worshiped” or (2) “Jacob” is a metonym for the nation of Israel and means “the God of Israel.” (See: Metonymy)

Psalms 46:8

(There are no notes for this verse.)

ULT

8 Come, behold the deeds of Yahweh,
the destruction he has caused on earth.

Psalms 46:9

He makes wars cease

“He makes nations stop fighting wars”

to the ends of the earth

This is an idiom that refers to everywhere in the word. Alternate translation: “everywhere in the world” (See: Idiom)

ULT

9 He makes wars cease to the ends of the earth; he breaks the bow and cuts the spear into pieces; he burns up the shields.

he breaks the bow ... burns up the shields

One way in which Yahweh will make all wars to cease is by destroying the weapons that the armies use to fight one another.

shields

Some versions understand this Hebrew word as “chariots.” (See: Textual Variants)

Psalms 46:10

Be quiet and know that I am God

Here, God begins to speak.

ULT

10 Be quiet and know that I am God; I will be exalted among the nations; I will be exalted on the earth.

Be quiet

In this context, these words are likely a command to the nations to stop their wars. Alternate translation: “Stop fighting” (See: Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information)

know that I am God

Here the word “know” means to understand and to confess that Yahweh is the true God.

I will be exalted among the nations; I will be exalted on the earth

These two phrases mean basically the same thing and emphasize that the people of every nation in the world will exalt God. This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: “People from every nation will exalt me; people all over the earth will exalt me” (See: Parallelism and Active or Passive)

Psalms 46:11

Yahweh of hosts is with us; the God of Jacob is our refuge

The writer speaks of God as if he were a place where people can go for safety. See how you translated these lines in Psalms 46:7. (See: Metaphor)

ULT

11 Yahweh of hosts is with us; the God of Jacob is our refuge. *Selah*

Psalms 47

Psalm 47 General Notes

Type of psalm

Psalm 47 is a psalm of praise to God.

Special concepts in this chapter

Yahweh’s power

God is powerful over all the nations in the world.

Psalms 47:1

General Information:

Parallelism is common in Hebrew poetry. (See: Poetry and Parallelism)

ULT

1 Clap your hands, all you peoples;
shout to God with the sound of
triumph.

For the chief musician

“This is for the director of music to use in worship”

Clap your hands

Clapping your hands is associated with celebration. Alternate translation: “Clap your hands in celebration” (See: Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information)

shout to God with the sound of triumph

“shout to God with joyful voices.” Here the word “triumph” refers to the joy associated with victory.

Psalms 47:2

(There are no notes for this verse.)

ULT

2 For Yahweh Most High is terrifying; he is a great King over all the earth.

Psalms 47:3

He subdues peoples under us and nations under our feet

ULT
3 He subdues peoples under us and nations under our feet.

These two phrases are parallel and mean that God enabled Israel to conquer their enemies. (See: Parallelism)

subdues

to conquer and place under the authority of another

under us ... under our feet

The writer speaks of conquering other nations as if it were putting those nations underneath their feet. (See: Metaphor)

Psalms 47:4

He chooses our inheritance for us

The writer speaks of the land of Israel as if it were an inheritance that God has given the people as a permanent possession. Alternate translation: “He chooses this land as an inheritance for us” (See: Metaphor)

ULT

4 He chooses our inheritance for us, the glory of Jacob whom he loved. *Selah*

the glory of Jacob

Here the word “glory” refers to a source of pride and represents the land that God has given to his people as an inheritance. Alternate translation: “the land in which Jacob takes pride” (See: Metonymy)

Jacob whom he loved

The word “Jacob” refers to the nation of Israel. (See: Metonymy)

Psalms 47:5

God has gone up with a shout

The writer speaks of God's conquering the nations as if God were a king ascending his throne, which was located in the temple. Alternate translation: "God has gone up into the temple as people shouted" or "God has ascended to his throne as people shouted" (See: Metaphor and Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information)

ULT

5 God has gone up with a shout,
Yahweh with the sound of a trumpet.

Yahweh with the sound of a trumpet

This phrase parallels the previous phrase. The verb may be supplied for clarity. Alternate translation: "Yahweh has gone up as people blew trumpets" (See: Parallelism and Ellipsis)

Psalms 47:6

Sing praises to God, sing praises; sing praises to our King, sing praises

ULT

6 Sing praises to God, sing praises; sing praises to our King, sing praises.

The phrase “sing praises” is repeated for emphasis. You may omit the repetition if it is awkward in your language. Alternate translation: “Sing, sing praises to God; sing, sing praises to our King” (See: Parallelism)

Psalms 47:7

(There are no notes for this verse.)

ULT

7 For God is the King over all the earth;
sing praises with understanding.

Psalms 47:8

(There are no notes for this verse.)

ULT

8 God reigns over the nations; God sits on his holy throne.

Psalms 47:9

The princes of the peoples

"The rulers of all the nations"

gathered together to the people

Possible meanings are that the rulers of the nations: (1) "gather in front of the people" or (2) "gathered together with the people" so that all may worship God as king.

ULT

9 The princes of the peoples have gathered together to the people of the God of Abraham; for the shields of the earth belong to God; he is greatly exalted.

the shields of the earth belong to God

Possible meanings are that **shields**: (1) refers to instruments of war. Alternate translation: "God has more power than the weapons of all the kings on the earth" or (2) refers to the rulers of the nations who are spoken of as shields who protect their nations. Alternate translation: "the kings of the earth are subject to God" (See: Metaphor)

Psalms 48

Psalm 48 General Notes

Type of psalm

Psalm 48 is a psalm of praise for Jerusalem.

Special concepts in this chapter

Jerusalem

Jerusalem has mighty defenses. Foreign nations will be amazed. It is something to remember and testify about. (See: testimony, testify, witness, eyewitness, evidence)

It is helpful to know that “Mount Zion” is often used to refer to the city of Jerusalem.

Psalms 48:1

General Information:

This psalm is a song about Jerusalem being God's dwelling place. Parallelism is common in Hebrew poetry. (See: Poetry and Parallelism)

ULT

1 Great is Yahweh and greatly to be praised, in the city of our God on his holy mountain.

greatly to be praised

This can be stated in active from. Alternate translation: "people are to praise him greatly" (See: Active or Passive)

the city of our God on his holy mountain

This is a reference to Jerusalem, which was built on Mount Zion.

the city of our God

This could mean: (1) "the city where our God lives" or (2) "the city that belongs to our God"

Psalms 48:2

Beautiful in elevation

“Beautiful and high.” The word “elevation” refers to how high mount Zion is.

ULT

2 Beautiful in elevation, the joy of the whole earth, is Mount Zion, on the sides of the north, the city of the great King.

the joy of the whole earth, is Mount Zion

Here the word “earth” refers to everyone living on the earth. The word “joy” may be translated as a verb. Alternate translation: “Mount Zion gives joy to everyone on earth” or “everyone on earth rejoices because of Mount Zion” (See: Metonymy and Abstract Nouns)

on the sides of the north

Possible meanings are that this phrase: (1) refers to the direction of the north or (2) is another name for Mount Zion meaning “the mountain of God.”

Psalms 48:3

God has made himself known in her palaces as a refuge

ULT

3 God has made himself known in her palaces as a refuge.

The writer speaks of God as if he were a place where people can go for safety. Alternate translation: “God has made himself known as one who gives safety to the people in Mount Zion’s palaces” (See: Metaphor)

Psalms 48:4

ULT
4 For, see, the kings assembled themselves; they passed by together.

see

The word “see” here alerts us to pay attention to the surprising information that follows.

assembled themselves

Here the kings represent their armies. Alternate translation: “assembled their armies” (See: Metonymy)

they passed by together

“together they passed by Jerusalem”

Psalms 48:5

They saw it

"They saw Jerusalem"

dismayed

greatly troubled

ULT

5 They saw it, then they were amazed;
they were dismayed, and they hurried
away.

Psalms 48:6

Trembling took hold of them there

The writer speaks of the kings' fear as if it were a person who caused the kings and their armies to tremble. Alternate translation: "There they trembled with fear" (See: Personification)

ULT

6 Trembling took hold of them there,
pain as when a woman is in labor.

pain as when a woman is in labor

The writer speaks of the kings' fear as if it were the pain that a woman experiences in childbirth and speaks of that pain as if it were a person. The verb may be supplied from the previous clause. Alternate translation: "pain took hold of them, as when a woman is in labor" or "they became afraid, like a woman is afraid of experiencing labor pains" (See: Metaphor and Personification and Ellipsis)

Psalms 48:7

With the east wind you break the ships of Tarshish

ULT

7 With the east wind you break the ships of Tarshish.

This could mean: (1) this is a metaphor in which the author describes the kings being afraid as if they were ships that shake because God destroys them with a strong wind. Alternate translation: “They shook with fear, as the ships of Tarshish shake when you break them with the east wind” or (2) this is an apostrophe in which the author describes God’s great power. (See: Metaphor and Apostrophe)

the east wind

This could mean: (1) “a wind blowing from the east” or (2) “a strong wind.”

the ships of Tarshish

This could mean: (1) ships that sail to or are built in the city of Tarshish or (2) any large ocean-going ship.

Psalms 48:8

As we have heard

It is implied that what they have heard is the great things that God has done in the past. Alternate translation: “As we have heard about the great things that God has done” (See: Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information)

ULT

8 As we have heard, so have we seen in the city of Yahweh of hosts, in the city of our God; God will establish it forever. *Selah*

so have we seen

This means that they have seen the proof that the things that they have heard are true. Alternate translation: “so we have seen God do great things now” (See: Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information)

in the city of Yahweh of hosts, in the city of our God

Both of these phrases refer to Jerusalem. Alternate translation: “in the city of our God, Yahweh of hosts” (See: Parallelism)

establish it

“make it secure.” Here the word “establish means to preserve and make something secure.

Psalms 48:9

your covenant faithfulness

The abstract noun “faithfulness” can be translated as an adjective. Alternate translation: “how faithful you are to your covenant” or “how faithful you are to us because of your covenant” (See: Abstract Nouns)

in the middle of your temple

“as we are in your temple”

ULT

9 We have thought about your covenant faithfulness, God, in the middle of your temple.

Psalms 48:10

As your name is ... so is your praise to the ends of the earth

ULT

10 As your name is, God, so is your praise to the ends of the earth; your right hand is full of righteousness.

Here the word “name” represents God’s character and reputation. The two phrases compare the greatness of God’s reputation with how greatly people praise him. Alternate translation: “Your name is very great ... and so people throughout the world praise you greatly” or “People all throughout the world have heard of you ... so people throughout the world praise you” (See: Metonymy)

to the ends of the earth

This is an idiomatic expression that means everywhere in the word. See how you translated this in Psalms 46:9. (See: Idiom)

your right hand is full of righteousness

The writer speaks of righteousness as if it were an object that God could hold in his hand. Here the word “hand” refers to God’s power and authority to rule. Alternate translation: “you rule with righteousness” or “you are righteous as you rule” (See: Metaphor and Metonymy)

Psalms 48:11

Let Mount Zion be glad

The writer speaks of Mount Zion as if it were a person who could be glad. The phrase refers to the people who live in Jerusalem. Alternate translation: “Let those who live on Mount Zion be glad” (See: Personification and Metonymy)

ULT

11 Let Mount Zion be glad, let the daughters of Judah rejoice because of your righteous decrees.

let the daughters of Judah rejoice

The writer speaks of the towns in Judah as if they were Judah’s children. The phrase refers to the people who live in those towns. Alternate translation: “let the people who live in the cities of Judah rejoice” (See: Metaphor and Metonymy)

Psalms 48:12

Walk around Mount Zion, go round about her

These two phrases are parallel. Alternate translation: “Walk all the way around Mount Zion” (See: Parallelism)

ULT

12 Walk around Mount Zion, go round about her; count her towers,

Psalms 48:13

notice well

“notice in detail”

ULT

13 notice well her walls, and look at her palaces so that you may tell it to the next generation.

Psalms 48:14

he will be our guide

The word “guide” can be translated as a verb. Alternate translation: “he will guide us” (See: Abstract Nouns)

to death

This could mean: (1) “until we die” or (2) “forever.”

ULT

14 For this God is our God forever and ever; he will be our guide to death.

Psalms 49

Psalm 49 General Notes

Type of psalm

Psalm 49 is a wisdom psalm. (See: wise, wisdom)

Special concepts in this chapter

Riches

Riches do not last forever. They cannot save a person from death, and they cannot be taken from a person at death. (See: eternity, everlasting, eternal, forever and save, saved, safe, salvation)

Psalms 49:1

General Information:

Parallelism is common in Hebrew poetry. (See: Poetry and Parallelism)

ULT

1 Hear this, all you peoples; give ear, all you inhabitants of the world,

For the chief musician

“This is for the director of music to use in worship”

Hear this, all you peoples; give ear, all you inhabitants

These two phrases are parallel. Together they strengthen the command for all people to listen. (See: Parallelism)

give ear

This idiomatic expression means to use one’s ears to listen. Alternate translation: “listen” (See: Idiom)

Psalms 49:2

both low and high

> **ULT**
> **2** both low and high, rich and poor together.

The writer speaks of people who are weak or insignificant in society as being low and of people who are important and powerful as being high. Together, the words “low” and “high” represent all people. Alternate translation: “both important people and unimportant people” or “people of every social class” (See: Metaphor and Merism)

rich and poor together

Together the words “rich” and “poor” refer to all people, regardless of wealth. Alternate translation: “all people” (See: Merism)

Psalms 49:3

My mouth will speak wisdom

Here the word “mouth” refers to the whole person who speaks. Alternate translation: “I will speak wise words” (See: Synecdoche)

the meditation of my heart will be of understanding

Here the word “heart” represents the mind and thoughts. The abstract nouns “meditation” and “understanding” can be translated as verbs. Alternate translation: “the thoughts upon which I meditate will help you to understand” (See: Metonymy and Abstract Nouns)

ULT

3 My mouth will speak wisdom and the meditation of my heart will be of understanding.

Psalms 49:4

incline my ear

The writer speaks of listening carefully to something as if it were bending one's ear towards the person who is speaking. Alternate translation: "listen carefully" (See: Metaphor)

with the harp

"as I play the harp"

ULT

4 I will incline my ear to a parable; I will
begin my parable with the harp.

Psalms 49:5

Why should I fear ... heels?

The writer asks this question to emphasize that he has no reason to fear when bad things happen. Alternate translation: “I have no reason to fear ... heels.” (See: Rhetorical Question)

ULT

5 Why should I fear the days of evil,
when iniquity surrounds me at my heels?

the days of evil

“when evil things happen.” Here the word “days” refers to general periods of time.

when iniquity surrounds me at my heels

This could mean: (1) the writer speaks of the evil desires of his enemies as if it were a predator ready to overtake him. Alternate translation: “when the iniquity of sinful men is ready to overcome me” or (2) the writer’s enemies surround him as they commit their iniquity. Alternate translation: “when my enemies surround me” (See: Metaphor)

Psalms 49:6

those who trust in their wealth

These people trust their wealth will keep them from having to suffer. (See: Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information)

about the amount of their riches

a large amount of something

ULT

6 Why should I fear those who trust in their wealth and boast about the amount of their riches?

Psalms 49:7

It is certain that no one

“There is no way that any of them can” or Alternate translation: “No one can”

no one can redeem his brother or give God a ransom for him

Both of these phrases express that a person cannot give God enough money to be able to avoid death. Alternate translation: “no one can pay money to God so that their brother will not die” (See: Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information and Parallelism)

ULT

7 It is certain that no one can redeem his brother or give God a ransom for him,

Psalms 49:8

the redemption of one’s life is costly

The word “redemption” can be translated with a verb. Alternate translation: “it costs too much to redeem a person’s life” (See: Abstract Nouns)

ULT

8 For the redemption of one’s life is costly, and no one can pay what we owe.

Psalms 49:9

so that his body should not decay

This refers to the body decomposing in the grave.

ULT

9 No one can live forever so that his body should not decay.

Psalms 49:10

he will see decay

The writer speaks of experiencing something as if it were seeing that thing. Alternate translation: “he will die and his body will decay” (See: Metaphor)

ULT

10 For he will see decay. Wise men die;
the fool and the brute alike perish and
leave their wealth to others.

Wise men die; the fool and the brute alike perish

The author refers to all people by referring to those who have the most and least wisdom. (See: Merism)

brute

This means a person who is stupid or unintelligent.

Psalms 49:11

Their inner thought

“Their belief”

the places where they live, to all generations

The verb may be supplied from the previous phrase. Alternate translation: “the places where they live will continue to all generations” (See: Ellipsis)

ULT

11 Their inner thought is that their families will continue forever, and the places where they live, to all generations; they call their lands after their own names.

they call their lands after their own names

“they name their lands after themselves.” This phrase expresses ownership. Alternate translation: “they own their own lands” (See: Idiom)

Psalms 49:12

But man, having wealth

“But man, even if he has wealth”

ULT

12 But man, having wealth, does not remain alive; he is like the beasts that perish.

Psalms 49:13

This, their way, is their folly

The writer speaks of the fate of fools as if it is the destination at the end of the path on which they walk. Alternate translation: “This is the fate of those who practice folly” (See: Metaphor)

yet after them

“yet after they die”

ULT

13 This, their way, is their folly; yet after them, men approve of their sayings.
Selah

Psalms 49:14

General Information:

The author continues to describe people who believe their wealth will save them.

ULT

14 Like sheep they are appointed for Sheol, and death will be their shepherd. The upright will rule over them in the morning, and their bodies will be consumed in Sheol, with no place for them to live.

Like sheep

The writer compares people who will all die to a flock of sheep. Just as sheep cannot escape when the butcher decides to slaughter them, so men will not escape when it is their time to die. (See: Simile)

they are appointed

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: “God has appointed them” (See: Active or Passive)

death will be their shepherd

The writer speaks of men dying by personifying death as a shepherd who leads them into the grave. Alternate translation: “death will take them away as a shepherd leads away sheep to be slaughtered” (See: Personification and Metaphor)

in the morning

Here the word “morning” is a metaphor that refers to a time when God will vindicate righteous people and save them from evil people. (See: Metaphor)

their bodies will be consumed in Sheol

The writer speaks of Sheol, the place of the dead, as if it were a person or animal. He speaks of the decay of dead bodies as if Sheol were eating them. Alternate translation: “their bodies will decompose in the grave” (See: Personification and Metaphor)

Psalms 49:15

God will redeem my life from the power of Sheol

The writer speaks of Sheol as if it were a person who has power over those who die. From the context, it is implied that this power refers to consuming the bodies of the dead. (See: Personification)

ULT

15 But God will redeem my life from the power of Sheol; he will receive me. *Selah*

God will redeem my life

Here the word “life” refers to the whole person. Alternate translation: “God will redeem me” (See: Synecdoche)

Psalms 49:16

the glory of his house increases

The word “glory” here refers to wealth or riches. This could mean: (1) “when he gains more wealth in his house” or (2) “when his family becomes richer.”

ULT

16 Do not be afraid when one becomes rich, and the glory of his house increases.

Psalms 49:17

he will take nothing away

“he will take nothing with him to the grave”

his glory will not go down after him

ULT

17 For when he dies he will take nothing away; his glory will not go down after him.

The phrase “go down” refers to when the man dies. Alternate translation: “his glory will not go along with him when he dies” or “he will not keep his reputation when he dies” (See: Euphemism)

Psalms 49:18

He blessed his soul

Here the word “soul” refers to the whole person. This phrase means that he considered himself to be happy and successful because of his riches. Alternate translation: “He congratulated himself” (See: Synecdoche and Idiom)

ULT

18 He blessed his soul while he lived—
and men praise you when you live for yourself—

Psalms 49:19

he will go to the generation of his fathers

“he will go to where his fathers’ generation is.” This is a euphemism that means that the rich man will die and join his ancestors in the grave. Alternate translation: “he will join his ancestors in the grave” (See: Euphemism)

ULT

19 he will go to the generation of his fathers and they will never see the light again.

they will never see the light again

The word “they” refers to the rich man and his ancestors. The word “light” may refer to the sun or be a metaphor for life. Alternate translation: “they will never see the sun again” or “they will never live again” (See: Metaphor)

Psalms 49:20

(There are no notes for this verse.)

ULT

20 One who has wealth but no understanding is like the beasts, which perish.

Psalms 50

Psalm 50 General Notes

Type of psalm

Psalm 50 is a wisdom psalm. It tells what pleases God. (See: wise, wisdom)

Special concepts in this chapter

Sacrifices

God does not need animal sacrifices; he does not eat meat or drink blood. The world and everything in it belong to God. He wants people to be thankful and to depend on him. God rejects evil people who reject his covenant. (See: blood and evil, wicked, unpleasant)

Psalms 50:1

General Information:

This psalm is a song that teaches people. Parallelism is common in Hebrew poetry. (See: Poetry and Parallelism)

ULT

1 The Mighty One, God, Yahweh, has spoken and called the earth from the rising of the sun to its setting.

The Mighty One, God, Yahweh

The author uses three different names to speak of God.

called the earth

Here the word “earth” refers to the people who live on the earth. Alternate translation: “called all people” (See: Metonymy)

from the rising of the sun to its setting

This phrase refers to the directions east, where the sun rises, and west, where the sun sets. The writer uses these two extremes to represent everywhere on earth. Alternate translation: “everywhere on earth” (See: Merism)

Psalms 50:2

Zion, the perfection of beauty

This could mean: (1) “Zion, whose beauty is perfect” or (2) “Zion, the most beautiful city.”

ULT

2 Out of Zion, the perfection of beauty,
God has shone.

God has shone

The writer speaks of God as if he were a light that shines. This refers to God causing people to know about his glory. Alternate translation: “God’s glory shines like a light” (See: Metaphor)

Psalms 50:3

does not stay silent

The writer uses this negative statement to emphasize the positive. Alternate translation: “speaks so that everyone can hear him” (See: Litotes)

ULT

3 Our God comes and does not stay silent; a fire devours before him, and it is very stormy around him.

a fire devours before him

The writer speaks of a fire burning things as if it were eating them. Alternate translation: “a fire burns in front of him” (See: Metaphor)

it is very stormy around him

“there is a great storm around him”

Psalms 50:4

He calls to the heavens above and to the earth

This could mean: (1) God is calling on all who live in heaven and on earth to be witnesses as he judges his people or (2) God is speaking to heaven and earth as if they are people, and he is calling them to be witnesses as he judges his people. (See: Metonymy and Personification)

ULT

4 He calls to the heavens above and to the earth so that he may judge his people:

Psalms 50:5

(There are no notes for this verse.)

ULT

5 “Gather my faithful ones together to
me, those who have made a covenant
with me by sacrifice.”

Psalms 50:6

The heavens will declare

This could mean: (1) the writer uses the word “heavens” to refer to the angels who live there or (2) the writer speaks of “the heavens” as if they are a person who testifies about God’s righteousness. (See: Metonymy and Personification)

ULT

6 The heavens will declare his
righteousness, for God himself is judge.
Selah

Psalms 50:7

(There are no notes for this verse.)

ULT

7 “Hear, my people, and I will speak; I
am God, your God.

Psalms 50:8

I will not reprove you for your sacrifices

“I will reprove you, but not for your sacrifices.” God explains that their sacrifices are not the reason that he is reproving them.

ULT

8 I will not reprove you for your sacrifices; your burnt offerings are always before me.

reprove

tell someone he is guilty of doing wrong

your burnt offerings are always before me

This explains why God is not rebuking them for their sacrifices. The phrase “are always before me” refers to being in God’s presence and means that his people are always sacrificing their burnt offerings to him. Alternate translation: “you are always sacrificing burnt offerings to me” (See: Idiom)

Psalms 50:9

folds

areas surrounded by walls in which sheep and goats are kept

ULT

9 I will take no bull out of your house, or
male goats out of your folds.

Psalms 50:10

the cattle on a thousand hills

The phrase “on a thousand hills” does not represent the total number of cattle that God owns. The number is an exaggeration that emphasizes that God owns all of the cattle in the world. The verb may be supplied from the previous phrase. Alternate translation: “all the cattle in the world are mine” (See: Hyperbole and Ellipsis)

thousand hills

“1,000 hills” (See: Numbers)

ULT

10 For every beast of the forest is mine,
and the cattle on a thousand hills.

Psalms 50:11

I know all the birds

Here the word “know” implies ownership. Alternate translation: “I own all the birds” (See: Idiom and Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information)

ULT

11 I know all the birds of the mountains,
and the wild beasts of the field are mine.

Psalms 50:12

If I were hungry

This describes something that could not happen, since God does not get hungry. (See: Hypothetical Situations)

ULT

12 If I were hungry, I would not tell you;
for the world is mine, and everything in it.

Psalms 50:13

Will I eat the flesh of bulls or drink the blood of goats?

ULT

13 Will I eat the flesh of bulls or drink the blood of goats?

God asks this rhetorical question to emphasize that he does not do these things and so has no need for their sacrifices. Alternate translation: “I do not eat the flesh of bulls or drink the blood of goats.” (See: Rhetorical Question)

Psalms 50:14

Offer to God

Here God refers to himself. Alternate translation: “Offer to me” (See: First, Second or Third Person)

pay your vows to the Most High

The writer speaks of “vows” as if they are currency which a person pays to God. Alternate translation: “fulfill your vows to the Most High” or “do what you have promised the Most High to do” (See: Metaphor)

ULT

14 Offer to God the sacrifice of thanksgiving, and pay your vows to the Most High.

Psalms 50:15

in the day of trouble

Here the word “day” refers to any period of time. Alternate translation: “whenever you have troubles” (See: Idiom)

ULT

15 Call on me in the day of trouble; I will rescue you, and you will glorify me.”

Psalms 50:16

But to the wicked God says

Here God is still speaking and speaks of himself in the third person. Alternate translation: “But to the wicked I say” (See: First, Second or Third Person)

ULT

16 But to the wicked God says, “What have you to do with declaring my statutes, that you have taken my covenant in your mouth,

to the wicked

The word “wicked” refers to wicked people in general. Alternate translation: “to wicked people” (See: Nominal Adjectives)

have taken my covenant in your mouth

God speaks of wicked people reciting the words of his covenant as if they are putting the covenant in their mouth. Alternate translation: “talk about my covenant” (See: Metaphor)

Psalms 50:17

since you hate instruction and throw my words away

ULT
17 since you hate instruction and throw my words away?

This is the end of the rhetorical question begun with the words "What have you to do" (Psalms 50:16). God uses this question to rebuke wicked people. This question can be turned into a statement: "It is not right for you to declare my statutes and my covenant, since you hate instruction and throw my words away." (See: Rhetorical Question)

throw my words away

God speaks of the wicked people rejecting what he says as if they were throwing away trash. Alternate translation: "reject what I say" (See: Metaphor)

Psalms 50:18

you agree with him

This could mean: (1) that they approve of the thief's actions. Alternate translation: "you approve or him" or (2) that they join the thief in their actions. Alternate translation: "you join him" (See: Idiom)

ULT

18 When you see a thief, you agree with him; you participate with those who commit adultery.

Psalms 50:19

You give your mouth to evil

God speaks of a person speaking evil things as if that person's mouth is a messenger whom the person sends to do evil things. Alternate translation: "You are always saying evil things" (See: Metaphor and Synecdoche)

ULT

19 You give your mouth to evil, and your tongue expresses deceit.

your tongue expresses deceit

The word "tongue" represents the person who is speaking. Alternate translation: "you are always telling lies" (See: Synecdoche)

Psalms 50:20

You sit and speak against your brother; you slander your own mother’s son

ULT

20 You sit and speak against your brother; you slander your own mother’s son.

These two phrases have the same meaning but use different words. God accuses them of speaking falsely against members of their own family. (See: Parallelism)

You sit and speak

To “sit and speak” against someone implies that this person deliberately thinks of bad things to say about someone. Alternate translation: “You always think of ways to speak” (See: Idiom and Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information)

Psalms 50:21

you thought that I was someone just like yourself

Since God had kept silent and not yet rebuked the wicked people for their actions, they thought that God approved of what they did. Alternate translation: “you thought that I was someone who acts just like you do” (See: Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information)

ULT

21 You have done these things, but I have kept silent, so you thought that I was someone just like yourself. But I will reprove you and bring up, right before your eyes, all the things you have done.

reprove

tell someone he is guilty of doing wrong

bring up ... all the things you have done

God speaks of listing all of the evil things that they have done. Alternate translation: “list ... all the things you have done” (See: Idiom)

right before your eyes

Here, to be “before your eyes” means that it is in a place where they can see. This means that they will not be able to deny the charges that God brings against them. Alternate translation: “right in front of you” or “so that you can not deny them” (See: Idiom)

Psalms 50:22

you who forget God

God speaks of the wicked rejecting him as if they have forgotten him. He speaks of himself in the third person. Alternate translation: “you who reject me” (See: Metaphor and First, Second or Third Person)

I will tear you to pieces

God speaks of destroying the wicked as if he were a lion eating its prey. Alternate translation: “I will destroy you” (See: Metaphor)

ULT

22 Give this careful consideration, you who forget God, otherwise I will tear you to pieces, and there will be no one to come to help you!

Psalms 50:23

plans his path in the right way

God speaks of a the way a person lives as if it were a path that the person travels. Alternate translation: “lives his life the right way” (See: Metaphor)

I will show God’s salvation

The abstract noun “salvation” can be stated as “save.” God refers to himself in the third person. Alternate translation: “I will save him” (See: Abstract Nouns and First, Second or Third Person)

ULT

23 The one who offers a sacrifice of thanksgiving praises me, and to anyone who plans his path in the right way I will show God’s salvation.”

Psalms 51

Psalm 51 General Notes

Type of psalm

Psalm 51 is a psalm of repentance from sin. (See: repent, repentance and sin, sinful, sinner, sinning)

Special concepts in this chapter

Repentance

The psalmist is truly sorry for having sinned. He repented and God forgave his sins. God wants true sorrow for having sinned, not sacrifices. (See: true, truth and forgive, forgiven, forgiveness, pardon, pardoned)

Author of Psalm

Scholars are divided over whether this psalm was authored by King David as is mentioned by the superscription. If nothing else, we can assume the last two verses were added later since Jerusalem is intact with well-built walls during King David’s reign.

Psalms 51:1

General Information:

Parallelism is common in Hebrew poetry. In this psalm David asks God for forgiveness. (See: Poetry and Parallelism)

ULT

1 Have mercy on me, God, because of your covenant faithfulness; for the sake of the multitude of your merciful actions, blot out my transgressions.

For the chief musician

“This is for the director of music to use in worship.”

A psalm of David

This could mean: (1) David wrote the psalm or (2) the psalm is about David or (3) the psalm is in the style of David’s psalms.

when Nathan the prophet came to him

It can be stated clearly what Nathan did when he came to David, because this psalm is in response to that. Alternate translation: “when Nathan the prophet came to David and rebuked him” (See: Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information)

because of your covenant faithfulness

The abstract noun “faithfulness” can be translated as an adjective. Alternate translation: “because you are faithful to your covenant” (See: Abstract Nouns)

for the sake of the multitude of your merciful actions

“because you do so many merciful things”

blot out my transgressions

Forgiving sins is spoken of as either: (1) blotting them out or (2) erasing a written record of the sins. Alternate translation: “forgive my sins like someone wiping something away” or “forget my sins like someone who erases a record of sins” (See: Metaphor)

Psalms 51:2

Wash me thoroughly from my iniquity ... cleanse me from my sin

These two phrases mean the same thing. (See: Parallelism)

ULT

2 Wash me thoroughly from my iniquity and cleanse me from my sin.

Wash me thoroughly from my iniquity

Being acceptable to God is spoken of as being clean. God makes people acceptable by forgiving their sins. Alternate translation: “Wash away all my sin” or “Forgive all my sins so that I will be acceptable to you” (See: Metaphor)

thoroughly

completely, totally

cleanse me from my sin

Being acceptable to God is spoken of as being clean. God makes people acceptable by forgiving their sins. Alternate translation: “Make me clean from my sin” or “forgive me for my sin so that I will be clean” (See: Metaphor)

Psalms 51:3

my sin is always before me

Not being able to forget his sins is spoken of as if they were always in front of him where he can see them. Alternate translation: “I am always aware of my sins” or “I cannot forget my sins” (See: Metaphor)

ULT

3 For I know my transgressions, and my sin is always before me.

Psalms 51:4

what is evil in your sight

The word “sight” here represents judgment. Yahweh saw and did not approve of David’s actions. Alternate translation: “what you judge to be evil” or “what you consider to be evil” (See: Metaphor)

ULT

4 Against you, you only, I have sinned and done what is evil in your sight; you are right when you speak; you are correct when you judge.

Psalms 51:5

ULT

5 See, I was born in iniquity; as soon as my mother conceived me, I was in sin.

I was born in iniquity

Being a sinner is spoken of as being in iniquity. Alternate translation: “I was already a sinner when I was born” (See: Metaphor)

as soon as my mother conceived me, I was in sin

Being a sinner is spoken of as being in sin. Alternate translation: “even when my mother conceived me, I was a sinner” (See: Metaphor)

Psalms 51:6

See, you desire trustworthiness

The use of “See” here draw our attention to the contrast between this sentence and “See, I was born in iniquity” (verse 5). “Truly I was born in iniquity … But you desire trustworthiness”

ULT

6 See, you desire trustworthiness in my inner self; and you teach me wisdom in the secret place within.

you desire trustworthiness in my inner self

The **inner self** represents either: (1) the person’s desires or (2) the whole person. Alternate translation: “you want me to desire trustworthiness” or “you want me to be trustworthy” (See: Metonymy and Synecdoche)

Psalms 51:7

Purify me ... I will be clean ... wash me ... I will be whiter than snow

Being acceptable to God is spoken of as being clean or white. God makes people acceptable by forgiving their sins. (See: Metaphor)

ULT

7 Purify me with hyssop, and I will be clean; wash me, and I will be whiter than snow.

Purify me with hyssop

The writer speaks of God as if God were a priest who would sprinkle water on him to make him acceptable to God. Alternate translation: “Make me acceptable by sprinkling water on me with hyssop” or “Forgive me for my sins so that I will be acceptable to you” (See: Metaphor)

hyssop

This is a plant that the priests used to sprinkle water or blood on people or things to make them ceremonially clean, that is, acceptable to God. (See: Translate Unknowns)

whiter than snow

Not having sin is spoken of as being white. Alternate translation: “very, very white” (See: Simile)

Psalms 51:8

joy and gladness

These two words mean basically the same thing and emphasize his desire to hear joyful things. (See: Doublet)

so that the bones that you have broken may rejoice

Feeling terrible sadness is spoken of as if his bones were broken. Alternate translation: “for you have caused me terrible sadness in my inner being. Let me rejoice again” (See: Metaphor)

ULT

8 Make me hear joy and gladness so that the bones that you have broken may rejoice.

Psalms 51:9

Hide your face from my sins

ULT
9 Hide your face from my sins and blot out all my iniquities.

Thinking about someone's sins is spoken of as seeing them. Forgiving or refusing to think about the sins is spoken of as choosing not to see them. Alternate translation: "Do not look at my sins" or "Do not remember my sins" (See: Metaphor)

blot out all my iniquities

Here, forgiving or refusing to think about someone's sins could mean: (1) blotting them out or (2) erasing a written record of the sins. Alternate translation: (1) "forgive my sins like someone wiping something away" or (2) "forget my sins like someone who erases a record of sins" (See: Metaphor)

Psalms 51:10

Create in me a clean heart

Here the “heart” represents the feelings and desires. Being completely devoted and obedient to God is spoken of as having a clean heart. Alternate translation: “Make me completely devoted to you” or “Make me want to obey you always” (See: Metonymy and Metaphor)

ULT

10 Create in me a clean heart, God, and renew a right spirit within me.

renew a right spirit within me

Here “spirit” represents the attitude and desires of a David. Alternate translation: “make my attitude right” or “make me always want to do what is right” (See: Metonymy)

Psalms 51:11

Do not drive me away from your presence

“Do not force me to go away from you.” Being rejected by God is spoken of as being forced to go away from him. Alternate translation: “Do not reject me as one of your people” (See: Metaphor)

ULT

11 Do not drive me away from your presence, and do not take your holy Spirit from me.

Psalms 51:12

sustain me

“hold me up” or “assist me”

ULT

12 Restore to me the joy of your salvation, and sustain me with a willing spirit.

Psalms 51:13

your ways

“the way you want people to live” or “what you want people to do”

transgressors ... sinners

These two words refer to the same people here.

ULT

13 Then will I teach transgressors your ways, and sinners will be converted to you.

Psalms 51:14

shedding blood

This phrase refers to killing another person. (See: Metonymy)

ULT

14 Forgive me for shedding blood, God
of my salvation, and I will shout for the
joy of your righteousness.

Psalms 51:15

Lord, open my lips, and my mouth will express your praise

ULT

15 Lord, open my lips, and my mouth will express your praise.

Here the person is represented by his “mouth.” Being able to talk is spoken of as the lips being open. Here not being able to speak is a symbol of being guilty of sin and not being able to make a defense. Alternate translation: “Lord, make me able to speak, and I will praise you” (See: Synecdoche)

Psalms 51:16

you do not delight in sacrifice ... you have no pleasure in burnt offerings

This means that God wants something more important than these things. Alternate translation: “A sacrifice is not enough to please you ... you want something more than burn offerings” (See: Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information)

ULT

16 For you do not delight in sacrifice, or I would give it; you have no pleasure in burnt offerings.

Psalms 51:17

The sacrifices of God

"The sacrifices that please God"

a broken spirit

A broken spirit represents a humble attitude. Alternate translation: "humility" or "a person who becomes humble" (See: Metaphor and Metonymy)

a broken and a contrite heart

Being humble and sorry for one's sin is spoken of as having a broken and contrite heart. The heart represents the emotions and will. Alternate translation: "sorrow and humility" or "a person who is sorry for his sin and humble" (See: Metonymy)

ULT

17 The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit. You, God, will not despise a broken and a contrite heart.

Psalms 51:18

rebuild the walls of Jerusalem

The walls of a city protect the city and the people in it. This could mean: (1) “enable us to rebuild the walls of Jerusalem” or (2) “protect Jerusalem and make it strong” (See: Metaphor)

ULT

18 Do good in your good pleasure to Zion; rebuild the walls of Jerusalem.

Psalms 51:19

our people will offer bulls on your altar

A bull is an adult male cow. Bulls were often used as sacrificial animals, according to God's instruction.

ULT

19 Then will you delight in the sacrifices of righteousness, in burnt offerings and whole burnt offerings; then our people will offer bulls on your altar.

Psalms 52

Psalm 52 General Notes

Type of psalm

Psalm 52 is a wisdom psalm. It teaches that God will destroy evil people. (See: wise, wisdom and evil, wicked, unpleasant)

Special concepts in this chapter

Evil people

Although the evil people feel secure with their wealth and evil deeds, God will destroy them. But people who do good are secure because God protects them. (See: work, works, deeds)

Superscription

This psalm is called “a Maschil of David.” The word “Maschil” in the original language has caused scholars to have various opinions about its meaning. Some say it means to instruct, while others say that the word is referring to the skill used in creating the psalm. Still others think it means that meditation should be used in reading this psalm.

Psalms 52:1

General Information:

In this psalm the word “you” refers to Doeg. When Saul wanted to kill David, Doeg told Saul where David was so that Saul could find him. Parallelism is common in Hebrew poetry. (See: Poetry and Parallelism)

ULT

1 Why are you proud of making trouble, you mighty man? The covenant faithfulness of God comes every day.

For the chief musician

“This is for the director of music to use in worship.”

A maschil

This may refer to a style of music. See how you translated this in Psalms 32:1.

Doeg ... Ahimelech

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

Why are you proud of making trouble, you mighty man?

This question shows how angry David was at the one who made trouble. Alternate translation: “You should not be so proud of making trouble, you mighty man.” (See: Rhetorical Question)

you mighty man

David may have been using irony when he called Doeg this. Alternate translation: “you, who think you are so mighty” (See: Irony)

The covenant faithfulness of God comes every day

David speaks of God’s covenant faithfulness as if it were something that could come. David was probably referring to God’s promises to protect his people from wicked people. The abstract noun “faithfulness” can be translated as an adjective or an adverb. Alternate translation: “Every day, God is faithful to keep the promises of his covenant” or “Every day, God faithfully protects his people from wicked people like you” (See: Metaphor and Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information and Abstract Nouns)

Psalms 52:2

a sharp razor

a sharp blade

ULT

2 Your tongue plans destruction like a sharp razor, working deceitfully.

Your tongue plans destruction like a sharp razor, working deceitfully

Here the tongue is compared to a sharp razor which is capable of causing great harm. Alternate translation: “Your tongue harms people like a sharp razor does, when you plan destruction and deceive others” (See: Simile)

Your tongue

Here “your tongue” refers to the person David is speaking to. Alternate translation: “You” (See: Synecdoche)

Psalms 52:3

Connecting Statement:

David continues speaking to the “mighty man” of Psalms 5:1

lying rather than speaking righteousness

“you love lying more than speaking what is right”

ULT

3 You love evil more than good and
lying rather than speaking
righteousness. *Selah*

Psalms 52:4

words that devour others

Here words that harm others are spoken of as if they were animals that devour people. Alternate translation: “words that harm others” (See: Metaphor)

ULT

4 You love all words that devour others,
you deceitful tongue.

you deceitful tongue

This refers to the person the author is speaking to. Alternate translation: “you speaker of deceit” or “you liar” (See: Synecdoche)

Psalms 52:5

take you up ... pluck you ... root you

All three of these phrases are different ways of saying “remove you” (See: Parallelism)

root you out of the land of the living

Being alive on earth is spoken of as if people are plants with roots in the ground. God killing someone is spoken of as digging up the plant’s roots and taking it out of the ground. Alternate translation: “he will take you out the land of the living” or “He will kill you so that you will no longer be on earth with living people” (See: Metaphor)

Selah

This may be a musical term that tells people how to sing or play their instruments here. Some translations write the Hebrew word, and some translations do not include it. (See: Copy or Borrow Words)

ULT

5 God will likewise destroy you forever;
he will take you up and pluck you out of your tent and root you out of the land of the living. *Selah*

Psalms 52:6

The righteous will also see it and fear

“The righteous will also see God remove him and they will fear”

ULT

6 The righteous will also see it and fear;
they will laugh at him and say,

Psalms 52:7

See

“Look” or “Listen” or “Pay attention to what I am about to tell you”

did not make God his refuge

Here “refuge” represents a protector. Alternate translation: “did not make God his protector” or “did not ask God to protect him” (See: Metonymy)

ULT

7 “See, this is a man who did not make God his refuge, but he trusted in the abundance of his wealth, and he was strong when he destroyed others.”

Psalms 52:8

ULT

8 But as for me, I am like a green olive tree in God’s house; I will trust in the covenant faithfulness of God forever and ever.

a green olive tree

Green olive trees are strong and secure. They do not fall over.

I am like a green olive tree in God’s house

Being safe and secure is spoken of as being like a strong tree.
Alternate translation: “I am strong in God’s house, like a green olive tree” or “Because I worship in God’s house, I am secure like a green olive tree” (See: Simile)

in God’s house

This refers to God’s temple.

I will trust in the covenant faithfulness of God forever and ever

The abstract noun “faithfulness” can be translated with an adjective. Alternate translation: “I will trust in God forever and ever because he is faithful to his covenant” (See: Abstract Nouns)

Psalms 52:9

I will wait for your name, because it is good

God's name represents God himself. Waiting for God represents waiting for God to help him. Alternate translation: "I will wait for you, because you are good" or "I will wait for you to help me, because you are good" (See: Metonymy)

ULT

9 I will give you thanks forever for what you have done. I will wait for your name, because it is good, in the presence of your faithful ones.

Psalms 53

Psalm 53 General Notes

Type of psalm

Psalm 53 is a wisdom psalm. It warns people who do evil that God will judge them. (See: wise, wisdom and evil, wicked, unpleasant and judge, judgment)

Special concepts in this chapter

God’s watching mankind

God looks down from heaven and sees that all humans are evil and corrupt. (See: heaven, sky, heavens, heavenly)

Superscription

This psalm is called “a Maschil of David.” The word “Maschil” in the original language has caused scholars to have various opinions about its meaning. Some say it means to instruct, while others say that the word is referring to the skill used in creating the psalm. Still others think it means that meditation should be used in reading this psalm.

Psalms 53:1

General Information:

Parallelism is common in Hebrew poetry. (See: Poetry and Parallelism)

For the chief musician

“This is for the director of music to use in worship”

set to Mahalath

This may refer to a style of music. (See: Copy or Borrow Words)

A maschil

This may refer to a style of music. See how you translated this in Psalms 32:1.

ULT

1 A fool says in his heart, “There is no God.” They are corrupt and have done abominable iniquity; there is no one who does good.

Psalms 53:2

the children of mankind

This refers to all people.

who seek after him

Seeking God as a person would look for someone is spoken of as "seeking" God. This could mean: (1) wanting to know God. Alternate translation: "who want to know him" or (2) worshiping God. Alternate translation: "who worship him" (See: Metaphor)

ULT

2 God looks down from heaven on the children of mankind to see if there are any who understand, who seek after him.

Psalms 53:3

They have all turned away

Rejecting God and what is right is spoken of as turning away. Alternate translation: “They have all turned away from doing what is right” or “They have all rejected God” (See: Metaphor)

ULT

3 They have all turned away. Together they have become corrupt. There is not one who does good, not even one.

Psalms 53:4

Do those who commit iniquity have no understanding—those ... God?

This question is used to show the shock that the writer feels because the people are so sinful. It can be written as two statements. “Those who commit iniquity act as though they do not know anything. They devour my people as if they were eating bread, and they do not call on God!” (See: Rhetorical Question)

ULT

4 Do those who commit iniquity have no understanding— those who devour my people as if they were eating bread and they do not call on God?

those who devour my people as if they were eating bread

Destroying people is spoken of as devouring them. Doing it as if they were eating bread implies that they did it very easily or without feeling guilty about it. Alternate translation: “those who destroy my people as freely as if they were eating bread” (See: Metaphor and Simile)

Psalms 53:5

God will scatter the bones of whoever will camp against you

Scattering people's bones represents killing them and allowing their bones to remain wherever they have died and not be buried properly. "God will completely destroy whoever will camp against you, and their bones will lie scattered on the ground" (See: Metonymy)

ULT

5 They were in great fear, although no reason to fear was there; for God will scatter the bones of whoever will camp against you; such people will be put to shame because God has rejected them.

whoever will camp against you

Camping against people represents attacking them. Enemy armies would travel and set up camps to live in temporarily near the people they wanted to attack. Alternate translation: "whoever will attack you" (See: Metonymy)

Psalms 53:6

Oh, that the salvation of Israel would come

The word “Oh” here introduces an exclamation that expresses a hope or prayer. Alternate translation: “I hope that the salvation of Israel will come” or “I pray that the salvation of will come” (See: Exclamations)

ULT

6 Oh, that the salvation of Israel would come from Zion! When God brings back his people from the captivity, then Jacob will rejoice and Israel will be glad!

the salvation of Israel would come from Zion

The salvation represents God, the savior, whose temple is in Zion. Alternate translation: “the savior of Israel would come from Zion” or “God would come from Zion and save Israel” (See: Metonymy)

When God brings back his people from the captivity

“When God saves his captive people”

Jacob will rejoice and Israel will be glad!

These two phrases have the same meaning. (See: Parallelism)

Jacob

Here “Jacob” refers to the descendants of Jacob, the Israelites. (See: Metonymy)

Psalms 54

Psalm 54 General Notes

Type of psalm

Psalm 54 is a deliverance psalm. (See: deliver, hand over, turn over, release, rescue)

Special concepts in this chapter

Rescue

Evil people want to kill David; but God has rescued him in the past and he trusts God to rescue him again. (See: evil, wicked, unpleasant and trust, trusted, trustworthy, trustworthiness)

Superscription

This psalm is called “a Maschil of David.” The word “Maschil” in the original language has caused scholars to have various opinions about its meaning. Some say it means to instruct, while others say that the word is referring to the skill used in creating the psalm. Still others think it means that meditation should be used in reading this psalm.

Psalms 54:1

General Information:

This psalm is a prayer for help. Parallelism is common in Hebrew poetry. (See: Poetry and Parallelism)

ULT

1 Save me, God, by your name, and judge me in your might.

For the chief musician

“This is for the director of music to use in worship”

on stringed instruments

“people should play stringed instruments with this song”

A maschil

This may refer to a style of music. See how you translated this in Psalms 32:1

Ziphites

people from the city of Ziph in the Judean mountains, southeast of Hebron. (See: How to Translate Names)

Save me, God, by your name

Here God’s name represents his character. It may represent specifically his power or his justice. Alternate translation: “Save me, God, by your power” (See: Metonymy)

judge me in your might

Judging David here represents showing people that David is not guilty. When God uses his might to save David, people will know that God has judged him as not guilty. Alternate translation: “In your might, show people that I am not guilty” or “Show people that I am not guilty by using your power to rescue me” (See: Metonymy)

Psalms 54:2

give ear to the words

Giving one's ear represents listening. Alternate translation: "listen to the words" (See: Metonymy)

ULT

2 Hear my prayer, God; give ear to the words of my mouth.

the words of my mouth

Here the speaker is represented by his mouth. Alternate translation: "my words" or "what I am saying to you" (See: Synecdoche)

Psalms 54:3

have risen up against me

Rising up against someone represents preparing to attack him or actually attacking him. Alternate translation: “have prepared to attack me” or “are attacking me” (See: Metonymy)

ULT

3 For strangers have risen up against me, and pitiless men have sought after my life; they have not set God before them. *Selah*

pitiless men

“men who have no mercy”

have sought after my life

Seeking after someone’s life represents trying to kill him. Alternate translation: “have tried to kill me” or “want to kill me” (See: Metonymy)

they have not set God before them

Setting God before them represents paying attention to God. Alternate translation: “they do not pay attention to God” or “they ignore God” (See: Metonymy)

Psalms 54:4

who upholds me

Defending David and keeping him safe is spoken of as upholding or supporting him. Alternate translation: “who defends me” or “who keeps me safe” (See: Metaphor)

ULT

4 See, God is my helper; the Lord is the one who upholds me.

Psalms 54:5

He will repay my enemies with evil

Punishment is spoken as if it were payment. Alternate translation: “He will do the evil to my enemies that they have done to me” or “He will cause the evil that my enemies have done to me to be done to them” (See: Metaphor)

ULT

5 He will repay my enemies with evil; in your faithfulness, destroy them!

in your faithfulness, destroy them

Here David changes from talking about God to talking to God. Alternate translation: “God, destroy them because you are faithful to me”

Psalms 54:6

I will give thanks to your name, Yahweh, for it is good

Yahweh's name represents him. Alternate translation: "I will give thanks to you, Yahweh, for you are good" (See: Synecdoche)

ULT

6 I will sacrifice to you with a freewill offering; I will give thanks to your name, Yahweh, for it is good.

Psalms 54:7

my eye has looked

The eye represents the person. Alternate translation: “I have looked” (See: Synecdoche)

my eye has looked in triumph on my enemies

This could mean: (1) seeing that his enemies have been defeated. Alternate translation: “I have seen that my enemies have been defeated” or (2) defeating his enemies. Alternate translation: “I have defeated my enemies” (See: Metonymy)

ULT

7 For he has rescued me from every trouble; my eye has looked in triumph on my enemies.

Psalms 55

Psalm 55 General Notes

Type of psalm

Psalm 55 is a deliverance psalm. The psalmist is praying that God will deliver him from his enemies. (See: deliver, hand over, turn over, release, rescue)

Special concepts in this chapter

Betrayal

The author wishes he could get far away from his enemies after his best friend betrayed him. He asks God to completely destroy his enemies. He is trusting God to save him. (See: trust, trusted, trustworthy, trustworthiness and save, saved, safe, salvation)

Superscription

This psalm is called “a Maschil of David.” The word “Maschil” in the original language has caused scholars to have various opinions about its meaning. Some say it means to instruct, while others say that the word is referring to the skill used in creating the psalm. Still others think it means that meditation should be used in reading this psalm.

Psalms 55:1

General Information:

Parallelism is common in Hebrew poetry. (See: Poetry and Parallelism)

ULT

1 Give ear to my prayer, God; and do not hide yourself from my plea.

For the chief musician

“This is for the director of music to use in worship”

on stringed instruments

“people should play stringed instruments with this song”

A maschil

This may refer to a style of music. See how you translated this in Psalms 32:1

Give ear to my prayer

Giving one’s ear represents listening. Alternate translation: “Listen to my prayer” (See: Metonymy)

do not hide yourself from my plea

Refusing to pay attention to his plea is spoken of as hiding himself from it. Alternate translation: “do not ignore my plea” (See: Metaphor)

Psalms 55:2

(There are no notes for this verse.)

ULT

2 Pay attention to me and answer me; I
have no rest in my troubles

Psalms 55:3

because of the voice of my enemies

Here “voice” represents what they say. Alternate translation: “because of what my enemies say” (See: Metonymy)

they bring trouble on me

Causing trouble is spoken of as bringing trouble. Alternate translation: “they cause me to have great troubles” or “they do wicked things to me and so I suffer” (See: Metaphor)

ULT

3 because of the voice of my enemies,
because of the oppression of the
wicked; for they bring trouble on me
and persecute me in anger.

Psalms 55:4

My heart trembles within me

Here, “heart trembles” refers to his emotional pain and suffering. This suffering is because of fear. Alternate translation: “I am suffering because I am so afraid” (See: Metonymy)

ULT

4 My heart trembles within me, and the terrors of death have fallen on me.

the terrors of death have fallen on me

Becoming very afraid, or terrified, is spoken of as if terror is a thing that falls on a person. Alternate translation: “I am very much afraid that I will die” or “I am terrified that I will die” (See: Metaphor)

Psalms 55:5

Fearfulness and trembling have come on me

Becoming fearful and trembling is spoken of as if fearfulness and trembling are things that come on a person. Alternate translation: “I have become very fearful and I tremble” (See: Metaphor)

ULT

5 Fearfulness and trembling have come on me, and horror has overwhelmed me.

horror has overwhelmed me

Feeling horror is spoken of as if horror were a thing that can cover people. Alternate translation: “I feel terrible horror” or “I am extremely afraid” (See: Metaphor)

Psalms 55:6

Oh, if only I had wings like a dove!

This exclamation expresses something the writer wishes for very much. Alternate translation: “I wish very much that I had wings like a dove” (See: Exclamations)

Then would I fly away

“If I did have wings, I would fly away”

ULT

6 I said, “Oh, if only I had wings like a dove! Then would I fly away and be at rest.

Psalms 55:7

See, then I would wander

"I would do that and more: I would wander"

ULT

7 See, then I would wander far away; I would stay in the wilderness. *Selah*

Psalms 55:8

General Information:

The writer finishes telling about what he had said.

tempest

a strong storm

ULT

8 I would hurry to a shelter from the
stormy wind and tempest.”

Psalms 55:9

Devour them

Destroying something is spoken of as eating all of it. Possible meanings are “Destroy my enemies’ plans” or “Destroy my enemies.” (See: Metaphor)

ULT

9 Devour them, Lord, confuse their language! For I have seen violence and strife in the city.

confuse their language

“Language” here represents what the people were saying to each other, and probably refers specifically to them talking about plans to do evil. Confusing it represents making the people unable to understand each other. Alternate translation: “confuse them when they speak to each other” or “confuse their plans” (See: Metonymy)

Psalms 55:10

ULT

10 Day and night they go about on its walls; wickedness and trouble are in the middle of it.

they go about on its walls

"violence and strife go about on her walls" (Psalms 55:9). Violence and strife are spoken of as if they were people. This can be expressed by telling about the people who cause violence and strife. Alternate translation: "people walk about on the city's walls, being violent and fighting" (See: Personification)

on its walls

"along the tops of the city walls." Cities had thick walls around them to protect them from enemies. People could walk along the tops of the walls to see if any enemies were coming to the city.

wickedness and trouble are in the middle of it

Wickedness and trouble are spoken of as if they were people. This can be expressed by telling about the people who do wickedness and trouble. Alternate translation: "people do wickedness and cause trouble in the middle of the city" or "people do sinful things and cause trouble in it" (See: Personification)

Psalms 55:11

Wickedness is in the middle of it

Wickedness is spoken of as if it were a person. This can be expressed by telling about the people who do wicked things. Alternate translation: “People do wicked things in the middle of the city” or “people destroy things in the city” (See: Personification)

ULT

11 Wickedness is in the middle of it;
oppression and deceit do not leave its streets.

oppression and deceit do not leave its streets

Oppression and deceit are spoken of as if they were people. This can be expressed by telling about the people who oppress and deceive others. Alternate translation: “People oppress and deceive others in the city streets, and they do not leave” or “People are always oppressing and deceiving others in the city streets” (See: Personification)

its streets

This may refer to the marketplaces in the city.

Psalms 55:12

I could have borne it

Tolerating or enduring a rebuke is spoken of as bearing or carrying it. Alternate translation: “I could have tolerated the rebuke” or “I would not be so sad about the rebuke” (See: Metaphor)

raised himself up against me

Being proud of oneself and insulting another is spoken of as raising oneself up against another. Alternate translation: “insulted me” or “despised me” (See: Metaphor)

ULT

12 For it was not an enemy who rebuked me, then I could have borne it; neither was it he who hated me who raised himself up against me, then I would have hidden myself from him.

Psalms 55:13

But it was you

The psalmist speaks as though the person who had rebuked and taunted him were there listening to him. (See: Apostrophe)

ULT

13 But it was you, a man equal to myself,
my companion and my close friend.

myself, my companion and my close friend

This can be divided and a new sentence begun. Alternate translation: “myself. You were my companion and my close friend”

Psalms 55:14

We

The word “we” refers to the psalmist and his friend.

with the throng

This could mean: (1) “together” or (2) “with the crowd.”

ULT

14 We had sweet fellowship together;
we walked in the house of God with the
throng.

Psalms 55:15

Let death come suddenly on them

Death is spoken of as if it were a person that could attack people. Alternate translation: “Let my enemies die suddenly” (See: Personification)

ULT

15 Let death come suddenly on them; let them go down alive to Sheol, for wickedness is where they live, right among them.

let them go down alive to Sheol

Dying suddenly is spoken of as if people were to go to Sheol so fast that they do not even die first. Alternate translation: “let them suddenly go to Sheol” (See: Metaphor)

wickedness is where they live

Wickedness is spoken of as if it were a thing that could be in a certain place. The habitual wickedness of his enemies is spoken of as if wickedness were with them or near them. Alternate translation: “they always do wicked things where they live” (See: Metaphor)

right among them

This phrase intensifies the idea of wickedness being very near them. Here wickedness is spoken of as being not only in their homes, but right where they are. Alternate translation: “They always do wicked things wherever they are” or “wherever they are” (See: Metaphor)

Psalms 55:16

As for me

This phrase shows that the writer has stopped talking about one thing and is now about to talk about himself. Alternate translation: “But I”

ULT

16 As for me, I will call on God, and
Yahweh will save me.

Psalms 55:17

moan

the sound people and animals make when they are in pain

he will hear my voice

ULT

17 In the evening, morning and at noonday I complain and moan; he will hear my voice.

Here, **voice** represents either: (1) the psalmist or (2) the psalmist's complaints and moans. Alternate translation: "he will hear me" or "he will hear my moaning" (See: Synecdoche and Metonymy)

Psalms 55:18

my life

Here “my life” represents the psalmist. Alternate translation: “me” (See: Metonymy)

for those who fought against me were many

“for many people fought against me”

ULT

18 He will safely rescue my life from the battle that was against me, for those who fought against me were many.

Psalms 55:19

will hear them

“will hear my enemies” or “will hear what my enemies say.” Some versions say “will hear me.”

humiliate them

How God will humiliate them can be stated clearly. Alternate translation: “will defeat and humiliate them” (See: Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information)

ULT

19 God, the one who rules from eternity,
will hear them and humiliate them.
Selah They never change, and they do
not fear God.

Psalms 55:20

has raised his hands against those

Raising the hand against people represents attacking them. This may be a metaphor for saying things that put people in danger or cause them trouble. Alternate translation: “has attacked those” or “has betrayed those” (See: Metonymy and Metaphor)

ULT

20 My friend has raised his hands against those who were at peace with him; he has not respected the covenant that he had.

Psalms 55:21

ULT

21 His mouth was smooth as butter, but his heart was hostile; his words were softer than oil, yet they were actually drawn swords.

His mouth

Someone's "mouth" represents what he says. Alternate translation: "What my friend said" (See: Metonymy)

His mouth was smooth as butter

Speech that is pleasant or nice to hear is spoken of as if it were smooth and easy to swallow. Alternate translation: "What he said was pleasant like smooth butter" or "He said nice things" (See: Simile)

was hostile

"was mean" or "was hateful"

his words

"what he said"

his words were softer than oil

People put oil on their skin to make it feel nice, and they put it on wounds to help them heal. Speech that is kind or helpful is spoken of as if it were soft or soothing. Alternate translation: "what he said was kind and soothing like oil" or "he said kind things" (See: Simile)

they were actually drawn swords

Speech that causes people trouble is spoken of as if it were swords that wound people. Alternate translation: "what he said wounded people as drawn swords do" or "what he said caused people trouble" (See: Metaphor)

drawn swords

The word "drawn" here means that the swords were pulled out of their covers and ready to be used.

Psalms 55:22

Place your burdens

Here the psalmist is speaking to other godly people.

ULT

22 Place your burdens on Yahweh, and he will sustain you; he will never allow a righteous person to totter.

Place your burdens on Yahweh

Here troubles are spoken of as if they were burdens that people have to carry. Trusting God to help us when we have troubles is spoken of as putting our burdens on him so that he can carry them for us. Alternate translation: “Give Yahweh your problems” or “Trust God to help you with all your troubles like someone who trusts a stronger person to carry his load” (See: Metaphor)

he will sustain you

Taking care of someone or helping someone when he has troubles is spoken of as supporting him. Alternate translation: “he will take care of you” or “he will help you”

he will never allow a righteous person to totter

A person who is about to be severely harmed by some sort of disaster is spoken of as if he is tottering or swaying and is about to fall down. Alternate translation: “he will not let a righteous person sway and fall down” or “he will not let a righteous person to be destroyed” (See: Metaphor)

Psalms 55:23

But you, God

The author speaks to God now.

the pit of destruction

This probably refers to the grave or hell.

ULT

23 But you, God, will bring the wicked down into the pit of destruction; bloodthirsty and deceitful men will not live even half as long as others, but I will trust in you.

will bring the wicked down into the pit of destruction

This represents causing people to die. Alternate translation: “will cause the wicked to die” or “will cause wicked people to die and go to the place where dead people are” (See: Metonymy)

bloodthirsty and deceitful men

“people who lie and who want to kill others” or “deceitful murderers”

even half as long as others

“even half as long as other people live”

Psalms 56

Psalm 56 General Notes

Type of psalm

Psalm 56 is a psalm of deliverance. (See: deliver, hand over, turn over, release, rescue)

Special concepts in this chapter

Fear

Although the psalmist's enemies are trying to harm him, he is not afraid because God is protecting him.

Superscription

The word "Michtam" is used in the superscription for this psalm. There is much discussion about this word but, in the end, no one is certain what it means. It is easiest to transliterate this word into your language, or you can simply translate it as "psalm."

Psalms 56:1

General Information:

Parallelism is common in Hebrew poetry. (See: Poetry and Parallelism)

ULT

1 Be merciful to me, God, for men are attacking me! All the day long those who fight me press their assault.

For the chief musician

“This is for the director of music to use in worship;”

set to Jonath elem rehokim

This probably tells what musical style or tune to use when singing this psalm. Alternate translation: “Sing this psalm using the tune of ‘Jonath elem rehokim’” or “Sing this using the Jonath elem rehokim style”

Jonath elem rehokim

This may mean “Dove on Distant Oak Trees.” Translators may either write the meaning or copy the Hebrew words. (See: Translate Unknowns and Copy or Borrow Words)

A psalm of David

This could mean: (1) David wrote the psalm or (2) the psalm is about David or (3) the psalm is in the style of David’s psalms.

A michtam

The meaning of the word “michtam” is uncertain. You may use the word “psalm” instead. This can be written as: “This is a psalm that David wrote.” See how you translated this in Psalms 16:1.

press their assault

“come closer and closer in order to attack me”

Psalms 56:2

My enemies trample me

The enemies' fierce attack is spoken of as if they were crushing his body by marching on it. Alternate translation: "My enemies attack me severely" (See: Metaphor)

ULT

2 My enemies trample me all day long;
for there are many who arrogantly fight against me.

Psalms 56:3

you

The word “you” refers to God.

ULT

3 When I am afraid, I will put my trust in you.

Psalms 56:4

what can mere man do to me?

Here a question is used to show that the psalmist is not afraid of people, because they cannot seriously harm him. This rhetorical question can be translated as a statement. Alternate translation: “mere man can do nothing to me!” or “mere man cannot harm me badly!” (See: Rhetorical Question)

ULT

4 In God, whose word I praise— in God I have put my trust; I will not be afraid; what can mere man do to me?

mere man

“just humans” or “people.” This implies that people are not powerful, but God is powerful.

Psalms 56:5

All the day long

“All the time”

they twist my words

ULT

5 All the day long they twist my words;
all their thoughts are against me for evil.

Repeating what someone says but changing it a little so that it means something different is spoken of as twisting their words. Alternate translation: “they say that I said things than I did not say” or “they claim that I said things, but they lie” (See: Metaphor)

all their thoughts are against me for evil

“they always have evil thoughts against me” or “they always think of evil things to do to me”

Psalms 56:6

they mark my steps

Watching what a person does in order to see how to cause him trouble is spoken of as watching his steps, just as someone who wants to capture a person watches where that person walks. Alternate translation: “they watch everything I do” (See: Metaphor)

ULT

6 They gather themselves together, they hide themselves, and they mark my steps, just as they have waited for my life.

just as they have waited for my life

Waiting to kill someone is spoken of as waiting for his life. Alternate translation: “as they wait to kill me” (See: Metonymy)

Psalms 56:7

Do not let them escape doing iniquity

What they might escape can be sued clearly. Alternate translation: “Do not let them escape your punishment for their iniquity” or “Do not let them escape when you punish them for the wicked things they do” (See: Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information)

ULT

7 Do not let them escape doing iniquity.
Bring down the peoples in your anger,
God.

Bring down the peoples

Defeating the enemies is spoken of as bringing them down. Alternate translation: “Defeat the peoples” (See: Metaphor)

Psalms 56:8

You number my wanderings

God's concern for the psalmist is spoken of as if God counted each time that the psalmist has walked in sadness and with no place to go for comfort. Alternate translation: "You care about all the times that I have been wandering alone" (See: Metaphor)

ULT

8 You number my wanderings and put my tears into your bottle; are they not in your book?

put my tears into your bottle

God's concern for the psalmist is spoken of as if God saved the psalmist's tears in a bottle. The tears represent crying. Alternate translation: "you know how much I have cried and you care about me" (See: Metaphor and Metonymy)

are they not in your book?

God's concern for the psalmist is spoken of as if he wrote the number of the psalmist's tears in his book. This question is used to remind God about how greatly he cares for the psalmist. Alternate translation: "you have written about them in your book!" or "you remember my cries!" (See: Metaphorand Rhetorical Question)

Psalms 56:9

will turn back

“will retreat” or “will turn and run away”

God is for me

This means that God favors him. In this context it implies that God fights against the psalmist’s enemies in order to protect him. Alternate translation: “God is fighting for me” (See: Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information)

ULT

9 Then my enemies will turn back on the day that I call to you; this I know, that God is for me.

Psalms 56:10

(There are no notes for this verse.)

ULT

10 In God—whose word I praise, in
Yahweh—whose word I praise,

Psalms 56:11

What can anyone do to me?

Here a question is used to show that the psalmist is not afraid of people, because they cannot seriously harm him. This rhetorical question can be translated as a statement. Alternate translation: “People can do nothing to me!” or “People cannot harm me badly!” (See: Rhetorical Question)

ULT

11 in God I trust, I will not be afraid.
What can anyone do to me?

Psalms 56:12

The duty to fulfill my vows to you is on me

Being obligated to do something is spoken of as if the duty to do something is on a person. Alternate translation: “I must fulfill my vows to you” or “I must do what I promised you I would do” (See: Metaphor)

ULT

12 The duty to fulfill my vows to you is on me, God; I will give thank offerings to you.

Psalms 56:13

you have kept my feet from falling

The feet here represent the person. Falling here probably represents being killed by his enemies. Alternate translation: “you have kept me from falling” or “you have kept me from being killed by my enemies” (See: Synecdoche)

ULT

13 For you have rescued my life from death; you have kept my feet from falling, so that I may walk before God in the light of the living.

so that I may walk before God

Living and being seen by God is spoken of as walking before God. Alternate translation: “so that I may live in God’s presence” (See: Metaphor)

in the light of the living

Here “the light of the living” probably represents God’s enabling people to live. Alternate translation: “with the life that you give” or “because you enable me to live” (See: Metonymy)

Psalms 57

Psalm 57 General Notes

Type of psalm

Psalm 57 is a psalm of deliverance. It praises God for the many times he has delivered David. (See: deliver, hand over, turn over, release, rescue)

Special concepts in this chapter

Fear

Since God is protecting the psalmist, he has nothing to fear from his enemies.

Superscription

The word “Michtam” is used in the superscription for this psalm. There is much discussion about this word but, in the end, no one is certain what it means. It is easiest to transliterate this word into your language, or you can simply translate it as “psalm.”

Psalms 57:1

General Information:

Parallelism is common in Hebrew poetry. (See: Poetry and Parallelism)

> **ULT**
> **1** Be merciful to me, God, be merciful to me, for I take refuge in you until these troubles are over. I stay under your wings for protection until this destruction is over.

For the chief musician

“This is for the director of music to use in worship”

set to Al Tashheth

This probably tells what musical style or tune to use when singing the psalm. Alternate translation: “sing this psalm using the tune of ‘Al Tashheth’” or “sing this using the Al Tashheth style”

Al Tashheth

This means “Do Not Destroy.” Translators may either write the meaning or copy the Hebrew words. (See: Translate Unknowns and Copy or Borrow Words)

A psalm of David

This could mean: (1) David wrote the psalm or (2) the psalm is about David or (3) the psalm is in the style of David’s psalms.

A michtam

The meaning of the word “michtam” is uncertain. You may use the word “psalm” instead. This can be written as: “This is a psalm that David wrote.” See how you translated this in Psalms 16:1.

I take refuge in you

Going to Yahweh for protection is spoken of as taking refuge in him. Alternate translation: “I go to you for protection” (See: Metaphor)

I stay under your wings for protection

The psalmist speaks of God as if he were a mother bird that protects its babies by huddling them under its wings. Alternate translation: “I trust you to protect me” (See: Metaphor)

until this destruction is over

The abstract noun “destruction” can be stated as “destructive.” Alternate translation: “until this destructive storm is over” (See: Abstract Nouns and Metaphor)

Psalms 57:2

who does all things for me

This explains why he will cry out to God. It can be translated with “because.” Alternate translation: “because he does all things for me”

ULT

2 I will cry to God Most High, to God,
who does all things for me.

Psalms 57:3

those who crush me

The enemies' fierce attack is spoken of as if they were crushing his body by marching on it. Alternate translation: "those who attack me severely" (See: Metaphor)

ULT

3 He will send help from heaven and save me, he is angry with those who crush me. *Selah* God will send me his loving kindness and his faithfulness.

God will send me his loving kindness and his faithfulness

God's being kind and faithful is spoken of as if he were sending his kindness and faithful. The abstract nouns "kindness" and "faithfulness" can be stated as "kind" and "trustworthy." Alternate translation: "God will be kind to me and trustworthy" (See: Metaphor Abstract Nouns)

Psalms 57:4

My life is among lions

The psalmist speaks of his enemies as if they were lions. Alternate translation: “I live among fierce enemies” or “Fierce enemies surround me like lions” (See: Metaphor)

ULT

4 My life is among lions; I am among those who are ready to devour me. I am among people whose teeth are spears and arrows, and whose tongues are sharp swords.

those who are ready to devour me

Destroying is spoken of as devouring or eating something up. Some versions understand the Hebrew text to mean “fiery beasts.” Both images speak of his enemies as if they were wild beasts. Alternate translation: “those who are ready to destroy me” (See: Metaphor)

people whose teeth are spears and arrows

The enemies’ spears and arrows are spoken of as if they were lions’ teeth. The psalmist continues to speak of his enemies as if they were lions. Alternate translation: “people who kill others with spears and arrows as lions kill with their sharp teeth” (See: Metaphor)

spears and arrows

Since both of these terms are weapons, if your culture knows only one, it is acceptable to use it alone. (See: Doublet)

whose tongues are sharp swords

The tongue represents what someone says, and the enemies’ cruel words are spoken of as if they were swords. Alternate translation: “whose cruel words are like sharp swords” or “who cause terrible trouble for me by what they say” (See: Metaphor)

Psalms 57:5

Be exalted, God, above the heavens

The psalmist is asking God to show that he is exalted. Being exalted above the heavens represents being great. Alternate translation: “God, show that you are exalted above the heavens” or “God, show that you are great in the heavens” (See: Metaphor)

ULT

5 Be exalted, God, above the heavens;
let your glory be above all the earth.

let your glory be above all the earth

The psalmist is asking God to show his glory. Alternate translation: “show your glory over all the earth”

Psalms 57:6

They spread out a net for my feet

His enemies' plans to capture him are spoken of as if they had spread out a net on the ground to trap him. Alternate translation: "It is as though my enemies have spread a net out to trap me" or "They planned to capture me like people who spread out a net to trap an animal" (See: Metaphor)

ULT

6 They spread out a net for my feet; I was distressed. They dug a pit in front of me. They themselves have fallen into the middle of it! *Selah*

They dug a pit in front of me

His enemies' plans to capture him are spoken of as if they had dug a pit for him to fall into. Alternate translation: "It is as though they dug a pit for me to fall into" or "They planned to capture me like people who dig a hole in the ground to trap an animal" (See: Metaphor)

They themselves have fallen into the middle of it

The harm that came to his enemies when they tried to capture him is spoken of as if they fell into the trap that they had made for him. Alternate translation: "They themselves fell into the pit they had dug for me" or "But they themselves were hurt by what they planned to do to me" (See: Metaphor)

Psalms 57:7

My heart is fixed, God, my heart is fixed

Being confident is spoken of as one's heart being firm rather than shaken or easily moved. The phrase is repeated to show that he has complete confidence in God and will not change. Alternate translation: "I am completely confident in you, God" (See: Metonymy)

ULT

7 My heart is fixed, God, my heart is fixed; I will sing, yes, I will sing praises.

I will sing praises

Who he will sing to can be stated clearly. Alternate translation: "I will sing praises to you, God" (See: Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information)

Psalms 57:8

Wake up, my honored heart

ULT
8 Wake up, my honored heart; wake up, lute and harp; I will wake up the dawn.

It can be stated clearly that the purpose of waking up is to sing praises to God. Waking up may be a metaphor for starting or preparing to do something. The heart represents the psalmist or his emotions. Alternate translation: “Wake up, my honored heart, to sing praises to God” or “I will prepare my honored heart to sing praises to God” or “I am honored to wake up and sing praises to God” (See: Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information and Metaphor and Synecdoche)

wake up, lute and harp

It can be stated clearly that the purpose of waking up is to sing praises to God. The psalmist speaks as though the lute and harp were people who could wake up to sing praises to God. Alternate translation: “Wake up, lute and harp, and sing praises to God” or “I will play the lute and harp while I sing praises to God” (See: Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information and Personification and Metaphor)

I will wake up the dawn

The dawn is spoken of as if it were alive, and getting up before dawn happens is spoken of as waking it up. The purpose of getting up before dawn is to praise God. Alternate translation: “I will get up before dawn” or “I will get up before the sun rises” (See: Personification and Metaphor and Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information)

Psalms 57:9

(There are no notes for this verse.)

ULT

9 I will give thanks to you, Lord, among the peoples; I will sing praises to you among the nations.

Psalms 57:10

For great is your unfailing love, reaching to the heavens ... your faithfulness to the clouds

These two phrases are very similar in meaning. The greatness of God's unfailing love and the greatness of his faithfulness are spoken of as if they could be measured in distance. (See: Parallelism and Metaphor)

ULT

10 For great is your unfailing love, reaching to the heavens; and your faithfulness to the clouds.

For great is your unfailing love, reaching to the heavens

The greatness of God's unfailing love is spoken of as if it could be measured in distance. Alternate translation: "Your unfailing love is as great as the distance from the earth to the heavens" (See: Metaphor)

your faithfulness to the clouds

The words "great is your" and "reaching" are understood from the previous phrase. Alternate translation: "great is your faithfulness, reaching to the clouds" or "your faithfulness is as great as the distance from the earth to the clouds" (See: Ellipsis and Metaphor)

Psalms 57:11

Be exalted, God, above the heavens

The psalmist is asking God to show that he is exalted. Being exalted above the heavens represents being great. Alternate translation: “God, show that you are exalted above the heavens” or “God, show that you are great in the heavens” (See: Metaphor)

ULT

11 Be exalted, God, above the heavens;
may your glory be exalted over all the earth.

may your glory be exalted over all the earth

The psalmist is asking God to show his glory. Alternate translation: “show your glory over all the earth”

Psalms 58

Psalm 58 General Notes

Type of psalm

Psalm 58 is a deliverance psalm. It asks God for deliverance from the unjust rulers. (See: deliver, hand over, turn over, release, rescue and just, justice, unjust, injustice, justify, justification)

Special concepts in this chapter

Deliverance

Although the leaders are very evil and unfair, God can deliver his people from their oppression. (See: evil, wicked, unpleasant and oppress, oppressed, oppression, oppressor, dominate)

Superscription

The word “Michtam” is used in the superscription for this psalm. There is much discussion about this word but, in the end, no one is certain what it means. It is easiest to transliterate this word into your language, or you can simply translate it as “psalm.”

Psalms 58:1

General Information:

This psalm is a song about wicked people. Parallelism is common in Hebrew poetry. (See: Poetry and Parallelism)

ULT

1 Do you rulers speak righteousness?
Do you judge uprightly, you people?

For the chief musician

“This is for the director of music to use in worship”

set to Al Tashheth

This probably tells what musical style or tune to use when singing the psalm. See how you translated this in Psalms 57:1.

A psalm of David

This could mean: (1) David wrote the psalm or (2) the psalm is about David or (3) the psalm is in the style of David’s psalms.

Do you rulers speak righteousness?

The author uses this question to rebuke the rulers because they do not speak righteously. Alternate translation: “You rulers do not say what is right!” (See: Rhetorical Question)

Do you judge uprightly, you people?

The author uses this question to rebuke the judges who do not judge uprightly. Alternate translation: “You people never judge people uprightly!” (See: Rhetorical Question)

Psalms 58:2

ULT

2 No, you commit wickedness in your heart; you distribute violence throughout the land with your hands.

you ... your

The words “you” and “your” refer to the mighty men who are judges (Psalm 58:1) and so is plural. (See: Forms of You)

No

The author answers the two questions he had just asked.

you commit wickedness in your heart

The heart refers to the people’s thoughts or plans. Alternate translation: “you commit wickedness in your thoughts” or “you think about doing wicked things” (See: Metonymy)

you distribute violence throughout the land with your hands

Doing violence in various places throughout the land is spoken of as distributing or spreading the violence throughout the land, as if violence were some kind of stuff or things. Alternate translation: “you yourselves do violent deeds everywhere in the land” (See: Metaphor)

Psalms 58:3

The wicked go astray even when they are in the womb ... they go astray from birth

This is the same idea expressed in two different ways. (See: Parallelism)

ULT

3 The wicked go astray even when they are in the womb; they go astray from birth, speaking lies.

they go astray

Doing wrong things is spoken of as if people are walking on a road, and they turn off and go the wrong way. Alternate translation: “they do wrong things” (See: Metaphor)

Psalms 58:4

Their poison is like a snake’s poison

The wicked things people say are spoken of as if they were poison. Alternate translation: “Their wicked words cause trouble as a snake’s poison harms people” (See: Metaphor and Simile)

ULT

4 Their poison is like a snake’s poison;
they are like a deaf adder that stops up its ears,

they are like a deaf adder that stops up its ears

Wicked people who do not listen to advice or rebukes are spoken of as if they were snakes that do not respond to a charmer’s music. Alternate translation: “they refuse to listen like a deaf adder that stops up its ears” (See: Simile)

a deaf adder that stops up its ears

An adder that does not respond to a charmer’s music is spoken of as if it could put something in its ears so that it will not hear. Alternate translation: “an adder that does not listen” (See: Personification)

adder

a kind of poisonous snake

Psalms 58:5

charmers

people who play or sing music in order to control snakes

no matter how skillful they are

What the snake charmers were skillful at can be stated clearly. Alternate translation: “no matter how skillful the charmers are at controlling snakes” (See: Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information)

ULT

5 that pays no attention to the voice of charmers, no matter how skillful they are.

Psalms 58:6

General Information:

The author lists things that he would like God to do to wicked people.

ULT

6 Break their teeth in their mouths, God;
break out the great teeth of the young lions, Yahweh.

Break their teeth ... break out the great teeth of the young lions

In both of these phrases, the wicked people are spoken of as if they were lions, and making them powerless to kill people is spoken of as breaking their teeth. Alternate translation: “Take away their power to kill. Make them powerless like young lions whose teeth have been broken and fallen out” (See: Parallelism and Metaphor)

Psalms 58:7

Let them melt away as water that runs off

The wicked people are spoken of as if they were ice or water. No longer existing is spoken of as melting or draining away into the dry ground. Alternate translation: “Make them disappear like water that runs off” or “Make them vanish like ice that melts and drains into the ground” (See: Metaphor and Simile)

let them be as though they had no points

“let their arrows be as though they had no points”

ULT

7 Let them melt away as water that runs off; when they shoot their arrows, let them be as though they had no points.

Psalms 58:8

Let them be like a snail that melts and passes away

No longer existing is spoken of as melting and disappearing. Alternate translation: “Let the wicked vanish like a snail that melts and no longer exists” (See: Simile)

ULT

8 Let them be like a snail that melts and passes away, like the untimely-born child of a woman that never sees the sunlight.

snail

small animal that the Israelites considered unclean and that looks like it is melting as it moves by sliding over slime it has produced

like the untimely-born child of a woman that never sees the sunlight

Not existing is spoken of as being like a baby that is born dead. Alternate translation: “like a baby who is born too early too live and see the sunlight” or “like a baby that was born dead” (See: Simile)

Psalms 58:9

Before your pots can feel the thorn’s burning heat ... the green thorns and the burning thorns alike

ULT

9 Before your pots can feel the thorn’s burning heat, he will take them away with a whirlwind, the green thorns and the burning thorns alike.

The wicked are spoken of as if they were thornbush branches, and God’s swift punishment of them is spoken of as if he were to quickly blow them away or sweep them away. Alternate translation: “God will destroy wicked people faster than a whirlwind can blow away thornbush branches that have been put under a cooking pot and lit with fire” (See: Metaphor)

your

David is speaking to God’s people, so this is plural. (See: Forms of You)

the thorn’s burning heat ... the green thorns and the burning thorns

“the heat from the burning thorn branches ... the green thorn branches and the burning thorn branches”

Psalms 58:10

The righteous will rejoice when he sees

The phrase “the righteous” refers to righteous people in general. Alternate translation: “Righteous people will rejoice when they see” (See: Generic Noun Phrases)

ULT

10 The righteous will rejoice when he sees God’s vengeance; he will wash his feet in the blood of the wicked,

he will wash his feet in the blood of the wicked

Getting one’s feet wet by walking on blood is spoken of as washing the feet in blood. Alternate translation: “the righteous will make their feet wet in the blood of the wicked” or “the righteous will march on the blood of the wicked” (See: Metaphor)

he will wash his feet in the blood of the wicked

This exaggeration expresses that a great number of wicked people will die. Alternate translation: “so many wicked people will die that when the righteous march on their blood, it will seem as if they could wash their feet in it” (See: Metaphor and Hyperbole)

Psalms 58:11

(There are no notes for this verse.)

ULT

11 so that men will say, “Truly, there is a reward for the righteous person; truly there is a God who judges the earth.”

Psalms 59

Psalm 59 General Notes

Type of psalm

Psalm 59 is a deliverance psalm. (See: deliver, hand over, turn over, release, rescue)

Special concepts in this chapter

Protection

The author prays for God to defeat his enemies. God is his protector. Therefore, he will praise God.

Superscription

The word “Michtam” is used in the superscription for this psalm. There is much discussion about this word but, in the end, no one is certain what it means. It is easiest to transliterate this word into your language, or you can simply translate it as “psalm.”

Psalms 59:1

General Information:

Parallelism is common in Hebrew poetry. (See: Poetry and Parallelism)

ULT

1 Rescue me from my enemies, my God;
set me on high away from those who
rise up against me.

For the chief musician

“This is for the director of music to use in worship”

set to Al Tashheth

This probably tells what musical style or tune to use when singing the psalm. See how you translated this in Psalms 57:1.

A psalm of David

This could mean: (1) David wrote the psalm or (2) the psalm is about David or (3) the psalm is in the style of David’s psalms.

A michtam

The meaning of the word “michtam” is uncertain. You may use the word “psalm” instead. This can be written as: “This is a psalm that David wrote.” See how you translated this in Psalms 16:1.

set me on high

A high place represents a safe place where his enemies cannot reach him. Alternate translation: “put me in a safe place” (See: Metonymy)

rise up against me

Rising up against someone represents attacking him. Alternate translation: “attack me” (See: Metonymy)

Psalms 59:2

bloodthirsty men

The word “bloodthirsty” contains “blood,” which refers to murder and “thirsty,” which refers to desire. Alternate translation: “people who desire to kill” or “people who like to kill people” (See: Idiom)

ULT

2 Keep me safe from the workers of iniquity, and save me from the bloodthirsty men.

Psalms 59:3

they wait in ambush to take my life

David’s enemies are in hiding and are waiting quietly for the time when they can attack him. (See: Idiom)

ULT

3 For, see, they wait in ambush to take my life. The powerful men gather themselves together against me, but not because of my transgression or my sin, Yahweh.

Psalms 59:4

awake

Deciding to do something and beginning to do it is spoken of as waking up. Alternate translation: “do something” or “take action” (See: Idiom)

ULT

4 They prepare to run at me although I
am without fault; awake and help me
and see.

and see

What he wants God to see can be stated clearly. Alternate translation: “and see what is happening to me” or “and see what they are doing to me” (See: Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information)

Psalms 59:5

arise

Deciding to do something and beginning to do it is spoken of as getting up. Alternate translation: “do something” or “take action” (See: Idiom)

all the nations

The word “nations” here represents the people of the nations that do not honor God. Alternate translation: “the people of all the nations” (See: Metonymy)

ULT

5 You, Yahweh God of hosts, the God of Israel, arise and punish all the nations; do not be merciful to any wicked transgressors. *Selah*

Psalms 59:6

They return at evening

The word “they” refers to the wicked transgressors.

ULT

6 They return at evening, they howl like dogs and go around the city.

they howl like dogs

The psalmist speaks of his enemies threatening to attack people as if they were dogs howling, growling, or barking at people. Alternate translation: “they threaten to attack people” (See: Simile)

go around the city

Why they go around the city can be stated clearly. Alternate translation: “go around the city to attack anyone they find” (See: Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information)

Psalms 59:7

ULT

7 See, they belch out with their mouths;
swords are in their lips, for they say,
“Who hears us?”

See

Here the word “See” is being used to draw attention to something. Alternate translation: “Hear”

they belch out with their mouths

Saying terrible things is spoken of as belching. These terrible things may have been insults or threats. Alternate translation: “they say terrible things” or “they shout out terrible words” (See: Metaphor)

belch

burp loudly; allow air from the stomach to come out of the mouth with a loud, rude noise

swords are in their lips

The cruel things that the wicked people were saying are spoken of as if they were swords. Alternate translation: “they say cruel things that cause people trouble as much as swords destroy people” (See: Metaphor)

Who hears us?

This question is used to show that they believed that God would not hear and punish them. Alternate translation: “No one can hear us!” or “Your God does not hear us!” (See: Rhetorical Question)

Psalms 59:8

laugh at them

“laugh at them scornfully” or “mock them.” God would laugh at them because they are worthless and powerless.

ULT

8 But you, Yahweh, laugh at them; you hold all the nations in derision.

you hold all the nations in derision

“you ridicule all the nations” or “you know that the people of the nations are fools”

derision

ridicule

Psalms 59:9

my strength

God's being the psalmist's strength represents God protecting him. Alternate translation: "you are my strength" or "you are my protector" (See: Metonymy)

ULT

9 God, my strength, I will pay attention to you; you are my high tower.

you are my high tower

A high tower is a place that people could go to for shelter from their enemies. The psalmist speaks of God protecting him as if God were a strong, safe shelter. Alternate translation: "you protect me like a high tower" (See: Metaphor)

Psalms 59:10

My God will meet me with his covenant faithfulness

ULT

10 My God will meet me with his covenant faithfulness; God will let me see my desire on my enemies.

This phrase implies that God will come to him in order to save him. The abstract noun “faithfulness” can be translated with an adjective. Alternate translation: “My God, who is faithful to his covenant, will come to save me” or “My God will come to save me because he is faithful to his covenant” (See: Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information and Abstract Nouns)

my desire on my enemies

The abstract noun “desire” can be expressed with the verb “want.” Alternate translation: “what I want to happen to my enemies” (See: Abstract Nouns)

Psalms 59:11

Scatter them

“Cause them to wander around”

our shield

God’s protecting the righteous is spoken of as if God were a shield. Alternate translation: “our protector” or “the one who protects us like a shield” (See: Metonymy)

ULT

11 Do not kill them, or my people will forget. Scatter them by your power and make them fall, Lord our shield.

Psalms 59:12

For the sins of their mouths and the words of their lips

The mouths and lips represent the things people say. Alternate translation: “Because they sin by what they say” or “Because of the sinful things they say” (See: Metonymy)

ULT

12 For the sins of their mouths and the words of their lips, let them be captured in their pride, and for the curses and lies that they express.

let them be captured in their pride

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: “let people capture them because of their pride” (See: Active or Passive)

that they express

“that they say”

Psalms 59:13

Consume them in wrath, consume them so that they will be no more

Destroying them completely is spoken of either as burning them up or eating them. Alternate translation: “Be angry with them and destroy them completely so there will be no more of them” (See: Metaphor)

ULT

13 Consume them in wrath, consume them so that they will be no more; let them know that God rules in Jacob and to the ends of the earth. *Selah*

in Jacob

Jacob here refers to Israel. Alternate translation: “in Israel” (See: Metonymy)

to the ends of the earth

“to even the most distance places on earth.” This represents all places on earth. Alternate translation: “everywhere on earth” (See: Metonymy)

Psalms 59:14

howling like dogs

The psalmist speaks of his enemies threatening to attack people as if they were dogs howling, growling, or barking at people. Alternate translation: “threatening to attack us” or “threatening to attack us like wild dogs” (See: Simile)

ULT

14 At evening they return, howling like dogs going around the city.

Psalms 59:15

satisfied

content, having everything they want

ULT

15 They wander about looking for food and they growl like a dog if they are not satisfied.

Psalms 59:16

you have been my high tower and a refuge

High towers and refuges are places that people can go to for shelter from their enemies. The psalmist speaks of God protecting him as if God were a strong, safe shelter. Alternate translation: “you have protected me like a high tower and a refuge” (See: Metaphor)

in the day of my distress

“whenever I have had troubles”

ULT

16 But I will sing about your strength,
and in the morning I will sing about your steadfast love! For you have been
my high tower and a refuge in the day
of my distress.

Psalms 59:17

To you, my strength, I will sing praises

“To you, my strength” can be combined as one clause. Alternate translation: “You are my strength, so I will sing praises to you” (See: Sentence Structure)

ULT

17 To you, my strength, I will sing praises; for God is my high tower, the God of covenant faithfulness.

my strength

God’s being the psalmist’s strength represents God protecting him. Alternate translation: “my protector” (See: Metonymy)

for God is my high tower

High towers are places that people can go to for shelter from their enemies. The psalmist speaks of God protecting him as if God were a strong, safe shelter. Alternate translation: “you have protected me like a high tower” (See: Metaphor)

the God of covenant faithfulness

The abstract noun “faithfulness” can be translated with an adjective. This can be expressed in a separate sentence. Alternate translation: “He is the God who is faithful to his covenant” (See: Abstract Nouns)

Psalms 60

Psalm 60 General Notes

Type of psalm

Psalm 60 is a psalm of war.

Special concepts in this chapter

Protection

God has preserved the land of Israel, and now he will give them victory over the countries of Moab and Edom.

Psalms 60:1

General Information:

Parallelism is common in Hebrew poetry. (See: Poetry and Parallelism)

ULT

1 God, you have cast us off; you have broken through our defenses; you have been angry; restore us again.

For the chief musician

“This is for the director of music to use in worship”

set to Shushan Eduth

This probably tells what tune or musical style to use when singing the psalm. Alternate translation: “sing this psalm using the tune of ‘Shushan Eduth’” or “sing this using the Shushan Eduth style”

Shushan Eduth

This means “Lily of the Promise.” Translators may either write the meaning or copy the Hebrew words. (See: Translate Unknowns and Copy or Borrow Words)

A michtam

The meaning of the word “michtam” is uncertain. You may use the word “psalm” instead. This can be written as: “This is a psalm that David wrote.” See how you translated this in Psalms 16:1.

Aram Naharaim ... Aram Zobah

“Aram of the two rivers ... the Aramean nation of Zobah.” These are places. (See: How to Translate Names)

Joab

This refers to Joab and the army that he led. Alternate translation: “Joab and his army” (See: Synecdoche)

twelve thousand Edomites

“12,000 Edomites” (See: Numbers)

you have cast us off

God’s rejecting people is spoken of as if he had thrown them away. Alternate translation: “you have rejected us” (See: Metaphor)

you have broken through our defenses

God’s allowing Israel’s enemies to break through their defenses is spoken of as God himself had done it. Alternate translation: “you have allowed our enemies to break through our defenses” (See: Metonymy)

Psalms 60:2

Connecting Statement:

The psalmist continues speaking to God.

ULT

2 You have made the land tremble; you have torn it apart; heal its fissures, for it is shaking.

You have made the land tremble; you have torn it apart

The psalmist speaks of the disaster in his country as if it were an earthquake. (See: Metaphor)

heal its fissures

Making the people strong again is spoken of as repairing the fissures in the ground or walls. (See: Metaphor)

fissures

large cracks in the ground or walls

Psalms 60:3

You have made your people see difficult things

Here “see” represents “experience” or “suffer.” (See: Metonymy)

ULT

[3] You have made your people see difficult things; you have made us drink the wine of staggering.

drink the wine of staggering

Being helpless is spoken of as staggering around, barely able to stand upright. The abstract noun “staggering” can be stated as a verb. Alternate translation: “the wine that makes us stagger” (See: Metaphor and Abstract Nouns)

Psalms 60:4

you have set up a banner

God's guiding his people in battle is spoken of as if God were a human king or commander who had set up a banner for the army. Alternate translation: "you are like a king who sets up a banner" or "you command us in battle like a king who raises up a banner" (See: Metaphor)

ULT

4 For those who honor you, you have set up a banner to be displayed against those who carry the bow. *Selah*

banner

"battle flag." This is a flag that a king or commander would raise up on a pole to show that the army should gather.

to be displayed against those who carry the bow

This can be stated with an active clause. However some versions have different interpretations of this phrase. Alternate translation: "to display against those who carry the bow" (See: Active or Passive)

to be displayed against those who carry the bow

The phrase "those who carry the bow" refers to the enemy soldiers in battle. Alternate translation: "to display when he takes his army into battle against your enemies" (See: Metonymy)

Psalms 60:5

with your right hand

God's right hand represents his power. Alternate translation: "by your power" (See: Metonymy)

answer me

Answering here represents responding to his request. Alternate translation: "respond to my request" or "answer my prayer" (See: Metonymy)

ULT

5 So that those you love may be rescued, rescue us with your right hand and answer me.

Psalms 60:6

(There are no notes for this verse.)

ULT

6 God has spoken in his holiness, “I will
rejoice; I will divide Shechem and
apportion out the Valley of Succoth.

Psalms 60:7

Ephraim also is my helmet

God speaks of the tribe of Ephraim as if it were his army. The helmet symbolizes equipment for war. Alternate translation: “Ephraim is like a helmet I have chosen” or “the tribe of Ephraim is my army” (See: Metaphor)

ULT

7 Gilead is mine, and Manasseh is mine;
Ephraim also is my helmet; Judah is my scepter.

helmet

a hard hat that soldiers wear to protect their heads from injury

Judah is my scepter

God chose men from the tribe of Judah to be the kings of his people, and he speaks of that tribe as if it were his scepter. Alternate translation: “the tribe of Judah is like my scepter” or “Judah is the tribe through whom I rule my people” (See: Metaphor)

Psalms 60:8

Moab is my washbasin

God speaks of Moab being unimportant as if Moab were a washbasin or a lowly servant. Alternate translation: “Moab is like a bowl that I use for washing” (See: Metaphor)

ULT

8 Moab is my washbasin; over Edom I will throw my shoe; I will shout in triumph because of Philistia.”

over Edom I will throw my shoe

God was probably speaking of taking ownership of Edom as if he were symbolically throwing his shoe onto that land to show that he owns it. However some versions have other interpretations. Alternate translation: “I take ownership of the land of Edom” or “I throw my shoe onto the land of Edom to show that it is mine” (See: Metaphor and Symbolic Action)

Psalms 60:9

(There are no notes for this verse.)

ULT

9 Who will bring me into the strong city?
Who will lead me to Edom?

Psalms 60:10

But you, God, have you not rejected us?

The psalmist uses this question to express his sadness that it seems that God has rejected them. Alternate translation: “But God, it seems like you have rejected us.” or “God, you seem to have abandoned us.” (See: Rhetorical Question)

ULT

10 But you, God, have you not rejected us? You do not go into battle with our army.

You do not go into battle with our army

The psalmist speaks of God helping their army as if God were to go and fight with them. Alternate translation: “you do not help our army when we go into battle” (See: Metaphor)

Psalms 60:11

is futile

“is worthless”

ULT

11 Give us help against the enemy, for man’s help is futile.

Psalms 60:12

will triumph

“will defeat our enemies”

he will trample down our enemies

The psalmist speaks of God helping their army defeat their enemies as if God were to trample down the enemies. Alternate translation: “he will enable us to trample down our enemies” or “he will make us able to defeat our enemies” (See: Metaphor)

ULT

12 We will triumph with God’s help; he will trample down our enemies.

Psalms 61

Psalm 61 General Notes

Type of psalm

Psalm 61 is a psalm of praise.

Special concepts in this chapter

Vow

The author has vowed to praise God every day of his life because God has blessed him. (See: vow and bless, blessed, blessing)

Psalms 61:1

General Information:

This is a song about God's faithfulness. Parallelism is common in Hebrew poetry. (See: Poetry and Parallelism)

ULT

1 Hear my cry, God; attend to my prayer.

For the chief musician

"This is for the director of music to use in worship"

on a stringed instrument

"people should play a stringed instrument with this song"

Hear my cry, God; attend to my prayer

These clauses have a similar meaning. Alternate translation: "God, listen to me and answer my prayer" (See: Doublet)

Psalms 61:2

lead me to the rock that is higher than I

Here the writer speaks of God as if he were a high rock that he could climb for protection. (See: Metaphor)

ULT

2 From the ends of the earth will I call to
you when my heart is faint; lead me to
the rock that is higher than I.

Psalms 61:3

(There are no notes for this verse.)

ULT

3 For you have been a refuge for me, a strong tower from the enemy.

Psalms 61:4

take refuge under the shelter of your wings

Going to Yahweh for protection is spoken of as taking refuge in him. Here there is a second metaphor that speaks of Yahweh's protection as if he was a hen protecting her baby chicks under her wings. Alternate translation: "go to you for protection as a chick is safe under the wings of its mother" (See: Metaphor)

ULT

4 Let me live in your tabernacle forever!
Let me take refuge under the shelter of
your wings. *Selah*

Psalms 61:5

you have given me the inheritance

The writer speaks of God's blessings as if they were an inheritance that he has received. Alternate translation: "you have given to me the blessings" (See: Metaphor)

ULT

5 For you, God, have heard my vows,
you have given me the inheritance of
those who honor your name.

who honor your name

Here "your name" means God himself. Alternate translation: "who honor you" or "who have an awesome respect for you" (See: Metonymy)

Psalms 61:6

You will prolong ... many generations

These two clauses have similar meanings. The idea is repeated for emphasis. (See: Parallelism)

ULT

6 You will prolong the king’s life; his years will be like many generations.

You will prolong the king’s life

“You will extend the king’s life” or “You will cause the king’s life to last a long time”

his years will be like many generations

Here “years” refers to how long the king will live. Alternate translation: “he will live for many generations” (See: Metonymy)

Psalms 61:7

He will remain before God forever

Here “to remain before God” means to be in God’s presence or to be with God. This can be stated clearly in the translation. Alternate translation: “God will be with him forever” or “God will be with the king forever” (See: Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information)

ULT

7 He will remain before God forever.

Psalms 61:8

I will sing praise to your name forever

Here “name” stands for God himself. Alternate translation: “I will always sing praise to you” (See: Metonymy)

my vows

These refer to the promise to offer sacrifices to God every day.

ULT

8 I will sing praise to your name forever
so that I may perform my vows every
day.

Psalms 62

Psalm 62 General Notes

Type of psalm

Psalm 62 is a psalm of deliverance. It expresses trust that God will save the psalmist from his enemies. (See: deliver, hand over, turn over, release, rescue and trust, trusted, trustworthy, trustworthiness and save, saved, safe, salvation)

Special concepts in this chapter

Trust

Although the psalmist's enemies have attacked him when he was feeling weak, he trusts in God to deliver him. God is powerful and kind.

Psalms 62:1

General Information:

This psalm is a song about God's faithfulness. Parallelism is common in Hebrew poetry. (See: Poetry and Parallelism)

ULT

1 I wait in silence for God alone; my salvation comes from him.

For the chief musician

"This is for the director of music to use in worship"

Jeduthun

One of David's chief musicians had this same name. This may refer to him. See how you translated this in Psalms 39:1. (See: How to Translate Names)

my salvation comes from him

"he is the one who rescues me" or "he is the one who saves me"

Psalms 62:2

He alone is my rock and my salvation

The writer speaks of God's ability to protect him as if God were a rock. Alternate translation: "He is the only one who can protect and rescue me" (See: Metaphor)

ULT

2 He alone is my rock and my salvation;
he is my high tower; I will not be greatly moved.

he is my high tower

The writer speaks of God's ability to protect him as if God were a high tower. Alternate translation: "he keeps me away from the grasp of my enemies" (See: Metaphor)

I will not be greatly moved

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "nothing can ever move me" (See: Active or Passive)

Psalms 62:3

all of you

“my enemies” or “all my enemies”

ULT

3 How long, all of you, will you attack a man, that you may tip him over like a leaning wall or a shaky fence?

How long ... will you attack a man ... or a shaky fence?

David uses a rhetorical question to express his frustration. No answer is expected. Alternate translation: “It seems like my enemies will never stop attacking me. I feel that I am as weak against you as a leaning wall or a broken-down fence.” (See: Rhetorical Question)

attack a man

“attack me”

Psalms 62:4

They consult with him only to

“They intend to” or “They plan to”

consult with him ... bring him ... bless him ... curse him

In these verses, David is referring to himself by “him.”

with their mouths

This refers to their speech or their words. (See: Metonymy)

in their hearts

This refers to their thoughts. (See: Metonymy)

ULT

4 They consult with him only to bring him down from his honorable position; they love to tell lies; they bless him with their mouths, but in their hearts they curse him. *Selah*

Psalms 62:5

my hope is set on him

“for I place my hope in him”

ULT

5 I wait in silence for God alone; for my hope is set on him.

Psalms 62:6

He alone is my rock and my salvation; he is my high tower

The writer speaks of God as if he were a rock and a high tower. Both of these metaphors show how God provides protection from one's enemies. Here "salvation" means that God rescues the writer. See how you translated this in Psalms 62:2. (See: Metaphor)

ULT

6 He alone is my rock and my salvation; he is my high tower; I will not be moved.

I will not be moved

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "nothing can move me" (See: Active or Passive)

Psalms 62:7

the rock of my strength and my refuge are in God

The writer speaks of God as if he were a rock that keeps one safe from his enemies. He also speaks of God as if he were a shelter that provides protection. Alternate translation: “God always gives me strength and protection” (See: Metaphor)

ULT

7 With God is my salvation and my glory; the rock of my strength and my refuge are in God.

Psalms 62:8

pour out your heart

This refers to telling God your inner feelings as if you were pouring out a liquid. Alternate translation: “give your deepest concerns to God” (See: Idiom)

ULT

8 Trust in him at all times, you people;
pour out your heart before him; God is a refuge for us. *Selah*

refuge for us

The word “us” refers to David and the people he is speaking to. (See: Exclusive and Inclusive ‘We’)

Psalms 62:9

men of low standing ... men of high standing are a lie

This refers to men of all levels of wealth and importance. The phrases “are vanity” and “are a lie” have the same meaning. One cannot confidently trust in anyone. Alternate translation: “you cannot place your trust in men, no matter how important they are” (See: Merism and Parallelism)

ULT

9 Surely men of low standing are vanity,
and men of high standing are a lie; they will weigh lightly in the scales; weighed together, they are lighter than nothing.

weighed together, they are lighter than nothing

If you put all of these kinds of men together on a scale, they would have no weight. This means that they have no real value to you.

Psalms 62:10

oppression or robbery

These two words have basically the same meaning. You cannot trust in money that you get by taking it from other people. (See: Doublet)

for they will bear no fruit

The writer speaks of riches as if they were trees or vines that could bear fruit. Alternate translation: “for they will provide nothing good for you” (See: Metaphor)

do not fix your heart on them

Here “fix your heart” is an idiom that means to desire something greatly. Alternate translation: “do not desire them” (See: Idiom)

ULT

10 Do not trust in oppression or
robbery; and do not hope uselessly in
riches, for they will bear no fruit; do not
fix your heart on them.

Psalms 62:11

God has spoken once, twice have I heard this

This means that God has said this more than once.

power belongs to God

God being characterized by power is spoken of as if power belonged to him. The abstract noun “power” can be translated with an adjective. Alternate translation: “God is powerful” (See: Metaphor and Abstract Nouns)

ULT

11 God has spoken once, twice have I heard this: power belongs to God.

Psalms 62:12

Also to you, Lord, belongs covenant faithfulness

ULT

12 Also to you, Lord, belongs covenant faithfulness, for you pay back every person for what he has done.

God being characterized by covenant faithfulness is spoken of as if covenant faithfulness belonged to him. The abstract noun “faithfulness” can be translated with an adjective. Alternate translation: “You, Lord, are also faithful to your covenant” (See: Metaphor and Abstract Nouns)

for you pay back every person for what he has done

The writer speaks of God’s rewards as if he were paying a wage for work. (See: Metaphor)

Psalms 63

Psalm 63 General Notes

Type of psalm

Psalm 63 is a psalm of praise.

Special concepts in this chapter

Praise

The author praises God for who he is and for having protected him.

Psalms 63:1

General Information:

Parallelism is common in Hebrew poetry. (See: Poetry and Parallelism)

ULT

1 God, you are my God! I earnestly search for you, my soul thirsts for you, and my flesh longs for you, in a dry and weary land where there is no water.

A psalm of David

This could mean: (1) David wrote the psalm or (2) the psalm is about David or (3) the psalm is in the style of David's psalms.

earnestly

sincerely

my soul thirsts for you, and my flesh longs for you

These two clauses have basically the same meaning and are used together to emphasize how greatly the writer desires to be with God. Alternate translation: "my whole being greatly desires to be with you" (See: Parallelism)

dry and weary land

"hot, dry desert"

Psalms 63:2

(There are no notes for this verse.)

ULT

2 So I have looked on you in the sanctuary, to see your power and your glory.

Psalms 63:3

Because your covenant faithfulness is better than life, my lips

ULT

3 Because your covenant faithfulness is better than life, my lips will praise you.

The abstract noun “faithfulness” can be translated with an adverb and the abstract noun “life” can be translated with a verbal phrase. Alternate translation: “I value you being faithful to your covenant more than I value living, so my lips” (See: Abstract Nouns)

my lips will praise you

Here “my lips” represents the whole person. Alternate translation: “I will praise you” (See: Synecdoche)

Psalms 63:4

I will lift up my hands in your name

Here “in your name” means “to you.” Alternate translation: “I will worship you and pray to you” (See: Metonymy)

ULT

4 So I will bless you while I live; I will lift up my hands in your name.

Psalms 63:5

It will be as if I ate a meal of marrow and fatness

ULT

5 It will be as if I ate a meal of marrow and fatness; with joyful lips my mouth will praise you,

Here the writer speaks of knowing and worshiping God as being more satisfying than eating a good meal. Alternate translation: “I will be happier than a person who eats a meal of fat and choice food” (See: Simile)

with joyful lips my mouth will praise you

Here “with joyful lips my mouth” represents the whole person who will praise God joyfully. Alternate translation: “I will praise you joyfully” (See: Synecdoche)

Psalms 63:6

when I think about you on my bed ... in the night hours

These two clauses have the same meaning. The ideas are repeated to emphasize how much the writer thinks about God. (See: Parallelism)

ULT

6 when I think about you on my bed and meditate on you in the night hours.

Psalms 63:7

in the shadow of your wings I rejoice

The writer speaks of God as if he were a bird protecting its young under his wings. Alternate translation: “I rejoice because you protect me” (See: Metaphor)

ULT

7 For you have been my help, and in the shadow of your wings I rejoice.

Psalms 63:8

I cling to you

“I need you” or “I depend on you”

ULT
8 I cling to you; your right hand supports me.

your right hand supports me

Here, the right hand is used as a symbol of strength and power. Alternate translation: “you support me” or “you lift me up” (See: Metonymy)

Psalms 63:9

will go down into the lowest parts of the earth

This means they will die and go to the place of the dead. This can be stated clearly in the translation. Alternate translation: “will die and descend into the place of the dead” or “will die and go down into the place of the dead” (See: Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information)

ULT

9 But those who seek to destroy my life
will go down into the lowest parts of the
earth;

Psalms 63:10

they will be given over to those whose hands use the sword

Here “the sword” represents death in battle, and “those whose hands use the sword” refers to enemies who kill them in battle. This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: “God will cause them to die in battle” (See: Metonymy and Active or Passive)

ULT

10 they will be given over to those whose hands use the sword, and they will become food for the jackals.

they will become food for the jackals

Here “they” refers to the corpses of those who die in battle. Alternate translation: “jackals will eat their dead bodies” (See: Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information)

the jackals

“jackals” here are a kind of long-legged wild dog. They feed on carrion, game, and fruit.

Psalms 63:11

the king will

David is speaking about himself. This can be stated clearly in the translation. Alternate translation: “I, the king of Israel, will” (See: Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information)

ULT

11 But the king will rejoice in God;
everyone who swears by him will be
proud of him, but the mouth of those
who speak lies will be stopped up.

swears by him ... proud of him

The word “him” refers to “God.”

but the mouth of those who speak lies will be stopped up

Here “the mouth” represents the whole person. This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: “but God will silence the liars” or “but God will silence those who lie” (See: Synecdoche and Active or Passive)

Psalms 64

Psalm 64 General Notes

Type of psalm

Psalm 64 is a psalm of deliverance. (See: deliver, hand over, turn over, release, rescue)

Special concepts in this chapter

Plotting of enemies

The author's enemies have plotted against him but God has saved him. (See: save, saved, safe, salvation)

Psalms 64:1

General Information:

This psalm is a prayer for help. Parallelism is common in Hebrew poetry. (See: Poetry and Parallelism)

For the chief musician

“This is for the director of music to use in worship”

preserve

save

ULT

1 Hear my voice, God, listen to my complaint; preserve my life from fear of my enemies.

Psalms 64:2

Hide me from the secret plotting of evildoers

Here “Hide” represents protecting, and “the secret plotting of evildoers represents” represents the harm that evildoers secretly plan to do to David. Alternate translation: “Protect me from the harm that evil doers secretly plan to do to me” (See: Metonymy)

ULT

2 Hide me from the secret plotting of evildoers, from the commotion of the doers of iniquity.

from the commotion

The words “hide me” are understood from the previous phrase and can be repeated here. Alternate translation: “hide me from the commotion” or “protect me from the commotion”(See: Ellipsis)

the commotion of the doers of iniquity

Here, **commotion** could mean: (1) a noisy disturbance. Alternate translation: “the noisy disturbance that the doers of iniquity make” or (2) a crowd that makes a noisy disturbance. Alternate translation: “the noisy crowd of doers of iniquity”

Psalms 64:3

They have sharpened their tongues like swords

The writer speaks of his enemies' tongues as if they were as sharp as swords. Here "tongues" represents the harsh words that the enemies speak. Alternate translation: "The harsh things that they say hurt me like a sharp sword" (See: Simile and Metonymy)

ULT

3 They have sharpened their tongues like swords; they have aimed their arrows, bitter words,

arrows, bitter words

The writer speaks of his enemies' bitter words as if they were arrows being shot at him. Alternate translation: "bitter words which pierce me like arrows" (See: Metaphor)

Psalms 64:4

(There are no notes for this verse.)

ULT

4 so that they may shoot from secret
places at someone who is innocent;
suddenly they shoot at him and fear
nothing.

Psalms 64:5

Who will see us?

The evildoers do not expect an answer to their question because they think no one will see them. Alternate translation: “No one will see what we are doing” (See: Rhetorical Question)

ULT

5 They encourage themselves in an evil plan; they consult privately together in order to set traps; they say, “Who will see us?”

Psalms 64:6

The inner thoughts and hearts of man are deep

The writer speaks of man's "inner thoughts" and "hearts of man" as if they were a deep body of water that no one can explore all the way to the bottom. (See: Metaphor)

ULT

6 They invent sinful plans; "We have finished," they say, "a careful plan." The inner thoughts and hearts of man are deep.

inner thoughts ... hearts of man

Both of these phrases refer to man's private or inner thoughts. (See: Doublet)

Psalms 64:7

General Information:

The writer continues to speak of the “evildoers” of Psalms 64:1.

ULT

7 But God will shoot them; suddenly they will be wounded with his arrows.

But God will shoot them ... with his arrows

The writer speaks of God’s punishment of the evildoers as if God were shooting arrows at them. (See: Metaphor)

Psalms 64:8

They will be made to stumble

The writer speaks of God's causing the evildoers' plans to fail as if God were making them stumble in their paths. This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "God will make them stumble" or "God will cause their plans to fail" (See: Metaphor and Active or Passive)

ULT

8 They will be made to stumble, since their own tongues are against them; all who see them will wag their heads.

since their own tongues are against them

Here "tongues" represents the words that they say. Alternate translation: "since the words that they say are against them" (See: Metonymy)

Psalms 64:9

what he has done

“what God has done”

ULT

9 All people will fear and will declare God’s deeds. They will wisely think about what he has done.

Psalms 64:10

take refuge in him

Going to Yahweh for protection is spoken of as taking refuge in him. Alternate translation: “go to him for protection” (See: Metaphor)

all the upright in heart will take pride in him

Here “upright in heart” is an idiom that means godly or righteous. Alternate translation: “all the people who are godly will praise him” (See: Idiom)

ULT

10 The righteous will be glad about Yahweh and will take refuge in him; all the upright in heart will take pride in him.

Psalms 65

Psalm 65 General Notes

Type of psalm

Psalm 65 is a psalm of praise to God.

Special concepts in this chapter

God’s power

God answered prayers and gave the people justice and hope. God created nature and controls it, sending rain so the grain and pastures grow well.

Psalms 65:1

General Information:

This psalm is a song of praise. Parallelism is common in Hebrew poetry. (See: Poetry and Parallelism)

ULT

1 For you, God in Zion, our praise waits;
our vows will be carried out to you.

For the chief musician

“This is for the director of music to use in worship”

For you, God in Zion, our praise waits

This speaks of praise as if it were a person who could act on its own. Alternate translation: “To you alone, God in Zion, we will offer our praise” (See: Personification)

our vows will be carried out to you

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: “we will do what we have promised you that we would do” (See: Active or Passive)

Psalms 65:2

(There are no notes for this verse.)

ULT

2 You who hear prayer, to you all flesh will come.

Psalms 65:3

Iniquities prevail against us

David speaks about iniquity as if it were a person that is able to defeat or oppress. Alternate translation: “It is as if our own sins were defeating us” (See: Personification)

you will forgive them

The word “them” refers to our “iniquities.”

ULT

3 Iniquities prevail against us; as for our transgressions, you will forgive them.

Psalms 65:4

whom you choose ... your courts

The words “you” and “your” in this verse refer to Yahweh.

live in your courts

This exaggeration expresses that the man is in the temple very frequently to worship Yahweh. Alternate translation: “worship often in your courts” (See: Hyperbole)

ULT

4 Blessed is the man whom you choose to bring near to you so that he may live in your courts. We will be satisfied with the goodness of your house, your holy temple.

We will be satisfied with the goodness of your house, your holy temple

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: “The goodness of your house, your holy temple, will satisfy us” (See: Active or Passive)

We will be

Here the word “we” refers to David and the people of Israel, but not to God, to whom he is speaking. (See: Exclusive and Inclusive ‘We’)

your house, your holy temple

“your house, which is your holy temple”

Psalms 65:5

ULT

5 In righteousness you will answer us by doing amazing things, God of our salvation; you who are hope of all the ends of the earth and of those who are far across the sea.

In righteousness

“Because you are righteous”

you who are

“you are”

of all the ends of the earth ... across the sea

These two phrases have similar meanings. Alternate translation: “of all the people who live throughout the earth and across the sea” (See: Doublet)

of all the ends of the earth

This refers to the people who live all over the earth. (See: Metonymy)

Psalms 65:6

you who are belted with strength

The writer speaks of God as if he wore his strength like a belt. Alternate translation: “showing that you are very powerful” (See: Metaphor)

ULT

6 For it is you who made the mountains
firm, you who are belted with strength.

Psalms 65:7

the roaring of the seas, the roaring of their waves

These two phrases have the same meaning and are used together to create a vivid impression on the hearer or reader. Alternate translation: “the continuous roaring of the seas” (See: Parallelism)

roaring

a loud noise caused by the wind and waves

the commotion of the peoples

This is also something that God makes quiet.

commotion

loud noise

ULT

7 It is you who quiet the roaring of the seas, the roaring of their waves, and the commotion of the peoples.

Psalms 65:8

evidence

proof or something that shows that another thing is true

you make the east and the west rejoice

The phrase “the east and the west” refers to the people who live all over the earth. Alternate translation: “you cause people everywhere to shout joyfully” (See: Metonymy and Merism)

ULT

8 Those who live in the uttermost parts of the earth are afraid of the evidence of your deeds; you make the east and the west rejoice.

Psalms 65:9

help the earth

This refers to the soil of the earth.

you greatly enrich it

“you make the soil very good so that good things will grow in it”

ULT

9 You come to help the earth; you water it; you greatly enrich it; the river of God is full of water; you provide mankind grain when you have prepared the earth.

the river of God is full of water

This refers to the supply of water in the sky that God sends to water the earth and fill the streams. Alternate translation: “you fill the streams with water” (See: Metonymy)

Psalms 65:10

You ... you ... you ... you

The writer is speaking to Yahweh, so these words are all singular. (See: Forms of You)

its furrows

“the earth’s furrows”

furrows

A furrow is a long narrow trench made in the ground for planting seeds or for watering the field where grains have been planted.

ridges

edges

ULT

10 You water its furrows abundantly;
you settle down the furrows’ ridges;
you make them soft with rain showers;
you bless the sprouts between them.

Psalms 65:11

ULT

11 You crown the year with your goodness, and your wagon tracks overflow with abundance.

You ... your

The words “You” and “your” refer to Yahweh and so are singular. (See: Forms of You)

You crown the year with your goodness

Here the “year” is given the human quality of wearing a crown. Alternate translation: “You have honored the year with a good harvest” (See: Personification)

your wagon tracks overflow with abundance

Yahweh making the soil so good and fertile that it produces an abundant harvest is spoken of as if Yahweh were traveling through an empty land in a cart, leaving abundant food behind wherever he goes. Alternate translation: “everywhere you have been, you have left abundant food” (See: Metaphor)

Psalms 65:12

The pastures ... drip with dew

There is so much dew in the pastures that they are said to drip with it. Alternate translation: “The pastures ... are full of dew” or “Much dew drips in the pastures of the wilderness”

ULT

12 The pastures in the wilderness drip with dew, and the hills are clothed with joy.

the hills are clothed with joy

The writer speaks of the beauty of the hills as if they were joyful people, and of joy as if it were clothing. Alternate translation: “the hills are like people wearing joy” or “the hills are like joyful people” (See: Personification and Metaphor)

Psalms 65:13

The pastures are clothed with flocks

The writer speaks of the pastures as being so covered with flocks that it is like the pastures are wearing a garment.

ULT

13 The pastures are clothed with flocks;
the valleys also are covered over with grain; they shout for joy, and they sing.

pastures

a large field where animals feed on the grass

flocks

group of animals, such as sheep and goats

they shout for joy, and they sing

The pastures, hills and valleys are so bountiful, that they seem to shout and sing for joy. Alternate translation: “they are like joyful singing people” (See: Personification)

they shout

The word “they” refers to the pastures and valleys.

Psalms 66

Psalm 66 General Notes

Type of psalm

Psalm 66 is a psalm of praise.

Special concepts in this chapter

Yahweh saves

Just as God brought Israel through the wilderness, he took the author through hard times but saved him. The author will worship God by sacrificing animals to him. (See: save, saved, safe, salvation)

Psalms 66:1

General Information:

This psalm is a song of praise. Parallelism is common in Hebrew poetry. (See: Poetry and Parallelism)

ULT

1 Make a joyful noise to God, all the earth;

For the chief musician

“This is for the director of music to use in worship”

Make a joyful noise to God, all the earth

A “joyful noise to God” represents singing and shouting praises to God. Alternate translation: “Let all the earth sing and shout joyfully to God” (See: Metonymy)

all the earth

This refers to all the people who live on the earth. Alternate translation: “everyone on earth” (See: Metonymy)

Psalms 66:2

Sing out the glory of his name; make his praise glorious

ULT

2 Sing out the glory of his name; make his praise glorious.

These phrases have similar meanings and are used together to emphasize how wonderful God is. Alternate translation: “Sing about how wonderful God’s name is; sing wonderful praise about how great God is” (See: Parallelism)

the glory of his name

God’s name here represents God himself. Alternate translation: “his glory” (See: Metonymy)

Psalms 66:3

How terrifying are your deeds

The works of God cause us to be in awe and terrified because we know he is powerful and holy.

By the greatness of your power

“Because you have great power”

ULT

3 Say to God, “How terrifying are your deeds! By the greatness of your power your enemies will submit to you.

Psalms 66:4

All the earth will worship you

This refers to all of the people who live on the earth. Alternate translation: “All the people on earth will worship you” (See: Metonymy)

ULT

4 All the earth will worship you and will sing to you; they will sing to your name.” *Selah*

they will sing to your name

Here “your name” refers to God himself. Alternate translation: “they will praise and honor you” (See: Metonymy)

Psalms 66:5

he ... his

These words refer to God.

he is fearsome in his deeds toward the sons of mankind

“he causes people to feel fear and wonder when they see his deeds”

the sons of mankind

“humanity”

ULT

5 Come and see the works of God; he is fearsome in his deeds toward the sons of mankind.

Psalms 66:6

ULT

6 He turned the sea into dry land; they went through the river on foot; there we rejoiced in him.

He ... him

These words refer to God.

He turned the sea into dry land; they went through the river on foot

This refers to the crossing of the Red Sea. (See: Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information)

they went

The word “they” refers to God’s people, the Israelites.

we rejoiced

The word “we” refers to the Israelites, their ancestors, David, and the people he is speaking to. (See: Exclusive and Inclusive ‘We’)

Psalms 66:7

ULT

7 He rules forever by his might; his eyes observe the nations; let not the rebellious exalt themselves. *Selah*

He ... his

These words refer to God.

his eyes

These phrase “his eyes” refers to God himself. Alternate translation: “he sees” (See: Synecdoche)

let not the rebellious exalt themselves

“let not the rebellious people exalt themselves” or “let not the rebellious people be proud”

Psalms 66:8

Give blessing to God ... let the sound of his praise be heard

These two clauses have similar meanings. The idea is repeated to emphasize the importance of praising God. (See: Parallelism)

ULT

8 Give blessing to God, you people, let the sound of his praise be heard.

Psalms 66:9

us ... our

These words refer to David and the people he is speaking to. (See: Exclusive and Inclusive ‘We’)

ULT

9 He keeps us among the living, and he does not permit our feet to slip.

he does not permit our feet to slip

The writer speaks of God’s protection as preventing his people from slipping as they walk or falling off a cliff. Alternate translation: “he has not allowed us to fall into disaster” (See: Metaphor)

Psalms 66:10

(There are no notes for this verse.)

ULT

10 For you, God, have tested us; you have tested us as silver is tested.

Psalms 66:11

You brought us into a net

The writer speaks of God’s punishment as if God had captured his people in a net. (See: Metaphor)

ULT

11 You brought us into a net; you laid a heavy burden on our backs.

a net

a trap for a bird or an animal

you laid a heavy burden on our backs

The writer speaks of what the people have endured as having to carry heavy loads on their backs. (See: Metaphor)

Psalms 66:12

You made people ride over our heads

This is a picture of being horribly defeated in battle. Alternate translation: “It is as if our enemies defeated us in battle and then drove their chariots over our fallen bodies” (See: Metaphor)

ULT

12 You made people ride over our heads; we went through fire and water, but you brought us out into a spacious place.

went through fire and water

God tested them with natural disasters like fires and floods. Alternate translation: “we suffered like people who suffer from fires and floods” (See: Metaphor and Merism)

spacious place

The writer speaks of the blessings that the people of Israel now have as if they had been brought into a wide open space where they are safe. Alternate translation: “open place where we are safe” (See: Metaphor)

Psalms 66:13

(There are no notes for this verse.)

ULT

13 I will come into your house with
burnt offerings; I will pay you my vows

Psalms 66:14

which my lips promised and my mouth spoke

Here “lips” and “mouth” refer to the words of promise that were spoken. Alternate translation: “which I promised” (See: Synecdoche)

ULT

14 which my lips promised and my mouth spoke when I was in distress.

Psalms 66:15

aroma of rams

“smell of the smoke of sacrificed rams”

ULT

15 I will offer to you burnt offerings of fat animals with the sweet aroma of rams; I will offer bulls and goats. *Selah*

Psalms 66:16

I will declare what he has done for my soul

The word “soul” represents the whole person. Alternate translation: “I will tell you what he has done for me” (See: Synecdoche)

ULT

16 Come and listen, all you who fear God, and I will declare what he has done for my soul.

Psalms 66:17

I cried to him with my mouth

The word “mouth” represents the whole person who cries out to God. (See: Synecdoche)

ULT

17 I cried to him with my mouth, and he was praised with my tongue.

he was praised with my tongue

Here “tongue” represents words or speech. This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: “I praised him with my tongue” or “I praised him” (See: Active or Passive and Metonymy)

Psalms 66:18

seen sin

“loved sin” or “held iniquity”

would not have listened to me

Here “would not have listened” implies that God would not have answered his prayer. This can be made clear in the translation. Alternate translation: “would not have heard me call out to him” or “he would not have answered my prayer” (See: Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information)

ULT

18 If I had seen sin within my heart, the Lord would not have listened to me.

Psalms 66:19

But God has truly heard; he has paid attention

These two clauses have similar meanings and are used together to emphasize that God has heard his prayer. Alternate translation: “But God has truly heard my prayer” (See: Parallelism)

ULT

19 But God has truly heard; he has paid attention to the voice of my prayer.

the voice of my prayer

Here the author’s prayer is given the personal quality of having a voice. Alternate translation: “my prayer” (See: Personification)

Psalms 66:20

who has not turned away my prayer

Here “turned away’ represents ignoring his prayer. Alternate translation: “who has not ignored my prayer”

or his covenant faithfulness from me

The phrase “has not turned away” is understood from the previous phrase and can be repeated here. The idea of “his covenant faithfulness” can be translated with the phrase “being faithful to his covenant.” Alternate translation: “and has not turned away his covenant faithfulness from me” or “and has not stopped being faithful to his covenant with me” (See: Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information and Abstract Nouns)

ULT

20 Blessed be God, who has not turned away my prayer or his covenant faithfulness from me.

Psalms 67

Psalm 67 General Notes

Type of psalm

Psalm 67 is a worship psalm.

Special concepts in this chapter

Praise

People all over the world should be praising God.

Psalms 67:1

General Information:

Parallelism is common in Hebrew poetry. (See: Poetry and Parallelism)

ULT

1 May God be merciful to us and bless
us and cause his face to shine on us
Selah

For the chief musician

“This is for the director of music to use in worship”

on stringed instruments

“people should play stringed instruments with this song”

cause his face to shine on us

The writer speaks of Yahweh acting favorably towards them as if Yahweh’s face shone a light on them. Alternate translation: “act favorably towards us” (See: Metaphor)

Psalms 67:2

your ways may be known on earth

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: “people may know your ways on earth” (See: Active or Passive)

ULT

2 so that your ways may be known on earth, your salvation among all nations.

your salvation among all nations

The writer desires for everyone to know that God has the power to save them. This can be made clear in the translation. Alternate translation: “and the people of all nations may know that you have the power to save them” (See: Ellipsis and Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information)

Psalms 67:3

(There are no notes for this verse.)

ULT

3 Let the peoples praise you, God; let all the peoples praise you.

Psalms 67:4

let the nations ... govern the nations

Here “nations” represents the people who live in all the nations on the earth. (See: Metonymy)

with justice

“fairly” or “justly”

ULT

4 Oh, let the nations be glad and sing for joy, for you will judge the peoples with justice and govern the nations on earth. *Selah*

Psalms 67:5

Let the peoples praise you ... let all the peoples praise you

The second clause intensifies the meaning of the first to emphasize how important it is to praise God. (See: Parallelism)

ULT

5 Let the peoples praise you, God; let all the peoples praise you.

Psalms 67:6

The earth has yielded its harvest

Here the writer speaks of “the earth” as if it has chosen to provide a harvest to the people. Alternate translation: “We have reaped a bountiful harvest from our crops” (See: Personification)

ULT

6 The earth has yielded its harvest and
God, our God, has blessed us.

Psalms 67:7

all the ends of the earth honor him

This means that people everywhere should honor God because of his blessings. Alternate translation: “I desire that all people everywhere on the earth may have an awesome respect for him” (See: Metonymy)

ULT

7 God has blessed us, and all the ends of the earth honor him.

Psalms 68

Psalm 68 General Notes

Type of psalm

Psalm 68 is a worship psalm.

Special concepts in this chapter

Yahweh's greatness

God is exceedingly great. He takes care of the weak and helpless. He is glorious in his temple. (See: glory, glorious, glorify and temple, house, house of God)

No Common Theme

Scholars have found this psalm the most difficult to interpret. There does not appear to be any unity to this psalm.

Psalms 68:1

General Information:

Parallelism is common in Hebrew poetry. (See: Poetry and Parallelism)

ULT

1 Let God arise; let his enemies be scattered; let those also who hate him flee before him.

For the chief musician

“This is for the director of music to use in worship”

A psalm of David

This could mean: (1) David wrote the psalm or (2) the psalm is about David or (3) the psalm is in the style of David’s psalms.

Let God arise

God beginning to act is spoke of as if he stands up. Alternate translation: “Let God begin to act” (See: Metaphor)

let his enemies be scattered

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: “let God chase away his enemies” (See: Active or Passive)

Psalms 68:2

As smoke is driven away, so drive them away

God's enemies are spoken of as if they are smoke that is easily blown away by the wind. This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "Drive them away as the wind blows away smoke" (See: Metaphor and Active or Passive)

ULT

2 As smoke is driven away, so drive them away; as wax melts before the fire, so let the wicked perish in the presence of God.

as wax melts before the fire

God's enemies are spoken of as if they are wax that is easily melted by a fire. Alternate translation: "cause them to disappear as wax melts before a fire" (See: Metaphor)

the wicked

This refers to the wicked people in general. (See: Nominal Adjectives)

Psalms 68:3

the righteous

This refers to the righteous people in general. (See: Nominal Adjectives)

rejoice and be happy

These means the same thing and emphasizes the amount of joy they feel. (See: Doublet)

ULT

3 But let the righteous be glad; let them exult before God; may they rejoice and be happy.

Psalms 68:4

to his name

This refers to God. Alternate translation: “to him” (See: Metonymy)

the one who rides through the plains

God’s presence among people is spoken of as if he rides on the earth in a horse or chariot. (See: Metaphor)

ULT

4 Sing to God! Sing praises to his name!
Praise the one who rides through the
plains of the Jordan River valley!
Yahweh is his name! Rejoice before
him!

Psalms 68:5

A father of the fatherless

God is spoken of as a compassionate God who acts like a father to orphans. Alternate translation: “One who acts like a father to children who have no parents” (See: Metaphor)

ULT

5 A father of the fatherless, a judge of the widows, is God in the holy place where he lives.

a judge of the widows

God is spoken of as a merciful God who protects widows. Alternate translation: “a protector of widows” (See: Metaphor)

Psalms 68:6

God puts the lonely into families

God is spoken of as if he places lonely people into families. “God provides families for those who have no one to live with” (See: Metaphor)

ULT

6 God puts the lonely into families; he
brings out the prisoners with singing;
but the rebellious live in a parched land.

he brings out the prisoners with singing

God is spoken of as the one who leads prisoners out of their confinement. Alternate translation: “God frees prisoners and makes them sing with happiness” (See: Metaphor)

the rebellious

This nominal adjective refers to rebellious people and can be translated with either an adjective or a noun. Alternate translation: “rebellious people” or “people who rebel against him” (See: Nominal Adjectives)

a parched land

God’s punishment of the rebellious is spoken of as if he forces them to live in a hot desert land. Alternate translation: “a very hot and dry land” (See: Metaphor)

Psalms 68:7

General Information:

David begins to tell the story of God leading the Israelites through the desert to Mt. Sinai.

ULT

7 God, when you went out before your people, when you marched through the wilderness, *Selah*

when you went out ... when you marched through

These two phrases refer to the same event. (See: Parallelism)

you went out before your people

“you led your people”

when you marched through the wilderness

God is spoken of as if he was a soldier marching ahead of the people of Israel. (See: Metaphor)

Psalms 68:8

the heavens also dropped rain ... God's presence

"God caused it to rain"

in the presence of God

This idiom here refers to God's appearance before the Israelites.
Alternate translation: "when God appeared to the Israelites" (See: Parallelism)

ULT

8 The earth trembled; the heavens also dropped rain in God's presence, in the presence of God when he came to Sinai, in the presence of God, the God of Israel.

Psalms 68:9

you strengthened your inheritance when it was weary

The land of Israel is spoken of as if it was a person who could be weary, or could gain strength. Alternate translation: “you caused the land to produce good crops” (See: Metaphor)

ULT

9 You, God, sent a plentiful rain; you strengthened your inheritance when it was weary.

your inheritance

The land that God gave to the Israelites is spoken of as if it was an inheritance that a father passed on to his children. Alternate translation: “the land that you gave to us Israelites” (See: Metaphor)

Psalms 68:10

the poor

This refers to poor people in general. Alternate translation: “poor people” (See: Nominal Adjectives)

ULT

10 Your people lived in it; You, God, gave from your goodness to the poor.

Psalms 68:11

General Information:

David continues the story of the journey of the Israelites through the desert. In this part of the story, the Israelites are victorious in war over their enemies.

ULT

11 The Lord gave the orders, and those who announced them were a great army.

those who announced them ... army

The large number of people told the Lord's message to others. They are spoken of as if there were a large army. Since this phrase is feminine, some versions translate it as, "the women who announced them ... army." (See: Metaphor)

Psalms 68:12

Kings of armies flee, they flee

The kings represent themselves and their entire armies. It is understood that they flee because they are defeated by Israel's army. Alternate translation: "Kings and their armies flee from us because they are defeated" (See: Synecdoche and Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information)

ULT

12 Kings of armies flee, they flee, and the women waiting at home divide the plunder:

plunder

things that are taken from the defeated army and brought to the victorious army's home.

Psalms 68:13

doves covered with silver ... gold

This means that some of the plunder is very valuable because it is covered with precious metals.

When some of you people stayed among the sheepfolds, why did you do this?

This question is used to rebuke the people who did not participate in the battle. Alternate translation: “Those who stayed among the sheepfolds should not have stayed; they should have gone to the battle.” (See: Rhetorical Question)

ULT

13 doves covered with silver with wings of yellow gold. When some of you people stayed among the sheepfolds, why did you do this?

Psalms 68:14

scattered kings there ... snowed on Mount Zalmon

ULT

14 The Almighty scattered kings there, it was as when it snowed on Mount Zalmon.

There were so many dead kings and soldiers on the mountain that they are spoken of as if they were snow covering the mountain. Alternate translation: “defeated so many enemy kings and soldiers there that they were like snowflakes covering Mount Zalmon” (See: Simile)

scattered kings

Here “kings” refers to their armies as well. Alternate translation: “scattered the enemy kings and their armies” (See: Synecdoche)

Mount Zalmon

This is the name of a mountain. (See: How to Translate Names)

Psalms 68:15

A mighty mountain is the ... a high mountain is the

These two phrase have similar meanings and are used together to strengthen each other. Alternate translation: “a mighty and high mountain is the hill country of Bashan” (See: Parallelism)

ULT

15 A mighty mountain is the hill country of Bashan; a high mountain is the hill country of Bashan.

Psalms 68:16

Why do you look in envy ... for the place he will live?

This question can be written as a statement. Alternate translation: “The high hill country of Bashan should not look in envy at the mountain which God desires for the place he will live.” (See: Rhetorical Question)

ULT

16 Why do you look in envy, you high hill country, at the mountain which God desires for the place he will live? Indeed, Yahweh will live in it forever.

Psalms 68:17

twenty thousand, thousands upon thousands

This is probably not meant to be an exact number, but to indicate a large number. Alternate translation: “many thousands” (See: Numbers)

ULT

17 The chariots of God are twenty thousand, thousands upon thousands; the Lord is among them in the holy place, as at Sinai.

Psalms 68:18

ascended

To “ascend” is to move up, to go toward the sky.

ULT

18 You have ascended on high; you have led away captives; you have received gifts from among men, even from those who fought against you, so that you, Yahweh God, might live there.

Psalms 68:19

daily bears our burdens

“carries our heavy loads every day.” The Lord’s care for his people is spoken of as if he was physically carrying their troubles as a burden. (See: Metaphor)

ULT

19 Blessed be the Lord, who daily bears our burdens, the God who is our salvation. *Selah*

the God who is our salvation

The words “is our salvation” can be translated with the verb “save.” Alternate translation: “the God who saves us” (See: Abstract Nouns)

Psalms 68:20

(There are no notes for this verse.)

ULT

20 Our God is a God who saves; Yahweh the Lord is the one who is able to rescue us from death.

Psalms 68:21

will strike through the heads of his enemies

God is spoken of as a warrior who will kill his enemies by striking them in their heads in order to kill them. Alternate translation: “will kill his enemies by striking them in the head” (See: Metaphor and Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information)

ULT

21 But God will strike through the heads of his enemies, through the hairy scalps of those who walk in offenses against him.

the hairy scalps

It seems to have been the custom for soldiers not to cut their hair during the time of war. Alternate translation: “the long-haired skulls” (See: Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information)

walk in offenses against him

Offending God is spoken of as walking among the offenses. Alternate translation: “habitually offend him” (See: Metaphor)

Psalms 68:22

I will bring them back

The word “them” refers to God’s enemies.

the depths of the sea

This speaks of the most remote parts of the earth where people might try to escape from God as if they were the depths of the sea. (See: Metaphor)

ULT

22 The Lord said, “I will bring my enemies back from Bashan; I will bring them back from the depths of the sea

Psalms 68:23

crush your enemies

The total destruction of Israel's enemies is spoken of as if the Israelites had crushed them under their feet. Alternate translation: "totally defeat your enemies" (See: Metaphor)

ULT

23 so that you may crush your enemies,
dipping your foot in blood, and so that
the tongues of your dogs may have
their share from your enemies."

dipping your foot in blood

The violence of from the destruction of the enemies is spoke of in very graphic form, as if the Israelites would be standing in the blood of their dead enemies. Alternate translation: "stepping in their blood" (See: Metaphor)

the tongues of your dogs may have their share

The bloodshed from the battle against Israel's enemies is spoken of as if it is so extensive that the dogs will lap up the flowing blood with their tongues. (See: Metaphor)

Psalms 68:24

processions

A procession is a group of people walking together in an orderly manner as part of a ceremony.

ULT

24 They have seen your processions,
God, the processions of my God, my
King, into the holy place.

Psalms 68:25

minstrels

people who play musical instruments

ULT

25 The singers went first, the minstrels followed after, and in the middle were the unmarried girls playing tambourines.

Psalms 68:26

Bless God in the assemblies; praise Yahweh, you who are from the fountain of Israel

It may be helpful to change the order of these phrases. Alternate translation: “You who are from the fountain of Israel, praise Yahweh and bless God in the assembly”

ULT

26 Bless God in the assemblies; praise Yahweh, you who are from the fountain [1] of Israel.

from the fountain of Israel

The word “fountain” is a metaphor for the ability of the man Israel to be the ancestor of many people: as much water comes from a fountain, so Israel is the ancestor of many people. This also implies that the call is to those who serve God as the man Israel did. Alternate translation: “true descendants of Israel” or “all of you descendants from Israel”(See: Metaphor and Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information)

Psalms 68:27

their multitudes

“their group.” The word “their” refers to the leaders of Judah.

ULT

27 There is first Benjamin, the smallest tribe, then the leaders of Judah and their multitudes, the leaders of Zebulun and the leaders of Naphtali.

Psalms 68:28

Your God, Israel, has decreed your strength

Some versions understand the Hebrew text differently: “Summon your strength, God” or “Use your strength, God”

Your God, Israel, has decreed

“People of Israel, your God has decreed”

to us

The word “us” refers to the writer and the people of Israel, but not to Yahweh, to whom he is speaking. (See: Exclusive and Inclusive ‘We’)

ULT

28 Your God, Israel, has decreed your strength; reveal to us your power, God, as you have revealed it in times past.

Psalms 68:29

to us

The word “us” refers to the writer and the people of Israel, but not to Yahweh, to whom he is speaking. (See: Exclusive and Inclusive ‘We’)

ULT

29 Reveal your power to us from your temple at Jerusalem, where kings bring gifts to you.

Reveal your power to us from your temple at Jerusalem

“When you are present in the temple at Jerusalem, show us your power”

Reveal your power

The abstract noun “power” can be stated as “strong.” Alternate translation: “Show us that you are strong” (See: Abstract Nouns)

Psalms 68:30

the wild beasts in the reeds

Many scholars believe these wild beasts are a metaphor that refers to the people of Egypt. This can be made explicit. Alternate translation: “the people of Egypt who are like wild beasts in the reeds” (See: Metaphor and Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information)

ULT

30 Shout in battle against the wild beasts in the reeds, against the peoples, that multitude of bulls and calves. Humiliate them and make them bring you gifts; scatter the peoples who love to wage war.

the peoples, that multitude of bulls and calves

The peoples of other nations are spoken of as if they were a large group of cattle. Alternate translation: “the powerful nations, who are like herds of bulls” (See: Metaphor)

scatter

to disperse or to cause something to spread quickly in different direction

Psalms 68:31

Princes will come out of Egypt

It is implied that these princes come from Egypt in order to offer gifts to God in Jerusalem. Alternate translation: “Then the leaders of Egypt will bring gifts to you” (See: Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information)

ULT

31 Princes will come out of Egypt; Cush will hurry to reach out with her hands to God.

Cush

This refers to the people of Cush. Alternate translation: “The Cushites” (See: Metonymy)

reach out with her hands to God

This is a symbolic action that represents worship to God. Alternate translation: “lift up her hands to praise God” (See: Symbolic Action)

Psalms 68:32

you kingdoms of the earth

Here “kingdoms” refers to the citizens of the kingdoms. Alternate translation: “you people who are citizens of kingdoms all over the world” (See: Synecdoche)

ULT

32 Sing to God, you kingdoms of the earth; *Selah* Sing praises to Yahweh.

Psalms 68:33

To him who rides on the heaven of heavens

The word “Sing” is implied as the beginning of this verse. Here God is described as if he rides in a chariot in the sky. Alternate translation: “Sing to God who rides across the sky in his chariot” (See: Ellipsis and Metaphor)

ULT

33 To him who rides on the heaven of heavens, which exist from ancient times; see, he lifts up his voice with power.

he lifts up his voice with power

This idiom means he speaks powerfully. Alternate translation: “he shouts powerfully” or “he speaks loudly” (See: Idiom)

Psalms 68:34

Ascribe strength to God

“Ascribe” means to give credit to someone. Alternate translation: “Strength belongs to God”

his strength is in the skies

The abstract noun “strength” can be stated as “powerful.” Alternate translation: “in the skies he also shows that he is powerful” (See: Abstract Nouns)

ULT

34 Ascribe strength to God; his majesty is over Israel, and his strength is in the skies.

Psalms 68:35

God, you are fearsome in your holy place

Here the author speaks directly to God. (See: Apostrophe)

strength and power

These two words mean basically these same thing. They emphasize how much strength God provides to his people. (See: Doublet)

ULT

35 God, you are fearsome in your holy place; the God of Israel—he gives strength and power to his people. Blessed be God.

Psalms 69

Psalm 69 General Notes

Type of psalm

Psalm 69 is a psalm of deliverance. The author prays to be saved from his enemies and for them to be punished. (See: deliver, hand over, turn over, release, rescue and save, saved, safe, salvation)

Special concepts in this chapter

Deliverance

The author prays for God to rescue him from his enemies. They show him no mercy, and he asks God to show them no mercy. (See: mercy, merciful)

Psalms 69:1

General Information:

This psalm is a prayer for help. Parallelism is common in Hebrew poetry. (See: Poetry and Parallelism)

ULT

1 Save me, God; for the waters have put my life in danger.

For the chief musician

“This is for the director of music to use in worship”

set to Shoshannim

This may refer to a style of music. See how you translated this in Psalms 45:1.

for the waters have put my life in danger

The writer describes the troubles in his life as if he were drowning in a flood of water. Alternate translation: “for it feels like I am drowning in the waters” (See: Metaphor)

Psalms 69:2

I sink in deep mire

The writer describes the troubles in his life as if he were sinking in deep mud. Alternate translation: “For it feels like I am sinking in deep mud and will die” (See: Metaphor)

ULT

2 I sink in deep mire, where there is no place to stand; I have come into deep waters, where the floods flow over me.

mire

thick mud

there is no place to stand

The writer uses a negative statement to stress how unstable and uncertain his condition is. (See: Litotes)

I have come into deep waters, where the floods flow over me

The writer describes his problems as if he was drowning in a deep, raging river. Alternate translation: “t feels like I am in deep waters, and the floodwaters flow over me” (See: Metaphor)

Psalms 69:3

weary

very tired

my eyes fail

ULT

3 I am weary with my crying; my throat
is dry; my eyes fail while I wait for my
God.

This idiom means the writer has cried so much that his eyes do not see well any longer. Alternate translation: “my eyes are swollen from tears” (See: Idiom)

Psalms 69:4

more than the hairs on my head

This is an exaggeration to express how many enemies the writer has. Alternate translation: “more than I can count, like the hairs on my head” (See: Hyperbole)

cut me off

This idiom means “kill me.” (See: Idiom)

ULT

4 Those who hate me without a cause
are more than the hairs on my head;
those who would cut me off, being my enemies for wrong reasons, are mighty;
what I did not steal, I have to give back.

Psalms 69:5

my foolishness

The abstract noun “foolishness” can be stated as “foolish.” Alternate translation: “the foolish things that I have done” (See: Abstract Nouns)

ULT

5 God, you know my foolishness, and my sins are not hidden from you.

my sins are not hidden from you

This can be expressed as a positive statement. Alternate translation: “you know all my sins” (See: Litotes)

Psalms 69:6

Let not those ... let not those

"Do not let those ... do not let those"

Let not those who hope in you be put to shame because of me

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "Please do not allow anyone to put those who wait for you to shame because of me" (See: Active or Passive)

let not those who seek you be brought to dishonor because of me

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "Please do not allow anyone to bring dishonor on those who seek you because of me" (See: Active or Passive)

those who seek you

Here, seeking **God** could mean: (1) asking God for help or (2) thinking about God and obeying him. Alternate translation: (1) "those who ask you for help" or (2) "those who worship and obey you" (See: Metaphor)

ULT

6 Let not those who hope in you be put to shame because of me, Lord Yahweh of hosts; let not those who seek you be brought to dishonor because of me, God of Israel.

Psalms 69:7

ULT

7 For your sake I have borne rebuke;
shame has covered my face.

For your sake

“On your behalf” or “For you”

I have borne rebuke

The rebukes of the writer’s enemies are spoken of as if they are a heavy load that he has had to carry. Alternate translation: “I have endured the insults of my enemies” (See: Metaphor)

shame has covered my face

The writer speaks of the shame that he feels as if it is a foul thing on his face that everyone can clearly see. Alternate translation: “I am thoroughly humiliated” (See: Metaphor)

Psalms 69:8

ULT

8 I have become a stranger to my brothers, an alien to my mother’s children.

I have become a stranger to my brothers

The writer speaks of himself as if he were not part of his own family. Alternate translation: “My brothers no longer know or accept me at all” (See: Metaphor)

a stranger to my brothers ... an alien to my mother’s children

These two phrases mean the same thing. They are repeated to stress his separation from his own family. (See: Parallelism)

an alien to my mother’s children

It is implied that “I have become” should be understood here. The writer speaks of himself as if he were not part of his own family. Alternate translation: “my brothers no longer know or trust me at all” (See: Ellipsis and Metaphor)

Psalms 69:9

the zeal of your house has eaten me up

The writer speaks of his zeal for God's temple as if it was a wild animal that devours the writer. Alternate translation: "the zeal I have for your house consumes me" (See: Personification)

ULT

9 For the zeal of your house has eaten me up, and the rebukes of those who rebuke you have fallen on me.

has eaten me up

This idiom means that the writer's zeal for the temple takes over all of his thoughts and actions. Alternate translation: "completely controls all that I think and do" (See: Idiom)

the rebukes ... have fallen on me

The writer speaks of the rebukes of Gods' enemies as if they were rocks that were thrown at the writer. Alternate translation: "those who rebuke you have also thrown their rebukes at me" (See: Metaphor)

Psalms 69:10

I wept and did not eat food

The fact that the writer was fasting indicates that he was sad about the way people treated God's temple. (See: Symbolic Action and Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information)

they insulted me

"my enemies rebuked me because of it"

ULT

10 When I wept and did not eat food,
they insulted me.

Psalms 69:11

I made sackcloth my clothing

Wearing rough, cheap clothing was a symbol of mourning over sin. (See: Symbolic Action)

ULT

11 When I made sackcloth my clothing, I became the object of a proverb to them.

I became the object of a proverb

The writer speak of himself as if he was the sad or foolish person in a proverb. Alternate translation: “I became the example of a sad person spoken of in their proverbs” or “they laugh at me” (See: Metaphor)

Psalms 69:12

Those who sit in the city gate

Here “city gate” is associated with leadership of a town. Alternate translation: “The important people of the city” (See: Metonymy)

ULT

12 Those who sit in the city gate talk about me; I am a song of drunkards.

I am a song of drunkards

The writer speaks of himself as if he was the person about whom the drunkards sing mocking songs. Alternate translation: “the drunkards of the city sing disgusting songs about me” (See: Metaphor)

Psalms 69:13

at a time that you will accept

“in your accepted time” or “when you are willing”

answer me in the trustworthiness of your salvation

ULT

13 But as for me, my prayer is to you,
Yahweh, at a time that you will accept;
answer me in the trustworthiness of
your salvation.

The abstract nouns “trustworthiness” and “salvation” can be stated as “faithfully” and “rescue.” Alternate translation: “rescue me because you faithfully love me, as you have promised to do” (See: Abstract Nouns)

Psalms 69:14

ULT

14 Pull me out of the mire, and do not let me sink; let me be taken away from those who hate me and rescued out of the deep waters.

Pull me out ... do not let me sink

These two phrases mean the same thing. (See: Parallelism)

Pull me out of the mire, and do not let me sink

The writer speaks of his danger from his enemies as if he was sinking into a pit of mud. “Do not allow me to sink anymore in the mud” (See: Metaphor)

let me be taken away

Here “take away” refers to being removed from danger. This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: “take me away” or “rescue me” (See: Idiom and Active or Passive)

rescued out

It is understood that “let me be” is implied here. It can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: “please rescue me out” (See: Ellipsis and Active or Passive)

rescued out of the deep waters

The writer speaks about his danger from his enemies as if he was drowning in deep water. (See: Metaphor)

Psalms 69:15

the floods of water overwhelm me

The writer speaks about his danger from his enemies as if flood waters were covering him completely. (See: Metaphor)

the deep swallow me up

The writer speaks of the deep as if it was a deadly animal that was about to eat him. Alternate translation: “the deep waters swallow me up like a dangerous animal” (See: Personification and Metaphor)

Do not let the pit shut its mouth on me

Here the “pit” is spoken of as if it has a mouth like a person and could eat the writer. Alternate translation: “Do not let the pit consume me” or “Do not let the pit of death close over me” (See: Personification and Metaphor)

ULT

15 Do not let the floods of water overwhelm me, neither let the deep swallow me up. Do not let the pit shut its mouth on me.

Psalms 69:16

your covenant faithfulness is good

The abstract noun “faithfulness” can be translated as an adjective. Alternate translation: “you are good and faithful to your covenant” (See: Abstract Nouns)

your mercies for me are many

“you are very merciful to me”

turn to me

The idea of turning towards someone means to pay attention to them or help them. Alternate translation: “help me” (See: Metaphor)

ULT

16 Answer me, Yahweh, for your covenant faithfulness is good; because your mercies for me are many, turn to me.

Psalms 69:17

Do not hide your face from your servant

To hide one's face means to refuse to hear or help someone. Alternate translation: "Please help your servant" or "Please help me" (See: Idiom)

in distress

"in great trouble"

ULT

17 Do not hide your face from your servant, for I am in distress; answer me quickly.

Psalms 69:18

redeem me

The writer asks God to redeem him as if the writer were a slave whose freedom God could purchase. Alternate translation: “free me” (See: Metaphor)

ULT

18 Come to me and redeem me.
Because of my enemies, ransom me.

ransom me

The writer asks God to ransom him as if the writer were a captive whose release could be paid for with money. Alternate translation: “rescue me” (See: Metaphor)

Psalms 69:19

my rebuke, my shame, and my dishonor

These abstract nouns can be stated as actions. Alternate translation: “how people have rebuked me, shamed me, and dishonored me” (See: Abstract Nouns)

ULT

19 You know my rebuke, my shame, and my dishonor; my adversaries are all before you.

my adversaries are all before you

Here “before you” means that God sees and knows all about them. Alternate translation: “you know who all my enemies are” (See: Idiom)

Psalms 69:20

broken my heart

This idiom means a person is extremely sad. Alternate translation: “offended me deeply” (See: Idiom)

I am full of heaviness

The writer’s great sadness is spoken of as if he was full of a heavy weight. Alternate translation: “I am heavy with sorrow” (See: Metaphor)

to take pity

to feel sorrow or sadness

ULT

20 Rebuke has broken my heart; I am full of heaviness; I looked for someone to take pity, but there was none; I looked for comforters, but I found none.

Psalms 69:21

They gave me poison for my food

This is probably figurative. The food that people gave to the writer was so bad that it tasted like poison. Alternate translation: “They gave me food that tasted like poison” (See: Metaphor)

ULT

21 They gave me poison for my food; in my thirst they gave me vinegar to drink.

Psalms 69:22

Let their table before them become a snare ... let it become a trap

The writer would like for his enemies' food to completely ruin them as if they were small animals caught in a snare or a trap. Alternate translation: "May their food ruin them like a snare ... may it destroy them like a trap" (See: Metaphor)

ULT

22 Let their table before them become a snare; when they think they are in safety, let it become a trap.

their table

This refers to food that was served on the tables, possibly at a feast. Alternate translation: "their own food" or "sacrificial feasts" (See: Metonymy)

Psalms 69:23

Let their eyes be darkened

The writer speaks of eyes that cannot see well as if they were darkened. This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: “Please make them unable to see anything” (See: Metaphor and Active or Passive)

ULT

23 Let their eyes be darkened so that they cannot see; and always make their loins shake.

make their loins shake

Weak backs are spoken of as if they are shaking in weakness. Alternate translation: “cause their backs to be too weak for them to do anything” (See: Metaphor)

their loins

“their sides” or “their backs”

Psalms 69:24

Pour out your indignation on them

God’s demonstration of his anger is described as if he poured it out on his enemies like water. (See: Metaphor)

ULT

24 Pour out your indignation on them,
and let the fierceness of your anger
overtake them.

indignation

anger of a person who has suffered injustice

the fierceness of your anger

“your burning anger” or “your strong anger”

overtake them

God’s judgment on his enemies is described as if he ran after them and caught them. (See: Metaphor)

Psalms 69:25

be a desolation

This abstract noun can be stated as “abandoned.” Alternate translation: “become abandoned” (See: Abstract Nouns)

ULT

25 Let their place be a desolation; let no one live in their tents.

Psalms 69:26

they persecuted the one

“they persecuted the man”

you struck down

Here to be “struck down” refers to punishment. Alternate translation: “you punished” (See: Metonymy)

those you have wounded

Here to be “wounded” refers to causing them to suffer. Alternate translation: “those you have caused to suffer” (See: Metonymy)

ULT

26 For they persecuted the one you struck down. They repeated the account of the pain of those you have wounded.

Psalms 69:27

Accuse them of having committed iniquity after iniquity

“Keep making a record of all their sins”

iniquity after iniquity

“very many sins”

do not let them come into your righteous victory

To come into God’s victory is an idiom that means to receive a reward from him. Alternate translation: “do not let them receive your righteous reward” (See: Idiom)

ULT

27 Accuse them of having committed iniquity after iniquity; do not let them come into your righteous victory.

Psalms 69:28

Let them be blotted out of

Here “them” refers to the names of the enemies. This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: “Wipe out their names in” (See: Metonymy and Active or Passive)

ULT

28 Let them be blotted out of the Book of Life and not be written down along with the righteous.

not be written down

It is inferred that “let them” is understood. This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: “do not write down their names” (See: Ellipsis and Active or Passive)

Psalms 69:29

let your salvation, God, set me up on high

The abstract noun “salvation” can be stated with the verb “save.” Here “on high” refers to a place of safety.” Alternate translation: “God, save me and put me in a safe place” (See: Abstract Nouns and Metonymy)

ULT

29 But I am poor and sorrowful; let your salvation, God, set me up on high.

Psalms 69:30

the name of God

Here “name” refers to God himself. Alternate translation: “God” (See: Metonymy)

with thanksgiving

This abstract noun can be stated with the verb “thank.” Alternate translation: “by thanking him” (See: Abstract Nouns)

ULT

30 I will praise the name of God with a song and will exalt him with thanksgiving.

Psalms 69:31

better than an ox or a bull

It is understood that the ox and the bull are to be offered to God as sacrifices. Alternate translation: “better than sacrificing an ox or sacrificing a bull” (See: Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information)

ULT

31 That will please Yahweh better than an ox or a bull that has horns and hooves.

a bull that has horns and hooves

This phrase distinguishes the full grown bulls from other younger cows. Alternate translation: “a bull that is full grown with horns and hooves” (See: Distinguishing Versus Informing or Reminding)

Psalms 69:32

ULT

32 The meek have seen it and are glad;
you who seek after God, let your hearts
live.

The meek

This refers to meek people in general. Alternate translation: “Meek people” (See: Nominal Adjectives)

you who seek after God

Seeking **God** could mean: (1) asking God for help or (2) thinking about God and obeying him. Alternate translation: “you who ask God for help” or “you who think about God” (See: Metaphor)

let your hearts live

Here “hearts” refer to the people. Here “live” is an idiom that means to be encouraged. Alternate translation: “may you be encouraged” (See: Synecdoche and Hypothetical Situations)

Psalms 69:33

Yahweh hears

Here “hears” means to respond. Alternate translation: “Yahweh answers” (See: Metonymy)

ULT

33 For Yahweh hears the needy and
does not despise his prisoners.

the needy

This refers to needy people in general. Alternate translation: “needy people” (See: Nominal Adjectives)

his prisoners

“those who have suffered for him”

Psalms 69:34

Let heaven and earth praise him ... the seas

Here heaven and earth and the seas are spoken of as if they are people who are able to praise God. (See: Personification)

the seas and everything that moves in them

It is implied that "Let ... praise him" should be understood here. Alternate translation: "let he seas and everything that moves in them praise him" (See: Ellipsis)

ULT

34 Let heaven and earth praise him, the seas and everything that moves in them.

Psalms 69:35

God will save Zion

Here “Zion” refers to the people in Zion. Alternate translation: “God will save the people of Zion” (See: Metonymy)

have it as a possession

The word “it” refers to the land of Judah.

ULT

35 For God will save Zion and will rebuild the cities of Judah; the people will live there and have it as a possession.

Psalms 69:36

who love his name

Here “name” refers to God himself. Alternate translation: “who love God” (See: Metonymy)

ULT

36 His servants’ descendants will inherit it; and those who love his name will live there.

Psalms 70

Psalm 70 General Notes

Type of psalm

Psalm 70 is a psalm of deliverance. The psalmist asks God to deliver him from his enemies.

Special concepts in this chapter

Help

The author needs help and needs it immediately.

Psalm 40

This psalm is an almost exact duplicate of Psalm 40:13-17.

Psalms 70:1

General Information:

Parallelism is common in Hebrew poetry. (See: Poetry and Parallelism)

ULT

1 Save me, God! Yahweh, come quickly and help me.

For the chief musician

“This is for the director of music to use in worship”

A psalm of David

This could mean: (1) David wrote the psalm or (2) the psalm is about David or (3) the psalm is in the style of David’s psalms.

Psalms 70:2

ULT

2 Let those who try to take my life be ashamed and humiliated; let them be turned back and brought to dishonor, those who take pleasure in my pain.

those who

“the people who”

take my life

This idiom means “kill me.” (See: Idiom)

be ashamed and humiliated

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: “may God put them to shame and bring disgrace upon them” (See: Active or Passive)

let them be turned back and brought to dishonor

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: “may God turn them around and make them ashamed for what they have done” (See: Active or Passive)

turned back

To be stopped or thwarted is spoken of as being turned back from their attack. Alternate translation: “stopped” (See: Metaphor)

Psalms 70:3

those who say, “Aha, aha.”

This is an expression of mocking laughter. You may replace “Aha, aha” with whatever laughing sounds like in your language. Alternate translation: “those who mock and laugh at me”

ULT

3 Let them be turned back because of their shame, those who say, “Aha, aha.”

Psalms 70:4

seek you

Seeking **God** could mean: (1) asking God for help or (2) thinking about God and obeying him. Alternate translation: “ask you for help” or “think about you and obey you” (See: Metaphor)

ULT

4 Let all those who seek you rejoice and be glad in you; let those who love your salvation always say, “May God be praised.”

rejoice and be glad

These two phrases mean basically the same thing and emphasize the intensity of gladness. Alternate translation: “rejoice greatly” or “be very glad” (See: Doublet)

love your salvation

The abstract noun “salvation” can be stated as an action. Alternate translation: “love you because you saved them” (See: Abstract Nouns)

always say

This exaggeration emphasizes that it is important to praise God often. (See: Hyperbole)

May God be praised

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: “Let everyone praise God” (See: Active or Passive)

Psalms 70:5

poor and needy

Here the words “poor” and “needy” mean basically the same thing and emphasize that he is unable to help himself. Alternate translation: “very needy” (See: Doublet)

ULT

5 But I am poor and needy; hurry to me, God; you are my help and you rescue me. Yahweh, do not delay.

hurry to me

The writer speaks of God as if he were running to the writer in order to help him. Alternate translation: “come quickly to help me” (See: Metaphor)

you are my help and you rescue me

Here the phrase “you rescue me” explains how God is his “help.” Alternate translation: “you help me by rescuing me” (See: Parallelism)

do not delay

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: “please come quickly” (See: Litotes)

Psalms 71

Psalm 71 General Notes

Type of psalm

Psalm 71 is a psalm of deliverance. (See: deliver, hand over, turn over, release, rescue)

Special concepts in this chapter

Yahweh's help

God has helped the psalmist all his life. Now that he is old, his enemy thinks that God has abandoned him; but the psalmist trusts in God and will praise Yahweh with songs of praise. (See: trust, trusted, trustworthy, trustworthiness)

Psalms 71:1

General Information:

This psalm is a prayer for help. Parallelism is common in Hebrew poetry. (See: Poetry and Parallelism)

ULT

1 In you, Yahweh, I take refuge; let me never be put to shame.

In you, Yahweh, I take refuge

Going to Yahweh for protection is spoken of as taking refuge in him. Alternate translation: “go to you, Yahweh, for protection” (See: Metaphor)

let me never be put to shame

This can be stated in active form. See how “do not let me be humiliated” is translated in Psalms 25:2. Alternate translation: “never let my enemies put me to shame” (See: Active or Passive)

Psalms 71:2

make me safe in your righteousness

This could mean: (1) “make me safe because you always do what is right” or (2) “make me safe as I do what you want me to do” (See: Idiom)

ULT

2 Rescue me and make me safe in your righteousness; turn your ear to me and save me.

turn your ear to me

Here “your ear” refers to God’s willingness to hear someone who prays to him. See how this is translated in Psalms 17:6. Alternate translation: “pay attention to me” (See: Metonymy)

save me

“keep me safe”

Psalms 71:3

Be to me a rock for refuge

The psalmist requests that Yahweh make him as safe as he would be if he were hiding in a large rock or cliff where his enemies could not find him. (See: Metaphor)

ULT

3 Be to me a rock for refuge where I may always go; you have given a command to save me, for you are my rock and my fortress.

rock ... rock

These are hills or mountains, not rocks one can hold in one's hand.

you have given a command

"you have commanded your angels"

you are my rock and my fortress

The psalmist believes that Yahweh will protect him and make him as safe as if he were hiding on top of a large mountain or inside a man-made fortress. (See: Metaphor)

Psalms 71:4

ULT

4 Rescue me, my God, out of the hand of the wicked, out of the hand of the unrighteous and cruel.

out of the hand of the wicked, out of the hand of the unrighteous

This could mean: (1) the word “hand” is a metonym for power. Alternate translation: “from the power of the wicked, from the power of the unrighteous” or (2) “hand” refers to the person himself. Alternate translation: “from wicked people, from unrighteous … people” or “so that wicked people and unrighteous … people cannot harm me” (See: Metonymy)

wicked, out of the hand of the unrighteous

“wicked; rescue me out of the hand of the unrighteous.” You can make clear the understood information. (See: Ellipsis)

wicked … unrighteous … cruel

These adjectives can be translated as noun phrases. Alternate translation: “wicked people … unrighteous people … cruel people” (See: Nominal Adjectives)

Psalms 71:5

you are my hope

Here “hope” is a metonym for the one in whom the psalmist hopes. Alternate translation: “you are the one whom I confidently expect to help me” (See: Metonymy)

ULT

5 For you are my hope, Lord Yahweh. I have trusted in you ever since I was a child.

Psalms 71:6

By you I have been supported from the womb

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: “You have supported me from the womb” or “You have taken care of me ever since I came out of my mother’s womb” (See: Active or Passive)

you are he

“you are the one”

ULT

6 By you I have been supported from the womb; you are he who took me out of my mother’s belly; my praise will be always about you.

Psalms 71:7

I am an example to many people

“Many people see how I live and want to live as I do”

ULT

7 I am an example to many people; you are my strong refuge.

Psalms 71:8

My mouth will be filled with your praise ... with your honor

ULT

8 My mouth will be filled with your praise, all the day with your honor.

The psalmist speaks of his desire to praise and honor Yahweh with the words he speaks as if his mouth were full of words the way it can be full of food. Alternate translation: “My mouth will be filled with words that praise you ... that honor you” or “I will always praise you ... will always honor you” (See: Synecdoche)

your praise

Here “praise” refer to the words that he will use to praise Yahweh. Alternate translation: “words that tell people how great you are” (See: Metonymy)

your honor

Here “honor” refer to the words that he will use to honor Yahweh. Alternate translation: “words that cause people to honor you” (See: Metonymy)

all the day

“all day long” or “at all times”

Psalms 71:9

Do not throw me away ... do not abandon me

These two phrases have basically the same meaning and are used together for emphasis. (See: Parallelism)

ULT

9 Do not throw me away in my time of old age; do not abandon me when my strength fails.

Do not throw me away

“Do not force me to go away from you.” For God to reject him is spoken of as God forcing him to go away. See how this is translated in Psalms 51:11. Alternate translation: “do not reject me” (See: Metaphor)

do not abandon me

“do not leave me forever”

Psalms 71:10

watch for my life

It is implied that they are watching for an opportunity to take his life. The euphemism “to take a life” means to kill. Alternate translation: “watch for an opportunity to take my life” or “wait for an opportunity to kill me” (See: Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information and Euphemism)

ULT

10 For my enemies are talking about me; those who watch for my life are plotting together.

Psalms 71:11

They say

This can be translated to make explicit that they are talking about him. Alternate translation: “They say about me” (See: Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information)

pursue and take him

“follow him when he runs away, and kill him”

ULT

11 They say, “God has forsaken him;
pursue and take him, for there is no one to save him.”

Psalms 71:12

do not be far from me

Because Yahweh has not yet answered the writer's request, he speaks of Yahweh as if Yahweh were standing far away from the writer. (See: Metaphor)

hurry to help me

"help me soon"

ULT

12 God, do not be far from me; my God, hurry to help me.

Psalms 71:13

Let them be put to shame and destroyed, those who are hostile to my life

“Let those who are hostile to my life be put to shame and destroyed”

ULT

13 Let them be put to shame and destroyed, those who are hostile to my life; let them be covered with rebuke and dishonor, those who seek my hurt.

Let them be put to shame and destroyed

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: “Put them to shame and destroy them” (See: Active or Passive)

those who are hostile to my life

The words “my life” represent the person. The idiom “hostile to my life” means that these are people who try to harm him by accusing him of wrongdoing. Alternate translation: “those who accuse me of doing wrong” (See: Synecdoche and Idiom)

let them be covered with rebuke and dishonor, those who seek my hurt

“let those who seek my hurt be covered with rebuke and dishonor”

let them be covered with rebuke and dishonor

This can be stated in active form. The abstract nouns “rebuke” and “dishonor” can be stated as verbs. Alternate translation: “may everyone rebuke them, and may no one honor them” (See: Active or Passive and Abstract Nouns)

those who seek my hurt

The noun “hurt” can be translated with a verb. Alternate translation: “those who are looking for ways to harm me” (See: Abstract Nouns)

Psalms 71:14

more and more

“more all the time” or “always more than I have before”

ULT

14 But I will always hope in you and will praise you more and more.

Psalms 71:15

My mouth will tell about your righteousness and your salvation all the day, although I cannot understand it

ULT

15 My mouth will tell about your righteousness and your salvation all the day, although I cannot understand it.

"I do not completely understand your righteousness and your salvation, but my mouth will tell about them all the day"

My mouth will tell

The mouth is synecdoche for the whole person. Alternate translation: "I will tell" or "I will speak with my mouth and tell" (See: Synecdoche)

your righteousness

This can be restated to remove the abstract noun "righteousness." Alternate translation: "how righteous you are" or "all the good things you do" (See: Abstract Nouns)

your salvation

The abstract noun "salvation" can be stated as an action. Alternate translation: "how you have saved me" or "how you save people" (See: Abstract Nouns)

Psalms 71:16

ULT

16 I will come with the mighty acts of the Lord Yahweh; I will make mention of your righteousness, yours alone.

I will come

This could mean: (1) "I will go to where people worship Yahweh" or (2) "I will go to my enemies" (See: Go and Come)

with the mighty acts of the Lord Yahweh

This could mean: (1) "I will tell them of the mighty deeds the Lord Yahweh has done" or (2) "because the Lord Yahweh has given me strength to do mighty acts."

will make mention of

"will talk about"

Psalms 71:17

taught me

The implied information may be stated clearly. “taught me many things” (See: Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information)

ULT

17 God, you have taught me from my youth; even now I declare your wonderful deeds.

Psalms 71:18

ULT

18 Indeed, even when I am old and gray-headed, God, do not forsake me, as I have been declaring your strength to the next generation, your power to everyone who is to come.

God, do not forsake me

“God, please do not forsake me”

I have been declaring your strength

The abstract noun “strength” can be translated with a verbal phrase. Alternate translation: “I have been telling how strong you are” (See: Abstract Nouns)

to the next generation

“to those who are children today”

your power to everyone who is to come

The omitted information may be stated clearly. Alternate translation: “and as I declare your power to everyone who is to come” (See: Ellipsis)

everyone who is to come

This exaggeration refers to everyone the writer can speak to. Alternate translation: “so as many people as I can tell will know” (See: Hyperbole)

Psalms 71:19

Your righteousness also, God, is very high

The psalmist speaks of the good things God has done as though they were put together as a high building or a mountain. (See: Metaphor)

who is like you?

This rhetorical question can be translated as a statement. Alternate translation: “there is no one like you!” (See: Rhetorical Question)

ULT

19 Your righteousness also, God, is very high; you who have done great things, God, who is like you?

Psalms 71:20

revive

strengthen or make lively again

from the depths of the earth

ULT

20 You who made me see many troubles will revive us again and will bring us up again from the depths of the earth.

“The depths of the earth” here is a metaphor for where people go when they die. The psalmist had not already died, but in this exaggeration he speaks as if he had. Alternate translation: “when we are near death” (See: Metaphor and Hyperbole)

Psalms 71:21

May you increase ... turn again and comfort

“I want you to increase ... I want you to turn again and comfort.” Some translations read, “You will increase ... you will turn again and comfort.”

ULT

21 May you increase my honor; turn again and comfort me.

turn again and comfort me

This describes one action through two phrases. Alternate translation: “comfort me again” (See: Hendiadys)

Psalms 71:22

to you I will sing praises with the harp, Holy One of Israel

“to you, who is the Holy One of Israel, I will sing praises while I play the harp”

ULT

22 I will also give thanks to you with the harp for your trustworthiness, my God;
to you I will sing praises with the harp,
Holy One of Israel.

Psalms 71:23

ULT

23 My lips will shout for joy when I sing praises to you— even my soul, which you have redeemed.

My lips will shout for joy

“Lips” represent the whole person. Alternate translation: “I will shout for joy” (See: Synecdoche)

even my soul, which you have redeemed

The words the psalmist has omitted can be stated clearly. Alternate translation: “and my soul, which you have redeemed, will sing praises” (See: Ellipsis)

my soul

Here “soul” refers to the whole person. (See: Synecdoche)

Psalms 71:24

My tongue will also talk

Here “tongue” refers to the whole person. Alternate translation: “I will also talk” (See: Synecdoche)

they have been put to shame and are confused, those who sought my hurt

“those who sought my hurt have been put to shame and are confused”

for they have been put to shame and are confused

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: “for God has put to shame and confused them” (See: Active or Passive)

those who sought my hurt

This refers to the enemies of the writer. (Psalms 71:10). See how “those who seek my hurt” is translated in Psalms 71:13.

ULT

24 My tongue will also talk about your righteousness all day long; for they have been put to shame and are confused, those who sought my hurt.

Psalms 72

Psalm 72 General Notes

Type of psalm

Psalm 72 is a psalm for the king when he begins to be the king. David wrote it as a blessing on his son, Solomon. (See: bless, blessed, blessing)

Special concepts in this chapter

Blessings for the king

May the king be honored throughout the world. May he help the poor. May there be prosperity while he is king.

Close of Book Two

The whole collection of Psalms has been divided into several “books.” This is the last psalm of the second book. It is attributed to Solomon, the son of David.

Psalms 72:1

General Information:

ULT

1 Give the king your righteous decrees,
God, your righteousness to the king's
son.

Parallelism is common in Hebrew poetry. Possible meanings for the header **a psalm of Solomon** are: (1) David wrote this psalm about Solomon ("the king's son") or (2) Solomon (who, as David's son, was "the king's son") wrote this psalm as a prayer about himself or (3) another king wrote it about his son in the style of Solomon. People in those days would often speak of themselves as if they were someone else. However, it would be best to translate this as though the psalmist is speaking of someone else, not of himself. (See: Poetry and Parallelism and First, Second or Third Person)

Give the king your righteous decrees, God, your righteousness to the king's son

This could mean: (1) "Give me, the king, your righteous decrees, God, your righteousness to my son" or (2) "Give me, the king, your righteous decrees, God, your righteousness to me, the king's son." People in those days would often speak of themselves as if they were someone else. However, it would be best to translate this as though the psalmist is speaking of someone else, not of himself. (See: First, Second or Third Person)

Give the king your righteous decrees

"Enable the king to judge rightly"

your righteousness to the king's son

The verb may be supplied from the previous phrase. Here the word "righteousness" refers to making righteous decisions. Alternate translation: "give your righteousness to the king's son" or "enable the king's son to rule with righteousness" (See: Ellipsis)

Psalms 72:2

May he judge

If David wrote this, he is talking about his son, “the king’s son,” he is speaking of the time when his son will be king. If Solomon wrote it, even though he is writing about himself, it would be best to translate as though he were writing about someone else. Either way, “May the king judge” is the best translation.

ULT

2 May he judge your people with righteousness and your poor with justice.

your people ... your poor

The psalmist is speaking to God.

your poor

The verb may be supplied from the previous phrase. The adjective “poor” refers to poor people. Alternate translation: “may he judge your poor people” (See: Ellipsis and Nominal Adjectives)

Psalms 72:3

May the mountains produce peace ... may the hills produce righteousness

ULT

[3] May the mountains produce peace for the people; may the hills produce righteousness.

The psalmist speaks of the people of Israel as if they were the mountains and hills on which they live. He speaks of the mountains and the hills as if they were the entire land of Israel, as if that land were a garden that produces fruit, and of peace and righteousness as if they are that fruit. Alternate translation: “May the people of the land live in peace ... may they do everything in a righteous way” (See: Metonymy and Synecdoche and Metaphor)

Psalms 72:4

he ... he

These refer to the one who will “judge” (Psalms 72:2).

break in pieces the oppressor

The writer speaks of the king defeating or punishing people who oppress others as if those people were objects that the king would break into pieces. Alternate translation: “punish the person who oppresses others” (See: Metaphor)

ULT

4 May he judge the poor of the people;
may he save the children of the needy
and break in pieces the oppressor.

Psalms 72:5

while the sun endures, and as long as the moon lasts

The sun and the moon are metonyms for the day and the night, which together are a merism for all time. Alternate translation: “forever, and without ending” (See: Metonymy and Merism)

ULT

5 May they honor you while the sun endures, and as long as the moon lasts throughout all generations.

Psalms 72:6

May he come down like rain on the mown grass

The king will be good, and he will do good things for his people as if he were rain doing good for freshly cut grass. (See: Simile)

ULT

6 May he come down like rain on the mown grass, like showers that water the earth.

May he come

"I desire that he come"

like showers that water

"May he come down like showers that water." The king will be good, and he will do good things for his people as if he were rain doing good for the ground. (See: Ellipsis and Simile)

Psalms 72:7

the righteous

The adjective “righteous” can be translated as a noun phrase. Alternate translation: “righteous people” (See: Nominal Adjectives)

ULT

7 May the righteous flourish in his days,
and may there be an abundance of
peace till the moon is no more.

in his days

This could mean: (1) “while the king rules” or (2) “as long as the righteous person lives” or “as long as the righteous people live.”

may there be an abundance of peace

The psalmist speaks as if peace were a physical object like food. An “abundance” is when there is much of something. This can be restated to remove the abstract nouns “abundance” and “peace.” Alternate translation: “may righteous people live peacefully” (See: Metaphor and Abstract Nouns)

till the moon is no more

“as long as the moon shines” or “forever” (See: Idiom)

Psalms 72:8

May he have dominion

“May the king have dominion”

from sea to sea, and from the River to the ends of the earth

Both of these expressions are merisms and refer to the whole earth. (See: Merism)

from sea to sea

from the Dead Sea and the Sea of Kinnereth in the east to the Mediterranean Sea in the west.

the River

“the Euphrates River,” which the Israelites would travel to on land by going north

the ends of the earth

as far as people could travel on land by different routes to the south. The Israelites spoke of the earth as if it were a flat surface with ends. (See: Metaphor and Idiom)

ULT

8 May he have dominion from sea to sea, and from the River to the ends of the earth.

Psalms 72:9

lick the dust

This is a metaphor for extreme humiliation. Alternate translation: “do everything they can so he will allow them to live” (See: Metaphor)

ULT

9 May those who live in the wilderness bow down before him; may his enemies lick the dust.

Psalms 72:10

Tarshish

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

render

pay

offer gifts

“give gifts”

Seba

This is the name of a country. It is not the same country as Sheba. (See: How to Translate Names)

ULT

10 May the kings of Tarshish and of the islands render tribute; may the kings of Sheba and Seba offer gifts.

Psalms 72:11

fall down before him

“bow down before him” or “honor him as their king”

all nations

Here the word “nations” represents the people who live in the nations. Alternate translation: “the people who live in every nation” (See: Metonymy)

ULT

11 Indeed, may all kings fall down
before him; may all nations serve him.

Psalms 72:12

no other helper

“no one else to help him”

ULT

12 For he helps the needy person who cries out and the poor person who has no other helper.

Psalms 72:13

He has pity on the poor and needy

“He wants to stop the poor and needy from suffering”

the poor and needy

Here the nominal adjectives “poor” and “needy” mean basically the same thing and emphasize that they are unable to help themselves. Alternate translation: “those who are poor and those who are needy” (See: Doublet and Nominal Adjectives)

ULT

13 He has pity on the poor and needy,
and he saves the lives of needy people.

Psalms 72:14

ULT
14 He redeems their lives from oppression and violence, and their blood is precious in his sight.

redeems their lives

Here “lives” refers to the whole person. Alternate translation: “redeems them” or “saves them” or “rescues them” (See: Synecdoche)

oppression and violence

These two words mean basically the same thing and emphasize how badly the needy suffer. These abstract nouns can be stated as verbs. Alternate translation: “those who oppress them and hurt them” (See: Doublet and Abstract Nouns)

their blood is precious in his sight

Here “their blood” is a metonym for their well-being. The sight of Yahweh represents his judgment or evaluation. Alternate translation: “their well-being is very important to him” or “he wants them to live well” (See: Metonymy)

in his sight

See how this phrase is translated in Psalms 19:14.

Psalms 72:15

May he live!

This saying was used to honor the king by expressing a desire to have him live a long time. Alternate translation: “May the king live a long time!” or “I desire that the king live a long time!” (See: Idiom)

ULT

15 May he live! May the gold of Sheba be given to him. May people always pray for him; may God bless him all day long.

May the gold of Sheba be given to him

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: “May they give him the gold of Sheba” or “May he receive the gold of Sheba” (See: Active or Passive)

all day long

This idiom means “continually” and does not refer only to one day. Alternate translation: “continually” or “all the time” (See: Idiom)

Psalms 72:16

abundance of grain

An “abundance” is when there is much of something. This abstract noun can be stated as “much” or “plenty” Alternate translation: “much grain” or “plenty of grain” (See: Abstract Nouns)

crops

plants that people grow for food

wave

Use the word for what long grass does when a gentle wind blows on it and it moves slowly back and forth.

like Lebanon

“like the cedar trees in Lebanon.” These trees were beautiful and had wood that was good for building. The meaning of this can be made clear. (See: Simile and Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information)

the people flourish in the cities like the grass of the field

The prosperity of the people in the cities is spoken of as if they were grass that grows abundantly in the fields. (See: Simile)

ULT

16 May there be abundance of grain in the land; on the mountaintops may their crops wave. May the fruit of it be like Lebanon; may the people flourish in the cities like the grass of the field.

Psalms 72:17

May his name endure forever

This saying is used to honor God by expressing the desire for people to always remember him. Alternate translation: “May people always know about him” or “May people never forget who he is” (See: Idiom)

ULT

17 May his name endure forever; may his name continue as long as the sun; may people be blessed in him; may all nations call him blessed.

his name

Here “his name” refers to God’s reputation. Alternate translation: “the king’s name” or “the king’s reputation” or “the king’s fame” (See: Metonymy)

as long as the sun

The verb may be supplied from the previous phrase. Alternate translation: “as long as the sun endures” or “as long as the sun shines” (See: Ellipsis)

may people be blessed in him

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: “may God cause him to do good things for people” (See: Active or Passive)

call him blessed

“recognize that God has blessed them”

Psalms 72:18

General Information:

These verses are more than the end of this psalm. It is the closing statement for all of Book 2 of the Psalms, which starts at Psalm 42 and ends with Psalm 72.

ULT

18 May Yahweh God, the God of Israel, be blessed, who alone does wonderful things.

May Yahweh God, the God of Israel, be blessed

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: “May people bless Yahweh God, the God of Israel” (See: Active or Passive)

Psalms 72:19

May his glorious name be blessed forever

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: “May people bless his glorious name forever” or, treating “name” as a metonym for Yahweh himself, “May people forever know how glorious he is” (See: Active or Passive and Metonymy)

ULT

19 May his glorious name be blessed forever, and may the whole earth be filled with his glory. Amen and Amen.

his glorious name be blessed

“he, who is glorious, be blessed”

may the whole earth be filled with his glory

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: “may his glory fill the whole earth” or “may he fill the whole earth with his glory” (See: Active or Passive)

Amen and Amen

The word “Amen” is repeated to emphasize approval of what has been said. See how you translated this in Psalms 41:13. Alternate translation: “May it certainly be so”

Psalms 72:20

The prayers of David son of Jesse are finished

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: “David, the son of Jesse has finished his prayers” or “This is the last prayer of the David the son of Jesse” (See: Active or Passive)

ULT

20 The prayers of David son of Jesse are finished.

Book Three

Psalms 73

Psalm 73 General Notes

Type of psalm

Psalm 73 is a wisdom psalm. It explains the problem of wicked people who seem to prosper. (See: wise, wisdom and evil, wicked, unpleasant)

Special concepts in this chapter

Evil people

Sometimes it seems that wicked people have no problems and everything works for them. Despite this, they will be destroyed. In contrast, the righteous always have God to help them through problems. (See: righteous, righteousness, unrighteous, unrighteousness, upright, uprightness)

Psalms by Asaph

There are twelve psalms attributed to Asaph; the first one is Psalm 50, which is in Book Two, and the other eleven (Psalm 73–83) are at the beginning of Book Three.

Psalms 73:1

General Information:

Parallelism is common in Hebrew poetry. (See: Poetry and Parallelism)

ULT

1 Surely God is good to Israel, to those with a pure heart.

Psalms 73:2

my feet almost slipped; my feet almost slipped out from under me

The psalmist speaks of being unable to trust God and wanting to sin as if he had almost fallen while walking on a slippery path. Alternate translation: “I almost stopped trusting in God; I was almost guilty of committing a great sin against him” (See: Metaphor)

ULT

2 But as for me, my feet almost slipped;
my feet almost slipped out from under me

Psalms 73:3

I was envious of the arrogant

“I envied the arrogant” or “I did not want arrogant people to have the good things that they had”

ULT
3 because I was envious of the arrogant
when I saw the prosperity of the wicked.

the arrogant

The adjective “arrogant” can be translated as a noun phrase. Alternate translation: “arrogant people” (See: Nominal Adjectives)

the prosperity of the wicked

The word “prosperity” can be translated as a verb. Alternate translation: “how the wicked have so many good things” (See: Abstract Nouns)

the wicked

The adjective “wicked” can be translated as a noun phrase. Alternate translation: “wicked people” (See: Nominal Adjectives)

Psalms 73:4

General Information:

Asaph begins to describe how he sometimes wants to complain to God about those who are “arrogant” and “wicked” (Psalms 73:3).

ULT

4 For they have no pain until their death,
but they are strong and well fed.

Psalms 73:5

the burdens of other men

The words “burdens” is a metonym for the struggles of daily life (need for food, shelter, clothing, and health). (See: Metonymy)

they are not afflicted like other men

“they do not suffer the way other people do”

ULT

5 They are free from the burdens of other men; they are not afflicted like other men.

Psalms 73:6

General Information:

Asaph continues to describe how he sometimes wants to complain to God about those who are “arrogant” and “wicked” (Psalms 73:3).

ULT

6 Pride adorns them like a necklace around their neck; violence clothes them like a robe.

Pride adorns them like a necklace around their neck; violence clothes them like a robe

This means the wicked show everyone how proud and violent they are as if they were wearing a necklace or beautiful robe. (See: Simile)

necklace ... robe

This refers to things that rich and important people wear.

necklace

a chain usually made of gold or jewels that goes around the neck

Psalms 73:7

Out of such blindness comes sin

Because they are like blind people who cannot see where they are going, they sin without knowing it. Being blind is a metaphor for a person being unable to see how wicked he is. (See: Metaphor)

ULT

7 Out of such blindness comes sin; evil thoughts pass through their hearts.

evil thoughts pass through their hearts

Here the psalmist describes people's thoughts as if they were people. He also describes the inner beings of wicked people as if they were a building in which those people could walk. Alternate translation: "in their inner beings they are always thinking about more evil things to do" (See: Metaphor)

Psalms 73:8

General Information:

Asaph continues to describe how he sometimes wants to complain to God about those who are “arrogant” and “wicked” (Psalms 73:3).

ULT

8 They mock and speak wickedly; in their arrogance they threaten oppression.

They mock

Whom they mock can be stated clearly. Alternate translation: “They mock God and his people” (See: Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information)

Psalms 73:9

They set their mouth against the heavens

Here “their mouth” is a metonym for their speech, and “heavens” is a metonym for God, who lives in the heavens. Alternate translation: “They speak against God, who is in the heavens” (See: Metonymy)

ULT

9 They set their mouth against the heavens, and their tongues march through the earth.

their tongues march through the earth

The word “tongues” represents the people themselves. This could mean: (1) “they go through the earth saying bad things about God” or (2) “they go everywhere and boast about themselves.” (See: Synecdoche)

Psalms 73:10

General Information:

Asaph continues to describe how he sometimes wants to complain to God about those who are “arrogant” and “wicked” (Psalms 73:3).

ULT

10 Therefore his people turn to them
and abundant waters are drained out.

his people turn to them

This could mean: (1) “God’s people love the wicked people” or (2) “the wicked people return to this place”

abundant waters are drained out

This could mean: (1) “God’s people listen gladly to the words of the wicked people” or (2) “the wicked people have plenty of food to eat and wine to drink”

Psalms 73:11

They say

the wicked people say

ULT

11 They say, “How does God know? Is there knowledge with the Most High?”

How does God know? Is there knowledge with the Most High?

These rhetorical questions are to show contempt for God. These questions can be translated as statements. Alternate translation: “Surely God does not know what we are doing. The Most High has no knowledge of it.” (See: Rhetorical Question)

Psalms 73:12

(There are no notes for this verse.)

ULT

12 Take notice: these people are wicked;
they are always carefree, becoming
richer and richer.

Psalms 73:13

General Information:

In verses 13 and 14, Asaph continues to describe how he sometimes wants to complain to God about those who are “arrogant” and “wicked” (Psalms 73:3). In verse 15 he begins to talk about what he is really thinking.

ULT

13 Surely it is in vain that I have guarded my heart and washed my hands in innocence.

I have

The word “I” refers to Asaph.

guarded my heart

Asaph speaks of guarding his heart as if he were guarding a city or building against enemies. Alternate translation: “I have kept my thoughts pure” (See: Metaphor)

washed my hands in innocence

The writer speaks of his purity as if he had washed his hands with innocence instead of with water. See how you translated this in Psalms 26:6. Alternate translation: “my actions have remained pure” or “I have washed my hands to show that I am innocent” (See: Metaphor)

Psalms 73:14

ULT
14 For all the day long I have been afflicted and disciplined every morning.

all the day long

“always” or “every day”

I have been afflicted

“You have made me suffer.” See how “they are not afflicted” is translated in Psalms 73:5.

I have been ... disciplined

“I have been ... punished”

Psalms 73:15

If I had said, “I will say these things,” then I would have betrayed this generation of your children

This hypothetical situation did not happen. Alternate translation: “I never said, ‘I will say these things,’ so I did not betray this generation of your children” (See: Hypothetical Situations)

ULT

15 If I had said, “I will say these things,” then I would have betrayed this generation of your children.

Psalms 73:16

these things

The good things that happen to “the wicked” (Psalms 73:4-Psalms 12).

ULT

16 Though I tried to understand these things, it was too difficult for me.

Psalms 73:17

their fate

“what happens to wicked people when they die” or “how wicked people die”

ULT

17 Then I went into God’s sanctuary and
came to understand their fate.

Psalms 73:18

put them

The word “them” refers to the wicked.

slippery places

“unsafe or unstable ground.” See how “slipped” is translated in Psalms 73:2.

ULT

18 Surely you put them in slippery
places; you bring them down to ruin.

Psalms 73:19

How they become a wilderness in a moment

The word “wilderness” is a metaphor for a person who has lost everything good. Alternate translation: “How quickly they are destroyed” (See: Metaphor)

ULT

19 How they become a wilderness in a moment! They come to an end and are finished in awful terrors.

Psalms 73:20

like a dream after one wakes up

The wicked will last no longer than what a person sees in a dream. It disappears as soon as the person wakes up. (See: Simile)

ULT

20 They are like a dream after one wakes up; Lord, when you arise, you will think nothing of those dreams.

Psalms 73:21

my heart was grieved

The word “heart” represents the person emphasizing their thoughts and feelings. Alternate translation: “I was very sad” (See: Synecdoche)

ULT

21 For my heart was grieved, and I was deeply wounded.

I was deeply wounded

The psalmist speaks of emotional pain as if it were physical pain by being pierced with a knife or arrow. Alternate translation: “I felt like someone had wounded me” (See: Metaphor)

Psalms 73:22

ignorant and lacked insight

These two phrases mean basically the same thing and emphasize how little he knew. Alternate translation: “very ignorant” (See: Doublet)

lacked insight

“understood nothing”

you

This “you” refers to God.

ULT

22 I was ignorant and lacked insight; I
was like a senseless animal before you.

Psalms 73:23

I am always with you

The word “I” here represents Asaph. The word “you” here represents God.

ULT

23 Yet I am always with you; you hold my right hand.

you hold my right hand

The person’s “right hand” refers to the whole person. This shows an intimate relationship with God that offers stability and security. Alternate translation: “You hold me close” (See: Synecdoche)

Psalms 73:24

receive me to glory

This could mean: (1) “put me where people will honor me” or (2) “honor me by taking me to where you are.” See how “receive me” is translated in Psalms 49:15.

ULT

24 You will guide me with your advice and afterward receive me to glory.

Psalms 73:25

Whom have I in heaven but you?

You can translate this as a statement. Alternate translation: “There is no one for me in heaven but you!” or “You are the only one I have in heaven!” (See: Rhetorical Question)

in heaven

“among the gods” or “among the supernatural beings”

ULT

25 Whom have I in heaven but you?
There is no one on earth that I desire but you.

Psalms 73:26

My flesh and my heart

These two phrases share similar meanings. Together they represent the whole person. Alternate translation: “My body and my mind” (See: Doublet and Merism)

ULT

26 My flesh and my heart grow weak,
but God is the strength of my heart
forever.

Psalms 73:27

General Information:

Asaph continues to talk about God.

ULT

27 Those who are far from you will perish; you will destroy all those who are unfaithful to you.

Those who are far from you

Here the idea of staying far from God is compared to being unwilling to obey him. Alternate translation: “Those who do not want to obey you” (See: Metaphor)

Psalms 73:28

my refuge

The writer speaks of Yahweh as if he were a place to which a person could flee for safety. (See: Metaphor)

ULT

28 But as for me, all I need to do is to approach God. I have made the Lord Yahweh my refuge. I will declare all your deeds.

Psalms 74

Psalm 74 General Notes

Type of psalm

Psalm 74 is a psalm of deliverance. The people have been completely conquered and they pray for God to deliver them. (See: deliver, hand over, turn over, release, rescue)

Special concepts in this chapter

God’s power

The enemies have destroyed God’s temple and are insulting the people. God is powerful. He made everything and he chose Israel for his people. He should avenge himself on these enemies that have burnt his temple. (See: temple, house, house of God and people of God and avenge, avenger, revenge, vengeance)

Superscription

This is called a “Maschil.” The word in the original language has caused scholars to have various opinions about its meaning. Some say it means to instruct, while others say that the word is referring to the skill used in creating the psalm. Still others think it means that meditation should be used in reading this psalm.

Psalms 74:1

General Information:

Parallelism is common in Hebrew poetry. (See: Poetry and Parallelism)

ULT

1 God, why have you rejected us forever? Why does your anger burn against the sheep of your pasture?

A maschil

This may refer to a style of music. See how you translated this in Psalms 32:1.

God, why have you rejected us forever?

This can be translated as a statement. Alternate translation: “God, we have done nothing wrong, but you have rejected us forever!” (See: Rhetorical Question)

Why does your anger burn against the sheep of your pasture?

This can be translated as a statement. Alternate translation: “We are the ones you have promised to care for, and we have done nothing wrong, but now you are angry with us!” (See: Rhetorical Question)

the sheep of your pasture

Asaph speaks of the people of Israel as if they were sheep. Alternate translation: “against Israel, who are like the sheep whom you feed in your pasture” (See: Metaphor)

Psalms 74:2

Call to mind

“Pay attention to.” God has not forgotten his people, but he does not seem to be thinking about them.

your own heritage

“yours forever”

ULT

2 Call to mind your people, whom you purchased in ancient times, the tribe whom you have redeemed to be your own heritage, and Mount Zion, where you live.

Psalms 74:3

General Information:

These verses describe an actual event, a physical attack on the temple of Israel in Jerusalem.

Come look

Asaph is addressing God, asking him to come look at the destruction.

ULT

3 Come look at the complete ruins, all the damage that the enemy has done in the holy place.

Psalms 74:4

roared

The adversaries were shouting loudly with a great cry of victory.

ULT

4 Your adversaries roared in the middle of your appointed place; they set up their battle flags.

Psalms 74:5

(There are no notes for this verse.)

ULT

5 They hacked away with axes as in a thick forest.

Psalms 74:6

engravings

This refers to carvings on wood, metal, or stone in the temple.

ULT

6 They smashed and broke down all the engravings; they broke them with axes and hammers.

Psalms 74:7

General Information:

Asaph continues to describe the destruction of the temple.

They ... they

Here “they” refers to the adversaries mentioned in Psalms 74:4.

ULT

7 They set your sanctuary on fire; they desecrated where you live, knocking it to the ground.

Psalms 74:8

They ... They

Here “they” refers to the adversaries mentioned in Psalms 74:4.

They said in their hearts

This is an idiom. Alternate translation: “They said to themselves” or “They thought to themselves” (See: Idiom)

ULT

8 They said in their hearts, “We will destroy them all.” They burned up all of your meeting places in the land.

Psalms 74:9

General Information:

Asaph is addressing God about the destruction he sees.

ULT

9 We do not see any more signs; there is no prophet any more, and no one among us knows how long this will last.

We do not see any more signs

This could mean: (1) “We do not see any more miraculous signs from God” or (2) “All our sacred symbols are gone” or (3) the “signs” are the flags and symbols of an army representing the army itself. Alternate translation: “They have completely destroyed our army” (See: Metaphor and Metonymy)

Psalms 74:10

How long, God, will the enemy throw insults at you?

This can be translated as a statement. Alternate translation: “God, the enemy has been throwing insults at you for too long!” (See: Rhetorical Question)

ULT

10 How long, God, will the enemy throw insults at you? Will the enemy blaspheme your name forever?

Will the enemy blaspheme your name forever?

This can be translated as a statement. Alternate translation: “It seems as if you will never stop the enemy from blaspheming your name!” (See: Rhetorical Question)

blaspheme your name

The word “name” is a metonym for God himself. Alternate translation: “say that you are bad” or “insult you” (See: Metonymy)

Psalms 74:11

Why do you hold back your hand, your right hand?

The psalmist speaks of God as if he had a physical body. This can be translated as a statement. Alternate translation: “Stop holding back your hand, your right hand!” (See: Rhetorical Question and Personification)

ULT

11 Why do you hold back your hand, your right hand? Take your right hand from your garment and destroy them.

hold back your hand

Here the word “hand” is a metonym for power. Alternate translation: “not show your power” or “not use your power to destroy your enemies” (See: Metonymy and Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information)

your right hand

“your strongest hand”

Take your right hand from your garment

The psalmist speaks of God as if he had a physical body. “Stop hiding your power and take action” (See: Metonymy and Personification)

Psalms 74:12

General Information:

This begins a new theme: Asaph is proclaiming God's mighty deeds in the history of his people.

ULT

12 Yet God has been my king from ancient times, bringing salvation on the earth.

God has been my king from ancient times

This could mean: (1) Asaph is speaking as Israel's representative, "God has been our king since we Israelites first became a nation" or (2) "God, my king, was alive even in ancient times."

bringing salvation

The abstract noun "salvation" can be translated with the verb "to save." Here Yahweh saving people is spoken of as if salvation were an object that he brings with him. Alternate translation: "saving people" (See: Abstract Nouns and Metaphor)

Psalms 74:13

You divided ... in the waters

Asaph is probably speaking of the time God brought Israel out of Egypt, divided the Sea of Reeds, led Israel through it on dry land, then drowned Pharaoh's army. (See: Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information)

ULT

13 You divided the sea by your strength;
you smashed the heads of the sea monsters in the waters.

You divided the sea by your strength

Asaph is speaking of God as if God had a physical body. "You are so strong you were able to make dry land in the middle of the sea." (See: Personification)

the sea

"the great water"

you smashed the heads of the sea monsters in the waters

Asaph is probably speaking of Pharaoh and his army as if they were sea monsters. If possible, translate these words literally. Alternate translation: "when you killed Pharaoh's army, it was as if you smashed the heads of sea monsters in the waters" (See: Metaphor)

Psalms 74:14

General Information:

Asaph continues to speak of what God did long ago. He is probably speaking of when God brought Israel out of Egypt and drowned Pharaoh's army in the Sea of Reeds. If possible, these words should be translated literally.

ULT

14 You crushed the heads of leviathan;
you fed him to those living in the wilderness.

leviathan

Leviathan is a sea monster. It represents a cruel enemy. (See: Metaphor)

Psalms 74:15

You broke open springs and streams

Yahweh causing springs and streams to flow out of the ground as if he broke open the ground so that they could flow. Alternate translation: “You caused springs and streams to flow out of the ground” (See: Metaphor)

ULT

15 You broke open springs and streams;
you dried up flowing rivers.

Psalms 74:16

General Information:

Asaph continues to recount God’s creative power.

ULT

16 The day is yours, and the night is yours also; you set the sun and moon in place.

Psalms 74:17

the borders of the earth

“the boundaries of the land and the sea”

ULT

17 You have set all the borders of the earth; you have made summer and winter.

Psalms 74:18

General Information:

Asaph is pleading for God’s help.

Call to mind

“Pay attention to.” See how this is translated in Psalms 74:2. (See: Idiom)

the enemy hurled insults at you

Asaph speaks of insulting words as if they were physical objects, like stones, which the enemy was throwing at Yahweh. Alternate translation: “the enemy insulted you many times” (See: Metaphor)

ULT

18 Call to mind how the enemy hurled insults at you, Yahweh, and that a foolish people has blasphemed your name.

Psalms 74:19

the life of your dove

Asaph speaks of himself as if he were a dove, a defenseless bird. This phrase may also be a metaphor for the people of Israel. Alternate translation: “me, your dove” (See: Metaphor)

ULT

19 Do not give the life of your dove to a wild animal. Do not forget forever the life of your oppressed people.

dove

A small, defenseless bird often kept as a pet.

a wild animal

This phrase may be a metaphor for the enemies of Israel. Alternate translation: “a savage enemy that is like a wild animal” (See: Metaphor)

Do not forget forever the life of your oppressed people

“Do not continue forever to do nothing to help your oppressed people.” This can be stated in positive form. Alternate translation: “Come soon to help your oppressed people” (See: Litotes)

Psalms 74:20

General Information:

Asaph continues his lament to Yahweh.

ULT

20 Remember your covenant, for the dark regions of the land are full of places of violence.

the dark regions of the land are full of places of violence

Asaph speaks of “regions” as if they were containers in which one could put “places of violence.” Alternate translation: “violent people do evil deeds in dark places in the land wherever they can” (See: Metaphor)

the dark regions of the land

The word “dark” is probably a metaphor for a place where bad things happen or for the lands to which the Israelites had been sent in exile, but these words should be translated literally if possible. (See: Metaphor)

Psalms 74:21

Do not let the oppressed be turned back in shame

“Do not let wicked people defeat the oppressed and make them ashamed”

ULT

21 Do not let the oppressed be turned back in shame; let the poor and oppressed praise your name.

the oppressed

These are people who are treated cruelly by powerful people.

the poor and oppressed

The words “poor” and “oppressed” mean basically the same thing and emphasize that Yahweh saves many who need his help. See how these words are translated in Psalms 35:10. (See: Doublet)

Psalms 74:22

defend your own honor

"show everyone that you are right"

call to mind

ULT

22 Arise, God; defend your own honor;
call to mind how fools insult you all day long.

"Pay attention to." God has not forgotten how fools insult him, but he does not seem to be thinking about it. See how this is translated in verse Psalms 2.

Psalms 74:23

the voice of your adversaries

The word “voice” is a metonym for the words people use when they speak. Alternate translation: “what your adversaries are saying” (See: Metonymy)

ULT

23 Do not forget the voice of your adversaries or the uproar of those who continually defy you.

or the uproar of those who continually defy you

The psalmist speaks of the words of those who defy God as if they were the loud sound of animals or non-living objects like water or the wind. Alternate translation: “and pay attention to the loud and meaningless words of those who continually defy you” (See: Ellipsis and Metaphor)

defy

boldly oppose

Psalms 75

Psalm 75 General Notes

Type of psalm

Psalm 75 is a wisdom psalm; teaching what will happen to evil people. (See: wise, wisdom and evil, wicked, unpleasant)

Special concepts in this chapter

Punishment

God has warned the evil people that they will be punished. He will strengthen the good people. (See: good, right, pleasant, better, best)

Psalms 75:1

General Information:

The people of God are speaking in 75:1, and God speaks in 75:2-3. Parallelism is common in Hebrew poetry. (See: Poetry and Parallelism)

ULT

1 We give thanks to you, God; we give thanks, for you reveal your presence; people tell of your wondrous works.

For the chief musician

“This is for the director of music to use in worship”

set to Al Tashheth

This may refer to a style of music. See how you translated this in Psalms 57:1.

A psalm of Asaph

“This is a psalm that Asaph wrote.” See how this is translated in Psalms Psalm 53.

Psalms 75:2

(There are no notes for this verse.)

ULT

2 At the appointed time I will judge fairly.

Psalms 75:3

all the inhabitants

“all the people who live on it”

make steady the earth’s pillars

“keep the earth from being destroyed” or Alternate translation: “keep my people safe” (See: Metaphor)

ULT

3 Though the earth and all the inhabitants shake in fear, I make steady the earth’s pillars. *Selah*

Psalms 75:4

I said to the arrogant ... and to the wicked

The words “the arrogant” and “the wicked” are nominal adjectives that can be translated with nouns. The verb for the second phrase may be supplied from the first. Alternate translation: “I said to the arrogant people ... and I said to the wicked people” (See: Nominal Adjectives and Ellipsis)

ULT

4 I said to the arrogant, “Do not be arrogant,” and to the wicked, “Do not lift up the horn.

I said

This could mean: (1) God is speaking or (2) Asaph is speaking.

Do not be arrogant ... Do not lift

The speaker is speaking to many wicked people, so these forms are plural. (See: Pronouns)

Do not lift up the horn

Asaph speaks of wicked people as if they were animals with horns on their heads, stretching their necks and holding their heads high to frighten other animals. Alternate translation: “Do not be confident” or “Do not boast about how strong you are” (See: Metaphor)

Psalms 75:5

ULT

5 Do not lift up your horn to the heights;
do not speak with an insolent neck.”

Do not lift up your ... do not speak

The speaker is speaking to many wicked people, so these forms are plural. (See: Pronouns)

Do not lift up your horn to the heights

Asaph speaks of wicked people as if they were animals with horns on their heads, stretching their necks and holding their heads as high as they can to frighten other animals. Alternate translation: “Be especially sure not to boast that you are greater than God” (See: Metaphor)

with an insolent neck

Asaph speaks of wicked people who defy or challenge God as if they were animals with horns on their heads, stretching their necks and holding their heads high to frighten other animals. Alternate translation: “arrogantly” (See: Idiom and Metaphor)

Psalms 75:6

It is not from the east ... that lifting up comes

ULT

6 It is not from the east or from the west, and it is not from the wilderness that lifting up comes.

Asaph speaks of the one who lifts up as if he were the action of lifting up. He also speaks of God giving strength and honor to a person as if God were physically lifting that person up. Alternate translation: “The one who will lift you up will not be someone who comes from the east” or “The one who will make you strong and have people honor you will not be someone who comes from the east” (See: Metonymy)

Psalms 75:7

General Information:

Asaph speaks about God.

ULT

7 But God is the judge; he brings down and he lifts up.

he brings down and he lifts up

The objects of the verbs can be stated clearly: “he brings some people down and he lifts other people up.” The words “brings down” and “raises up” are metaphors for God making people powerful and taking away their power. Alternate translation: “he makes one man king in place of another man” or “he takes away one man’s power and gives power to another man” (See: Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information and Metaphor)

Psalms 75:8

a cup of foaming wine ... mixed with spices

When Yahweh punishes the people they will be like people who have drunk strong wine and become ill. (See: Metaphor)

foaming wine

The foam is a metaphor for the power of the wine to make people drunk, Alternate translation: “strong wine” (See: Metaphor)

spices

dried leaves or ground seeds

pours it out

pours it from a large container into the cups that the people will drink from

drink it to the last drop

“drink every drop of it”

ULT

8 For Yahweh holds in his hand a cup of foaming wine, which is mixed with spices, and pours it out. Surely all the wicked of the earth will drink it to the last drop.

Psalms 75:9

(There are no notes for this verse.)

ULT

9 But I will continually tell what you have done; I will sing praises to the God of Jacob.

Psalms 75:10

He says

God says

cut off all the horns of

The horns of an animal are a metaphor for the power of a person. Alternate translation: “take away all power from” (See: Metaphor)

the horns of the righteous will be raised up

The horns of an animal are a metaphor for the power of a person. This can be translated as a statement in active form. Alternate translation: “I will raise up the horns of the righteous” or “I will make the righteous powerful” (See: Metaphor and Active or Passive)

ULT

10 He says, “I will cut off all the horns of the wicked, but the horns of the righteous will be raised up.”

Psalms 76

Psalm 76 General Notes

Type of psalm

Psalm 76 is a worship psalm.

Special concepts in this chapter

Yahweh’s greatness

God is great. He has conquered all the nations surrounding Israel. Everyone should bring him gifts.

Psalms 76:1

General Information:

Parallelism is common in Hebrew poetry. (See: Poetry and Parallelism)

ULT

1 God has made himself known in Judah; his name is great in Israel.

For the chief musician

“This is for the director of music to use in worship”

on stringed instruments

“people should play stringed instruments with this song.”

A psalm of Asaph

“This is a psalm that Asaph wrote” See how this is translated in Psalms 53:1.

made himself known in Judah

“caused the people of Judah to know who he is” or “made himself famous in Judah”

his name is great in Israel

The words “his name” are a metonym for his reputation. Alternate translation: “the people of Israel consider him good and powerful” (See: Metonymy)

Psalms 76:2

his dwelling place

“the place where he has chosen to live”

ULT

2 His tent is in Salem; his dwelling place is in Zion.

Psalms 76:3

There he broke the arrows of the bow, the shield, the sword, and the other weapons of war

These words are probably a metaphor for God causing the people of Judah to live in peace without being afraid of enemies making war on them, but the words should be translated literally. (See: Metaphor)

ULT

3 There he broke the arrows of the bow, the shield, the sword, and the other weapons of war. *Selah*

Psalms 76:4

General Information:

Asaph speaks of God as if God was a soldier returning from a mountain after winning a great battle.

ULT

4 You shine brightly and reveal your glory, as you descend from the mountains, where you killed your victims.

You shine brightly and reveal your glory

The second phrase strengthens the first phrase in that Yahweh's glory relates to Yahweh shining brightly. (See: Doublet)

You shine brightly

The words "shine brightly" are a metaphor for being great. Alternate translation: "You show how extremely great you are" (See: Metaphor)

Psalms 76:5

The bravehearted were plundered

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: “Your people killed the brave soldiers of their enemies and then took all their possessions” (See: Active or Passive)

ULT

5 The bravehearted were plundered;
they fell asleep. All the warriors were helpless.

fell asleep

Here “fell asleep” is a euphemism for died. Alternate translation: “died” or “fell down dead” (See: Euphemism)

Psalms 76:6

At your rebuke

The abstract noun “rebuke” refers to saying something in an angry or critical way. Alternate translation: “When you rebuked them” (See: Abstract Nouns)

ULT

6 At your rebuke, God of Jacob, both rider and horse fell asleep.

fell asleep

This phrase is a polite way to say that they died. Alternate translation: “died” or “fell down dead” (See: Euphemism)

Psalms 76:7

who can stand in your sight when you are angry?

This can be translated as a statement. Alternate translation: “No one can stand in your sight when you are angry.” or “You can destroy anyone at whom you are angry.” (See: Rhetorical Question)

ULT

7 You, yes you, are to be feared; who can stand in your sight when you are angry?

Psalms 76:8

you made your judgment heard

“you pronounced judgment” or “you announced how you were going to punish wicked people”

the earth was

Here “the earth” is a metonym for the people living on the earth. Alternate translation: “the people of the earth were” (See: Metonymy)

ULT

8 From heaven you made your judgment heard; the earth was afraid and silent

Psalms 76:9

execute judgment

“carry out judgment” or “punish wicked people”

ULT

9 when you, God, arose to execute judgment and to save all the oppressed of the earth. *Selah*

Psalms 76:10

Surely your angry judgment

“It is certain that your angry judgment”

ULT

10 Surely your angry judgment against humanity will bring you praise; you gird yourself with what is left of your anger.

your angry judgment against humanity will bring you praise

This could mean: (1) “people will praise you because you are angry at the wicked and judge them” or (2) “people who are angry with you will do things that cause people to praise you.”

you gird yourself with what is left of your anger

Yahweh’s anger is spoken of as something that he can tie around himself like a belt. Alternate translation: “you tie your remaining anger around you like a belt” (See: Metaphor)

Psalms 76:11

him who is to be feared

"Yahweh, whom they should fear"

ULT

11 Make vows to Yahweh your God and keep them. May all who surround him bring gifts to him who is to be feared.

Psalms 76:12

He cuts off the spirit of the princes

The phrase “He cuts off the spirit” is an idiom that means He breaks the spirit or He humbles. Alternate translation: “He humbles the princes” (See: Idiom)

ULT

12 He cuts off the spirit of the princes;
he is feared by the kings of the earth.

he is feared by the kings of the earth

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: “the kings of the earth fear him” (See: Active or Passive)

Psalms 77

Psalm 77 General Notes

Type of psalm

The author felt abandoned by God. This is a psalm of lament. (See: lament, lamentation)

Special concepts in this chapter

Lament

God used to be close to the psalmist, but now it seems that God has completely abandoned him. Long ago, God took care of Israel and brought the people safely through the sea.

Psalms 77:1

General Information:

Parallelism is common in Hebrew poetry. (See: Poetry and Parallelism)

ULT

1 I will call out with my voice to God; I will call with my voice to God, and my God will hear me.

For the chief musician

“This is for the director of music to use in worship”

Jeduthun

One of David’s chief musicians had this same name. This may refer to him. See how you translated this in Psalms 39:1. (See: How to Translate Names)

Psalms 77:2

I stretched my hands out

"I prayed with my arms extended"

My soul refused to be comforted

The "soul" represents the person. This can be stated in active form.
Alternate translation: "I would not allow anyone to try to comfort me" (See: Synecdoche and Active or Passive)

ULT

2 In the day of my trouble I sought the Lord; at night I stretched my hands out, and they would not become tired. My soul refused to be comforted.

Psalms 77:3

I thought of God as I groaned; I thought about him as I grew faint

These two phrases share similar meanings and are combined for emphasis. (See: Parallelism)

as I grew faint

“as my spirit grew faint” or “as my spirit was overwhelmed”

ULT

3 I thought of God as I groaned; I thought about him as I grew faint. *Selah*

Psalms 77:4

General Information:

After speaking about God, Asaph speaks to God in verse 4 and then returns to speaking about God.

ULT

4 You held my eyes open; I was too troubled to speak.

You held my eyes open

“I said to God, ‘You held my eyes open.’”

held my eyes open

Open eyes is a metonym for being unable to sleep. Alternate translation: “kept me from sleeping” (See: Metonymy)

Psalms 77:5

the days of old, about times long past

If necessary, “days of old” and “times long past” can be combined. Alternate translation: “about things that happened a very long time ago” (See: Parallelism)

ULT

5 I thought about the days of old, about times long past.

Psalms 77:6

I called to mind

This is an idiom for remembering. Alternate translation: “I remembered” (See: Idiom)

what had happened

Another possible meaning is “what was happening.”

ULT

6 During the night I called to mind the song I once sang. I thought carefully and tried to understand what had happened.

Psalms 77:7

Will the Lord reject me forever? Will he never again show me favor?

These two phrases express feeling rejection from the Lord. (See: Doublet)

ULT

7 Will the Lord reject me forever? Will he never again show me favor?

show me favor

“do things that show that he is pleased with me”

Psalms 77:8

General Information:

Because Asaph was not sure of the answer to these questions, they are probably literal questions and should be translated literally.

ULT

8 Was his covenant faithfulness gone forever? Had his promise failed forever?

Was his covenant faithfulness gone forever?

Asaph speaks of Yahweh no longer acting faithfully to his covenant as if Yahweh's covenant faithfulness had gone away. The abstract noun "faithfulness" can be translated with an adjective. Alternate translation: "Has he stopped being faithful to his covenant forever?" (See: Abstract Nouns)

Psalms 77:9

Had God forgotten to be gracious? Had his anger shut off his compassion?

These are two expressions stating similar concept of God not showing compassion. (See: Doublet)

ULT

9 Had God forgotten to be gracious?
Had his anger shut off his compassion?
Selah

Had his anger shut off his compassion

Asaph speaks of anger as if it were a person shutting a door to keep another person, compassion, from coming out, Alternate translation: “Had God stopped showing us compassion because he was angry with us” (See: Personification and Rhetorical Question)

Psalms 77:10

I said

This could mean: (1) the psalmist was speaking to himself or (2) the psalmist was speaking to Yahweh.

the changing of the right hand of the Most High toward us

The “right hand” is a metonym for power, authority or strength. Alternate translation: “the Most High no longer uses his power to help us” (See: Metonymy)

ULT

10 I said, “This is my sorrow: the changing of the right hand of the Most High toward us.”

Psalms 77:11

General Information:

The writer begins to speak to Yahweh.

ULT

11 But I will call to mind your deeds,
Yahweh; I will think about your
wonderful deeds of old.

call to mind

“remember” See how this is translated in Psalms 74:2. (See: Idiom)

your wonderful deeds of old

“the wonderful things you did long ago”

Psalms 77:12

I will ponder all your deeds and will reflect on them.

These two phrases express the concept of meditating on what Yahweh has done. (See: Doublet)

ponder

think deeply about

reflect on them

“think of what they mean”

ULT

12 I will ponder all your deeds and will reflect on them.

Psalms 77:13

General Information:

The writer continues to speak to Yahweh.

ULT
13 Your way, God, is holy; what god compares to our great God?

what god compares to our great God?

This can be translated as a statement. Alternate translation: “no god compares to our great God.” (See: Rhetorical Question)

Psalms 77:14

revealed your strength among the peoples

The abstract noun “strength” can be translated with an adjective. Alternate translation: “shown people from many people groups how strong you are” (See: Abstract Nouns)

ULT

14 You are the God who does wonders;
you have revealed your strength among the peoples.

Psalms 77:15

gave your people victory ... the descendants

"gave us, your people, victory ... us who are the descendants"

gave your people victory

The abstract noun "victory" can be translated with an adjective. Alternate translation: "caused your people to be victorious" (See: Abstract Nouns)

the descendants of Jacob and Joseph

This refers to the entire nation of Israel.

ULT

15 You gave your people victory by your great power— the descendants of Jacob and Joseph. *Selah*

Psalms 77:16

The waters saw you ... they were afraid ... the depths trembled

Asaph speaks of the water as if it were a person who saw something that terrified him. (See: Personification)

ULT

16 The waters saw you, God; the waters saw you, and they were afraid; the depths trembled.

the waters saw you, and they were afraid; the depths trembled

“water” and “depth” refers to large bodies of water such as the sea or ocean. (See: Doublet)

depths

deepest waters

Psalms 77:17

The clouds poured down water

Asaph speaks of the clouds as if they were people pouring water out of containers. Alternate translation: “Much rain fell” or “It rained very hard” (See: Personification)

ULT

17 The clouds poured down water; the cloudy skies gave voice; your arrows flew about.

your arrows flew about

This is a metaphor that describes lightning as God’s arrows. Alternate translation: “the lightning you made flashed like arrows” (See: Metaphor)

flew

Use your language’s word for what an arrow does after someone shoots it.

Psalms 77:18

thunderous voice

This is personification, referring to the thunder as the voice of God. Alternate translation: “voice, which was as loud as thunder” or “very loud voice” (See: Personification)

ULT

18 Your thunderous voice was heard in the wind; the lightning lit up the world; the earth trembled and shook.

lightning lit up the world

This is an exaggeration to emphasize that the lightning lit up everything the writer could see. Alternate translation: “lightning lit up everything as far as you could see” (See: Hyperbole)

Psalms 77:19

ULT

19 Your path went through the sea and
your way through the surging waters,
but your footprints were not seen.

Your path ... your way

These two phrases have similar meanings and are combined for emphasis. (See: Doublet)

your footprints

Asaph is speaking of Yahweh as if Yahweh was a person with feet. While this is personification, it should be translated literally, if possible. (See: Personification)

your footprints were not seen

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: “no one saw your footprints” (See: Active or Passive)

Psalms 77:20

You led your people like a flock

This simile compares God's people to a flock of animals. (See: Simile)

ULT
20 You led your people like a flock by the hand of Moses and Aaron.

by the hand of

The phrase "by the hand of" here means "by the action of" or "through the action of."

hand

Here "hand" is synechdoche for the whole person. (See: Synecdoche)

Psalms 78

Psalm 78 General Notes

Type of psalm

Psalm 78 is a wisdom psalm using Israel's history. (See: wise, wisdom)

Special concepts in this chapter

Israel's complaining

Although God did one miracle after the other, the people of Israel still complained and failed to believe Yahweh. (See: believe, believer, belief, unbeliever, unbelief)

Superscription

This is called a "Maschil." The word in the original language has caused scholars to have various opinions about its meaning. Some say it means to instruct, while others say that the word is referring to the skill used in creating the psalm. Still others think it means that meditation should be used in reading this psalm.

Psalms 78:1

General Information:

Parallelism is common in Hebrew poetry. (See: Poetry and Parallelism)

ULT

1 Hear my teaching, my people, listen to the words of my mouth.

A maschil

This may refer to a style of music. See how you translated this in Psalms 32:1.

Hear my teaching

The noun “teaching” can be translated with a verb. Alternate translation: “Hear what I teach” or “Hear me as I teach you” (See: Abstract Nouns)

the words of my mouth

The word “mouth” represents the person. Alternate translation: “my words” (See: Synecdoche)

Psalms 78:2

open my mouth in parables

The idiom “open my mouth” means to speak. Alternate translation: “speak in parables” (See: Idiom)

sing about

“tell.” See how “pours out” is translated in Psalms 19:2.

hidden things

If your language has a word for sayings that are purposely difficult to understand, you might use it here.

ULT

2 I will open my mouth in parables; I will sing about hidden things about the past.

Psalms 78:3

General Information:

Verse 3 continues the sentence begun in verse 2.

ULT

3 These are things that we have heard and learned, things that our ancestors have told us.

Psalms 78:4

We will not keep them from their descendants

This can be written in positive form. Alternate translation: “We will certainly tell our descendants about them”

the praiseworthy deeds of Yahweh

“the things we praise Yahweh for”

ULT

4 We will not keep them from their descendants. We will tell the next generation about the praiseworthy deeds of Yahweh, his strength, and the wonders that he has done.

Psalms 78:5

he established

"Yahweh established"

covenant decrees

Other possible meanings are "testimonies" or "laws."

ULT

5 For he established covenant decrees
in Jacob and appointed a law in Israel.
He commanded our ancestors that they
were to teach them to their children.

Psalms 78:6

(There are no notes for this verse.)

ULT

6 He commanded this so that the generation to come might know his decrees, the children not yet born, who should tell them in turn to their own children.

Psalms 78:7

General Information:

The writer speaks of the “children” of Psalms 78:5-6.

ULT

7 Then they would place their hope in God and not forget his deeds but keep his commandments.

Psalms 78:8

(There are no notes for this verse.)

ULT

8 Then they would not be like their ancestors, who were a stubborn and rebellious generation, a generation whose hearts were not right, and whose spirits were not committed and faithful to God.

Psalms 78:9

The Ephraimites ... day of battle

This is possibly a metaphor for not keeping the covenant (verse 10), but it is best to translate literally.

ULT

9 The Ephraimites were armed with bows, but they turned back on the day of battle.

The Ephraimites

“The Ephraimite soldiers”

were armed with bows

The soldiers probably also had arrows. Alternate translation: “had bows and arrows for weapons” (See: Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information)

Psalms 78:10

(There are no notes for this verse.)

ULT

10 They did not keep the covenant with God, and they refused to obey his law.

Psalms 78:11

(There are no notes for this verse.)

ULT

11 They forgot his deeds, the wonderful
things that he had shown them.

Psalms 78:12

land of Zoan

This refers to the area around the city of Zoan, which was in Egypt. (See: How to Translate Names)

ULT

12 They forgot the marvelous things he did in the sight of their ancestors in the land of Egypt, in the land of Zoan.

Psalms 78:13

(There are no notes for this verse.)

ULT

13 He divided the sea and led them
across it; he made the waters to stand
like walls.

Psalms 78:14

(There are no notes for this verse.)

ULT

14 In the daytime he led them with a cloud and all the night with the light of fire.

Psalms 78:15

He split

“God split”

enough to fill the depths of the sea

ULT

15 He split the rocks in the wilderness,
and he gave them water abundantly,
enough to fill the depths of the sea.

This is probably hyperbole. Alternate translation: “more water than they could possibly drink” (See: Hyperbole)

Psalms 78:16

streams

small rivers

ULT

16 He made streams flow out of the rock
and made the water flow like rivers.

Psalms 78:17

(There are no notes for this verse.)

ULT

17 Yet they continued to sin against him,
rebelling against the Most High in the
wilderness.

Psalms 78:18

They challenged God

They wanted God to prove that he could do what he said he would do before they would believe him.

in their hearts

“with their whole hearts”

to satisfy their appetites

“so they could eat as much as they desired”

ULT

18 They challenged God in their hearts by asking for food to satisfy their appetites.

Psalms 78:19

They spoke

the Israelites spoke

Can God really lay out a table for us in the wilderness?

This can be translated as a statement. Alternate translation: “We do not believe that God can really lay out a table for us in the wilderness!” or “God, prove to us that you can really lay out a table for us in the wilderness!” (See: Rhetorical Question)

lay out a table

The idiom “lay out a table” means to prepare a table for a meal. Here the word “table” is a metonym for the food on the table. Alternate translation: “provide us with food” (See: Idiom and Metonymy)

ULT

19 They spoke against God; they said,
“Can God really lay out a table for us in
the wilderness?

Psalms 78:20

waters gushed out

much water came out quickly

But can he give bread also? Will he provide meat for his people?

ULT

20 See, when he struck the rock, waters gushed out and streams overflowed. But can he give bread also? Will he provide meat for his people?”

The people are laughing at God to insult him with these questions. Alternate translation: “But we will not believe that he can give us bread also or provide meat for his people until we see him do it.” (See: Rhetorical Question)

bread ... meat

food from plants or food from animals. Though this is a merism for all kinds of food, it is best to translate it literally if possible. (See: Rhetorical Question)

Psalms 78:21

his fire burned against Jacob

The writer speaks of Yahweh's anger as if it were a fire, and of Yahweh acting in anger against Jacob as if that fire burned Jacob. Alternate translation: "his anger was like a fire that burned Jacob" (See: Metaphor)

ULT

21 When Yahweh heard this, he was angry; so his fire burned against Jacob, and his anger attacked Israel,

Jacob

This refers to the nation of Israel

his anger attacked Israel

The writer speaks of Yahweh punishing Israel when he was angry as if his anger were a person who attacked Israel. Alternate translation: "because he was angry, he attacked Israel" (See: Personification)

Psalms 78:22

did not trust in his salvation

"did not trust him to save them"

ULT

22 because they did not believe in God
and did not trust in his salvation.

Psalms 78:23

he commanded the skies

Asaph speaks of the skies as if they were a person who could hear and obey God's commands. Alternate translation: "he spoke to the sky" (See: Personification)

ULT

23 Yet he commanded the skies above and opened the doors of the sky.

skies

This could mean: (1) "sky" or (2) "clouds."

opened the doors of the sky

Asaph speaks of the sky as if it were a storeroom with doors. Alternate translation: "opened the sky as if it were a storeroom" (See: Metaphor)

Psalms 78:24

He rained down manna for them to eat, and gave them the grain from heaven

These two lines speak of the same event.

He rained down manna

“He caused manna to fall from the sky like rain”

ULT

24 He rained down manna for them to eat, and gave them the grain from heaven.

Psalms 78:25

the bread of angels

This refers to the manna that God provided for the people. The word “bread” represents food in general. Alternate translation: “the same kind of food that angels eat” (See: Synecdoche)

ULT

25 People ate the bread of angels. He sent them food in abundance.

food in abundance

The abstract noun “abundance” can be translated with an adjective. Alternate translation: “abundant food” or “a large amount of food” (See: Abstract Nouns)

Psalms 78:26

He caused

“God caused”

ULT

26 He caused the east wind to blow in the sky, and by his power he guided the south wind.

Psalms 78:27

He rained down meat on them like dust

The writer speaks of Yahweh causing birds to fall from the sky as if the birds were rain that Yahweh caused to fall. He compares the large amount of birds to dust. Alternate translation: “He caused meat to fall from the sky like rain, and there was so much of it that it covered the ground like dust” (See: Metaphor and Simile)

ULT

27 He rained down meat on them like dust, birds as numerous as the sands of the sea.

meat

birds

as numerous as the sands of the sea

No one can count the grains of sand. There were more birds than anyone could count, but this is an exaggeration: there were probably not literally the same number of birds as grains of sand. (See: Hyperbole)

Psalms 78:28

(There are no notes for this verse.)

ULT

28 They fell in the middle of their camp,
all around their tents.

Psalms 78:29

craved

strongly desired

ULT

29 So they ate and were full. He gave them what they craved.

Psalms 78:30

(There are no notes for this verse.)

ULT

30 But they had not yet filled up; their food was still in their mouths.

Psalms 78:31

Then

while the food was still in their mouths (Psalms 78:31)

God’s anger attacked them

“God was angry and attacked them.” See how “his anger attacked Israel” is translated in Psalms 78:21. (See: Personification)

brought down

This is a euphemism that means he caused them to die. Alternate translation: “killed” (See: Euphemism)

ULT

31 Then God’s anger attacked them and killed the strongest of them. He brought down the young men of Israel.

Psalms 78:32

did not believe his wonderful deeds

The word “deeds” is a metonym for God, who did the deeds. What they did not believe can be stated clearly. Alternate translation: “did not believe that he would take care of them even though he had done such wonderful deeds” (See: Metonymy and Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information)

ULT

32 Despite this, they continued to sin and did not believe his wonderful deeds.

Psalms 78:33

General Information:

The writer continues telling of what God did to the Israelites.

ULT
33 Therefore God cut short their days;
their years were filled with terror.

cut short their days

Here the word “days” refers to a lifetime. The idiom “to cut short … days” means to cause someone to die before they have lived a long life. Alternate translation: “killed them while they were still young” (See: Euphemism)

their years were filled with terror

Asaph speaks of years as if they were containers. Alternate translation: “year after year they were afraid all the time” (See: Metaphor)

Psalms 78:34

to seek him

to ask him what they needed to do so he would protect them (See: Idiom)

ULT

34 Whenever God afflicted them, they would start to seek him, and they would return and look earnestly for him.

afflicted them, they would ... they would return and look

These are different people from those whose days God “cut short.” When some of them died, others would “start to seek” God.

would return

“would repent” or “would be truly sorry for their sins”

look earnestly

“look urgently” or “look as best they could”

Psalms 78:35

General Information:

The tells of what the Israelites did.

ULT

35 They would call to mind that God was their rock and that the Most High God was their rescuer.

call to mind

“remember.” See how this is translated in Psalms 20:3.

God was their rock

The writer speaks about God as if he were a hill or mountain where people could go to be safe from their enemies. Alternate translation: “God was the one who protected them” (See: Metaphor)

their rescuer

“the one who rescued them”

Psalms 78:36

flatter him

“tell him he was wonderful when they did not believe it”

with their mouth

The word “mouth” is a metonym for the words they spoke using their mouths. Alternate translation: “by saying what they said” (See: Metonymy)

ULT

36 But they would flatter him with their mouth and lie to him with their words.

Psalms 78:37

their hearts were not firmly fixed on him

Here “hearts” is a metonym for their thoughts. To be loyal to him is spoken of as being solidly attached to him. Alternate translation: “their thoughts were not focused on him” or “they were not loyal to him” (See: Idiom)

ULT

37 For their hearts were not firmly fixed on him, and they were not faithful to his covenant.

Psalms 78:38

forgave their iniquity

"forgave them even though they had done evil deeds"

held back his anger

Asaph speaks of God's anger as if it were an angry person whom God held onto to keep him from attacking the one who had made him angry. Alternate translation: "did not punish them even though he was angry with them" (See: Metaphor)

did not stir up all his wrath

Asaph speaks of God's wrath as if it were a sleeping person whom God allowed to sleep and did not awaken. Alternate translation: "did not allow himself to become fully angry with them" (See: Metaphor)

ULT

38 Yet he, being merciful, forgave their iniquity and did not destroy them. Yes, many times he held back his anger and did not stir up all his wrath.

Psalms 78:39

called to mind

“remembered.” See how “call to mind” is translated in Psalms 20:3. (See: Idiom)

they were made of flesh

The word “flesh,” which is weak and then dies, is a metonym for human weakness and death. Alternate translation: “the Israelites were weak and would someday die” (See: Metonymy)

ULT

39 He called to mind that they were made of flesh, a wind that passes away and does not return.

Psalms 78:40

the barren regions

“places where nothing grows”

ULT

40 How often they rebelled against him
in the wilderness and grieved him in the
barren regions!

Psalms 78:41

they challenged God

They wanted God to prove that he could do what he said he would do before they would believe him. See how you translated this in Psalms 78:18.

ULT

41 Again and again they challenged God
and offended the Holy One of Israel.

Psalms 78:42

General Information:

The writer speaks of how God had rescued the Israelites.

ULT

42 They did not think about his power,
how he had rescued them from the
enemy

Psalms 78:43

Zoan

a city in Egypt (See: How to Translate Names)

ULT

43 when he performed his terrifying signs in Egypt and his wonders in the region of Zoan.

Psalms 78:44

General Information:

The writer describes what God did.

ULT

44 He turned the Egyptians' rivers to
blood so that they could not drink from
their streams.

Psalms 78:45

swarms of flies

so many flies that it looked like a cloud

that devoured them

The flies made the Egyptians almost as unhappy as they would have if they had eaten the Egyptians. (See: Metaphor and Hyperbole)

overran their land

“went everywhere in their land”

ULT

45 He sent swarms of flies that devoured them and frogs that overran their land.

Psalms 78:46

gave their crops to the grasshopper and their labor to the locust

"allowed the grasshoppers to eat all their crops and allowed the locusts to eat everything they had worked hard to produce"

ULT

46 He gave their crops to the grasshopper and their labor to the locust.

grasshopper

a plant-eating insect with long legs used for jumping

He gave their crops to the grasshopper

Asaph speaks of the crops as a gift that God gave to the grasshoppers. Alternate translation: "He allowed the grasshopper to eat their crops" (See: Metaphor)

their labor to the locust

"he gave their labor to the locust." Asaph speaks of the people's labor as if it were a gift that God gave to the grasshoppers. The word "labor" is a metonym for the crops that their labor had produced. Alternate translation: "he allowed the locusts to eat the crops they had worked so hard to produce" (See: Metaphor and Metonymy)

Psalms 78:47

General Information:

The writer continues to describe what God did to the Egyptians.

sycamore

a tree that gives fruit

ULT

47 He destroyed their vines with hail and their sycamore trees with more hail.

Psalms 78:48

lightning bolts

lightning that makes loud thunder

He rained hail

“He brought hail” or “He caused hail to fall”

ULT

48 He rained hail on their cattle and
hurled lightning bolts at their livestock.

Psalms 78:49

The fierceness of his anger lashed out against them

Asaph speaks of God's fierceness as if it were a person who could attack another person. Alternate translation: "He was angry with them, so he suddenly and fiercely attacked them" (See: Personification)

ULT

49 The fierceness of his anger lashed out against them. He sent wrath, fury, and trouble like agents who bring disaster.

The fierceness of his anger

"His fierce anger"

lashed out against them

"attacked them when they were not expecting anything to happen"

He sent wrath, fury, and trouble like agents who bring disaster

Asaph speaks of wrath, fury, and trouble as though they are people God can send to do his work for him. Alternate translation: "He was so angry that he wanted to harm the Egyptians, so he made trouble for them and brought them to disaster" (See: Personification and Simile)

fury

anger that makes someone want to harm others

Psalms 78:50

General Information:

The writer continues to describe what God did to the Egyptians.

ULT

50 He leveled a path for his anger; he did not spare them from death but gave them over to the plague.

He leveled a path for his anger

The psalmist speaks of anger as if it were a person who could walk Yahweh getting ready to punish the people as if he were making a smooth road for a person to walk on. Alternate translation: “He was so angry that he did everything he could to harm them” or “It was as if his anger was an army and he made a smooth road for it to march on” (See: Metaphor and Personification)

he did not spare them from death

“he did not keep the Egyptians from dying” or “he did not permit the Egyptians to live”

gave them over to the plague

Asaph speaks of the plague as if it were a person who was going to harm the Egyptians. Alternate translation: “he made them all very ill with the plague” (See: Metaphor and Personification)

Psalms 78:51

the firstborn of their strength

This phrase refers to the firstborn males of each family. Alternate translation: “the firstborn males” (See: Idiom)

in the tents of Ham

Here the word “tents” is a metonym for families. The word “Ham” refers to Egypt by the name of their ancestor. Alternate translation: “among the families of Egypt” (See: Metonymy)

ULT

51 He killed all the firstborn in Egypt, the firstborn of their strength in the tents of Ham.

Psalms 78:52

General Information:

The writer continues to describe what God did for the people of Israel.

ULT

52 He led his own people out like sheep
and guided them through the
wilderness like a flock.

like sheep ... like a flock

The writer speaks about the Israelites as if they were sheep. This means God cared for and protected the people like a shepherd does his sheep. (See: Simile)

Psalms 78:53

overwhelmed

completely covered

ULT

53 He led them secure and unafraid, but
the sea overwhelmed their enemies.

Psalms 78:54

General Information:

The writer continues to describe what God did for the people of Israel.

ULT

54 Then he brought them to the border of his holy land, to this mountain that his right hand acquired.

his right hand acquired

The words “right hand” are a metonym for power. Alternate translation: “he won for himself using his own power” (See: Metonymy)

Psalms 78:55

assigned them their inheritance

This could mean: (1) God assigned the Israelites their inheritance in the land in which the other nations had once lived or (2) God assigned to the nations he had driven out an inheritance somewhere else. “gave them land that would always be theirs”

ULT

55 He drove out the nations from before them and assigned them their inheritance. He settled the tribes of Israel in their tents.

in their tents

This could mean: (1) he settled Israel in their own tents in the land or (2) he settled Israel in the tents from which he had driven the other nations. Most of these “tents” were actually houses, both when the other nations lived in them and when the Israelites lived in them. Alternate translation: “in their homes” (See: Idiom)

Psalms 78:56

General Information:

The writer continues to describe what God did for the people of Israel.

ULT

56 Yet they challenged and defied the Most High God and did not keep his solemn commands.

challenged and defied

These words mean almost the same thing. The writer uses them both to emphasize that the Israelites did not believe that God would either provide for them or punish evil as he had said he would. (See: Doublet)

challenged

They wanted God to prove that he could do what he said he would do before they would believe him. See how you translated this idea in Psalms 78:18.

defied

refused to obey

Psalms 78:57

were unfaithful and acted treacherously

These words mean almost the same thing. The writer uses them both to emphasize that the Israelites did not do for God what they had said they would do. (See: Doublet)

ULT

57 They were unfaithful and acted treacherously like their fathers; they were as undependable as a faulty bow.

Psalms 78:58

General Information:

The writer continues to describe what God did for the people of Israel.

ULT

58 For they made him angry with their high places and provoked him to jealous anger with their idols.

made him angry with their high places and provoked him to jealous anger with their idols

These two phrases are in parallel and have similar meanings. (See: Parallelism)

Psalms 78:59

(There are no notes for this verse.)

ULT

59 When God heard this, he was angry
and completely rejected Israel.

Psalms 78:60

General Information:

The writer continues to describe what God did for the people of Israel.

ULT

60 He abandoned the sanctuary of Shiloh, the tent where he had lived among people.

Psalms 78:61

He allowed his strength to be captured and gave his glory into the enemy’s hand

ULT

61 He allowed his strength to be captured and gave his glory into the enemy’s hand.

Asaph speaks of God’s strength and glory as if they were physical objects that people could capture and hold. The words “strength” and “glory” are probably mentonyms for the ark of the covenant. The word “hand” is a metonym for the enemy’s power. This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: “He allowed his enemies to capture the glorious ark of his covenant; he simply gave it to them so they could do whatever they wanted with it” (See: Metonymy and Active or Passive)

Psalms 78:62

General Information:

The writer continues to describe what God did for the people of Israel.

ULT

62 He handed his people over to the sword, and he was angry with his heritage.

He handed his people over to the sword

Asaph speaks of God's people as if they were a small object God would give as a gift, and of the sword, a metonym for death in war, as if it were a person who could receive a gift. Alternate translation: "He allowed people to kill all his people in war" (See: Metaphor and Personification and Metonymy)

he was angry with his heritage

"he was angry with the people he had said would be his forever"

Psalms 78:63

Fire devoured their young men

This could mean: (1) “The enemy used fire to kill all their young men” or (2) “Their young men died quickly in battle like a fire burns dry grass.” Do not communicate that these people used guns. (See: Metaphor)

devoured

To “devour” is to eat everything very quickly.

wedding

the celebration when people marry

ULT

63 Fire devoured their young men, and their young women had no wedding songs.

Psalms 78:64

Their priests fell by the sword

Here the word “sword” represents soldiers who fought with swords. The phrase “fell by the sword” is an idiom that means to die in battle. Alternate translation: “Their priests died in battle” or “Enemies killed their priests with swords” (See: Metonymy and Idiom)

ULT

64 Their priests fell by the sword, and their widows could not weep.

their widows could not weep

This could mean: (1) someone forced the widows not to weep or (2) so many priests died that there was no time for proper funerals.

widows

women whose husbands have died

Psalms 78:65

the Lord awakened as one from sleep

The Lord not acting for a period of time is spoken of as if he were asleep, and his beginning to act is spoken of as if he awakened. Alternate translation: “the Lord began to act as if he had awakened from sleep” (See: Metaphor)

ULT

65 Then the Lord awakened as one from sleep, like a warrior who shouts because of wine.

like a warrior who shouts because of wine

This could mean: (1) like a warrior who had drunk too much wine and has become angry because he was awakened and so wants to fight or (2) like a warrior who drank much wine but is now able to think and fight well because he has slept.

Psalms 78:66

(There are no notes for this verse.)

ULT

66 He drove his adversaries back; he put them to everlasting shame.

Psalms 78:67

General Information:

The writer continues to describe what God did for the people of Israel.

ULT

67 He rejected the tent of Joseph, and he did not chose the tribe of Ephraim.

the tent of Joseph

Here the word “tent” is a metonym for a family. In this phrase it refers to the descendants of Joseph. Alternate translation: “the descendants of Joseph” (See: Metonymy)

Joseph ... Ephraim

Ephraim was Joseph’s son.

Psalms 78:68

Judah ... Mount Zion

Mount Zion was in the land where the tribe of Judah lived.

ULT

68 He chose the tribe of Judah and
Mount Zion that he loved.

Psalms 78:69

He built his sanctuary like the heavens

This simile could mean: (1) Yahweh has made his sanctuary as high as the heavens. Alternate translation: “He built his sanctuary high, like the heavens” or (2) Yahweh has made his sanctuary as permanent as the heavens. Alternate translation: “He built his sanctuary to last permanently, like the heavens last forever” (See: Simile)

ULT

69 He built his sanctuary like the heavens, like the earth that he has established forever.

like the earth

The verb may be supplied from the previous line. The writer compares the permanence of Yahweh’s sanctuary to the permanence of the earth. Alternate translation: “He built his sanctuary to last permanently, like the earth lasts permanently” (See: Ellipsis and Simile)

Psalms 78:70

General Information:

The writer continues to describe what God did

ULT

70 He chose David, his servant, and took him from the sheepfolds.

from the sheepfolds

“from where he was working in the sheepfolds” Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information

sheepfolds

spaces with walls around them where sheep are kept safe

Psalms 78:71

to be shepherd of Jacob, his people, and of Israel, his heritage

The word “shepherd” is a metaphor for one who leads and protects other people. Alternate translation: “to lead and protect the descendants of Jacob, his people, and of Israel, his heritage” (See: Metaphor)

ULT

71 He took him from following the ewes with their young, and he brought him to be shepherd of Jacob, his people, and of Israel, his heritage.

his heritage

“the ones he had chosen to be his forever” See how this is translated in Psalms 78:62.

Psalms 78:72

David shepherded them

The word “shepherded” is a metaphor for leading and protecting. Alternate translation: “David led them and protected them” (See: Metaphor)

ULT

72 David shepherded them with the integrity of his heart, and he guided them with the skill of his hands.

Psalms 79

Psalm 79 General Notes

Type of psalm

Psalm 79 is a deliverance psalm and a prayer for revenge against their enemies. (See: deliver, hand over, turn over, release, rescue and avenge, avenger, revenge, vengeance)

Special concepts in this chapter

Destruction

Jerusalem has been destroyed and its people killed. God should destroy these enemy nations who do not pray to him.

Psalms 79:1

General Information:

Parallelism is common in Hebrew poetry. (See: Poetry and Parallelism)

your inheritance

“the land that was to be yours forever” See how this is translated in Psalms 68:9.

ULT

1 God, foreign nations have come into your inheritance; they have defiled your holy temple; they have turned Jerusalem into a heap of ruins.

Psalms 79:2

(There are no notes for this verse.)

ULT

2 They have given the dead bodies of your servants as food to the birds of the skies, the bodies of your faithful ones to the beasts of the earth.

Psalms 79:3

They have shed their blood like water

The word “blood” is a metonym for innocent life. To shed blood is to kill innocent people. Most people saw water every day, so for blood to be as common as water, many innocent people would have to die. Alternate translation: “They have killed so many innocent people that the blood is everywhere, like water after it rains” (See: Metonymy and Simile)

ULT

3 They have shed their blood like water around Jerusalem, and there was none to bury them.

Psalms 79:4

We have become a reproach for our neighbors, mocking and derision to those who are around us

ULT

4 We have become a reproach for our neighbors, mocking and derision to those who are around us.

The words “reproach,” “mocking,” and “derision” are metonyms for those whom others reproach, mock, and deride. Alternate translation: “We have become people whom our neighbors reproach; those around us mock and deride us” (See: Metonymy)

We have become

The pronoun “We” refers to God’s people.

derision

strong laughter to shame a person

Psalms 79:5

How long will your jealous anger burn like fire?

ULT

5 How long, Yahweh? Will you stay angry forever? How long will your jealous anger burn like fire?

This can be translated as a statement. Alternate translation: “It seems as though your jealous anger will never stop burning like fire.” (See: Rhetorical Question)

will your jealous anger burn

The abstract noun “anger” can be stated as “angry.” Alternate translation: “will you be jealous and angry” (See: Abstract Nouns)

burn like fire

This simile compares the expression of God’s anger to a fire that destroys things. Alternate translation: “destroy us” (See: Simile and Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information)

Psalms 79:6

General Information:

These two pairs of phrases each share similar meanings and are combined for emphasis. (See: Parallelism)

ULT

6 Pour out your wrath on the nations that do not know you and on the kingdoms that do not call upon your name.

Pour out your wrath on the nations

Asaph speaks of God's wrath as if it were a liquid. Alternate translation: "Since you are angry, punish the nations" (See: Metaphor)

do not call upon your name

The word "name" is a metonym for the person's power and authority. Alternate translation: "do not belong to you" or "do not ask you to help them" (See: Metonymy)

Psalms 79:7

they have devoured Jacob

The word “Jacob” is a mentonym for his descendants, the people of Israel. Alternate translation: “they have completely destroyed the people of Israel” (See: Metonymy)

ULT

7 For they have devoured Jacob and
destroyed his villages.

Psalms 79:8

Do not hold the sins of our forefathers against us

"Do not continue to remember the sins of our forefathers and punish us for them" or "Forgive us for the sins of our forefathers"

ULT

8 Do not hold the sins of our forefathers against us; may your merciful actions come to us, for we are very low.

we are very low

The writer speaks of the people being weak and discouraged as if they were in a low position. Alternate translation: "we are very weak" or "we are very discouraged" (See: Metaphor)

Psalms 79:9

God of our salvation

The word “salvation” can be translated with the verb “save”: “God who saves us.” (See: Abstract Nouns)

ULT

9 Help us, God of our salvation, for the sake of the glory of your name; save us and forgive our sins for your name’s sake.

for the sake of the glory of your name

The word “name” is a metonym for his reputation, for what people know about him. Alternate translation: “so that people will know about your glory” (See: Metonymy)

for your name’s sake

God’s name here represents his whole being and the honor that he deserves. Alternate translation: “so that people will honor you” or “for your own sake” (See: Metonymy)

Psalms 79:10

Why should the nations say, “Where is their God?”

This can be translated as a statement. Alternate translation: “The nations should not be able to say, ‘Where is their God?’” (See: Rhetorical Question)

ULT

10 Why should the nations say, “Where is their God?” May the blood of your servants that was shed be avenged on the nations before our eyes.

Where is their God?

This taunt can be translated as a statement. Alternate translation: “Their God cannot do anything!” (See: Rhetorical Question)

May the blood of your servants that was shed be avenged on the nations before our eyes

To shed blood is a metonym for killing innocent people. This can be translated in active form. Alternate translation: “Avenge your innocent servants whom the nations killed where we can see you do it” (See: Metonymy and Rhetorical Question)

before our eyes

“in our sight” or “while we are present”

Psalms 79:11

May the groans of the prisoners come before you

Asaph speaks of the sound made by prisoners in pain and sorrow as if it were a person who appears before a king. Alternate translation: “Listen carefully to the groans of the prisoners and help them” (See: Metaphor and Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information)

ULT

11 May the groans of the prisoners come before you; with the greatness of your power keep the children of death alive.

children of death

This is an idiom that refers to people who are condemned to death. Alternate translation: “those who are condemned to die” (See: Idiom)

Psalms 79:12

Pay back ... the insults ... Lord

Asaph speaks of the evil deeds that the neighboring countries did against Israel as “insults,” and as if they were physical items. He asks the Lord to count those deeds, and for every one that the neighboring countries committed, he asks the Lord to have someone do seven evil deeds to the neighboring countries. (See: Metaphor)

ULT

12 Pay back into the laps of our neighboring countries seven times as much as the insults with which they have insulted you, Lord.

Pay back

“Return” or “Give back”

into the laps

onto their knees and thighs as they are sitting. This is a metaphor for “directly and personally.” (See: Metaphor)

Psalms 79:13

we your people and sheep of your pasture will give you thanks

The word “sheep” is a metaphor for helpless people whom a shepherd protects and leads. Alternate translation: “we who are your people, whom you protect and lead, will thank you” (See: Metaphor)

ULT

13 So we your people and sheep of your pasture will give you thanks forever. We will tell your praises to all generations.

tell your praises to all generations

“make sure that all generations to come know all the good things you have done”

your praises

This represents the things that people will praise them the Lord for. Alternate translation: “continue to praise you for the things that you have done” (See: Metonymy)

Psalms 80

Psalm 80 General Notes

Type of psalm

Psalm 80 is a deliverance psalm. (See: deliver, hand over, turn over, release, rescue)

Special concepts in this chapter

Yahweh's help

Israel's enemies threaten them. The psalmist asks Yahweh to look down with joy on them, then they will be saved. (See: save, saved, safe, salvation)

Important figures of speech in this chapter

Metaphor

The author uses an extended metaphor of Israel as a vine planted by God which is being uprooted. (See: Metaphor)

Psalms 80:1

General Information:

Parallelism is common in Hebrew poetry. (See: Poetry and Parallelism)

ULT

1 Pay attention, Shepherd of Israel, you who lead Joseph like a flock; you who sit above the cherubim, shine on us!

For the chief musician

“This is for the director of music to use in worship” See how this is translated in Psalms 4:1.

set to the Shoshannim

This may refer to a style of music. See how you translated this in Psalms 45:1.

Shepherd of Israel

Asaph is referring to God as the one who leads and protects Israel. (See: Metaphor)

you who lead Joseph like a flock

The word “Joseph” refers to the nation of Israel. Asaph speaks of the people as if they were a flock of sheep that Yahweh, who is the shepherd, leads. Alternate translation: “you who lead the descendants of Joseph as though they were a flock of sheep” (See: Metaphor)

Joseph

Here Joseph represents the nation of Israel. (See: Metonymy)

you who sit 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: “you who sit on your throne above the cherubim on the ark of the covenant” (See: Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information)

shine on us

Asaph speaks of God as if he were the sun, giving light, a metaphor for moral goodness. Alternate translation: “give us light” or “show us the right way to live” (See: Metaphor)

Psalms 80:2

stir up your power

The phrase “stir up” means to “put into action.” (See: Idiom)

ULT

2 In the sight of Ephraim and Benjamin
and Manasseh, stir up your power;
come and save us.

Psalms 80:3

make your face shine on us

The writer speaks of Yahweh acting favorably towards them as if Yahweh's face shone a light on them. Alternate translation: "act favorably towards us" (See: Metaphor)

ULT

3 God, restore us; make your face shine on us, and we will be saved.

and we will be saved

This can be translated in active form. Alternate translation: "and please save us" or "so that you can save us" (See: Active or Passive)

Psalms 80:4

your people

Israel

ULT

4 Yahweh God of hosts, how long will you be angry at your people when they pray?

Psalms 80:5

You have fed them with the bread of tears and given them tears to drink in great quantities

The words “bread of tears” and “tears to drink” are metaphors for continual sadness. Alternate translation: “You have made sure that they are very sad all the time” (See: Metaphor and Parallelism)

ULT

5 You have fed them with the bread of tears and given them tears to drink in great quantities.

Psalms 80:6

(There are no notes for this verse.)

ULT

6 You make us something for our neighbors to argue over, and our enemies laugh about us among themselves.

Psalms 80:7

General Information:

Asaph is speaking on behalf of the people of Israel. He begins in verse 8 to speak of the way God settled Israel in their land as if God were a man who cleared ground and planted a grapevine. The image of the grapevine continues through verse 16.

ULT

7 God of hosts, restore us; make your face shine on us, and we will be saved.

make your face shine on us

The writer speaks of Yahweh acting favorably towards them as if Yahweh's face shone a light on them. See how you translated this in Psalms 80:3. Alternate translation: "act favorably towards us" (See: Metaphor)

we will be saved

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "you will save us" (See: Active or Passive)

Psalms 80:8

You brought a vine out of Egypt

Asaph compares the nation of Israel to a vine made ready to transplant. Alternate translation: “You brought us, like a vine, out of Egypt” (See: Metaphor and Simile)

ULT

8 You brought a vine out of Egypt; you drove out nations and transplanted it.

you drove out nations and transplanted it

The psalmist speaks of his people as if they were a plant that Yahweh was transplanting. Alternate translation: “you drove out nations from their land and gave it to us, the vine, and planted us there” (See: Metaphor)

Psalms 80:9

General Information:

Asaph continues speaking of Israel in their land as if Israel were a grapevine in a vineyard. (See: Metaphor)

ULT
9 You cleared the land for it; it took root and filled the land.

You cleared the land for it

“You cleared the land for the vine”

it took root

“the vine took root” or “the vine began to grow”

filled the land

“its branches covered the land”

Psalms 80:10

The mountains were covered with its shade, the cedars of God by its branches

ULT

10 The mountains were covered with its shade, the cedars of God by its branches.

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: “Its shade covered the mountains, its branches the cedars of God” (See: Active or Passive)

the cedars of God by its branches

“and the cedars of God were covered by its branches,” which copies the verb from the previous sentence. This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: “and its branches covered the cedars of God” (See: Ellipsis and Active or Passive)

cedars of God

This could mean: (1) “the highest cedar trees,” the cedar trees that grew on the “mountains” in the land of Lebanon north of Israel, or (2) “God’s own cedar trees.”

Psalms 80:11

the sea

the Mediterranean Sea to the west of Israel

shoots

the parts of new plants that are just starting to grow above the ground

ULT

11 It sent out its branches as far as the sea and its shoots to the Euphrates River.

Psalms 80:12

General Information:

Asaph continues speaking of Israel in their land as if Israel were a grapevine in a vineyard.

its walls

walls of stone, not of wood

ULT

12 Why have you broken down its walls
so that all who pass by along the road
pluck its fruit?

Psalms 80:13

boars

wild pigs that ruin gardens and farms and attack people. If your readers do not know what these are, use the word for a wild animal that ruins gardens and farms and attacks people. (See: Translate Unknowns)

forest

land where there are many trees

beasts

wild animals of any kind

field

land where there are many plants but no trees

ULT

13 The boars out of the forest ruin it,
and the beasts of the field feed on it.

Psalms 80:14

General Information:

Asaph finishes speaking of Israel in their land as if Israel were a grapevine in a vineyard.

ULT

14 Turn back, God of hosts; look down from heaven and take notice and take care of this vine.

Turn back

The writer wants God to turn back in order to help them. This can be stated explicitly. Alternate translation: “Turn back to us” or “Come and help us again” (See: Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information)

take notice

“look at”

this vine

The writer continues comparing the nation of Israel to the vine. (See: Metaphor)

Psalms 80:15

This is the root that your right hand planted

The right hand represents the Yahweh's power and control. Alternate translation: "This is the root that you, Yahweh, planted" (See: Metonymy)

ULT

15 This is the root that your right hand planted, the shoot that you made to grow.

shoot

the part of a new plant that is just starting to grow above the ground. See how you translated this in Psalms 80:11.

Psalms 80:16

down; they perish because of your rebuke

This could mean: (1) “down; your people perish because of your rebuke.” or (2) “down. May your enemies perish because of your rebuke!”

ULT

16 It has been burned and cut down;
they perish because of your rebuke.

Psalms 80:17

ULT
17 May your hand be on the man of your right hand, on the son of man whom you made strong for yourself.

your hand

This refers to Yahweh's power and control. (See: Metonymy)

the man of your right hand

the nation of Israel, which Yahweh has chosen as his people. (See: Synecdoche)

right hand

When a man in Israel wanted to honor another man, he would have that other man stand at his right side, close to his right hand. (See: Idiom)

Psalms 80:18

we will not turn away from you

Here “turn away” is a metaphor for rejecting someone. This can also be stated in positive form. Alternate translation: “we will not stop worshiping and obeying you” or “we will always worship and obey you” (See: Metaphor)

ULT

18 Then we will not turn away from you;
revive us, and we will call on your name.

Psalms 80:19

shine on us

The writer speaks of Yahweh acting favorably towards them as if Yahweh's face shone a light on them. See how you translated this in Psalms 80:3. Alternate translation: "act favorably towards us" (See: Metaphor)

ULT

19 Yahweh God of hosts, restore us;
make your face shine on us, and we will be saved.

we will be saved

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "you will save us" (See: Active or Passive)

Psalms 81

Psalm 81 General Notes

Type of psalm

Psalm 81 is a wisdom psalm. It is meant to be sung at “new moon” and “full moon” ceremonies. (See: wise, wisdom)

Special concepts in this chapter

Obedience

If Israel would obey and worship God, he would destroy their enemies.

Psalms 81:1

General Information:

Parallelism is common in Hebrew poetry. (See: Poetry and Parallelism)

ULT

1 Sing aloud to God our strength; shout out for joy to the God of Jacob.

A psalm of Asaph

A psalm that Asaph wrote.

For the chief musician

“This is for the director of music to use in worship;”

set to the Gittith

This may refer to a style of music. See how you translated this in Psalms 8:1.

God our strength

The abstract noun “strength” can be stated as “strong.” Alternate translation: “God who causes us to be strong” (See: Abstract Nouns)

the God of Jacob

Here “Jacob” represents all of his descendants. Alternate translation: “the God of Israel, the nation of Jacob’s descendants” (See: Synecdoche)

Psalms 81:2

play the tambourine, the pleasant lyre with the harp

These are musical instruments.

ULT

2 Sing a song and play the tambourine,
the pleasant lyre with the harp.

tambourine

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)

Psalms 81:3

the new moon

This is the beginning of the lunar month.

the day of the full moon

This is the middle of the lunar month.

when our feast day begins

“and on the days when our feasts begin”

ULT

3 Blow the trumpet on the day of the new moon, on the day of the full moon, when our feast day begins.

Psalms 81:4

ULT

4 For it is a statute for Israel, a decree given by the God of Jacob.

For it

Here “it” refers to the feast day.

a decree given by the God of Jacob

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: “the God of Jacob decreed it” or “the God of Jacob commanded it” (See: Active or Passive)

the God of Jacob

Here “Jacob” represents all of his descendants. Alternate translation: “the God of Israel, the nation of Jacob’s descendants” (See: Synecdoche)

Psalms 81:5

issued it as a regulation

“gave it as a law”

in Joseph

Here “Joseph” represents all of the Israelites. Alternate translation: “to the Israelites” (See: Synecdoche)

when he went against the land of Egypt

This refers to the historical events in Egypt when the people of Israel were enslaved and God rescued them. (See: Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information)

the land of Egypt

Here “land” represents the people. Alternate translation: “the people of Egypt” (See: Metonymy)

ULT

5 He issued it as a regulation in Joseph
when he went against the land of Egypt,
where I heard a voice that I did not
recognize:

Psalms 81:6

General Information:

Here God begins speaking.

ULT

6 "I removed the burden from his shoulder; his hands were freed from holding the basket.

removed the burden from his shoulder

Here "the burden from his shoulder" represents the forced labor the Israelites had to do as slaves in Egypt. (See: Synecdoche)

his hands were freed from holding the basket

Here "holding the basket" represents the forced labor the Israelites had to do as slaves in Egypt. (See: Synecdoche)

Psalms 81:7

ULT

7 In your distress you called out, and I helped you; I answered you from a dark thundercloud. I tested you at the waters of Meribah. *Selah*

In your distress

“In your great suffering”

I answered you from a dark thundercloud

When God came to the Israelites, he hid the fullness of his presence and glory in a dark and threatening cloud. (See: Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information)

I tested you at the waters of Meribah

God tested the children of Israel to see if they would trust him to supply water in the desert of Meribah. (See: Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information)

Psalms 81:8

General Information:

Yahweh reminds the people what he said while they were in the desert.

ULT

8 Listen, my people, for I will warn you,
Israel, if you would only listen to me!

for I will warn you

“because I am giving you a warning”

Israel

Here “Israel” represents the people of Israel. Alternate translation: “Israelites” or “people of Israel” (See: Metonymy)

if you would only listen to me!

“how I wish you would listen to me” or “but you must start listening to me!”

Psalms 81:9

(There are no notes for this verse.)

ULT

9 There must be no foreign god among you; you must not worship any foreign god.

Psalms 81:10

Open your mouth wide, and I will fill it

God taking care of all the needs of the people is spoken of as if he were a mother bird feeding her baby birds. (See: Metaphor)

ULT

10 I am Yahweh your God, who brought you out of the land of Egypt. Open your mouth wide, and I will fill it.

Psalms 81:11

General Information:

Now Yahweh tells what actually happened after he warned the people.

to my words

“to what I said” or “to me”

ULT

11 But my people did not listen to my words; Israel did not obey me.

Psalms 81:12

So I gave them over to their own stubborn way

God allowing the people to remain stubborn is spoken of as if God were giving them over to an enemy to let the enemy harm them. Alternate translation: “Therefore, I let them be stubborn” (See: Metaphor)

ULT

12 So I gave them over to their own stubborn way so that they might do what seemed right to them.

Psalms 81:13

oh, that my people would walk in my paths

God wanting the people to obey him is spoken of as if he wanted the people to walk on his paths or roads. Alternate translation: “I wish that they would obey my laws” (See: Metaphor)

ULT

13 Oh, that my people would listen to me; oh, that my people would walk in my paths.

Psalms 81:14

turn my hand against

Here “hand” represents Yahweh’s power. Alternate translation: “I would destroy” or “I would defeat” (See: Metonymy)

ULT

14 Then I would quickly subdue their enemies and turn my hand against their oppressors.

Psalms 81:15

who hate Yahweh ... before him

Yahweh is speaking about himself in the third person. Alternate translation: “who hate me ... before me” (See: First, Second or Third Person)

cringe in fear

“bow down in fear” or “fall down in fear”

May they be humiliated forever

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: “I would humiliate them forever” or “I will punish them forever” (See: Active or Passive)

ULT

15 May those who hate Yahweh cringe in fear before him! May they be humiliated forever.

Psalms 81:16

I would feed Israel with the finest wheat

God causing the best wheat to grow in Israel is spoken of as if he would literally feed the wheat to the people. Alternate translation: “I would allow the Israelites to eat the finest wheat” (See: Metaphor)

ULT

16 I would feed Israel with the finest wheat; I would satisfy you with honey out of the rock.”

feed Israel ... satisfy you

Both “Israel” and “you” refer to the Israelites.

honey out of the rock

This refers to wild honey. Bees would build hives in the holes in rocks and make the honey there. (See: Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information)

Psalms 82

Psalm 82 General Notes

Type of psalm

Psalm 82 is a psalm of judgment against the leaders of the other nations. (See: judge, judgment)

Special concepts in this chapter

Favoritism

The leaders of the nations need to protect the poor and needy and not to favor the evil rich people. (See: favor, favorable, favoritism and evil, wicked, unpleasant)

Important figures of speech in this chapter

Metonymy

The leaders of the nations are represented by their gods. (See: Metonymy and god, false god, goddess, idol, idolater, idolatrous, idolatry)

Psalms 82:1

General Information:

Parallelism is common in Hebrew poetry. (See: Poetry and Parallelism)

ULT

1 God stands in the divine assembly; in the midst of the gods he renders judgment.

the divine assembly

“the heavenly council” or “the meeting in heaven”

he renders judgment

“he gives judgment.” The abstract noun “judgment” can be stated as a verb. Alternate translation: “he judges” (See: Abstract Nouns)

the gods

This could mean: (1) these are other spiritual beings who dwell in heaven. Alternate translation: “the divine beings” or “the heavenly judges” or (2) these are human judges that God has appointed. Either way, it does not mean they are gods like Yahweh is god. It means God has given them great power and authority. Alternate translation: “the rulers”

Psalms 82:2

How long will you judge unjustly and show favoritism to the wicked?

Yahweh uses a question to rebuke the gods for not judging people fairly. (See: Rhetorical Question)

ULT

2 How long will you judge unjustly and show favoritism to the wicked? *Selah*

Psalms 82:3

poor ... fatherless ... afflicted ... destitute

These words are nominal adjectives. They can be stated as adjectives. Alternate translation: “those who are poor ... those who are fatherless ... those who are afflicted ... those who are destitute” (See: Nominal Adjectives)

maintain the rights of the

“do what is right for the”

ULT

3 Defend the poor and fatherless;
maintain the rights of the afflicted and
destitute.

Psalms 82:4

poor ... needy ... wicked

These are all nominal adjectives. They can be stated as adjectives. Alternate translation: “those who are poor ... those who are needy ... those who are wicked” (See: Nominal Adjectives)

ULT

4 Rescue the poor and needy; take them out of the hand of the wicked.

take them out of the hand of the wicked

Here the word “hand” represents power or control. Alternate translation: “stop the wicked people from harming them” (See: Metonymy)

Psalms 82:5

ULT

5 They neither know nor understand;
they wander around in the darkness; all
the foundations of the earth crumble.

They neither

This could mean: (1) “they” refers to the gods or (2) “they” refers to the wicked people.

they wander around in the darkness

Doing what is evil is spoken of as if they were walking in a very dark place. (See: Metaphor)

all the foundations of the earth crumble

The gods corrupting the moral order that Yahweh established is spoken of as if the gods were shaking the earth and making it fall apart. (See: Metaphor)

crumble

fall apart

Psalms 82:6

You are gods, and all of you sons of the Most High

ULT

6 I said, “You are gods, and all of you sons of the Most High.

Here “gods” refers to the same group as in Psalms 82:1. Whether this refers to spiritual beings or human beings, they are not gods like Yahweh is God, and they are not literally his sons. By calling them “gods” and “sons of the Most High,” Yahweh is acknowledging that he has given them great power and authority.

sons of the Most High

Yahweh is speaking about himself as “the Most High.” (See: First, Second or Third Person)

Psalms 82:7

Nevertheless you

“However you”

and fall

This is a way of speaking of a person dying. (See: Idiom)

ULT

7 Nevertheless you will die like men and
fall like one of the princes.”

Psalms 82:8

General Information:

The writer is speaking again.

ULT
8 Arise, God, judge the earth, for you have an inheritance in all the nations.

judge the earth

Here “earth” represents the people. Alternate translation: “judge the people of the earth” (See: Metonymy)

for you have an inheritance in all the nations

“for all the nations are your inheritance.” Yahweh taking all the people as his own and ruling over them is spoken of as if the nations were a possession that he inherited. Alternate translation: “for you rule over all the people of every nation” (See: Metaphor)

all the nations

Here “nations” represents the people of the nations. (See: Metonymy)

Psalms 83

Psalm 83 General Notes

Type of psalm

Psalm 83 is a deliverance psalm. It is a prayer for deliverance from the many nations allied against Israel. (See: deliver, hand over, turn over, release, rescue)

Special concepts in this chapter

Destruction

God should destroy these enemy nations like he destroyed Israel's enemies during the time of the Judges.

Psalms 83:1

General Information:

Parallelism is common in Hebrew poetry. (See: Poetry and Parallelism)

remain unmoved

“do nothing to help us”

ULT

1 God, do not be silent! Do not ignore
us and remain unmoved, God.

Psalms 83:2

Look, your enemies are making a commotion

Here “making a commotion” means they are rioting and rebelling. Alternate translation: “Look, your enemies are rebelling against you”

those who hate you have raised their heads

The phrase “raised their heads” is way of saying they are rebelling against God. Alternate translation: “those who hate you are defying you” (See: Idiom)

ULT

2 Look, your enemies are making a commotion, and those who hate you have raised their heads.

Psalms 83:3

your protected ones

“those whom you protect.” This refers to the Israelites.

ULT

3 They conspire against your people and
plan together against your protected
ones.

Psalms 83:4

the name of Israel will no longer be remembered

Here “name” represents a reputation or the memory of someone. This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: “no one will ever remember the Israelites existed” (See: Metonymy and Active or Passive)

ULT

4 They have said, “Come, and let us destroy them as a nation. Then the name of Israel will no longer be remembered.”

Psalms 83:5

They schemed together with one strategy

“Your enemies have agreed together with one plan”

they made an alliance against you

“they have joined together against you”

ULT

5 They schemed together with one strategy; they made an alliance against you—

Psalms 83:6

General Information:

The writer continues to list the people groups who want to destroy Israel.

ULT

6 the tents of Edom and the Ishmaelites,
of Moab and the Hagrites,

the tents of Edom

This refers to the people of Edom who lived in tents. (See: Metonymy)

Hagrites

This is the name of a people group that lived on the east side of the Jordan River. (See: How to Translate Names)

Psalms 83:7

Gebal, Ammon, Amalek ... Philistia

These all represent the people of each area or tribe. Alternate translation: “the people of Gebal, the Ammonites, the Amalekites ... the Philistines” (See: Metonymy)

ULT

7 Gebal, Ammon, Amalek; and also Philistia and the inhabitants of Tyre.

Gebal

This is the name of a region south of the Dead Sea. (See: How to Translate Names)

Psalms 83:8

Assyria

This represents the people of Assyria. Alternate translation: “the people of Assyria” (See: Metonymy)

ULT

8 Assyria also has joined with them; they have become an arm for the descendants of Lot. *Selah*

they have become an arm for the descendants of Lot

Here “arm” is a metonym that represents “help.” Alternate translation: “they have become a help for the descendants of Lot” or “they are helping the descendants of Lot” (See: Metonymy)

the descendants of Lot

This refers to the people of the nations of Moab and Ammon. You can make clear the understood information. (See: Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information)

Psalms 83:9

Do to them as you did to Midian ... Sisera and to Jabin

The writer is asking God to defeat Israel's enemies as he has done in the past. (See: Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information)

ULT

[9] Do to them as you did to Midian, as you did to Sisera and to Jabin at the Kishon River.

did to Midian

Here "Midian" represents the people of Midian. Alternate translation: "did to the Midianites" (See: Metonymy)

Sisera ... Jabin

These are names of men. Jabin was king of Hazor. Sisera was the commander of Jabin's army. (See: How to Translate Names)

Kishon River

This is the name of a river in northern Israel. (See: How to Translate Names)

Psalms 83:10

Endor

This is the name of a town in northern Israel. (See: How to Translate Names)

ULT

10 They perished at Endor and became like manure for the earth.

became like manure for the earth

This means the bodies of Sisera and Jabin were not buried but were left to rot. (See: Simile)

Psalms 83:11

General Information:

The writer continues to remind God of other enemies he has defeated for Israel in the past. (See: Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information)

Oreb ... Zeeb ... Zebah ... Zalmunna

These are all names of kings. (See: How to Translate Names)

ULT

11 Make their nobles like Oreb and Zeeb, and all their princes like Zebah and Zalmunna.

Psalms 83:12

They said

Here “They” refers to Oreb, Zeeb, Zebah and Zalmunna.

ULT

12 They said, “Let us take for ourselves the pastures of God.”

the pastures of God

This speaks about the land of Israel as if it were land for sheep to graze and God were the shepherd watching over it. (See: Metaphor)

Psalms 83:13

General Information:

The writer uses similes to describe God's total destruction of Israel's enemies. (See: Simile)

ULT

13 My God, make them like the whirling dust, like chaff before the wind,

make them like the whirling dust, like chaff before the wind

Both statements speak of God destroying his enemies as if he were a strong wind easily blowing them away. (See: Simile and Parallelism)

Psalms 83:14

like the fire that burns the forest, and like the flame that sets the mountains on fire

Both statements speak of God's punishment as if it were a fire, and the enemies of God are things that burn in the fire. (See: Simile and Parallelism)

ULT

14 like the fire that burns the forest, and like the flame that sets the mountains on fire.

Psalms 83:15

Chase them with your strong wind, and terrify them with your windstorm

Both statements ask God to destroy the enemies with storms. (See: Simile and Parallelism)

ULT

15 Chase them with your strong wind,
and terrify them with your windstorm.

Psalms 83:16

Fill their faces with shame

Here “faces” represents the whole person. Alternate translation: “Make them very ashamed” (See: Synecdoche)

ULT

16 Fill their faces with shame so that they might seek your name, Yahweh.

they might seek your name

Here “name” represents God’s power. God’s enemies acknowledging that God is powerful is spoken of as if they are seeking to find Yahweh. Alternate translation: “they might acknowledge that you are powerful” (See: Metonymy and Metaphor)

seek your name

This could mean: (1) God’s enemies admit that God is powerful or (2) God’s enemies are asking God for help or (3) God’s enemies start to worship and obey him.

Psalms 83:17

May they be put to shame and be terrified forever

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: “Make them ashamed and terrified forever” (See: Active or Passive)

may they perish in disgrace

“may they die while they are ashamed”

ULT

17 May they be put to shame and be terrified forever; may they perish in disgrace.

Psalms 83:18

ULT

18 Then they will know that you alone, Yahweh, are the Most High over all the earth.

Then they will know

This can also be stated as the writer making a request to God. Alternate translation: “Cause them to know”

are the Most High over all the earth

God ruling over everything in the earth is spoken of as if he were elevated higher than everything else. Alternate translation: “are supreme, and you rule all things on the earth” (See: Metaphor)

Psalms 84

Psalm 84 General Notes

Type of psalm

Psalm 84 is a worship psalm.

Special concepts in this chapter

Obedience

God blesses all who want to obey him. Praising God in his temple is better than anything else. (See: bless, blessed, blessing and temple, house, house of God)

Similarity to Psalm 42-43

There are many similarities between these psalms and some scholars suggest they were written by the same people.

Psalms 84:1

General Information:

Parallelism is common in Hebrew poetry. (See: Poetry and Parallelism)

ULT

1 How lovely is the place where you live,
Yahweh of hosts!

For the chief musician

“This is for the director of music to use in worship”

set to the Gittith

This may refer to a style of music. See how you translated this in Psalms 8:1.

How lovely

“How beautiful”

Psalms 84:2

I long for the courts of Yahweh

"I really want to be in the courts of Yahweh"

the courts of Yahweh

Here "courts" represent the temple. (See: Synecdoche)

ULT

2 I long for the courts of Yahweh, my desire for it has made me exhausted. My heart and all of my being call out to the living God.

my desire for it has made me exhausted

"my desire has exhausted me" or "I am tired because I want it so much"

My heart and all of my being call out

Here "heart" represents the whole person. Alternate translation: "I call out with all of my being" (See: Synecdoche)

the living God

This means God is living and he also has the power to cause other things to live.

Psalms 84:3

sparrow ... swallow

These are types of birds. (See: Translate Unknowns)

found her a house

“found her a home” or “made her a home”

the swallow a nest

Here the words “has found” or “has made” are understood. Alternate translation: “the swallow has found a nest” or “the swallow has made a nest” (See: Ellipsis)

where she may lay her young

“where she may lay her eggs and care for her babies”

ULT

3 Even the sparrow has found her a house and the swallow a nest for herself where she may lay her young near your altars, Yahweh of hosts, my King, and my God.

Psalms 84:4

they who live in your house

This could mean: (1) “they” refers to the priests who permanently serve at the temple or (2) “they” refers to people in general who come and worship at the temple.

praise you continually

“keep praising you again and again”

ULT

4 Blessed are they who live in your house; they praise you continually. *Selah*

Psalms 84:5

Blessed is the man

Here “man” refers to people in general. (See: Generic Noun Phrases and When Masculine Words Include Women)

ULT

5 Blessed is the man whose strength is in you, in whose heart are the highways up to Zion.

whose strength is in you

God is spoken of as if strength was actually found in him. Alternate translation: “whom you strengthen” (See: Metaphor)

in whose heart are the highways up to Zion

This expression is about heart-felt desire. Alternate translation: “Who love to go up to Zion” or “Who earnestly wish go up to Zion” (See: Metaphor)

highways

roads built higher than the surrounding ground

up to Zion

The temple was in Jerusalem on the top of the highest hill, called Mount Zion.

Psalms 84:6

the Valley of Tears

This refers to a dry, arid place. Some Bible versions have “the Valley of Baca.” The word “Baca” means “weeping.”

ULT

6 Passing through the Valley of Tears, they find springs of water to drink. The early rains cover it with blessings. *[1]*

The early rains

This means the rain that falls in autumn before the cold season. This is during the months of October and November on Western calendars.

blessings

Here the word “blessings” is a metonym for the pools of water that make people who live in dry lands happy. Alternate translation: “pools of water that make them happy” (See: Metonymy)

Psalms 84:7

They go from strength to strength

This is a way of saying they get stronger. (See: Idiom)

They go

Here “They” refers to those who strongly desire to go to the temple to worship God.

ULT

7 They go from strength to strength;
every one of them appears before God
in Zion.

Psalms 84:8

(There are no notes for this verse.)

ULT

8 Yahweh God of hosts, hear my prayer;
God of Jacob, listen to what I am saying!
Selah

Psalms 84:9

God, watch over our shield

The king who protects his people is spoken of as if he were a shield. Alternate translation: “God, watch over our king” (See: Metaphor)

ULT

9 God, watch over our shield; show concern for your anointed.

Psalms 84:10

For one day in your courts is better than a thousand elsewhere

This can be stated with the understood information. Alternate translation: “I would rather be in your courts for one day than to be somewhere else for a thousand days” (See: Ellipsis)

ULT

10 For one day in your courts is better than a thousand elsewhere. I would rather be a doorkeeper in the house of my God, than to live within the tents of the wicked.

a thousand

“1,000” (See: Numbers)

be a doorkeeper

“be a guard at the door” or “stand at the door”

the wicked

This nominal adjective can be stated as an adjective. Alternate translation: “wicked people” or “those who are wicked” (See: Nominal Adjectives)

Psalms 84:11

For Yahweh God is our sun and shield

Yahweh who guides and protects his people is spoken of as if he were the sun and a shield. Alternate translation: “For Yahweh God guides us like the light from the sun, and he protects us like a shield” (See: Metaphor)

ULT

11 For Yahweh God is our sun and shield; Yahweh will give grace and glory; he does not withhold any good thing from those who walk in integrity.

Yahweh will give grace and glory

The abstract nouns “grace” and “glory” can be stated as verbs. Alternate translation: “Yahweh will be kind to us and honor us” (See: Abstract Nouns)

who walk in integrity

The way a person conducts their lives or behaves is spoken of as if the person were walking. Alternate translation: “who live honestly” or “who are honest”

Psalms 84:12

blessed is the man

Here “man” means people in general. Alternate translation: “blessed are those” (See: Generic Noun Phrases and When Masculine Words Include Women)

ULT

12 Yahweh of hosts, blessed is the man who trusts in you.

Psalms 85

Psalm 85 General Notes

Type of psalm

Psalm 85 is a worship psalm.

Special concepts in this chapter

Blessings

God has given so many blessings. If the people stop their sinning, then the land will be filled by the glory of God and his blessings. (See: bless, blessed, blessing and sin, sinful, sinner, sinning and glory, glorious, glorify)

Group Prayer

Note how this psalm uses the plural to show that it is a group praying.

Psalms 85:1

General Information:

Parallelism is common in Hebrew poetry. (See: Poetry and Parallelism)

ULT

1 Yahweh, you have showed favor to your land; you have restored the well-being of Jacob.

For the chief musician

“This is for the director of music to use in worship.”

you have showed favor to your land

Here “land” represents the nation and people of Israel. (See: Metonymy)

well-being

This refers to a person being happy, healthy and prosperous.

of Jacob

Here “Jacob” represents Jacob’s descendents, the Israelites. (See: Synecdoche)

Psalms 85:2

you have covered all their sin

Here sin that is forgiven is spoken of as if it were covered so that it can not be seen. Alternate translation: “you have deliberately forgotten their sin” (See: Metaphor)

ULT

2 You have forgiven the sin of your people; you have covered all their sin. *Selah*

their sin

This writer thought of himself as belonging to God’s people. Alternate translation: “our sin”

Psalms 85:3

You have withdrawn all your wrath

God no longer punishing the Israelites is spoken of as if wrath were an object that Yahweh could take away from the Israelites. (See: Metaphor)

ULT

3 You have withdrawn all your wrath;
you have turned back from your hot anger.

you have turned back from your hot anger

God no longer being angry with the Israelites is spoken of as if anger were a fire that God from which God turned away. (See: Metaphor)

Psalms 85:4

God of our salvation

The abstract noun “salvation” can be stated as a verb. Alternate translation: “God who saves us” (See: Abstract Nouns)

ULT

4 Restore us, God of our salvation, and
let go of your displeasure with us.

let go of your displeasure with us

Asking God to stop being angry with the Israelites is spoken of as if displeasure were an object the writer wants God to let go of. (See: Metaphor)

Psalms 85:5

Will you be angry with us forever? Will you remain angry throughout future generations?

The writer uses these questions to emphasize that he is requesting God to stop being angry with them. These rhetorical questions can be translated as a statement. Alternate translation: “Please do not stay angry at us forever.” (See: Rhetorical Question)

ULT

5 Will you be angry with us forever? Will you remain angry throughout future generations?

Psalms 85:6

Will you not revive us again?

The writer uses a question to emphasize his request to God to make the people of Israel prosper and happy again. This rhetorical question can be translated as a statement. Alternate translation: “Please make us prosper again.” (See: Rhetorical Question)

ULT

6 Will you not revive us again? Then your people will rejoice in you.

Psalms 85:7

Show us your covenant faithfulness

If the sentence is rearranged, the ideas in the abstract noun “covenant faithfulness” can be expressed with the phrase “faithful to your covenant.” (See: Abstract Nouns)

ULT

7 Show us your covenant faithfulness,
Yahweh, grant us your salvation.

grant us your salvation

This is how the writer wants God to show his faithfulness to his people. If the sentence is rearranged, the ideas in the abstract noun “salvation” can be expressed with the verb “save.” Alternate translation: “and save us” or “by saving us” (See: Abstract Nouns)

Psalms 85:8

make peace with his people

“have a peaceful relationship with his people” or “bring peace to his people”

Yet they must not turn again to foolish ways

A person changing the way he behaves is spoken of as if he were physically turning to a different direction. Alternate translation: “Yet they must not start doing foolish things again” (See: Metaphor)

ULT

8 I will listen to what Yahweh God says,
for he will make peace with his people,
his faithful ones. Yet they must not turn
again to foolish ways.

Psalms 85:9

Surely his salvation is near to those

God being ready to save someone is spoken of as if salvation were an object that God has placed near someone. Alternate translation: “Surely God is ready to save those” (See: Metaphor)

ULT

9 Surely his salvation is near to those who fear him; then glory will remain in our land.

then glory will remain in our land

Here “glory” represents God’s presence. Alternate translation: “then his glorious presence will remain in our land” (See: Metonymy)

Psalms 85:10

Covenant faithfulness and trustworthiness have met together

> **ULT**
> **10** Covenant faithfulness and trustworthiness have met together; righteousness and peace have kissed each other.

The abstract nouns “faithfulness” and “trustworthiness” are spoken of as if they were persons who meet together. This could mean: (1) God has been faithful because of his covenant and has done what he promised to do. Alternate translation: “God has been faithful to his covenant and has proven that he is worthy of people trusting him” or (2) God has been faithful because of his covenant and the people have responded by being faithful to him. Alternate translation: “God has been faithful to his covenant and people have responded by trusting him” (See: Abstract Nouns and Personification)

have met together ... have kissed each other

Most likely the speaker is describing a time in the future when God causes the people to prosper again. Alternate translation: “will meet together ... will kiss each other”

righteousness and peace have kissed each other

This could mean: (1) the people will do what is right and God will cause the people to live in peace or (2) God will do what is right and will cause the people to live in peace. Either way righteousness and peace are abstract nouns and are spoken of as if they were persons who kiss each other. (See: Abstract Nouns and Personification)

kissed each other

This was a common way for friends to greet each other.

Psalms 85:11

Trustworthiness springs up from the ground

The people on earth being faithful to God is spoken of as if trustworthiness were a plant growing out of the ground. The abstract noun “trustworthiness” can be stated as “loyal.” Alternate translation: “Here on earth, we will be loyal to God” (See: Metaphor and Abstract Nouns)

ULT

11 Trustworthiness springs up from the ground, and righteousness looks down from the sky.

righteousness looks down from the sky

The word “righteousness” is an abstract noun, and it is spoken of as a person looking down as God does. Alternate translation: “God will look on us from heaven and will act justly towards us” (See: Abstract Nouns and Personification)

Psalms 85:12

(There are no notes for this verse.)

ULT

12 Yes, Yahweh will give his good blessings, and our land will yield its crops.

Psalms 85:13

Righteousness will go before him and make a way for his footsteps

God doing what is right everywhere he goes is spoken of as if righteousness were a person who goes ahead of God and prepares a path for God to walk. (See: Personification)

his footsteps

Here “footsteps” represents where God walks. (See: Metonymy)

ULT

13 Righteousness will go before him and make a way for his footsteps.

Psalms 86

Psalm 86 General Notes

Type of psalm

Psalm 86 is a deliverance psalm. He is praying for deliverance from his many enemies. (See: deliver, hand over, turn over, release, rescue)

Special concepts in this chapter

Yahweh's help

God has blessed the psalmist and is so loving to him. He has been one of God's servants. Now he needs God to save him. (See: bless, blessed, blessing and love, beloved and save, saved, safe, salvation)

Psalms 86:1

General Information:

Parallelism is common in Hebrew poetry. (See: Poetry and Parallelism)

poor and needy

“weak and needy”

ULT

1 Listen, Yahweh, and answer me, for I
am poor and needy.

Psalms 86:2

save your servant

David refers to himself as “your servant,” that is, God’s servant. Alternate translation: “save me, your servant” (See: First, Second or Third Person)

ULT

2 Protect me, for I am faithful; my God,
save your servant who trusts in you.

Psalms 86:3

all day long

This is an exaggeration. David cries out continually, but not literally at all times from dawn to dusk. Alternate translation: “continually” (See: Hyperbole)

ULT

3 Be merciful to me, Lord, for I cry out to you all day long.

Psalms 86:4

Make your servant glad

David refers to himself as “your servant,” that is, God’s servant. Alternate translation: “Make me, your servant” or “Make me” (See: First, Second or Third Person)

ULT

4 Make your servant glad, for to you,
Lord, I lift up my soul.

Psalms 86:5

(There are no notes for this verse.)

ULT

5 You, Lord, are good, and ready to forgive, and you show great mercy to all those who cry out to you.

Psalms 86:6

(There are no notes for this verse.)

ULT

6 Yahweh, listen to my prayer; hear the sound of my pleas.

Psalms 86:7

In the day of my trouble

“During my times of difficulty”

I call on you

“I pray to you”

ULT

7 In the day of my trouble I call on you,
for you will answer me.

Psalms 86:8

among the gods

The writer is not acknowledging these other gods exist. He is referring to false gods that people from other nations worship. (See: Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information)

ULT

8 There is no one who compares to you among the gods, Lord. There are no deeds like your deeds.

Psalms 86:9

All the nations

Here “the nations” represent the people. Alternate translation: “The people from all nations” (See: Metonymy)

They will honor your name

Here “name” represents the whole person. Alternate translation: “They will honor you” (See: Metonymy)

ULT

9 All the nations that you have made will come and bow before you, Lord. They will honor your name.

Psalms 86:10

wonderful things

“very good things that amaze me”

you only are God

“you are the only God”

ULT

10 For you are great and do wonderful things; you only are God.

Psalms 86:11

Teach me your ways, Yahweh. Then I will walk in your truth

A person who obeys what God wants is spoken of as if he were walking on God's way or road. Alternate translation: "Teach me your truth, Yahweh. Then I will obey what you say" (See: Metaphor)

ULT

11 Teach me your ways, Yahweh. Then I will walk in your truth. Unite my heart to reverence you.

Unite my heart to reverence you

Here "heart" represents a person's thoughts, emotions, and motives. Asking God to cause a person to respect him completely is spoken of as if the person's heart were in many pieces and that God unites them together. Alternate translation: "Cause me to respect you sincerely with all my heart" or "Cause me to respect you sincerely" (See: Metonymy and Metaphor)

Psalms 86:12

I will praise you with my whole heart

Here “heart” represents a person’s thoughts, emotions, and motives. Alternate translation: “I will praise you completely and sincerely” (See: Metonymy)

ULT

12 Lord my God, I will praise you with my whole heart; I will glorify your name forever.

I will glorify your name

Here “name” represents the whole person. Alternate translation: “I will glorify you” (See: Metonymy)

Psalms 86:13

For great is your covenant faithfulness toward me

The abstract noun “faithfulness” can be stated as an adjective. Alternate translation: “For you are very faithful to me because of your covenant” (See: Abstract Nouns)

ULT

13 For great is your covenant faithfulness toward me; you have rescued my life from the depths of Sheol.

you have rescued my life from the depths of Sheol

This does not mean God brought him back to life after he died. It means God saved him when he was about to die.

Psalms 86:14

the arrogant

This nominal adjective can be stated as an adjective. Alternate translation: “arrogant people” (See: Nominal Adjectives)

have risen up against me

“are coming together to harm me”

seek my life

This is a way of saying they want to kill him. (See: Idiom)

ULT

14 God, the arrogant have risen up against me. A gang of violent men seek my life. They have no regard for you.

Psalms 86:15

and abundant in covenant faithfulness and trustworthiness

God constantly being faithful and trustworthy is spoken of as if faithfulness and trustworthiness were objects of which God has a large quantity. The two abstract nouns can be translated as adjectives. Alternate translation: “always faithful to your covenant and very worthy of people trusting you” (See: Metaphor and Abstract Nouns)

ULT

15 But you, Lord, are a merciful and gracious God, slow to anger, and abundant in covenant faithfulness and trustworthiness.

Psalms 86:16

Turn toward me

Asking God to consider him is spoken of as if he wanted God to turn and look at him. (See: Metaphor)

ULT

16 Turn toward me and have mercy on me; give your strength to your servant; save the son of your servant woman.

give your strength to your servant

The abstract noun “strength” can be stated as a verb or an adjective. Alternate translation: “strengthen your servant” or “make your servant strong” (See: Abstract Nouns)

your servant ... the son of your servant woman

The writer is speaking about himself in the third person. (See: First, Second or Third Person)

Psalms 86:17

be put to shame

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: “they will be ashamed” (See: Active or Passive)

ULT

17 Show me a sign of your favor. Then those who hate me will see it and be put to shame because you, Yahweh, have helped me and comforted me.

Psalms 87

Psalm 87 General Notes

Type of psalm

Psalm 87 is a psalm about Jerusalem.

Special concepts in this chapter

Pride

People will be proud to have been born in Jerusalem.

Psalms about Jerusalem

Psalm 46, 48, and 76 are part of a group of psalms that celebrate Jerusalem.

Psalms 87:1

General Information:

Parallelism is common in Hebrew poetry. (See: Poetry and Parallelism)

ULT

1 On the holy mount stands the city he founded;

Psalms 87:2

gates of Zion

Here “gates of Zion” represents the entire city of Jerusalem. Alternate translation: “city of Jerusalem” (See: Synecdoche)

ULT

2 Yahweh loves the gates of Zion more than all the tents of Jacob.

all the tents of Jacob

The people lived in tents while they wandered in the desert. Here the writer uses “tents of Jacob” to represent where the Israelites live now. Alternate translation: “any of the other dwelling places of the Israelites” (See: Metonymy)

Psalms 87:3

Glorious things are said of you, city of God

The writer speaks to the city of Jerusalem as if it were listening to him. This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: “You people in Jerusalem, other people say wonderful things about your city” (See: Apostrophe and Active or Passive)

ULT

3 Glorious things are said of you, city of God. *Selah*

Psalms 87:4

I mention

“I tell about.” Here “I” refers to Yahweh.

Rahab and Babylon

Here “Rahab” is a poetic way of referring to Egypt. Both “Rahab” and “Babylon” represent the people. Alternate translation: “the people of Egypt and Babylon” (See: Metonymy and How to Translate Names)

to my followers

“to those who worship me”

This one was born there

“This one” refers to the people from the nations that the writer mentions. Although they were not physically born in Zion, those who follow God are natives of Jerusalem spiritually. (See: Metaphor)

ULT

4 “I mention Rahab and Babylon to my followers. See, there are Philistia, and Tyre, along with Cush— and will say, ‘This one was born there.’”

Psalms 87:5

Of Zion it will be said

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: “People will say about Zion” (See: Active or Passive)

ULT

5 Of Zion it will be said, “Each of these was born in her; and the Most High himself will establish her.”

Each of these was born in her

People from other nations that worship Yahweh are spoken of as if they were born in Jerusalem. Alternate translation: “It is as though all of these people were born in Jerusalem” (See: Metaphor)

in her

It was common to refer to cities as “her.” Alternate translation: “in Jerusalem” or “in Zion”

the Most High himself

The writer uses the reflexive pronoun “himself” to emphasize that it is the Most High who is doing this. (See: Reflexive Pronouns)

will establish her

“will make Jerusalem strong”

Psalms 87:6

Yahweh writes in the census book of the nations

Yahweh acknowledging that the people from other nations belong to him is spoken of as if he were a king writing down the names of the people who live in his city. (See: Metaphor)

ULT

6 Yahweh writes in the census book of
the nations, “This one was born there.”
Selah

This one was born there

“This one” refers to the people from the nations that the writer mentions. Although they were not physically born in Zion, those who follow God are natives of Jerusalem spiritually. See how you translated this in Psalms 87:4. (See: Metaphor)

Psalms 87:7

All my fountains are in you

Jerusalem being a place where people receive all their blessings is spoken of as if Jerusalem were a spring that provided water to the people. (See: Metaphor)

ULT

7 So also the singers and the dancers say together, “All my fountains are in you.”

Psalms 88

Psalm 88 General Notes

Type of psalm

Psalm 88 is a psalm of deliverance from sickness. (See: deliver, hand over, turn over, release, rescue)

Special concepts in this chapter

Abandon

Ever since he was a child, the psalmist has been sick, and now all his friends have abandoned him. If he dies he cannot testify about God's healing.

Psalms 88:1

General Information:

Parallelism is common in Hebrew poetry. (See: Poetry and Parallelism)

ULT

1 Yahweh, God of my salvation, I cry out day and night before you.

A song, a psalm of the sons of Korah

“This is a psalm that the sons of Korah wrote”

for the chief musician

“this is for the director of music to use in worship”

set to the Mahalath Leannoth style

This may refer to a style of music. (See: Copy or Borrow Words)

A maschil

This may refer to a style of music. See how you translated this in Psalms 32:1.

Heman

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

God of my salvation

The abstract noun “salvation” can be stated as a verb. Alternate translation: “you are the one who saves me” (See: Abstract Nouns)

day and night

The writer uses these words with opposite meanings to say that he cries out continually. (See: Merism)

Psalms 88:2

(There are no notes for this verse.)

ULT

2 Listen to my prayer; pay attention to my cry.

Psalms 88:3

For I am filled with troubles

The writer speaks of himself as if he were a container and troubles are the contents that fill the container. Alternate translation: “For I am very troubled” (See: Metaphor)

ULT

3 For I am filled with troubles, and my life has reached Sheol.

my life has reached Sheol

Here “life” represents the writer. And “Sheol” represents death. The writer speaks about himself possibly dying soon as if Sheol were a place and he has arrived at that place. Alternate translation: “I am about to die” (See: Metonymy and Metaphor)

Psalms 88:4

People treat me like those who go down into the pit

The word “pit” means the same as “Sheol.” The phrase “go down into the pit” represents dying. Alternate translation: “people treat me like I have already died” (See: Metonymy)

ULT

4 People treat me like those who go down into the pit; I am a man with no strength.

Psalms 88:5

I am abandoned among the dead

ULT
5 I am abandoned among the dead; I am like the dead who lie in the grave, about whom you care no more because they are cut off from your power.

People treating the writer as if he were already dead is spoken of as if he were a corpse that they left unburied. Alternate translation: I am left alone as if I were dead" (See: Metaphor)

I am like the dead who lie in the grave

The writer feeling like people and God have abandoned him speaks about himself as if he were already a dead person lying in a grave. (See: Simile)

the dead who lie

The nominal adjective "the dead" can be stated as an adjective. Alternate translation: "a dead person who lies" or "dead people who lie" (See: Nominal Adjectives)

about whom you care no more

"who no longer receive your care" or "people you have stopped caring about"

they are cut off from your power

God no longer using his power to help dead people is spoken of as if God literally cut him off or removed him from his power. Alternate translation: "you no longer use your power to help them" (See: Metaphor)

Psalms 88:6

You place me in the lowest part of the pit, in the dark and deep places

The writer feeling like God has abandoned him speaks about himself as if God has put the him in the deepest and darkest grave. (See: Metaphor)

ULT

6 You place me in the lowest part of the pit, in the dark and deep places.

Psalms 88:7

Your wrath lies heavy on me

This speaks about God being very angry with the writer as if God's wrath were a heavy object lying on top of the writer. Alternate translation: "I feel your great anger" or "I feel how very angry you are with me" (See: Metaphor)

ULT

7 Your wrath lies heavy on me, and all your waves crash over me. *Selah*

all your waves crash over me

This speaks about God being very angry with the writer as if God's anger were large waves rising up from the sea then landing on the writer. (See: Metaphor)

Psalms 88:8

my acquaintances

“those who know me”

You have made me a shocking sight to them

“You have made me a disgusting sight to them” or “Because of you, they are shocked when they see me”

I am hemmed in

The writer’s physical condition that makes him repulsive to his friends is spoken of as if he were in closed into a confining space. Alternate translation: “It is as though I were in a prison” or “I am trapped” (See: Metaphor)

ULT

8 Because of you, my acquaintances avoid me. You have made me a shocking sight to them. I am hemmed in and I cannot escape.

Psalms 88:9

My eyes grow weary from trouble

Here “eyes” represents a person’s ability to see. For his eyes to grow weary from trouble is a way of saying that he his troubles cause him to cry so much that it is hard for him to see. (See: Metonymy and Idiom)

ULT

9 My eyes grow weary from trouble; All day long I call out to you, Yahweh; I spread out my hands to you.

I spread out my hands to you

“I lift up my hands to you.” This is an action that shows that he totally depends on God. (See: Symbolic Action)

Psalms 88:10

Will you do wonders for the dead?

The writer uses a question to emphasize that if God lets him die then God will no longer be able to do wonderful things for him. Alternate translation: “You do not do wonders for dead people.” (See: Rhetorical Question)

ULT

10 Will you do wonders for the dead?
Will those who have died rise and praise you? *Selah*

Will those who have died rise and praise you?

The writer uses a question to emphasize that if God lets him die then he will not be able to praise God any longer. Alternate translation: “You know that those who have died will not stand up and praise you.” (See: Rhetorical Question)

Psalms 88:11

Will your covenant faithfulness be proclaimed in the grave, your loyalty in the place of the dead?

ULT

11 Will your covenant faithfulness be proclaimed in the grave, your loyalty in the place of the dead?

Both questions mean the same thing. The writer uses questions to emphasize that a dead person is not able to praise God's faithfulness. The abstract nouns "faithfulness" and "loyalty" can be translated as adjectives. This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "Nobody will proclaim your covenant faithfulness or loyalty from the grave." or "Nobody will proclaim from the grave that you are faithful to your covenant and loyal to your people" (See: Parallelism and Rhetorical Question and Active or Passive)

the grave ... the place of the dead

These represent the place where people go after they die.

your loyalty in the place of the dead?

This can be translated as a separate sentence. Alternate translation: "Will your loyalty be proclaimed in the place of the dead?" or "Those who are dead will not proclaim your loyalty." (See: Ellipsis and Rhetorical Question)

Psalms 88:12

in the darkness ... the place of forgetfulness

These represent the place where people go after they die.

Will your wonderful deeds be known in the darkness, or your righteousness in the place of forgetfulness?

Both questions mean the same thing. The writer uses questions to emphasize that those who are dead are not able to experience or proclaim the great things God does. This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: “People will not talk about your wonderful deeds and righteousness in the dark place of the forgotten dead.” (See: Parallelism and Rhetorical Question and Active or Passive)

ULT

12 Will your wonderful deeds be known in the darkness, or your righteousness in the place of forgetfulness?

or your righteousness in the place of forgetfulness?

This can be translated as a separate sentence. Alternate translation: “Will your righteousness be known in the place of forgetfulness?” or “Those who are in the place of forgetfulness will not know about the righteous things you do.” (See: Ellipsis and Rhetorical Question)

Psalms 88:13

my prayer comes before you

The writer praying to Yahweh is spoken of as if the prayer itself goes to speak with Yahweh. (See: Metaphor)

ULT

13 But I cry to you, Yahweh; in the morning my prayer comes before you.

Psalms 88:14

Why do you hide your face from me?

This speaks of the writer feeling like God has rejected or abandoned him as if God were hiding his face or physically turning away from the writer. (See: Metaphor)

ULT

14 Yahweh, why do you reject me? Why do you hide your face from me?

Psalms 88:15

(There are no notes for this verse.)

ULT

15 I have always been afflicted and on the verge of death since my youth. I have suffered from your terrors; I am in despair.

Psalms 88:16

Your angry actions have passed over me

This speaks of God punishing the writer as if God's actions are a large wave rising out of the sea that fall on and crush the writer. Alternate translation: "It is as if your angry actions crush me" (See: Metaphor)

ULT

16 Your angry actions have passed over me, and your terrifying deeds have annihilated me.

your terrifying deeds have annihilated me

This exaggeration speaks about God punishing the writer as if God has completely destroyed the writer. Alternate translation: "the terrifying things you do have destroyed me" or "the terrifying things you do have almost destroyed me" (See: Hyperbole)

Psalms 88:17

They surround me like water all the day long

The writer compares God's "angry actions" and "terrifying deeds" to a flood of water. Alternate translation: "All day long they threaten to destroy me like a flood" (See: Simile)

ULT

17 They surround me like water all the day long; they have all encircled me.

They

The word "They" refers to God's "angry actions" and "terrifying deeds" from the previous verse.

they have all encircled me

The writer speaks of God's "angry actions" and "terrifying deeds" as if they were enemies who were trying to capture and kill him. Alternate translation: "they have surrounded me like enemy soldiers" (See: Metaphor)

Psalms 88:18

every friend and acquaintance

“every person I love and know”

My only acquaintance is the darkness

This speaks about darkness as if it were a person that could be friends with someone else. The writer is emphasizing that he feels completely alone. Alternate translation: “Everywhere I go it is dark” (See: Personification)

ULT

18 You have removed every friend and acquaintance from me. My only acquaintance is the darkness.

Psalms 89

Psalm 89 General Notes

Type of psalm

Psalm 89 is a worship and a deliverance psalm. (See: deliver, hand over, turn over, release, rescue)

Special concepts in this chapter

Yahweh's promises

God is mighty and has promised David an eternal kingdom. But now that kingdom is being destroyed. (See: promise, promised and eternity, everlasting, eternal, forever)

Parallelism

This psalm exhibits the kind of parallelism where the second line often emphasizes the first line. (See: Parallelism)

Psalms 89:1

General Information:

Parallelism is common in Hebrew poetry. (See: Poetry and Parallelism)

ULT

1 I will sing of Yahweh's acts of covenant faithfulness forever. I will proclaim your truthfulness to future generations.

A maschil

This may refer to a style of music. See how you translated this in Psalms 32:1.

Ethan

This is the name of the writer. (See: How to Translate Names)

acts of covenant faithfulness

The abstract noun "faithfulness" can be stated as an adjective. Alternate translation: "faithful acts" or "loving acts" (See: Abstract Nouns)

Psalms 89:2

Covenant faithfulness has been established forever

God always doing what he promised to do is spoken of as if his faithfulness were a building that God has built and made firm. This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: “You will always be faithful because of your covenant with us” (See: Metaphor and Active or Passive)

ULT

2 For I have said, “Covenant faithfulness has been established forever; your truthfulness you have established in the heavens.”

your truthfulness you have established in the heavens

God always doing what he promised to do is spoken of as if his faithfulness were a building that God has built and made firm. (See: Metaphor)

in the heavens

This could mean: (1) this refers to God’s dwelling place. This would mean God rules from heaven and he always does what he promises or (2) this refers to the sky. This would mean that God’s promises are as constant and permanent as the sky .

Psalms 89:3

I have made a covenant with my chosen one

You can make explicit that “chosen one” refers to David. Alternate translation: “I made a promise to David, the one I chose” (See: Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information)

I have made

Yahweh is speaking in 89:3-4.

ULT

3 “I have made a covenant with my chosen one, I have made an oath to David my servant.

Psalms 89:4

I will establish your descendants forever

Yahweh always causing one of David's descendants to be king is spoken of as if David's descendants are a building that Yahweh will build and make firm. (See: Metaphor)

ULT

4 I will establish your descendants forever, and I will establish your throne through all generations." *Selah*

I will establish your throne through all generations

Here "throne" represents the power to rule as king. The psalmist speaks of God promising that one of David's descendants will always rule as king as if God will build David's throne and make it firm. Alternate translation: "I will make sure that one of your descendants will rule as king over every generation of my people" (See: Metonymy and Metaphor)

Psalms 89:5

The heavens praise

Here “heavens” represents those who are in heaven. (See: Metonymy)

ULT

5 The heavens praise your wonders,
Yahweh; your truthfulness is praised in
the assembly of the holy ones.

praise your wonders, Yahweh

“praise you, Yahweh, because of the wonderful things you do”

your truthfulness is praised in the assembly of the holy ones

The abstract noun “truthfulness” can be stated as “you always do what you promise to do.” This can also be stated in active form. Alternate translation: “The assembly of the holy ones praises you because you always do what you promise to do” (See: Active or Passive and Active or Passive)

the assembly of the holy ones

This refers to the angels in heaven.

Psalms 89:6

For who in the skies can be compared to Yahweh? Who among the sons of the gods is like Yahweh?

ULT

6 For who in the skies can be compared to Yahweh? Who among the sons of the gods is like Yahweh?

Both questions mean the same thing. The writer is using question to emphasize that there in no one in heaven like Yahweh. (See: Parallelism and Rhetorical Question)

sons of the gods

Here “sons of” means having the characteristics of. This is a way of referring to other spiritual beings that live in heaven. Alternate translation: “angels” or “divine beings” (See: Idiom)

Psalms 89:7

He is a God who is greatly honored in the council of the holy ones

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: “The council of the holy ones greatly honors God” (See: Active or Passive)

the council of the holy ones

“the gathering of heavenly beings” or “the gathering of angels”

ULT

7 He is a God who is greatly honored in the council of the holy ones and is awesome among all who surround him.

Psalms 89:8

who is strong like you, Yahweh?

The writer asks the question to emphasize there is no one as strong as Yahweh. (See: Rhetorical Question)

ULT

8 Yahweh God of hosts, who is strong like you, Yahweh? Your truthfulness surrounds you.

Your truthfulness surrounds you

Yahweh always dong what he promises to do is spoken of as if his truthfulness were a cloak or garment that wraps around him. (See: Metaphor)

Psalms 89:9

You rule the raging sea

“You control the raging sea”

ULT

9 You rule the raging sea; when the waves surge, you calm them.

Psalms 89:10

You crushed Rahab as one who is killed

The word “Rahab” here refers to a monster of the sea. (See: Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information and How to Translate Names)

ULT

10 You crushed Rahab as one who is killed. You scattered your enemies with your strong arm.

with your strong arm

Here “arm” represents power. Alternate translation: “with your great power” (See: Metonymy)

Psalms 89:11

(There are no notes for this verse.)

ULT

11 The heavens belong to you, and the earth also. You made the world and all it contains.

Psalms 89:12

the north and the south

The writer uses the words “north” and “south” together to mean that God created everything everywhere. (See: Merism)

ULT

12 You created the north and the south.
Tabor and Hermon rejoice in your
name.

Tabor and Hermon rejoice in your name

Tabor is a mountain southwest of the sea of Galilee and Hermon is a mountain northeast of the sea of Galilee. The writer describes these mountains as if they were persons who could rejoice. Alternate translation: “It is as if Mount Tabor and Mount Hermon were rejoicing in your name” (See: Personification and How to Translate Names)

in your name

Here “name” represents the whole person. Alternate translation: “in you” (See: Metonymy)

Psalms 89:13

You have a mighty arm and a strong hand, and your right hand is high

ULT

13 You have a mighty arm and a strong hand, and your right hand is high.

The words “mighty arm,” “strong hand,” and “right hand” all represent God’s power. (See: Metonymy)

right hand is high

To raise the right hand high into the air is a gesture that indicates power. (See: Symbolic Action)

Psalms 89:14

Righteousness and justice are the foundation of your throne

God ruling as king and doing what is right and just is spoken of as if God's throne were a building, and righteousness and justice were its foundation. (See: Metaphor)

ULT

14 Righteousness and justice are the foundation of your throne. Covenant faithfulness and trustworthiness come before you.

your throne

The throne represents God's rule as king. (See: Metonymy)

Covenant faithfulness and trustworthiness come before you

God always being faithful and doing what he promises to do is spoken of as if covenant faithfulness and trustworthiness come and meet with God. The abstract nouns can be translated as adjectives. Alternate translation: "You are always faithful to your covenant and are worthy of people trusting you" (See: Metaphor)

Psalms 89:15

who worship you

Here the word “worship” implies shouting and blowing horns. These were common acts of worship during Israelite festivals. (See: Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information)

ULT

15 Blessed are the people who worship you! Yahweh, they walk in the light of your face.

they walk

Here people living their lives is spoken of as if they were walking. Alternate translation: “they live” (See: Metaphor)

in the light of your face

The writer speaks of Yahweh acting favorably towards them as if Yahweh’s face shone a light on them. Alternate translation: “knowing that you act favorably towards them” (See: Metaphor)

Psalms 89:16

ULT

16 They rejoice in your name all day long, and in your righteousness they exalt you.

in your name

Here “name” represents the person. Alternate translation: “in you” (See: Metonymy)

in your righteousness they exalt you

The abstract noun “righteousness” can be stated as an adjective. Alternate translation: “they exalt you because you always do what is right” (See: Abstract Nouns)

Psalms 89:17

You are their majestic strength

The abstract noun “strength” can be stated as an adjective. Alternate translation: “You make them wonderfully strong” (See: Abstract Nouns)

ULT

17 You are their majestic strength, and by your favor we are victorious.

You are their

Here “their” refers to the Israelites. The writer would have included himself as a member of the Israelites. Alternate translation: “You are our” (See: Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information)

we are victorious

Here “we” refers to the writer and the Israelites but not to Yahweh, to whom he speaks. (See: Exclusive and Inclusive ‘We’)

Psalms 89:18

For our shield belongs to Yahweh

The king who protects his people and whom Yahweh chose is spoken of as if he were a shield that belongs to Yahweh. (See: Metaphor)

ULT

18 For our shield belongs to Yahweh;
our king belongs to the Holy One of Israel.

Psalms 89:19

General Information:

The writer assumes that the reader knows the history of how David became the chosen king. (See: Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information)

ULT

19 Long ago you spoke in a vision to your faithful ones; [1] you said, “I have set a crown on a mighty one.” [2] I have raised up one chosen from among the people.

I have set a crown on a mighty one

To place a crown on a person’s head is a sign of making him king.
Alternate translation: “I have made a mighty man king” (See: Symbolic Action)

set a crown on a mighty one

Some Bible translations have “given strength to a mighty one” or “helped a mighty one.”

I have raised up one chosen from among the people

Here “raised up” means appointed. It is implied that God chose this person to be king. Alternate translation: “I have chosen one from among the people to be king” (See: Idiom and Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information)

Psalms 89:20

with my holy oil have I anointed him

Here to pour oil on someone’s head is a sign that God is appointing the person to be king. (See: Symbolic Action)

ULT

20 I have chosen David my servant; with my holy oil have I anointed him.

Psalms 89:21

My hand will support him; my arm will strengthen him

Here “hand” and “arm” both means the power and control of Yahweh. Alternate translation: “I will support him and make him strong” (See: Metonymy and Parallelism)

ULT

21 My hand will support him; my arm will strengthen him.

Psalms 89:22

son of wickedness

The writer refers to those who have the nature or character of wickedness as “sons of wickedness.” Alternate translation: “wicked person” (See: Metonymy)

ULT

22 No enemy will deceive him; no son of wickedness will oppress him.

Psalms 89:23

(There are no notes for this verse.)

ULT

23 I will crush his enemies before him; I will kill those who hate him.

Psalms 89:24

Connecting Statement:

Yahweh continues speaking about David.

ULT
24 My truth and my covenant faithfulness will be with him; by my name he will be victorious.

My truth and my covenant faithfulness will be with him

God always being loyal and doing what he promises for David is spoken of as if truth and faithfulness were objects that would be with David. The abstract nouns “truth” and “faithfulness” can be translated as adjectives. Alternate translation: “I will always be truthful with him and I will always act faithfully towards him” (See: Metaphor and Abstract Nouns)

by my name he will be victorious

Here “name” represents God’ power. Alternate translation: “I, God, will cause him to be victorious” (See: Metonymy)

Psalms 89:25

I will place his hand over the sea and his right hand over the rivers

ULT

25 I will place his hand over the sea and his right hand over the rivers.

Here “hand” and “right hand” represent power and authority. Here “the sea” seems to refer to the Mediterranean Sea west of Israel, and “rivers” refers to the Euphrates river in the east. This means David will have authority over everything from the sea to the river. Alternate translation: “I will give him authority over everything from the Mediterranean sea to the Euphrates river” (See: Metonymy and Merism)

Psalms 89:26

He will call out to me, ‘You are my Father, my God, and the rock of my salvation.’

This has a quotation within a quotation. It can be stated as an indirect quotation. Alternate translation: “He will say that I am his Father, his God, and the rock of his salvation.” (See: Quotes within Quotes and Direct and Indirect Quotations)

ULT

26 He will call out to me, ‘You are my Father, my God, and the rock of my salvation.’

the rock of my salvation

Yahweh protecting and saving David is spoken of as if Yahweh were a high rock that David could stand on top of for protection from enemies. (See: Metaphor)

Psalms 89:27

Connecting Statement:

Yahweh continues speaking about David.

I also will place him as my firstborn son

Yahweh giving David special rank and privileges over all other people is spoken of as if David would be Yahweh's firstborn son. (See: Metaphor)

ULT

27 I also will place him as my firstborn son, the most exalted of the kings of the earth.

Psalms 89:28

I will extend my covenant faithfulness to him forever

ULT

28 I will extend my covenant faithfulness to him forever; and my covenant with him will be secure.

Yahweh speaks of continuing to act faithfully towards David is spoken of as if Yahweh's covenant faithfulness were an object that he extends or makes longer. The abstract noun "faithfulness" can be translated with an adverb. Alternate translation: "I will continue to act faithfully towards him forever" (See: Metaphor and Abstract Nouns)

Psalms 89:29

his throne as enduring as the skies above

Someone from David's family always ruling as king is spoken of as if his throne would last as long as the sky will last. (See: Simile)

his throne

Here "throne" represents the power to rule as king. (See: Metonymy)

ULT

29 I will make his descendants endure forever and his throne as enduring as the skies above.

Psalms 89:30

his children

“David’s descendants”

ULT

30 If his children forsake my law and do
not walk in my regulations,

Psalms 89:31

(There are no notes for this verse.)

ULT

31 if they break my rules and do not
keep my commands,

Psalms 89:32

punish their rebellion with a rod

God punishing David's descendants is spoken of as if he would hit them with a rod. The abstract noun "rebellion" can be stated as a verb. Alternate translation: "punish them for rebelling against me" (See: Metaphor and Abstract Nouns)

ULT

32 then will I punish their rebellion with a rod and their iniquity with blows.

their iniquity with blows

God punishing David's descendants is spoken of as if God would literally hit them. This can be stated as a complete sentence. Alternate translation: "I will punish them because they sinned against me" (See: Metaphor and Ellipsis)

Psalms 89:33

I will not remove my steadfast love from him or be unfaithful to my promise

This can be stated in positive form. Alternate translation: “I will always love David, and I will do what I promised to him” (See: Litotes)

ULT

33 But I will not remove my steadfast love from him or be unfaithful to my promise.

Psalms 89:34

the words of my lips

Here “lips” represent the whole mouth and the person speaking. Alternate translation: “what I said” (See: Synecdoche)

ULT

34 I will not break my covenant or
change the words of my lips.

Psalms 89:35

(There are no notes for this verse.)

ULT

35 Once and for all I have sworn by my holiness— I will not lie to David:

Psalms 89:36

his throne as long as the sun before me

The words “will continue” are understood. Alternate translation: “his throne will continue as long as the sun before me” (See: Ellipsis)

ULT

36 his descendants will continue forever and his throne as long as the sun before me.

his throne

Here “throne” represents the power to rule as king. God is promising that one of David’s descendants will always be king. (See: Metonymy)

as long as the sun before me

God compares David’s rule as king to the sun to emphasize that someone from David’s descendants will always rule as king. (See: Simile)

Psalms 89:37

It will be established forever

Here “It” stands for David’s throne or power to rule as king. This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: “I will cause it to last forever” (See: Active or Passive)

ULT

37 It will be established forever like the moon, the faithful witness in the sky.” *Selah*

forever like the moon

God compares David’s rule as king to the moon to emphasize that someone from David’s descendants will always rule as king. (See: Simile)

the moon, the faithful witness in the sky

The moon is spoken of as if it were a person who witnesses God making this promise to David. Alternate translation: “the moon, which is like a faithful witness in the sky” (See: Personification)

Psalms 89:38

you have refused and rejected

The words “the king” are understood. Alternate translation: “you have refused and rejected the king” (See: Ellipsis)

with your anointed king

“with the king you chose”

ULT

38 But you have refused and rejected;
you have been angry with your
anointed king.

Psalms 89:39

You have renounced the covenant

“You have rejected the covenant”

You have desecrated his crown on the ground

ULT

39 You have renounced the covenant of your servant. You have desecrated his crown on the ground.

To push down into the ground or dust is a sign of great humiliation. Alternate translation: “You have defiled his crown on the ground” or “You have caused his crown to fall into the dirt” (See: Symbolic Action)

his crown

This represents the king’s power as king and his right to rule. (See: Metonymy)

Psalms 89:40

You have broken down all his walls. You have ruined his strongholds

ULT

40 You have broken down all his walls.
You have ruined his strongholds.

This implies that God allowed enemies to destroy the defenses at Jerusalem. Alternate translation: “You have allowed enemies to break down his walls and ruin his strongholds in Jerusalem” (See: Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information)

Psalms 89:41

to his neighbors

Here “neighbors” means people of nearby nations.

ULT

41 All who pass by have robbed him. He has become an object of disgust to his neighbors.

Psalms 89:42

raised the right hand of his enemies

Here “right hand” represents power. To “raise the right hand” means that Yahweh has made his enemies strong enough to defeat God’s chosen king. (See: Metonymy and Symbolic Action)

ULT

42 You have raised the right hand of his enemies; you have made all his enemies rejoice.

Psalms 89:43

turn back the edge of his sword

Here “sword” represents the king’s power in battle. To turn the sword back represents making the king unable to win in battle. (See: Metonymy and Idiom)

ULT

43 You turn back the edge of his sword and have not made him stand when in battle.

the edge of his sword

Here “edge” represents the whole sword. Alternate translation: “his sword” (See: Synecdoche)

have not made him stand when in battle

Here “stand” represents being victorious in battle. Alternate translation: “You have not helped him to be victorious in battle” (See: Metonymy)

Psalms 89:44

you have brought down his throne to the ground

Here “throne” represents the power to rule as king. Alternate translation: “you, Yahweh, have ended his reign as king” (See: Metonymy)

ULT

44 You have brought his splendor to an end; you have brought down his throne to the ground.

Psalms 89:45

You have shortened the days of his youth

This is a way of saying God made the king seem old even while he was still young. Alternate translation: “Even while he is young you have made him weak like an old man” (See: Idiom)

ULT

45 You have shortened the days of his youth. You have covered him with shame. *Selah*

covered him with shame

Yahweh completely humiliating the king is spoken of as if shame were a garment that God used to cover the king. (See: Metaphor)

Psalms 89:46

How long, Yahweh? Will you hide yourself, forever?

ULT

46 How long, Yahweh? Will you hide yourself, forever? How long will your anger burn like fire?

The writer uses these questions to emphasize that he does not want God to continue to refuse the king. Alternate translation: “Please, Yahweh, do not refuse to help the king forever.” (See: Rhetorical Question)

Will you hide yourself

God not helping the king is spoken of as if God were hiding from him. Alternate translation: “Will you refuse to help the king” (See: Metaphor)

How long will your anger burn like fire?

The writer uses a question to emphasize that he does not want God to remain angry. Alternate translation: “Please do not continue being angry” (See: Rhetorical Question)

your anger burn like fire

God being very angry is spoken of as if his anger were a hot fire. (See: Simile)

Psalms 89:47

for what uselessness you have created all the children of mankind

ULT

47 Oh, think about how short my time is, and for what uselessness you have created all the children of mankind!

The abstract noun “uselessness” can be stated as “uselessly.” Alternate translation: “that you have created all people to die uselessly” (See: Abstract Nouns)

the children of mankind

This refers to humans in general. Alternate translation: “humans” or “people” (See: When Masculine Words Include Women)

Psalms 89:48

Who can live and not die, or rescue his own life from the hand of Sheol?

The writer uses these questions to emphasize that all people will die. Alternate translation: “No one can live forever or bring himself back to life after dying” (See: Rhetorical Question)

ULT

48 Who can live and not die, or rescue his own life from the hand of Sheol? *Selah*

rescue his own life from the hand of Sheol

Here “hand” refers to power. The writer speaks of Sheol as if it were a person who has power over those who die. This could mean: (1) a person cannot bring himself back to life after dying or (2) a person cannot keep himself from dying. (See: Metonymy and Personification)

Psalms 89:49

Lord, where are your former acts of covenant faithfulness that you swore to David in your truthfulness?

ULT

49 Lord, where are your former acts of covenant faithfulness that you swore to David in your truthfulness?

The writer uses a question to request the Lord to be faithful to his covenant with David. Alternate translation: “Lord, be faithful to your covenant with David as you have been in the past” (See: Rhetorical Question)

your former acts of covenant faithfulness

The abstract nouns “acts” and “faithfulness” can be translated with a verb and an adverb. Alternate translation: “the things that you did before that showed that you are faithful to your covenant” (See: Abstract Nouns)

Psalms 89:50

Call to mind

The writer asks Yahweh to bring this up in his memory. Alternate translation: “Remember” or “Consider” (See: Idiom)

ULT

50 Call to mind, Lord, the mocking directed against your servants and how I bear in my heart so many insults from the nations.

the mocking directed against your servants

Here “your servants” refers to the people of Israel. Alternate translation: “how they mock us, your servants”

how I bear in my heart so many insults from the nations

Here “heart” represents the person’s emotions. Alternate translation: “I endure so many insults from the people of the nations” or “I suffer because the people from the nations insult me” (See: Metonymy)

from the nations

Here “nations” represents the people of the nations. (See: Metonymy)

Psalms 89:51

Your enemies hurl insults

The enemies shouting insults at the king is spoken of as if insults were an object that the enemies throw violently at the king. (See: Metaphor)

ULT

51 Your enemies hurl insults, Yahweh;
they mock the footsteps of your anointed one.

they mock the footsteps of your anointed one

Here “footsteps” represents where the king goes. Alternate translation: “they mock your anointed one wherever he goes” (See: Metonymy)

Psalms 89:52

General Information:

This verse is more than the end of this psalm. It is the closing statement for all of Book 3 of the Psalms, which starts at Psalm 73 and ends with Psalm 89.

Blessed be Yahweh forever

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: “May people praise Yahweh forever” (See: Active or Passive)

Amen and Amen

The word “Amen” is repeated to emphasize approval of what has been said. See how you translated this in Psalms 41:13.

ULT

52 Blessed be Yahweh forever. Amen and Amen.

Book Four

Psalms 90

Psalm 90 General Notes

Type of psalm

Psalm is a wisdom psalm. God is eternal but a human's life is short. (See: wise, wisdom and eternity, everlasting, eternal, forever)

Special concepts in this chapter

Life's shortness

Because life is so short, people need to spend it as God wants them to spend it.

Psalms 90:1

General Information:

Parallelism is common in Hebrew poetry. (See: Poetry and Parallelism)

ULT

1 Lord, you have been our refuge
throughout all generations.

Lord, you have been our refuge

God protecting his people is spoken of as if God were a refuge or shelter. Alternate translation: “Lord, you have been like a shelter for us” (See: Metaphor)

throughout all generations

“always”

Psalms 90:2

Before the mountains were formed

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: “Before you formed the mountains” (See: Active or Passive)

were formed

“were created” or “were shaped”

the world

This represents everything that is in the world. (See: Metonymy)

from everlasting to everlasting

This phrase represents all time past, present, and future.

ULT

2 Before the mountains were formed, or
you formed the earth and the world,
from everlasting to everlasting, you are
God.

Psalms 90:3

You return man to dust

This implies that just as God created the first man, Adam, from the soil, God will cause people's bodies to turn back into soil after they die. Alternate translation: "You return people to dust when they die" (See: Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information)

ULT

3 You return man to dust, and you say,
"Return, you descendants of mankind."

return man

Here "man" means people in general. (See: When Masculine Words Include Women)

Return, you descendants

The words "to dust" or "to soil" are understood. Alternate translation: "Return to dust, you descendants" or "Return to soil, you descendants" (See: Ellipsis)

you descendants of mankind

This is a way of referring to humans in general. Alternate translation: "you humans" or "you people" (See: Idiom)

Psalms 90:4

For a thousand years in your sight are as yesterday when it is past, and as a watch in the night

ULT

4 For a thousand years in your sight are as yesterday when it is past, and as a watch in the night.

The writer means that a long period of time seems like a short period of time to God. Alternate translation: “You consider a thousand years the same as one day in the past, or as a few short hours in the night” or “Even a thousand years is not a long time to you” (See: Simile)

a thousand years

“1,000 years” (See: Numbers)

in your sight

Here sight represents judgment or evaluation. Alternate translation: “to you” (See: Metaphor)

Psalms 90:5

You sweep them away as with a flood and they sleep

ULT

5 You sweep them away as with a flood and they sleep; in the morning they are like the grass that sprouts up.

God causing people to die suddenly is spoken of as if he swept them away with a broom. This sweeping is also spoken of as if it were a flood that carried people away. Alternate translation: “Lord, you destroy the people as with a flood and they die” (See: Metaphor and Simile)

they sleep

This is a polite way of speaking of people dying. (See: Euphemism)

Psalms 90:6

it blooms and grows up

Both of these phrases refer to how the grass grows. Alternate translation: “it begins to grow and develop” (See: Doublet)

it withers and dries up

Both of these phrases refer to how the grass dies. Alternate translation: “it fades and dries up” (See: Doublet)

ULT

6 In the morning it blooms and grows up; in the evening it withers and dries up.

Psalms 90:7

we are consumed in your anger

God destroying people in his anger is spoken of as if God's anger were a fire that completely burns up the people. This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "You destroy us in your anger" (See: Metaphor and Active or Passive)

in your wrath we are terrified

"when you are angry we are greatly afraid"

ULT

7 Truly, we are consumed in your anger,
and in your wrath we are terrified.

Psalms 90:8

You have set our iniquities before you, our hidden sins in the light of your presence

God considering people's sins is spoken of as if sins were an objects he could place in front of himself and look at them. Alternate translation: "You see every sinful thing we do, even the sinful things we do in secret" (See: Metaphor)

ULT

8 You have set our iniquities before you, our hidden sins in the light of your presence.

Psalms 90:9

Our life passes away under your wrath

The word “because” can be used to make clear that God’s wrath causes human life to end. Alternate translation: “Our lives come to an end because of your wrath” (See: Connecting Words and Phrases)

ULT

9 Our life passes away under your wrath; our years quickly pass like a sigh.

like a sigh

The writer compares human life to a sigh to emphasize that life is very brief. (See: Simile)

Psalms 90:10

ULT

10 Our years are seventy, or even eighty if we are healthy; but even our best years are marked by trouble and sorrow. Yes, they pass quickly, and we fly away.

seventy

“70” (See: Numbers)

eighty

“80” (See: Numbers)

even our best years are marked by trouble and sorrow

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: “Even in our best years we experience trouble and sorrow” (See: Active or Passive)

we fly away

This is a polite way of referring to people dying. Alternate translation: “we die” (See: Euphemism)

Psalms 90:11

Who knows the intensity of your anger, and your wrath that is equal to the fear of you?

ULT

11 Who knows the intensity of your anger, and your wrath that is equal to the fear of you?

The writer uses a question to emphasize that no one has fully experienced God anger. Therefore no one truly reveres God and fears his anger when people sin. Alternate translation: “No one knows the intensity of your anger. Therefore no one fears your wrath when they sin.” (See: Rhetorical Question)

Psalms 90:12

(There are no notes for this verse.)

ULT

12 So teach us to consider our life so that we might live wisely.

Psalms 90:13

Turn back, Yahweh! How long will it be?

Asking Yahweh to no longer be angry is spoken of as if the writer wants God to turn physically away from his anger. Alternate translation: “Yahweh, please do not be angry any longer” (See: Metaphor)

ULT

13 Turn back, Yahweh! How long will it be? Have pity on your servants.

How long will it be?

The writer uses a question to state that he wants God to stop being angry. (See: Rhetorical Question)

Have pity on your servants

Here “your servants” refers to the people of Israel. Alternate translation: “Be merciful to us, your servants”

Psalms 90:14

Satisfy us in the morning

“Satisfy us every morning”

with your covenant faithfulness

ULT

14 Satisfy us in the morning with your covenant faithfulness so that we may rejoice and be glad all our days.

The abstract noun “faithfulness” can be stated as an adjective. Alternate translation: “by being faithful because of your covenant with us” (See: Abstract Nouns)

Psalms 90:15

in proportion to the days you afflicted us and to the years we have experienced trouble

Both of these phrases mean the same thing. The writer is asking Yahweh to make them happy for the same amount of time he punished them. Alternate translation: “for the same amount of time that you afflicted us and caused us to suffer” (See: Parallelism)

ULT

15 Make us glad in proportion to the days you afflicted us and to the years we have experienced trouble.

Psalms 90:16

ULT

16 Let your servants see your work, and let our children see your majesty.

Let your servants

Here “your servants” refer to the people of Israel. Alternate translation: “Let us, your servants” or “Let us” (See: Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information)

let our children

Here “children” means children and descendants.

see your majesty

The abstract noun “majesty” can be stated as “great things.” Alternate translation: “see the great things you do” (See: Abstract Nouns)

Psalms 90:17

May the favor of the Lord our God be ours

The abstract noun “favor” can be stated as “be kind.” Alternate translation: “May the Lord our God be kind to us” (See: Abstract Nouns)

ULT

17 May the favor of the Lord our God be ours; prosper the work of our hands; indeed, prosper the work of our hands.

prosper the work of our hands

Here “hands” represents the whole person. Alternate translation: “cause us to be successful” (See: Synecdoche)

Psalms 91

Psalm 91 General Notes

Type of psalm

Psalm 91 is a wisdom psalm. Those who depend on God are protected by him. (See: wise, wisdom)

Special concepts in this chapter

Fear

No matter what dangers befall a person, they do not need to fear. God is protecting them from all harm.

Psalms 91:1

General Information:

Parallelism is common in Hebrew poetry. (See: Poetry and Parallelism)

ULT

1 He who lives in the shelter of the Most High will stay in the shadow of the Almighty.

He who lives ... will stay ... of the Almighty

Because “live” and “stay” mean almost the same thing, as do “shelter” and “shadow,” which are both metaphors for protection, you may need to combine the two lines into one. Alternate translation: “The Most High, the Almighty, will care for all those who live where he can protect them” (See: Metaphor and Doublet)

who lives in the shelter of the Most High

The word “shelter” is a metaphor for protection. Alternate translation: “who lives where the Most High protects him” (See: Metaphor)

the Most High

The words “the Most High” refer to Yahweh. See how this is translated in Psalms 18:13.

will stay in the shadow of the Almighty

The word “shadow” here is a metaphor for protection. Alternate translation: “will stay where the Almighty can protect him” (See: Metaphor)

the Almighty

the one who has power and control over everything. See how this was translated in Psalms 68:14

Psalms 91:2

I will say of Yahweh

“I will say about Yahweh”

my refuge and my fortress

ULT

2 I will say of Yahweh, “He is my refuge and my fortress, my God, in whom I trust.”

A “refuge” is any place a person can go and have someone or something protect him. A “fortress” is something that people make so they can protect themselves and their property. Asaph uses them here as metaphors for protection. Alternate translation: “the one to whom I can go and he will protect me” (See: Metaphor)

Psalms 91:3

For he will rescue you from the snare of the hunter and from the deadly plague

The words that have been left out can be put in. Alternate translation: “For God will rescue you from the snare of the hunter and he will rescue you from the plagues that can kill” (See: Ellipsis)

the snare of the hunter

“from the snare that the hunter has set to catch you”

ULT

3 For he will rescue you from the snare of the hunter and from the deadly plague.

Psalms 91:4

He will cover you with his wings, and under his wings you will find refuge

God's protection is here referred to as "wings" which a bird uses to cover its' young from danger. "Cover you with his wings" and "under his wings" mean basically the same thing. Alternate translation: "He will keep you safe and protect you" (See: Metaphor and Parallelism)

ULT

4 He will cover you with his wings, and under his wings you will find refuge. His trustworthiness is a shield and protection.

His trustworthiness is a shield and protection

God's trustworthiness is here referred to as a "shield" which can protect people who rely on him. The abstract noun "trustworthiness" can be stated as "trust." Alternate translation: "You can trust him to protect you" (See: Metaphor and Abstract Nouns)

protection

No one knows for sure what this word means. This could mean: (1) a small shield strapped to the forearm that soldiers used to defend themselves against arrows and swords or (2) a wall of stones set in a circle inside which soldiers could hide and shoot arrows.

Psalms 91:5

terror in the night

The psalmist speaks of “terror” as if it were a spirit or fierce animal that could attack at night and so terrify people. Alternate translation: “things attacking you at night” (See: Metonymy)

ULT

5 You will not be afraid of terror in the night, or of the arrow that flies by day,

in the night ... by day

These two phrases taken together refer to all possible times of night and day. (See: Merism)

the arrow that flies by day

“Arrow” here is a metonym for the people who shoot the arrows. Alternate translation: “people attacking you with arrows during the day” (See: Metonymy)

Psalms 91:6

or of the plague that roams

The psalmist speaks of illness as if it were a person who went about at night killing other people. Alternate translation: “You will not be afraid of dying from illness” (See: Personification)

ULT

6 or of the plague that roams around in the darkness, or of the disease that comes at noontime.

roams

goes wherever he wants to go at any time

in the darkness ... at noontime

These two phrases taken together refer to all possible times of night and day. (See: Merism)

disease

an illness that makes many people ill at the same time

Psalms 91:7

A thousand may fall at your side and ten thousand at your right hand

"Many people may fall all around you." If translating the exact numbers confuses the readers, you may omit them.

it will not reach you

"the evil will not harm you"

ULT

7 A thousand may fall at your side and ten thousand at your right hand, but it will not reach you.

Psalms 91:8

You will only observe and see

“You yourself will not suffer, but you will watch carefully, and you will see”

ULT

8 You will only observe and see the punishment of the wicked.

the punishment of the wicked

The abstract noun “punishment” can be translated with a verbal phrase. Alternate translation: “how God punishes the wicked” (See: Abstract Nouns)

Psalms 91:9

Yahweh is my refuge

The writer speaks of Yahweh protecting him as if Yahweh were a safe place for him to find protection from his enemies. Alternate translation: “Yahweh protects me, like a person finds protection in a place of refuge” (See: Metaphor)

ULT

9 For Yahweh is my refuge! Make the Most High your refuge also.

Make the Most High your refuge also

“You should make the Most High your refuge also.” The psalmist stops speaking to God and speaks to the reader.

Psalms 91:10

No evil will overtake you

The writer speaks of a person experiencing bad or evil things as if evil were a person who overtakes another person. Alternate translation: “Nothing evil will happen to you” (See: Metaphor and Personification)

ULT

10 No evil will overtake you; no affliction will come near your home.

no affliction will come near your home

The psalmist speaks of people who afflict others as though they were the harm they cause. Alternate translation: “no one will be able to harm your family” (See: Personification and Metonymy)

Psalms 91:11

For he will direct

“Yahweh will command”

in all your ways

The psalmist speaks of the way a person lives his life as if it were a path down which the person walked. Alternate translation: “in everything you do” or “at all times” (See: Metaphor)

ULT

11 For he will direct his angels to protect you, to guard you in all your ways.

Psalms 91:12

They will lift you

“Yahweh’s angels will lift you”

you will not hit your foot on a stone

ULT

12 They will lift you up with their hand so that you will not hit your foot on a stone.

The angels will protect not only the reader’s foot but the rest of his body as well. The words “not … hit your foot on a stone” is an exaggerated metonym to say that not even small bad things will happen. This should probably not be taken as a promise that no bad things will ever happen again. Alternate translation: “you will not even hit your foot on a stone” or “not even the smallest bad thing will happen to you” (See: Hyperbole and Synecdoche and Metonymy)

Psalms 91:13

You will crush lions and adders under your feet; you will trample on young lions and serpents

ULT

13 You will crush lions and adders under your feet; you will trample on young lions and serpents.

Where “hit your foot on a stone” is a minor problem, lions and snake are examples of great dangers. The psalmist speaks of lions and snakes as if they were small enough to be crushed under a person’s foot. Alternate translation: “You will be able kill lions and adders as if they were small animals you could crush under your feet” (See: Metaphor)

adders

types of poisonous snake.

trample

crush by walking heavily on

Psalms 91:14

Because he is devoted to me

“Because he loves me”

ULT

14 Because he is devoted to me, I will rescue him. I will protect him because he is loyal to me.

Psalms 91:15

I will be with him in trouble

This can be made explicit. Alternate translation: “I will be with him when he is in trouble” (See: Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information)

ULT

15 When he calls to me, I will answer him. I will be with him in trouble; I will give him victory and will honor him.

I will give him victory

The abstract noun “victory” can be translated with an adjective. Alternate translation: “I will cause him to be victorious” or “I will enable him to defeat his enemies” (See: Abstract Nouns)

Psalms 91:16

will satisfy him with the length of his days

The idiom “the length of his days” here refers to the duration of his life. It may imply a long life. Alternate translation: “I will satisfy him by giving him a long life” or “I will make him happy by letting him live a very long time” (See: Idiom)

ULT

16 I will satisfy him with the length of his days, and show him my salvation.

and show him my salvation

“and I will show him my salvation.” The psalmist speaks of the work God does to save people as if it were a physical object. Alternate translation: “I will save him so that he knows I am the one who saved him” (See: Metaphor)

Psalms 92

Psalm 92 General Notes

Type of psalm

Psalm 92 is a psalm of praise for God’s kindness and faithfulness. (See: faithful, faithfulness, trustworthy)

Special concepts in this chapter

Justice

God causes evil people to be destroyed and good people to be happy and useful, even after they grow old. (See: just, justice, unjust, injustice, justify, justification and evil, wicked, unpleasant)

Psalms 92:1

General Information:

Parallelism is common in Hebrew poetry. (See: Poetry and Parallelism)

ULT

1 It is a good thing to give thanks to Yahweh and to sing praises to your name, Most High,

to sing praises to your name

The words “your name” are a metonym for “you.” Alternate translation: “to sing praises to you” (See: Metonymy)

Psalms 92:2

proclaim your covenant faithfulness in the morning

The abstract noun “faithfulness” can be translated with the adjective “faithful.” Alternate translation: “proclaim in the morning that you are faithful to your covenant” (See: Abstract Nouns)

ULT

2 to proclaim your covenant faithfulness in the morning and your truthfulness every night,

your truthfulness every night

The verb may be supplied from the previous phrase. The abstract noun “truthfulness” can be translated with the adjective “true.” Alternate translation: “proclaim every night that everything you say is true” (See: Ellipsis and Abstract Nouns)

Psalms 92:3

(There are no notes for this verse.)

ULT

3 with a harp of ten strings and with the melody of the lyre.

Psalms 92:4

ULT

4 For you, Yahweh, have made me glad
through your deeds. I will sing for joy
because of the deeds of your hands.

glad

happy

through your deeds

The abstract noun phrase “your deeds” can be translated with the relative clause “what you have done.” Alternate translation: “by what you have done” (See: Abstract Nouns)

the deeds of your hands

The abstract noun phrase “the deeds of your hands” can be translated with the relative clause “what your hands have done.” The word “hands” is a synecdoche for the whole person. Alternate translation: “What you have done” (See: Abstract Nouns and Synecdoche)

your deeds

The abstract noun phrase “your deeds” can be translated with a relative clause. Alternate translation: “what you have done” (See: Abstract Nouns)

Psalms 92:5

Your thoughts are very deep

“We cannot understand what you plan to do until you do it”

ULT

5 How great are your deeds, Yahweh!
Your thoughts are very deep.

Your thoughts

The abstract noun phrase “your thoughts” can be translated with a relative clause. Alternate translation: “What you think” or “What you plan” (See: Abstract Nouns)

Psalms 92:6

brutish

animal-like

ULT

6 A brutish person does not know, nor
does a fool understand this:

Psalms 92:7

When the wicked sprout like the grass

This compares evil people to grass, which grows quickly and in many places. Alternate translation: “When evil people appear quickly and seem to be everywhere, like grass” (See: Simile)

they are doomed to eternal destruction

This can be translated in active form. Alternate translation: “God has decided that he will destroy them completely” (See: Active or Passive)

ULT

7 When the wicked sprout like the grass,
and even when all the evildoers thrive,
still they are doomed to eternal
destruction.

Psalms 92:8

(There are no notes for this verse.)

ULT

8 But you, Yahweh, will reign forever.

Psalms 92:9

Indeed, look at your enemies, Yahweh

Many texts do not have these words.

They will perish

“They will die” or “You will kill them”

All those who do evil will be scattered

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: “you will scatter all those who do evil” (See: Active or Passive)

will be scattered

Many texts read, “have been scattered.”

be scattered

“driven away”

ULT

9 Indeed, look at your enemies,
Yahweh! Indeed, look at your enemies.
They will perish! All those who do evil
will be scattered.

Psalms 92:10

You have lifted up my horn like the horn of the wild ox

ULT

10 You have lifted up my horn like the horn of the wild ox; I am anointed with fresh oil.

The psalmist speaks of God as if he had made him as strong as a wild animal. Here his “horn” represents his strength. Alternate translation: “You have made me as strong as a wild ox” (See: Metonymy and Simile)

I am anointed with fresh oil

Possible meanings are that the oil that God has put on the psalmist is a metaphor for God: (1) making him happy “you have made me very happy” or (2) making him strong, “you have made me strong” or (3) enabling him to defeat his enemies, “you have enabled me to defeat my enemies.” (See: Metaphor)

Psalms 92:11

My eyes have seen the downfall of my enemies; my ears have heard of the doom of my evil foes

The words “eyes” and “ears” are synecdoches for the person who sees and hears. The lines may be combined. Alternate translation: “I have seen and heard of the defeat of my evil enemies” (See: Synecdoche)

ULT

11 My eyes have seen the downfall of my enemies; my ears have heard of the doom of my evil foes.

Psalms 92:12

The righteous will flourish like the palm tree

Possible meanings are that righteous people will be like a healthy palm tree because they will: (1) be strong or (2) live for long time. (See: Simile)

ULT

12 The righteous will flourish like the palm tree; they will grow like a cedar in Lebanon.

they will grow like a cedar in Lebanon

Possible meanings are that righteous people will be like a healthy cedar tree growing in the land of Lebanon because: (1) they will be strong or (2) people will honor them. (See: Simile)

Psalms 92:13

They are planted

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: “Yahweh has planted them” or “Yahweh takes care of them as if they were trees he had planted” (See: Active or Passive and Metaphor)

ULT

13 They are planted in the house of Yahweh; they flourish in the courts of our God.

in the house of Yahweh ... in the courts of our God

The psalmist speaks of people who truly worship God as if they were trees growing in Yahweh’s house. (See: Metaphor)

they flourish

The psalmist speaks of righteous people as if they were healthy trees. Alternate translation: “they are growing well” or “they are very strong” (See: Metaphor)

in the courts of our God

in the courtyard of the temple in Jerusalem.

Psalms 92:14

They bear fruit

The psalmist speaks of righteous people as if they were trees that produce food. Alternate translation: “They please God” (See: Metaphor)

ULT

14 They bear fruit even when they are old; they stay fresh and green,

they stay fresh and green

The psalmist speaks of righteous people as if they were trees. Alternate translation: “they remain strong and healthy” or “they always do what pleases God” (See: Metaphor)

Psalms 92:15

to proclaim that

These words continue the thought begun by the words “they stay fresh and green” in (Psalms 92:14). This could mean: (1) “they stay fresh and green, so that they can proclaim” or (2) “they stay fresh and green. This shows that.”

ULT

15 to proclaim that Yahweh is just. He is my rock, and there is no unrighteousness in him.

He is my rock

“Yahweh is the one who protects me.” The psalmist speaks of Yahweh as if he were a rock that would protect him. See how this is translated in Psalms 18:2. (See: Metaphor)

Psalms 93

Psalm 93 General Notes

Type of psalm

Psalm 93 is a worship psalm about the power of Yahweh.

Special concepts in this chapter

Yahweh’s power

Yahweh is all powerful; He even controls the ocean.

Psalms 93:1

General Information:

Parallelism is common in Hebrew poetry. (See: Poetry and Parallelism)

ULT

1 Yahweh reigns; he is robed in majesty;
Yahweh has clothed and girded himself
with strength. The world is firmly
established; it cannot be moved.

he is robed in majesty; Yahweh has clothed and girded himself with strength

The psalmist speaks of Yahweh's strength and majesty as if they were things Yahweh wears. Alternate translation: "he shows everyone that he is a powerful king" or "his majesty is there for all to see, like the robe a king wears; everything about Yahweh shows that he is strong and he is ready to do great work" (See: Metaphor and Simile)

majesty

the power of a king and the way a king acts

girded himself

put on a belt—a band of leather or another material that a person wears around his waist—to prepare for work or battle

The world is firmly established

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "You have firmly established the world" (See: Active or Passive)

it cannot be moved

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "no one will ever move it" (See: Active or Passive)

Psalms 93:2

Your throne is established from ancient times

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: “You established your throne in ancient times” (See: Active or Passive)

you are from everlasting

“you have always existed”

ULT

2 Your throne is established from ancient times; you are from everlasting.

Psalms 93:3

oceans ... oceans’

Some versions read “floods ... floods’.” The word often refers to a river (See: “the River” in Psalms 72:8), but “oceans ... oceans’” has been chosen here because oceans, not rivers, have “waves” that “crash and roar.”

ULT

3 The oceans rise, Yahweh; they have lifted up their voice; the oceans’ waves crash and roar.

have lifted up their voice; the oceans’ waves crash and roar

The psalmist speaks of the ocean as if it were a person who could speak. Alternate translation: “have made a mighty noise because their waves crash and roar” (See: Personification)

roar

make a long, loud sound.

Psalms 93:4

Above the crashing of many waves, the mighty breakers of the sea

The phrase “the mighty breakers of the sea” means basically the same thing as “many waves” and emphasizes how great these waves are. Alternate translation: “Above the crashing of all of the very great waves of the sea” (See: Doublet)

ULT

4 Above the crashing of many waves,
the mighty breakers of the sea, Yahweh
on high is mighty.

breakers

large waves coming to land

on high

The psalmist speaks of where God lives as if it were high above the earth. Alternate translation: “in heaven” (See: Metaphor)

Psalms 93:5

ULT

5 Your solemn commands are very trustworthy; holiness adorns your house, Yahweh, for the length of your days.

solemn

very serious

are very trustworthy

“always stay the same” or “never change”

holiness adorns your house

The psalmist speaks of Yahweh’s house as if it were a woman wearing beautiful clothing or jewelry and of Yahweh’s holiness as the beautiful clothing or jewelry. Alternate translation: “your house is beautiful because you are holy” or “your holiness makes your house beautiful the way beautiful clothes and jewelry make a woman more beautiful” (See: Metaphor)

adorns

makes beautiful

your house

This refers to the temple in Jerusalem.

for the length of your days

This idiom refers to the duration of God’s life. Since God lives forever, it can also be translated as forever. Alternate translation: “for as long as you live” or “forever” (See: Idiom)

Psalms 94

Psalm 94 General Notes

Type of psalm

Psalm 94 is a prayer requesting that evil people be punished. (See: evil, wicked, unpleasant)

Special concepts in this chapter

Justice

Evil people expect God to ignore their injustices. But God knows what they are doing and will punish them for their evil deeds. (See: just, justice, unjust, injustice, justify, justification and work, works, deeds)

Psalms 94:1

General Information:

Parallelism is common in Hebrew poetry. (See: Poetry and Parallelism)

ULT

1 Yahweh, God who avenges, God who avenges, shine over us.

shine over us

Here “shine” is a metaphor for God revealing himself. Alternate translation: “show yourself” or “reveal your glory” (See: Metaphor)

Psalms 94:2

Rise up, judge of the earth, give to the proud what they deserve

“Come, judge of the earth, and punish the proud”

ULT

2 Rise up, judge of the earth, give to the proud what they deserve.

Rise up

The psalmist speaks of starting to do something as getting up. If your language has a word for beginning to act, use it here. Alternate translation: “Take action” or “Do something” (See: Metonymy)

Psalms 94:3

How long will the wicked, Yahweh, how long will the wicked rejoice?

ULT

[3] How long will the wicked, Yahweh, how long will the wicked rejoice?

The psalmist repeats the question to show that he is unhappy with how long Yahweh has allowed the wicked to rejoice. This rhetorical question can be translated as a statement. Alternate translation: “You have waited too long Yahweh; you have waited too long to stop the wicked from rejoicing.” (See: Rhetorical Question)

will the wicked rejoice

Why the wicked rejoice can be stated clearly. Alternate translation: “will the wicked rejoice because you never punish them for the evil deeds they do” (See: Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information)

Psalms 94:4

ULT

4 They pour out their arrogant words;
all those who do evil boast.

They pour out

“All those who do evil pour out”

They pour out their arrogant words

The psalmist writes of the wicked speaking as if their words were a liquid being poured out. (See: Metaphor)

all those who do evil boast

The translation can make explicit that these people boast about their evil actions. Alternate translation: “all those who do evil boast about their evil deeds” (See: Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information)

Psalms 94:5

afflict the nation

Here the metonym “nation” refers to the people of the nation. Alternate translation: “afflict the people of the nation” (See: Metonymy)

ULT

5 They crush your people, Yahweh; they afflict the nation that belongs to you.

They crush

The psalmist speaks of powerful people treating powerless people badly as if it were crushing them or breaking them in pieces. See how “break in pieces” is translated in Psalms 72:4. Alternate translation: “They completely destroy” or “They greatly harm” (See: Metaphor)

Psalms 94:6

the widow

“women whose husbands have died”

the fatherless

“children without fathers”

ULT

6 They kill the widow and foreigner who lives in their country, and they murder the fatherless.

Psalms 94:7

the God of Jacob does not take notice of it

“the God of Israel does not see what we do”

ULT

7 They say, “Yahweh will not see, the God of Jacob does not take notice of it.”

Psalms 94:8

General Information:

The writer now instructs the wicked people.

ULT

8 Understand, you stupid people! You fools, when will you ever learn?

when will you ever learn?

This rhetorical question emphasizes the anger of the writer with the wicked people he is speaking to. This question can be translated as a statement. Alternate translation: “stop your foolish ways!” or “learn from your mistakes!” (See: Rhetorical Question)

Psalms 94:9

He who made the ear, does he not hear? He who formed the eye, does he not see?

ULT

9 He who made the ear, does he not hear? He who formed the eye, does he not see?

These rhetorical questions can be translated as statements or commands. Alternate translation: “God made ears, so he can hear. God made eyes, so he can see.” or “God made ears, so stop acting as if he does not hear. God made eyes, so stop acting as if he does not see.” (See: Rhetorical Question)

Psalms 94:10

General Information:

The writer continues instructing the wicked people.

ULT

10 He who disciplines the nations, does he not correct? He is the one who gives knowledge to man.

He who disciplines the nations, does he not correct?

This question can be translated as a statement. It is implied that Yahweh corrects his people. Alternate translation: “You know that Yahweh corrects the nations, so you can be sure that he will correct his people!” or “he will punish his people!” (See: Rhetorical Question and Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information)

does he not correct

This can be stated in positive form. This could mean: (1) God corrects. Alternate translation: “he corrects” or (2) God punishes. “he punishes” (See: Litotes)

Psalms 94:11

that they are vapor

Here the thoughts of men are compared to vapor or steam that disappears into the air. This metaphor shows how unimportant and useless they are. (See: Metaphor)

vapor

“mist.” See how this word is translated in Psalms 39:11

ULT

11 Yahweh knows the thoughts of men,
that they are vapor.

Psalms 94:12

General Information:

Now the writer again talks to Yahweh.

ULT

12 Blessed is the one whom you instruct,
Yahweh, the one whom you teach from
your law.

Psalms 94:13

until a pit is dug for the wicked

The psalmist speaks of Yahweh's punishing the wicked as if Yahweh were trapping an animal in a pit. This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "until you dig a pit for the wicked" or "until you destroy the wicked" (See: Active or Passive and Metaphor)

ULT

13 You give him rest in times of trouble
until a pit is dug for the wicked.

Psalms 94:14

his inheritance

“those whom he has chosen to be with him forever”

ULT

14 For Yahweh will not forsake his people or abandon his inheritance.

Psalms 94:15

judgment will again be righteous

ULT
15 For judgment will again be righteous;
and all the upright in heart will follow it.

The psalmist speaks of those who judge as if they were the decisions they make. The abstract noun “judgment” can be translated with the verb “judge.” Alternate translation: “judges will again judge righteously” or “judges will again make righteous decisions” (See: Metonymy and Abstract Nouns)

the upright in heart

The adjective phrase “upright in heart” can be translated as a noun phrase. Alternate translation: “those whose hearts are right with God” (See: Nominal Adjectives)

will follow it

“will want the judges to judge righteously”

Psalms 94:16

Who will rise up to defend me against the evildoers? Who will stand up for me against the wicked?

This can be translated as a statement. Alternate translation: “No one will defend me against the evildoers. No one will help me fight against the wicked.” (See: Rhetorical Question)

ULT

16 Who will rise up to defend me against the evildoers? Who will stand up for me against the wicked?

the wicked

The adjective “wicked” can be translated as a noun phrase. Alternate translation: “wicked people” (See: Nominal Adjectives)

Psalms 94:17

Unless Yahweh had been my help ... silence

This is a hypothetical situation. Yahweh did help him, so he was not lying in the place of silence. (See: Hypothetical Situations)

ULT

17 Unless Yahweh had been my help, I would soon be lying down in the place of silence.

Unless Yahweh had been my help

The abstract noun “help” can be expressed as a verb. Alternate translation: “If Yahweh had not helped me” (See: Abstract Nouns)

I would soon be lying down in the place of silence

Here “would be lying down” refers to “death” and “in the place of silence” refers to the grave.” Alternate translation: “in a short time, I would be dead, lying in a silent grave” (See: Euphemism)

Psalms 94:18

Your covenant faithfulness, Yahweh, held me up

The abstract noun “faithfulness” can be translated with an adjective. Alternate translation: “You, Yahweh, held me up because you are faithful to your covenant” (See: Abstract Nouns)

ULT

18 When I said, “My foot is slipping,”
Your covenant faithfulness, Yahweh,
held me up.

Psalms 94:19

When cares within me are many, your consolations make me happy

ULT

19 When cares within me are many, your consolations make me happy.

The psalmist speaks of care as if he could count separate cares. The abstract noun “consolations” can be translated with the verb “console” or “comfort.” Alternate translation: “When I have been worried about many things, you have comforted me and made me happy” (See: Abstract Nouns)

Psalms 94:20

Can a throne of destruction be allied with you, one who creates injustice by statute?

This rhetorical question is used to make a point. It can be translated as a statement. Alternate translation: “A wicked ruler who makes unjust laws is not your friend” (See: Rhetorical Question)

ULT

20 Can a throne of destruction be allied with you, one who creates injustice by statute?

a throne of destruction

Here the metonym “throne” refers to a king or ruler. Alternate translation: “a wicked ruler” or “corrupt judge” (See: Metonymy)

Psalms 94:21

conspire

secretly plan with a person something harmful or illegal

take the life of

This is an idiom which means to kill someone. (See: Idiom)

ULT

21 They conspire together to take the life of the righteous and they condemn the innocent to death.

Psalms 94:22

Yahweh has been my high tower

Here “tower” is a metaphor for protection. Alternate translation: “Yahweh has protected me from my enemies” (See: Metaphor)

God has been the rock of my refuge

The psalmist speaks of having God protect him as if God were a place where the psalmist could go to be safe. See how “rock” and “refuge” are translated in Psalms 62:7. Alternate translation: “I have asked God to protect me, and he has kept me safe by his power” (See: Metaphor)

ULT

22 But Yahweh has been my high tower,
and my God has been the rock of my refuge.

Psalms 94:23

will bring on them their own iniquity

This could mean: (1) “will do to them the evil things they have done to others” or (2) “will punish them for all the evil things he has done to others.”

cut them off

This is an idiom which means “kill them.” (See: Idiom)

in their own wickedness

This could mean: (1) “while they are doing wicked things” or (2) “because they have done wicked things.”

ULT

23 He will bring on them their own iniquity and will cut them off in their own wickedness. Yahweh our God will cut them off.

Psalms 95

Psalm 95 General Notes

Type of psalm

Psalm 95 is the first in a series of six worship psalms (Psalms 95-100).

Special concepts in this chapter

God’s care

God made everything and takes good care of people. People should not be stubborn like the Israelites were in the days of Moses. The Israelites with Moses wandered in the desert for forty years.

Psalms 95:1

General Information:

Parallelism is common in Hebrew poetry. (See: Poetry and Parallelism)

ULT

1 Oh come, let us sing to Yahweh; let us sing joyfully to the rock of our salvation.

the rock of our salvation

The psalmist speaks of Yahweh as if Yahweh were a mountain the people could climb so they would be safe. See how “rock” and “of my salvation” are translated in Psalms 18:46. Alternate translation: “the rock where we can go and God will save us” (See: Metaphor)

Psalms 95:2

enter his presence

The psalmist speaks as if he is telling the readers to go into the throne room of a king. Alternate translation: “go to where he is” (See: Metaphor)

with thanksgiving

“thanking him as we enter his presence”

ULT

2 Let us enter his presence with thanksgiving; let us sing to him with psalms of praise.

Psalms 95:3

superior to all gods

Possible meanings are that Yahweh is a great king: (1) “who rules over all other gods,” or (2) “who is much better than all gods.”

ULT

3 For Yahweh is a great God and a great King superior to all gods.

Psalms 95:4

In his hand

This is an idiom which means “in his control” or “he is responsible for.” (See: Idiom)

depths

deep places

heights

high places

ULT

4 In his hand are the depths of the earth; the heights of the mountains are his.

Psalms 95:5

his hands formed

The word “hands” is a metonym for Yahweh himself. Alternate translation: “he himself formed” (See: Synecdoche)

ULT

5 The sea is his, for he made it, and his hands formed the dry land.

Psalms 95:6

kneel

put both knees on the ground, often to show submission (See: Symbolic Action)

ULT

6 Oh come, let us worship and bow down; let us kneel before Yahweh, our Creator:

Psalms 95:7

the people of his pasture

The word “pasture” is a metonym for the food that animals eat in the pasture, which in turn is a synecdoche for everything that Yahweh provides for his people. Alternate translation: “we are the people whose needs he meets” (See: Metonymy and Synecdoche)

ULT

7 For he is our God, and we are the people of his pasture and the sheep of his hand. Today—oh, that you would hear his voice!

pasture

an area where animals find grass to eat

the sheep of his hand

The word “hand” here refers to how Yahweh protects his people the way a shepherd protects his sheep. Alternate translation: “the people whom he protects like a shepherd protects his sheep” (See: Metaphor)

Today—oh, that you would hear his voice!

“Oh, that you would hear his voice today!” The psalmist purposely interrupts what he is saying.

hear his voice

Here “his voice” represents God speaking or what he says. Alternate translation: “listen to God speak” or “hear what God says” (See: Metonymy)

Psalms 95:8

General Information:

Now the writer writes the words that Yahweh spoke.

ULT

8 “Do not harden your heart, as at Meribah, or as on the day of Massah in the wilderness,

harden your heart

“become stubborn”

Meribah,...Massah

These are places in the desert that Moses named because the Israelites rebelled against God. (See: How to Translate Names and Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information)

Psalms 95:9

tested me ... tried me

These two phrases are both metaphors for the people seeing how much evil they could do before Yahweh would punish them. The phrases say basically the same thing and can be combined. Alternate translation: “tested me” or “wanted to see if they could do evil things without my punishing them ... tested whether I would continue to be patient with them” (See: Metaphor and Doublet)

my deeds

“the amazing things I had done”

ULT

9 where your forefathers tested me and tried me, though they had seen my deeds.

Psalms 95:10

General Information:

Yahweh continues speaking directly to his people.

ULT

10 For forty years I was angry with that generation and said, ‘This is a people whose hearts wander astray; they have not known my ways.’

forty years

“40 years” (See: Numbers)

that generation

“all of those people” or “that entire generation of people”

wander astray

God speaks of the people as if they were sheep, which will go wherever they want to and not stay near their shepherd. Alternate translation: “move away from me” or “go their own way” (See: Metaphor)

they have not known my ways

Yahweh’s commands are spoken of as if they were paths on which the people should walk. The people not obeying Yahweh’s commands is spoken of as if they did not know these paths. Alternate translation: “they have not obeyed my commands” (See: Metaphor)

Psalms 95:11

my resting place

“the place where I would have allowed them to rest”

ULT

11 Therefore I vowed in my anger that they would never enter into my resting place.”

Psalms 96

Psalm 96 General Notes

Type of psalm

Psalm 96 is one of six worship psalms (Psalms 95-100).

Special concepts in this chapter

Yahweh, the king

Yahweh is king over all the earth and is worthy of all praise.

Psalms 96:1

General Information:

Parallelism is common in Hebrew poetry. (See: Poetry and Parallelism)

ULT

1 Oh, sing to Yahweh a new song; sing to Yahweh, all the earth.

a new song

a song no one has ever sung before

all the earth

This refers to the people of the earth. Alternate translation: “all you people who live on the earth” (See: Metonymy)

Psalms 96:2

bless his name

The word “name” is a metonym for Yahweh himself. Alternate translation: “bless Yahweh” or “do what makes Yahweh happy” See how “may his glorious name be blessed” is translated in Psalms 72:19. (See: Metonymy)

ULT

2 Sing to Yahweh, bless his name;
announce his salvation day after day.

announce his salvation

The abstract noun “salvation” can be translated using the verb “save.” Alternate translation: “announce that he has saved us” or “tell people that he is the one who saves” (See: Abstract Nouns)

Psalms 96:3

Declare his glory among the nations

“Tell all the people in every nation about his great glory”

ULT

3 Declare his glory among the nations,
his marvelous deeds among all the
nations.

Psalms 96:4

Yahweh is great and is to be praised greatly

This can be translated in active form. Alternate translation: “Yahweh is great. Praise him greatly” or “Yahweh is great, and people should praise him greatly” (See: Active or Passive)

ULT

4 For Yahweh is great and is to be praised greatly. He is to be feared above all other gods.

He is to be feared above all other gods

This can be translated in active form. Alternate translation: “Fear him above all other gods” (See: Active or Passive)

Psalms 96:5

(There are no notes for this verse.)

ULT

5 For all the gods of the nations are idols, but it is Yahweh who made the heavens.

Psalms 96:6

in his presence

“where he is”

Splendor and majesty are in his presence

The psalmist speaks as if splendor and majesty are people who can stand before a king. Alternate translation: “Everyone knows of his splendor and majesty” (See: Personification)

Strength and beauty are in his sanctuary

The words “strength” and “beauty” are metonyms for the ark of the covenant decrees, which is found in the sanctuary. Alternate translation: “It is his sanctuary that contains the ark of the covenant decrees” (See: Metonymy)

ULT

6 Splendor and majesty are in his presence. Strength and beauty are in his sanctuary.

Psalms 96:7

Ascribe to Yahweh ... ascribe praise to Yahweh for his glory and strength

This can be restated to removed the abstract nouns “praise,” “glory,” and “strength.” See how these words are translated in Psalms 29:1. Alternate translation: “Praise Yahweh ... praise Yahweh because he is glorious and strong” (See: Abstract Nouns)

ULT

7 Ascribe to Yahweh, you clans of peoples, ascribe praise to Yahweh for his glory and strength.

Psalms 96:8

Give to Yahweh the glory that his name deserves

The abstract noun “glory” can be stated as a verb or adjective. See how these words are translated in Psalms 29:2. Alternate translation: “Honor Yahweh just as his name deserves” or “Proclaim that Yahweh is glorious just as his name deserves” (See: Abstract Nouns)

ULT

8 Give to Yahweh the glory that his name deserves. Bring an offering and come into his courts.

his name deserves

Here “name” refers to the person of God. Alternate translation: “he deserves” (See: Metonymy)

his courts

the temple courtyard where the priests sacrificed animals to Yahweh

Psalms 96:9

Bow down to Yahweh

The implied information is that the people were to bow down in worship. Alternate translation: “Bow down to worship Yahweh” (See: Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information and Symbolic Action)

ULT

9 Bow down to Yahweh in the splendor of holiness; tremble before him, all the earth.

in the splendor of holiness

The abstract nouns “splendor” and “holiness” can be translated as adjectives. Alternate translation: “because he is gloriously beautiful and holy” (See: Abstract Nouns)

tremble

to shake because of fear

all the earth

Here “earth” represents the people. Alternate translation: “all the people of the earth” (See: Metonymy)

Psalms 96:10

The world also is established

This can be translated in active form. Alternate translation: “He also established the world” (See: Active or Passive)

it cannot be shaken

This can be translated in active form. Alternate translation: “nothing can shake it” (See: Active or Passive)

ULT

10 Say among the nations, “Yahweh reigns.” The world also is established; it cannot be shaken. He judges the peoples fairly.

Psalms 96:11

Let the heavens be glad, and let the earth rejoice

ULT

11 Let the heavens be glad, and let the earth rejoice; let the sea roar and that which fills it shout with joy.

This could mean: (1) the heavens and the earth are spoken of as if they have emotions like people. Alternate translation: “Let it be as if the heavens are glad and the earth rejoices” or (2) “the heavens” and “the earth” are metonyms for those who dwell in those places. Alternate translation: “Let those who live in the heavens be glad and let those who live on the earth rejoice” (See: Personification and Metonymy)

that which fills it shout with joy

The implied information is that this refers to all the creatures living in the sea. They are spoken of as if they should shout with joy like people might do. Alternate translation: “the sea creatures shout joyfully” (See: Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information and Personification)

Psalms 96:12

Let the fields rejoice and all that is in them

“Let the fields and all that is in them rejoice.” The psalmist speaks as if “the fields” and the animals that live in them have emotions like people. Alternate translation: “Let it be as if the fields themselves and all the animals that live in them are rejoicing” (See: Personification)

ULT

12 Let the fields rejoice and all that is in them. Then let all the trees in the forest shout for joy

let all the trees in the forest shout for joy

This speaks about the trees as if they were people who could shout for joy. Alternate translation: “let it be as if all the trees in the forest shout for joy” (See: Personification)

Psalms 96:13

He is coming to judge the earth. He will judge the world ... and the peoples

The three phrase have similar meanings; the last two phases are used to strengthen the first. (See: Parallelism)

ULT

13 before Yahweh, for he is coming. He is coming to judge the earth. He will judge the world with righteousness and the peoples with his faithfulness.

to judge ... will judge

Another possible meaning is “to rule ... will rule.”

He will judge the world with righteousness

Here “the world” is a metonym for all the people in the world. See how these words are translated in Psalms 9:8. Alternate translation: “He will judge all the people of the world righteously” (See: Metonymy)

the peoples with his faithfulness

The words “he will judge” are understood. Alternate translation: “he will judge the peoples with his faithfulness” (See: Ellipsis)

with his faithfulness

The can be restated to remove the abstract noun “faithfulness.” This could mean: (1) Alternate translation: “fairly, according to what he knows is true” or (2) Alternate translation: “using the same standard for all people” (See: Abstract Nouns)

Psalms 97

Psalm 97 General Notes

Type of psalm

Psalm 97 is one of six worship psalms (Psalms 95-100)

Special concepts in this chapter

Yahweh’s authority

All people who worship idols are disgraced because Yahweh rules over all the world.

Psalms 97:1

General Information:

Parallelism is common in Hebrew poetry. (See: Poetry and Parallelism)

ULT

1 Yahweh reigns; let the earth rejoice;
let the many coastlands be glad.

let the earth rejoice; let the many coastlands be glad

The earth and the coastlands are said to have emotions like people. Alternate translation: “Rejoice and be glad every person on the earth and near the seas” (See: Personification)

coastlands

This could mean: (1) “lands near the seas” or (2) “islands.”

Psalms 97:2

Clouds and darkness surround him

“We cannot see him; it is as if he were sitting in the dark with clouds all around him”

ULT

2 Clouds and darkness surround him.
Righteousness and justice are the
foundation of his throne.

Righteousness and justice are the foundation of his throne

The word “throne” is a metonym for the deeds and words of the one who sits on it. The psalmist speaks as if righteousness and justice were physical objects that made the throne secure. Alternate translation: “He is righteous and just in everything he does” or “He is able to rule because he rules righteously and justly” (See: Metonymy and Metaphor)

the foundation of his throne

Here “the foundation of his throne” refers to how Yahweh rules his kingdom. (See: Metonymy)

Psalms 97:3

Fire goes before him

The psalmist speaks as if fire were a person walking before King Yahweh and telling people that the king was coming. (See: Personification)

consumes his adversaries

“burns up his enemies”

ULT

3 Fire goes before him and consumes his adversaries on every side.

Psalms 97:4

the earth sees and trembles

The writer speaks of the earth as if it were a person who sees what Yahweh does and trembles in fear. Alternate translation: “like a person, the earth sees and trembles” (See: Personification)

trembles

shakes with fear

ULT

4 His lightning lights up the world; the earth sees and trembles.

Psalms 97:5

The mountains melt like wax before Yahweh

The writer speaks of the mountains crumbling before Yahweh as if they were wax that was exposed to a fire. Alternate translation: “The mountains are unable to stand as Yahweh comes near” or “The mountains crumble in Yahweh’s presence” (See: Simile)

ULT

5 The mountains melt like wax before Yahweh, the Lord of the whole earth.

Psalms 97:6

The skies declare his justice

ULT
6 The skies declare his justice, and all the nations see his glory.

This could mean: (1) the psalmist speaks as if the skies are Yahweh's messengers who declare that Yahweh is just. Alternate translation: "Everyone can see that God is just, the same way that everyone can see the skies" or (2) the skies refer to the beings that live in the heavens. Alternate translation: "All those who live in heaven declare that Yahweh is just" (See: Personification and Metonymy)

Psalms 97:7

(There are no notes for this verse.)

ULT

7 All those who worship carved figures
will be shamed, those who boast in
worthless idols— bow down to him, all
you gods!

Psalms 97:8

Zion heard ... the towns of Judah

This refers to the people who live in these lands. Alternate translation: “The people of Zion heard ... the people of Judah” (See: Metonymy)

ULT

8 Zion heard and was glad, and the towns of Judah rejoiced because of your righteous decrees, Yahweh.

Psalms 97:9

are most high above all

The psalmist speaks as if those who were strong enough to rule were the physically higher than others. Alternate translation: “rule over all the people who live on” (See: Metaphor and Metonymy)

ULT

9 For you, Yahweh, are most high above all the earth. You are exalted far above all gods.

You are exalted far

The psalmist speaks as if those who were strong enough to rule were the physically higher than others. Alternate translation: “You are high, far” (See: Metaphor)

Psalms 97:10

he takes them out of the hand of the wicked

Here the word “hand” represents power. Yahweh rescuing people from the power of wicked people is spoken of as if he took them out of their hands. Alternate translation: “he rescues them from the power of the wicked” (See: Metonymy and Metaphor)

ULT

10 You who love Yahweh, hate evil! He protects the lives of his faithful ones,
and he takes them out of the hand of the wicked.

Psalms 97:11

Light is sown for ... and gladness for

These two phrases have similar meanings and are used together for emphasis. Alternate translation: “Yahweh sows light for those who do right, and he sows gladness for those with honest hearts” (See: Parallelism and Active or Passive and Ellipsis)

ULT

11 Light is sown for the righteous and gladness for those with honest hearts.

Light is sown for the righteous

The word “sown” is a metaphor for actions with future results. “Light” is a metaphor for good things. Alternate translation: “Yahweh plans for good things to happen to the righteous in the future” (See: Metaphor)

the righteous

The adjective “righteous” can be translated as a noun phrase. Alternate translation: “righteous people” (See: Nominal Adjectives)

gladness for those with honest hearts

The words “is sown” are understood. The word “sown” is a metaphor for actions with future results. The abstract noun “gladness” can be stated as “happy.” Alternate translation: “gladness is sown for those with honest hearts” or “Yahweh plans for people with honest hearts to be happy in the future” (See: Ellipsis and Metaphor and Abstract Nouns)

those with honest hearts

The heart is a synecdoche for the whole person. Alternate translation: “honest people” (See: Synecdoche)

Psalms 97:12

General Information:

This verse has a command followed by the reason for the command. If your language requires the reason to precede the command: “Because of what Yahweh has done for you, you righteous people, be glad and give thanks when you remember his holiness.”

ULT

12 Be glad in Yahweh, you righteous;
and give thanks when you remember his holiness.

Be glad in Yahweh

This idiom means to be glad because of what Yahweh has done. Alternate translation: “Be glad because of what Yahweh has done” (See: Idiom)

when you remember his holiness

This could mean: (1) “when you remember how holy he is” or (2) “to his holy name,” a metonym for “to him.” (See: Metonymy)

Psalms 98

Psalm 98 General Notes

Type of psalm

Psalm 98 is one of six worship psalms (Psalms 95-100).

Special concepts in this chapter

Praise

Everyone and every thing should sing praises to Yahweh because he is worthy of all praise.

Psalms 98:1

General Information:

Parallelism is common in Hebrew poetry. (See: Poetry and Parallelism)

ULT

1 Oh, sing to Yahweh a new song, for he has done marvelous things; his right hand and his holy arm have given him victory.

a new song

a song no one has ever sung before. See how this is translated in Psalms 96:1.

his right hand and his holy arm have

The words “right hand” and “holy arm” refer to Yahweh’s strength. Together they emphasize how great his strength is. Alternate translation: “his very great power has” (See: Metonymy and Doublet)

right hand

the more powerful and skilled hand

holy arm

Here “arm” is a metonym for power. Alternate translation: “the power that is his alone” (See: Metonymy)

have given him victory

This can be restated to remove the abstract noun “victory.” Alternate translation: “have enabled him to be victorious over his enemies” or “has enabled him to defeat his enemies” (See: Abstract Nouns)

Psalms 98:2

made known his salvation

The abstract noun “salvation” can be translated using the verb “save.” Alternate translation: “showed people that he saves his people” (See: Abstract Nouns)

ULT

2 Yahweh has made known his salvation; he has openly showed his justice to all the nations.

showed his justice to all the nations

The abstract noun “justice” can be translated using the adjective “just.” The word “nations” is a metonym for “the people who live in all the nations.” Alternate translation: “showed the people who live in all the nations that he is just” (See: Abstract Nouns)

Psalms 98:3

calls to mind

“remembers.” See how “call to mind” is translated in Psalms 20:3. (See: Idiom)

all the ends of the earth

This is a metonym for the people of the earth. Alternate translation: “people from all over the world” (See: Metonymy)

will see the victory of our God

The abstract noun “victory” can be translated using the verb “defeat.” Alternate translation: “will see our God defeat his enemies” (See: Abstract Nouns)

ULT

3 He calls to mind his covenant loyalty and faithfulness for the house of Israel; all the ends of the earth will see the victory of our God.

Psalms 98:4

all the earth

This is a metonym for the people of the earth. Alternate translation: “all people in the world” (See: Metonymy)

burst into song

“suddenly begin singing happily”

sing for joy

“sing because you are happy”

sing praises

“sing praises to God”

ULT

4 Shout for joy to Yahweh, all the earth;
burst into song, sing for joy, and sing praises.

Psalms 98:5

melodious

delightful or pleasing musical sound

ULT

5 Sing praises to Yahweh with the harp,
with the harp and melodious song.

Psalms 98:6

the horn

an animal horn used as a musical instrument

make a joyful noise

“raise a shout.” See how “shout” is translated in Psalms 47:1.

ULT

6 With trumpets and the sound of the horn, make a joyful noise before the King, Yahweh.

Psalms 98:7

Let the sea shout and everything in it

The psalmist speaks as if the sea were a person who could shout to God. Alternate translation: “Let it be as if the sea and everything in it were shouting” (See: Personification)

ULT

7 Let the sea shout and everything in it,
the world and those who live in it!

the world and those who live in it

The psalmist speaks as if the world were a person. Alternate translation: “and let it be as if the world and those who live in it were shouting” (See: Ellipsis and Personification)

the world

This is a metonym for the people who live in the world. Alternate translation: “the people in the world” (See: Metonymy)

Psalms 98:8

Let the rivers clap their hands, and let the mountains shout for joy

ULT

8 Let the rivers clap their hands, and let the mountains shout for joy.

The psalmist speaks as if the rivers and mountains were people who could clap and shout. Alternate translation: “Let it be as though the rivers are clapping their hands and mountains were shouting for joy” (See: Personification)

Psalms 98:9

the nations with fairness

The verb may be supplied from the previous phrase. Alternate translation: “he will judge the nations with fairness” (See: Ellipsis)

the nations

This is a metonym for “the people who live in the nations.” (See: Metonymy)

with fairness

“honestly” or “using the same standard for everyone”

ULT

9 Yahweh is coming to judge the earth;
he will judge the world with righteousness and the nations with fairness.

Psalms 99

Psalm 99 General Notes

Type of psalm

Psalm 99 is one of six worship psalms (Psalms 95-100).

Special concepts in this chapter

Yahweh’s justice

God is just and fair. Moses, Aaron and Samuel each prayed to him and obeyed him and he answered their prayers. (See: just, justice, unjust, injustice, justify, justification)

Psalms 99:1

General Information:

Parallelism is common in Hebrew poetry. (See: Poetry and Parallelism)

ULT

1 Yahweh reigns; let the nations tremble. He sits enthroned above the cherubim; the earth quakes.

the nations

This refers to the people of all nations. Alternate translation: “the people of all nations” (See: Metonymy)

tremble

shake with fear

He sits enthroned 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: “He sits on his throne above the cherubim on the ark of the covenant” (See: Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information)

quakes

shakes

Psalms 99:2

Yahweh is great in Zion; he is exalted above all the nations

“Not only is Yahweh great in Zion, he is exalted above all the nations” or “Not only does Yahweh rule in Zion, he rules over all the nations”

ULT

2 Yahweh is great in Zion; he is exalted above all the nations.

he is exalted above all the nations

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: “people in all the nations exalt him” or “people in all nations praise him greatly” (See: Active or Passive and Metonymy)

Psalms 99:3

Let them praise your great and awesome name

Here the author shifts from speaking about God, to speaking to God. After this phrase though, he shifts back to speaking about God.

ULT

3 Let them praise your great and awesome name; he is holy.

Psalms 99:4

he loves justice

The abstract noun “justice” can be translated using the phrase “what is just.” Alternate translation: “he loves doing what is just” (See: Abstract Nouns)

ULT

4 The king is strong, and he loves justice. You have established fairness; you have done righteousness and justice in Jacob.

You have established fairness

The abstract noun “fairness” is a metonym for the laws that are fair. Alternate translation: “The laws you have established are fair” (See: Abstract Nouns and Metonymy)

Psalms 99:5

worship at his footstool

ULT

5 Praise Yahweh our God and worship at his footstool. He is holy.

Here the word “footstool” likely refers to the ark of the covenant, which the biblical writers often spoke of as if it were Yahweh’s footstool upon which he rested his feet as he sat on his throne in heaven above. The translation can make explicit that the people are to worship Yahweh. Alternate translation: “worship Yahweh at his footstool” or “worship Yahweh before his throne in the temple” (See: Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information)

Psalms 99:6

(There are no notes for this verse.)

ULT

6 Moses and Aaron were among his priests, and Samuel was among those who called on his name. They called to Yahweh, and he answered them.

Psalms 99:7

solemn

important, given seriously

ULT

7 He spoke to them from the pillar of cloud. They kept his solemn commands and the statutes that he gave them.

Psalms 99:8

You answered them

“You answered your people”

ULT

8 You answered them, Yahweh our God.
A forgiving God you were to them, but
one who punished their sinful deeds.

Psalms 99:9

his holy hill

"Mount Zion"

ULT

9 Praise Yahweh our God, and worship at his holy hill, for Yahweh our God is holy.

Psalms 100

Psalm 10 General Notes

Type of psalm

Psalm 100 is the last of six worship psalms (Psalms 95-100).

Special concepts in this chapter

Yahweh’s care for his creation

God made mankind and takes good care of people.

Psalms 100:1

General Information:

Parallelism is common in Hebrew poetry. (See: Poetry and Parallelism)

ULT
1 Shout joyfully to Yahweh, all the earth.

Shout joyfully to Yahweh

“Raise a shout to Yahweh.” See how “shout” is translated in Psalms 47:1.

all the earth

This refers to all the people of the earth. Alternate translation: “everyone on the earth” (See: Metonymy)

Psalms 100:2

come before his presence

The psalmist speaks as if he is telling the readers to go into the throne room of a king. Alternate translation: “go to where he is with joyful singing” or “he can hear you, so sing joyfully” (See: Metaphor)

ULT

2 Serve Yahweh with gladness; come before his presence with joyful singing.

Psalms 100:3

the sheep of his pasture

God's people are like his sheep. Alternate translation: "the people God provides for and protects" (See: Metaphor)

pasture

a grassy area for feeding animals

ULT

3 Know that Yahweh is God; he made us,
and we are his. We are his people and
the sheep of his pasture.

Psalms 100:4

with thanksgiving

“while thanking him” or “while giving thanks to him”

bless his name

The word “name” is a metonym for Yahweh himself. Alternate translation: “bless Yahweh” or “do what makes Yahweh happy” See how “may his glorious name be blessed” is translated in Psalms 72:19. (See: Metonymy)

ULT

4 Enter into his gates with thanksgiving
and into his courts with praise. Give
thanks to him and bless his name.

Psalms 100:5

ULT

5 For Yahweh is good; his covenant faithfulness endures forever and his truthfulness through all generations.

his covenant faithfulness endures forever

The abstract noun “faithfulness” can be translated with an adjective. Alternate translation: “he is faithful to his covenant forever” (See: Abstract Nouns)

his truthfulness through all generations

The verb may be supplied from the previous phrase. The abstract noun “truthfulness” can be translated with an adjective. Alternate translation: “his truthfulness endures through all generations” or “he is truthful through all generations” (See: Ellipsis and Abstract Nouns)

through all generations

“generation after generation.” See how this is translated in Psalms 89:4.

Psalms 101

Psalm 11 General Notes

Type of psalm

Psalm 101 is a psalm asking God’s help in living as a person should.

Special concepts in this chapter

Encouragement

The psalmist wanted to encourage all the good people in the land restrain all the evil people. (See: evil, wicked, unpleasant)

Psalms 101:1

General Information:

Parallelism is common in Hebrew poetry. (See: Poetry and Parallelism)

ULT

1 I will sing of covenant faithfulness and justice; to you, Yahweh, I will sing praises.

I will sing of covenant faithfulness and justice

The abstract nouns “faithfulness” and “justice” can be translated with adjectives. Alternate translation: “I will sing that you are faithful to your covenant and that you are just” (See: Abstract Nouns)

Psalms 101:2

I will walk in the way of integrity

Here David speaks about “living” as if it were “walking.” Alternate translation: “I will live in a way that is honest and right” or “I will live a life full of integrity” (See: Metaphor)

ULT

2 I will walk in the way of integrity. Oh, when will you come to me? I will walk with integrity within my house.

I will walk with integrity within my house

Here David speaks about “living” as if it were walking.” Also, David speaks of overseeing his house with integrity, as if integrity were a physical object residing in his house. Alternate translation: “I will oversee my house with integrity” (See: Metaphor)

Psalms 101:3

I will not put wrongdoing before my eyes

This can be restated to remove the abstract noun “wrongdoing.” The idiom, “put evil before my eyes,” means to approve of it. Alternate translation: “I will not approve of anyone doing anything that is wrong in my presence” (See: Abstract Nouns and Idiom)

ULT

3 I will not put wrongdoing before my eyes; I hate worthless evil; it will not cling to me.

it will not cling to me

David describes “evil” as if it were something unable to cling to him. This means that he would avoid evil things and people doing evil things. Alternate translation: “I will completely avoid evil” (See: Personification)

cling

hold on to something or someone very tightly

Psalms 101:4

to evil

“to anything that is evil”

ULT

4 Perverse people will leave me; I am not loyal to evil.

Psalms 101:5

a proud demeanor and an arrogant attitude

These two phrases mean basically the same thing and emphasize how prideful such people are. (See: Doublet)

a proud demeanor

“a proud outward appearance.”” This refers to a person being so proud that anyone who looks at him can see how proud he is.

ULT

5 I will destroy whoever secretly slanders his neighbor. I will not tolerate anyone who has a proud demeanor and an arrogant attitude.

Psalms 101:6

I will look to the faithful of the land to sit at my side

This means that David would allow those people to be around him and live with him. Alternate translation: “I will allow the faithful of the land to live with me” (See: Idiom)

ULT

6 I will look to the faithful of the land to sit at my side. Those who walk in the way of integrity may serve me.

the faithful

This refers to the people who are faithful to God. Alternate translation: “the faithful people” (See: Nominal Adjectives)

walk in the way of integrity

Here David speaks about “living” as if it were “walking.” Alternate translation: “live in a way that is honest and right” or “live lives full of integrity” (See: Metaphor)

Psalms 101:7

Deceitful people will not ... liars will not

These two phrases have the same idea and are used together to emphasize how David will not tolerate deceitful people. (See: Parallelism)

ULT

7 Deceitful people will not remain within my house; liars will not be welcome before my eyes.

liars will not be welcome

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: “I will not welcome liars” (See: Active or Passive)

before my eyes

Here “my eyes” refers to David himself. Alternate translation: “before me” or “in my presence” (See: Synecdoche)

Psalms 101:8

Morning by morning

“Every day”

the wicked

ULT

8 Morning by morning I will destroy all the wicked from the land; I will remove all evildoers from the city of Yahweh.

This refers to wicked people. Alternate translation: “the wicked people” (See: Nominal Adjectives)

from the city of Yahweh

David is referring to the city that he is in as “the city of Yahweh.” This can be made clear. Alternate translation: “from this city, which is Yahweh’s city” (See: Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information)

Psalms 102

Psalm 12 General Notes

Type of psalm

Psalm 102 is a psalm of deliverance from sickness. (See: deliver, hand over, turn over, release, rescue)

Special concepts in this chapter

Salvation

The author does not want to die young. He also wants to see Jerusalem saved. (See: save, saved, safe, salvation)

Psalms 102:1

General Information:

Parallelism is common in Hebrew poetry. (See: Poetry and Parallelism)

ULT

1 Hear my prayer, Yahweh; hear my cry to you.

the afflicted

This refers to a man who is afflicted. Alternate translation: “the afflicted man” (See: Nominal Adjectives)

Psalms 102:2

(There are no notes for this verse.)

ULT

2 Do not hide your face from me in my time of trouble. Listen to me. When I call out to you, answer me quickly.

Psalms 102:3

my days pass away like smoke

Here “my days” refers to the author’s life and the idea of “smoke” is something that quickly disappears. Alternate translation: “my life passes away quickly” (See: Simile)

ULT

3 For my days pass away like smoke,
and my bones burn like fire.

my bones burn like fire

Here the author refers to his “body” as his “bones.” Alternate translation: “my body feels like it is burning” (See: Synecdoche and Simile)

Psalms 102:4

My heart is crushed

Here the author refers to himself as his “heart.” This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: “I am in despair” (See: Synecdoche and Active or Passive)

ULT

4 My heart is crushed, and I am like
grass that has withered. I forget to eat
any food.

I am like grass that has withered

This is another way to describe his despair. Alternate translation: “I feel like I am drying up like withered grass” (See: Simile)

Psalms 102:5

(There are no notes for this verse.)

ULT

5 With my continual groaning, I have become very thin.

Psalms 102:6

I am like a pelican of the wilderness

He compares his loneliness to that of a pelican, which is often seem alone instead of with other birds. Alternate translation: “I am lonely and despised like a pelican in the wilderness” (See: Simile)

ULT

6 I am like a pelican of the wilderness; I have become like an owl in the ruins.

a pelican

a large fish-eating bird

I have become like an owl in the ruins

The author continues to describe loneliness by comparing himself to an owl in abandoned ruins. Alternate translation: “I have become alone like an owl in abandoned ruins” (See: Simile)

an owl

This is a bird that is awake at night. Alternate translation: “a night bird”

Psalms 102:7

I lie awake like a solitary bird

The writer compares himself to a bird to emphasize his feeling of loneliness. (See: Simile)

ULT

7 I lie awake like a solitary bird, alone on the housetop.

Psalms 102:8

(There are no notes for this verse.)

ULT

8 My enemies taunt me all day long;
those who mock me use my name in curses.

Psalms 102:9

I eat ashes like bread

David would have sat in ashes as an act of mourning, therefore ashes would have fallen on his food. Alternate translation: “I eat ashes like I eat bread” or “As I mourn, ashes fall on the bread that I eat” (See: Simile)

ULT

9 I eat ashes like bread and mix my drink with tears.

mix my drink with tears

David did not purposefully mix his drink with tears; rather his tear would have fallen into his cup while he mourned and wept. Alternate translation: “my tears fall into the cup that I drink” (See: Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information)

Psalms 102:10

you have lifted me up to throw me down

God has not literally lifted and thrown David's body to the ground; rather David says this to describe what he is feeling and experiencing. Alternate translation: "it is like you have lifted me up to throw me down" (See: Metaphor)

ULT

10 Because of your raging anger, you have lifted me up to throw me down.

Psalms 102:11

My days are like a shadow that fades

David compares his time left to live on earth to a fading shadow. Alternate translation: “My time to remain alive is short like an evening shadow that will soon be gone” (See: Simile)

ULT

11 My days are like a shadow that fades,
and I have withered like grass.

I have withered like grass

As David’s body becomes weak and he is nearing the end of his life, he compares himself to withering grass. Alternate translation: “my body has become weak like withered grass” (See: Simile)

withered

dry and wrinkled

Psalms 102:12

your fame is for all generations

“you will be recognized for all generations to come”

fame

being known by many people

ULT

12 But you, Yahweh, live forever, and
your fame is for all generations.

Psalms 102:13

have mercy on Zion

Here “Zion” refers to the people who live in Zion. Alternate translation: “have mercy on the people of Zion” (See: Metonymy)

upon her

The word “her” refers to Zion.

ULT

13 You will rise up and have mercy on Zion. Now is the time to have mercy upon her; the appointed time has come.

Psalms 102:14

hold her stones dear

The “stones” refer to the stones that were part of the city walls before they were destroyed. Alternate translation: “still love the stones that were formerly in the city walls” (See: Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information)

ULT

14 For your servants hold her stones dear and feel compassion for the dust of her ruins.

Psalms 102:15

ULT

15 The nations will respect your name,
Yahweh, and all the kings of the earth
will honor your glory.

your name

Here “your name” refers to Yahweh. Alternate translation: “you” (See: Metonymy)

will honor your glory

The people will honor Yahweh because of his glory. Here Yahweh is referred to by his glory. Alternate translation: “will honor you because you are glorious” (See: Synecdoche)

Psalms 102:16

will appear in his glory

“will be seen as glorious” or “people will see his glory”

ULT

16 Yahweh will rebuild Zion and will appear in his glory.

Psalms 102:17

the destitute

This refers to destitute people. (See: Nominal Adjectives)

he will not reject their prayer

This can be stated in positive form. Alternate translation: “Yahweh will accept their prayers” (See: Double Negatives)

ULT

17 At that time, he will respond to the prayer of the destitute; he will not reject their prayer.

Psalms 102:18

This will be written for future generations

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: “I will write this for future generations” (See: Active or Passive)

ULT

18 This will be written for future generations, and a people not yet born will praise Yahweh.

Psalms 102:19

For he has looked down from the holy heights; from heaven Yahweh has viewed

These two phrases have similar meaning and are used together for emphasize how God looks down from heaven. (See: Parallelism)

the holy heights

“his holy place high above the earth”

ULT

19 For he has looked down from the holy heights; from heaven Yahweh has viewed the earth,

Psalms 102:20

those who were condemned to death

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: “those whom the authorities had sentenced to die” (See: Active or Passive)

ULT

20 to hear the groaning of the prisoners,
to release those who were condemned
to death.

Psalms 102:21

proclaim the name of Yahweh in Zion and his praise in Jerusalem

These two phrases have the same meaning and emphasize the idea of praising the name of Yahweh. (See: Parallelism)

ULT

21 Then men will proclaim the name of Yahweh in Zion and his praise in Jerusalem

Psalms 102:22

(There are no notes for this verse.)

ULT

22 when the peoples and kingdoms
gather together to serve Yahweh.

Psalms 102:23

taken away my strength

David describes God causing him to become weak as if his strength were a physical item that could be taken away from him. Alternate translation: “has caused me to become weak” (See: Metaphor)

ULT

23 He has taken away my strength in the middle of life. He has shortened my days.

my days

The word “days” here refers to his life. Alternate translation: “my life” (See: Metaphor)

Psalms 102:24

do not take me away

David is asking God to not let him die. Alternate translation: “do not take me away from the earth” or “do not let me die” (See: Metaphor)

you are here throughout all generations

“you are present throughout all generations”

ULT

24 I said, “My God, do not take me away in the middle of life; you are here throughout all generations.

Psalms 102:25

(There are no notes for this verse.)

ULT

25 In ancient times you set the earth in place; the heavens are the work of your hands.

Psalms 102:26

they will all grow old

The word “they” refers to “the earth” and “the heavens.”

ULT

26 They will perish, but you will remain;
they will all grow old like a garment; like
clothing, you will remove them, and
they will disappear.

Psalms 102:27

your years will have no end

Here David describes the length of time that God is alive as his “years.” This can be written in positive form. Alternate translation: “you will live forever” (See: Metaphor and Double Negatives)

ULT

27 But you are the same, and your years will have no end.

Psalms 102:28

will live on

“will continue to live”

live in your presence

ULT

28 The children of your servants will live on, and their descendants will live in your presence.”

Here David describes the descendants being protected by Yahweh as being in his presence. Alternate translation: “be protected as they live in your presence” (See: Metaphor)

Psalms 103

Psalm 13 General Notes

Type of psalm

Psalm 103 is the first in a series of five psalms of praise to God. (Psalm 103-107)

Special concepts in this chapter

Yahweh’s grace

God is good to us by forgiving our sins and not punishing us as much as we deserve. His loving-kindness goes on from generation to generation. (See: grace, gracious and forgive, forgiven, forgiveness, pardon, pardoned and sin, sinful, sinner, sinning)

Psalms 103:1

General Information:

Parallelism is common in Hebrew poetry. (See: Poetry and Parallelism)

ULT

1 I give praise to Yahweh with all my life, and with all that is within me, I give praise to his holy name.

I give praise to Yahweh with all my life, and with all that is within me, I give praise to his holy name

These two phrases mean basically the same thing and emphasize how much he will praise Yahweh. Alternate translation: “I will praise Yahweh with all that I am” (See: Parallelism)

give praise to his holy name

This refers to praising Yahweh’s name as Yahweh. (See: Metonymy)

all that is within me

“all of me” or “all that I am.” David uses this phrase to refer to himself and to emphasize his devotion to Yahweh. (See: Synecdoche)

Psalms 103:2

(There are no notes for this verse.)

ULT

2 I give praise to Yahweh with all my life,
and I remember all of his good deeds.

Psalms 103:3

your ... you

David is speaking to himself, so he uses the words “your” and “you” to refer to himself. Many translations express this with “my” and “me” as the UST does.

ULT

3 He forgives all your sins; he heals all your diseases.

Psalms 103:4

your ... you

David is speaking to himself, so he uses the words “your” and “you” to refer to himself. Many translations express this with “my” and “me” as the UST does.

ULT

4 He redeems your life from destruction; he crowns you with covenant faithfulness and acts of tender mercy.

He redeems your life from destruction

This means that Yahweh keeps him alive. Alternate translation: “He saves me from dying” (See: Metaphor)

he crowns you with covenant faithfulness and acts of tender mercy

Here blessing someone and treating them with great honor is described as if it were placing a crown on that person’s head. The abstract nouns “faithfulness” and “mercy” can be translated with adverbs. Alternate translation: “he blesses you by acting faithfully and mercifully towards you” (See: Metaphor and Abstract Nouns)

Psalms 103:5

He satisfies your life with good things

The phrase “your life” refers to “you,” but it emphasizes that Yahweh gives blessings throughout life. Alternate translation: “He satisfies you with good things through your life” (See: Metonymy)

ULT

5 He satisfies your life with good things so that your youth is renewed like the eagle.

your youth is renewed like the eagle

Having your “youth renewed” means to feel young again. Here David compares this feeling of youth to the swiftness and strength of an eagle. Alternate translation: “you feel young and are strong like an eagle” (See: Simile)

your youth

The word “youth” refers to the strength one had as a young adult. (See: Metonymy)

Psalms 103:6

does acts of justice for

“causes justice to happen to”

all who are oppressed

Who is doing the oppressing can be stated explicitly. Alternate translation: “all who are oppressed by men” (See: Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information)

ULT

6 Yahweh does what is fair and does acts of justice for all who are oppressed.

Psalms 103:7

his deeds to the descendants of Israel

The words “he made known” are understood from the previous phrase. They may be repeated here. Alternate translation: “he made known his deeds to the descendants of Israel” (See: Ellipsis)

ULT

7 He made known his ways to Moses,
his deeds to the descendants of Israel.

Psalms 103:8

has great covenant loyalty

“is full of mercy and love”

ULT

8 Yahweh is merciful and gracious; he is patient; he has great covenant loyalty.

Psalms 103:9

He will not always discipline; he is not always angry

These two phrases have similar meanings. The second one strengthens the thought in the first. (See: Parallelism)

ULT

9 He will not always discipline; he is not always angry.

Psalms 103:10

He does not deal with us ... or repay us

These two phrases are parallel and emphasize that God does not punish us as we deserve. Alternate translation: “He does not repay us with the punishment we deserve for our sins” (See: Parallelism)

deal with us

“punish us”

ULT

10 He does not deal with us as our sins deserve or repay us for what our sins demand.

Psalms 103:11

For as the skies are high ... toward those who honor him

The simile compares the great distance between heaven and earth to the greatness of God's love for his people. (See: Simile)

ULT

11 For as the skies are high above the earth, so great is his covenant faithfulness toward those who honor him.

so great is his covenant faithfulness

The abstract noun "faithfulness" can be translated with an adjective. Alternate translation: "so he is very faithful to his covenant" (See: Abstract Nouns)

Psalms 103:12

As far as the east ... removed the guilt of our sins from us

The distance between east and west is so far that it cannot be measured. In this simile, that distance is being compared to how far God moves our guilt away from us. (See: Simile)

ULT

12 As far as the east is from the west, this is how far he has removed the guilt of our sins from us.

Psalms 103:13

As a father has compassion ... on those who honor him

Here the author compares a father's compassion for his children to Yahweh's compassion for those who honor him. (See: Simile)

ULT

13 As a father has compassion on his children, so Yahweh has compassion on those who honor him.

Psalms 103:14

how we are formed

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: “what our bodies are like” or “how he formed our bodies” (See: Active or Passive)

ULT

14 For he knows how we are formed; he knows that we are dust.

he knows that we are dust

When Yahweh created Adam the first man he created him from dust. Alternate translation: “he remembers that he created us from dust” (See: Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information)

Psalms 103:15

As for man, his days are like grass

In this simile, the length of man's life is being compared to the short length of time that grass grows before it dies. Alternate translation: "The length of man's life is short like that of grass" (See: Simile)

ULT

15 As for man, his days are like grass; he flourishes like a flower in a field.

he flourishes like a flower in a field

In this simile, how man grows over time is compared to how a flower grows. (See: Simile)

flourishes

To "flourish" is to grow well or be healthy.

Psalms 103:16

The wind blows over it, and it disappears ... where it once grew

ULT

16 The wind blows over it, and it disappears, and no one can even tell where it once grew.

These phrases continue to talk about flowers and grass. They compare how flowers and grass die to how man dies. Alternate translation: “The wind blows over the flowers and grass and they disappear, and no one can tell where they once grew—it is the same way with man” (See: Simile)

Psalms 103:17

the covenant faithfulness of Yahweh is

The abstract noun “faithfulness” can be translated with an adjective. Alternate translation: “Yahweh is faithful to his covenant” (See: Abstract Nouns)

is from everlasting to everlasting

This means that Yahweh’s love continues forever. Alternate translation: “will continue forever” (See: Merism)

their descendants

“the descendants of those who honor him”

ULT

17 But the covenant faithfulness of Yahweh is from everlasting to everlasting on those who honor him. His righteousness extends to their descendants.

Psalms 103:18

They keep his covenant and remember to obey his instructions

These two phrases have similar meanings. (See: Parallelism)

ULT

18 They keep his covenant and remember to obey his instructions.

Psalms 103:19

Yahweh has established his throne in the heavens

Here Yahweh's reign as king is referred to as his "throne." Alternate translation: "Yahweh has taken his seat in the heavens where he rules as king" (See: Metonymy)

ULT

19 Yahweh has established his throne in the heavens, and his kingdom rules over everyone.

has established

"has made"

his kingdom rules

Here Yahweh is referred to by "his kingdom" to emphasize his authority as king. Alternate translation: "he rules" (See: Metonymy)

Psalms 103:20

(There are no notes for this verse.)

ULT

20 Give praise to Yahweh, you his angels, you mighty ones who are strong and do his word, and obey the sound of his word.

Psalms 103:21

carry out his will

This is an idiom meaning to “do his will.” Alternate translation: “do his will” (See: Idiom)

ULT

21 Give praise to Yahweh, all his hosts,
you are his servants who carry out his will.

Psalms 103:22

in all the places where he reigns

“praise him in all the places where he reigns”

with all my life

This phrase means that he will praise Yahweh wholeheartedly and is used to emphasize his devotion to him. Alternate translation: “with all of me” or “with all my soul” (See: Metonymy)

ULT

22 Give praise to Yahweh, all his creatures, in all the places where he reigns. I will give praise to Yahweh with all my life.

Psalms 104

Psalm 14 General Notes

Type of psalm

Psalm 104 is the second in the series of five psalms of praise to God. (Psalm 103-107)

Special concepts in this chapter

Yahweh’s creation

God has created everything good on earth, in the sky and in the sea.

Psalms 104:1

General Information:

Parallelism is common in Hebrew poetry. This psalm is a song of praise. (See: Poetry and Parallelism)

ULT

1 I give praise to Yahweh with all my life,
Yahweh my God, you are very
magnificent; you are clothed with
splendor and majesty.

with all my life

This phrase means that he will praise Yahweh wholeheartedly and is used to emphasize his devotion to him. Alternate translation: “with all of me” or “with all my soul”(See: Metonymy)

you are clothed with splendor and majesty

The words “splendor” and “majesty” have similar meanings and emphasize the greatness of Yahweh’s glory. They are described as clothing Yahweh like a garment. Alternate translation: “you have splendor and majesty all around you” (See: Doublet and Metaphor)

Psalms 104:2

You cover yourself with light as with a garment

Yahweh is described as being covered with light as if the light were a garment around him. Alternate translation: “You are covered in light” (See: Simile)

ULT

2 You cover yourself with light as with a garment; you spread out the heavens like a tent curtain.

you spread out the heavens like a tent curtain

Here God is described as spreading out the heavens like someone spreads out a tent when setting it up. Alternate translation: “you spread out the heavens like someone sets up a tent” (See: Simile)

Psalms 104:3

You lay the beams of your chambers on the clouds

“You build your upper rooms in the heavens.” This is referring to his house is so tall that the upper floor extends into the clouds.

ULT

3 You lay the beams of your chambers on the clouds; you make the clouds your chariot; you walk on the wings of the wind.

you make the clouds your chariot

Here the clouds are described as carrying Yahweh as if they were a chariot. Alternate translation: “you make the clouds carry you like a chariot” (See: Metaphor)

you walk on the wings of the wind

Here the blowing of the wind is described as wings on which Yahweh walks. Alternate translation: “you walk upon the wind” (See: Metaphor)

Psalms 104:4

He makes the winds his messengers

This could mean: (1) he causes the wind to be able to carry a message like a messenger, “He makes the winds to be like his messengers” or (2) “He makes his messengers swift like the wind” (See: Personification and Metaphor)

ULT

4 He makes the winds his messengers,
flames of fire his servants.

flames of fire his servants

This could mean: (1) “he causes flames of fire to be like his servants.” He causes fire to serve him like a servant would or (2) “he makes his servants to be like flames of fire”and (See: Personification and Metaphor)

flames of fire his servants

This can be stated with the implied information from the previous line. Alternate translation: “He makes the flames of fire his servants” (See: Ellipsis)

Psalms 104:5

He laid the foundations of the earth

Here the phrase “laid the foundations” means “created.” Alternate translation: “He created the whole earth” (See: Idiom)

ULT

5 He laid the foundations of the earth,
and it will never be moved.

Psalms 104:6

You covered the earth with water like a garment

Here the water that covered the earth is being compared to how a large garment is able to completely cover something. Alternate translation: “You completely covered the earth with water” (See: Simile)

ULT

6 You covered the earth with water like a garment; the water covered the mountains.

Psalms 104:7

Your rebuke made the waters ... they fled

These two phrases have basically the same meaning and are used together to emphasize how God spoke and the waters went away. (See: Parallelism)

ULT

7 Your rebuke made the waters recede;
at the sound of your thunderous voice they fled.

recede

move back, go down

they fled

Here the psalmist speaks about the waters receding as if they fled like an animal after hearing Yahweh's voice. The word "fled" means to run away quickly. Alternate translation: "rushed away" (See: Personification)

Psalms 104:8

The mountains rose, and the valleys spread out

Here the psalmist speaks of God causing the mountains and valleys to move and change as if they chose to move themselves. They are described this way to emphasize God's power. (See: Personification)

for them

The word "them" refers to the waters.

ULT

8 The mountains rose, and the valleys spread out into the places that you had appointed for them.

Psalms 104:9

a boundary for them that they will not cross

Here the psalmist speaks of God causing the waters not to cross the boundary that he created for them as if the waters themselves chose not to cross it. They are described this way to emphasize God's authority over them. Alternate translation: "a boundary for them that they cannot cross" (See: Personification)

boundary

border

ULT

9 You have set a boundary for them that they will not cross; they will not cover the earth again.

Psalms 104:10

streams

small rivers

ULT

10 He made springs flow into the valleys; the streams flow between the mountains.

Psalms 104:11

the wild donkeys quench their thirst

It can be stated clearly that they quench their thirst by drinking the water. Alternate translation: “the wild donkeys drink the water to quench their thirst” (See: Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information)

ULT

11 They supply water for all the animals of the field; the wild donkeys quench their thirst.

Psalms 104:12

riverbanks

the ground at the edges of a river

they sing among the branches

Here David describes birds chirping as if they were singing. Alternate translation: “they chirp among the tree branches” (See: Metaphor)

ULT

12 By the riverbanks the birds build their nests; they sing among the branches.

Psalms 104:13

He waters the mountains from his water chambers in the sky

This means that God causes it to rain. The waters are described as residing in chambers in the sky. Alternate translation: “He waters the mountains by causing the rains to fall from the sky” (See: Metaphor)

the fruit of his labor

“the many good things that you create”

ULT

13 He waters the mountains from his water chambers in the sky. The earth is filled with the fruit of his labor.

Psalms 104:14

and plants for man to cultivate

The words “he makes” and “grow” are understood from the previous phrase, and can be repeated here. Alternate translation: “and he makes the plants grow for man to cultivate” (See: Ellipsis)

ULT

14 He makes the grass grow for the cattle and plants for man to cultivate so that man may produce food from the earth.

Psalms 104:15

(There are no notes for this verse.)

ULT

15 He makes wine to make man happy,
oil to make his face shine, and food to
sustain his life.

Psalms 104:16

The trees of Yahweh get plenty of rain

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: “Yahweh provides plenty of rain for his trees” (See: Active or Passive)

ULT

16 The trees of Yahweh get plenty of rain; the cedars of Lebanon which he planted.

Psalms 104:17

There the birds make their nests

They makes their nests in the cedars. This can be stated clearly. Alternate translation: “The birds make their nests in the cedars” (See: Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information)

stork

This is a type of bird. Alternate translation: “bird”

ULT

17 There the birds make their nests. The stork makes the cypress tree her home.

Psalms 104:18

hyraxes

I hyrax is a small animal that looks like a large rodent. Alternate translation: “rock badger”

ULT

18 The wild goats live on the high mountains; the mountain heights are a refuge for the hyraxes.

Psalms 104:19

seasons

This word refers to different weather changes through the year. Some places have rainy season and dry season, while others have spring, summer, fall, and winter.

ULT

19 He appointed the moon to mark the seasons; the sun knows its time for setting.

the sun knows its time

Here David describes the sun as if it knows what time of day it is. Alternate translation: “he made the sun to set when it is time” (See: Personification)

Psalms 104:20

You make

"Yahweh, you make." Here the authors switches from speaking about Yahweh to speaking to him.

ULT

20 You make the darkness of the night
when all the beasts of the forest come
out.

Psalms 104:21

prey

an animal that is food for another animal

and seek their food from God

“but they rely on God to provide their food”

ULT

21 The young lions roar for their prey
and seek their food from God.

Psalms 104:22

retreat

go back to their dens

dens

the homes of some mammals and small animals

ULT

22 When the sun rises, they retreat and sleep in their dens.

Psalms 104:23

(There are no notes for this verse.)

ULT

23 Meanwhile, people go out to their work and labor away until the evening.

Psalms 104:24

overflows with your works

Here David describes the amount of things that Yahweh had created as if they were a liquid overflowing out of a container. Alternate translation: “is filled with your work” (See: Metaphor)

ULT

24 Yahweh, how many and varied are your works! With wisdom you made them all; the earth overflows with your works.

Psalms 104:25

deep and wide

“it is very deep and very wide.” The depth and width of the sea emphasizes how large it is. (See: Doublet)

teeming with innumerable creatures

“having in them more creatures than anyone could count”

innumerable

more than anyone can count

both small and great

This means creatures of all sizes. (See: Merism)

ULT

25 Over there is the sea, deep and wide,
teeming with innumerable creatures,
both small and great.

Psalms 104:26

The ships travel there

“The ships travel on the sea”

ULT

26 The ships travel there, and Leviathan is also there, which you formed to play in the sea.

Psalms 104:27

All these

“All these creatures”

give them their food on time

“give them their food when they need it”

ULT

27 All these look to you to give them their food on time.

Psalms 104:28

When you give to them, they gather

It may be helpful to state that it is food that is given. Alternate translation: “When you give food to them, they gather it” (See: Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information)

gather

collect

when you open your hand

This describes Yahweh as opening his hand to give food to the creatures. Alternate translation: “when you open your hand to feed them” (See: Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information)

ULT

28 When you give to them, they gather;
when you open your hand, they are satisfied.

Psalms 104:29

hide your face

This means that Yahweh does not look at them or pay attention to them. Alternate translation: “when you do not look upon them” or “when you ignore them” (See: Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information)

ULT

29 When you hide your face, they are troubled; if you take away their breath, they die and return to dust.

return to dust

This means that their bodies decay and are and become soil again. Alternate translation: “their bodies decay and return to the ground” (See: Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information)

Psalms 104:30

When you send out your Spirit

This refers to his Spirit being sent to give life to creatures. (See: Idiom)

they are created

It is Yahweh's spirit that created them. (See: Active or Passive)

you renew the countryside

"you cause the land to be full of new life"

ULT

30 When you send out your Spirit, they are created, and you renew the countryside.

Psalms 104:31

(There are no notes for this verse.)

ULT

31 May the glory of Yahweh last forever;
may Yahweh enjoy his creation.

Psalms 104:32

(There are no notes for this verse.)

ULT

32 He looks down on the earth, and it shakes; he touches the mountains, and they smoke.

Psalms 104:33

(There are no notes for this verse.)

ULT

33 I will sing to Yahweh all my life; I will sing praise to my God as long as I live.

Psalms 104:34

my thoughts be sweet

He is comparing his thoughts to something that tastes sweet. Alternate translation: “my thoughts be pleasing” (See: Metaphor)

ULT

34 May my thoughts be sweet to him; I will rejoice in Yahweh.

Psalms 104:35

vanish

disappear

let the wicked be no more

The phrase “the wicked” refers to wicked people. Alternate translation: “may wicked people disappear” (See: Nominal Adjectives)

ULT

35 May sinners vanish from the earth,
and let the wicked be no more. I give
praise to Yahweh with all my life. Praise
Yahweh.

Psalms 105

Psalm 15 General Notes

Type of psalm

Psalm 105 is the third in a series of five psalms of praise to God. (Psalm 103-107)

Special concepts in this chapter

Yahweh’s protection

God protected Abraham and Jacob. He worked throughout Israel’s history to bring Israel into the Promised Land. (See: Promised Land)

Psalms 105:1

General Information:

Parallelism is common in Hebrew poetry. (See: Poetry and Parallelism)

ULT

1 Give thanks to Yahweh, call on his name; make known his deeds among the nations.

call on his name

Here “name” represents Yahweh. Alternate translation: “call on him” (See: Metonymy)

the nations

This refers to the people in the nations. Alternate translation: “the people of the nations” (See: Metonymy)

Psalms 105:2

(There are no notes for this verse.)

ULT

2 Sing to him, sing praises to him; speak of all his marvelous deeds.

Psalms 105:3

Boast in his holy name

Here “name” represents Yahweh. Alternate translation: “Boast in Yahweh” (See: Metonymy)

ULT

3 Boast in his holy name; let the heart of those who seek Yahweh rejoice.

let the heart of those who seek Yahweh rejoice

Here “the heart” represents the person who seeks Yahweh. Alternate translation: “let the people who seek Yahweh rejoice” (See: Synecdoche)

Psalms 105:4

Seek Yahweh and his strength

To “seek Yahweh’s strength” means to ask him to strengthen you. Alternate translation: “Seek Yahweh and ask him to give you his strength” (See: Idiom)

ULT

4 Seek Yahweh and his strength; seek his presence continually.

Psalms 105:5

Recall

remember and think about

his miracles and

The word “recall” is understood from the previous phrase. Alternate translation: “recall his miracles and” (See: Ellipsis)

the decrees from his mouth

Here “mouth” refers to the things that he spoke. Alternate translation: “the decrees that he has spoken” (See: Metonymy)

ULT

5 Recall the marvelous things he has done, his miracles and the decrees from his mouth,

Psalms 105:6

you descendants of Abraham ... you people of Jacob

The author is speaking to the Israelites, calling them these names.

Abraham his servant

“Abraham, Yahweh’s servant”

ULT

6 you descendants of Abraham his servant, you people of Jacob, his chosen ones.

Psalms 105:7

(There are no notes for this verse.)

ULT

7 He is Yahweh, our God. His decrees are on all the earth.

Psalms 105:8

He keeps in mind ... the word that he commanded

These two phrases share similar meanings and are used together for emphasis. The word “word” refers to the covenant. Alternate translation: “He keeps in mind his covenant forever, the promise he made” (See: Parallelism and Metonymy)

ULT

8 He keeps in mind his covenant forever,
the word that he commanded for a thousand generations.

keeps in mind

This means to remember and think about something. Alternate translation: “remembers” (See: Idiom)

a thousand generations

“1,000 generations” (See: Numbers)

Psalms 105:9

ULT

9 He calls to mind the covenant that he made with Abraham and his oath to Isaac.

He calls to mind

The phrase “call to mind” means to remember something. Alternate translation: “he remembers” (See: Idiom)

the covenant that he made with Abraham ... his oath to Isaac

Both of these phrases “the covenant” and “the oath” refer to the same promise that Yahweh made to his people. (See: Parallelism)

his oath to Isaac

The words “that he made” are undestood from the previous phrase. They can be repeated. Alternate translation: “his oath that he made to Isaac” or “his oath that he gave to Isaac” (See: Ellipsis)

Psalms 105:10

(There are no notes for this verse.)

ULT

10 This is what he confirmed to Jacob as a statute and to Israel as an everlasting covenant.

Psalms 105:11

(There are no notes for this verse.)

ULT

11 He said, “I will give you the land of Canaan as your share of your inheritance.”

Psalms 105:12

Connecting Statement:

The psalmist is writing about Israel.

ULT

12 He said this when they were only few in number, so very few, and were strangers in the land.

when they were only few in number

The word “they” refers to the Israelites.

were strangers in the land

It is implied that “the land” refers to Canaan. Alternate translation: “were foreigners in the land of Canaan” (See: Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information)

Psalms 105:13

ULT
13 They went from nation to nation and from one kingdom to another.

They went from

“They continued to wander”

from nation to nation and from one kingdom to another

These two phrases have similar meanings and are used together for emphasis. (See: Parallelism)

Psalms 105:14

Connecting Statement:

The psalmist is writing about Israel.

for their sakes

“for their own well-being.” This is referring to Israel.

ULT

14 He did not allow anyone to oppress them; he rebuked kings for their sakes.

Psalms 105:15

Do not touch my anointed ones

Here “touch” means to harm, it’s an exaggeration Yahweh used to strengthen his warning to not harm his people. Alternate translation: “Do not harm the people I have anointed” (See: Hyperbole)

ULT

15 He said, “Do not touch my anointed ones, and do not harm my prophets.”

Psalms 105:16

ULT

16 He called for a famine on the land; he cut off the whole supply of bread.

He called for

“He sent.” This means that caused a famine to happen in the land. (See: Idiom)

the whole supply of bread

Here “bread” refers to food in general. Alternate translation: “the whole supply of food” (See: Synecdoche)

Psalms 105:17

He sent a man ahead of them; Joseph

It may be helpful to state that he sent him ahead of them to Egypt. Alternate translation: “He sent a man ahead of them to Egypt; he sent Joseph who” (See: Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information)

ULT

17 He sent a man ahead of them; Joseph was sold as a servant.

Joseph was sold as a servant

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: “Joseph’s brothers sold him as a slave” (See: Active or Passive)

Psalms 105:18

shackles

metal restraints used to fasten a prisoner’s wrists or ankles together

ULT

18 His feet were bound by shackles; on his neck was put an iron collar,

His feet were bound by shackles; on his neck was put an iron collar

These statements can be restated as active. Alternate translation: “The Egyptians bound his feet in shackles; they put an iron collar around his neck. (See: Active or Passive and Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information)

Psalms 105:19

The word of Yahweh tested him

“The message of Yahweh tested him”

ULT

19 until what he had said came to pass.
The word of Yahweh tested him.

Psalms 105:20

The king sent servants to release him; the ruler of the people set him free

These two phrases have basically the same meaning and are used together to emphasize that the king set Joseph free. (See: Parallelism)

ULT

20 The king sent servants to release him; the ruler of the people set him free.

Psalms 105:21

(There are no notes for this verse.)

ULT

21 He put him in charge of his house as ruler of all his possessions

Psalms 105:22

(There are no notes for this verse.)

ULT

22 to instruct his princes as he wished
and to teach his elders wisdom.

Psalms 105:23

Then Israel came into Egypt

Here “Israel” refers to Jacob. Jacob also brought his family with him. Alternate translation: “Then Israel and his family came into Egypt” (See: Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information)

ULT

23 Then Israel came into Egypt, and Jacob lived for a time in the land of Ham.

Psalms 105:24

Yahweh made his people fruitful

The writer speaks of the increase of Israel as if they were a plant that produced a lot of fruit. “God increased the number of his people greatly” (See: Metaphor)

ULT

24 Yahweh made his people fruitful, and made them stronger than their enemies.

Psalms 105:25

to hate his people, to mistreat his servants

“to hate his people and to mistreat his servants”

ULT

25 He caused their enemies to hate his people, to mistreat his servants.

Psalms 105:26

(There are no notes for this verse.)

ULT

26 He sent Moses, his servant, and
Aaron, whom he had chosen.

Psalms 105:27

They performed his signs among the Egyptians ... his wonders in the land of Ham

ULT

27 They performed his signs among the Egyptians, his wonders in the land of Ham.

These two phrases have basically the same meaning. Alternate translation: “Moses and Aaron performed God’s miracles in Egypt among the descendants of Ham” (See: Parallelism)

his wonders in the land of Ham

The words “they performed” are understood fromt the previous phrase. They may be repeated here. Alternate translation: “and they performed his wonders in the land of Ham” (See: Ellipsis)

the land of Ham

Ham was an ancestor of the people of Egypt. Alternate translation: “the land of Ham’s descendants” (See: Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information)

Psalms 105:28

made that land dark

“made the sky dark”

ULT

28 He sent darkness and made that land dark, but its people did not obey his commands.

Psalms 105:29

(There are no notes for this verse.)

ULT

29 He turned their water into blood and killed their fish.

Psalms 105:30

frogs

a small jumping reptile

even in the rooms of their rulers

“they were even in the rooms of their rulers”

ULT

30 Their land swarmed with frogs, even in the rooms of their rulers.

Psalms 105:31

Connecting Statement:

The psalmist continues to describe Yahweh's judgment on Egypt.

swarms

large flying groups

gnats

small flying insects like flies but smaller

ULT

31 He spoke, and swarms of flies and gnats came throughout their country.

Psalms 105:32

hail

ice that falls from the sky like rain

ULT

32 He turned their rain into hail, with fire
flaming on their land.

Psalms 105:33

He destroyed ... he broke

God caused the hail, rain, and lightning to ruin the vines and trees. Alternate translation: “He caused it to destroy ... and to break” (See: Metonymy)

ULT

33 He destroyed their vines and fig trees; he broke the trees of their country.

Psalms 105:34

so many locusts

“there were so many locusts”

ULT

34 He spoke, and the locusts came, so many locusts.

Psalms 105:35

The locusts ate up all of the vegetation ... They ate up all the crops of the ground

These two phrase have basically the same meaning and are used together for emphasis. Alternate translation: “The insects ate all the plants and all the crops in the land” (See: Parallelism)

ULT

35 The locusts ate up all of the vegetation in their land; They ate up all the crops of the ground.

Psalms 105:36

He killed every firstborn in their land, the firstfruits of all their strength

ULT

36 He killed every firstborn in their land, the firstfruits of all their strength.

Here the second phrase about the “firstfruits” is used to describe the “firstborn” in the first phrase. Alternate translation: “He killed every firstborn in their land, which were the firstfruits of all their strength” or “Then Yahweh killed the oldest son in every house of the people of Egypt” (See: Parallelism and Metaphor)

Psalms 105:37

He brought the Israelites out with silver and gold

When the Israelites left Egypt they took silver and gold with them. Alternate translation: “He brought the Isrealites out of Egypt with silver and gold in their possession” (See: Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information)

ULT

37 He brought the Israelites out with silver and gold; none of his tribes stumbled on the way.

none of his tribes stumbled on the way

No one was left behind. This can be stated positively Alternate translation: “all of his tribes was able to make the journey” (See: Double Negatives)

Psalms 105:38

Egypt was glad

Here “Egypt” refers to the people who live in Egypt. Alternate translation: The people of Egypt were glad (See: Metonymy)

ULT

38 Egypt was glad when they went away,
for the Egyptians were afraid of them.

Psalms 105:39

He spread a cloud for a covering

Here the psalmist describes Yahweh placing a cloud in the sky as if he were spreading out a garment. The cloud was a “covering” to protect them from the sun. Alternate translation: “He placed a cloud in the sky to protect them from the sun and heat” (See: Metaphor and Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information)

ULT

39 He spread a cloud for a covering and made a fire to light up the night.

made a fire to light up the night

Yahweh placed a pillar of fire in the sky to give light during the night. Alternate translation: “placed a fire it the sky to light up the night” (See: Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information)

Psalms 105:40

he brought quail

It may be helpful to make clear that quail are small birds Yahweh sent for them to eat. Alternate translation: “Yahweh sent small birds to eat” (See: Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information)

ULT

40 The Israelites asked for food, and he brought quail and satisfied them with bread from heaven.

with bread from heaven

Yahweh caused manna, a type of bread, to fall from the sky. Alternate translation: “with bread that fell from the sky” (See: Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information)

Psalms 105:41

they flowed

"the waters flowed"

ULT

41 He split the rock, and waters gushed from it; they flowed in the wilderness like a river.

Psalms 105:42

called to mind

This means to remember. Alternate translation: “remembered” (See: Idiom)

ULT

42 For he called to mind his holy promise that he made to Abraham his servant.

Psalms 105:43

He led his people out ... his chosen with shouts of triumph

ULT

43 He led his people out with joy, his chosen with shouts of triumph.

These two phrases have basically the same meaning and are used together to emphasize that God's people were joyful when he led them out of Egypt. The people were shouting joyfully. Alternate translation: "He led his chosen people out with shouts of joy and triumph" (See: Parallelism)

his chosen

Here "chosen" refers to Yahweh's chosen people. Alternate translation: "his chosen people" (See: Nominal Adjectives)

shouts of triumph

the sound that people make when they are shouting with joy because they have defeated their enemies

Psalms 105:44

(There are no notes for this verse.)

ULT

44 He gave them the lands of the nations; they took possession of the wealth of the peoples

Psalms 105:45

keep his statutes and obey his laws

These two phrases have basically the same meaning and are used together for emphasis. “To keep” his statutes means to obey them. Alternate translation: “obey his laws and statutes” (See: Parallelism)

ULT

45 so that they might keep his statutes and obey his laws. Praise Yahweh.

Psalms 106

Psalm 16 General Notes

Type of psalm

Psalm 106 is the fourth in a series of five psalms of praise to God. (Psalm 103-107)

Special concepts in this chapter

Israel’s sin

Although Israel continually sinned in the desert, God still took them to the Promised Land. (See: sin, sinful, sinner, sinning and Promised Land)

Psalms 106:1

General Information:

Parallelism is common in Hebrew poetry. (See: Poetry and Parallelism)

ULT

1 Praise Yahweh. Give thanks to Yahweh, for he is good, for his covenant faithfulness endures forever.

for his covenant faithfulness endures forever

The abstract noun “faithfulness” can be translated with an adjective. Alternate translation: “for he remains faithful to his covenant forever” (See: Abstract Nouns)

Psalms 106:2

Who can recount the mighty acts of Yahweh ... deeds?

The author asks this question to praise God and does not expect an answer. Alternate translation: “No one can recount the mighty acts of Yahweh ... deeds.” (See: Rhetorical Question)

praiseworthy deeds

“deeds that are worthy of praise”

ULT

2 Who can recount the mighty acts of Yahweh or proclaim in full all his praiseworthy deeds?

Psalms 106:3

(There are no notes for this verse.)

ULT

3 Blessed are those who do what is
right, and whose deeds are always just.

Psalms 106:4

Call me to mind

The phrase “call to mind” means to remember something. Alternate translation: “remember me” (See: Idiom)

ULT

4 Call me to mind, Yahweh, when you show favor to your people; help me when you save them.

Psalms 106:5

ULT

5 Then I will see the prosperity of your chosen, rejoice in the gladness of your nation, and glory with your inheritance.

of your chosen

The word “chosen” refers to Yahweh’s chosen people. Alternate translation: “of your chosen people” (See: Nominal Adjectives)

rejoice in the gladness ... and glory

These are things that David says he will do, along with “seeing the prosperity of your chosen.” The words “I will” may be repeated here. Alternate translation: “I will rejoice in the gladness ... and I will glory” (See: Ellipsis)

gladness

joy, delight

glory with your inheritance

Here the phrase “your inheritance” refers to the Isrealites, who are Yahweh’s chosen people. Here “glory” means “to boast about” something; in this case they are boasting about Yahweh. Alternate translation: “boast of your greatness with your people” or “boast with your people about you” (See: Metonymy)

Psalms 106:6

(There are no notes for this verse.)

ULT

6 We have sinned like our ancestors; we have done wrong, and we have done evil.

Psalms 106:7

did not appreciate your marvelous deeds

“were not grateful for the marvelous deed you did”

they ignored your many acts of covenant faithfulness

The abstract noun “faithfulness” can be translated with an adjective.
Alternate translation: “they ignored the many things that you did because you are faithful to your covenant” (See: Abstract Nouns)

at the sea ... the Sea of Reeds

These two phrases refer to the same sea. The second is the name of the sea.

ULT

7 Our fathers did not appreciate your marvelous deeds in Egypt; they ignored your many acts of covenant faithfulness; they were rebellious at the sea, the Sea of Reeds.

Psalms 106:8

Nevertheless, he

“Even though what I have just said is true, he”

for his name’s sake

Here “his name” refers to Yahweh. Alternate translation: “for the sake of his own reputation” (See: Metonymy)

ULT

8 Nevertheless, he saved them for his name’s sake so that he might reveal his power.

Psalms 106:9

through the depths, as through a wilderness

Here David compares the way that Yahweh led the Isrealites through the Sea of Reeds to the way people can be led across the dry ground of a wilderness. “The depths” refers the riverbed that appeared after Yahweh parted the waters. Alternate translation: “through the Seas of Reeds on dry ground” (See: Simile and Metaphor)

ULT

9 He rebuked the Sea of Reeds, and it dried up. Then he led them through the depths, as through a wilderness.

Psalms 106:10

He saved them from the hand ... and he rescued them from the hand

These two phrases mean basically the same thing and are used together to emphasize that Yahweh saved them from their enemies. (See: Parallelism)

ULT

10 He saved them from the hand of those who hated them, and he rescued them from the hand of the enemy.

the hand of those who hated them

Here “hand” refers to power or control. Alternate translation: “the power of those who hated them” or “the control of those who hated them” (See: Metonymy)

Psalms 106:11

covered their adversaries

This is a polite way to talk about them drowning. Alternate translation: “drowned their enemies” (See: Euphemism)

ULT

11 But the waters covered their adversaries; not one of them survived.

Psalms 106:12

Then they believed his words

Here the word “they” refers to “their ancestors” and the word “his” refers to “Yahweh.”

ULT

12 Then they believed his words, and they sang his praise.

Psalms 106:13

they did not wait for his instructions

It is implied that they did things without waiting to find out what Yahweh wanted them to go. Alternate translation: “they did things without first waiting for Yahweh’s instructions” (See: Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information)

ULT

13 But they quickly forgot what he had done; they did not wait for his instructions.

Psalms 106:14

insatiable cravings

“cravings that could not be satisfied”

they challenged God

“They rebelled against God”

ULT

14 They had insatiable cravings in the wilderness, and they challenged God in the desert.

Psalms 106:15

but he sent a horrible disease

Here David speaks about Yahweh causing the people to be afflicted by a disease as if Yahweh sent a disease to them in the same way that someone sends a person or a messenger. Alternate translation: “but he caused them to suffer from a horrible disease” (See: Metaphor)

ULT

15 So he gave them what they requested, but he sent a horrible disease upon them.

a horrible disease

a disease that caused people to slowly become weak and caused some of them to die

Psalms 106:16

In the camp

This refers to the Israelites' camp in the wilderness. Alternate translation: "In the camp in the wilderness" (See: Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information)

ULT

16 In the camp they became jealous of
Moses and Aaron, the holy priest of
Yahweh.

Psalms 106:17

The earth opened and swallowed up

Here how the ground opens up and buries the people is being compared to how a creature swallows something. Alternate translation: “The earth opened and buried” (See: Personification)

ULT

17 The earth opened and swallowed up Dathan and covered the followers of Abiram.

Dathan

This was an official who rebelled against Moses. (See: How to Translate Names)

covered the followers of Abiram

The followers of Abiram were also buried when the earth opened and buried Dathan. Alternate translation: “it also covered the followers of Abiram” or “it also buried the followers of Abiram” (See: Ellipsis)

Abiram

This was an official who rebelled against Moses. (See: How to Translate Names)

Psalms 106:18

Fire broke out among them; the fire consumed the wicked

These two phrases mean the same things and are written together to emphasize how the wicked people were killed by the fire. (See: Parallelism)

ULT

18 Fire broke out among them; the fire consumed the wicked.

Psalms 106:19

They made a calf at Horeb and worshiped a cast metal figure

ULT

19 They made a calf at Horeb and worshiped a cast metal figure.

This information can be reordered so that it is clear that the calf was the cast metal figure. Alternate translation: “At Horeb, they made a cast metal figure of a calf and worshiped it” (See: Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information)

Psalms 106:20

They traded the glory of God for the image of a bull

ULT
20 They traded the glory of God for the image of a bull that eats grass.

This means that instead of worshiping God they worshiped the image of the bull. Alternate translation: “They traded worshiping the glory of God to worship the image of a bull” (See: Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information)

the glory of God

Here God is referred to by his glory. Alternate translation: “their glorious God” or “God who is glorious” (See: Metonymy)

Psalms 106:21

(There are no notes for this verse.)

ULT

21 They forgot God their Savior, who had done great deeds in Egypt.

Psalms 106:22

the land of Ham

This refers to the land where Ham's descendants lived. Alternate translation: "the land where Ham's descendant live" (See: Possession)

mighty acts

"awesome things"

ULT

22 He had done wonderful things in the land of Ham and mighty acts at the Sea of Reeds.

Psalms 106:23

stood in the breach before him, to turn away his anger from destroying them

Here David speaks about Moses persuading Yahweh not to destroy the Israelites as intervening with him in the breach. Alternate translation: “stood between Yahweh and the Israelites and begged Yahweh to not destroy them” (See: Metaphor)

ULT

23 So he said he would destroy them—
had not Moses, his chosen one, stood in
the breach before him, to turn away his
anger from destroying them.

Psalms 106:24

his promise

This refers to Yahweh's promise that he would allow them to take the land of Canaan as their possession.

ULT

24 Then they despised the fruitful land;
they did not believe his promise,

Psalms 106:25

grumbled

complained

ULT

25 but grumbled in their tents, and did not obey Yahweh.

Psalms 106:26

raised his hand

The word “his” refers to Yahweh. Also, it was custom to raise a hand when swearing an oath.

ULT

26 Therefore he raised his hand and swore to them that he would let them die in the desert,

Psalms 106:27

scatter their descendants ... in foreign lands

These two phrases have basically the same meaning and are used together for emphasis. Alternate translation: “and that he would make their descendants live in foreign lands” (See: Parallelism)

scatter

This means to disperse or spread out something.

ULT

27 scatter their descendants among the nations, and scatter them in foreign lands.

Psalms 106:28

the sacrifices offered to the dead

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: “the sacrifices that they offered to the dead” (See: Active or Passive)

ULT

28 They worshiped the Baal of Peor and ate the sacrifices offered to the dead.

to the dead

“The dead” refers to the idols and gods that the Israelites were worshiping. Alternate translation: “to gods who are dead” or “to lifeless gods” (See: Nominal Adjectives)

Psalms 106:29

a plague broke out

“a plague spread”

provoked him to anger

“angered him”

ULT

29 They provoked him to anger with their actions, and a plague broke out among them.

Psalms 106:30

Then Phinehas rose to intervene

Phinehas intervened among the people, punishing them for their sin. This can be made clear. Alternate translation: “Then Phinehas rose to intervene among the people because of their sin” (See: Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information)

ULT

30 Then Phinehas rose to intervene, and the plague subsided.

Psalms 106:31

It was counted to him as a righteous deed

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: “People credited it to him as a righteous deed” (See: Active or Passive)

ULT

31 It was counted to him as a righteous deed to all generations forever.

Psalms 106:32

Meribah

This is a place. (See: How to Translate Names)

suffered because of them

Moses suffered because of the peoples' sin. Here the word "them" is a pronoun for the people and a metonym referring to their sin. Alternate translation: "suffered because of their actions" (See: Metonymy)

ULT

32 They also angered Yahweh at the waters of Meribah, and Moses suffered because of them.

Psalms 106:33

(There are no notes for this verse.)

ULT

33 They made Moses bitter, and he spoke rashly.

Psalms 106:34

(There are no notes for this verse.)

ULT

34 They did not destroy the nations as
Yahweh had commanded them,

Psalms 106:35

but they mingled with the nations

Hey David speaks of the people intermarrying with the women from other nations as “mingling” with them. Alternate translation: “but they mixed in marriage with the other nations” (See: Metaphor)

ULT

35 but they mingled with the nations
and learned their ways

Psalms 106:36

which became a snare to them

The idols became a snare to them.

ULT

36 and worshiped their idols, which became a snare to them.

Psalms 106:37

(There are no notes for this verse.)

ULT

37 They sacrificed their sons and their daughters to demons.

Psalms 106:38

They shed innocent blood, the blood of their sons and of their daughters

The phrase “shedding blood” is a descriptive euphemism used for “killing.” Alternate translation: “They shed innocent blood when they killed their sons and daughters” (See: Euphemism)

ULT

38 They shed innocent blood, the blood of their sons and of their daughters, whom they sacrificed to the idols of Canaan, desecrating the land with blood.

Psalms 106:39

They were defiled by their deeds

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: “Their deeds defiled them” (See: Active or Passive)

ULT

39 They were defiled by their deeds; in their actions they were like prostitutes.

in their actions they were like prostitutes

Here David compares their unfaithfulness to Yahweh to the unfaithfulness of a prostitute. Alternate translation: “they were as unfaithful to Yahweh as prostitutes” (See: Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information)

Psalms 106:40

So Yahweh was angry with his people ... he despised his own people

"So Yahweh was angry with his people and despised them"

ULT

40 So Yahweh was angry with his people, and he despised his own people.

Psalms 106:41

He gave them into the hand of the nations

Here “hand” refers to power or control. Alternate translation: “God allowed the nations to take control of them” (See: Metonymy)

those who hated them

“people who hated them”

ULT

41 He gave them into the hand of the nations, and those who hated them ruled over them.

Psalms 106:42

they were brought into subjection to their authority

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: “their enemies caused them to be subject to their authority” (See: Active or Passive)

ULT

42 Their enemies oppressed them, and they were brought into subjection to their authority.

Psalms 106:43

were brought low by their own sin

Here the phrase “brought low” means to be destroyed. Also, this can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: “their sin ruined them” (See: Idiom and Active or Passive)

ULT

43 Many times he came to help them,
but they kept rebelling and were
brought low by their own sin.

Psalms 106:44

Nevertheless, he

“Even though what I have just said is true, he.” See how you translated this in Psalms 106:8.

their distress

“their affliction” or “their suffering”

ULT

44 Nevertheless, he paid attention to their distress when he heard their cry for help.

Psalms 106:45

called to mind

The phrase “call to mind” means to remember something. Alternate translation: “remembered” (See: Idiom)

He … relented because of his steadfast love

“He … decided that because he still loved them very much he would not punish them”

ULT

45 He called to mind his covenant with them and relented because of his steadfast love.

Psalms 106:46

their conquerers

“their captors.” This refers to the Isrealites’ enemies who had taken them captive.

to have pity on them

“to be compassionate on them”

ULT

46 He caused all their conquerers to have pity on them.

Psalms 106:47

General Information:

Here 106:48 is more than the end of this psalm. It is the closing statement for all of Book 4 of the Psalms, which starts at Psalm 90 and ends with Psalm 106.

ULT

47 Save us, Yahweh, our God. Gather us from among the nations so that we may give thanks to your holy name and glory in your praises.

to your holy name

Here Yahweh is referred to by his “holy name.” Alternate translation: “to you” (See: Metonymy)

Psalms 106:48

May Yahweh, the God of Israel, be praised

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: “May people praise Yahweh the God of Israel” (See: Active or Passive)

from everlasting to everlasting

This refers to two extremes and means for all time. See how you translated this in Psalms 41:13. Alternate translation: “for all eternity” (See: Merism)

ULT

48 May Yahweh, the God of Israel, be praised from everlasting to everlasting. All the people said, “Amen.” Praise Yahweh.

Book Five

Psalms 107

Psalm 17 General Notes

Type of psalm

Psalm 107 is the last in a series of five psalms of praise to God (Psalm 103-107).

Special concepts in this chapter

Praise

The psalmist praises Yahweh for saving people lost in the desert, in prison, sick, in a storm at sea, homeless and oppressed. (See: save, saved, safe, salvation and oppress, oppressed, oppression, oppressor, dominate)

Psalms 107:1

General Information:

Parallelism is common in Hebrew poetry. (See: Poetry and Parallelism)

ULT

1 Give thanks to Yahweh, for he is good,
and his covenant faithfulness endures forever.

his covenant faithfulness endures forever

The abstract noun “faithfulness” can be translated with an adjective. Alternate translation: “he remains faithful to his covenant forever” (See: Abstract Nouns)

Psalms 107:2

the redeemed of Yahweh

“The redeemed” refers to the people whom Yahweh has saved. Alternate translation: “those whom Yahweh has saved” (See: Nominal Adjectives)

ULT

2 Let the redeemed of Yahweh speak out, those he has rescued from the hand of the enemy.

speak out

This means to tell others about something. Alternate translation: “tell about what Yahweh has done” (See: Idiom)

from the hand of the enemy

Here “hand” refers to power. Alternate translation: “from the power of the enemy” (See: Metonymy)

Psalms 107:3

from the east ... and from the south

Here the four directions are given to emphasize that he gather them from everywhere. Alternate translation: “from every direction” or “from every part of the world” (See: Merism)

ULT

3 He has gathered them out of foreign lands, from the east and from the west, from the north and from the south.

from the east and from the west, from the north and from the south

This describes the places that Yahweh gather his people from. Alternate translation: “he has gathered them from the east and from the west, from the north and from the south” (See: Ellipsis)

Psalms 107:4

They wandered

“Some people wandered”

on a desert road

“on a road that was in the desert”

in which to live

“that they could live in”

ULT

4 They wandered in the wilderness on a desert road and found no city in which to live.

Psalms 107:5

(There are no notes for this verse.)

ULT

5 Because they were hungry and thirsty,
they fainted from exhaustion.

Psalms 107:6

Then they called out to Yahweh in their trouble

It is implied that they are praying to Yahweh so that he will help them. Alternate translation: “Then they prayed to Yahweh to help them in their trouble” (See: Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information)

their distress

“their difficulties” or “their afflictions”

ULT

6 Then they called out to Yahweh in their trouble, and he rescued them out of their distress.

Psalms 107:7

(There are no notes for this verse.)

ULT

7 He led them by a direct path so that they would go to a city to live in.

Psalms 107:8

Oh that people would praise Yahweh for his covenant faithfulness

ULT

8 Oh that people would praise Yahweh for his covenant faithfulness and for the amazing things he has done for humanity!

Here the word “Oh” is used to convey a strong desire for people to praise Yahweh. The abstract noun “faithfulness” can be translated with an adjective. Alternate translation: “Let people praise Yahweh because he is faithful to his covenant” or “People should praise Yahweh because he is faithful to his covenant” (See: Exclamations and Abstract Nouns)

for humanity

“for all people”

Psalms 107:9

For he satisfies the longings of those who are thirsty

“For he gives water to those who desire it—to those who are thirsty”

the desires of those who are hungry he fills up with good things

“to those who are very hungry and desire food, he give them good things to eat”

ULT

9 For he satisfies the longings of those who are thirsty, and the desires of those who are hungry he fills up with good things.

Psalms 107:10

ULT

10 Some sat in darkness and in gloom,
prisoners in affliction and chains.

Some sat

It is implied that these are people that Yahweh has rescued. Alternate translation: “Yahweh also rescued people who sat” (See: Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information)

in darkness and in gloom

Both “darkness” and “gloom” have basically the same meaning and are used to emphasize how dark the prison was. Alternate translation: “in complete darkness” (See: Doublet)

Psalms 107:11

they had rebelled against God’s word ... rejected the instruction of the Most High

These phrases have similar meanings and emphasize how much they had rebelled again God, which is why they had been imprisoned. (See: Parallelism)

ULT

11 This was because they had rebelled against God’s word and rejected the instruction of the Most High.

Psalms 107:12

He humbled their hearts through hardship

Here the heart represents a person, but specifically his will. Alternate translation: “He humbled them by allowing them to suffer hardship” (See: Synecdoche)

ULT

12 He humbled their hearts through hardship; they stumbled and there was no one to help them up.

hardship

This could mean: (1) “trouble” or (2) “hard labor.”

they stumbled and there was no one to help them up

The word “stumbled” refers to times when these people got into very difficult situations. Alternate translation: “they got into trouble and there was no one to help them out of it” (See: Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information)

Psalms 107:13

Then they called out to Yahweh in their trouble

It is implied that they are praying to Yahweh so that he will help them. See how you translated this in Psalms 107:6. Alternate translation: “Then they prayed to Yahweh to help them in their trouble” (See: Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information)

ULT

13 Then they called out to Yahweh in their trouble, and he brought them out of their distress.

their distress

“difficulties” or “afflictions.” See how you translated this in Psalms 107:6

he brought

Here David describes Yahweh saving them from their distress as if their distress were a physical place that he was bringing them out of. Alternate translation: “he saved” (See: Metaphor)

Psalms 107:14

He brought them

“Yahweh brought those in prison”

darkness and gloom

Both “darkness” and “gloom” have basically the same meaning and are used to emphasize how dark the prison was. See how you translated this in Psalms 107:10. Alternate translation: “complete darkness” (See: Doublet)

ULT

14 He brought them out of darkness and gloom and broke their bonds.

Psalms 107:15

Oh that people would praise Yahweh for his covenant faithfulness

ULT

15 Oh that people would praise Yahweh for his covenant faithfulness and for the amazing things he has done for humanity!

Here the word “Oh” is used to convey a strong desire for people to praise Yahweh. The abstract noun “faithfulness” can be translated with an adjective. See how you translated this in Psalms 107:8. Alternate translation: “Let people praise Yahweh because he is faithful to his covenant” or “People should praise Yahweh because he is faithful to his covenant” (See: Exclamations and Abstract Nouns)

Psalms 107:16

ULT
16 For he has broken the gates of bronze and cut through the bars of iron.

For he

“because he”

For he has broken the gates of bronze and cut through the bars of iron

Both of these phrases describe Yahweh freeing his people from prison and are used to emphasize that Yahweh truly freed them. Alternate translation: “He freed his people from prison” (See: Parallelism and Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information)

Psalms 107:17

They were foolish in their rebellious ways

“They were foolish in the way they rebelled against Yahweh”

and afflicted

“and they suffered.” Specifically they were afflicted by becoming sick. Alternate translation: “and they became sick” (See: Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information)

ULT

17 They were foolish in their rebellious ways and afflicted because of their sins.

Psalms 107:18

they came close to the gates of death

Here the act of “dying” is described as a place, “the gates of death” Alternate translation: “they almost died” (See: Metaphor)

ULT

18 They lost their desire to eat any food,
and they came close to the gates of death.

Psalms 107:19

Then they called out to Yahweh in their trouble

It is implied that they are praying to Yahweh so that he will help them. See how you translated this in Psalms 107:6. Alternate translation: “Then they prayed to Yahweh to help them in their trouble” (See: Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information)

ULT

19 Then they called out to Yahweh in their trouble, and he brought them out of their distress.

Psalms 107:20

He sent his word and healed them

Here David describes Yahweh speaking as sending his words as if they were a messenger. This could mean: (1) “He commanded for them to be healed and they were healed” or (2) “He encouraged them and healed them” (See: Personification)

ULT

20 He sent his word and healed them,
and he rescued them from their destruction.

Psalms 107:21

Oh that people would praise Yahweh for his covenant faithfulness

ULT

21 Oh that people would praise Yahweh for his covenant faithfulness and for the amazing things he has done for humanity!

Here the word “Oh” is used to convey a strong desire for people to praise Yahweh. The abstract noun “faithfulness” can be translated with an adjective. See how you translated this in Psalms 107:8. Alternate translation: “Let people praise Yahweh because he is faithful to his covenant” or “People should praise Yahweh because he is faithful to his covenant” (See: Exclamations and Abstract Nouns)

Psalms 107:22

of thanksgiving

“that show that they are thankful”

in singing

“by singing about them”

ULT

22 Let them offer the sacrifices of thanksgiving and proclaim his deeds in singing.

Psalms 107:23

and do business overseas

They would sail to places and buy and sell things with the people there. Alternate translation: “selling things in cities far away” (See: Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information)

ULT

23 Some travel on the sea in ships and do business overseas.

Psalms 107:24

(There are no notes for this verse.)

ULT

24 These saw the deeds of Yahweh and his wonders on the seas.

Psalms 107:25

he commanded and aroused the windstorm that stirs up the seas

“he commanded the wind and caused it become a great windstorm that stirred up the sea”

ULT

25 For he commanded and aroused the windstorm that stirs up the seas.

windstorm

a strong wind, like the wind that accompanies a strong rain storm

that stirs up the seas

Here David describes the winds causing the waves to become high as if the wind was an object fiercely stirring something. Alternate translation: “that caused the waves of the sea to become very high” (See: Metaphor)

Psalms 107:26

They reached up to the sky; they went down to the depths

ULT

26 They reached up to the sky; they went down to the depths. Their lives melted away in distress.

This describes the ships rising and falling with the waves. The extremes of rising to the sky and falling to the depths are an exaggeration to express how horrible the windstorm was and how large the waves were. Alternate translation: “their ships would rise very high on the waves and then they would fall very low between the waves” (See: Hyperbole)

Their lives melted away in distress

This idiom describes the sailors’ great fear. Alternate translation: “The men were terrified and greatly distressed” (See: Idiom)

Psalms 107:27

were at their wits’ end

The phrase “at their wit’s end” means that they did not know what to do. Alternate translation: “and they did not know what to do” or “they had no idea what to do” (See: Idiom)

ULT

27 They swayed and staggered like drunkards and were at their wits’ end.

Psalms 107:28

Then they called out to Yahweh in their trouble

It is implied that they are praying to Yahweh so that he will help them. See how you translated this in Psalms 107:6. Alternate translation: “Then they prayed to Yahweh to help them in their trouble” (See: Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information)

Then they

The word “they” refers to the sailors.

he brought them

“he guided them”

ULT

28 Then they called out to Yahweh in their trouble, and he brought them out of their distress.

Psalms 107:29

He calmed the storm

“He made the wind stop”

the waves were stilled

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: “he made the waves still” (See: Active or Passive)

ULT

29 He calmed the storm, and the waves were stilled.

Psalms 107:30

their desired harbor

“to the harbor where they wanted to go”

ULT

30 Then they rejoiced because the sea was calm, and he brought them to their desired harbor.

Psalms 107:31

Oh that people would praise Yahweh for his covenant faithfulness

ULT

31 Oh that people would praise Yahweh for his covenant faithfulness and for the amazing things he has done for humanity!

Here the word “Oh” is used to convey a strong desire for people to praise Yahweh. The abstract noun “faithfulness” can be translated with an adjective. See how you translated this in Psalms 107:8. Alternate translation: “Let people praise Yahweh because he is faithful to his covenant” or “People should praise Yahweh because he is faithful to his covenant” (See: Exclamations and Abstract Nouns)

Psalms 107:32

praise him in the council of the elders

"when the elders sit together." The elders sat together to discuss issues in the community and to make decisions for the community.

ULT

32 Let them exalt him in the assembly of the people and praise him in the council of the elders.

Psalms 107:33

He turns

"Yahweh makes"

ULT

33 He turns rivers into a wilderness,
springs of water into dry land,

Psalms 107:34

because of the wickedness of its people

“because the people that live there are wicked”

ULT

34 and a fruitful land into a barren place
because of the wickedness of its people.

Psalms 107:35

He turns the wilderness into a pool of water and dry land into springs of water

Both of these phrases have similar meaning and emphasize how Yahweh makes water appear in the wilderness. Alternate translation: “He make springs and lakes in land that used to be desert” (See: Parallelism)

ULT

35 He turns the wilderness into a pool of water and dry land into springs of water.

Psalms 107:36

He settles the hungry there

The word “there” refers to the places where Yahweh made springs and lakes appear. Also, the phrase “the hungry” refers to people who are hungry. Alternate translation: “Yahweh makes people who are hungry live there” (See: Nominal Adjectives)

ULT

36 He settles the hungry there, and they build a city to live in.

Psalms 107:37

to plant vineyards

“to plant vineyards in”

and to bring in an abundant harvest

“so that they can produce a plentiful harvest”

ULT

37 They build a city to plant fields in, to plant vineyards, and to bring in an abundant harvest.

Psalms 107:38

so they are very numerous

“so that their people are very numerous”

He does not let their cattle decrease in number

This can be stated in positive form. Alternate translation: “He keeps their cattle very numerous” (See: Litotes)

ULT

38 He blesses them so they are very numerous. He does not let their cattle decrease in number.

Psalms 107:39

They

The word “They” refers to the people who were hungry that Yahweh had settled in the land. This sentence describes how they were before Yahweh settled them in the land.

ULT
39 They were diminished and brought low by painful distress and suffering.

They were diminished and brought low

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: “Their leaders diminished their number and brought them low” (See: Active or Passive)

were diminished

“became fewer in number”

brought low

This means to be humiliated. Alternate translation: “humiliated” (See: Idiom)

Psalms 107:40

pours contempt on

Here David speaks of Yahweh showing contempt for the leaders as if contempt were a liquid he poured out on them. Alternate translation: “shows contempt for” (See: Metaphor)

ULT

40 He pours contempt on the leaders and causes them to wander in the wilderness, where there are no roads.

the leaders

“the nobles.” This refers to the leaders who oppressed the people. Alternate translation: “the leaders who oppressed them” (See: Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information)

where there are no roads

“where people never go”

Psalms 107:41

But he

“But Yahweh”

the needy

This refers to needy people. Alternate translation: “needy people” or “poor people” (See: Nominal Adjectives)

cares for his families like a flock

Here David compares how Yahweh cares for his people to how a shepherd cares for his sheep. This could mean: (1) “makes the number of people in their families increase like flocks” or (2) “takes care of them like a shepherd cares for his sheep” (See: Simile)

ULT

41 But he protects the needy from affliction and cares for his families like a flock.

Psalms 107:42

ULT

42 The upright will see this and rejoice,
and all wickedness shuts its mouth.

The upright

This refers to people who live in an upright way. Alternate translation: “Upright people” or “People who do what is right” (See: Nominal Adjectives)

all wickedness

Here wicked people are referred to as “wickedness.” Alternate translation: “all wicked people” (See: Metonymy)

shuts its mouth

This means to not say anything in response. Alternate translation: “has nothing to say against Yahweh in reply” (See: Idiom)

Psalms 107:43

take note of these things

This means to think about these things. Alternate translation: “think about these things” or “remember these things” (See: Idiom)

meditate on Yahweh’s acts of covenant faithfulness

The abstract noun “faithfulness” can be translated with an adjective. Alternate translation: “meditate on the things that Yahweh has done that show that he is faithful to his covenant” (See: Abstract Nouns)

ULT

43 Whoever is wise should take note of these things and meditate on Yahweh’s acts of covenant faithfulness.

Psalms 108

Psalm 18 General Notes

Type of psalm

Psalm 108 is a psalm of war.

Special concepts in this chapter

Victory

God promised success to the psalmist, but Yahweh failed to help him conquer the country of Edom. He needed God to give him victory over Edom.

Psalms 108:1

General Information:

Parallelism is common in Hebrew poetry. (See: Poetry and Parallelism)

ULT

1 My heart is fixed, God; I will sing, yes, I will sing praises also with my honored heart.

My heart is fixed, God

Here David is referring to himself by his heart. Also, the word “fixed” means to trust completely. Alternate translation: “My heart is fixed on you, God” or “I am trusting completely in you, God” (See: Synecdoche and Idiom)

I will sing praises also with my honored heart

Here David is represented by his “heart.” David refers to himself as having the honor of praising God. Alternate translation: “You honor me by allowing me to sing praises to you” (See: Synecdoche)

Psalms 108:2

Wake up, lute and harp

Here David describes playing his instruments as waking them up from sleep. Alternate translation: “I will praise you by playing the lute and the harp” (See: Personification)

ULT

2 Wake up, lute and harp; I will wake up the dawn.

I will wake up the dawn

Here David is describing the dawn waking up like a person waking up in the morning. Alternate translation: “I will be praising you when the dawn comes” (See: Personification)

dawn

when the sun rises

Psalms 108:3

(There are no notes for this verse.)

ULT

3 I will give thanks to you, Yahweh,
among the peoples; I will sing praises to
you among the nations.

Psalms 108:4

your covenant faithfulness is great above the heavens; and your trustworthiness reaches to the skies

ULT

4 For your covenant faithfulness is great above the heavens; and your trustworthiness reaches to the skies.

These two phrases have similar meanings. They speak of the greatness of Yahweh's covenant faithfulness and trustworthiness as if they were objects that were tall enough to reach up to the sky. The abstract nouns "faithfulness" and "trustworthiness" can be translated as adjectives. Alternate translation: "For your covenant faithfulness and trustworthiness are greater than the distance between heaven and earth" or "For you are more faithful to your covenant and more worthy of people trusting you than the sky is higher than the earth" (See: Parallelism and Metaphor and Abstract Nouns)

Psalms 108:5

Be exalted, God, above the heavens

The psalmist is asking God to show that he is exalted. Being exalted above the heavens represents being great. Alternate translation: “God, show that you are exalted above the heavens” or “God, show that you are great in the heavens” (See: Metaphor)

ULT

5 Be exalted, God, above the heavens,
and may your glory be exalted over all the earth.

may your glory be exalted

Here Yahweh is referred to by his “glory.” Alternate translation: “may you be exalted” (See: Metonymy)

Psalms 108:6

So that those you love may be rescued

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: Because those you love need rescuing" or "Rescue those you love" (See: Active or Passive)

ULT

6 So that those you love may be rescued, rescue us with your right hand and answer me.

with your right hand

Here Yahweh's "right hand" refers to his power. Alternate translation: "by your power" (See: Metonymy)

answer me

Answering here represents responding to his request. Alternate translation: "respond to my request" or "answer my prayer" (See: Metonymy)

Psalms 108:7

General Information:

This verse is the same as Psalms 60:6.

ULT

7 God has spoken in his holiness; “I will rejoice; I will divide Shechem and apportion out the Valley of Succoth.

God has spoken in his holiness

Here David describes God speaking something because he is holy as speaking “in his holiness,” as if his holiness were something that he was physically inside of. Alternate translation: “God, because he is holy, has said” (See: Metaphor)

I will divide Shechem and apportion out the Valley of Succoth

Here God is speaking about dividing the land of Shechem and the Valley of Succoth.

apportion

to divide into portions

Psalms 108:8

General Information:

This verse is the same as Psalms 60:7.

ULT

8 Gilead is mine, and Manasseh is mine;
Ephraim also is my helmet; Judah is my
scepter.

Ephraim also is my helmet

God speaks of the tribe of Ephraim as if it were his army. The helmet symbolizes equipment for war. Alternate translation: “Ephraim is like a helmet I have chosen” or “The tribe of Ephraim is my army” (See: Metaphor)

helmet

a hard hat that soldiers wear to protect their heads from injury

Judah is my scepter

God chose men from the tribe of Judah to be the kings of his people, and he speaks of that tribe as if it were his scepter. Alternate translation: “The tribe of Judah is like my scepter” or “Judah is the tribe through whom I rule my people” (See: Metaphor)

Psalms 108:9

General Information:

This verse is the same as Psalms 60:8.

ULT

9 Moab is my washbasin; over Edom I will throw my shoe; I will shout in triumph because of Philistia.

Moab is my washbasin

God speaks of Moab being unimportant as if Moab were a washbasin or a lowly servant. Alternate translation: “Moab is like a bowl that I use for washing” (See: Metaphor)

over Edom I will throw my shoe

God was probably speaking of taking ownership of Edom as if he were symbolically throwing his shoe onto that land to show that he owns it. However some versions have other interpretations. Alternate translation: “I take ownership of the land of Edom” or “I throw my shoe onto the land of Edom to show that it is mine” (See: Metaphor and Symbolic Action)

Psalms 108:10

General Information:

This verse is the same as Psalms 60:9.

ULT

10 Who will bring me into the strong
city? Who will lead me to Edom?”

Psalms 108:11

General Information:

This verse is almost the same as Psalms 60:10.

ULT
11 God, have you not rejected us? You do not go into battle with our army.

God, have you not rejected us?

The psalmist uses this question to express his sadness that it seems that God has rejected them. Alternate translation: “It seems like you have rejected us!” or “God, you seem to have abandoned us!” (See: Rhetorical Question)

You do not go into battle with our army

The psalmist speaks of God helping their army as if God were to go and fight with them. Alternate translation: “you do not help our army when we go into battle” (See: Metaphor)

Psalms 108:12

General Information:

This verse is the same as Psalms 60:11.

is futile

“is worthless”

ULT

12 Give us help against the enemy, for man’s help is futile.

Psalms 108:13

General Information:

This verse is the same as Psalms 60:12.

ULT

13 We will triumph with God's help; he will trample down our enemies.

will triumph

"will defeat our enemies"

he will trample down our enemies

The psalmist speaks of God helping their army defeat their enemies as if God were to trample down the enemies. Alternate translation: "he will enable us to trample down our enemies" or "he will make us able to defeat our enemies. (See: Metaphor)

Psalms 109

Psalm 19 General Notes

Type of psalm

Psalm 109 is a psalm of vengeance against an enemy who has lied about him. (See: avenge, avenger, revenge, vengeance)

Special concepts in this chapter

Enemies destroyed

This enemy lied about the psalmist. So he asked God to completely destroy his enemy and his enemy's family.

Psalms 109:1

General Information:

Parallelism is common in Hebrew poetry. (See: Poetry and Parallelism)

For the chief musician

“This is for the director of music to use in worship.”

ULT

1 God whom I praise, do not be silent,

Psalms 109:2

For the wicked and deceitful

The words “wicked” and “deceitful” refer to people. They have similar meanings and emphasize how bad these people are. Alternate translation: “For wicked and deceitful men” (See: Nominal Adjectives and Doublet)

ULT

2 For the wicked and deceitful attack me; they speak lies against me.

Psalms 109:3

(There are no notes for this verse.)

ULT

3 They surround me and say hateful things, and they attack me without cause.

Psalms 109:4

ULT

4 In return for my love they accuse me,
but I pray for them.

In return for my love

“Although I loved them”

my love

“my love for them”

they accuse me

The word “they” refers to the people who are wicked and deceitful. You may need to make explicit that those who accuse the psalmist do so falsely. Alternate translation: “they accuse me falsely” or “they slander me” (See: Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information)

Psalms 109:5

(There are no notes for this verse.)

ULT

5 They repay me evil for good, and they hate my love.

Psalms 109:6

Appoint a wicked man ... appoint an accuser

These two phrases are parallel and the phrases “a wicked man” and “an accuser” refer to the same person. (See: Parallelism)

at his right hand

“at my enemy’s right hand”

ULT

6 Appoint a wicked man over such an enemy as these people; appoint an accuser to stand at his right hand.

Psalms 109:7

When he is judged, may he be found guilty

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: “When he is on trial, may the judge find him guilty” (See: Active or Passive)

may his prayer be considered sinful

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: “consider his prayer sinful” (See: Active or Passive)

ULT

7 When he is judged, may he be found guilty; may his prayer be considered sinful.

Psalms 109:8

May his days be few

The phrase “his days” refers to the length of his life. Alternate translation: “May he not live a long time” (See: Idiom)

his office

“his position of authority”

ULT

8 May his days be few; may another take his office.

Psalms 109:9

(There are no notes for this verse.)

ULT

9 May his children be fatherless, and
may his wife be a widow.

Psalms 109:10

handouts

food or money given to beggars

their ruined home

“their destroyed homes”

ULT

10 May his children wander about and beg, asking for handouts as they leave their ruined home.

Psalms 109:11

the creditor

someone who lends money to another person but expects that the person will pay the money back

plunder

steal by force

ULT

11 May the creditor take all he owns;
may strangers plunder what he earns.

Psalms 109:12

(There are no notes for this verse.)

ULT

12 May no one extend any kindness to him; may no one have pity on his fatherless children.

Psalms 109:13

May his children be cut off; may their name be blotted out

These two phrases have similar meanings and emphasize his children being destroyed. (See: Parallelism)

ULT

13 May his children be cut off; may their name be blotted out in the next generation.

May his children be cut off

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: “Cause his children to be cut off” or “Cause his children to die” (See: Active or Passive)

may their name be blotted out in the next generation

Here the idea of there being no one to carry on the family name is spoke of as “their name being blotted out.” Alternate translation: “may there be no one to carry on his name” (See: Metaphor)

Psalms 109:14

May his ancestors’ sins be mentioned to Yahweh

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: “May you remember the sins of his ancestors, Yahweh” (See: Active or Passive)

ULT

14 May his ancestors’ sins be mentioned to Yahweh; and may the sin of his mother not be forgotten.

may the sin of his mother not be forgotten

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: “May you not forget the sins that his mother committed” (See: Active or Passive)

Psalms 109:15

May their guilt always be before Yahweh

Here David speaks about Yahweh thinking about their guilt as if their guilt is something physically present before him. Alternate translation: “May Yahweh continually think about their sins” (See: Metaphor)

ULT

15 May their guilt always be before Yahweh; may Yahweh cut off their memory from the earth.

may Yahweh cut off their memory from the earth

David uses the word “earth” to refer to all the people that live on the earth. Also, the phrase “their memory” refers to people remembering them after they have died. Alternate translation: “may Yahweh make it so that no one on earth remembers them” (See: Metonymy)

Psalms 109:16

this man never bothered to show any covenant faithfulness

This refers to him showing covenant faithfulness to people. The abstract noun “faithfulness” can be translated with an adjective. Alternate translation: “this man never bothered to show any covenant faithfulness to people” or “this man never did anything to show that he was faithful to his covenant” (See: Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information and Abstract Nouns)

ULT

16 May Yahweh do this because this man never bothered to show any covenant faithfulness, but instead harassed the oppressed, the needy, and the disheartened to death.

the oppressed, the needy

This refers to oppressed and needy people. Alternate translation: “oppressed people, needy people” (See: Nominal Adjectives)

the disheartened

This refers to people who are disheartened. Alternate translation: “disheartened people” or “people who have lost hope” (See: Nominal Adjectives)

to death

“until they died.” This means that he harassed them until they died.

Psalms 109:17

may it come back upon him

“may his curses come upon him”

ULT

17 He loved cursing; may it come back upon him. He hated blessing; may no blessing come to him.

Psalms 109:18

He clothed himself with cursing as his garment

David speaks of the wicked person's behavior as if it were his clothing. Alternate translation: "He cursed other people as often as he wore clothing" or "He cursed people all the time" (See: Metaphor)

ULT

18 He clothed himself with cursing as his garment, and his curse came into his inner being like water, like oil into his bones.

as his garment

"as if they were his clothing"

his curse came into his inner being like water, like oil into his bones

Possible meanings are: (1) He spoke curses so often that they became a part of his identity. "the curses that he speaks are part of who he is" or (2) the curse that he spoke happened to him. "his whole being was cursed by the curse he spoke" (See: Metaphor)

like water

This refers to how a person drinks water. Alternate translation: "like water a person drinks" (See: Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information)

like oil into his bones

This refers to how oil soaks into bones when rubbed on the skin. Alternate translation: "like olive oil soaks into a person's bones when it is rubbed on his skin" (See: Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information)

Psalms 109:19

May his curses be to him like the clothes he wears to cover himself

People wore their clothes everyday. David speaks of a wicked person always being cursed as if his curses always covered him as his clothing does. Alternate translation: “Let his curses be on him every day like the garment he wears” (See: Simile)

ULT

19 May his curses be to him like the clothes he wears to cover himself, like the belt he always wears.

like the belt he always wears

The words “may his curses be to him” are understood from the previous phrase. They may be repeated here. Alternate translation: “may his curses be to him like the belt he always wears” or “and let his curses always be on him like the belt he always wears” (See: Ellipsis)

Psalms 109:20

May this be the reward

“May these curses be the reward”

ULT

20 May this be the reward of my accusers from Yahweh, of those who say evil things about me.

Psalms 109:21

deal kindly with me

This is a request for Yahweh to treat him kindly. Alternate translation: “treat me kindly” (See: Idiom)

your name’s sake

“the sake of your reputation”

Because your covenant faithfulness is good

The abstract noun “faithfulness” can be translated with an adjective. Alternate translation: “Because you are good and are faithful to your covenant” (See: Abstract Nouns)

ULT

21 Yahweh my Lord, deal kindly with me for your name’s sake. Because your covenant faithfulness is good, save me.

Psalms 109:22

oppressed and needy

These two words have similar meanings and emphasize that he is unable to help himself. (See: Doublet)

ULT

22 For I am oppressed and needy, and my heart is wounded within me.

my heart is wounded within me

Here David speaks of being in great despair as his heart being wounded. Alternate translation: “I am full of grief and despair” (See: Metaphor)

Psalms 109:23

I am fading away like the shadow ... like a locust

ULT

23 I am fading away like the shadow of the evening; I am shaken off like a locust.

David feels like he is going to die soon and describes this feeling by comparing himself to a fading shadow and to how the wind blows away locust. Alternate translation: “I feel like I am about to die, like an evening shadow that will soon disappear, like a locust is easily blown away by the wind” (See: Metaphor)

Psalms 109:24

My knees are weak

This means that he is weak and it is difficult for him to stand. Alternate translation: “I have difficulty standing” or “My body is weak” (See: Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information)

ULT

24 My knees are weak from fasting; I am turning to skin and bones.

from fasting

“because I am not eating any food”

I am turning to skin and bones

This means that he has lost a lot of weight. Alternate translation: “my body has become very thin” (See: Idiom)

Psalms 109:25

I am disdained by my accusers

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: “My accusers ridicule me” (See: Active or Passive)

shake their heads

This is an act of disapproval.

ULT

25 I am disdained by my accusers; when they see me, they shake their heads.

Psalms 109:26

save me by your covenant faithfulness

The abstract noun “faithfulness” can be translated with an adjective. Alternate translation: “save me because you are faithful to your covenant” (See: Abstract Nouns)

ULT

26 Help me, Yahweh my God; save me by your covenant faithfulness.

Psalms 109:27

May they know

The word “they” refers to David’s accusers and the people who say bad things about him.

have done this

“have saved me”

ULT

27 May they know that this is your doing, that you, Yahweh, have done this.

Psalms 109:28

Though they curse me

The word “they” refers to the people who accuse David and say bad things about him.

ULT

28 Though they curse me, please bless me; when they attack, may they be put to shame, but may your servant rejoice.

may they be put to shame

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: “may they be ashamed” or “let them be ashamed” (See: Active or Passive)

but may your servant rejoice

“but may I, your servant, rejoice” or “I am your servant, let me rejoice.” David uses the phrase “your servant” to refer to himself.

Psalms 109:29

May my adversaries be clothed ... may they wear

These two phrase have them same meaning and are used together for emphasize how greatly he wishes for them to be ashamed. (See: Parallelism)

ULT

29 May my adversaries be clothed with shame; may they wear their shame like a robe.

be clothed with shame

Here David speaks of them being ashamed as if were clothing they wore. Alternate translation: “be very ashamed” (See: Metaphor)

may they wear their shame like a robe

David speaks of them being ashamed as if it were a robe that they wore. Alternate translation: “may their shame cover them just like their robe is wrapped around them” (See: Simile)

Psalms 109:30

With my mouth I give

This means that he will speak. Alternate translation: “I will speak and give” (See: Idiom)

ULT

30 With my mouth I give great thanks to Yahweh; I will praise him in the midst of a crowd.

Psalms 109:31

will stand at the right hand of the one who is needy

This means that he will help and defend the poor person. Alternate translation: “will defend the one who is needy” (See: Idiom)

ULT

31 For he will stand at the right hand of the one who is needy, to save him from those who judge him.

Psalms 110

Psalm 110 General Notes

Type of psalm

Psalm 110 is a psalm honoring the king as he becomes king and also a prophecy about Christ. (See: prophet, prophecy, prophesy, seer, prophetess and Christ, Messiah)

Special concepts in this chapter

King

The king will be able to conquer his enemies. Christ is seen as both high priest and king. (See: high priest, chief priests)

Psalms 110:1

General Information:

Parallelism is common in Hebrew poetry. (See: Poetry and Parallelism)

ULT

1 Yahweh says to my master, “Sit at my right hand until I make your enemies your footstool.”

Sit at my right hand

The phrase “my right hand” refers to the place of honor. Alternate translation: “Sit at the place of honor which I have for you” (See: Idiom)

make your enemies your footstool

Here David describes Yahweh placing his master’s enemies under his power and control as putting them under his feet like a footstool. Alternate translation: “put your enemies under your power” (See: Metaphor)

Psalms 110:2

General Information:

David continues speaking to the king.

ULT

2 Yahweh will hold out the scepter of your strength from Zion; rule among your enemies.

Yahweh will hold out the scepter of your strength

Here David speaks of Yahweh extending the area that the king rules as holding out his scepter. Alternate translation: “Yahweh will extend the area over which you powerfully rule” (See: Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information)

rule among your enemies

“King, rule among your enemies.” This is spoken to the king as a command.

Psalms 110:3

ULT

3 Your people will follow you in holy garments of their own free will on the day of your power; from the womb of the dawn your youth will be to you like the dew.

of their own free will

"by their own choice." This means that they will chose to follow the king.

on the day of your power

This refers to the day that the king will lead his armies into battle. This can be stated clearly. Alternate translation: "on the day that you lead your armies into battle" (See: Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information)

from the womb of the dawn ... like the dew

David describes the dew as a baby to whom the dawn gives birth. Alternate translation: "in the morning ... like the dew" (See: Personification)

from the womb of the dawn your youth will be to you like the dew

David is telling the king that he will have youthful strength each morning by comparing it to how the dew appears early each morning. Alternate translation: "each morning you will be filled with youthful strength to sustain you just like each morning the dew appears to water and sustain the earth" (See: Metaphor)

Psalms 110:4

ULT

4 Yahweh has sworn, and will not change: “You are a priest forever, after the manner of Melchizedek.”

You are

Yahweh is speaking to the lord, the one David calls “my master” in Psalms 110:1.

will not change

This means that he will not change what he has said. Alternate translation: “will not change his mind” or “will not change what he has said” (See: Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information)

after the manner of Melchizedek

The idea of being priest is understood from the previous phrase. It can be stated clearly here. Alternate translation: “after the manner that Melchizedek was priest” or “in the same way that Melchizedek was priest” (See: Ellipsis)

Psalms 110:5

The Lord is at your right hand

When the lord goes to battle, Yahweh stands at his right hand in order to help him. Alternate translation: “The Lord helps you in battle” (See: Idiom and Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information)

ULT

5 The Lord is at your right hand. He will kill kings on the day of his anger.

The Lord

The word “Lord” refers to Yahweh.

He will kill

The word “He” refers to Yahweh. He will cause the kings to be defeated and die, but he will allow the king’s armies to kill the enemy kings. Alternate translation: “He will cause the kings to die” or “He will allow your armies to kill the kings” (See: Metonymy)

kings

This refers to his enemies. Alternate translation: “enemy kings” (See: Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information)

on the day of his anger

Here David speaks of the day when Yahweh will become angry and defeat the kings as “the day of his anger.” Alternate translation: “on the day of judgment when his patience turns to anger” (See: Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information)

Psalms 110:6

he will fill the battlegrounds with dead bodies

This means that Yahweh will cause this to happen, not that he will personally kill all of the people who die on the battleground. Alternate translation: “he will cause the battlegrounds to be filled with death bodies” (See: Metonymy)

ULT

6 He will judge the nations; he will fill the battlegrounds with dead bodies; he will kill the leaders in many countries.

he will kill the leaders in many countries

This means that Yahweh will cause this to happen, not that he will personally kill the leaders. Alternate translation: “he will cause the leaders in many countries to be killed” or “he will allow the leaders in many countries to die” (See: Metonymy)

Psalms 110:7

He will drink of the brook along the road

The king only stops briefly for a drink and then he continues the pursuit of his enemies. Alternate translation: “As he pursues his enemies, he will only stop to drink quickly from a brook” (See: Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information)

ULT

7 He will drink of the brook along the road, and then he will lift his head up high after victory.

of the brook

This means the he will drink water from the brook. A brook is a small stream. Alternate translation: “he will drink water from the brook” (See: Synecdoche)

and then

“and so” or “therefore”

he will lift his head

This could mean: (1) the king lifts up his own head or (2) Yahweh lifts up the head of the king.

he will lift his head up high after victory

People raised their heads when they are victorious, confident, and joyful. Alternate translation: “he will confidently lift his head after victory” or “he will be victorious” (See: Idiom)

Psalms 111

Psalm 111 General Notes

Type of psalm

Psalm 111 is a psalm of praise to God for his miracles and care. (See: miracle, wonder, sign)

Special concepts in this chapter

Yahweh’s character

God is great. He has given his people food and a land always keeps his promises to his people. (See: promise, promised and people of God)

Psalms 111:1

General Information:

Parallelism is common in Hebrew poetry. (See: Poetry and Parallelism)

ULT

1 Praise Yahweh. I will give thanks to Yahweh with my whole heart in the assembly of the upright, in their gathering.

with my whole heart

Here the word “heart” represents the person’s entire inner being and emotions. Alternate translation: “with all that I am” (See: Metonymy)

in the assembly of the upright, in their gathering

These two phrases mean that same thing and may be combined if necessary. Alternate translation: “in the gathering of upright people” (See: Doublet)

Psalms 111:2

eagerly awaited by all those who desire them

The word “them” refers to the “works of Yahweh.” This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: “all those who desire the works of Yahweh eagerly await them” (See: Active or Passive)

eagerly awaited

This could mean: (1) “sought after” or (2) “studied.”

ULT

2 The works of Yahweh are great,
eagerly awaited by all those who desire them.

Psalms 111:3

(There are no notes for this verse.)

ULT

3 His work is majestic and glorious, and
his righteousness endures forever.

Psalms 111:4

that will be remembered

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: “that people will always remember” (See: Active or Passive)

ULT

4 He does wonderful things that will be remembered; Yahweh is gracious and merciful.

Psalms 111:5

call to mind

This is an idiom that means to remember. Alternate translation: “remember” (See: Idiom)

ULT

5 He gives food to his faithful followers.
He will always call to mind his covenant.

Psalms 111:6

his powerful works

“his works that demonstrated his power”

the inheritance of the nations

ULT

6 He showed his powerful works to his people in giving them the inheritance of the nations.

The writer speaks of the land that belonged to the nations in Canaan as if it were their inheritance. Alternate translation: “the land that belonged to other nations” (See: Metaphor)

Psalms 111:7

The works of his hands

Here the word “hands” refers to Yahweh, himself. Alternate translation: “The works that he does” (See: Synecdoche)

ULT

7 The works of his hands are
trustworthy and just; all his instructions
are reliable.

Psalms 111:8

They are established forever

This means that Yahweh's instructions are unchangeable and will last forever. This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "He has established them forever" or "They will last forever" (See: Active or Passive)

ULT

8 They are established forever, to be observed faithfully and properly.

to be observed faithfully and properly

This could mean: (1) Yahweh has given his instructions in a faithful and proper manner or (2) his people are to observe Yahweh's instructions in a faithful and proper manner. This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "for his people to observe them faithfully and properly" (See: Active or Passive)

Psalms 111:9

holy and awesome is his name

Here the word “name” refers to Yahweh, himself. Alternate translation: “Yahweh is holy and awesome” (See: Metonymy)

ULT

9 He gave victory to his people; he ordained his covenant forever; holy and awesome is his name.

Psalms 111:10

the beginning of wisdom

The word “wisdom” can be translated as “wise.” Alternate translation: “the first step to becoming wise” or “the most important thing to become wise” (See: Abstract Nouns)

those who carry out his instructions

“those who obey his instructions”

His praise endures forever

The word “praise” can be translated as a verb. Alternate translation: “People will praise him forever” (See: Abstract Nouns)

ULT

10 To honor Yahweh is the beginning of wisdom; those who carry out his instructions have good understanding. His praise endures forever.

Psalms 112

Psalm 112 General Notes

Type of psalm

Psalm 112 is a wisdom psalm teaching the value of a righteous life. (See: wise, wisdom and righteous, righteousness, unrighteous, unrighteousness, upright, uprightness)

Special concepts in this chapter

Righteous people

The righteous people will be well-known for their generosity and they will not have to worry about bad news because God is taking care of them.

Psalms 112:1

General Information:

Parallelism is common in Hebrew poetry. (See: Poetry and Parallelism)

greatly delights

“takes great pleasure”

ULT

1 Praise Yahweh. Blessed is the man
who fears Yahweh, who greatly delights
in his commandments.

Psalms 112:2

the descendants of the godly man will be blessed

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: “Yahweh will bless the descendants of the godly man” (See: Active or Passive)

ULT

2 His descendants will be powerful on earth; the descendants of the godly man will be blessed.

Psalms 112:3

General Information:

The person who sings this song continues to describe a person who reveres Yahweh.

ULT

3 Wealth and riches are in his house; his righteousness will endure forever.

Wealth and riches are in his house

Here the word “house” represents the family. The words “Wealth” and “riches” mean basically the same thing and indicate an abundance of wealth. Alternate translation: “His family is very wealthy” (See: Metonymy and Doublet)

Psalms 112:4

Light shines in the darkness for the godly person

The writer speaks of God blessing the godly person in difficult times as if it were a light shining in darkness. Alternate translation: “The blessings that a godly person receives from God are like a light that shines in the darkness” (See: Metaphor)

ULT

4 Light shines in the darkness for the godly person; he is gracious, merciful, and just.

Psalms 112:5

lends money

The understood information can be made clear. Alternate translation: “lends his money to other people” (See: Ellipsis)

ULT

5 It goes well for the man who deals graciously and lends money, who conducts his affairs with honesty.

Psalms 112:6

General Information:

The person who sings this song continues to describe a person who reveres Yahweh.

ULT

6 For he will never be moved; the righteous person will be remembered forever.

For he will never be moved

he will not be troubled or overwhelmed by circumstances for his trust is in Yahweh? This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: “For nothing will ever move him” (See: Active or Passive)

the righteous person will be remembered forever

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: “people will remember the righteous person forever” (See: Active or Passive)

Psalms 112:7

(There are no notes for this verse.)

ULT

7 He does not fear bad news; he is confident, trusting in Yahweh.

Psalms 112:8

General Information:

The person who sings this song continues to describe a person who reveres Yahweh.

ULT

8 His heart is tranquil, without fear, until he looks in triumph over his adversaries.

His heart is tranquil

“His heart is supported.” Here the word “heart” refers to the person. This could mean: (1) “He is at peace” or (2) “He is confident” (See: Synecdoche)

Psalms 112:9

his righteousness endures forever

“his righteous deeds will endure forever.” See how you translated this in Psalms 112:3.

he will be exalted with honor

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: “Yahweh will exalt him by giving him honor” (See: Active or Passive)

ULT

9 He generously gives to the poor; his righteousness endures forever; he will be exalted with honor.

Psalms 112:10

will see this

"will see that things go well for the godly person." The word "this" refers to everything good that the writer has described in the previous verses about the godly person.

ULT

10 The wicked person will see this and be angry; he will grind his teeth in rage and he will melt away; the desire of the wicked people will perish.

he will grind his teeth in rage

The grinding of teeth is an expression of extreme anger. See how you translated a similar phrase in Psalms 35:16. (See: Symbolic Action)

melt away

The writer speaks of the wicked person's eventual death as if that person were something, such as ice, that can melt. Alternate translation: "eventually die" (See: Metaphor)

the desire of the wicked people will perish

Here, **desire** could mean: (1) the emotional desire that wicked people have. Alternate translation: "the things that wicked people want to do will never happen" or (2) it is a metonym for the things that wicked people have desired. Alternate translation: "wicked people will lose the things that they desired" (See: Metonymy)

Psalms 113

Psalm 113 General Notes

Type of psalm

Psalm 113 is a psalm of praise to God for his goodness. (See: good, right, pleasant, better, best)

Special concepts in this chapter

Yahweh’s help

God helps the poor and gives children to the wife who cannot conceive children.

Psalms 113:1

General Information:

Parallelism is common in Hebrew poetry. (See: Poetry and Parallelism)

ULT

1 Praise Yahweh. Praise him, you servants of Yahweh; praise the name of Yahweh.

the name of Yahweh

Here the word “name” represents Yahweh, himself. Alternate translation: “Yahweh” (See: Metonymy)

Psalms 113:2

(There are no notes for this verse.)

ULT

2 Blessed be the name of Yahweh, both
now and forevermore.

Psalms 113:3

From the rising of the sun to its setting

This phrase refers to the directions east, where the sun rises, and west, where the sun sets. The writer uses these two extremes to represent everywhere on earth. See how you translated this in Psalms 50:1. Alternate translation: “Everywhere on earth” (See: Merism)

ULT

3 From the rising of the sun to its setting, Yahweh’s name should be praised.

Yahweh’s name should be praised

Here the word “name” represents Yahweh, himself. This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: “people should praise Yahweh” (See: Metonymy and Active or Passive)

Psalms 113:4

his glory reaches above the skies

The glory of God is spoken of as if it was very high. Alternate translation: “his glory is higher than the skies” or “his glory is enormously great” (See: Metaphor)

ULT

4 Yahweh is exalted above all nations,
and his glory reaches above the skies.

Psalms 113:5

Who is like Yahweh our God, who has his seat on high

ULT

5 Who is like Yahweh our God, who has his seat on high,

This is the first part of a rhetorical question that the writer asks to emphasize that there is no one like Yahweh. It may be translated as a statement. Alternate translation: “There is no one like Yahweh our God, who has his seat on high” (See: Rhetorical Question)

who has his seat on high

“who is enthroned on high” or “who rules in the highest position”

Psalms 113:6

who looks down at the sky and at the earth

This is the second part of a rhetorical question that the writer asks to emphasize that there is no one like Yahweh. It may be translated as a statement that begins a new sentence. Alternate translation: “There is no one like Yahweh our God, who looks down at the sky and at the earth.” (See: Rhetorical Question)

ULT

6 who looks down at the sky and at the earth?

Psalms 113:7

He raises up the poor ... from the ash heap

These two phrases are parallel. The writer speaks of Yahweh helping and honoring people who are poor as if Yahweh caused them to stand up from sitting in dirt and ashes. (See: Parallelism and Metaphor)

ULT

7 He raises up the poor out of the dirt
and lifts up the needy from the ash
heap,

out of the dirt ... from the ash heap

Sitting in dirt and ashes represents either poverty or despair. (See: Symbolic Action)

Psalms 113:8

so that he may seat him with princes, with the princes of his people

ULT

8 so that he may seat him with princes, with the princes of his people.

Here the second phrase clarifies that the first phrase refers to the princes of Yahweh's people. These two statements can be combined. Alternate translation: "so that Yahweh may seat him next to rulers of his people" (See: Parallelism)

Psalms 113:9

He gives a home to the barren woman of the house

Here “home” refers to the children that live in a home. Alternate translation: “He gives children to the woman who had none” (See: Metonymy)

ULT

9 He gives a home to the barren woman of the house, he makes her a joyful mother of children. Praise Yahweh!

Psalms 114

Psalm 114 General Notes

Type of psalm

Psalm 114 is a psalm of praise to God for his miracles in bringing the people of Israel to the promised land. (See: miracle, wonder, sign and Promised Land)

Special concepts in this chapter

Praise

The psalmist praised God for opening up the Red Sea for the people to cross, for providing the earthquake that stopped the Jordan River so the people could cross and providing water from a rock for the people to drink.

Psalms 114:1

General Information:

Parallelism is common in Hebrew poetry. (See: Poetry and Parallelism)

ULT

1 When Israel left Egypt, the house of Jacob from a people who spoke a foreign language,

When Israel left Egypt, the house of Jacob from a people who spoke a foreign language

These two lines are parallel, with “Israel” and “the house of Jacob” meaning the same thing and “Egypt” and “that foreign people” referring to the same people. (See: Parallelism)

the house of Jacob from a people who spoke a foreign language

The word “house” here represents the family or descendents. The verb may be supplied to this phrase. Alternate translation: “the descendants of Jacob left people who spoke a language that the descendants of Jacob did not understand” (See: Metonymy and Ellipsis)

Psalms 114:2

Judah became his holy place, Israel his kingdom

ULT

2 Judah became his holy place, Israel his kingdom.

Possible meanings for **Judah** and **Israel** are: (1) they refer to the land. Alternate translation: “The land of Judah became Yahweh’s holy place, the land of Israel became his kingdom” or (2) they are metonyms for the people of Judah and Israel. Alternate translation: “The people of Judah became those among whom Yahweh lived, the people of Israel became those over whom he ruled” (See: Metonymy and Ellipsis)

Psalms 114:3

The sea looked and fled

The writer speaks of the Sea of Reeds as if it were a person who fled away as Yahweh led the people of Israel through on dry ground. Alternate translation: “It was as though the sea looked and fled” (See: Personification)

ULT

3 The sea looked and fled; the Jordan turned back.

the Jordan turned back

The writer speaks of the Jordan River as if it were a person who retreated as Yahweh led the people of Israel through on dry ground. Alternate translation: “it was as though the Jordan retreated” (See: Personification)

Psalms 114:4

The mountains skipped like rams, the hills skipped like lambs

ULT

4 The mountains skipped like rams, the hills skipped like lambs.

The writer speaks of the mountains and hills as if they are alive. He is probably speaking of an earthquake when he describes their fear at the presence of Yahweh as if they were jumping like rams and lambs. Alternate translation: “It was as if the mountains shook like jumping rams and the hills shook like jumping lambs” (See: Personification and Metaphor)

Psalms 114:5

General Information:

Verses 5-6 contain four rhetorical questions. The expected answer to each question is found in verse 7, “because of the presence of the Lord.” (See: Rhetorical Question)

ULT

5 Why did you flee, sea? Jordan, why did you turn back?

Psalms 114:6

skip like rams ... skip like lambs

The writer speaks of the mountains and hills as if they are alive. He is probably speaking of an earthquake when he describes their fear at the presence of Yahweh as if they were jumping like rams and lambs. See how you translated similar phrases in Psalms 114:4. Alternate translation: “shake like jumping rams ... shake like jumping lambs” (See: Personification and Metaphor)

ULT

6 Mountains, why did you skip like rams? You little hills, why did you skip like lambs?

Psalms 114:7

Tremble, earth, before the Lord, at the presence of the God of Jacob

ULT

7 Tremble, earth, before the Lord, at the presence of the God of Jacob.

The last two phrases are parallel. The verb may be supplied in the second line. Alternate translation: “Tremble, earth, before the Lord, tremble at the presence of the God of Jacob” (See: Parallelism and Ellipsis)

Tremble, earth

This could mean: (1) the writer is speaking to the earth as if it were a person and commands it to tremble with fear before God or (2) the word “earth” is a metonym for those who live on the earth. Alternate translation: “Tremble, everyone one earth” (See: Personification and Metonymy)

Psalms 114:8

He turned the rock into a pool of water, the hard rock into a spring of water

ULT

8 He turned the rock into a pool of water, the hard rock into a spring of water.

These two phrases are parallel. The writer describes Yahweh causing water to flow from the rock as if he turned the rock into water. (See: Parallelism and Metaphor)

the hard rock into a spring of water

The verb may be supplied from the previous phrase. Alternate translation: “He turned the hard rock into a spring of water” (See: Ellipsis)

Psalms 115

Psalm 115 General Notes

Type of psalm

Psalm 115 is a psalm of praise.

Special concepts in this chapter

Yahweh’s power

God is in heaven and is able to do whatever he wants. Idols can not do anything. Therefore, people and priests should trust God for their protection. (See: heaven, sky, heavens, heavenly and priest, priesthood and trust, trusted, trustworthy, trustworthiness)

Psalms 115:1

General Information:

Parallelism is common in Hebrew poetry. (See: Poetry and Parallelism)

ULT

1 Not to us, Yahweh, not to us, but to your name bring honor, for your covenant faithfulness and for your trustworthiness.

Not to us, Yahweh, not to us

The writer repeats the phrase “Not to us” in order to emphasize that they are not worthy to receive the honor that is due only to Yahweh. If necessary, a verbal phrase may be supplied here. Alternate translation: “Do not bring honor to us, Yahweh” (See: Doublet and Ellipsis)

to us

The word “us” refers to the people of Israel.

but to your name bring honor

Here the word “name” represents Yahweh, himself. Alternate translation: “but bring honor to yourself” (See: Metonymy)

for your covenant faithfulness and for your trustworthiness

The abstract noun “faithfulness” can be translated as an adjective. The abstract noun “trustworthiness” can be translated with a verbal phrase. Alternate translation: “because you are faithful to your covenant and you are worthy of people trusting you” (See: Abstract Nouns)

Psalms 115:2

Why should the nations say, “Where is their God?”

ULT

2 Why should the nations say, “Where is their God?”

This rhetorical question emphasizes that there should be no reason for the nations to say what they say. This question can be translated as a statement. Alternate translation: “The people of the nations should not be able to say, ‘Where is their God?’” (See: Rhetorical Question)

Where is their God?

The people of other nations use this question to mock the people of Israel and to express that they do not see Yahweh helping them. This question can be translated as a statement. Alternate translation: “Your God is not here to help you.” (See: Rhetorical Question)

Psalms 115:3

(There are no notes for this verse.)

ULT

3 Our God is in heaven; he does whatever he pleases.

Psalms 115:4

the work of men’s hands

Here the word “hands” represents the people who made the idols. Alternate translation: “things which men have made” (See: Synecdoche)

ULT

4 The nations’ idols are silver and gold,
the work of men’s hands.

Psalms 115:5

Those idols have mouths

The idols do not have real mouths, eyes, ears, or noses. Rather, people made them with the likeness of mouths, eyes, ears, and noses. The writer is emphasizing that these idols are not really alive. You can make clear the implied information. Alternate translation: “People have given mouths to those idols” (See: Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information)

ULT

5 Those idols have mouths, but they do not speak; they have eyes, but they do not see;

Psalms 115:6

(There are no notes for this verse.)

ULT

6 they have ears, but they do not hear;
they have noses, but they do not smell.

Psalms 115:7

Those idols have hands

The idols do not have real hands, feet, or mouths. Rather, people made them with the likeness of hands, feet, and mouths. The writer is emphasizing that these idols are not really alive. You can make this implicit information clear. Alternate translation: “People have given hands to those idols” (See: Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information)

but do not feel

“but those hands do not feel”

ULT

7 Those idols have hands, but do not feel; they have feet, but they cannot walk; nor do they speak from their mouths.

Psalms 115:8

Those who make them are like them, as is everyone who trusts in them

ULT

8 Those who make them are like them,
as is everyone who trusts in them.

Those who make and worship idols become lifeless and powerless, just like those idols. The full meaning of this statement can be made clear. Alternate translation: “Those who make them become lifeless like they are, as does everyone who trusts in them” (See: Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information)

Psalms 115:9

Israel, trust in Yahweh

The word “Israel” represents the people of Israel. Alternate translation: “People of Israel, trust in Yahweh” (See: Metonymy)

ULT

9 Israel, trust in Yahweh; he is your help and shield.

your help and shield

The writer speaks of Yahweh as if he were a shield because he protects his people as a shield would protect them from harm. Alternate translation: “the one who helps you and protects you” (See: Metaphor)

Psalms 115:10

House of Aaron

Here the word “House” represents the family or descendants. This phrase refers to the priests, who were descendants of Aaron. Alternate translation: “Descendants of Aaron” or “Priests” (See: Metonymy)

ULT

10 House of Aaron, trust in Yahweh; he is your help and shield.

Psalms 115:11

(There are no notes for this verse.)

ULT

11 You who honor Yahweh, trust in him;
he is your help and shield.

Psalms 115:12

takes notice of us

“has paid attention to us”

the family of Israel

This refers to the people of Israel, who are descendants of Jacob, who also called Israel. Alternate translation: “the people of Israel” (See: Metonymy)

the family of Aaron

This refers to the priests, who are descendants of Aaron. Alternate translation: “the descendants of Aaron” or “the priests” (See: Metonymy)

ULT

12 Yahweh takes notice of us and will bless us; he will bless the family of Israel; he will bless the family of Aaron.

Psalms 115:13

both young and old

“both small and great.” Possible meanings are that this refers: (1) to social status or (2) to age. In either case, the two extremes represent every person, regardless of age or social status. (See: Merism)

ULT

13 He will bless those who honor him,
both young and old.

Psalms 115:14

May Yahweh increase your numbers more and more

The writer is speaking of the number of children that the people of Israel would have. Alternate translation: “May Yahweh increase the number of your children more and more” (See: Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information)

ULT

14 May Yahweh increase your numbers more and more, yours and your descendants’.

yours and your descendants’

“both your children and your descendants’ children.” The writer clarifies that his request for more children applies not only to the present generation, but to their descendants, as well.

Psalms 115:15

May you be blessed by Yahweh, who made heaven and earth

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: “May Yahweh, who made heaven and earth, bless you” (See: Active or Passive)

ULT

15 May you be blessed by Yahweh, who made heaven and earth.

Psalms 115:16

the earth he has given to mankind

This does not mean that the earth does not belong to Yahweh, but that has given the earth to mankind as a dwelling place.

ULT

16 The heavens belong to Yahweh; but the earth he has given to mankind.

Psalms 115:17

The dead

The adjective “dead” may be translated with a noun phrase. Alternate translation: “People who are dead” (See: Nominal Adjectives)

ULT

17 The dead do not praise Yahweh, nor do any who go down into silence;

nor do any who go down into silence

This parallel phrase has a similar meaning to phrase before it. The verb may be supplied from that previous phrase to make the meaning clear. Alternate translation: “nor do any who go down into silence praise Yahweh” (See: Ellipsis and Parallelism)

nor do any who go down into silence

The writer speaks of the grave or the place of the dead as a place of silence where no one can speak. This is a euphemism for death. Alternate translation: “nor do any who go to the place of the dead” (See: Metaphor and Euphemism)

Psalms 115:18

But we

The word “we” refers to the people of Israel who are still alive.

ULT

18 But we will bless Yahweh now and
forevermore. Praise Yahweh.

Psalms 116

Psalm 116 General Notes

Type of psalm

Psalm 116 is a psalm of praise for saving the psalmist's life. (See: save, saved, safe, salvation)

Special concepts in this chapter

Healing

The author was very sick and expected to die but God healed him. So he will pay his vow and sacrifice an offering of thanks. (See: vow)

Psalms 116:1

General Information:

Parallelism is common in Hebrew poetry. (See: Poetry and Parallelism)

ULT

1 I love Yahweh because he hears my voice and my pleas for mercy.

he hears my voice and my pleas for mercy

Here the word “voice” represents the person who is speaking. The abstract nouns “pleas” and “mercy” can be stated as “plead” and “merciful.” Alternate translation: “he hears me when I plead for him to be merciful to me” (See: Synecdoche and Abstract Nouns)

Psalms 116:2

(There are no notes for this verse.)

ULT

2 Because he listened to me, I will call
on him as long as I live.

Psalms 116:3

General Information:

The person who composed this psalm continues to speak.

ULT

3 The cords of death surrounded me,
and the snares of Sheol confronted me;
I felt anguish and sorrow.

The cords of death surrounded me

The writer speaks of death as if it were a person who could capture him and bind him with ropes. See how you translated this in Psalms 18:4. Alternate translation: “I felt like I was about to die” (See: Personification and Metaphor)

the snares of Sheol confronted me

The writer speaks of “Sheol,” the place of the dead, as if it were a person who could trap him with snares. Alternate translation: “I felt as if I were ready to enter the grave” (See: Personification and Metaphor)

Psalms 116:4

called on the name of Yahweh

Here the word “name” represents Yahweh himself. Alternate translation: “called out to Yahweh” (See: Metonymy)

ULT

4 Then I called on the name of Yahweh:
“Please Yahweh, rescue my life.”

rescue my life

Here the word “life” represents the person. Alternate translation: “rescue me” or “keep me from dying” (See: Synecdoche)

Psalms 116:5

General Information:

The person who made this song continues to speak.

ULT

5 Yahweh is merciful and fair; our God is compassionate.

Psalms 116:6

the naive

This refers to people who are inexperienced or who cannot care for themselves. The adjective can be translated as a noun phrase. Alternate translation: “those who are naive” or “those who are helpless” (See: Nominal Adjectives)

ULT

6 Yahweh protects the naive; I was brought low, and he saved me.

I was brought low

The writer speaks of being humbled as in being in a lower position. Alternate translation: “I was helpless” (See: Metaphor)

Psalms 116:7

General Information:

The person who composed this psalm continues to speak.

ULT

7 My soul can return to its resting place,
for Yahweh has been good to me.

My soul can return to its resting place

The writer speaks of having peace and confidence as if it were a place where his soul can rest. The word “soul” represents the person. Alternate translation: “I can rest in peace again” (See: Metaphor and Synecdoche)

Psalms 116:8

you rescued my life from death

Here the word “you” refers to Yahweh. The word “life” represents the person. Alternate translation: “you have saved me from death” or “you have kept me from dying” (See: Metonymy)

ULT

8 For you rescued my life from death,
my eyes from tears, and my feet from stumbling.

my eyes from tears

The verbal phrase may be supplied from the previous phrase to make the meaning clear. Alternate translation: “you have rescued my eyes from tears” or “you have kept me from crying” (See: Ellipsis)

my feet from stumbling

The verbal phrase may be supplied from the previous phrase to make the meaning clear. The feet here represent the person. Stumbling here probably represents being killed by his enemies. Alternate translation: “you have rescued me from stumbling” or “you have kept me from being killed by my enemies” (See: Synecdoche and Metaphor and Ellipsis)

Psalms 116:9

General Information:

The person who composed this psalm continues to speak.

ULT
9 I will serve Yahweh in the land of the living.

in the land of the living

“in this world where people are alive.” This is in contrast to the place of the dead.

Psalms 116:10

I am greatly afflicted

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: “I suffer greatly” or “People afflict me very much” (See: Active or Passive)

ULT

10 I believed in him, even when I said, “I am greatly afflicted.”

Psalms 116:11

In my confusion I said

“I said too quickly” or “I said without considering”

All men are liars

“Every person is a liar” or “All people are liars”

ULT

11 In my confusion I said, “All men are liars.”

Psalms 116:12

General Information:

The person who made this song continues to speak.

ULT

12 How can I repay Yahweh for all his kindnesses to me?

How can I repay Yahweh ... to me?

The writer asks this leading question to introduce how he will respond to what Yahweh has done for him. This question can be translated as a statement. Alternate translation: “This is how I will repay Yahweh ... to me.” (See: Rhetorical Question)

Psalms 116:13

I will raise the cup of salvation

ULT
13 I will raise the cup of salvation, and call on the name of Yahweh.

This is probably a reference to a drink offering, which was a sacrifice that involved pouring wine on the altar, and which the writer will offer in response to Yahweh saving him. The full meaning of this statement can be made explicit. Alternate translation: "I will present a drink offering to Yahweh because he saved me" (See: Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information)

call on the name of Yahweh

Here the word "name" represents Yahweh himself. Alternate translation: "call on Yahweh" (See: Metonymy)

Psalms 116:14

(There are no notes for this verse.)

ULT

14 I will fulfill my vows to Yahweh in the presence of all his people.

Psalms 116:15

Precious in the sight of Yahweh is the death of his faithful ones

ULT

15 Precious in the sight of Yahweh is the death of his faithful ones.

The word “Precious” here does not imply that Yahweh values the death of his saints, but that the death of his saints is costly to him and grieves him. Here sight represents judgment or evaluation. Alternate translation: “Yahweh considers the death of his saints to be a costly thing” (See: Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information and Metaphor)

Psalms 116:16

General Information:

The person who composed this psalm continues to speak.

ULT

16 Yahweh, indeed, I am your servant; I am your servant, the son of your servant woman; you have taken away my bonds.

the son of your servant woman

This is likely a reference to the writer's mother and indicates that she faithfully worshiped Yahweh. The full meaning of this can be made clear. Alternate translation: "as my mother was" (See: Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information)

you have taken away my bonds

The writer speaks of being in danger of dying as if he had been chained in prison. Alternate translation: "you have saved me from death" (See: Metaphor)

Psalms 116:17

the sacrifice of thanksgiving

“a sacrifice to express my thankfulness”

will call on the name of Yahweh

ULT

17 I will offer to you the sacrifice of thanksgiving and will call on the name of Yahweh.

Here the word “name” represents Yahweh himself. Alternate translation: “will call on Yahweh” (See: Metonymy)

Psalms 116:18

General Information:

The person who made this song continues to speak.

I will fulfill ... all his people

See how you translated Psalms 116:14.

ULT

18 I will fulfill my vows to Yahweh in the presence of all his people,

Psalms 116:19

in the courts of Yahweh’s house

The word “house” refers to Yahweh’s temple. Alternate translation: “in the courtyards of Yahweh’s temple” (See: Metonymy)

ULT

19 in the courts of Yahweh’s house, in your midst, Jerusalem. Praise Yahweh.

in your midst, Jerusalem

The writer speaks to Jerusalem as though it were a person. Alternate translation: “in Jerusalem” (See: Personification and Apostrophe)

Psalms 117

Psalm 117 General Notes

Type of psalm

Psalm 117 is a psalm of praise.

Special concepts in this chapter

Praise

Everyone should praise God for his love and unending faithfulness. (See: love, beloved and faithful, faithfulness, trustworthy)

Psalms 117:1

General Information:

Parallelism is common in Hebrew poetry. (See: Poetry and Parallelism)

ULT

1 Praise Yahweh, all you nations; exalt him, all you peoples.

Psalms 117:2

ULT

[2] For his covenant faithfulness is great toward us, and the trustworthiness of Yahweh endures forever. Praise Yahweh.

For his

“Because his”

his covenant faithfulness is great toward us

The abstract noun “faithfulness” can be translated with an adjective. Alternate translation: “he does great things for us because he is faithful to his covenant” (See: Abstract Nouns)

the trustworthiness of Yahweh endures forever

The abstract noun “trustworthiness” can be translated with an adjective or a verbal phrase. Alternate translation: “Yahweh remains trustworthy forever” or “Yahweh will forever be worthy of people trusting him” (See: Abstract Nouns)

Psalms 118

Psalm 118 General Notes

Type of psalm

Psalm 118 is a psalm of war and is about Christ. (See: Christ, Messiah)

Special concepts in this chapter

Rejected stone

The author praised Yahweh for his rescuing him. God enabled him to overpower his enemies. The new Testament, and even Jesus himself, saw the rejected stone as a reference to the Messiah's rejection by the Jewish leaders. (See: Christ, Messiah)

Psalms 118:1

General Information:

Parallelism is common in Hebrew poetry. (See: Poetry and Parallelism)

ULT

1 Give thanks to Yahweh, for he is good,
for his covenant faithfulness endures
forever.

Give thanks to Yahweh, for he is good

“Thank Yahweh because of the good things he does”

his covenant faithfulness endures forever

The abstract noun “faithfulness” can be translated with an adjective. Alternate translation: “he remains faithful to his covenant forever” (See: Abstract Nouns)

Psalms 118:2

Let Israel say

The word “Israel” represents the people of Israel. Alternate translation: “Let the people of Israel say” (See: Metonymy)

ULT

2 Let Israel say, “His covenant faithfulness endures forever.”

Psalms 118:3

Let the house of Aaron say

Here the word “house” represents the family and descendants of a person. This phrase refers to the priests, who were descendants of Aaron. Alternate translation: “Let the descendants of Aaron say” or “Let the priests say” (See: Metonymy)

ULT

3 Let the house of Aaron say, “His covenant faithfulness endures forever.”

His covenant faithfulness endures forever

The abstract noun “faithfulness” can be translated with an adjective. See how you translated this in Psalms 118:1-2. Alternate translation: “He remains faithful to his covenant forever” (See: Abstract Nouns)

Psalms 118:4

the loyal followers of Yahweh

“those who fear Yahweh” or “those who worship Yahweh”

ULT

4 Let the loyal followers of Yahweh say,
“His covenant faithfulness endures for ever.”

Psalms 118:5

set me free

The writer speaks of Yahweh saving him from distress as if Yahweh had taken him from a place of confinement to a wide open space where he could move about freely. (See: Metaphor)

ULT

5 In my distress I called out to Yahweh;
Yahweh answered me and set me free.

Psalms 118:6

what can man do to me?

The writer asks this rhetorical question to emphasize that there is nothing that man can do to hurt him since Yahweh is with him. This question can be translated as a statement. Alternate translation: “people cannot do anything to harm me.” (See: Rhetorical Question)

ULT

6 Yahweh is with me; I will not be afraid;
what can man do to me?

Psalms 118:7

Yahweh is on my side as my helper

To be on one's side is an idiomatic expression that indicates that that person approves of and will help another. Alternate translation: "Yahweh approves of me and will help me" (See: Idiom)

ULT

7 Yahweh is on my side as my helper; I will look in triumph on those who hate me.

I will look in triumph on those who hate me

It is implied that Yahweh is the one who will defeat the writer's enemies, while the writer looks on. The full meaning of this can be made clear. Alternate translation: "I will see Yahweh defeating all those who hate me" (See: Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information)

Psalms 118:8

to take shelter in Yahweh

God is spoken of as if he were a shelter, a place where people can be protected. Alternate translation: “to seek protection from Yahweh” (See: Metaphor)

ULT

8 It is better to take shelter in Yahweh
than to put confidence in man.

Psalms 118:9

to take refuge in Yahweh

This verse is parallel to the one preceding it. God is spoken of as if he were a refuge, a place where people can be protected. Alternate translation: “to seek protection from Yahweh” (See: Metaphor)

ULT

9 It is better to take refuge in Yahweh
than to put one’s trust in a princes.

Psalms 118:10

ULT
10 All the nations surrounded me; in Yahweh's name I cut them off.

All the nations

Here the word "nations" represents the armies of those nations. The writer uses hyperbole to emphasize the great number of armies that surrounded him. Alternate translation: "The armies of many nations" (See: Metonymy and Hyperbole)

in Yahweh's name

Here the word "name" represents Yahweh's power. Alternate translation: "by Yahweh's power" (See: Metonymy)

I cut them off

The writer speaks of defeating the enemy armies as if he were cutting them off like a person would cut a branch off of a plant. Alternate translation: "I defeated them" (See: Metaphor)

Psalms 118:11

(There are no notes for this verse.)

ULT

11 They surrounded me; yes, they surrounded me; in Yahweh’s name I cut them off.

Psalms 118:12

They surrounded me like bees

The writer compares the enemy armies to a swarm of bees. Alternate translation: “They surrounded me like a swarm of bees would surround a person” (See: Simile)

they disappeared as quickly as fire among thorns

Just like dry thorns burn out quickly, the attack of the enemy armies was quickly over. Alternate translation: “their attack lasted only a short time, as a fire that consumes thorns quickly dies” (See: Simile)

ULT

12 They surrounded me like bees; they disappeared as quickly as fire among thorns; in Yahweh’s name I cut them off.

Psalms 118:13

to knock me down

The writer speaks of the enemy armies trying to defeat him as if they were trying to push him down onto the ground. Alternate translation: “in order to defeat me” (See: Metaphor)

ULT

13 They attacked me to knock me down,
but Yahweh helped me.

Psalms 118:14

Yahweh is my strength and joy

“Yahweh gives me strength and joy”

ULT

14 Yahweh is my strength and joy, and he is the one who rescues me.

Psalms 118:15

The joyful shout of victory is heard in the tents of the righteous

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: “People hear the joyful shout of victory in the tents of the righteous” or “The righteous shout joyfully for victory in their tents” (See: Active or Passive)

ULT

15 The joyful shout of victory is heard in the tents of the righteous; the right hand of Yahweh conquers.

the right hand of Yahweh conquers

Here the word “hand” represents Yahweh’s power. Alternate translation: “Yahweh has conquered by his great strength” (See: Metonymy)

Psalms 118:16

The right hand of Yahweh is exalted

Here, to raise one's hand is a gesture of victory. This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "Yahweh has exalted his right hand" or "Yahweh has raised his right hand in victory" (See: Symbolic Action and Active or Passive)

ULT

16 The right hand of Yahweh is exalted;
the right hand of Yahweh conquers.

Psalms 118:17

I will not die, but live

The writer states the same idea both negatively and positively to emphasize that he will certainly live. (See: Doublet)

ULT

17 I will not die, but live and declare the deeds of Yahweh.

Psalms 118:18

Yahweh has punished me

“Yahweh has disciplined me”

he has not handed me over to death

ULT

18 Yahweh has punished me harshly;
but he has not handed me over to
death.

The writer speaks of death as if it were a person under whose power Yahweh could place the writer. Alternate translation: “he has not allowed me to die” or “he has not allowed my enemies to kill me” (See: Personification and Idiom)

Psalms 118:19

Open to me the gates of righteousness

“Open to me the gates through which the righteous people enter.” This is a reference to the gates of the temple, and the writer is addressing the gatekeepers. The full meaning of this can be made clear. Alternate translation: “Open for me the temple gates” (See: Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information)

ULT

19 Open to me the gates of
righteousness; I will enter them and I
will give thanks to Yahweh.

Psalms 118:20

the gate of Yahweh

“the gate that leads to Yahweh’s presence” or “Yahweh’s gate”

ULT

20 This is the gate of Yahweh; the righteous enter through it.

Psalms 118:21

I will give thanks to you

Here the writer begins to speak to Yahweh.

you have become my salvation

The word “salvation” can be translated with a verbal phrase. Alternate translation: “you have saved me” (See: Abstract Nouns)

ULT

21 I will give thanks to you, for you answered me, and you have become my salvation.

Psalms 118:22

The stone that the builders rejected has become the cornerstone

ULT

22 The stone that the builders rejected has become the cornerstone.

This is likely a proverb that the writer has used to describe either the king or the nation of Israel. That which others have considered worthless, Yahweh has made to be the most important. (See: Proverbs)

Psalms 118:23

it is marvelous in our eyes

This could mean: (1) “it is a marvelous thing for us to see” or (2) “we consider it to be a marvelous thing.” (See: Idiom)

ULT

23 This is Yahweh’s doing; it is marvelous in our eyes.

Psalms 118:24

rejoice and be glad

These two phrases mean basically the same thing and emphasize the intensity of joy. Alternate translation: “be very glad” (See: Doublet)

ULT

24 This is the day on which Yahweh has acted; we will rejoice and be glad in it.

Psalms 118:25

(There are no notes for this verse.)

ULT

25 Please, Yahweh, give us victory!
Please, Yahweh, give us success!

Psalms 118:26

Blessed is he who comes in the name of Yahweh

ULT

26 Blessed is he who comes in the name of Yahweh; we bless you from the house of Yahweh.

Here the priests begin to address the king.

he who comes in the name of Yahweh

Here the word “name” represents Yahweh’s power. Alternate translation: “the one who comes in the power of the Yahweh” (See: Metonymy)

we bless you from the house of Yahweh

Here the priests address the people.

the house of Yahweh

The word “house” refers to the temple. Alternate translation: “Yahweh’s temple” (See: Metonymy)

Psalms 118:27

he has given us light

The writer speaks of Yahweh blessing his people as if Yahweh were shining a light on them. Alternate translation: “he has blessed us” (See: Metaphor)

bind the sacrifice with cords

“tie the sacrifice with rope”

ULT

27 Yahweh is God, and he has given us light; bind the sacrifice with cords to the horns of the altar.

Psalms 118:28

You are my God

Here the writer begins to speak again and addresses Yahweh directly.

ULT

28 You are my God, and I will give thanks to you; you are my God; I will exalt you.

Psalms 118:29

ULT

29 Oh, give thanks to Yahweh; for he is good; for his covenant faithfulness endures forever.

Oh

This is an exclamation that should be translated with whatever exclamation of emphasis you have in your language to make it sound natural. (See: Exclamations)

give thanks to Yahweh; for he is good

“thank Yahweh because of the good things he does.” See how you translated this in Psalms 118:1.

his covenant faithfulness endures forever

The abstract noun “faithfulness” can be translated with an adjective. See how you translated this in Psalms 118:1-2. Alternate translation: “he remains faithful to his covenant forever” (See: Abstract Nouns)

Psalms 119

Psalm 119 General Notes

Formatting in this chapter

This is an alphabetic psalm with twenty-two groups of eight verses each all beginning with the same letter of the alphabet in the alphabetical order of the Hebrew alphabet.

Type of psalm

Psalm 119 is a wisdom psalm about the Law of God. (See: wise, wisdom and law, law of Moses, law of Yahweh, law of God)

Special concepts in this chapter

The Law

The author loved the law of God and was blessed by obeying it. (See: love, beloved and bless, blessed, blessing)

Psalms 119:1

General Information:

Parallelism is common in Hebrew poetry. (See: Poetry and Parallelism)

ULT

1 Blessed are those whose ways are blameless, who walk in the law of Yahweh.

Blessed are those

“How good it is for those”

those whose ways are blameless

How a person behaves is spoken of as “ways” or “paths.” Alternate translation: “those whose behavior is blameless” or “those whom no one can blame for doing wrong” (See: Metaphor)

who walk in the law of Yahweh

The way a person lives or behaves is spoken of as walking. Alternate translation: “who live according to the law of Yahweh” or “who obey the law of Yahweh.” This phrase clarifies the meaning of “whose ways are blameless” (See: Metaphor)

Psalms 119:2

who seek him with all their heart

To “seek” God means to want to know him.

with all their heart

This is an idiom which means intensely or sincerely. Alternate translation: “with all their being” or “with everything in them” or “sincerely” (See: Idiom)

ULT

2 Blessed are they who keep his solemn commands, who seek him with all their heart.

Psalms 119:3

General Information:

Most of this psalm is addressed to God, and the words “you” and “your” almost always refer to him.

ULT
3 They do no wrong; they walk in his ways.

They do no wrong

They do not disobey Yahweh.

they walk in his ways

“they walk in Yahweh’s ways.” Here their behavior is spoken of as “walking,” and the way God wants them to behave is spoken of as “his ways.” Alternate translation: “they behave as Yahweh wants them to”

Psalms 119:4

keep your instructions

“obey all the things that you have declared that we should do”

carefully observe them

This is to carefully know and understand the commandments and to obey those commandments.

ULT

4 You have commanded us to keep your instructions so that we should carefully observe them.

Psalms 119:5

I would be firmly established

The writer speaks of being established in God's commandments as if no one could physically make him move. (See: Metaphor)

observance of your statutes

"in obeying your statutes"

ULT

5 Oh, that I would be firmly established
in the observance of your statutes!

Psalms 119:6

I would not be put to shame

The writer does not want to be ashamed when he is in God's presence.

all your commandments

"all that you have commanded us"

ULT

6 Then I would not be put to shame
when I think of all your
commandments.

Psalms 119:7

an upright heart

“a sincere heart.” A person who is sincere will do what is right. The heart refers to the center of emotions in a person. See how you translated “uprightness” in Psalms 25:21. (See: Idiom and Metonymy)

ULT

7 I will give thanks to you with an upright heart when I learn your righteous decrees.

Psalms 119:8

your statutes

“Statutes” refers to God’s laws or commands.

ULT

8 I will observe your statutes; do not
leave me alone. BETH

Psalms 119:9

How can a young person keep his path pure?

This question is used to introduce a new value to the word of God. This rhetorical question can be translated as a statement. Alternate translation: “This is how a young person can keep his path pure” (See: Rhetorical Question)

ULT

9 How can a young person keep his path pure? By obeying your word.

keep his path pure

The writer compares living according to God’s law as a path kept clear of obstructions. (See: Metaphor)

Psalms 119:10

With my whole heart

This is an idiom. The heart refers to all of one's emotions, feelings, desires, and will. Alternate translation: "with all my being" or "with everything in me" or "sincerely" (See: Idiom)

ULT

10 With my whole heart I seek you; Do not let me stray from your commandments.

Do not let me stray from your commandments

Here to disobey God's commandments is described as straying off a path. Alternate translation: "Do not let me disobey your commandments" (See: Metaphor)

Psalms 119:11

I have stored up your word in my heart

“I have put your words in my heart.” This is a metaphor that means “I have memorized your word.” The heart is pictured as a container that can hold what people think. (See: Metaphor)

ULT

11 I have stored up your word in my heart so that I might not sin against you.

Psalms 119:12

(There are no notes for this verse.)

ULT

12 Blessed you are, Yahweh; teach me your statutes.

Psalms 119:13

(There are no notes for this verse.)

ULT

13 With my mouth I have declared all the righteous decrees that you have revealed.

Psalms 119:14

more than in all riches

“more than all the wealth”

ULT

14 I rejoice in the way of your covenant
decrees more than in all riches.

Psalms 119:15

I will meditate ... and pay attention

These are parallel thoughts that have similar meanings, which are repeated for emphasis. (See: Parallelism)

ULT

15 I will meditate on your instructions
and pay attention to your ways.

meditate on your instructions

“think carefully about what you have instructed us”

pay attention

This idiom refers to thinking clearly about what is being discussed. Alternate translation: “give careful thought” (See: Idiom)

Psalms 119:16

I delight

to take pleasure

ULT

16 I delight in your statutes; I will not
forget your word. GIMEL

Psalms 119:17

your servant

The writer called himself “your servant” to show his humility.

ULT

17 Be kind to your servant so that I may
live and keep your word.

Psalms 119:18

Open my eyes so that I may see

The author speaks of gaining understanding, knowledge and wisdom as being able to see. Alternate translation: Help me to understand” (See: Metaphor)

ULT

18 Open my eyes so that I may see marvelous things in your law.

marvelous things in your law

The author speaks of insight into the law as objects to marvel at. (See: Metaphor)

in your law

“in your instructions” or “in your commands”

Psalms 119:19

I am a foreigner in the land

ULT
19 I am a foreigner in the land; do not hide your commandments from me.

This could mean: (1) the writers speaks of his short life on earth as if he were a foreigner who would not stay long in the land. Alternate translation: “I am like a foreigner living a short time in the land” or (2) the writer’s ignorance of God’s law as if he were a foreigner who did not know the laws of the land. Alternate translation: “I am ignorant like a foreigner in the land” (See: Metaphor)

Psalms 119:20

My desires are crushed by the longing

The writer speaks of his desires being very strong as if they were in pain. Alternate translation: “My inner being strongly desires to know” or “My soul aches because I want so much to know” (See: Metaphor)

ULT

20 My desires are crushed by the longing to know your righteous decrees at all times.

Psalms 119:21

who are cursed

This could mean: (1) God will curse them or (2) they deserve God's punishment. Alternate translation: "who deserve your punishment"

who wander from your commandments

The writer speaks of disobeying God's commandments as if they were a path that can be wandered off from. Alternate translation: "who go away from the path of your commandments" or "who disobey your commandments" (See: Metaphor)

ULT

21 You rebuke the proud, who are cursed, who wander from your commandments.

Psalms 119:22

Spare me from

“Keep me from” or “Rescue me from”

ULT

22 Spare me from disgrace and humiliation, for I have obeyed your covenant decrees.

Psalms 119:23

Though rulers plot and slander me

“Though rulers make plans to harm me and say bad things about me”

ULT

23 Though rulers plot and slander me,
your servant meditates on your statutes.

Psalms 119:24

Your covenant decrees are my delight

“Your covenant decrees make me very happy.”

they are my counselors

God’s decrees are spoken of as if they were people. Alternate translation: “they are like wise counselors to me” or “they give me wise counsel” (See: Personification)

ULT

24 Your covenant decrees are my delight, and they are my counselors.
DALETH

Psalms 119:25

My life clings to the dust

This is an idiom. Possible meanings are that: (1) he thought that he would die soon, or (2) he lay in the dust because he was very sad, or (3) he realized that he desired the worthless things of the earth. (See: Idiom)

ULT

25 My life clings to the dust! Give me life by your word.

Give me life by your word

This is an idiom. Here “life” refers to purpose and significance, not just biological life. (See: Idiom)

by your word

“according to your promise”

Psalms 119:26

my ways

What a person does or how he behaves is spoken of as if it were a road or way. Alternate translation: “what I have done” (See: Metaphor)

ULT

26 I told you my ways, and you
answered me; teach me your statutes.

Psalms 119:27

wondrous teachings

“amazing teachings”

ULT

27 Make me understand the ways of your instructions, so that I can meditate on your wondrous teachings.

Psalms 119:28

with grief

“because I am so sad”

Strengthen me

“Make me strong.” This may refer to physical strength or spiritual strength.

ULT

28 I am overwhelmed with grief!
Strengthen me by your word.

Psalms 119:29

Turn from me the path of deceit

The word “path” here refers to a way of behaving. Alternate translation: “Keep me from following the path of deceit” or “Prevent me from being deceptive” (See: Metaphor)

deceit

This could mean: (1) “lying” or (2) “believing lies” or “following lies.”

ULT

29 Turn from me the path of deceit;
graciously teach me your law.

Psalms 119:30

the way of faithfulness

How a person behaves or acts is spoken as if it were a road or way. Alternate translation: “to be faithful to you” (See: Metaphor)

ULT

30 I have chosen the way of faithfulness;
I have always kept your righteous decrees before me.

Psalms 119:31

I cling to your covenant decrees

Holding tightly to them refers to being committed to obeying them. Alternate translation: “I hold tightly to your covenant decrees” or “I am committed to obeying your covenant decrees” (See: Metaphor)

covenant decrees

This refers to the law of Moses.

ULT

31 I cling to your covenant decrees;
Yahweh, do not let me be shamed.

Psalms 119:32

I will run in the path of your commandments

The writer speaks of being focused or committed to obeying God's commands as if one is running on a path. Alternate translation: "I will be committed to obey your commands" (See: Metaphor)

ULT

32 I will run in the path of your commandments, for you enlarge my heart to do so. HE

you enlarge my heart

This is an idiom. This could mean: (1) "you help me gain greater understanding of your commands" or (2) "you give me greater desire to obey your commands" (See: Idiom)

Psalms 119:33

your statutes

This is another way of describing the law of Moses.

to the end

This could mean: (1) “completely” or (2) “to the end of my life” or (3) “to the end of time.”

ULT

33 Teach me, Yahweh, the way of your statutes, and I will keep them to the end.

Psalms 119:34

keep your law

"obey your law"

I will observe it with all my heart

"I will surely observe your law" or "I am completely committed to doing what it says"

with all my heart

This is an idiom. Alternate translation: "with all my being" or "with everything in me" or "sincerely" (See: Idiom)

ULT

34 Give me understanding, and I will keep your law; I will observe it with all my heart.

Psalms 119:35

Guide me in the path of your commandments

“Guide me according to your commandments” or “Teach me to obey your commandments.” God’s commandments are compared to a path that a person walks in obedience to God. (See: Metaphor)

ULT

35 Guide me in the path of your commandments, for I delight to walk in it.

Psalms 119:36

Direct my heart toward

This is an idiom. The “heart” here refers to the will, desires, and choices that directs one’s life. Alternate translation: “Make me want” (See: Idiom)

ULT

36 Direct my heart toward your covenant decrees and away from unrighteous gain.

your covenant decrees

“to obey your covenant decrees.” This is referring to obeying the law of Moses.

unrighteous gain

“the desire for riches.” This is referring to wealth gained by illegal methods or wrongdoing towards others.

Psalms 119:37

Turn my eyes from looking at worthless things

This is a metaphor that refers to one desiring things that have no eternal value. (See: Metaphor)

revive me in your ways

“make me able to live as you wish me to live”

revive me

“make my life strong” or “give me strength”

ULT

37 Turn my eyes from looking at worthless things; revive me in your ways.

Psalms 119:38

Carry out for your servant your promise that you made to those who honor you

“Do for your servant what you promised to do for those who honor you”

ULT

38 Carry out for your servant your promise that you made to those who honor you.

your servant

The writer referred to himself as God’s servant to show his humility. Alternate translation: “me, your servant” (See: Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information)

Psalms 119:39

ULT
39 Take away the insults I dread, for your righteous judgments are good.

I dread

“I am very afraid of”

your righteous judgments are good

God judges rightly and his decisions are good. Alternate translation: “Your judgments are righteous and good” (See: Abstract Nouns)

Psalms 119:40

ULT

40 See, I have longed for your instructions; revive me in your righteousness. VAV

See

This refers to being aware of the situation. The focus is on knowledge or understanding, rather than just observing.

I have longed for your instructions

This could mean: (1) “I want very much to know your instructions” or (2) “I want very much to obey what you teach us to do.”

revive me in your righteousness

The word “righteousness” is an abstract noun and refers to being righteous. Alternate translation: “revive me because you are righteous” (See: Abstract Nouns)

revive me

This could mean: (1) “Keep me alive” or (2) “Make me strong.”

Psalms 119:41

your salvation

You may make clear the understood information. Alternate translation: “give me your salvation” or “save me” (See: Ellipsis)

ULT

41 Yahweh, give me your unfailing love
— your salvation, according to your promise;

Psalms 119:42

a reply

“an answer” or “a response”

ULT

42 then I will have a reply for the one
who mocks me, for I trust in your word.

Psalms 119:43

Do not take the word of truth from my mouth

Here the writer is represented by his “mouth.” This could mean: (1) “never prevent me from speaking the message about the truth” or (2) “never prevent me from speaking the true message.”

ULT

43 Do not take the word of truth from my mouth, for my hope is in your righteous decrees.

Psalms 119:44

I will observe

"I will obey"

ULT

44 I will observe your law continually,
forever and ever.

Psalms 119:45

I will walk securely

To walk securely is to live one’s life securely. Alternate translation: “I will live securely in God” (See: Metaphor and Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information)

ULT

45 I will walk securely, for I seek your instructions.

I seek your instructions

To “seek” is to perceive, or gain understanding of God’s instructions as if one can see them. (See: Idiom)

Psalms 119:46

solemn commands before kings

“serious commands to kings” or “instructions to kings”

ULT

46 I will speak of your solemn commands before kings and will not be ashamed.

Psalms 119:47

I delight in your commandments

This could mean: (1) “I find delight in studying your commandments” or (2) “I am delighted that I have the opportunity to study your commandments.”

ULT

47 I delight in your commandments,
which I love dearly.

Psalms 119:48

lift up my hands to

This is an idiom which means to honor, cherish or respect God's commandments. (See: Idiom)

ULT

48 I will lift up my hands to your commandments, which I love; I will meditate on your statutes. ZAYIN

Psalms 119:49

Call to mind your promise

“Remember your promise.” See how you translated this in Psalms 20:3

ULT

49 Call to mind your promise to your servant because you have given me hope.

Psalms 119:50

This is my comfort in my affliction: that your promise has kept me alive

This clause can be restructured. Alternate translation: “The reason for my comfort is that your promise has kept me alive in my affliction” (See: Sentence Structure)

ULT

50 This is my comfort in my affliction:
that your promise has kept me alive.

Psalms 119:51

The proud

This nominal adjective can be stated as an adjective. Alternate translation: “The proud people” (See: Nominal Adjectives)

ULT

51 The proud have scoffed at me, yet I have not turned away from your law.

scoffed at

to mock someone or something that is looked down on, doubted, or not honored

Psalms 119:52

from ancient times

This is a reference to when the decrees, the Law, were given to Moses many years before. (See: Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information)

ULT

52 I have thought about your righteous decrees from ancient times, Yahweh,
and I comfort myself.

Psalms 119:53

Hot anger has taken hold of me

This is an idiom. Anger is expressed as if it is a person that can grab another person. Alternate translation: “I have become very angry” (See: Idiom and Personification)

ULT

53 Hot anger has taken hold of me
because of the wicked who reject your
law.

Psalms 119:54

Your statutes have been my songs

“I have used your statutes as lyrics to my music” or “I have created songs from your statutes”

ULT

54 Your statutes have been my songs in the house where I temporarily live.

Psalms 119:55

I think about your name

Here the word “name” represents Yahweh himself. Alternate translation: “I think about you, Yahweh” (See: Metonymy)

ULT

55 I think about your name during the night, Yahweh, and I keep your law.

I keep your law

This is an idiom which means to obey the law. Alternate translation: “I obey your law” (See: Idiom)

Psalms 119:56

my practice

“my habit”

I have observed your instructions

This is an idiom which means to follow or to obey those instructions. Alternate translation: “I have obeyed your instructions” (See: Idiom)

ULT

56 This has been my practice because I have observed your instructions. HETH

Psalms 119:57

Yahweh is my portion

This means Yahweh is all he wants. Just as the Levites did not receive vast territories of land for the Lord was to be their portion so the writer claims Yahweh as the satisfier of his needs. (See: Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information)

ULT

57 Yahweh is my portion; I have determined to observe your words.

Psalms 119:58

(There are no notes for this verse.)

ULT

58 I earnestly request your favor with my whole heart; be merciful to me, as your word promised.

Psalms 119:59

turned my feet

Here “feet” represent the whole person. To repent and choose to obey God’s laws is like turning one’s feet on a path to head in another direction. Alternate translation: “changed my direction” (See: Synecdoche and Metaphor)

ULT

59 I examined my ways and turned my feet to your covenant decrees.

Psalms 119:60

I hurry and do not delay

The writer expresses the same idea both positively and negatively in order to emphasize the urgency with which he obeys Yahweh's commands. (See: Doublet)

ULT

60 I hurry and do not delay to keep your commandments.

Psalms 119:61

The cords of the wicked have ensnared me

In this metaphor, wicked or evil people tried to cause the writer to sin like a hunter seeking to catch an animal with a trap. Alternate translation: “My enemies have tried to catch me” (See: Metaphor)

ULT

61 The cords of the wicked have ensnared me; I have not forgotten your law.

Psalms 119:62

(There are no notes for this verse.)

ULT

62 At midnight I rise to give thanks to
you because of your righteous decrees.

Psalms 119:63

I am a companion of all who honor you

“I am a friend of all who honor you”

ULT

63 I am a companion of all who honor you, to all who observe your instructions.

Psalms 119:64

The earth, Yahweh, is full of your covenant faithfulness

ULT

64 The earth, Yahweh, is full of your covenant faithfulness; teach me your statutes. TETH

People everywhere in the world being able to see evidence of Yahweh's covenant faithfulness is spoken of as if his covenant faithfulness filled the earth. The abstract noun "covenant faithfulness" can be translated as an adjective. See how you translated a similar phrase in Psalms 33:5. Alternate translation: "People everywhere on earth can see that you, Yahweh, are faithful to your covenant" or "Throughout the earth, there is evidence that you, Yahweh, are faithful to your covenant" (See: Metaphor and Abstract Nouns)

Psalms 119:65

ULT

65 You have done good to your servant,
Yahweh, by means of your word.

to your servant

The writer refers to himself as “your servant.” Alternate translation: “to me, your servant” or “to me” (See: First, Second or Third Person)

by means of your word

This is an idiom. “Your word” refers to the promises Yahweh has made to the writer. Alternate translation: “as you have promised” (See: Idiom)

Psalms 119:66

Teach me proper discernment and understanding, for I have believed in your commandments

ULT

66 Teach me proper discernment and understanding, for I have believed in your commandments.

Some languages may require change in logical progression.
Alternate translation: “Since I have believed in your commandments, teach me proper discernment and understanding” (See: Sentence Structure and Writing Styles)

Psalms 119:67

Before I was afflicted

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: “Before you afflicted me” or “Before you punished me” (See: Active or Passive)

ULT

67 Before I was afflicted I went astray,
but now I observe your word.

I went astray

Disobeying God is spoken of as if the person walked on the wrong path. Alternate translation: “I disobeyed you” (See: Metaphor)

I observe your word

Here “word” represents commandments. Alternate translation: “I obey your commandments” (See: Metonymy)

Psalms 119:68

(There are no notes for this verse.)

ULT

68 You are good, and you are one who does good; teach me your statutes.

Psalms 119:69

ULT

69 The arrogant have smeared me with lies, but I keep your instructions with my whole heart.

The arrogant

This nominal adjective can be stated as an adjective. Alternate translation: “Arrogant people” (See: Nominal Adjectives)

smeared me with lies

People telling many lies about a person is spoken of as if they made the person dirty by spreading lies over him. (See: Metaphor)

with my whole heart

Here “heart” represents a person’s will. Alternate translation: “with complete commitment” or “completely” (See: Metonymy)

Psalms 119:70

Their hearts are hardened

Here “hearts” represents the people’s wills. A person being stubborn is spoken of as if their hearts or wills were hard like a rock. Alternate translation: “They are stubborn” (See: Metonymy and Metaphor)

ULT

70 Their hearts are hardened, but I delight in your law.

Psalms 119:71

(There are no notes for this verse.)

ULT

71 It is good for me that I have suffered
so that I would learn your statutes.

Psalms 119:72

Instruction from your mouth is

Here “mouth” represents what God says. Alternate translation: “The instructions you have spoken are” or “Your instructions are” (See: Metonymy)

ULT

72 Instruction from your mouth is more precious to me than thousands of pieces of gold and silver. YOD

than thousands of pieces of gold and silver

This can be stated more generally. Alternate translation: “than a large amount of money” or “than great wealth”

Psalms 119:73

Your hands have made and fashioned me

God creating a person is spoken of as if God used his hands to shape the person the way someone may shape clay into an object. (See: Metaphor)

ULT

73 Your hands have made and fashioned me; give me understanding so that I may learn your commandments.

Your hands

Here “hands” represents God’s power or action. Alternate translation: “You” (See: Metonymy)

Psalms 119:74

because I find hope in your word

“because I trust what you say” or “I confidently believe what you say”

ULT

74 Those who honor you will be glad when they see me because I find hope in your word.

Psalms 119:75

in faithfulness you afflicted me

God promises to reward the righteous and punish wrongdoers, so he is faithful to do what he says he will. The abstract noun “faithfulness” can be translated with an adjective. Alternate translation: “you punished me because you are faithful” (See: Abstract Nouns)

ULT

75 I know, Yahweh, that your decrees are just, and that in faithfulness you afflicted me.

Psalms 119:76

Let your covenant faithfulness comfort me

The abstract noun “faithfulness” can be translated with an adjective. Alternate translation: “Comfort me by showing me that you are faithful to your covenant” (See: Abstract Nouns)

ULT

76 Let your covenant faithfulness comfort me, as you promised your servant.

your servant

The writer refers to himself as “your servant.” Alternate translation: “me, your servant” or “me” (See: First, Second or Third Person)

Psalms 119:77

(There are no notes for this verse.)

ULT

77 Show me compassion so that I may live, for your law is my delight.

Psalms 119:78

Let the proud be put to shame

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: “Put the proud to shame” or “Cause those who are proud to be ashamed” (See: Active or Passive)

ULT

78 Let the proud be put to shame, for they have slandered me; but I will meditate on your instructions.

the proud

This nominal adjective can be stated as an adjective. Alternate translation: “proud people” or “those who are proud” (See: Nominal Adjectives)

Psalms 119:79

turn to me

People returning in friendship to the writer is spoken of as if they physically turn towards him. Alternate translation: “come to me” or “unite with me” (See: Metaphor)

ULT

79 May those who honor you turn to me,
those who know your covenant decrees.

those who know your covenant decrees

This could mean: (1) this further describes those who honor God or (2) this indicates the purpose for those who honor God to return to the writer. Alternate translation: “so that they may learn your covenant decrees” (See: Connecting Words and Phrases)

Psalms 119:80

May my heart be blameless

Here “heart” represents a person’s thoughts and motives. Alternate translation: “May I be blameless” (See: Metonymy)

I may not be put to shame

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: “I may not be ashamed” (See: Active or Passive)

ULT

80 May my heart be blameless with respect to your statutes so that I may not be put to shame. KAPH

Psalms 119:81

I hope in your word

“I confidently trust in what you say”

ULT

81 I faint with longing that you might rescue me! I hope in your word.

Psalms 119:82

My eyes long to see your promise

Here “eyes” represents the whole person. Alternate translation: “I wait and wait for you to do what you promised to do” (See: Synecdoche)

ULT

82 My eyes long to see your promise;
when will you comfort me?

Psalms 119:83

I have become like a wineskin in the smoke

A wineskin is ruined when it hangs for a long time in a smoke-filled place. The writer compares himself to a wineskin that has been ruined by smoke to emphasize that he feels useless. (See: Simile)

ULT

83 For I have become like a wineskin in the smoke; I do not forget your statutes.

Psalms 119:84

How long must your servant endure this; when will you judge those who persecute me?

ULT

84 How long must your servant endure this; when will you judge those who persecute me?

The writer uses a question to request God to punish those who persecute him. This rhetorical question can be translated as a statement. Alternate translation: “Please do not make wait any longer. Punish those who persecute me.” (See: Rhetorical Question)

must your servant

The writer refers to himself as “your servant.” Alternate translation: “must I, your servant” or “must I” (See: First, Second or Third Person)

Psalms 119:85

The proud have dug pits for me

The proud are seeking to capture the writer or cause him to do wrong. This is spoken of as if they were hunters digging holes to trap the writer like an animal. (See: Metaphor)

ULT

85 The proud have dug pits for me,
defying your law.

The proud

This nominal adjective can be stated as an adjective. Alternate translation: “Proud people” or “Those who are proud” (See: Nominal Adjectives)

Psalms 119:86

(There are no notes for this verse.)

ULT

86 All your commandments are reliable;
those people persecute me wrongfully;
help me.

Psalms 119:87

They have almost made an end to me on earth

This is a polite way of speaking about someone killing someone else. Alternate translation: “They have almost killed me” (See: Euphemism)

ULT

87 They have almost made an end to me on earth, but I do not reject your instructions.

Psalms 119:88

By your steadfast love

“According to your steadfast love.” The phrase “steadfast love” or “faithfulness” can be stated as an adverb. Alternate translation: “because you faithfully love me” (See: Abstract Nouns)

ULT

88 By your steadfast love, keep me alive,
so that I may obey your commands.
LAMEDH

Psalms 119:89

your word stands forever

“what you have said will be true forever”

your word is established firmly in heaven

ULT

89 Yahweh, your word stands forever;
your word is established firmly in heaven.

This speaks about what God has said as if it were an object that stands firmly upright. Alternate translation: “what you have said will be true in heaven forever” (See: Metaphor)

Psalms 119:90

for all generations

“for all future generations.” This is an idiom that means “forever.” (See: Idiom)

ULT

90 Your faithfulness lasts for all generations; you have established the earth, and it remains.

Psalms 119:91

all things are your servants

All created things are spoken of as if they were persons who can serve God. Alternate translation: “all things serve you” or “all things obey your commands” (See: Personification)

ULT

91 All things continue to this day, just as you said in your righteous decrees, for all things are your servants.

Psalms 119:92

(There are no notes for this verse.)

ULT

92 If your law had not been my delight, I
would have perished in my affliction.

Psalms 119:93

I will never forget

This can be stated in positive form. Alternate translation: “I will always remember” (See: Litotes)

for through them you have kept me alive

It is implied that the writer obeys God’s instructions. The full meaning of this statement can be made explicit. Alternate translation: “for you have kept me alive because I obey them” (See: Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information)

ULT

93 I will never forget your instructions,
for through them you have kept me
alive.

Psalms 119:94

for I seek your instructions

Trying hard to obey God’s instructions is spoken of as if instructions were an object for which a person must search. (See: Metaphor)

ULT

94 I am yours; save me, for I seek your instructions.

Psalms 119:95

I will seek to understand

“I will try hard to understand”

ULT

95 The wicked prepare to destroy me,
but I will seek to understand your
covenant decrees.

Psalms 119:96

everything has its limits

“all things have an end”

but your commandments are broad, beyond limits

God’s commandments always being true and perfect is spoken of as if God’s commandments were an object that is so wide that it never ends. Alternate translation: “but your commandments are without limits” or “but your commandments are eternal” (See: Metaphor)

ULT

96 I have seen that everything has its limits, but your commandments are broad, beyond limits. MEM

Psalms 119:97

(There are no notes for this verse.)

ULT

97 Oh how I love your law! It is my meditation all day long.

Psalms 119:98

your commandments are always with me

Constantly thinking about God's commandments is spoken of as if the commandments were an object that the writer keeps with him always. (See: Metaphor)

ULT

98 Your commandments make me wiser than my enemies, for your commandments are always with me.

Psalms 119:99

(There are no notes for this verse.)

ULT

99 I have more understanding than all
my teachers, for I meditate on your
covenant decrees.

Psalms 119:100

(There are no notes for this verse.)

ULT

100 I understand more than those older than I am; this is because I have kept your instructions.

Psalms 119:101

I have kept my feet back from every evil path

Avoiding doing what is evil is spoken of as if it were avoiding walking on paths that are evil. Alternate translation: “I have avoided doing what is evil” (See: Metaphor)

ULT

101 I have kept my feet back from every evil path so that I might observe your word.

kept my feet

Here “feet” represents the whole person. Alternate translation: “kept myself” (See: Synecdoche)

observe your word

“obey your word” or “observe your commands”

Psalms 119:102

I have not turned aside from your righteous decrees

Continuing to obey God’s righteous decrees is spoken of as if the writer has not physically turned away from the righteous decrees. This can be stated in positive form. Alternate translation: “I always obey your righteous decrees” (See: Metaphor and Litotes)

ULT

102 I have not turned aside from your righteous decrees, for you have instructed me.

Psalms 119:103

How sweet are your words to my taste, yes, sweeter than honey to my mouth!

The writer delighting in what God says is spoken of as if God's words were food that tasted sweet to the writer. Alternate translation: "Your words are good and delightful!" (See: Metaphor)

ULT

103 How sweet are your words to my taste, yes, sweeter than honey to my mouth!

Psalms 119:104

I gain discernment

The abstract noun “discernment” can be stated as a verb. Alternate translation: “I learn to discern what is right” (See: Abstract Nouns)

therefore I hate every false way

Evil behavior is spoken of as if it were a false way or road. (See: Metaphor)

ULT

104 Through your instructions I gain discernment; therefore I hate every false way. NUN

Psalms 119:105

Your word is a lamp to my feet and a light for my path

ULT

105 Your word is a lamp to my feet and a light for my path.

These two phrases have similar meanings. They speak about God telling a person how to live as if the person were walking on a path and God's words were a light that helps the person see where to go. Alternate translation: "Your words tell me how to live my life" (See: Doublet and Metaphor)

Your word

Here "word" represents all that God communicates to people.

Psalms 119:106

(There are no notes for this verse.)

ULT

106 I have sworn and have confirmed it,
that I will observe your righteous decrees.

Psalms 119:107

as you have promised in your word

“as you have promised to do”

ULT

107 I am very afflicted; keep me alive,
Yahweh, as you have promised in your
word.

Psalms 119:108

freewill offerings of my mouth

The writer speaks of his prayer as if it were a sacrifice that he is offering to God. Alternate translation: “my prayer as a sacrifice to you” (See: Metaphor)

of my mouth

Here “mouth” represents the whole person. (See: Synecdoche)

ULT

108 Yahweh, please accept the freewill offerings of my mouth, and teach me your righteous decrees.

Psalms 119:109

My life is always in my hand

This is an idiom that means the writer's life is always in danger. Alternate translation: "My enemies are often trying to kill me" (See: Idiom)

ULT

109 My life is always in my hand, yet I do not forget your law.

I do not forget your law

This can be stated in positive form. Alternate translation: "I always remember your laws" (See: Litotes)

Psalms 119:110

The wicked have set a snare for me

Wicked people trying to capture and kill the writer is spoken of as if they were hunters setting a trap to catch an animal. (See: Metaphor)

ULT

110 The wicked have set a snare for me,
but I have not strayed from your instructions.

The wicked

This nominal adjective can be stated as an adjective. Alternate translation: “Wicked people” (See: Nominal Adjectives)

I have not strayed from your instructions

Not disobeying God’s instructions is spoken of as if the writer has not walked away from God’s instructions. This can be stated in positive form. Alternate translation: “I obey your instructions” (See: Metaphor and Litotes)

Psalms 119:111

I claim your covenant decrees as my heritage forever

ULT

111 I claim your covenant decrees as my heritage forever, for they are the joy of my heart.

The writer always cherishing and obeying God's decrees is spoken of as if the decrees are land or a possession that the writer will inherit. Alternate translation: "Your laws will belong to me forever" or "Your covenant decrees are like a heritage I will keep forever" (See: Metaphor)

they are the joy of my heart

Here "heart" represents the whole person. Alternate translation: "they make me joyful" or "I delight in them" (See: Synecdoche)

Psalms 119:112

My heart is set on obeying

Here “heart” represents the writer’s will. The phrase “heart is set” is an idiom. It is a way of saying the writer is determined. Alternate translation: “I am determined to obey” (See: Metonymy and Idiom)

ULT

112 My heart is set on obeying your statutes forever to the very end.
SAMEKH

to the very end

This could mean: (1) “every one of them” (2) “to the very end of my life” or (3) “to the very end of time”

Psalms 119:113

who have a double mind

A person who is not sincere and not fully committed to obeying God is spoken of as if the person has two minds. Alternate translation: “who are not completely committed to obeying you” or “who are insincere” (See: Metaphor)

ULT

113 I hate those who have a double mind, but I love your law.

Psalms 119:114

my hiding place

God making the writer safe is spoken of as if God were a place where the writer could go and hide. (See: Metaphor)

ULT

114 You are my hiding place and my shield; I hope in your word.

my shield

God protecting the writer is spoken of as if God were the writer's shield. (See: Metaphor)

I hope in your word

Here "wait" means to wait expectantly. This has the idea of hope and trust. Alternate translation: "I trust in your word"

your word

Here "word" represents what God communicates to people.

Psalms 119:115

(There are no notes for this verse.)

ULT

115 Get away from me, you evil doers, so that I may observe the commandments of my God.

Psalms 119:116

Sustain me by your word

“Give me strength as you said you would” or “Enable me to be strong as you promised”

and not be ashamed of my hope

Here “my hope” represents the writer’s trust in God and his promises. This can be stated as a complete sentence. Alternate translation: “Do not disappoint me” or “Do not cause me shame by not doing what you promised to do”

ULT

116 Sustain me by your word so that I may live and not be ashamed of my hope.

Psalms 119:117

Support me

“Help me” or “Strengthen me”

ULT

117 Support me, and I will be safe; I will always meditate on your statutes.

Psalms 119:118

those people are deceptive and unreliable

This could mean: (1) “those people lie and no one can trust them” or (2) “those people make deceitful plans but they will fail”

ULT

118 You reject all those who stray from your statutes, for those people are deceptive and unreliable.

Psalms 119:119

You remove all the wicked of the earth like slag

Slag is the waste or undesired leftovers in the process of refining gold or other metals. Yahweh removes the wicked people as if they were trash. (See: Simile)

ULT

119 You remove all the wicked of the earth like slag; therefore I love your solemn commands.

the wicked

This nominal adjective can be stated as an adjective. Alternate translation: “the wicked people” (See: Nominal Adjectives)

like slag

“like trash” or “like waste”

Psalms 119:120

My body trembles in fear of you

Here “body” represents the whole person. Alternate translation: “I shake because I fear you” (See: Synecdoche)

I am afraid of your righteous decrees

It is implied that the writer is afraid of God’s righteous decrees because the writer knows that God punishes those who disobey his decrees. You can make the full meaning of this statement explicit. (See: Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information)

ULT

120 My body trembles in fear of you, and
I am afraid of your righteous decrees.
AYIN

Psalms 119:121

do not abandon me to my oppressors

“do not allow people to oppress me”

ULT

121 I do what is just and right; do not abandon me to my oppressors.

Psalms 119:122

Guarantee the welfare of your servant

The writer speaks about himself as “your servant.” Alternate translation: “Guarantee my welfare” or “Help and protect me, your servant” (See: First, Second or Third Person)

ULT

122 Guarantee the welfare of your servant; do not let the proud oppress me.

the proud

This nominal adjective can be stated as an adjective. Alternate translation: “those who are proud” or “proud people” (See: Nominal Adjectives)

Psalms 119:123

My eyes grow tired as I wait

Here “eyes” represents the whole person. Alternate translation: “I grow tired because I wait and wait” (See: Synecdoche)

ULT

123 My eyes grow tired as I wait for your salvation and for your righteous word.

for your salvation and for your righteous word

The abstract noun “salvation” can be stated as a verb. Alternate translation: “for you to save me as you promised to do” (See: Abstract Nouns)

your righteous word

“your righteous promise”

Psalms 119:124

Show your servant

The writer speaks about himself as “your servant.” Alternate translation: “Show me” or “Show me, your servant” (See: First, Second or Third Person)

ULT

124 Show your servant your covenant faithfulness, and teach me your statutes.

your covenant faithfulness

The abstract noun “faithfulness” can be stated as an adverb or adjective. Alternate translation: “that you faithfully love me” or “that you are faithful to your covenant” (See: Abstract Nouns)

Psalms 119:125

give me understanding

The abstract noun “understanding” can be stated as a verb. Alternate translation: “enable me to understand what you want me to know” (See: Abstract Nouns)

ULT

125 I am your servant; give me understanding so that I may know your covenant decrees.

Psalms 119:126

It is time for Yahweh to act

The writer is speaking to Yahweh in the third person. This can be stated in second person. Alternate translation: “It is time for you to act, Yahweh” (See: First, Second or Third Person)

ULT

126 It is time for Yahweh to act, for people have broken your law.

people have broken your law

This is an idiom. Here “have broken” means “disobeyed.” This is a way of saying the people have disobeyed God’s law. (See: Idiom)

Psalms 119:127

(There are no notes for this verse.)

ULT

127 Truly I love your commandments
more than gold, more than fine gold.

Psalms 119:128

I carefully follow all your instructions

A person carefully obeying all of God's instructions is spoken of as if as if the instructions were leading a person and that person follows behind. Alternate translation: I carefully obey all of your instructions" (See: Metaphor)

ULT

128 Therefore I carefully follow all your instructions, and I hate every path of falsehood. PE

every path of falsehood

People doing what is evil is spoken of as if they are walking on the wrong path. Alternate translation: "all the bad ways some people live" (See: Metaphor)

Psalms 119:129

(There are no notes for this verse.)

ULT

129 Your rules are wonderful, that is why I obey them.

Psalms 119:130

The unfolding of your words gives light

The writer speaks of Yahweh's words as if those words were fabric that is folded, and of the person who explains Yahweh's words as if they are unfolding that fabric. Alternate translation: "The explanation of your words gives light" or "When someone explains your words, they give light" (See: Metaphor)

ULT

130 The unfolding of your words gives light; it gives understanding to the untrained.

The unfolding of your words gives light

The writer speaks of Yahweh's words giving wisdom to a person as if his words were shining a light on them. Alternate translation: "The explanation of your words gives people wisdom" (See: Metaphor)

Psalms 119:131

I open my mouth and pant, for I long for your commandments

The writer speaks of his desire for Yahweh's commandments as if he were a dog panting for water. Alternate translation: "I earnestly long for your commandments" (See: Metaphor)

ULT

131 I open my mouth and pant, for I long for your commandments.

Psalms 119:132

Turn to me

To turn towards someone means to pay attention to that person. Alternate translation: “Pay attention to me” (See: Symbolic Action)

love your name

Here the word “name” represents Yahweh himself. Alternate translation: “love you” (See: Metonymy)

ULT

132 Turn to me and have mercy on me,
as you always do for those who love
your name.

Psalms 119:133

Direct my footsteps

Here the word “footsteps” represents the writer as he is walking. He speaks of the way he lives, or his conduct, as if he were walking on a path. Alternate translation: “Direct me” or “Teach me how to live” (See: Synecdoche and Metaphor)

ULT

133 Direct my footsteps by your word;
do not let any sin rule me.

do not let any sin rule me

The writer speaks of sin as if it were a person who has authority over him. This could mean: (1) “do not let me habitually commit any sin” or (2) “do not let sinful men rule me” (See: Personification)

Psalms 119:134

Redeem me from human oppression

The word “oppression” can be translated as a verb. Alternate translation: “Save me from people who oppress others” (See: Abstract Nouns)

ULT

134 Redeem me from human oppression
so that I may observe your instructions.

Psalms 119:135

Let your face shine on your servant

The writer speaks of Yahweh acting favorably towards him as if Yahweh's face shone a light on him. Alternate translation: "Act favorably towards your servant" (See: Metaphor)

ULT

135 Let your face shine on your servant,
and teach me your statutes.

Psalms 119:136

Streams of tears

The writer speaks of his many tears as if they were streams of water. Alternate translation: “Many tears” (See: Metaphor)

observe your law

“obey your law”

ULT

136 Streams of tears run down from my eyes because people do not observe your law. TSADHE

Psalms 119:137

(There are no notes for this verse.)

ULT

137 You are righteous, Yahweh, and your decrees are fair.

Psalms 119:138

covenant decrees

Other possible meanings are “testimonies” or “laws.” See how you translated this in Psalms 78:5.

ULT

138 You have given your covenant decrees righteously and faithfully.

Psalms 119:139

Anger has destroyed me

This is an idiom. The phrase is an exaggeration for “I am extremely angry.” (See: Idiom and Hyperbole)

ULT

139 Anger has destroyed me because my adversaries forget your words.

Psalms 119:140

has been tested very much

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: “I have tested your word many times” (See: Active or Passive)

ULT

140 Your word has been tested very much, and your servant loves it.

your servant loves

The writer speaks of himself as if he were another person. Alternate translation: “I, your servant, love” or “I love” (See: Pronouns)

Psalms 119:141

I am ... despised

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: “People despise me” (See: Active or Passive)

ULT

141 I am insignificant and despised, yet I
do not forget your instructions.

Psalms 119:142

(There are no notes for this verse.)

ULT

142 Your justice is forever right, and your law is trustworthy.

Psalms 119:143

distress and anguish have found me

The psalmist speaks of distress and anguish as if they were people. Alternate translation: “I have become distressed and anguished” or “my body and my mind are suffering” (See: Personification)

ULT

143 Though distress and anguish have found me, your commandments are still my delight.

Psalms 119:144

(There are no notes for this verse.)

ULT

144 Your covenant decrees are righteous
forever; give me understanding that I
may live. QOPH

Psalms 119:145

with my whole heart

The psalmist speaks of his whole being as if it were only his heart. Alternate translation: “completely” (See: Synecdoche)

ULT

145 I cried out with my whole heart,
“Answer me, Yahweh, I will keep your statutes.

Psalms 119:146

covenant decrees

Other possible meanings are “testimonies” or “laws.”See how you translated this in Psalms 78:5.

ULT

146 I call to you; save me, and I will observe your covenant decrees.”

Psalms 119:147

dawn of the morning

“before the sun first appears”

ULT

147 I rise before the dawn of the morning and cry for help. I hope in your words.

Psalms 119:148

My eyes are open before the night watches change

This is an idiom. In Hebrew culture, the night was usually divided into three “watches” or periods. Alternate translation: “I am awake all night” (See: Idiom)

ULT

148 My eyes are open before the night watches change so that I might meditate on your word.

Psalms 119:149

in your covenant faithfulness

The abstract noun “faithfulness” can be translated with an adjective. Alternate translation: “because you are faithful to your covenant” (See: Abstract Nouns)

ULT

149 Hear my voice in your covenant faithfulness; keep me alive, Yahweh, as you have promised in your righteous decrees.

Psalms 119:150

they are far from your law

“they have strayed from your law” or “they do not pay any attention to your laws”

ULT

150 Those who are persecuting me are coming closer to me, but they are far from your law.

Psalms 119:151

all your commandments are trustworthy

“I can trust your commandments”

ULT

151 You are near, Yahweh, and all your commandments are trustworthy.

Psalms 119:152

covenant decrees

Other possible meanings are “testimonies” or “laws.” See how you translated this in Psalms 78:5

set them in place

The psalmist speaks of Yahweh’s commands as if they were posts set in the ground. Alternate translation: “given them for people to obey” (See: Metaphor)

ULT

152 Long ago I learned from your covenant decrees that you had set them in place forever. RESH

Psalms 119:153

Look on my affliction

The psalmist speaks of affliction as if it were an object that people could see. Alternate translation: “Look at how much I am suffering” (See: Metaphor)

ULT

153 Look on my affliction and help me,
for I do not forget your law.

Psalms 119:154

Plead my cause

“Defend me against those who accuse me”

keep me

“protect my life” or “give me life”

ULT

154 Plead my cause and redeem me;
keep me, as you have promised in your word.

Psalms 119:155

Salvation is far from the wicked

God not saving a person is spoken of as if salvation were far from the person. The abstract noun “Salvation” can be stated as “save.” Alternate translation: “You will certainly not save the wicked” (See: Metaphor and Abstract Nouns)

ULT

155 Salvation is far from the wicked, for they do not love your statutes.

Psalms 119:156

Great are your merciful actions

Here “great” means “many.” Alternate translation: “You have shown mercy to people many times” or “You have done many merciful things”

as you always do

Another possible meaning is “because you do what is just.”

ULT

156 Great are your merciful actions,
Yahweh; keep me alive, as you always do.

Psalms 119:157

My persecutors

“Those who persecute me”

I have not turned from

This is an idiom. “I have not stopped obeying” or “I have not stopped believing” (See: Idiom)

covenant decrees

Other possible meanings are “testimonies” or “laws.” See how this is translated in Psalms 78:5.

ULT

157 My persecutors and my foes are many, yet I have not turned from your covenant decrees.

Psalms 119:158

the treacherous

The adjective “treacherous” can be translated as a noun phrase. Alternate translation: “treacherous people” or “those who betray me” or “my enemies” (See: Nominal Adjectives)

do not keep

“do not obey”

ULT

158 I view the treacherous with disgust
because they do not keep your word.

Psalms 119:159

See

“Look at me so you can see”

by your covenant faithfulness

ULT

159 See how I love your instructions;
keep me alive, Yahweh, as you have
promised by your covenant faithfulness.

The abstract noun “faithfulness” can be translated with an adjective. Alternate translation: “because you are faithful to your covenant” (See: Abstract Nouns)

Psalms 119:160

The essence of your word is truth

“Your word is completely true” or “Your word can be trusted”

ULT

160 The essence of your word is truth;
every one of your righteous decrees
lasts forever. SHIN

Psalms 119:161

my heart stands in awe of your word

The psalmist speaks of the heart as if it could be amazed. The heart is a synecdoche for the whole person. Alternate translation: “I am amazed at your word” (See: Synecdoche and Personification)

ULT

161 Princes persecute me without cause,
but my heart stands in awe of your
word.

Psalms 119:162

plunder

This could mean: (1) things that soldiers and robbers take from those they have defeated in battle or (2) things of great value or "treasure."

ULT

162 I rejoice at your word like one who finds great plunder.

Psalms 119:163

hate and despise

These two words mean almost the same thing. Alternate translation: “hate very strongly” (See: Doublet)

ULT

163 I hate and despise falsehood, but I love your law.

falsehood

Possible meanings are this is a metonym for: (1) “people who lie” or (2) “the false words that people say.” (See: Metonymy)

Psalms 119:164

(There are no notes for this verse.)

ULT

164 Seven times a day I praise you
because of your righteous decrees.

Psalms 119:165

nothing makes them stumble

This could mean: (1) “nothing makes them do wrong” or (2) “nothing causes them trouble.”

ULT

165 Great peace they have, those who love your law; nothing makes them stumble.

Psalms 119:166

(There are no notes for this verse.)

ULT

166 I hope for your salvation, Yahweh,
and I obey your commandments.

Psalms 119:167

I observe your solemn commands

“I obey your solemn commands”

solemn commands

Other possible meanings are “testimonies” or “laws.” See how you translated this in Psalms 119:2.

ULT

167 I observe your solemn commands,
and I love them greatly.

Psalms 119:168

I keep your instructions

“I obey your instructions”

ULT

168 I keep your instructions and your solemn commands, for you are aware of everything I do. TAV

Psalms 119:169

give me understanding into your word

The psalmist speaks of the ability to understand as if it were a solid object. Alternate translation: “help me understand your word” (See: Metaphor)

ULT

169 Listen to my cry for help, Yahweh;
give me understanding into your word.

Psalms 119:170

May my plea come before you

The psalmist speaks of the words he says in prayer as if they were people who want to speak to a king. Alternate translation: “May you hear my prayer” (See: Metaphor)

ULT

170 May my plea come before you; help me, as you have promised in your word.

Psalms 119:171

May my lips pour out praise

The psalmist speaks of his lips as if they were a container and his praise a liquid that could be poured out. Here the word “lips” is a synecdoche which represents the whole person. Alternate translation: “I desire to praise you much” (See: Metaphor and Synecdoche)

ULT

171 May my lips pour out praise, for you teach me your statutes.

Psalms 119:172

my tongue sing

The psalmist speaks of his tongue either: (1) as if it were a person or (2) as a synecdoche for his whole being. Alternate translation: “me sing” (See: Metaphor and Synecdoche)

ULT

172 Let my tongue sing about your word, for all your commandments are right.

Psalms 119:173

May your hand help me

The hand is a synecdoche for the whole person. Alternate translation: “Please help me” (See: Synecdoche)

have chosen

“have chosen to obey”

ULT

173 May your hand help me, for I have chosen your instructions.

Psalms 119:174

for your rescue

“you to rescue me”

your law is my delight

The abstract noun “delight” can be stated as a verb. “I very much enjoy obeying your law” (See: Abstract Nouns)

ULT

174 I long for your rescue, Yahweh, and your law is my delight.

Psalms 119:175

may your righteous decrees help me

The psalmist speaks of Yahweh's decrees as if they were a person who could help him. Alternate translation: "may I listen to your righteous decrees and so become wise and strong" (See: Metaphor)

ULT

175 May I live and praise you, and may your righteous decrees help me.

Psalms 119:176

I have wandered off like a lost sheep

The psalmist compares his disobedience to Yahweh to a sheep that has wandered away from the flock. Alternate translation: “I have left your way like a sheep that has left its flock” (See: Simile)

seek your servant

“because I am your servant, come and search for me”

ULT

176 I have wandered off like a lost sheep; seek your servant, for I have not forgotten your commandments.

Psalms 120

Psalm 120 General Notes

Type of psalm

Psalm 120 is a psalm of deliverance from liars. (See: deliver, hand over, turn over, release, rescue)

Special concepts in this chapter

Fighting

The author did not want to fight, but the people he lived with wanted to fight him.

Psalms 120:1

General Information:

Parallelism is common in Hebrew poetry. (See: Poetry and Parallelism)

In my distress

“In my trouble” or “When I was in trouble”

ULT

1 In my distress I called out to Yahweh,
and he answered me.

Psalms 120:2

Rescue my life

Here the word “life” represents the person. Alternate translation: “Rescue me” (See: Metonymy)

those who lie with their lips and deceive with their tongues

Here the phrases “their lips” and “their tongues” represent the people who speak lies and deceit. Alternate translation: “those who lie to me and try to deceive me” (See: Synecdoche)

ULT

2 Rescue my life, Yahweh, from those who lie with their lips and deceive with their tongues.

Psalms 120:3

How will he punish you, and what more will he do to you, you who have a lying tongue?

ULT

[3] How will he punish you, and what more will he do to you, you who have a lying tongue?

The writer asks this as a leading question to explain what God will do to liars. This question can be translated as a statement. Alternate translation: “This is how God will punish you, and this is what he will do to you, you who have a lying tongue.” (See: Rhetorical Question)

you who have a lying tongue

Here “a lying tongue” represents the person who speaks lies. Alternate translation: “you who tell lies” (See: Synecdoche)

Psalms 120:4

He will punish you with the arrows of a warrior

The writer speaks of God severely punishing liars as if God were shooting them with arrows. Alternate translation: “He will punish you severely, as if he were shooting you with warrior’s arrows” (See: Metaphor)

ULT

4 He will punish you with the arrows of a warrior sharpened over burning coals of the broom tree.

sharpened over burning coals of the broom tree

This refers to how people forged the tip of the arrow in a fire. This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: “that he sharpened over burning coals of the broom tree” (See: Active or Passive)

Psalms 120:5

I temporarily live in Meshech; I lived previously among the tents of Kedar

These two places were far away from each other. The writer is likely using the names metaphorically to represent living among cruel and barbaric people. Alternate translation: “It is as if I live in Meshech or among the tents of Kedar” (See: Metaphor)

ULT

5 Woe is me because I temporarily live in Meshech; I lived previously among the tents of Kedar.

the tents of Kedar

This phrase represents the people of Kedar who live in those tents. Alternate translation: “the people who live in Kedar” (See: Metonymy)

Psalms 120:6

(There are no notes for this verse.)

ULT

6 For too long I have lived with those who hate peace.

Psalms 120:7

I am for peace

“I want peace”

they are for war

“they want war”

ULT

7 I am for peace, but when I speak, they are for war.

Psalms 121

Psalm 121 General Notes

Type of psalm

Psalm 121 is a worship psalm.

Special concepts in this chapter

Yahweh’s protection

God always watches over those who believe in him and protects them from harm. (See: believe, believer, belief, unbeliever, unbelief)

Psalms 121:1

General Information:

Parallelism is common in Hebrew poetry. (See: Poetry and Parallelism)

ULT

1 I will lift up my eyes to the mountains.
From where will my help come?

lift up my eyes

This expression means “look at” or “focus my attention on.” (See: Metonymy)

From where will my help come?

The writer uses this question to focus attention on the source of his help. This rhetorical question can be translated as a statement. Alternate translation: “I will tell you from where my help comes.” (See: Rhetorical Question)

Psalms 121:2

My help comes from Yahweh

This is the answer to the previous question.

ULT

2 My help comes from Yahweh, who made heaven and earth.

Psalms 121:3

General Information:

There is a shift here to the second person. This could mean: (1) the writer begins speaking to the people of Israel or (2) the writer is quoting another person speaking to the writer. (See: First, Second or Third Person)

ULT

3 He will not allow your foot to slip; he who protects you will not slumber.

your foot to slip

The slipping of a foot is associated with falling. Alternate translation: “you to fall” (See: Metonymy)

he who protects you will not slumber

Here to “slumber” means he would stop protecting. The negative form strengthens the statement. Alternate translation: “God will not fall asleep and stop protecting you” or “God will always protect you” (See: Metonymy and Double Negatives)

he who protects you

God

Psalms 121:4

the guardian

God

ULT

4 See, the guardian of Israel never slumbers or sleeps.

See

This word alerts us to pay attention to the important information that follows.

never slumbers or sleeps

These two words mean the same thing. Here to “slumber” means to stop protecting. The negative form strengthens the statement. Alternate translation: “will not sleep and stop protecting you” or “will always protect you” (See: Doublet and Metonymy and Double Negatives)

Psalms 121:5

Yahweh is the shade at your right hand

Here “shade” refers to protection. Alternate translation: “God is beside you to protect you from things that would hurt you” (See: Metonymy)

at your right hand

Here this expression means to be beside or near to the writer.

ULT

5 Yahweh is your guardian; Yahweh is the shade at your right hand.

Psalms 121:6

The sun will not harm you by day, nor the moon by night

ULT

6 The sun will not harm you by day, nor the moon by night.

The contrasting terms “day” and “night” refer to those extremes and everything in between. Alternate translation: “God protects you from the elements at all times” (See: Merism)

nor the moon by night

It is implies that “will not harm you” is implied here. The full meaning of this statement may be made clear. Alternate translation: “nor will the moon harm you by night” (See: Ellipsis)

Psalms 121:7

your life

This refers to the writer. Alternate translation: “you” (See: Metonymy)

ULT

7 Yahweh will protect you from all harm,
and he will protect your life.

Psalms 121:8

(There are no notes for this verse.)

ULT

8 Yahweh will protect you in all you do
now and forevermore.

Psalms 122

Psalm 122 General Notes

Type of psalm

Psalm 122 is a psalm about Jerusalem.

Special concepts in this chapter

Jerusalem

Jerusalem is an important city, the center of government and religious activities; so the author prays for peace for the city.

Psalms 122:1

General Information:

Parallelism is common in Hebrew poetry. (See: Poetry and Parallelism)

ULT

1 I was glad when they said to me, “Let us go to the house of Yahweh.”

A song of ascents

This could mean: (1) “song people sang while going up to Jerusalem for a celebration” or (2) “song people sang while going up the steps into the temple” or (3) “song whose words are like steps.” See how you translated this in Psalms 120:1

Psalms 122:2

Jerusalem, our feet are standing within your gates!

ULT

2 Jerusalem, our feet are standing within your gates!

The writer briefly stops speaking to his audience and speaks directly to the city of Jerusalem. Jerusalem is spoken to as if it was a person who could hear the writer. (See: Apostrophe and Personification)

our feet are standing

Here “feet” refers to the whole person. Alternate translation: “we are standing” (See: Synecdoche)

within your gates

Here “gates” refers to the city. Alternate translation: “inside you, Jerusalem” (See: Synecdoche)

Psalms 122:3

(There are no notes for this verse.)

ULT

3 Jerusalem, built as a city carefully planned!

Psalms 122:4

the name of Yahweh

Here “name” refers to Yahweh himself. Alternate translation: “Yahweh” (See: Metonymy)

ULT

4 The tribes go up to Jerusalem—the tribes of Yahweh— as a testimony for Israel, to give thanks to the name of Yahweh.

Psalms 122:5

the house of David

Here “house” refers to the descendants of David. Alternate translation: “the descendants of David” (See: Metonymy)

ULT

5 There thrones of judgment were set,
thrones of the house of David.

Psalms 122:6

May those who love you have peace

This section states the content of the prayer that the writer wants his audience to pray. He asks them to speak directly to the city of Jerusalem, as if the city was a person who could hear them. (See: Apostrophe and Personification)

ULT

6 Pray for the peace of Jerusalem! “May those who love you have peace.

Psalms 122:7

This verse finishes the prayer that the writer wants his audience to pray. He asks them to speak directly to the city of Jerusalem, as if the city was a person who could hear them. (See: Apostrophe and Personification)

ULT

7 May there be peace within the walls that defend you, and may they have peace within your fortresses.”

May there be peace within ... may they have peace within

These two phrases have the same meanings and are used together to strengthen each other. Alternate translation: “May the people in Jerusalem live in peace” (See: Parallelism)

within the walls that defend you ... within your fortresses

Here Jerusalem is referred to by the fortress walls that protects it. The terms “walls” and “fortress” refer to the same thing. Alternate translation: “within Jerusalem” (See: Synecdoche and Parallelism)

Psalms 122:8

General Information:

In this section, the writer speaks directly to the city of Jerusalem, as if the city was a person who could hear them. (See: Apostrophe and Personification)

ULT

8 For the sake of my brothers and my friends I will say, “May there be peace within you.”

For the sake

“For the well-being”

May there be peace within you

“May the people in you live in peace”

Psalms 122:9

I will seek good for you

The abstract noun “good” can be stated as an action. Alternate translation: “I will pray that people treat you well”

ULT

9 For the sake of the house of Yahweh
our God, I will seek good for you.

Psalms 123

Psalm 123 General Notes

Type of psalm

Psalm 123 is a psalm asking for deliverance from the contempt of proud people. (See: deliver, hand over, turn over, release, rescue)

Special concepts in this chapter

Trust

Just as a servant trusts his master to protect him, so the author is trusting God to stop proud people from insulting him. (See: trust, trusted, trustworthy, trustworthiness)

Psalms 123:1

General Information:

Parallelism is common in Hebrew poetry. (See: Poetry and Parallelism)

ULT

1 To you I lift up my eyes, you who are enthroned in the heavens.

I lift up my eyes

Here the author refers to his eyes because that is the part of the body used for seeing. Alternate translation: “I look to you” (See: Metonymy)

enthroned

sitting on a throne and ruling as king

Psalms 123:2

as the eyes of servants ... as the eyes of a maid ... so our eyes look

These three phrases have similar meanings. The third phrase, about the Israelites, is being compared to how the servants and maids look to their masters and mistresses for help. In each case “eyes” refers to the whole person. (See: Parallelism and Synecdoche)

ULT

2 See, as the eyes of servants look to their master’s hand, as the eyes of a maid look to her mistress’s hand, so our eyes look to Yahweh our God until he has mercy on us.

master’s hand ... mistress’s hand

Here “hand” refers to the provision for needs. Alternate translation: “master’s provision ... mistress’s provision” (See: Metonymy)

maid

servant girl

mistress

woman who has authority over servant girls

has mercy on us

The abstract noun “mercy” can be stated as an action. Alternate translation: “act mercifully toward us” (See: Abstract Nouns)

Psalms 123:3

Have mercy on us

The abstract noun “mercy” can be stated as an action. See how you translated a similar phrase in Psalms 123:2. Alternate translation: “act mercifully toward us” (See: Abstract Nouns)

ULT

3 Have mercy on us, Yahweh, have mercy on us, for we are filled with humiliation.

we are filled with humiliation

Here humiliation is spoken of as if it were something that could be fill up a person. “we are very disgraced” (See: Metaphor)

Psalms 123:4

ULT

4 We are more than full of the scoffing of the insolent and with the contempt of the proud.

We are more than full

This idiom means that the amount is excessive, in a negative sense. Alternate translation: “We have had too much” (See: Idiom)

of the scoffing ... and with the contempt

There two phrases have very similar meanings and are used together to emphasize how much they have been mocked by the people. (See: Parallelism)

scoffing

“mocking” or “insults”

the insolent

This refers to the insolent people. Alternate translation: “rude and arrogant people” (See: Nominal Adjectives)

the proud

This refers to the proud people. Alternate translation: “the people who are proud” (See: Nominal Adjectives)

Psalms 124

Psalm 124 General Notes

Type of psalm

Psalm 124 is a psalm of praise for God's delivering the Israelites from their enemy's attack. (See: deliver, hand over, turn over, release, rescue)

Special concepts in this chapter

Yahweh saves

God saved the Israelites from their enemy who wanted to completely destroy them. (See: save, saved, safe, salvation)

Psalms 124:1

General Information:

Parallelism is common in Hebrew poetry. (See: Poetry and Parallelism)

ULT

1 “If Yahweh had not been on our side,”
let Israel say now,

song of ascents

This could mean: (1) “song people sang while going up to Jerusalem for a celebration” or (2) “song people sang while going up the steps into the temple” or (3) “song whose words are like steps.” See how you translated this in Psalms 120:1

“If Yahweh had not been on our side

This is the beginning of a hypothetical statement about something that did not actually happen. (See: Hypothetical Situations)

Psalms 124:2

if it had not been Yahweh who was on our side

This is the continuation of a hypothetical statement about something that did not actually happen. (See: Hypothetical Situations)

ULT

2 “if it had not been Yahweh who was on our side when men rose up against us,

Psalms 124:3

then they would have swallowed us up alive

ULT
3 then they would have swallowed us up alive when their anger raged against us.

This is the end of a hypothetical statement that begins with the words “If Yahweh had not been on our side” in Psalms 124:1 and continues with the words “if it had not been Yahweh who was on our side when men rose up against us” in Psalms 124:2. It describes a result that did not happen because Yahweh was actually on their side. “They were not able to swallow us up alive because Yahweh was on our side.” (See: Hypothetical Situations)

swallowed us up alive

This metaphor describes how the Israelites could have died to how a fierce animal would attack a smaller animal to eat. Alternate translation: “killed us” (See: Metaphor)

their anger raged against us

Here “their anger” refers to the enemies who were angry. Alternate translation: “they were very angry with us” (See: Metonymy)

Psalms 124:4

General Information:

In these two verses the author compares the enemies of Israel to a flood of water.

ULT

4 The water would have swept us away;
the torrent would have overwhelmed us.

The water would have swept us away; the torrent would have overwhelmed us

This is the end of a hypothetical statement that begins with the words “If Yahweh had not been on our side” in Psalms 124:1 and continues with the words “if it had not been Yahweh who was on our side when men rose up against us” in Psalms 124:2. It describes a result that did not happen because Yahweh was actually on their side. “The water did not sweep us away, and the torrent did not overwhelm us because Yahweh was on our side” (See: Hypothetical Situations)

The water would have swept us away

Here the enemies of the writer are spoken of as if they were a flood of water. Alternate translation: “Our enemies would have easily defeated us” (See: Metaphor)

the torrent would have overwhelmed us

Here the enemies of the writer are spoken of as if they were a flood of water that would have drowned the Israelites. Alternate translation: “our enemies would have overwhelmed us” (See: Metaphor)

Psalms 124:5

Then the raging waters would have drowned us

ULT

5 Then the raging waters would have drowned us.”

This is the end of a hypothetical statement that begins with the words “If Yahweh had not been on our side” in Psalms 124:1 and continues with the words “if it had not been Yahweh who was on our side when men rose up against us” in Psalms 124:2. It describes a result that did not happen because Yahweh was actually on their side. “The raging waters did not drown us because Yahweh was on our side” (See: Hypothetical Situations)

the raging waters would have drowned us

Here the enemies of the writer are spoken of as if they were a raging river that would have drowned the Israelites. Alternate translation: “our enemies would have destroyed us” (See: Metaphor)

Psalms 124:6

torn by their teeth

The enemies are spoken of as if they were wild animals that would destroy the Israelites by eating them. Alternate translation: “destroyed as if we were eaten by wild animals” (See: Metaphor)

ULT

6 Blessed be Yahweh, who has not allowed us to be torn by their teeth.

Psalms 124:7

escaped like a bird out of the snare of the fowlers

The writer describes his escape from the enemies as if he was a bird that had escaped from the snare of the hunters. Alternate translation: “escaped from our enemies as a bird escapes from the trap that hunters have set” (See: Metaphor)

ULT

7 We have escaped like a bird out of the snare of the fowlers; the snare has been broken, and we have escaped.

snare

a small trap of string or wire made for catching small animals or birds

the snare has been broken

The plot of the enemies to catch the writer failed as if it was a snare that had broken. (See: Metaphor)

Psalms 124:8

(There are no notes for this verse.)

ULT

8 Our help is in Yahweh, who made heaven and earth.

Psalms 125

Psalm 125 General Notes

Type of psalm

Psalm 125 is a psalm of praise.

Special concepts in this chapter

Yahweh’s protection

God protects good people. He will not allow the evil people to rule over the good people because they might make them do evil. (See: good, right, pleasant, better, best and evil, wicked, unpleasant)

Psalms 125:1

General Information:

Parallelism is common in Hebrew poetry. (See: Poetry and Parallelism)

Those who trust in Yahweh are like Mount Zion, unshakable, forever enduring

People who trust in Yahweh are spoken of as if they were Mount Zion. Mountains are unable to be moved. (See: Simile)

ULT

1 Those who trust in Yahweh are like Mount Zion, unshakable, forever enduring.

Psalms 125:2

As the mountains surround Jerusalem, so Yahweh surrounds his people

ULT

2 As the mountains surround Jerusalem, so Yahweh surrounds his people now and forever.

Yahweh's protection is spoken of as if he was the mountains surrounding Jerusalem. Jerusalem was surrounded by several mountains, which protected it from attack. Alternate translation: "As the hills that surround Jerusalem protect it, so Yahweh protects his people" (See: Simile)

now and forever

Here, this phrase means "always." (See: Merism)

Psalms 125:3

The scepter of wickedness

Here the scepter of wickedness represents the rule of wicked people. Alternate translation: “Wicked people” or “Wicked rulers” (See: Metonymy)

ULT

3 The scepter of wickedness must not
rule in the land of the righteous.
Otherwise the righteous might do what
is wrong.

Psalms 125:4

Do good, Yahweh

This is a request. Alternate translation: “Yahweh, please do good things” or “Yahweh, I beg you to do good things”

are upright in their hearts

Here, “hearts” refers to their desires. Alternate translation: “desire to do the right” (See: Metonymy)

ULT

4 Do good, Yahweh, to those who are good and to those who are upright in their hearts.

Psalms 125:5

turn aside

Refusing to obey Yahweh is spoken of as turning away from a good path. Alternate translation: “leave good and go” (See: Metaphor)

ULT

5 But as for those who turn aside to their crooked ways, Yahweh will lead them away with the evildoers. May peace be on Israel.

their crooked ways

Here wicked ways are spoken of as if they were a path that is not straight. Alternate translation: “their wicked ways” (See: Metaphor)

lead them away

People are lead away in order to punish them. The full meaning of this statement can be made clear. Alternate translation: “lead them away to punish them” (See: Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information)

Psalms 126

Psalm 126 General Notes

Type of psalm

Psalm 126 is a psalm of praise for Yahweh bringing captives home.

Special concepts in this chapter

Sorrow and joy

People may have sorrow now; but later it will turn into joy. (See: joy, joyful, rejoice, glad)

Psalms 126:1

General Information:

Parallelism is common in Hebrew poetry. (See: Poetry and Parallelism)

restored the fortunes of Zion

“made Zion prosperous again”

ULT

1 When Yahweh restored the fortunes of Zion, we were like those who dream.

Psalms 126:2

our mouths were filled with laughter

Laughing is spoken of as if their mouths were a container and their laughter was in it. It can be made clear that this laughter was a response to their joy. Alternate translation: “we laughed for joy” (See: Metaphor and Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information)

ULT

2 Then our mouths were filled with laughter and our tongues with singing. Then they said among the nations, “Yahweh has done great things for them.”

our tongues with singing

The verbs “were filled” can be stated clearly. Singing is spoken of as if their tongues were containers and singing was in them. Alternate translation: “our tongues were filled with singing” or “we sang songs of joy” (See: Ellipsis and Metaphor)

they said among the nations

“the people of the nations said among themselves.” The pronoun is used before introducing what it references. This is very unusual.

Psalms 126:3

Yahweh did great things for us; how glad we were!

“How glad we were, because Yahweh did these great things for us!”

ULT

3 Yahweh did great things for us; how glad we were!

Psalms 126:4

(There are no notes for this verse.)

ULT

4 Restore our fortunes, Yahweh, like the streams in the Negev.

Psalms 126:5

Those who sow in tears

“Those who weep as they sow”

ULT

5 Those who sow in tears will reap with shouts of joy.

Psalms 126:6

(There are no notes for this verse.)

ULT

6 He who goes out weeping, carrying seed for sowing, will return again with shouts of joy, bringing his bundles of grain with him.

Psalms 127

Psalm 127 General Notes

Type of psalm

Psalm 127 is a wisdom psalm. (See: wise, wisdom)

Special concepts in this chapter

Blessings

God wants his people to have rest. It is a blessing to have many children. (See: rest, rested, restless and bless, blessed, blessing)

Psalms 127:1

General Information:

Parallelism is common in Hebrew poetry. (See: Poetry and Parallelism)

ULT

1 Unless Yahweh builds the house, they work uselessly, those who build it. Unless Yahweh guards the city, the watchman stands guard uselessly.

song of ascents

This could mean: (1) “song people sang while going up to Jerusalem for a celebration” or (2) “song people sang while going up the steps into the temple” or (3) “song whose words are like steps.” See how you translated this in Psalms 120:1

Psalms 127:2

to rise up early, to come home late

A person who works hard often has to wake up earlier in the morning and return home late at night.

eat the bread of hard work

This is an idiom. Bread often represents the food a person needs every day in order to live. Alternate translation: “work hard for your daily needs” (See: Idiom and Synecdoche)

ULT

2 It is useless for you to rise up early, to come home late, or to eat the bread of hard work, for Yahweh provides for his beloved as they sleep.

Psalms 127:3

heritage

property that a person can inherit from his ancestors. Children normally receive an inheritance from their parents. Inheritance goes from parents to children. This passage uses parents inheriting children from Yahweh as a metaphor for Yahweh being the only one who can give children. (See: Metaphor)

ULT

3 See, children are a heritage from Yahweh, and the fruit of the womb is a reward from him.

Psalms 127:4

Like arrows in the hand of a warrior, so are the children of one’s youth

ULT

4 Like arrows in the hand of a warrior,
so are the children of one’s youth.

Arrows are very important to a warrior because they protect him in battle. Children are spoken of as if they are a warrior’s arrow.
Alternate translation: “Having many children will help to protect you” (See: Simile)

Psalms 127:5

his quiver full of them

A quiver is a container for arrows. Having many children is spoken of as if the children were arrows in a quiver. Alternate translation: “a home full of children” or “many children” (See: Metaphor)

ULT

5 How blessed is the man that has his quiver full of them. He will not be put to shame when he confronts his enemies in the gate.

Psalms 128

Psalm 128 General Notes

Type of psalm

Psalm 128 is a wisdom psalm. (See: wise, wisdom)

Special concepts in this chapter

Respect

Those people who respect God will live well and have many children. (See: life, live, living, alive)

Psalms 128:1

General Information:

Parallelism is common in Hebrew poetry. (See: Poetry and Parallelism)

ULT

1 Blessed is everyone who honors Yahweh, who walks in his ways.

Blessed is everyone who honors Yahweh

This phrase occurs in the passive voice to avoid implying that Yahweh is obligated to bless those who honor him. This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: “Yahweh will bless everyone who honors him” (See: Active or Passive)

Psalms 128:2

What your hands provide

A man can be referred to by his hands because that is the part of the body he works with. Alternate translation: “What you provide” or “What you work for” (See: Synecdoche)

ULT

2 What your hands provide, you will enjoy; you will be blessed and prosper.

you will be blessed and prosper

The words “be blessed” and “prosper” share similar meanings and emphasize God’s favor. Alternate translation: “Yahweh will bless you and prosper you” or “Yahweh will make you blessed and prosperous” (See: Doublet)

Psalms 128:3

like a fruitful vine in your house

The wife is spoke of as a vine producing a lot of fruit. This implies that children are like fruit and the wife will have many children. Alternate translation: “very productive and give you many children” (See: Simile)

ULT

3 Your wife will be like a fruitful vine in your house; your children will be like olive plants as they sit around your table.

your children will be like olive plants

Children are compared to olive plants because of the way they grow to surround something. Children will surround the table and make it full. Alternate translation: “you will have many children who will grow and prosper” (See: Simile)

around your table

This refers to the place where a family gathers to eat. Often, all those who eat a man’s table are under his authority or control.

Psalms 128:4

the man will be blessed who honors Yahweh

This can be stated as an active verb. “Yahweh will bless the man who honors him” (See: Active or Passive)

ULT

4 Yes, indeed, the man will be blessed who honors Yahweh.

Psalms 128:5

all the days of your life

“throughout your lifetime”

ULT

5 May Yahweh bless you from Zion; may you see the prosperity of Jerusalem all the days of your life.

Psalms 128:6

May peace be on Israel

“May Israel have peace”

ULT

6 May you live to see your children’s children. May peace be on Israel.

Psalms 129

Psalm 129 General Notes

Type of psalm

Psalm 129 is a psalm of deliverance from Israel's many enemies. (See: deliver, hand over, turn over, release, rescue)

Special concepts in this chapter

Yahweh saves

Israel's enemies have always persecuted them but God has saved them from their enemies. He prays that this enemy will be destroyed with no one to wish them well. (See: save, saved, safe, salvation)

Psalms 129:1

General Information:

Parallelism is common in Hebrew poetry. (See: Poetry and Parallelism)

ULT

1 “Often since my youth they have attacked me,” let Israel say.

Psalms 129:2

(There are no notes for this verse.)

ULT

2 “Often since my youth they have attacked me, yet they have not defeated me.

Psalms 129:3

The plowers plowed on my back

The cuts from a whipping are spoken of as the plow of a plowman. A farmer plowed deep lines into a field. Alternate translation: “My enemies have cut me deeply on my back” (See: Metaphor)

ULT

3 The plowers plowed on my back; they made their furrows long.

they made their furrows long

This is a continuation of the plowing metaphor. The “furrow” is the line the farmer plowed. Alternate translation: “they made their cuts long” (See: Metaphor)

Psalms 129:4

he has cut the ropes of the wicked

Israel is spoken of as being bound by evil people. Alternate translation: “he has freed us from our enemies” (See: Metaphor)

ULT

4 Yahweh is righteous; he has cut the ropes of the wicked.”

Psalms 129:5

May they all be put to shame and turned back

Yahweh is not explicitly mentioned as the one who does these things. This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: “May Yahweh shame them and defeat them” (See: Active or Passive and Idiom)

ULT

5 May they all be put to shame and turned back, those who hate Zion.

Psalms 129:6

May they be like the grass on the housetops that withers before it grows up

The psalmist speaks of his enemies dying and being few in number. He compares them to the little bit of grass that grows on the roof of a house and withers and is not enough to cut or bundle. Alternate translation: “May they die and may there be few of them” (See: Simile)

ULT

6 May they be like the grass on the housetops that withers before it grows up,

Psalms 129:7

that cannot fill ... together

These words finish the simile that begins in (Psalms 129:6). The psalmist speaks of his enemies dying and being few in number. He compares them to the little bit of grass that grows on the roof of a house and withers and is not enough to cut or bundle. “May they be like the grass, which cannot fill ... together” (See: Simile)

ULT

7 that cannot fill the reaper’s hand or
the chest of the one who binds bundles
of grain together.

Psalms 129:8

the blessing of Yahweh be on you

"Yahweh bless you"

ULT

8 May those who pass by not say, "May the blessing of Yahweh be on you; we bless you in the name of Yahweh."

Psalms 130

Psalm 130 General Notes

Type of psalm

Psalm 130 is a psalm of praise that God forgives sins. (See: forgive, forgiven, forgiveness, pardon, pardoned and sin, sinful, sinner, sinning)

Special concepts in this chapter

Forgive

God forgives sin and helps the sinner. So Israel should trust in God for his forgiveness. (See: trust, trusted, trustworthy, trustworthiness)

Psalms 130:1

General Information:

Parallelism is common in Hebrew poetry. (See: Poetry and Parallelism)

ULT

1 Out of the depths I cry to you,
Yahweh.

Out of the depths I

The author's sadness is spoken of as if it were a container. His sadness comes from the bottom of the container. Sadness is often spoken of as being a container that fills from the top to the bottom. Alternate translation: "Because I am very sad, I" (See: Metaphor)

Psalms 130:2

let your ears be attentive

The ears represent Yahweh, but because the author knows that Yahweh hears everything, he is really asking for Yahweh to respond. Alternate translation: “please listen” or “please respond” (See: Synecdoche)

ULT

2 Lord, hear my voice; let your ears be attentive to my pleas for mercy.

to my pleas for mercy

The abstract noun “mercy” can be stated as “merciful.” Alternate translation: “to my pleas and be merciful to me” (See: Abstract Nouns)

Psalms 130:3

who could stand?

ULT

3 If you, Yahweh, would mark iniquities,
Lord, who could stand?

The speaker uses this question to express the futility of thinking that anyone could stand in this situation. This rhetorical question can be translated as a statement. Alternate translation: “no one could stand.” (See: Rhetorical Question)

who could stand

“Stand” often represents escaping or surviving when someone attacks. In this case, it would be to escape from being punished. Alternate translation: “no one could escape from your punishment” or “no one could survive your punishment” (See: Metonymy)

Psalms 130:4

(There are no notes for this verse.)

ULT

4 But there is forgiveness with you, that you may be revered.

Psalms 130:5

(There are no notes for this verse.)

ULT

5 I wait for Yahweh, my soul waits, and
in his word I hope.

Psalms 130:6

ULT

6 My soul waits for the Lord more than watchmen wait for the morning.

My soul

“My soul” represents the psalmist. Alternate translation: “I” (See: Synecdoche)

My soul waits

The psalmist is spoken of as if he were waiting on something with expectation. Alternate translation: “I hope” or “I trust” or “I desire for something” (See: Metonymy)

My soul waits ... more than watchmen wait for the morning

The psalmist speaks of his desire for the Lord to help him as being greater than the desire that those who work all night have for the morning to come. (See: Simile)

watchmen

These are men who guard towns or fields against enemies or robbers. Here it refers to men who have to stay awake at night doing this.

Psalms 130:7

Israel, hope in Yahweh

The people of Israel are spoken of as if they were a man. Alternate translation: “You people of Israel, hope in Yahweh” (See: Metaphor)

ULT

7 Israel, hope in Yahweh. Yahweh is merciful, and he is very willing to forgive.

Psalms 130:8

who will redeem Israel from all his sins

The people of Israel are spoken of as if they were a man. Alternate translation: “who will redeem the people of Israel from all their sins” (See: Metaphor)

ULT

8 It is he who will redeem Israel from all his sins.

Psalms 131

Psalm 131 General Notes

Type of psalm

Psalm 131 is a wisdom psalm teaching trust in Yahweh. (See: wise, wisdom and trust, trusted, trustworthy, trustworthiness)

Special concepts in this chapter

Trust

This psalm focuses on the concept of trust. A quiet trust in Yahweh is best.

Psalms 131:1

General Information:

Parallelism is common in Hebrew poetry. (See: Poetry and Parallelism)

ULT

1 Yahweh, my heart is not proud or my eyes haughty. I do not have great hopes for myself or concern myself with things that are beyond me.

song of ascents

This could mean: (1) “song people sang while going up to Jerusalem for a celebration” or (2) “song people sang while going up the steps into the temple” or (3) “song whose words are like steps.” See how you translated this in Psalms 120:1

my heart is not proud or my eyes haughty

The heart and the eyes represent the person. Alternate translation: “I am not proud or haughty” (See: Synecdoche)

I do not have great hopes for myself

Possible meanings are “I do not expect to do great things” or “I do not think I am great.”

things that are beyond me

Things that are too hard for a person to understand are spoken of as if they are beyond the person or too far away from the person to be able to reach them. Alternate translation: “things that are too hard to understand” (See: Metaphor)

Psalms 131:2

I have stilled and quieted my soul

The soul represents the person or his emotions. Being calm and peaceful is spoken of has having making one's soul still and quiet. Alternate translation: "I am calm and peaceful" (See: Synecdoche and Metaphor)

ULT

2 Indeed I have stilled and quieted my soul; like a weaned child with his mother, my soul within me is like a weaned child.

my soul within me

The soul represents the person or his emotions. Alternate translation: "I" (See: Metonymy)

a weaned child with his mother

The psalmist speaks of himself being content and resting as if he were a young child that no longer demands breast milk from his mother. Alternate translation: "content like a young child that no longer cries for breast milk but rests in his mother's arms" or "content and resting" (See: Metaphor)

Psalms 131:3

(There are no notes for this verse.)

ULT

3 Israel, hope in Yahweh now and forever.

Psalms 132

Psalm 132 General Notes

Type of psalm

Psalm 132 is a royal psalm praising David. It might have been sung when David brought the ark to Jerusalem.

Special concepts in this chapter

Ark

The Ark had been moved from one place to another several times. David wanted to make a permanent home for it. God had promised David that his son would be king after him. (See: promise, promised)

Psalms 132:1

General Information:

Parallelism is common in Hebrew poetry. (See: Poetry and Parallelism)

for David’s sake

“because of what happened to David”

call to mind

“remember” or “think about”

ULT

1 Yahweh, for David’s sake call to mind
all his afflictions.

Psalms 132:2

the Mighty One of Jacob

This refers to God.

ULT

2 Call to mind how he swore to Yahweh,
how he vowed to the Mighty One of Jacob.

Psalms 132:3

He said

"King David said"

ULT

3 He said, "I will not enter my house or
get into my bed,

Psalms 132:4

I will not give sleep to my eyes or rest to my eyelids

ULT

4 I will not give sleep to my eyes or rest to my eyelids

Sleep and rest are spoken of as if they are things that can be given. Here eyes and eyelids represent the whole person. Alternate translation: “I will not allow my eyes to sleep or my eyelids to rest” or “I will not sleep or close my eyes and rest” (See: Metaphor and Synecdoche)

Psalms 132:5

until I find a place for Yahweh

Building a place for Yahweh is spoken of as finding a place for him. Alternate translation: “until I build a place for Yahweh” (See: Metonymy)

the Mighty One of Jacob

This refers to God.

ULT

5 until I find a place for Yahweh, a tabernacle for the Mighty One of Jacob.”

Psalms 132:6

we heard about it in Ephrathah

ULT
6 See, we heard about it in Ephrathah;
we found it in the fields of Jaar.

The word “it” probably refers to where God’s sacred chest was. The phrase “in Ephrathah” probably refers to where they were when they heard about it. This can be stated clearly. Alternate translation: “we who were in Ephrathah heard about where the sacred chest was” or “we in Ephrathah heard that the holy box was in Jaar” (See: Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information)

fields of Jaar

Jaar is probably another name for the city of Kiriath Jearim. This probably refers to the fields surrounding the city. (See: How to Translate Names)

Psalms 132:7

we will worship at his footstool

Worshiping God at the covenant box is spoken of as bowing at the feet of the king who is sitting on his throne. This communicates humility and submission to God. Alternate translation: “we will go to God’s covenant box and worship him as king” (See: Metaphor)

ULT

7 We will go into God’s tabernacle; we will worship at his footstool.

Psalms 132:8

Arise, Yahweh, to your resting place

The verb “come” can be stated clearly. “Arise, Yahweh, and come to your resting place” (See: Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information)

ULT

8 Arise, Yahweh, to your resting place,
you and the ark of your strength!

your resting place

The place God chose for people to worship him is spoken of as if it were a place where he rests or lives eternally. Alternate translation: “the place where you stay” or “your tabernacle” (See: Metaphor)

you and the ark of your strength!

This could mean: (1) “come to the ark of your strength” or (2) “come, and make the ark of your strength come.” (See: Ellipsis)

the ark of your strength

“the ark that shows your great power”

Psalms 132:9

May your priests be clothed with integrity

Integrity is spoken of as if it were clothing. Alternate translation: “May people recognize that your priests have integrity” or “I want people see how your priests always do what is right” (See: Metaphor)

ULT

9 May your priests be clothed with integrity; may your faithful ones shout for joy.

Psalms 132:10

For your servant David’s sake

“Because of what happened to your servant David.” See how you translated a similar phrase in Psalms 132:1.

ULT

10 For your servant David’s sake, do not turn away from your anointed king.

do not turn away from your anointed king

Here “turning away” means to reject someone. Alternate translation: “do not abandon the king that you anointed” (See: Metaphor)

Psalms 132:11

I will place one of your descendants on your throne

Making a king's descendant become king in his place is spoken of as placing him on that king's throne. AT "I will cause one of your descendants to rule Israel in your place" (See: Metaphor)

ULT

11 Yahweh swore a sure oath to David, a sure oath that he will not revoke: "I will place one of your descendants on your throne.

Psalms 132:12

sit on your throne

Ruling as king is spoken of as sitting on the throne. Alternate translation: “rule as king” (See: Metaphor)

your sons

Here “your sons” represents the descendants of David that would become king. Alternate translation: “your descendants” (See: Synecdoche)

ULT

12 If your sons keep my covenant and
the laws that I will teach them, their
children also will sit on your throne
forevermore.”

Psalms 132:13

General Information:

“He”, “my” and “I” refer to Yahweh and “her” refers to Zion. (See: Pronouns)

ULT

13 Certainly Yahweh has chosen Zion, he has desired her for his seat.

Zion ... her

The author writes as though the city of Zion were a woman. (See: Personification)

he has desired her for his seat

“Yahweh has desired Zion for Yahweh’s seat.” Here, **seat** could mean: (1) his throne where he would rule, or (2) the place where he would stay. (See: Metonymy)

Psalms 132:14

her

The author writes as though the city of Zion (Psalms 132:13) were a woman. (See: Personification)

ULT

14 "This is my resting place forever. I will live here, for I desire her.

my resting place

The place God chose for people to worship him is spoken of as if it were a place where he rests or lives eternally. Alternate translation: "the place where I stay" or "my tabernacle" (See: Metaphor)

Psalms 132:15

God continues to speak about the city of Zion as if Zion was a woman. (See: Personification)

will abundantly bless her

“will abundantly bless Zion”

will satisfy her poor with bread

Here “poor” refers to the poor people in Zion and “bread” probably represents food in general. Alternate translation: “will satisfy the poor people in Zion with food” (See: Nominal Adjectives and Synecdoche)

ULT

15 I will abundantly bless her with provisions. I will satisfy her poor with bread.

Psalms 132:16

I will clothe her priests with salvation

Salvation is spoken of as if it is clothing. This could mean: (1) "I will cause the priests to behave in a manner worthy of ones whom I have saved" or (2) "I will save her priests" (See: Metaphor)

ULT

16 I will clothe her priests with salvation,
her faithful ones will shout aloud for joy.

Psalms 132:17

I will make a horn to sprout for David

God speaks of a powerful descendant of David as if he was the powerful horn of an animal. Alternate translation: “I will make a descendant of David become king after him” or “I will cause David to have a descendant who will be a powerful king” (See: Metaphor)

ULT

17 There I will make a horn to sprout for David and set up a lamp for my anointed one.

set up a lamp for my anointed one

God speaks of causing David’s descendants to continue to rule as king as if they were a lamp that would continue to shine. Alternate translation: “I will cause my anointed one’s descendants to continue to rule as king” (See: Metaphor)

my anointed one

“my chosen king” or “the king I have chosen”

Psalms 132:18

I will clothe his enemies with shame

Shame is spoken of as if it was clothing. This shame would result from losing in war. Alternate translation: “I will cause his enemies to be ashamed” or “I will cause his enemies to be defeated and ashamed” (See: Metaphor)

ULT

18 I will clothe his enemies with shame,
but on him his crown will shine.”

his crown will shine

The crown represents his rule, and greatness is spoken of as shining. Alternate translation: “he will be a great king” or “his greatness will shine” (See: Metonymy and Metaphor)

Psalms 133

Psalm 133 General Notes

Type of psalm

Psalm 133 is a wisdom psalm about harmony. (See: wise, wisdom)

Special concepts in this chapter

Harmony

Harmony between relatives is refreshing and brings a blessings from God. (See: bless, blessed, blessing)

Psalms 133:1

General Information:

Parallelism is common in Hebrew poetry. (See: Poetry and Parallelism)

ULT

1 Behold, how good and how pleasant it is for brothers to live together!

song of ascents

This could mean: (1) “song people sang while going up to Jerusalem for a celebration” or (2) “song people sang while going up the steps into the temple” or (3) “song whose words are like steps.” See how you translated this in Psalms 120:1

Behold

This word is used to stress the importance of the statement that follows.

for brothers to live together

The relationships among fellow God’s people is spoken of as if they were brothers. Alternate translation: “for God’s people to live together peacefully as brothers” (See: Metaphor)

Psalms 133:2

It is like fine oil on the head

The goodness of unity among God's people is spoken of as if it were like the fine oil that was poured on Aaron's head. Alternate translation: "This unity is precious like the oil that was poured on Aaron's head" (See: Simile)

ULT

2 It is like fine oil on the head pouring
down on the beard— Aaron's beard,
and then it pours down on the collar of
his robes.

Psalms 133:3

like the dew of Hermon

The goodness of unity among God's people is spoken of as it if it were refreshing like dew. Alternate translation: "refreshing like the dew of Hermon" (See: Simile)

Hermon

This is a mountain in Israel that has snow on its peak year-round.

ULT

3 It is like the dew of Hermon which falls
on the mountains of Zion. For there
Yahweh commanded the blessing— life
forevermore.

Psalms 134

Psalm 134 General Notes

Type of psalm

Psalm 134 is a temple psalm. (See: temple, house, house of God)

Special concepts in this chapter

Watchmen

The watchmen who work at night should praise God. Then he will bless them. (See: bless, blessed, blessing)

Psalms 134:1

General Information:

Parallelism is common in Hebrew poetry. (See: Poetry and Parallelism)

all you servants of Yahweh

“all you who serve Yahweh”

ULT

1 Come, bless Yahweh, all you servants of Yahweh, you who serve during the night in Yahweh’s house.

Psalms 134:2

Lift up your hands

This is how people prayed or praised God. (See: Symbolic Action)

to the holy place

This could mean: (1) “to the temple” or (2) “to the holy place in the temple.”

ULT

2 Lift up your hands to the holy place
and bless Yahweh.

Psalms 134:3

heaven and earth

The phrase “heaven and earth” here represents all things. Alternate translation: “everything in heaven and earth” (See: Merism)

ULT

3 May Yahweh bless you from Zion, he who made heaven and earth.

Psalms 135

Psalm 135 General Notes

Type of psalm

Psalm 135 is a worship psalm focusing on worshiping God because his greatness.

Special concepts in this chapter

Praise

The people, priests and their helpers should praise God because he is so great. He defeated the Egyptians and led his people to the promise land. Idols have no power. (See: priest, priesthood and Promised Land)

Psalms 135:1

General Information:

Parallelism is common in Hebrew poetry. (See: Poetry and Parallelism)

ULT

1 Praise Yahweh. Praise the name of Yahweh. Praise him, you servants of Yahweh,

Praise the name of Yahweh

Yahweh's name represents him. "Praise Yahweh" or "Praise him" (See: Metonymy)

Psalms 135:2

stand in Yahweh’s house

This represents serving Yahweh in his temple. (See: Metonymy)

our God

These words refer to Yahweh (Psalms 135:1).

ULT

2 you who stand in Yahweh’s house, in
the courtyards of the house of our God.

Psalms 135:3

for it is pleasant to do so

“because we get pleasure from praising his name”

ULT

3 Praise Yahweh, for he is good; sing praises to his name, for it is pleasant to do so.

Psalms 135:4

Yahweh has chosen Jacob

“Jacob” here refers to his descendants, the people of Israel. Alternate translation: “Yahweh has chosen Jacob’s descendants” (See: Metonymy)

ULT

4 For Yahweh has chosen Jacob for himself, Israel as his possession.

Israel as his possession

The beginning of the sentence can be stated clearly. Alternate translation: “he has chosen Israel to be his possession” (See: Ellipsis)

Psalms 135:5

that our Lord is above all gods

"I know that our Lord is above all gods." Being greater than something is spoken of as being above it. Alternate translation: "that our Lord is greater than all gods" (See: Metaphor)

ULT

5 I know that Yahweh is great, that our Lord is above all gods.

Psalms 135:6

(There are no notes for this verse.)

ULT

6 Whatever Yahweh desires, he does in heaven, on earth, in the seas and all the ocean depths.

Psalms 135:7

bringing the wind out of his storehouse

A storehouse is a place where things are kept for future use. This imagery shows God's power to control the wind. Alternate translation: "causing the wind to blow by his power" (See: Metaphor)

ULT

7 He brings the clouds from far away,
making lightning bolts accompany the rain and bringing the wind out of his storehouse.

Psalms 135:8

(There are no notes for this verse.)

ULT

8 He killed the firstborn of Egypt, both of man and animals.

Psalms 135:9

signs and wonders

These two words mean basically the same thing and refer to the miraculous troubles that God had caused in Egypt. (See: Doublet)

into your midst, Egypt

The psalmist speaks as if the people of Egypt were listening to him. Alternate translation: “among you people of Egypt” or “among the people of Egypt” (See: Apostrophe)

against Pharaoh

“to punish Pharaoh”

ULT

9 He sent signs and wonders into your midst, Egypt, against Pharaoh and all his servants.

Psalms 135:10

(There are no notes for this verse.)

ULT

10 He attacked many nations and killed
mighty kings,

Psalms 135:11

Sihon ... Og

These are the names of two men. (See: How to Translate Names)

ULT

11 Sihon king of the Amorites and Og king of Bashan and all the kingdoms of Canaan.

Psalms 135:12

He gave us their land as an inheritance

God’s gift of the land to the Israelites is spoken of as if it were inheritance from father to son. Alternate translation: “He gave us their land to have forever” or “He gave us their land to be ours forever” (See: Metaphor)

ULT

12 He gave us their land as an inheritance, an inheritance to Israel his people.

Psalms 135:13

Your name

His name here represents his fame or reputation. Alternate translation: “Your fame” or “Your reputation” (See: Metonymy)

ULT

13 Your name, Yahweh, endures forever;
your renown, Yahweh, endures throughout all generations.

Psalms 135:14

(There are no notes for this verse.)

ULT

14 For Yahweh defends his people and has compassion on his servants.

Psalms 135:15

(There are no notes for this verse.)

ULT

15 The nations’ idols are silver and gold,
the work of men’s hands.

Psalms 135:16

(There are no notes for this verse.)

ULT

16 Those idols have mouths, but they do
not speak; they have eyes, but they do
not see;

Psalms 135:17

(There are no notes for this verse.)

ULT

17 they have ears, but they do not hear,
nor is there breath in their mouths.

Psalms 135:18

Those who make them are like them

Being ignorant and powerless is spoken of as being like idols, which cannot speak, see, hear, or breathe. Alternate translation: “Those who make them are stupid and powerless like their idols” (See: Simile)

as is everyone who trusts in them

“and so are those who trust in the idols”

ULT

18 Those who make them are like them,
as is everyone who trusts in them.

Psalms 135:19

(There are no notes for this verse.)

ULT

19 Descendants of Israel, bless Yahweh;
descendants of Aaron, bless Yahweh.

Psalms 135:20

(There are no notes for this verse.)

ULT

20 Descendants of Levi, bless Yahweh;
you who honor Yahweh, bless Yahweh.

Psalms 135:21

he who lives in Jerusalem

God is spoken of as if he lived in Jerusalem because the temple where the Israelites worshiped him was there. Alternate translation: “he whose temple is in Jerusalem” (See: Metonymy)

ULT

21 Blessed be Yahweh in Zion, he who lives in Jerusalem. Praise Yahweh.

Psalms 136

Psalm 136 General Notes

Type of psalm

Psalm 136 is a worship psalm. It was written to be sung by two parts of the choir. One part would sing the first part of each of the lines and then the other part of the choir would sing the repeated refrain.

Special concepts in this chapter

Israel blessed

God has blessed Israel throughout its history and taken care of the needy people. (See: bless, blessed, blessing)

Psalms 136:1

General Information:

Parallelism is common in Hebrew poetry. (See: Poetry and Parallelism)

ULT

1 Oh, give thanks to Yahweh; for he is good, for his covenant faithfulness endures forever.

Oh

This is an exclamation that should be translated with whatever exclamation of emphasis you have in your language to make it sound natural. (See: Exclamations)

for his covenant faithfulness endures forever

The abstract noun “faithfulness” can be translated with an adjective. Alternate translation: “because he remains faithful to his covenant forever” (See: Abstract Nouns)

Psalms 136:2

the God of gods

the God who is greater than the gods that other people worship (See: Idiom)

ULT

2 Oh, give thanks to the God of gods, for his covenant faithfulness endures forever.

Psalms 136:3

(There are no notes for this verse.)

ULT

3 Oh, give thanks to the Lord of lords,
for his covenant faithfulness endures
forever.

Psalms 136:4

(There are no notes for this verse.)

ULT

4 Give thanks to him who alone does great wonders, for his covenant faithfulness endures forever—

Psalms 136:5

by wisdom

That is, because he is wise.

ULT

5 to him who by wisdom made the heavens, for his covenant faithfulness endures forever.

Psalms 136:6

spread out the earth above the waters

The ancient Israelites thought that the earth's dry land was on top of the sea. Alternate translation: "placed the earth over the waters"

ULT

6 Give thanks to him who spread out the earth above the waters, for his covenant faithfulness endures forever—

Psalms 136:7

great lights

This is a reference to the sources of light for the earth, especially the sun and the moon. Alternate translation: “the sun and the moon and the stars”

ULT

7 to him who made great lights, for his covenant faithfulness endures forever.

Psalms 136:8

to rule by day

The sun is spoken of as if it were a king. Alternate translation: “to mark the time of day” (See: Metaphor and Personification)

for his covenant faithfulness endures forever

The abstract noun “faithfulness” can be translated with an adjective. See how you translated this in Psalms 136:1. Alternate translation: “because he remains faithful to his covenant forever” (See: Abstract Nouns)

ULT

8 Give thank to him who gave the sun to rule by day, for his covenant faithfulness endures forever—

Psalms 136:9

to rule by night

The moon, and stars are spoken of as if they were kings. Alternate translation: “to mark the time of night” (See: Metaphor and Personification)

ULT

9 the moon and stars to rule by night,
for his covenant faithfulness endures forever.

Psalms 136:10

(There are no notes for this verse.)

ULT

10 Give thanks to him who killed the
firstborn of Egypt, for his covenant
faithfulness endures forever—

Psalms 136:11

from among them

“from among the people of Egypt”

ULT

11 and brought out Israel from among them, for his covenant faithfulness endures forever—

Psalms 136:12

with a strong hand and a raised arm

Here “hand” and “arm” represent power. Alternate translation: “with great power” (See: Metaphor)

ULT

12 with a strong hand and a raised arm,
for his covenant faithfulness endures
forever.

Psalms 136:13

the Sea of Reeds

The soldiers of Pharaoh drowned in the Sea of Reeds.

ULT

13 Give thanks to him who divided the Sea of Reeds, for his covenant faithfulness endures forever—

Psalms 136:14

(There are no notes for this verse.)

ULT

14 and made Israel to pass through the
middle of it, for his covenant
faithfulness endures forever—

Psalms 136:15

overthrew Pharaoh

Here defeat is spoken of as if it were tipping someone over. Alternate translation: “defeated Pharaoh” or “defeated the king of Egypt” (See: Metaphor)

Pharaoh

That is, the army of Pharaoh. (See: Metonymy)

ULT

15 but overthrew Pharaoh and his army in the Sea of Reeds, for his covenant faithfulness endures forever.

Psalms 136:16

(There are no notes for this verse.)

ULT

16 Give thanks to him who led his people through the wilderness, for his covenant faithfulness endures forever—

Psalms 136:17

(There are no notes for this verse.)

ULT

17 to him who killed great kings, for his covenant faithfulness endures forever.

Psalms 136:18

(There are no notes for this verse.)

ULT

18 Give thanks to him who killed famous kings, for his covenant faithfulness endures forever—

Psalms 136:19

Sihon

a man’s name (See: How to Translate Names)

ULT

19 Sihon king of the Amorites, for his
covenant faithfulness endures forever—

Psalms 136:20

Og

a man’s name (See: How to Translate Names)

ULT

20 and Og king of Bashan, for his
covenant faithfulness endures forever.

Psalms 136:21

(There are no notes for this verse.)

ULT

21 Give thanks to him who gave their land as an inheritance, for his covenant faithfulness endures forever—

Psalms 136:22

(There are no notes for this verse.)

ULT

22 an inheritance to Israel his servant,
for his covenant faithfulness endures
forever—

Psalms 136:23

called us to mind

“thought about us”

helped us in our humiliation

ULT

23 to him who called us to mind and helped us in our humiliation, for his covenant faithfulness endures forever.

The condition of feeling shame is spoken of as if it were a place that the Israelites had been in. This is a reference to the many times when the Israelites’ enemies had defeated them in battle and shamed them. Alternate translation: “cared when we were shamed” (See: Metaphor)

Psalms 136:24

has given us victory over our enemies

Causing people to be victorious and defeat their enemies is spoken of as giving them victory, as if victory were an object that can be given. Alternate translation: “has made us victorious over our enemies” or “has made us able to defeat our enemies” (See: Metaphor)

ULT

24 Give thanks to him who has given us victory over our enemies, for his covenant faithfulness endures forever—

Psalms 136:25

(There are no notes for this verse.)

ULT

25 who gives food to all living beings, for his covenant faithfulness endures forever.

Psalms 136:26

the God of heaven

“the God who lives in heaven” or “the God whom the heavenly beings worship”

ULT

26 Oh, give thanks to the God of heaven,
for his covenant faithfulness endures forever.

Psalms 137

Psalm 137 General Notes

Type of psalm

Psalm 137 is a psalm of mourning and vengeance. (See: avenge, avenger, revenge, vengeance)

Special concepts in this chapter

Songs of Zion

The captives are told to sing songs of Zion there in Babylon but they felt too unhappy to want to sing. The army from Babylon was cruel when it destroyed Jerusalem and the people of Edom encouraged them to destroy Jerusalem. They prayed that God will be cruel to the people of Edom and Babylon.

Psalms 137:1

General Information:

Parallelism is common in Hebrew poetry. (See: Poetry and Parallelism)

ULT

1 By the rivers of Babylon we sat down
and wept when we thought about Zion.

By the rivers of Babylon

“Next to one of the rivers near Babylon”

we sat ... wept ... we thought

The writer does not include the readers. (See: Exclusive and Inclusive ‘We’)

Psalms 137:2

we hung

The writer does not include the readers. (See: Exclusive and Inclusive ‘We’)

ULT

2 On the poplars there we hung our harps.

On the poplars there

Poplar trees do not grow in Israel. “Poplars” may here stand for all the trees in Babylon. Alternate translation: “On the trees in Babylon” (See: Metonymy)

Psalms 137:3

our captors required songs from us

“our captors required us to sing”

required us to be happy

“made us pretend to be happy”

one of the songs of Zion

This probably refers to songs that the Israelites had used in worship at the temple in Jerusalem.

ULT

3 There our captors required songs from us, and those who mocked us required us to be happy, saying, “Sing us one of the songs of Zion.”

Psalms 137:4

(There are no notes for this verse.)

ULT

4 How could we sing a song about
Yahweh in a foreign land?

Psalms 137:5

If I ignore the memory of you, Jerusalem

The writer speaks as if Jerusalem is listening to him. Alternate translation: “If I act as if I did not remember you, Jerusalem” or “If I try to forget you, Jerusalem” (See: Personification and Apostrophe)

right hand

the hand most people use most often

ULT

5 If I ignore the memory of you,
Jerusalem, let my right hand forget her
skill.

Psalms 137:6

(There are no notes for this verse.)

ULT

6 Let my tongue cling to the roof of my mouth if I think about you no more, if I do not prefer Jerusalem more than my greatest delights.

Psalms 137:7

Call to mind

“Remember” or “Think about”

ULT

7 Call to mind, Yahweh, what the Edomites did on the day Jerusalem fell. They said, “Tear it down, tear it down to its foundations.”

Call to mind, Yahweh, what the Edomites did

Here remembering what the Edomites did represents punishing them for what they did. Alternate translation: “Punish the Edomites, Yahweh, for what they did” (See: Metonymy)

the day Jerusalem fell

Jerusalem being captured by an enemy army is spoken of as if it had fallen. Who captured Jerusalem can be stated clearly. Alternate translation: “the day Jerusalem was captured” or “the day the Babylonian army entered Jerusalem” (See: Metaphor)

Psalms 137:8

General Information:

The psalmist addresses the people of Babylon as if they were there listening to him. (See: Apostrophe)

Daughter of Babylon

This represents the city of Babylon and its people. (See: Metonymy)

may the person be blessed

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: “may God bless the person” (See: Active or Passive)

pays you back for what you have done to us

The writer speaks of someone doing to others what they have done as if were payment. Alternate translation: “does to you what you did to us” (See: Metaphor)

ULT

8 Daughter of Babylon, soon to be destroyed— may the person be blessed, whoever pays you back for what you have done to us.

Psalms 137:9

dashes your little ones against a rock

“smashes your babies’ heads against rocks”

ULT

9 May the person be blessed, whoever takes and dashes your little ones against a rock.

Psalms 138

Psalm 138 General Notes

Type of psalm

Psalm is a psalm of praise.

Special concepts in this chapter

Answered prayers

God answers prayers and he protects the psalmist from his enemies.

Psalms 138:1

General Information:

Parallelism is common in Hebrew poetry. (See: Poetry and Parallelism)

ULT

1 I will give you thanks with my whole heart; before the gods I will sing praises to you.

I will give you thanks with my whole heart

The heart here represents the emotions. Doing something sincerely or completely is spoken of as doing it with all one's heart. Alternate translation: "I will sincerely thank you" (See: Metonymy)

before the gods

This could mean: (1) "in spite of the false idols that exist" or (2) "before the heavenly assembly," which means "in the knowledge of the angels in heaven."

Psalms 138:2

I will bow down

Bowing down is a symbolic action that represents worship and giving honor. Alternate translation: “I will worship you” (See: Symbolic Action)

give thanks to your name

Here the word “name” represents Yahweh himself. Alternate translation: “give thanks to you” (See: Metonymy)

ULT

2 I will bow down toward your holy temple and give thanks to your name for your covenant faithfulness and for your trustworthiness. You have made your word and your name more important than anything else.

for your covenant faithfulness and for your trustworthiness

The abstract noun “faithfulness” can be translated with an adjective. The abstract noun “trustworthiness” can be translated with a verbal phrase. Alternate translation: “because you are faithful to your covenant and you are worthy of people trusting you” (See: Abstract Nouns)

your word

“what you have said” or “your commands and promises”

your name

This could mean: (1) “yourself” or (2) “your fame.” (See: Metonymy)

Psalms 138:3

(There are no notes for this verse.)

ULT

3 On the day that I called you, you answered me; you made me bold and strengthened my soul.

Psalms 138:4

your mouth

This expression stands for God himself. Alternate translation: “you” (See: Synecdoche)

ULT

4 All the kings of the earth will give you thanks, Yahweh, for they will hear the words from your mouth.

Psalms 138:5

(There are no notes for this verse.)

ULT

5 Indeed, they will sing of the deeds of Yahweh, for great is the glory of Yahweh.

Psalms 138:6

Yahweh is high, yet he cares for the lowly

Yahweh is above all creation in power, position, and authority. Yet his interest is in those who are humble in spirit, servants to all. This is a simple contrast.

ULT

6 For though Yahweh is high, yet he cares for the lowly, but the proud he knows from far off.

the proud he knows from far off

This expression probably means that God is not faithful to those who are proud. (See: Metaphor)

Psalms 138:7

walk

live, exist

in the middle of danger

Being in danger is spoken of as being in a physical place. (See: Metaphor)

you will reach out with your hand against the anger of my enemies

God is spoken of as if he will strike the enemies with his hand. (See: Metaphor)

anger of my enemies

The abstract noun “anger” can be stated as “angry.” Alternate translation: “my enemies, who are angry” (See: Abstract Nouns)

ULT

7 Though I walk in the middle of danger,
you will preserve my life; you will reach
out with your hand against the anger of
my enemies, and your right hand will
save me.

Psalms 138:8

your covenant faithfulness, Yahweh, endures forever

The abstract noun “faithfulness” can be translated with an adjective. Alternate translation: “you, Yahweh, remain faithful to your covenant forever” (See: Abstract Nouns)

ULT

8 Yahweh is with me to the end; your covenant faithfulness, Yahweh, endures forever. Do not forsake the ones whom your hands have made.

the ones whom your hands have made

This expression probably refers to the nation of Israel.

your hands have made

God is spoken of as if he had physically used hands to create. Alternate translation: “you have created” (See: Metaphor)

Psalms 139

Psalm 139 General Notes

Type of psalm

Psalm 139 is a psalm of praise.

Special concepts in this chapter

God’s care

God created the psalmist in his mother’s womb and has taken care of him all of his life. No matter where he goes, God is always with him.

Psalms 139:1

General Information:

Parallelism is common in Hebrew poetry. (See: Poetry and Parallelism)

For the chief musician

“This is for the director of music to use in worship.”

have examined

“have tested”

ULT

1 Yahweh, you have examined me, and you know me.

Psalms 139:2

when I sit down and when I get up

The psalmist uses these two actions to represent everything he does. Alternate translation: “everything I do” or “everything about me” (See: Merism)

ULT

2 You know when I sit down and when I get up; you understand my thoughts from far away.

Psalms 139:3

my path and my lying down

Here “path” stands for one’s behavior. “My path and my lying down” together represent everything about the psalmist. (See: Metaphor and Merism)

ULT

3 You observe my path and my lying down; you are familiar with all my ways.

Psalms 139:4

before there is a word on my tongue

Here “word on the tongue” represents speech. Alternate translation: “before I say anything” (See: Metaphor)

ULT

4 For before there is a word on my tongue, you know it completely, Yahweh.

Psalms 139:5

Behind me and before me you surround me

This expression refers to God’s presence everywhere.

place your hand upon me

This expression refers to guidance and help. Alternate translation: “you guide and help me” (See: Metaphor)

ULT

5 Behind me and before me you surround me and place your hand upon me.

Psalms 139:6

too much for me

“too much for me to understand”

it is too high, and I cannot reach it

Being high and out of reach is an expression, in this case, about some knowledge that human beings cannot have. Alternate translation: “it is too difficult to understand” (See: Metaphor)

ULT

6 Such knowledge is too much for me; it is too high, and I cannot reach it.

Psalms 139:7

Where can I go from your Spirit?...Where can I flee from your presence?

These two questions are in parallel. The psalmist says that he cannot go away from God's presence. Alternate translation: "I cannot escape from your Spirit." (See: Rhetorical Question and Parallelism)

ULT

7 Where can I go from your Spirit?
Where can I flee from your presence?

Psalms 139:8

if I make my bed in Sheol

“Making one’s bed” refers to staying somewhere. Alternate translation: “even if I stay in Sheol” (See: Metaphor)

ULT

8 If I ascend up to the heavens, you are there; if I make my bed in Sheol, behold, you are there.

Psalms 139:9

If I fly away on the wings of the morning and go to live in the uttermost parts across the sea

ULT

9 If I fly away on the wings of the morning and go to live in the uttermost parts across the sea,

The author uses exaggeration to explain that wherever he is, God is there too. (See: Hyperbole and Hypothetical Situations)

If I fly away on the wings of the morning

In the ancient near east, the sun was often imagined as if it had wings which enabled it to fly across the sky. Alternate translation: “If the sun could carry me with itself across the sky” (See: Metaphor)

in the uttermost parts across the sea

“very far away to the west”

Psalms 139:10

will hold on to me

“will help me”

ULT

10 even there your hand will lead me,
your right hand will hold on to me.

Psalms 139:11

If I said, “Surely the darkness will cover me

The psalmist speaks of the night as if it were a blanket that could conceal him. (See: Metaphor)

ULT

11 If I said, “Surely the darkness will
cover me, and the light will become
night around me,”

Psalms 139:12

The night would shine like the day

The night, which is dark, is spoken of as if it were bright with light. (See: Metaphor)

ULT

12 even the darkness would not be dark to you. The night would shine like the day, for the darkness and the light are both alike to you.

Psalms 139:13

You formed my inner parts

“Inner parts” refers to the interior organs of a person, but here the expression probably stands for the entire body. Alternate translation: “You made my entire body (See: Synecdoche)

ULT

13 You formed my inner parts; you formed me in my mother’s womb.

Psalms 139:14

My soul knows this very well

Here “soul” probably refers to the psalmist’s innermost ability to be certain about God’s love and guidance. The translator may, however, treat “soul” here as metonymy for the psalmist’s mind and heart. Alternate translation: “I know this with all my heart” (See: Metonymy)

ULT

14 I will praise you, for I am wonderfully made. My soul knows this very well.

Psalms 139:15

intricately made

“made with great complexity”

the depths of the earth

This is probably a way of speaking about a mother’s womb (See: Metaphor)

ULT

15 My bones were not hidden from you
when I was made in private, when I was
intricately made in the depths of the
earth.

Psalms 139:16

all the days assigned to me were recorded in your book even before the first one happened

This expression implies that ancient Israelites imagined that God wrote down his plans in a book.

ULT

16 You saw me inside the womb; all the days assigned to me were recorded in your book even before the first one happened.

Psalms 139:17

How precious are your thoughts to me

“I consider your thoughts very important” or “Your thoughts are very valuable to me”

How vast is their sum!

“Your thoughts are so many.”

ULT

17 How precious are your thoughts to me, God! How vast is their sum!

Psalms 139:18

they would be more in number than the sand

This hyperbole means that the writer would be unable to count God's thoughts. Alternate translation: "there would be more than I could count" (See: Hyperbole)

ULT

18 If I tried to count them, they would be more in number than the sand. When I awake, I am still with you.

Psalms 139:19

get away from me, you violent men

The psalmist is only pretending to speak directly to the violent men whom he has in mind. Translators may decide to express this command as a wish. (See: Apostrophe)

ULT

19 If only you would kill the wicked, God;
get away from me, you violent men.

Psalms 139:20

They rebel against you

“They rebel against your authority, God”

your enemies tell lies

“your enemies lie about you”

ULT

20 They rebel against you and act deceitfully; your enemies tell lies.

Psalms 139:21

Do I not hate those, Yahweh, who hate you? Do I not despise those who rise up against you?

ULT

21 Do I not hate those, Yahweh, who hate you? Do I not despise those who rise up against you?

These two sentences have similar meanings. The second one strengthens the thought in the first. Both of these questions actually make statements. Alternate translation: “Yahweh, I hate those who hate you! I despise those who rise up against you!” (See: Parallelism and Rhetorical Question)

rise up against

rebel against

Psalms 139:22

(There are no notes for this verse.)

ULT

22 I hate them completely; they have become my enemies.

Psalms 139:23

Examine me

This is a request for God to tell the psalmist about any sinful thoughts that he may have. Alternate translation: “Please search me” or “I beg you to search me” (See: Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information)

ULT

23 Examine me, God, and know my heart; test me and know my thoughts.

Examine me, God, and know my heart; test me and know my thoughts

These two sentences have similar meanings. The second one strengthens the thought in the first. (See: Parallelism)

Psalms 139:24

ULT

24 See if there is any wicked way in me,
and lead me in the everlasting way.

any wicked way

Here “way” stands for behavior. (See: Metaphor)

the everlasting way

Here “way” refers to trust and obedience in God. Anyone who “walks” this way will have everlasting life. (See: Metaphor)

Psalms 140

Psalm 140 General Notes

Type of psalm

Psalm 140 is a deliverance psalm. (See: deliver, hand over, turn over, release, rescue)

Special concepts in this chapter

Yahweh’s protection

He prayed that God would save him from his enemies who are lying about him. (See: save, saved, safe, salvation)

Psalms 140:1

General Information:

Parallelism is common in Hebrew poetry. (See: Poetry and Parallelism)

For the chief musician

This is for the director of music to use in worship.”

ULT

1 Yahweh, rescue me from the wicked;
preserve me from violent men.

Psalms 140:2

they cause battles

Here “battles” probably refers to conflict of any kind, including quarrels.

ULT

2 They plan evil in their hearts; they
cause battles every day.

Psalms 140:3

Their tongues wound like serpents

ULT

3 Their tongues wound like serpents;
vipers' poison is on their lips. *Selah*

People who cause conflict by what they say are spoken of as if they had tongues of serpents. Of course, snakes do not do damage with their tongues, but with their bites and especially with poison. Neither can a person make his tongue sharp. Instead, here the idea of a sharp tongue stands for speaking in a way to cause trouble. And the idea the snakes have sharp tongues stands for the fact that many of them have poison. (See: Metaphor)

Psalms 140:4

the hands of the wicked

That is, the power of the wicked (See: Metaphor)

ULT

4 Keep me from the hands of the wicked, Yahweh; preserve me from violent men who plan to knock me over.

Psalms 140:5

have set a trap ... have spread a net ... have set a snare

ULT

5 The proud have set a trap for me; they have spread a net; they have set a snare for me. *Selah*

The exact kinds of traps are less important than the idea that wicked and proud people are planning to make trouble for the psalmist. If your readers do not know much about different ways of trapping, you may need to reduce this to one line. Alternate translation: “have set a trap to catch me” (See: Metaphor and Doublet)

Psalms 140:6

listen to my cries

This is a call for help. Alternate translation: “listen to me as I call to you now for help” (See: Metonymy)

ULT

6 I said to Yahweh, “You are my God;
listen to my cries for mercy.”

Psalms 140:7

you shield my head in the day of battle

A person's head is in great danger during battle. Protecting the person's head represents protecting the whole person. Alternate translation: "you protect me when I go to war" (See: Synecdoche and Metaphor)

ULT

7 Yahweh, my Lord, you are powerfully able to save me; you shield my head in the day of battle.

battle

Here "battle" probably stands for any kind of severe trouble (See: Metaphor)

Psalms 140:8

do not grant the desires of the wicked

“please do not allow the wicked to have what they desire”

the wicked

The adjective “wicked” can be translated as a noun phrase. Alternate translation: “wicked people” (See: Nominal Adjectives)

ULT

8 Yahweh, do not grant the desires of the wicked; do not let their plots succeed. *Selah*

Psalms 140:9

ULT

9 Those who surround me raise their heads; let the mischief of their own lips cover them.

raise their heads

This is a sign of being arrogant. Alternate translation: “are arrogant” (See: Symbolic Action)

let the mischief of their own lips cover them

This is a prayer that God would make the evildoers suffer from the trouble that they caused by the things they said.

the mischief of their own lips

The trouble that they themselves caused by what they said. (See: Metaphor)

cover them

That is, stop them from causing any more trouble. (See: Metaphor)

Psalms 140:10

Let burning coals fall on them; throw them into the fire

Images of fire stand for severe punishment for the wicked. (See: Metaphor)

bottomless pits

This is probably a reference to Sheol, the world of the dead.

ULT

10 Let burning coals fall on them; throw them into the fire, into bottomless pits, never more to rise.

Psalms 140:11

men of tongues

those who speak evil of others without cause (See: Idiom)

secure on the earth

“safe in this life”

may evil hunt down the violent man

Here evil is spoken of as if it were someone taking revenge on another person. (See: Personification)

ULT

11 May men of tongues not be made secure on the earth; may evil hunt down the violent man to strike him dead.

Psalms 140:12

he will give justice to the needy

The abstract noun “justice” can be stated as “just.” Alternate translation: “He will act in a just manner to help the needy” (See: Abstract Nouns)

ULT

12 I know that Yahweh will judge in favor of the afflicted, and that he will give justice to the needy.

Psalms 140:13

to your name

This represents Yahweh. Alternate translation: “to you” (See: Metonymy)

ULT

13 Surely the righteous people will give thanks to your name; the upright people will live in your presence.

Psalms 141

Psalm 141 General Notes

Type of psalm

Psalm 141 is a psalm of deliverance from his enemies and from sin. (See: deliver, hand over, turn over, release, rescue)

Special concepts in this chapter

Yahweh’s correction

The author prayed that God would keep him from sinning. He is glad to be corrected by good people. He asked God to show that he is right by destroying the evil leaders of the people. (See: sin, sinful, sinner, sinning, good, right, pleasant, better, best and righteous, righteousness, unrighteous, unrighteousness, upright, uprightness and evil, wicked, unpleasant)

Psalms 141:1

General Information:

Parallelism is common in Hebrew poetry. (See: Poetry and Parallelism)

ULT

1 Yahweh, I am crying out to you; come quickly to me. Listen to me when I call to you.

crying out

“asking you for help”

come quickly to me

The psalmist speaks as if Yahweh were a person who needed to come from another place to help him. What the psalmist wanted Yahweh to do can be stated clearly. Alternate translation: “come quickly to help me” (See: Personification and Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information)

Listen to me when I call

“Please hear me when I call” or “I beg you to hear me when I call”

Psalms 141:2

May my prayer be like incense

The psalmist asks Yahweh to accept and be pleased with his prayer the way he would accept and be pleased with incense. Alternate translation: “May the my prayer please you the way the sweet smell of incense pleases people” (See: Simile)

ULT

2 May my prayer be like incense before you; may my lifted hands be like the evening sacrifice.

my prayer

The psalmist wants Yahweh to be pleased with him because he is praying and because of the words of his prayer. (See: Metonymy)

my lifted hands

“the hands that I have lifted up.” Lifted hands are a metonym for prayer. People lifted their hands when they prayed or praised Yahweh. See how you translated “lift up your hands” in Psalms 134:2.

be like the evening sacrifice

The means to be like the animal that was burned on the altar in the evening. The psalmist speaks as if he wants Yahweh to be as pleased with him as he is with those who bring animals to sacrifice. He wants Yahweh to be pleased because the psalmist is praying or because of the words of his prayer. (See: Simile)

Psalms 141:3

place a guard over my mouth

The psalmist speaks as if evil words were prisoners trying to escape from his mouth. Alternate translation: “please help me not to say things that are evil” (See: Metaphor)

ULT

3 Yahweh, place a guard over my mouth; guard the door of my lips.

place a guard over

“tell someone to guard”

guard the door of my lips

The psalmist speaks as if evil words were prisoners trying to escape from his mouth. Alternate translation: “please help me not to say things when I should not” (See: Metaphor)

Psalms 141:4

participate in sinful activities

“do sinful deeds”

their delicacies

“their special foods”

ULT

4 Do not let my heart desire any evil thing or participate in sinful activities with men who behave wickedly. May I not eat any of their delicacies.

Psalms 141:5

ULT

5 Let a righteous man hit me; it will be a kindness to me. Let him correct me; it will be like oil on my head; may my head not refuse to accept it. But my prayer is always against their wicked deeds.

hit me

The psalmist speaks as if giving a rebuke were physically hitting someone. Alternate translation: “rebuke me” or “hit me so I will listen when he corrects me” (See: Metaphor)

it will be a kindness to me

The abstract noun “kindness” can be translated with an adverb. Alternate translation: “he will be acting kindly to me” (See: Abstract Nouns)

it will be like oil on my head

Possible meanings are that the psalmist speaks as if a person correcting him were putting oil on his head: (1) to honor him. Alternate translation: “when he corrects me, I will know that the one who corrects me is doing a good deed to me” or (2) to make his head feel better. (See: Simile and Metaphor)

may my head not refuse to accept it

The head is a synecdoche for the person. The litotes can be translated as a positive statement. Alternate translation: “may I accept it gladly” (See: Synecdoche and Litotes)

my prayer is always against their wicked deeds

The words “wicked deeds” are a metonym for the people who do the wicked deeds. Alternate translation: “I always pray that Yahweh will stop wicked people from doing evil deeds” (See: Metonymy)

Psalms 141:6

Their leaders will be thrown down

This could mean: (1) “Someone will throw their leaders down” or (2) “Their leaders will throw them down.” (See: Active or Passive)

cliffs

ground that goes straight down a long way

ULT

6 Their leaders will be thrown down
from the top of cliffs; they will hear that
my own words are pleasant.

Psalms 141:7

our bones have been scattered

This could mean: (1) “people have thrown our bones around in different directions” or (2) as a result of the fall from the cliffs (141:6) “our bodies are broken and our bones lie in disorder.”

ULT

7 They will have to say, “As when one plows and breaks up the ground, so our bones have been scattered at the mouth of Sheol.”

Psalms 141:8

my eyes are on you

The eyes are a synecdoche for the whole person. Alternate translation: “I am looking to see what you will do” or “I expect you to help me” (See: Synecdoche)

ULT

8 Surely my eyes are on you, Yahweh, Lord; in you I take refuge; do not leave my soul defenseless.

in you I take refuge

“I am asking you to protect me” See how “take refuge” is translated in Psalms 118:9. (See: Metaphor)

my soul

The soul is a metonym for the whole person. Alternate translation: “me” (See: Synecdoche)

Psalms 141:9

the snares that they have laid for me

The psalmist speaks of deceiving a good man so the good man will sin or so that the evil people can defeat him as if it were laying a trap for an animal. The word “snares” is a metonym for the people themselves. Alternate translation: “people who are looking for ways to harm me” (See: Metaphor and Metonymy)

ULT

9 Protect me from the snares that they have laid for me, from the traps of evildoers.

snares ... traps

Bible experts disagree on the exact meanings of these words. It would be best either to translate one of them with the word for a net or cage that contains the prey and the other as a rope or vine that catches the prey by the leg or neck or to translate both with the general word for “traps.” See how these words are translated in Psalms 140:5.

from the traps of evildoers

The verb may be supplied from the previous phrase. Alternate translation: “and protect me from the traps that those who do evil have set” (See: Ellipsis)

Psalms 141:10

Let the wicked fall into their own nets

The psalmist speaks of evil people deceiving good people as if hunters were trapping animals. Alternate translation: “Let the wicked fall into the net traps they have made to trap other people” or “Let the bad things the wicked planned for the righteous happen to the wicked instead”

ULT

10 Let the wicked fall into their own nets
while I escape.

Psalms 142

Psalm 142 General Notes

Type of psalm

Psalm 142 is a psalm of deliverance from his enemies. (See: deliver, hand over, turn over, release, rescue)

Special concepts in this chapter

Yahweh's help

The psalmist is alone, and has many enemies surrounding him. Despite this, Yahweh will help him. Then, good people will join the author. (See: good, right, pleasant, better, best)

Psalms 142:1

General Information:

Parallelism is common in Hebrew poetry. (See: Poetry and Parallelism)

ULT

1 With my voice I cry out for help to Yahweh; with my voice I plead for Yahweh’s favor.

A maschil

This may refer to a style of music. See how you translated this in Psalms 32:1.

cave

open place under the earth large enough for people to walk around in

I cry out for help to Yahweh ... I plead for Yahweh’s favor

If these two lines are so much the same that the reader will get the wrong meaning, you can translate them as one line. (See: Doublet)

with my voice

“using my voice” -

Psalms 142:2

pour out my lament before him ... I tell him my troubles

If these two lines are so much the same that the reader will get the wrong meaning, you can translate them as one line. (See: Doublet)

ULT

2 I pour out my lament before him; I tell him my troubles.

pour out my lament before him

The psalmist speaks of telling Yahweh why he is sad as if he were pouring all of a liquid out of a container. Alternate translation: “I tell him all about why I am sad” (See: Metaphor)

tell him my troubles

“tell him about everything that makes me worry”

Psalms 142:3

my spirit is weak within me

“I am weak” or “I am extremely discouraged”

you know my path

“you know the path I should take.” The psalmist speaks as if what a person does were a path that that person walked along. Alternate translation: “you know the way I should live” (See: Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information)

In the way that I walk they have hidden a trap for me

The psalmist speaks of people wanting to harm him as if they were trying to trap an animal. Alternate translation: “They are making plans so that whatever I do they can harm me” (See: Metaphor)

ULT

3 When my spirit is weak within me, you know my path. In the way that I walk they have hidden a trap for me.

Psalms 142:4

my life

This is a metonym for “me.” (See: Metonymy)

ULT

4 I look to my right and see that there is
no one who cares about me. There is no
escape for me; no one cares about my
life.

Psalms 142:5

called out to you

This is a call for help. Alternate translation: “called to you now for help” (See: Metonymy)

my portion

This could mean: (1) “all I want” or (2) “all I need” or (3) “all I have.”

in the land of the living

This idiom refers to a person being alive, as opposed to a person who is dead and in the place of the dead. Alternate translation: “while I am living” (See: Idiom)

ULT

5 I called out to you, Yahweh; I said,
“You are my refuge, my portion in the
land of the living.

Psalms 142:6

Listen to my call

This is a call for help. See how you translated this in Psalms 5:1. Alternate translation: “Listen to me as I call to you now for help” (See: Metonymy)

I have been brought very low

This could mean: (1) “I am very needy” and (2) “I am very weak.” See how “we are very low” is translated in Psalms 78:8.

ULT

6 Listen to my call, for I have been brought very low; rescue me from my persecutors, for they are stronger than I.

Psalms 142:7

Bring my soul out of prison

This is a request. The “soul” represents the whole person. Alternate translation: “bring me out of prison” (See: Synecdoche)

give thanks to your name

The word “name” is a metonym for the person. See how you translated this in Psalms 5:11. Alternate translation: “give thanks to you” (See: Metonymy)

ULT

7 Bring my soul out of prison so that I
may give thanks to your name. The
righteous will gather around me
because you have been good to me.”

Psalms 143

Psalm 143 General Notes

Type of psalm

Psalm 143 is a deliverance psalm. The author prays for deliverance from his enemies. (See: deliver, hand over, turn over, release, rescue)

Special concepts in this chapter

Yahweh’s help

The author prayed for help from Yahweh against his enemies because he is God’s servant.

Psalms 143:1

General Information:

Parallelism is common in Hebrew poetry. (See: Poetry and Parallelism)

ULT

1 Hear my prayer, Yahweh; listen to my pleas. Because of your faithfulness and righteousness, answer me!

Hear my prayer

The words “my prayer” are a metonym for the person who is praying. See how these words are translated in Psalms 39:12. Alternate translation: “Listen to me as I pray to you” or “Be willing to do what I ask you to do” (See: Metonymy)

Psalms 143:2

Do not enter into judgment

To “enter into judgment” is an idiom that means to pronounce judgment. Alternate translation: “Please do not judge” or “I beg you not to judge” (See: Idiom)

ULT

2 Do not enter into judgment with your servant, for in your sight no one is righteous.

your servant

The psalmist speaks of himself as if he were speaking of another person. Alternate translation: “me” (See: First, Second or Third Person)

in your sight no one is righteous

Here sight represents judgment or evaluation. Alternate translation: “in your judgment no one is righteous” (See: Metaphor)

Psalms 143:3

pursued my soul

Here the word “soul” represents the person. Alternate translation: “pursued me” (See: Synecdoche)

has crushed me to the ground

Defeating an enemy is spoken of as a heavy object crushing a lighter object on the ground. Alternate translation: “has completely defeated me” (See: Metaphor)

ULT

3 The enemy has pursued my soul; he has crushed me to the ground; he has made me to live in darkness like those who have been dead a long time.

Psalms 143:4

My spirit is overwhelmed within me

“I am weak” or “I am extremely discouraged”

my heart despairs

“I no longer have any hope”

ULT

4 My spirit is overwhelmed within me;
my heart despairs.

Psalms 143:5

call to mind

“think about”

your accomplishments

“all that you have accomplished” or “all the great things you have done”

ULT

5 I call to mind the old days; I meditate
on all your deeds; I reflect on your
accomplishments.

Psalms 143:6

ULT

6 I spread my hands out to you; my soul thirsts for you in a parched land. *Selah*

spread my hands out to you

What one does with one's body here is a metonym for the purpose of doing so. The Israelites would commonly pray while standing with their hands raised and spread out at their sides. Alternate translation: "pray to you with my hands lifted up at my sides" (See: Metonymy)

my soul thirsts for you in a parched land

The psalmist speaks of wanting to be with God as if he were in a parched land and he also was about to die of thirst. Alternate translation: "I want to be with you the way a person in a parched land who is very thirsty wants water" (See: Metaphor)

my soul thirsts for you

The psalmist desires to know Yahweh. The intensity of his desire to know Yahweh is like one who is very thirsty. Alternate translation: "I long for you" (See: Metaphor)

my soul

The soul is a metonym for the person. (See: Synecdoche)

parched land

A land where everything has died because there is no water.

Psalms 143:7

my spirit faints

Here the “spirit” refers to the whole person. Alternate translation: “I am weak” or “I am very discouraged” (See: Personification and Synecdoche)

ULT

7 Answer me quickly, Yahweh, because my spirit faints. Do not hide your face from me, or I will become like those who go down into the pit.

Do not hide your face from me

This is a request. “I beg you not to hide from me” or “Please, do not hide from me”

Do not hide your face from me

The psalmist speaks of Yahweh refusing to do what the psalmist asks as if Yahweh were refusing to even look at the psalmist. This litotes can be stated as a positive. Alternate translation: “Do not refuse to listen to me” or “Please listen to me” (See: Metaphor and Litotes)

I will become like those who go down into the pit

Here the word “pit” refers to the place of the dead. This phrase is a euphemism for death. Alternate translation: “I will become just another dead person” (See: Euphemism)

Psalms 143:8

Let me hear your covenant faithfulness

"Cause me to hear of your covenant faithfulness" or "Tell me of your covenant faithfulness." The abstract noun "faithfulness" can be translated with an adjective. Alternate translation: "Let me hear of how you are faithful to your covenant" (See: Abstract Nouns)

ULT

8 Let me hear your covenant faithfulness in the morning, for I trust in you. Show me the way where I should walk, for I lift up my soul to you.

in the morning

This could mean: (1) "in the morning," at the time many people thought was the best time to pray, or (2) "morning by morning," every day.

Show me

"Tell me"

the way where I should walk

The psalmist speaks of the way people live as if it were a path on which they walk. Alternate translation: "how you want me to live" (See: Metaphor)

for I lift up my soul to you

This could mean: (1) "I pray to you" or (2) "I believe that you will guide and protect me."

Psalms 143:9

I flee to you to hide

This could mean: (1) “I flee to you so I can hide” and (2) “I flee to you so you will hide and protect me.”

ULT

9 Rescue me from my enemies, Yahweh;
I flee to you to hide.

Psalms 143:10

to do your will

“to do what you want me to do”

lead me in the land of uprightness

This could mean: (1) “help me to live righteously” or (2) “may my life be free of trouble” (See: Metaphor)

the land of uprightness

This could mean: (1) this is a metaphor for righteous living or (2) “a level land,” a metaphor for life free of trouble. (See: Metaphor)

ULT

10 Teach me to do your will, for you are my God. May your good Spirit lead me in the land of uprightness.

Psalms 143:11

for your name’s sake

Yahweh’s name represents his reputation and character. Alternate translation: “because of who you are” (See: Metonymy)

ULT

11 Yahweh, for your name’s sake, keep me alive; in your righteousness bring my soul out of trouble.

Psalms 143:12

the enemies of my life

“the enemies who want to take my life”

In your covenant faithfulness cut off my enemies

ULT

12 In your covenant faithfulness cut off my enemies and destroy all the enemies of my life, for I am your servant.

“Show your covenant faithfulness by cutting off my enemies.” The abstract noun “faithfulness” can be translated with an adjective. Alternate translation: “Because you are faithful to your covenant, cut off my enemies” (See: Abstract Nouns)

the enemies of my life

“the enemies of my soul.” My “life” may be understood as representing the speaker. Alternate translation: “my enemies” (See: Metonymy)

Psalms 144

Psalm 144 General Notes

Type of psalm

Psalm 144 is a worship psalm. It is the first worship psalm in a series consisting of the final seven psalms (Psalms 144-150).

Special concepts in this chapter

Safety

Psalm 144 is a prayer for safety and prosperity for the nation of Israel.

Psalms 144:1

General Information:

Parallelism is common in Hebrew poetry. (See: Poetry and Parallelism)

ULT

1 Blessed be Yahweh, my rock, who trains my hands for war and my fingers for battle.

my rock

This could mean: (1) “the one who keeps me safe” or (2) “the one who gives me strength” (See: Metaphor)

who trains my hands for war and my fingers for battle

The words “hands” and “fingers” are synecdoches for “me.” If “war” and “battle” are the same word in your language, you can translate this as one line. Alternate translation: “who trains me for war and trains me for battle” or “who trains me for war” (See: Synecdoche and Doublet and Ellipsis)

Psalms 144:2

my covenant faithfulness

The abstract noun “faithfulness” can be translated with anadverb. This could mean: (1) “the one who faithfully loves me” or (2) “the one who faithfully protects me.” (See: Abstract Nouns)

ULT

2 You are my covenant faithfulness and my fortress, my high tower and the one who rescues me, my shield and the one in whom I take refuge, the one who subdues nations under me.

my fortress ... take refuge

The psalmist uses many metaphors to emphasize that Yahweh will protect him. (See: Metaphor)

my high tower

David speaks of Yahweh as if he were a fortress that protects him from attack. Yahweh is the one who protects David from harm. (See: Metaphor)

my shield

David speaks of Yahweh as if he were a shield that protects a soldier. Yahweh is the one who protects David from harm. See how this is translated in Psalms 18:2. (See: Metaphor)

the one in whom I take refuge

Going to Yahweh for protection is spoken of as taking refuge in him. Alternate translation: “the one to whom I go so he will protect me” (See: Metaphor)

the one who subdues nations under me

“the one who enables me to defeat other nations”

Psalms 144:3

Yahweh, what is man that you take notice of him or the son of man that you think about him?

ULT

3 Yahweh, what is man that you take notice of him or the son of man that you think about him?

These questions can be translated as statements. Alternate translation: “Man is so small compared to everything else you have made that I am surprised that you take notice of man and that you think about the son of man” (See: Rhetorical Question)

man ... son of man

two words for human beings. (See: Doublet)

Psalms 144:4

like a breath ... like a passing shadow

The writer compares humans to these thing to emphasize how short their lives are. (See: Simile)

ULT

4 Man is like a breath; his days are like a passing shadow.

Psalms 144:5

Cause ... come down ... touch ... make

These words should probably be translated as requests, not commands, since the psalmist knows that God is greater than he is.

ULT

5 Cause the sky to sink and come down,
Yahweh; touch the mountains and
make them smoke.

Cause the sky to sink

This could mean: (1) tear the sky open or (2) bend the heavens like a tree branch bends when someone walks on it or as one bends a bow before shooting arrows.

Psalms 144:6

Send ... scatter ... shoot ... drive

These should probably be translated as requests, not commands, since the psalmist knows that God is greater than he is.

in confusion

“so they do not know what to think or what to do”

ULT

6 Send flashes of lightning and scatter my enemies; shoot your arrows and drive them back in confusion.

Psalms 144:7

Reach out your hand from above; rescue me out of many waters

ULT

7 Reach out your hand from above;
rescue me out of many waters, from the
hand of foreigners.

David speaks as if God were on land above a flood and had physical hands with which he could pull David out of a flood. The flood is a metaphor for the troubles caused by the "foreigners." Alternate translation: "You who are able to act, help me overcome my troubles" (See: Metaphor)

from the hand of foreigners

Here "hand" refers to power. Alternate translation: "from the power of foreigners" (See: Metonymy)

Psalms 144:8

Their mouths speak lies

Here the word “mouths” represent the people who speak. Alternate translation: “They speak lies” (See: Synecdoche)

ULT

8 Their mouths speak lies, and their right hand is falsehood.

their right hand is falsehood

This could mean: (1) David speaks of the custom of raising the right hand to swear that what one is about to say in court is true, “they lie even when they swear to tell the truth,” or (2) the “right hand” is a metaphor for power, “everything they have gotten, they have gotten by telling lies.” (See: Metaphor)

Psalms 144:9

new song

This could mean: (1) “a song no one has ever sung before” or (2) “a song I have never sung before.”

ULT

9 I will sing a new song to you, God; on a lute of ten strings I will sing praises to you,

Psalms 144:10

who give ... kings, who rescued

You may end a sentence at the end of Psalms 144:9 and start a new sentence here. “you. It is you who give ... kings. It is you who rescued”

ULT

10 who give salvation to kings, who rescued David your servant from an evil sword.

David your servant

David speaks of himself as if he were someone else. “me, David, your servant”

from an evil sword

David speaks of evil people as if they were the swords they use as weapons. Alternate translation: “from evil people who were trying to kill him” (See: Metonymy)

Psalms 144:11

Rescue me and free me

“Please rescue me and free me”

from the hand of foreigners

ULT
11 Rescue me and free me from the hand of foreigners. Their mouths speak lies, and their right hand is falsehood.

Here “hand” refers to power. See how you translated these words in Psalms 144:7. Alternate translation: “from the power of foreigners” (See: Metonymy)

Their mouths speak lies

The people are represented by their “mouths.” See how you translated these words in Psalms 144:8. Alternate translation: “They speak lies” (See: Synecdoche)

their right hand is falsehood

This could mean: (1) David speaks of the custom of raising the right hand to swear that what one is about to say in court is true, “they lie even when they swear to tell the truth,” or (2) the “right hand” is a metaphor for power, “everything they have gotten, they have gotten by telling lies.”See how you translated these words Psalms 144:8. (See: Metaphor)

Psalms 144:12

like plants who grow to full size

healthy and strong

in their youth

the time when people develop

our daughters like carved corner pillars

“may our daughters be like carved corner pillars”

carved corner pillars

“beautiful posts that hold up the corners of a large house”

pillars, shapely like those of a palace

“pillars that are carved to make a palace beautiful”

ULT

12 May our sons be like plants who grow to full size in their youth and our daughters like carved corner pillars, shapely like those of a palace.

Psalms 144:13

thousands and ten thousands in our fields

“thousands—even tens of thousands!—and fill up our fields” (See: Numbers)

ULT

13 May our storehouses be full with every kind of produce, and may our sheep produce thousands and ten thousands in our fields.

Psalms 144:14

No one will break through our walls

“No one will be able to invade our city”

no outcry

Here the outcry is associated with a severe problem that causes the person to cry out. Alternate translation: “no one crying in pain” or “no one crying for help” or “no one calling out for justice” (See: Metonymy)

ULT

14 Then our oxen will have many young.
No one will break through our walls;
there will be no exile and no outcry in
our streets.

Psalms 144:15

(There are no notes for this verse.)

ULT

15 Blessed is the people with such blessings; happy is the people whose God is Yahweh.

Psalms 145

Psalm 145 General Notes

Type of psalm

Psalm 145 is a worship psalm. This is the second in a series of worship psalms consisting of the final seven psalms (Psalms 144-150).

Special concepts in this chapter

Praise

God is worthy of all praise. This is in part because he does such wonderful things for all who worship him.

Psalms 145:1

General Information:

Parallelism is common in Hebrew poetry. (See: Poetry and Parallelism)

ULT

1 I will extol you, my God, King; I will bless your name forever and ever.

extol you

“tell people how wonderful you are”

bless your name

The word “name” is a metonym for Yahweh himself. See how “may his glorious name be blessed” is translated in Psalms 72:19. Alternate translation: “bless you” or “do what makes you happy” (See: Metonymy)

Psalms 145:2

praise your name

The word “name” is a metonym for Yahweh himself. Alternate translation: “praise you” or “tell people how great you are” (See: Metonymy)

ULT

2 Every day will I bless you; I will praise your name forever and ever.

Psalms 145:3

(There are no notes for this verse.)

ULT

3 Great is Yahweh and greatly to be praised; his greatness is unsearchable.

Psalms 145:4

your mighty actions

“the things you can do because you are strong”

ULT

4 One generation will praise your deeds to the next and will proclaim your mighty actions.

Psalms 145:5

(There are no notes for this verse.)

ULT

5 I will meditate on the majesty of your glory and on your marvelous deeds.

Psalms 145:6

(There are no notes for this verse.)

ULT

6 They will speak of the power of your awesome works, and I will declare your greatness.

Psalms 145:7

declare your abounding goodness

“tell others how very good you are”

ULT

7 They will declare your abounding goodness, and they will sing about your righteousness.

Psalms 145:8

abounding in covenant faithfulness

The psalmist speaks of covenant faithfulness as if it were a physical object of which one could possess a large amount. The abstract noun “faithfulness” can be translated with an adjective. Alternate translation: “completely faithful to his covenant” (See: Metaphor and Abstract Nouns)

ULT

8 Yahweh is gracious and merciful, slow to anger and abounding in covenant faithfulness.

Psalms 145:9

his tender mercies are over all his works

“people can see him showing mercy in everything he does”

ULT

9 Yahweh is good to all; his tender mercies are over all his works.

Psalms 145:10

All you have made will give thanks

“All the people you have made will give thanks” or “It will be as if everything you have made will give you thanks”

ULT

10 All you have made will give thanks to you, Yahweh; your faithful ones will bless you.

Psalms 145:11

(There are no notes for this verse.)

ULT

11 They will speak of the glory of your kingdom, and they will tell of your power.

Psalms 145:12

(There are no notes for this verse.)

ULT

12 They will make known to mankind
God’s mighty deeds and the glorious
splendor of his kingdom.

Psalms 145:13

endures throughout all generations

“remains forever”

ULT

13 Your kingdom is an everlasting kingdom, and your dominion endures throughout all generations.

Psalms 145:14

supports all who are falling ... raises up all those who are bent over

The psalmist speaks of Yahweh encouraging people as if he were helping people who were physically weak. You may need to translate both lines using only one line. AT “encourages those who are discouraged” (See: Metaphor)

ULT

14 Yahweh supports all who are falling and raises up all those who are bent over.

Psalms 145:15

The eyes of all wait

Here the word “eyes” represents those who watch and wait for Yahweh to act. Alternate translation: “Everyone watches and waits” (See: Synecdoche)

ULT

15 The eyes of all wait for you; you give them their food at the right time.

Psalms 145:16

You open your hand

“You generously provide”

satisfy the desire of every living thing

“you give everyone more than they need and as much as they want”

ULT

16 You open your hand and satisfy the desire of every living thing.

Psalms 145:17

Yahweh is righteous in all his ways

"People can see from everything that Yahweh does that he is righteous"

ULT

17 Yahweh is righteous in all his ways and faithful in all he does.

faithful in all he does

"and he is gracious in all he does" or "people can see from everything that Yahweh does that he is gracious"

Psalms 145:18

is near to all those who call to him

Here “is near” means “ready to help.” Alternate translation: “is always ready to help all those who call to him” (See: Metaphor)

to all who call to him in trustworthiness

The abstract noun “trustworthiness” can be stated as an action. Alternate translation: “to all who tell only the truth when they pray” or “to all whom he trusts when they pray” (See: Abstract Nouns)

ULT

18 Yahweh is near to all those who call to him, to all who call to him in trustworthiness.

Psalms 145:19

(There are no notes for this verse.)

ULT

19 He fulfills the desire of those who honor him; he hears their cry and saves them.

Psalms 145:20

(There are no notes for this verse.)

ULT

20 Yahweh watches over all those who love him, but he will destroy all the wicked.

Psalms 145:21

My mouth will speak

Here the words “My mouth” represent the one speaking. Alternate translation: “I will speak” (See: Synecdoche)

will speak out the praise of Yahweh

“tell everyone how good Yahweh is”

let all mankind bless his holy name

The word “name” is a metonym for Yahweh himself. See how “may his glorious name be blessed” is translated in Psalms 72:19. Alternate translation: “let all people bless him” or “let all people do what makes him happy” (See: Metonymy)

ULT

21 My mouth will speak out the praise of Yahweh; let all mankind bless his holy name forever and ever.

Psalms 146

Psalm 146 General Notes

Type of psalm

Psalm 146 is a worship psalm. It is the third in series of seven worship psalms. (Psalms 144-150)

Special concepts in this chapter

Trust

Trusting people for protection is useless because they die. But God blesses everyone who trusts in him. He provides everything people need. (See: trust, trusted, trustworthy, trustworthiness and save, saved, safe, salvation and bless, blessed, blessing)

Psalms 146:1

General Information:

Parallelism is common in Hebrew poetry. (See: Poetry and Parallelism)

ULT

1 Praise Yahweh. Praise Yahweh, my soul.

Praise Yahweh, my soul

Here “soul” represents the writer’s inner being. The writer is commanding his inner being to praise Yahweh. This can be translated as a statement. Alternate translation: “I will praise Yahweh with all my soul” or “I give praise to Yahweh with all my life” (See: Metonymy)

Psalms 146:2

with all my life

“until I die” or “while I live”

ULT

2 I give praise to Yahweh with all my life;
I will sing praises to my God as long as I exist.

Psalms 146:3

ULT
3 Do not put your trust in princes or in mankind, in whom there is no salvation.

in princes

Here “princes” represents all human leaders. (See: Synecdoche)

in mankind, in whom there is no salvation

The abstract noun “salvation” can be stated as “save.” Alternate translation: “in any person because they cannot save you” (See: Abstract Nouns)

in mankind

“in humankind” or “in people”

Psalms 146:4

When a person’s life’s breath stops

This is a polite way to refer to someone dying. Alternate translation: When a person dies” (See: Euphemism)

ULT

4 When a person’s life’s breath stops,
he returns to the ground; on that day
his plans end.

he returns to the ground

This means that just as God made the first human, Adam, from the soil, so will a person’s body decay and become soil again when he dies. (See: Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information)

Psalms 146:5

(There are no notes for this verse.)

ULT

5 Blessed is he who has the God of Jacob for his help, whose hope is in Yahweh his God.

Psalms 146:6

Yahweh made heaven and earth

The words “heaven” and “earth” represent everything that exists in the physical universe. (See: Merism)

observes trustworthiness

The abstract noun “trustworthiness” can be stated as an adjective. Alternate translation: “remains trustworthy” or “remains faithful” (See: Abstract Nouns)

ULT

6 Yahweh made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that is in them; he observes trustworthiness forever.

Psalms 146:7

He executes justice

“He decides matters fairly”

for the oppressed

ULT

7 He executes justice for the oppressed and gives food to the hungry. Yahweh frees the prisoners;

This nominal adjective can be stated as adjectives. Alternate translation: “for oppressed people” or “for those whom other people oppress” (See: Nominal Adjectives)

to the hungry

This nominal adjective can be stated as adjectives. Alternate translation: “to hungry people” or “to those who are hungry” (See: Nominal Adjectives)

Psalms 146:8

opens the eyes of the blind

Causing a blind person to see is spoken of as if Yahweh were opening the person's eyes. Alternate translation: "causes the blind to see" (See: Metaphor)

ULT

8 Yahweh opens the eyes of the blind;
Yahweh raises up those who are bowed down; Yahweh loves the righteous people.

the blind

This nominal adjective can be stated as adjectives. Alternate translation: "blind people" or "those who are blind" (See: Nominal Adjectives)

Yahweh raises up those who are bowed down

Yahweh helping someone is spoken of as if he were physically helping someone to stand up. Alternate translation: "Yahweh helps those who are discouraged" or "Yahweh helps those who are weak" (See: Metaphor)

who are bowed down

This action is a sign of distress or mourning. (See: Symbolic Action)

Psalms 146:9

he lifts up

God helping someone is spoken of as if he were physically lifting them up. (See: Metaphor)

ULT

9 Yahweh protects the foreigners in the land; he lifts up the fatherless and widow, but he opposes the wicked.

Psalms 146:10

your God, Zion

Here “Zion” represents all the people of Israel. The writer is speaking to the people of Israel as if they were there listening to him. Alternate translation: “your God, people of Israel” (See: Metonymy and Apostrophe)

ULT
10 Yahweh will reign forever, your God, Zion, for all generations. Praise Yahweh.

for all generations

The words “will reign” are understood. Alternate translation: “will reign for all generations” or “will reign forever” (See: Ellipsis)

Psalms 147

Psalm 147 General Notes

Type of psalm

Psalm 147 is a worship psalm. It is the fourth in a series of seven worship psalms. (Psalms 144-150)

Special concepts in this chapter

Yahweh’s control

Yahweh has created everything and controls all of nature. He provides for the animals and people.

Psalms 147:1

General Information:

Parallelism is common in Hebrew poetry. (See: Poetry and Parallelism)

ULT

1 Praise Yahweh, for it is good to sing praises to our God, it is pleasant, and praise is suitable.

it is pleasant

The object may be supplied from the previous phrase. Alternate translation: “it is pleasant to sing praises” (See: Ellipsis)

praise is suitable

“praise is fitting” or “praise is appropriate”

Psalms 147:2

(There are no notes for this verse.)

ULT

2 Yahweh rebuilds Jerusalem, he
gathers together the scattered people
of Israel.

Psalms 147:3

He heals the brokenhearted and binds up their wounds

ULT

3 He heals the brokenhearted and binds up their wounds.

The writer speaks of the people's sorrow and discouragement as if they were physical wounds, and of Yahweh encouraging them as if he were healing those wounds. Alternate translation: "He encourages those who are sad and helps them to heal from their emotional wounds" (See: Metaphor)

Psalms 147:4

(There are no notes for this verse.)

ULT

4 He counts the stars, he gives names to all of them.

Psalms 147:5

his understanding cannot be measured

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: “no one can measure his understanding” or “his understanding has no limit” (See: Active or Passive)

ULT

5 Great is our Lord and awesome in power, his understanding cannot be measured.

Psalms 147:6

Yahweh lifts up the oppressed

The writer speaks of Yahweh honoring those who are oppressed as if Yahweh were lifting them up from the ground. Alternate translation: “Yahweh honors the oppressed” (See: Metaphor)

ULT

6 Yahweh lifts up the oppressed, he brings the wicked down to the ground.

he brings the wicked down to the ground

The writer speaks of Yahweh humiliating the wicked as if Yahweh were forcing them to lie on the ground. Alternate translation: “he humiliates the wicked” (See: Metaphor)

Psalms 147:7

with a harp

“while playing a harp”

ULT

7 Sing to Yahweh with thanksgiving,
sing praises to our God with a harp.

Psalms 147:8

(There are no notes for this verse.)

ULT

8 He covers the heavens with clouds
and prepares rain for the earth, making
the grass to grow on the mountains.

Psalms 147:9

to the young ravens when they cry

The verbal phrase can be supplied from the previous line. Alternate translation: “he gives food to the young ravens when they cry” (See: Ellipsis)

when they cry

“whey they chirp” or “when they call”

ULT

9 He gives food to the animals and to the young ravens when they cry.

Psalms 147:10

He finds no delight in the strength of a horse

“Strong horses do not delight him”

the strong legs of a man

This could mean: (1) “strong legs” is a metonym that represents how swiftly a man can run. Alternate translation: “men who can run swiftly” or (2) “strong legs” represents the strength of the whole man. Alternate translation: “how strong a man is” (See: Metonymy and Synecdoche)

ULT

10 He finds no delight in the strength of a horse, he takes no pleasure in the strong legs of a man.

Psalms 147:11

who hope in his covenant faithfulness

The abstract noun “faithfulness” can be translated with and adjective. Alternate translation: “who trust him because he is faithful to his covenant” (See: Abstract Nouns)

ULT

11 Yahweh takes pleasure in those who honor him, who hope in his covenant faithfulness.

Psalms 147:12

Jerusalem ... Zion

The writer speaks to Jerusalem, which he also calls Zion, as if it were a person. The names of the city are metonyms for the people who live in it. Alternate translation: “people of Jerusalem ... people of Zion” (See: Personification and Metonymy)

ULT

12 Praise Yahweh, Jerusalem, praise your God, Zion.

Psalms 147:13

For he strengthens the bars of your gates

The phrase “the bars of your gates” represent the city as a whole. Yahweh will make Jerusalem secure from enemy invasion. Alternate translation: “For he protects Jerusalem” (See: Synecdoche)

ULT

13 For he strengthens the bars of your gates, he blesses your children among you.

he blesses ... among you

The writer speaks of those who live in Jerusalem as if they were Jerusalem’s children. Alternate translation: “he blesses those who live in Jerusalem” (See: Metaphor)

Psalms 147:14

He brings prosperity

“He brings peace.” This could mean: (1) Yahweh causes the people who live in Jerusalem to prosper materially and financially or (2) the word translated as “prosperity” means “peace” and Yahweh keeps Jerusalem safe from enemy attack.

ULT

14 He brings prosperity inside your borders, he satisfies you with the finest of wheat.

Psalms 147:15

his command runs very swiftly

The writer describes God’s command as if it were a messenger that moves quickly to deliver God’s message. (See: Personification)

ULT

15 He sends out his commandment to earth, his command runs very swiftly.

Psalms 147:16

He makes the snow like wool, he scatters the frost like ashes

ULT

16 He makes the snow like wool, he scatters the frost like ashes.

These emphasize how easy it is for him to do these things. He covers the ground with snow as easily as a person covers something with a wool blanket. And, he removes the frost as easily as the wind blows ashes. (See: Simile)

Psalms 147:17

He dispenses the hail like crumbs

Yahweh scatters hail as easily as a person would scatter bread crumbs. Alternate translation: “He dispenses the hail easily, as if it were crumbs” (See: Simile)

ULT

17 He dispenses the hail like crumbs,
who can withstand the cold he sends?

He dispenses

“He sends”

hail

small pieces of ice that fall from the sky like rain

who can withstand the cold he sends?

The writer uses this question to emphasize that it is difficult to endure the cold weather that Yahweh causes. Alternate translation: “no one can live in the cold he sends.” (See: Rhetorical Question)

Psalms 147:18

He sends out his command and melts them

The writer speaks of Yahweh's command as if it were his messenger. The word "command" can be translated with a verb. Alternate translation: "He commands the ice to melt" (See: Metaphor and Abstract Nouns)

ULT

18 He sends out his command and melts them, he makes the wind to blow and the water to flow.

Psalms 147:19

He proclaimed his word to Jacob, his statutes and his righteous decrees to Israel

These two lines mean the same thing and emphasize that Yahweh gave his law only to Israel. (See: Parallelism)

ULT

19 He proclaimed his word to Jacob, his statutes and his righteous decrees to Israel.

his statutes and his righteous decrees to Israel

The verbal phrase can be supplied from the previous line. Alternate translation: “He proclaimed his statutes and his righteous decrees to Israel” (See: Ellipsis)

his statutes and his righteous decrees

The words “statutes” and “righteous decrees,” along with “word” in the previous line, all refer to the law of Moses. If your language does not have different words for these terms, you may combine the two lines into one, using either “Jacob” or “Israel” for the people who received them. (See: Doublet)

Psalms 147:20

they do not know them

The other nations do not know Yahweh’s decrees.

ULT

20 He has not done so with any other nation, and as for his decrees, they do not know them. Praise Yahweh.

Psalms 148

Psalm 148 General Notes

Type of psalm

Psalm 148 is a worship psalm. It is the fifth in a series of seven worship psalms. (Psalms 144-150)

Special concepts in this chapter

Praise

All creation, including humans, should praise God for his greatness.

Psalms 148:1

General Information:

Parallelism is common in Hebrew poetry. (See: Poetry and Parallelism)

ULT

1 Praise Yahweh. Praise Yahweh, you in the heavens; praise him, you in the heights.

Praise Yahweh, you in the heavens ... you in the heights

“Praise Yahweh, you in the heavens ... you in the sky.” These two lines are parallel, with phrase “the heights” meaning the same thing as “the heavens” in the previous line. (See: Parallelism)

Psalms 148:2

(There are no notes for this verse.)

ULT

2 Praise him, all his angels; praise him,
all his hosts.

Psalms 148:3

Praise him, sun and moon

The writer speaks to the sun and moon as if they were people and commands them to praise Yahweh. Alternate translation: “Praise Yahweh, sun and moon, as people do” (See: Personification)

ULT

3 Praise him, sun and moon; praise him, all you shining stars.

praise him, all you shining stars

The writer speaks to the shining stars as if they were people and commands them to praise Yahweh. Alternate translation: “Praise Yahweh, shining stars, as people do” (See: Personification)

Psalms 148:4

Praise him, highest heaven

The phrase “highest heaven” is an idiom that refers to heaven itself. The writer speaks to heaven as if it were a person and commands it to praise Yahweh. Alternate translation: “Praise Yahweh, highest heaven, as people do” (See: Personification)

ULT

4 Praise him, highest heaven and you waters that are above the sky.

you waters that are above the sky

The writer speaks to “the waters that are above the sky” as if they are people and commands them to praise Yahweh. The verbal phrase can be supplied from the previous line. Alternate translation: “praise him, you waters that are above the sky, as people do” (See: Personification and Ellipsis)

waters that are above the sky

The writer speaks of a place above the sky where water is stored and from which the rain comes.

Psalms 148:5

Let them praise the name of Yahweh

Here the word “name” represents Yahweh himself. Alternate translation: “Let them praise Yahweh” (See: Metonymy)

they were created

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: “he created them” (See: Active or Passive)

ULT

5 Let them praise the name of Yahweh,
for he gave the command, and they were created.

Psalms 148:6

he issued a decree that will never change

This could mean: (1) “he gave a command that is permanent” or (2) “he gave a command that they will not disobey.”

he issued

“he gave”

ULT

6 He has also established them forever and ever; he issued a decree that will never change.

Psalms 148:7

all ocean depths

This phrase represents every creature that lives in the depths of the oceans. Alternate translation: “all creatures in the ocean depths” (See: Metonymy)

ULT

7 Praise him from the earth, you sea monsters and all ocean depths,

Psalms 148:8

fire and hail, snow and clouds, stormy wind

The writer speaks to these natural phenomena as if they are people and commands them to praise Yahweh. (See: Personification)

stormy wind fulfilling his word

“stormy wind that does what Yahweh commands”

ULT

8 fire and hail, snow and clouds, stormy wind fulfilling his word.

Psalms 148:9

The writer continues to speak to things that are not human as if they were people and commands them to praise Yahweh. (See: Personification)

ULT

9 Praise him, mountains and all hills,
fruit trees and all cedars,

Psalms 148:10

animals wild and tame

The words “wild” and “tame” are opposites. Together they encompass all animals. Alternate translation: “all animals” (See: Merism)

ULT

10 animals wild and tame, creatures that crawl and birds.

Psalms 148:11

Connecting Statement:

The writer commands all people to praise Yahweh.

ULT

11 Praise Yahweh, kings of the earth and all nations, princes and all who govern on the earth,

all nations

The word “nations” represents the people who live in those nations. Alternate translation: “people of every nation” (See: Metonymy)

Psalms 148:12

young men and young women, elderly and children

The writer uses two merisms, one related to gender and one related to age, to represent every person. (See: Merism)

ULT

12 both young men and young women, elderly and children.

Psalms 148:13

the name of Yahweh, for his name alone

Here the word “name” represents Yahweh himself. Alternate translation: “Yahweh, for he alone” (See: Metonymy)

his glory extends over the earth and the heavens

The writer speaks of Yahweh’s greatness as his glory being high above earth and heaven. (See: Metaphor)

ULT

13 Let them all praise the name of Yahweh, for his name alone is exalted and his glory extends over the earth and the heavens.

Psalms 148:14

He has lifted up the horn of his people

The writer speaks of strength as if it were the horn of an animal. Lifting up an animal horn was a symbolic action that represented military victory. Alternate translation: “He has made his people strong” or “He has given his people victory” (See: Metaphor and Symbolic Action)

ULT

14 He has lifted up the horn of his people for praise from all his faithful ones, the Israelites, the people near to him. Praise Yahweh.

for praise from all his faithful ones

“so that all his faithful ones praise him”

the people near to him

The writer speaks of Yahweh loving his people as if his people were physically close to him. Alternate translation: “the people he loves” (See: Metaphor)

Psalms 149

Psalm 149 General Notes

Type of psalm

Psalm 149 is a worship psalm. It is the sixth in a series of seven worship psalms. (Psalms 144-150)

Special concepts in this chapter

Praise

The people of Israel should praise God and conquer the other nations.

Psalms 149:1

General Information:

The psalmist is speaking to all of God's people, so you should use the plural command form if your language has one. Parallelism is common in Hebrew poetry. (See: Pronouns and Poetry and Parallelism)

ULT

1 Praise Yahweh. Sing to Yahweh a new song; sing his praise in the assembly of the faithful ones.

a new song

This could mean: (1) "a song you have never sung before" or (2) a song no one has ever sung before.

sing his praise

"praise him with songs"

Psalms 149:2

rejoice in the one who made them

This could mean: (1) “rejoice because he made them” or (2) “rejoice because the one who made them is good.”

rejoice in their king

The words “their king” is likely a reference to God. This could mean: (1) “rejoice because he is their king” or (2) “rejoice because their king is good.”

ULT

2 Let Israel rejoice in the one who made them; let the people of Zion rejoice in their king.

Psalms 149:3

praise his name

The word “name” is a metonym for Yahweh himself. Alternate translation: “praise him” or “tell people how great he is” (See: Metonymy)

ULT

3 Let them praise his name with dancing; let them sing praises to him with tambourine and harp.

tambourine

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)

Psalms 149:4

glorifies the humble with salvation

The abstract noun “salvation” can be translated with a verbal phrase. Alternate translation: “glorifies the humble by saving them” (See: Abstract Nouns)

ULT

4 For Yahweh takes pleasure in his people; he glorifies the humble with salvation.

the humble

This can be restated to remove the nominal adjective. Alternate translation: “those who are humble” (See: Nominal Adjectives)

Psalms 149:5

on their beds

The translation can make explicit that this refers to when a person lies down at night to sleep in a bed. Alternate translation: “as they lie down to sleep at night” (See: Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information)

ULT

5 Let the faithful ones rejoice in this honor; let them sing for joy on their beds.

Psalms 149:6

May the praises of God be in their mouths

The mouth represents the whole person. Alternate translation: “May they always be ready to praise God” (See: Synecdoche)

a two-edged sword in their hand

If swords are not known, use the name of a local weapon. The word “sword” is a metonym for being ready to fight in war. Alternate translation: “may they always be ready to go to war for him” (See: Ellipsis and Metonymy)

ULT

6 May the praises of God be in their mouths and a two-edged sword in their hand

Psalms 149:7

the nations

The phrase “the nations” is a metonym for the people who live in the nations. Alternate translation: “the people of the nations” (See: Metonymy)

ULT

7 to execute vengeance on the nations
and acts of punishment on the peoples.

Psalms 149:8

chains

These are made of heavy metal and restrict the movement of prisoners.

ULT

8 They will bind their kings with chains
and their nobles with iron shackles.

shackles

a pair of chains or bands with a chain between that limits the movement of both a person’s hands or feet.

Psalms 149:9

They will execute the judgment that is written

The abstract noun “judgment” can be stated as “judge.” Alternate translation: “They will judge and punish the people of those nations as God wrote should be done” (See: Abstract Nouns)

ULT

9 They will execute the judgment that is written. This will be an honor for all his faithful ones. Praise Yahweh.

Psalms 150

Psalm 150 General Notes

Type of psalm

Psalm 150 is a worship psalm. It is last in a series of worship psalms. (Psalms 144-150)

Special concepts in this chapter

Instruments

People should praise Yahweh with every type of musical instrument.

Psalms 150:1

General Information:

This focuses on praise or worship that is most commonly held in the temple. Parallelism is common in Hebrew poetry. (See: Poetry and Parallelism)

ULT

1 Praise Yahweh. Praise God in his holy place; praise him in the mighty heavens.

Praise God in his holy place

God’s temple was often referred to as his holy place. This was the most common place to go to worship God.

Psalms 150:2

his mighty acts

"the great things he has done." God's **mighty acts** could mean: (1) natural such as thunderstorms and earthquakes or (2) miraculous such as healings and great victories in battle.

ULT

2 Praise him for his mighty acts; praise him for his surpassing greatness.

Psalms 150:3

General Information:

This chunk focuses on praising or worshiping God with musical instruments and dance.

ULT

3 Praise him with the blast of the horn;
praise him with lute and harp.

Psalms 150:4

tambourines

A tambourine 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

4 Praise him with tambourines and dancing; praise him with stringed instruments and wind instruments.

Psalms 150:5

cymbals

two thin, round metal plates that are hit together to make a loud sound (See: Translate Unknowns)

ULT

5 Praise him with loud cymbals; praise him with high sounding cymbals.

Psalms 150:6

General Information:

This verse is more than the end of this psalm. It is the closing statement for all of Book 5 of the Psalms, which starts at Psalm 107 and ends with Psalm 150.

ULT

6 Let everything that has breath praise Yahweh. Praise Yahweh.

everything that has breath

This is an exaggeration that calls on all people who are alive to praise God. (See: Hyperbole)

unfoldingWord® Translation Academy

Version 24

Abstract Nouns

Description

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]]
Sentence Structure

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.

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:** Psalms 1:2; 2:5; 3:8; 4:5; 4:7; 4:8; 5:7; 6:4; 6:5; 9:1; 9:6; 10:3; 13:5; 14:4; 17:7; 18:18; 18:35; 18:46; 18:47; 20:4; 21:1; 21:3; 21:4; 21:7; 22:31; 23:4; 23:6; 24:1; 24:5; 25:5; 25:6; 25:7; 25:11; 25:17; 25:18; 25:21; 26:3; 27:9; 27:12; 27:13; 28:7; 28:8; 29:1; 29:2; 30:4; 30:5; 30:6; 30:7; 30:11; 31:7; 31:16; 31:19; 31:21; 31:22; 32:10; 33:5; 33:18; 33:22; 35:3; 35:8; 35:9; 35:12; 35:20; 35:23; 35:26; 35:28; 36:4; 36:5; 36:7; 36:10; 37:30; 37:39; 38:20; 38:22; 40:3; 40:10; 40:16; 43:2; 44:8; 44:13; 44:14; 44:24; 44:26; 45:4; 48:2; 48:9; 48:14; 49:3; 49:8; 50:23; 51:1; 52:1; 52:8; 57:1; 57:3; 59:10; 59:17; 60:3; 62:11; 62:12; 63:3; 66:20; 68:19; 68:29; 68:34; 69:5; 69:13; 69:16; 69:19; 69:25; 69:29; 69:30; 70:4; 71:13; 71:15; 71:18; 72:7; 72:14; 72:16; 73:3; 74:12; 76:6; 77:8; 77:14; 77:15; 78:1; 78:25; 79:5; 79:9; 81:1; 82:1; 84:11; 85:4; 85:7; 85:10; 85:11; 86:13; 86:15; 86:16; 88:1; 89:1; 89:16; 89:17; 89:24; 89:28; 89:32; 89:47; 89:49; 90:14; 90:16; 90:17; 91:4; 91:8; 91:15; 92:2; 92:4; 92:5; 94:15; 94:17; 94:18; 94:19; 96:2; 96:7; 96:8; 96:9; 96:13; 97:11; 98:1; 98:2; 98:3; 99:4; 100:5; 101:1; 101:3; 103:4; 103:11; 103:17; 106:1; 106:7; 107:1; 107:8; 107:15; 107:21; 107:31; 107:43; 108:4; 109:16; 109:21; 109:26; 111:10; 115:1; 116:1; 117:2; 118:1; 118:3; 118:21; 118:29; 119:39; 119:40; 119:64; 119:75; 119:76; 119:88; 119:104; 119:123; 119:124; 119:125; 119:134; 119:149; 119:155; 119:159; 119:174; 123:2; 123:3; 130:2; 136:1;

136:8; 138:2; 138:7; 138:8; 140:12; 141:5; 143:8; 143:12; 144:2; 145:8; 145:18; 146:3; 146:6; 147:11; 147:18; 149:4; 149:9)

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.

> 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:
>
> *Sentence Structure*
> *[[rc://en/ta/man/translate/figs-verbs]]*

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.

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:** Psalms 2:10; 9:13; 9:18; 9:19; 10:16; 12:8; 16:4; 16:6; 16:8; 18:7; 18:8; 18:15; 18:44; 18:46; 18:48; 19:11; 20:8; 21:7; 22:5; 22:6; 22:10; 22:14; 25:2; 25:3; 25:20; 27:6; 28:7; 29:3; 31:1; 31:17; 31:18; 31:22; 32:1; 32:2; 33:6; 33:16; 34:21; 34:22; 35:4; 35:26; 35:27; 36:2; 36:12; 37:17; 37:20; 37:22; 37:23; 37:25; 37:28; 37:33; 37:36; 37:38; 38:9; 40:5; 40:14; 44:11; 44:13; 44:22; 45:13; 45:14; 45:15; 45:17; 46:2; 46:5; 46:6; 46:10; 48:1; 49:14; 59:12; 60:4; 62:2; 62:6; 63:10; 63:11; 64:8; 65:1; 65:4; 66:17; 67:2; 68:1; 68:2; 69:6; 69:14; 69:23; 69:28; 70:2; 70:4; 71:1; 71:6; 71:13; 71:24; 72:15; 72:17; 72:18; 72:19; 72:20; 75:10; 76:5; 76:12; 77:2; 77:19; 78:61; 80:3; 80:7; 80:10; 80:19; 81:4; 81:15; 83:4; 83:17; 86:17; 87:3; 87:5; 88:11; 88:12; 89:2; 89:5; 89:7; 89:37; 89:52; 90:2; 90:7; 90:10; 92:7; 92:9; 92:13; 93:1; 93:2; 94:13; 96:4; 96:10; 97:11; 99:2; 101:7; 102:4; 102:18; 102:20; 103:14; 104:16; 104:30; 105:17; 105:18; 106:28; 106:31; 106:39; 106:42; 106:43; 106:48; 107:29; 107:39; 108:6; 109:7; 109:13; 109:14; 109:25; 109:28; 111:2; 111:4; 111:8; 112:2; 112:6; 112:9; 113:3; 115:15; 116:10; 118:15; 118:16; 119:67; 119:78; 119:80; 119:140; 119:141; 120:4; 128:1; 128:4; 129:5; 137:8; 141:6; 147:5; 148:5)

Apostrophe

Description

This page answers the question: *What is the figure of speech called an apostrophe?*

In order to understand this topic, it would be good to read:

[[rc://en/ta/man/translate/figs-intro]]

An apostrophe is a figure of speech in which a speaker turns his attention away from his listeners and speaks to someone or something that he knows cannot hear him. He does this to tell his listeners his message or feelings about that person or thing in a very strong way.

Reason This Is a Translation Issue

Many languages do not use apostrophe, and readers could be confused by it. They may wonder who the speaker is talking to, or think that the speaker is crazy to talk to things or people who cannot hear.

Examples from the Bible

> Mountains of Gilboa, let there not be dew or rain on you. (2 Samuel 1:21a ULT)

King Saul was killed on Mount Gilboa, and David sang a sad song about it. By telling these mountains that he wanted them to have no dew or rain, he showed how sad he was.

> Jerusalem, Jerusalem, who kills the prophets and stones those sent to you. (Luke 13:34a ULT)

Jesus was expressing his feelings for the people of Jerusalem in front of his disciples and a group of Pharisees. By speaking directly to Jerusalem as though its people could hear him, Jesus showed how deeply he cared about them.

> He cried against the altar by the word of Yahweh: "**Altar**, **altar**! This is what Yahweh says, 'See, … on you they will burn human bones.'" (1 Kings 13:2 ULT)

The man of God spoke as if the altar could hear him, but he really wanted the king, who was standing there, to hear him.

Translation Strategies

If apostrophe would be natural and give the right meaning in your language, consider using it. But if this way of speaking would be confusing to your people, let the speaker continue speaking to the people that are listening to him as he tells **them** his message or feelings about the people or thing that cannot hear him. See the example below.

Examples of Translation Strategies Applied

> He cried against the altar by the word of Yahweh: "**Altar**, **altar**! This is what Yahweh says, 'See, … on you they will burn human bones.'" (1 Kings 13:2 ULT)
>
> > He said this about the altar: "This is what Yahweh says **about this altar.** 'See, … they will burn people's bones on **it**.'"
>
> **Mountains of Gilboa**, let there not be dew or rain on **you.** (2 Samuel 1:21a ULT)
>
> > **As for these mountains of Gilboa**, let there not be dew or rain on **them**.

(**Go back to:** Psalms 48:7; 55:13; 68:35; 87:3; 116:19; 122:2; 122:6; 122:7; 122:8; 135:9; 137:5; 137:8; 139:19; 146:10)

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:** Psalms 1:4; 2:2; 2:4; 2:7; 4:4; 5:1; 7:11; 9:12; 10:17; 14:5; 16:3; 17:15; 18:25; 18:45; 18:49; 19:6; 21:1; 21:12; 22:9; 22:10; 22:24; 22:25; 22:26; 24:2; 25:3; 25:15; 27:7; 28:5; 29:2; 34:1; 35:8; 35:21; 35:22; 35:25; 37:13; 37:32; 38:5; 38:9; 39:6; 40:7; 41:8; 41:11; 42:3; 42:6; 45:3; 45:9; 45:13; 46:3; 46:4; 46:10; 47:1; 47:5; 48:8; 49:6; 49:7; 50:11; 50:20; 50:21; 51:1; 51:16; 52:1; 55:19; 56:7; 56:9; 57:7; 57:8; 58:5; 59:4; 59:6; 59:10; 61:7; 63:9; 63:10; 63:11; 66:6; 66:18; 66:20; 67:2; 68:12; 68:21; 68:26; 68:30; 68:31; 69:10; 69:31; 71:10; 71:11; 71:17; 72:16; 73:8; 74:11; 74:13; 75:7; 78:9; 78:32; 78:70; 79:5; 79:11; 80:1; 80:14; 81:5; 81:7; 81:16; 83:8; 83:9; 83:11; 86:8; 89:3; 89:10; 89:15; 89:17; 89:19; 89:40; 90:3; 90:16; 91:15; 94:3; 94:4; 94:10; 95:8; 96:9; 96:11; 99:1; 99:5; 101:8; 102:9; 102:14; 103:6; 103:14; 104:11;

104:17; 104:28; 104:29; 105:12; 105:17; 105:18; 105:23; 105:27; 105:37; 105:39; 105:40; 106:13; 106:16; 106:19; 106:20; 106:30; 106:39; 107:6; 107:10; 107:12; 107:13; 107:16; 107:17; 107:19; 107:23; 107:28; 107:40; 109:4; 109:16; 109:18; 109:24; 110:2; 110:3; 110:4; 110:5; 110:7; 115:5; 115:7; 115:8; 115:14; 116:13; 116:15; 116:16; 118:7; 118:19; 119:38; 119:45; 119:52; 119:57; 119:93; 119:120; 125:5; 126:2; 132:6; 132:8; 139:23; 141:1; 142:3; 146:4; 149:5)

Biblical Imagery — Extended Metaphors

An **extended metaphor** is an explicit metaphor that uses multiple images and multiple ideas at the same time. This is in contrast to a simple metaphor, which uses only a single Image and a single Idea. The difference between an extended metaphor and a complex metaphor is that an extended metaphor is explicitly stated by a writer/speaker, but a complex metaphor is not.

This page answers the question: *What is an extended metaphor?*

In order to understand this topic, it would be good to read:

Metaphor

Simile

Explanation of an Extended Metaphor

When using a metaphor, a writer/speaker uses a physical Image in order to express an abstract Idea about some immediate Topic, with at least one point of comparison between the Topic and the Image. In an extended metaphor, the writer/speaker explicitly states the Topic, and then describes multiple images and communicates multiple ideas.

In Isaiah 5:1b-7, the prophet Isaiah uses a vineyard (the **Image**) to express God's disappointment (the **Idea**) with the nation of Israel (the **Topic**) for their unfaithfulness to God and his covenant with them as his people. Farmers care for their gardens, and a farmer would feel disappointed if his vineyard produced bad fruit. If a vineyard produced only bad fruit for a long enough time, the farmer would eventually stop caring for it. We call this an extended metaphor because the prophet describes in detail multiple images relating to a vineyard as well as multiple aspects of God's disappointment.

> 1b My well beloved had a **vineyard** on a very fertile hill. 2 He **spaded it, removed the stones**, and **planted it** with an excellent kind of vine. He **built a tower** in the middle of it, and also **built a winepress**. **He waited for it to produce grapes, but it produced wild grapes**. 3 So now, inhabitant of Jerusalem and man of Judah; judge between me and my vineyard. 4 What more could have been done for my vineyard, that I have not done for it? **When I looked for it to produce grapes, why did it produce wild grapes**? 5 Now I will tell you what I will do to my vineyard; I will remove the hedge; I will turn it into a pasture; I will break down its wall, and it will be trampled down. 6 I will lay it waste, and it will not be pruned nor hoed. Instead, briers and thorns will spring up. I will also command the clouds not to rain on it. 7 For **the vineyard of Yahweh of hosts is the house of Israel**, and the man of Judah his pleasant planting; **he waited for justice, but instead, there was killing**; **for righteousness, but, instead, a shout for help**. (Isa 5:1b-7 ULT)

Other Examples From the Bible

In Psalm 23, the psalmist uses the physical **Image** of a shepherd to describe the way that God (the **Topic**) shows great concern and care (the **Idea**) for his people. The psalmist describes multiple aspects of what shepherds do for sheep (leads them to pasture and to water, protects them, etc.). The psalmist also describes multiple aspects of how God takes care of him (gives him life, righteousness, comfort, etc.). Shepherds give sheep what they need, take them to safe places, rescue them, guide them, and protect them. What God does for his people is like these actions.

> 1 Yahweh is my shepherd; I will lack nothing.
> 2 He **makes me** to lie down in green pastures;
> he **leads me** beside tranquil water.
> 3 He **brings back** my life;
> he **guides me** along right paths for his name's sake.
> 4 Even though I walk through a valley of darkest shadow,

> I will not fear harm since you are with me;
> your rod and your staff comfort me. (Psalm 23:1-4 ULT)

Reasons This Is a Translation Issue

- People may not realize that the images represent other things.
- People may not be familiar with the things that are used as images.
- Extended metaphors are often so profound that it would be impossible for a translator to show all of the meaning generated by the metaphor.

Translation Principles

- Make the meaning of the extended metaphor as clear to the target audience as it was to the original audience.
- Do not make the meaning more clear to the target audience than it was to the original audience.
- When someone uses an extended metaphor, the images are an important part of what he is trying to say.
- If the target audience is not familiar with some of the images, you will need to find some way of helping them understand the images so that they can understand the whole extended metaphor.

Translation Strategies

Consider using the same extended metaphor if your readers will understand it in the same way the original readers would have understood it. If not, here are some other strategies:

(1) If the target audience would think that the images should be understood literally, translate the metaphor as a simile by using words such as “like” or “as.” It may be enough to to do this in just the first sentence or two.
(2) If the target audience would not know the image, find a way of translating it so they can understand what the image is.
(3) If the target audience still would not understand, then state it clearly.

Examples of Translation Strategies Applied

(1) If the target audience would think that the images should be understood literally, translate the metaphor as a simile by using words such as “like” or “as.” It may be enough to to do this in just the first sentence or two. See Psalm 23:1-2 as an example:

> Yahweh is **my shepherd**; I will lack nothing.
> He makes **me** to lie down in green pastures;
> **he leads me** beside tranquil water. (ULT)

Can be translated as:

> “Yahweh is **like** a shepherd to me, so I will lack nothing.
> **Like** a shepherd who makes his sheep lie down in green pastures and leads them by peaceful waters, Yahweh helps me to rest peacefully.”

(2) If the target audience would not know the image, find a way of translating it so they can understand what the image is.

> My well beloved had a **vineyard** on a very fertile hill.
> He **spaded** it, removed the stones, and planted it with **an excellent kind of vine**.
> He built **a tower** in the middle of it, and also built a **winepress**.
> He waited for it to produce grapes, but it only produced **wild grapes.** (Isaiah 5:1b-2 ULT)

May be translated as:

> My well beloved had a **grapevine garden** on a very fertile hill.
> He **dug up the ground** and removed the stones, and planted it with **the best grapevines**.
> He built a **watchtower** in the middle of it, and also built **a tank where he could crush the juice out of the grapes**.
> He waited for it to produce grapes, but it produced **wild grapes that were not good for making wine**.

(3) If the target audience still would not understand, then state it clearly.

> Yahweh is **my shepherd**; I will lack nothing. (Psalm 23:1 ULT)
>
> > "Yahweh **cares for me** like a shepherd that cares for his sheep, so I will lack nothing."
>
> For the vineyard of Yahweh of hosts **is** the house of Israel,
> and the men of Judah his pleasant planting;
> he waited for justice, but instead, there was killing;
> for righteousness, but, instead, a shout for help. (Isaiah 5:7 ULT)

Can be translated as:

> > For the vineyard of Yahweh of hosts **represents** the house of Israel,
> > and the men of Judah **are like** his pleasant planting;
> > he waited for justice, but instead, there was killing;
> > for righteousness, but, instead, a cry for help.

or as:

> > **So as a farmer stops caring for a grapevine garden that produces bad fruit**,
> > **Yahweh will stop protecting** Israel and Judah,
> > **because they do not do what is right.**
> > He waited for justice, but instead, there was killing;
> > for righteousness, but, instead, a cry for help.

Next we recommend you learn about:

[[rc://en/ta/man/translate/bita-part1]]

(**Go back to:** Psalms 16:4; 23:1; 23:3; 23:4; 23:5)

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:** Psalms 90:9; 119:79)

Copy or Borrow Words

Description

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

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.)

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 — צְפַנְיָה
>
> > "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:** Introduction to Psalms; Psalms 52:5; 53:1; 56:1; 57:1; 60:1; 88:1)

Direct and Indirect Quotations

Description

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]]
[[rc://en/ta/man/translate/writing-quotations]]

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!**'

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:** Psalms 89:26)

Distinguishing Versus Informing or Reminding

Description

This page answers the question: *When a phrase is used with a noun, what is the difference between phrases that distinguish the noun from others and phrases that simply inform or remind?*

In order to understand this topic, it would be good to read:

[[rc://en/ta/man/translate/figs-partsofspeech]]
Sentence Structure

In some languages, phrases that modify a noun can be used with the noun for two different purposes. They can either (1) distinguish the noun from other similar items, or (2) they can give more information about the noun. That information could be new to the reader, or a reminder about something the reader might already know. Other languages use modifying phrases with a noun only for distinguishing the noun from other similar things. When people who speak these languages hear a modifying phrase along with a noun, they assume that its function is to distinguish one item from another similar item.

Some languages use a comma to mark the difference between (1) making a distinction between similar items and (2) giving more information about an item. Without the comma, the sentence below communicates that it is making a distinction:

- Mary gave some of the food to **her sister who was very thankful**.
    - If her sister was usually thankful, the phrase “who was thankful” could distinguish this sister of Mary’s from another sister who was not usually thankful.

With the comma, the sentence is giving more information:

- Mary gave some of the food to **her sister, who was very thankful**.
    - This same phrase can be used to give us more information about Mary’s sister. It tells us about how Mary’s sister responded when Mary gave her the food. In this case it does not distinguish one sister from another sister.

Reasons This Is a Translation Issue

- Many source languages of the Bible use phrases that modify a noun both for distinguishing the noun from another similar item and also for giving more information about the noun. You (the translator) must be careful to understand which meaning the author intended in each case.
- Some languages use phrases that modify a noun only for distinguishing the noun from another similar item. When translating a phrase that is used for giving more information, translators who speak these languages will need to separate the phrase from the noun. Otherwise, people who read it or hear it will think that the phrase is meant to distinguish the noun from other similar items.

Examples From the Bible

Examples of words and phrases that are used to distinguish one item from other possible items:

(These usually do not cause any problem in translation.)

> The curtain is to separate **the holy place** from **the most holy place**. (Exodus 26:33b ULT)

The words “holy” and “most holy” distinguish two different places from each other and from any other place.

> A foolish son is a grief to his father, and bitterness to **the woman who bore him**. (Proverbs 17:25 ULT)

The phrase “who bore him” distinguishes which woman the son is bitterness to. He is not bitterness to all women, but to his mother.

Examples of words and phrases that are used to give added information or a reminder about an item:

(These are a translation issue for languages that do not use these.)

> … for **your righteous judgments** are good. (Psalm 119:39b ULT)

The word “righteous” simply reminds us that God’s judgments are righteous. It does not distinguish his righteous judgments from his unrighteous judgments, because all of his judgments are righteous.

> How can Sarah, **who is 90 years old**, bear a son? (Genesis 17:17b ULT)

The phrase “who is 90 years old” is the reason that Abraham did not think that Sarah could bear a son. He was not distinguishing one woman named Sarah from another woman named Sarah who was a different age, and he was not telling anyone something new about her age. He simply did not think that a woman who was that old could bear a child.

> I will wipe away mankind **whom I have created** from the surface of the earth. (Genesis 6:7 ULT)

The phrase “whom I have created” is a reminder of the relationship between God and mankind. It is the reason God had the right to wipe away mankind. There is not another mankind that God did not create.

Translation Strategies

If readers would understand the purpose of a phrase with a noun, then consider keeping the phrase and the noun together. For languages that use words or phrases with a noun only to distinguish one item from another, here are some strategies for translating phrases that are used to inform or remind.

(1) Put the information in another part of the sentence and add words that show its purpose.
(2) Use one of your language’s ways for expressing that this is just added information. It may be by adding a small word, or by changing the way the voice sounds. Sometimes changes in the voice can be shown with punctuation marks, such as parentheses or commas.

Examples of Translation Strategies Applied

(1) Put the information in another part of the sentence and add words that show its purpose.

> I hate those who serve **worthless** idols (Psalm 31:6 ULT)

By saying “worthless idols,” David was commenting about all idols and giving his reason for hating those who serve them. He was not distinguishing worthless idols from valuable idols.
>

> > **Because idols are worthless**, I hate those who serve them.
>
> … for your **righteous** judgments are good. (Psalm 119:39b ULT)
>
> > … for your judgments are good **because they are righteous**.

> Can Sarah, **who is 90 years old**, bear a son? (Genesis 17:17b ULT)

The phrase “who is 90 years old” is a reminder of Sarah’s age. It tells why Abraham was asking the question. He did not expect that a woman who was that old could bear a child.
>

> > Can Sarah bear a son **even when she is 90 years old**?
>
> I will call on Yahweh, **who is worthy to be praised**. (2 Samuel 22:4a ULT) There is only one Yahweh. The phrase “who is worthy to be praised” gives a reason for calling on Yahweh.
>
> > I will call on Yahweh, because **he is worthy to be praised**

(2) Use one of your language’s ways for expressing that this is just added information.

> You are my Son, **whom I love**. I am pleased with you. (Luke 3:22 ULT)
>
> > You are my Son. **I love you** and I am pleased with you.
>
> > **Receiving my love**, you are my Son. I am pleased with you.

Next we recommend you learn about:

Double Negatives

(**Go back to:** Psalms 31:6; 69:31)

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]]
Sentence Structure

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 "use**less**." 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 **unfruitful**. (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 can**not** 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 **un**punished. (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:** Psalms 19:6; 21:2; 22:5; 102:17; 102:27; 105:37; 121:3; 121:4)

Doublet

Description

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]]

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.

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:** Psalms 4:8; 8:5; 10:15; 18:2; 18:7; 20:2; 20:8; 21:13; 22:17; 22:24; 25:5; 26:2; 27:2; 27:9; 31:3; 31:7; 32:8; 35:10; 35:23; 35:26; 37:14; 37:21; 39:2; 40:1; 40:16; 40:17; 41:13; 42:7; 43:5; 44:3; 44:16; 44:24; 45:15; 51:8; 57:4; 61:1; 62:10; 64:6; 65:5; 68:3; 68:35; 70:4; 70:5; 72:13; 72:14; 73:22; 73:26; 74:21; 76:4; 77:7; 77:9; 77:12; 77:16; 77:19; 78:56; 78:57; 90:6; 91:1; 93:4; 95:9; 98:1; 101:5; 104:1; 104:25; 107:10; 107:14; 109:2; 109:22; 111:1; 112:3; 115:1; 118:17; 118:24; 119:60; 119:105; 119:163; 121:4; 128:2; 135:9; 140:5; 142:1; 142:2; 144:1; 144:3; 147:19)

Ellipsis

Description

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]]
Sentence Structure

An ellipsis[1] 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:

> > 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 **sinners in the assembly** of the righteous. (Psalm 1:5 ULT)
>
> > So the wicked will not stand in the judgment, and **sinners 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:** Psalms 1:5; 19:4; 19:10; 20:7; 26:9; 27:9; 29:6; 31:10; 31:13; 33:11; 35:17; 36:10; 40:9; 41:5; 44:3; 47:5; 48:6; 49:11; 50:10; 57:10; 64:2; 67:2; 68:33; 69:8; 69:14; 69:28; 69:34; 71:4; 71:18; 71:23; 72:1; 72:2; 72:6; 72:17; 74:23; 75:4; 78:69; 80:10; 84:3; 84:10; 88:11; 88:12; 89:32; 89:36; 89:38; 90:3; 91:3; 92:2; 96:13; 97:11; 98:7; 98:9; 100:5; 103:7; 104:4; 104:14; 105:5; 105:9; 105:27; 106:5; 106:17; 107:3; 109:19; 110:4; 112:5; 114:1; 114:2; 114:7; 114:8; 115:1; 115:17; 116:8; 119:41; 121:6; 126:2; 132:8; 135:4; 141:9; 144:1; 146:10; 147:1; 147:9; 147:19; 148:4; 149:6)

Euphemism

Description

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]]

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.

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:** Psalms 13:3; 41:8; 45:11; 49:17; 49:19; 71:10; 76:5; 76:6; 78:31; 78:33; 90:5; 90:10; 94:17; 106:11; 106:38; 115:17; 119:87; 143:7; 146:4)

Exclamations

Description

This page answers the question: *What are ways of translating exclamations?*

In order to understand this topic, it would be good to read:

[[rc://en/ta/man/translate/figs-sentencetypes]]

Exclamations are words or sentences that show strong feeling such as surprise, joy, fear, or anger. In the ULT and UST, they usually have an exclamation mark (!) at the end. The mark shows that it is an exclamation. The situation and the meaning of what the people said helps us understand what feelings they were expressing. In the example below from Matthew 8, the speakers were terribly afraid. In the example from Matthew 9, the speakers were amazed, because something happened that they had never seen before.

> Save us, Lord; we are about to die! (Matthew 8:25b ULT)

> When the demon had been driven out, the mute man spoke. The crowds were astonished and said, “This has never been seen before in Israel!” (Matthew 9:33 ULT)

Reason This Is a Translation Issue

Languages have different ways of showing that a sentence communicates strong emotion.

Examples From the Bible

Some exclamations have a word that shows feeling. The sentences below have “Oh” and “Ah.” The word “oh” here shows the speaker’s amazement.

> **Oh**, the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and the knowledge of God! (Romans 11:33 ULT)

The word “Alas” below shows that Gideon was very frightened.

> When Gideon saw that he was the angel of Yahweh, Gideon lamented, “**Alas**, O my Lord Yahweh, for because of this I have seen the angel of Yahweh face to face!” (Judges 6:22 ULT)
>
> Some exclamations start with a question word such as “how” or “why,” even though they are not questions. The sentence below shows that the speaker is amazed at how unsearchable God’s judgments are.
>
> **How** unsearchable are his judgments, and his ways beyond discovering! (Romans 11:33b ULT)

Some exclamations in the Bible do not have a main verb. The exclamation below shows that the speaker is disgusted with the person he is speaking to.

> You worthless person! (Matthew 5:22b ULT)

Translation Strategies

(1) If an exclamation in your language needs a verb, add one. Often a good verb is “is” or “are.”

(2) Use an exclamation word from your language that shows the strong feeling.

(3) Translate the exclamation word with a sentence that shows the feeling.

(4) Use a word that emphasizes the part of the sentence that brings about the strong feeling.

(5) If the strong feeling is not clear in the target language, then tell how the person felt.

Examples of Translation Strategies Applied

(1) If an exclamation in your language needs a verb, add one. Often a good verb is "is" or "are."

> You worthless person! (Matthew 5:22b ULT)
>
> > "You **are** such a worthless person!"
>
> Oh, the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and the knowledge of God! (Romans 11:33b ULT)
>
> > "Oh, the riches of the wisdom and the knowledge of God **are** so deep!"

(2) Use an exclamation word from your language that shows the strong feeling. In the first suggested translation below, the word "wow" shows that they were astonished. In the second suggested translation, the expression "Oh no" shows that something terrible or frightening has happened.

> They were extremely astonished, saying, "He has done everything well. He even makes the deaf hear and the mute speak." (Mark 7:37 ULT)
>
> > "They were extremely astonished, saying, '**Wow**! He has done everything well. He even makes the deaf to hear and the mute to speak.'"
>
> Alas, oh my Lord Yahweh! For because of this I have seen the angel of Yahweh face to face! (Judges 6:22b ULT)
>
> > "**Oh no**, Lord Yahweh! I have seen the angel of Yahweh face to face!"

(3) Translate the exclamation word with a sentence that shows the feeling.

> "**Alas,** O my Lord Yahweh, for because of this I have seen the angel of Yahweh face to face!" (Judges 6:22 ULT)
>
> > "Lord Yahweh, **what will happen to me**? For I have seen the angel of Yahweh face to face!"
> > "**Help**, Lord Yahweh! For I have seen the angel of Yahweh face to face!"

(4) Use a word that emphasizes the part of the sentence that brings about the strong feeling.

> How unsearchable are his judgments, and his ways beyond discovering! (Romans 11:33b ULT)
>
> > "His judgments are **so** unsearchable and his ways are **far** beyond discovering!"

(5) If the strong feeling is not clear in the target language, then tell how the person felt.

> When Gideon saw that he was the angel of Yahweh, Gideon lamented, "**Alas,** O my Lord Yahweh, for because of this I have seen the angel of Yahweh face to face!" (Judges 6:22 ULT)
>
> > Gideon understood that this was the angel of Yahweh. **He was terrified** and said, "**Alas**, Lord Yahweh! I have seen the angel of Yahweh face to face!"

(**Go back to:** Psalms 3:1; 8:9; 14:7; 35:21; 35:25; 40:15; 53:6; 55:6; 107:8; 107:15; 107:21; 107:31; 118:29; 136:1)

Exclusive and Inclusive 'We'

Description

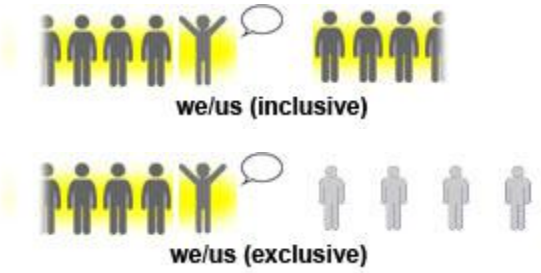
This page answers the question: *What are the exclusive and inclusive forms of "we"?*

In order to understand this topic, it would be good to read:

Pronouns

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.

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:

When Masculine Words Include Women

(**Go back to:** Psalms 20:5; 20:7; 20:8; 62:8; 65:4; 66:6; 66:9; 68:28; 68:29; 89:17; 137:1; 137:2)

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."

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

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.

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:** Psalms 5:6; 9:1; 18:50; 19:11; 19:13; 20:6; 22:24; 22:25; 22:27; 26:1; 27:9; 30:8; 34:6; 50:14; 50:16; 50:22; 50:23; 72:1; 81:15; 82:6; 86:2; 86:4; 86:16; 119:65; 119:76; 119:84; 119:122; 119:124; 119:126; 121:3; 143:2)

Forms of You

Singular, Dual, and Plural

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]]

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:** Psalms 22:15; 22:23; 22:25; 22:26; 22:27; 23:4; 58:2; 58:9; 65:10; 65:11)

Generic Noun Phrases

Description

This page answers the question: *What are generic noun phrases and how can I translate them?*

In order to understand this topic, it would be good to read:

[[rc://en/ta/man/translate/figs-partsofspeech]]

Generic noun phrases refer to people or things in general rather than to specific individuals or things. This happens frequently in proverbs, because proverbs tell about things that are true about people in general.

> Can **a man** walk on hot coals without scorching his feet?
> So is **the man who goes in to his neighbor's wife**;
> **the one who touches her** will not go unpunished. (Proverbs 6:28-29 ULT)

The phrases in bold above do not refer to a specific man. They refer to any man who does these things.

Reason This Is a Translation Issue

Different languages have different ways of showing that noun phrases refer to something in general. You (the translator) should refer to these general ideas in ways that are natural in your language.

Examples From the Bible

> The **righteous person** is kept away from trouble and it comes upon **the wicked** instead. (Proverbs 11:8 ULT)

The bold phrases above do not refer to a specific person but to anyone who does what is right or anyone who is wicked.

> People curse **the man who refuses to sell grain**. (Proverbs 11:26 ULT)

This does not refer to a particular man, but to any person who refuses to sell grain.

> Yahweh gives favor to **a good man**, but he condemns **a man who makes evil plans**. (Proverbs 12:2 ULT)

The phrase "a good man" does not refer to a particular man, but to any person who is good. The phrase "a man who makes evil plans" does not refer to a particular man, but to any person who makes evil plans.

Translation Strategies

If your language can use the same wording as in the ULT to refer to people or things in general rather than to specific individuals or things, consider using the same wording. If not, here are some strategies you might use.

(1) Use the word "the" in the noun phrase.

(2) Use the word "a" in the noun phrase.

(3) Use the word "any," as in "any person" or "anyone."

(4) Use the plural form, as in "people."

(5) Use any other way that is natural in your language.

Examples of Translation Strategies Applied

(1) Use the word "the" in the noun phrase.

> Yahweh gives favor to **a good man**, but he condemns **a man who makes evil plans**. (Proverbs 12:2 ULT)
>
> > "Yahweh gives favor to **the good man**, but he condemns **the man who makes evil plans**." (Proverbs 12:2)

(2) Use the word "a" in the noun phrase.

> People curse **the man** who refuses to sell grain. (Proverbs 11:26 ULT)
>
> > "People curse **a man** who refuses to sell grain."

(3) Use the word "any," as in "any person" or "anyone."

> People curse **the man** who refuses to sell grain. (Proverbs 11:26 ULT)
>
> > "People curse **any man** who refuses to sell grain."

(4) Use the plural form, as in "people" (or in this sentence, "men").

> People curse **the man** who refuses to sell grain. (Proverbs 11:26 ULT)
>
> > "People curse **men** who refuse to sell grain"

(5) Use any other way that is natural in your language.

> People curse **the man** who refuses to sell grain. (Proverbs 11:26 ULT)
>
> > "People curse **whoever** refuses to sell grain."

Next we recommend you learn about:

When Masculine Words Include Women

(**Go back to:** Psalms 10:3; 10:4; 10:11; 22:24; 24:4; 24:5; 25:12; 25:13; 36:1; 36:11; 37:12; 37:23; 37:25; 37:32; 37:33; 37:35; 37:37; 37:38; 58:10; 84:5; 84:12)

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:** Psalms 71:16)

Hendiadys

Description

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]]

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.

> … 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:** Psalms 42:4; 71:21)

How to Translate Names

Description

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

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.

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:** Psalms 29:6; 39:1; 42:6; 45:9; 52:1; 54:1; 60:1; 62:1; 68:14; 72:10; 77:1; 78:12; 78:43; 83:6; 83:7; 83:9; 83:10; 83:11; 87:4; 88:1; 89:1; 89:10; 89:12; 95:8; 106:17; 106:32; 132:6; 135:11; 136:19; 136:20)

Hyperbole

Description

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]]

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.

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:** Psalms 12:2; 39:5; 40:6; 42:3; 42:10; 44:22; 45:2; 45:16; 50:10; 58:10; 65:4; 69:4; 70:4; 71:18; 71:20; 77:18; 78:15; 78:27; 78:45; 86:3; 88:16; 91:12; 105:15; 107:26; 118:10; 119:139; 139:9; 139:18; 150:6)

Hypothetical Situations

This page answers the question: *What is a hypothetical situation?*

In order to understand this topic, it would be good to read:

Writing Styles

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.

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:** Psalms 27:10; 44:20; 50:12; 69:32; 73:15; 94:17; 124:1; 124:2; 124:3; 124:4; 124:5; 139:9)

Idiom

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]]

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.")

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:** Psalms 3:1; 13:3; 14:1; 16:11; 17:3; 18:27; 18:38; 18:39; 18:41; 19:13; 20:3; 21:4; 21:12; 22:9; 22:10; 22:29; 23:5; 23:6; 24:4; 25:2; 25:6; 25:7; 27:12; 27:13; 29:1; 30:7; 31:13; 31:22; 31:23; 32:3; 32:4; 32:11; 33:1; 33:8; 33:9; 33:11; 33:18; 33:20; 34:3; 34:5; 34:6; 34:17; 34:18; 35:11; 35:15; 35:25; 37:5; 37:10; 37:15; 37:18; 37:19; 37:26; 38:10; 39:1; 41:5; 41:6; 41:9; 41:10; 42:4; 42:6; 44:1; 44:26; 45:2; 46:9; 48:10; 49:1; 49:11; 49:18; 50:8; 50:11; 50:15; 50:18; 50:20; 50:21; 59:2; 59:3; 59:4; 59:5; 62:8; 62:10; 64:10; 68:33; 69:3; 69:4; 69:9; 69:14; 69:17; 69:19; 69:20; 69:27; 70:2; 71:2; 71:13; 72:7; 72:8; 72:15; 72:17; 74:8; 74:18; 75:5; 76:12; 77:6; 77:11; 78:2; 78:19; 78:34; 78:37; 78:39; 78:51; 78:55; 78:64; 79:11; 80:2; 80:17; 82:7; 83:2; 84:7; 86:14; 88:9; 89:6; 89:19; 89:43; 89:45; 89:50; 90:3; 91:16; 93:5; 94:21; 94:23; 95:4; 97:12; 98:3; 101:3; 101:6; 103:21; 104:5; 104:30; 105:4; 105:8; 105:9; 105:16; 105:42; 106:4; 106:43; 106:45; 107:2; 107:26; 107:27; 107:39; 107:42; 107:43; 108:1; 109:8; 109:21; 109:24; 109:30; 109:31; 110:1; 110:5; 110:7; 111:5; 118:7; 118:18; 118:23; 119:2; 119:7; 119:10; 119:15; 119:25; 119:32; 119:34; 119:36; 119:45; 119:48; 119:53; 119:55; 119:56; 119:65; 119:90; 119:109; 119:112; 119:126; 119:139; 119:148; 119:157; 123:4; 127:2; 129:5; 136:2; 140:11; 142:5; 143:2)

Imperatives — Other Uses

Description

This page answers the question: *What other uses are there for imperative sentences in the Bible?*

In order to understand this topic, it would be good to read:

[[rc://en/ta/man/translate/figs-sentencetypes]]

Imperative sentences are mainly used to express a desire or requirement that someone do something. In the Bible, sometimes imperative sentences have other uses.

Reason This Is a Translation Issue

Some languages would not use an imperative sentence for some of the functions that they are used for in the Bible.

Examples From the Bible

Speakers often use imperative sentences to tell or ask their listeners to do something. In Genesis 26, God spoke to Isaac and told him not to go to Egypt but to live where God would tell him to live.

> Now Yahweh appeared to him and said, "**Do not go down** to Egypt; **live** in the land that I tell you to live in." (Genesis 26:2 ULT)

Sometimes imperative sentences in the Bible have other uses.

Imperatives that make things happen

God can make things happen by commanding that they happen. Jesus healed a man by commanding that the man be healed. The man could not do anything to obey the command, but Jesus caused him to be healed by commanding it. (In this context, the command "Be clean" means to "be healed" so that others around would know that it was safe to touch the man again.)

> "I am willing. **Be clean**." Immediately he was cleansed of his leprosy. (Matthew 8:3b ULT)

In Genesis 1, God commanded that there should be light, and by commanding it, he caused it to exist. Some languages, such as the Hebrew of the Bible, have commands that are in the third person. English does not do that, and so it must turn the third-person command into a general, second-person command, as in the ULT:

> God said, "**Let there be** light," and there was light. (Genesis 1:3 ULT)

Languages that have third-person commands can follow the original Hebrew, which translates into English as something like "light must be."

Imperatives that function as blessings

In the Bible, God blesses people by using imperatives. This indicates what his will is for them.

> God blessed them and said to them, "**Be fruitful**, and **multiply**. **Fill** the earth, and **subdue** it. **Have dominion** over the fish of the sea, over the birds of the sky, and over every living thing that moves upon the earth." (Genesis 1:28 ULT)

Imperatives that function as conditions

An imperative sentence can also be used to tell the **condition** under which something will happen. The proverbs mainly tell about life and things that often happen. The purpose of Proverbs 4:6 below is not primarily to give a command, but to teach what people can expect to happen **if** they love wisdom.

> **Do not abandon** wisdom and she will watch over you;
> **love** her and she will keep you safe. (Proverbs 4:6 ULT)

The purpose of Proverbs 22:6, below, is to teach what people can expect to happen if they teach their children the way they should go.

> **Teach** a child the way he should go,
> and when he is old he will not turn away from that instruction. (Proverbs 22:6 ULT)

Translation Strategies

(1) If people would not use an imperative sentence for one of the functions in the Bible, try using a statement instead.

(2) If people would not understand that a sentence is used to cause something to happen, add a connecting word like "so" to show that what happened was a result of what was said.

(3) If people would not use a command as a condition, translate it as a statement with the words "if" and "then."

Examples of Translation Strategies Applied

(1) If people would not use an imperative sentence for one of the functions in the Bible, try using a statement instead.

> **Be clean**. (Matthew 8:3b ULT)
>
> > "You are now clean."
> > "I now cleanse you."
>
> God said, "**Let there be** light," and there was light. (Genesis 1:3 ULT)
>
> > God said, "**There is now light**" and there was light.
>
> God blessed them and said to them, "**Be fruitful**, and **multiply**. **Fill** the earth, and **subdue** it. **Have dominion** over the fish of the sea, over the birds of the sky, and over every living thing that moves upon the earth." (Genesis 1:28 ULT)
>
> > God blessed them and said to them, "**My will for you is that you be fruitful**, and **multiply**. **Fill** the earth, and **subdue** it. **I want you to have dominion** over the fish of the sea, over the birds of the sky, and over every living thing that moves upon the earth."

(2) If people would not understand that a sentence is used to cause something to happen, add a connecting word like "so" to show that what happened was a result of what was said.

> God said, "**Let there be** light," and there was light. (Genesis 1:3 ULT)
>
> > God said, 'Let there be light,' **so** there was light.
> > God said, "Light must be;" **as a result**, there was light.

(3) If people would not use a command as a condition, translate it as a statement with the words "if" and "then."

> Teach a child the way he should go, and when he is old he will not turn away from that instruction. (Proverbs 22:6 ULT)

Translated as:

> "**If** you teach a child the way he should go,
> **then** when he is old he will not turn away from that instruction."

(**Go back to:** Psalms 42:5; 42:11; 43:5)

Irony

Description

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]]

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.

> 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:** Psalms 22:8; 52:1)

Litotes

Description

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]]

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.

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:** Psalms 17:5; 22:2; 22:11; 22:19; 23:1; 34:5; 34:9; 34:10; 34:22; 35:22; 40:5; 40:10; 40:12; 40:17; 50:3; 69:2; 69:5; 70:5; 74:19; 89:33; 94:10; 107:38; 119:93; 119:102; 119:109; 119:110; 141:5; 143:7)

Merism

Definition

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]]

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.

> "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:** Psalms 22:2; 32:4; 41:13; 42:3; 49:2; 49:10; 50:1; 62:9; 65:8; 66:12; 72:5; 72:8; 73:26; 88:1; 89:12; 89:25; 91:5; 91:6; 103:17; 104:25; 106:48; 107:3; 113:3; 115:13; 121:6; 125:2; 134:3; 139:2; 139:3; 146:6; 148:10; 148:12)

Metaphor

Description

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

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.

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:** Psalms 1:1; 1:5; 1:6; Notes; 2:3; 2:9; 2:12; 3:3; 3:7; 4:1; 4:5; 4:6; 4:7; 4:8; 5:8; 5:9; 5:10; 5:11; 6:4; 6:9; 7:1; 7:6; 7:7; 7:10; 7:12; 7:14; 7:16; 8:2; 8:5; 8:6; 9:5; 9:6; 9:9; 9:13; 9:15; 9:16; 9:18; 10:1; 10:4; 10:5; 10:6; 10:9; 10:10; 10:11; 10:12; 11:1; 11:6; 12:2; 12:3; 14:2; 14:3; 14:4; 14:6; 15:5; 16:1; 16:5; 16:6; 17:1; 17:2; 17:4; 17:5; 17:7; 17:8; 17:13; 17:14; 18:2; 18:4; 18:5; 18:7; 18:8; 18:10; 18:11; 18:14; 18:15; 18:16; 18:21; 18:28; 18:30; 18:31; 18:32; 18:35; 18:36; 18:46; 18:48; 19:2; 19:4; 19:10; 19:14; 20:2; 21:5; 21:9; 21:12; 22:1; 22:3; 22:6; 22:11; 22:12; 22:13; 22:14; 22:15; 22:16; 22:17; 22:20; 22:21; 22:24; 22:26; 22:27; 22:30; Notes; 23:1; 23:2; 23:3; 23:4; 23:6; 24:6; 24:8; 25:1; 25:4; 25:8; 25:9; 25:10; 25:12; 25:15; 25:16; 25:17; 25:20; 26:1; 26:3; 26:9; 26:11; 26:12; 27:1; 27:2; 27:3; 27:4; 27:5; 27:8; 27:9; 27:11; 27:12; 28:1; 28:3; 28:5; 28:7; 28:8; 28:9; 29:3; 29:9; 30:1; 30:5; 30:6; 30:7; 30:8; 30:11; 31:1; 31:2; 31:3; 31:4; 31:8; 31:16; 31:19; 31:20; 32:1; 32:6; 32:7; 32:8; 32:10; 33:4; 33:5; 33:7; 33:12; 33:14; 33:15; 33:20; 33:22; 34:4; 34:5; 34:7; 34:8; 34:14; 34:16; 34:18; 34:22; 35:2; 35:3; 35:4; 35:6; 35:7; 35:8; 35:12; 35:15; 35:17; 35:23; 35:25; 35:26; 36:4; 36:5; 36:8; 36:9; 36:10; 36:12; 37:3; 37:9; 37:11; 37:14; 37:20; 37:22; 37:24; 37:27; 37:28; 37:29; 37:31; 37:34; 37:38; 37:40; 38:2; 38:4; 38:6; 38:7; 38:8; 38:12; 38:16; 38:17; 38:20; 38:21; 38:22; 39:1; 39:3; 39:5; 39:10; 39:11; 39:12; 40:2; 40:12; 40:14; 41:6; 41:8; 41:10; 41:12; 42:1; 42:2; 42:3; 42:4; 42:5; 42:7; 42:8; 42:9; 42:11; 43:3; 43:5; 44:2; 44:3; 44:5; 44:9; 44:12; 44:15; 44:18; 44:19; 44:22; 44:23; 44:24; 44:25; 45:1; 45:2; 45:7; 45:10; 45:12; 46:1; 46:2; 46:5; 46:6; 46:7; 46:11; 47:3; 47:4; 47:5; 47:9; 48:3; 48:6; 48:7; 48:10; 48:11; 49:2; 49:4; 49:5; 49:10; 49:13; 49:14; 49:19; 50:2; 50:3; 50:14; 50:16; 50:17; 50:19; 50:22; 50:23; 51:1; 51:2; 51:3; 51:4; 51:5; 51:7; 51:8; 51:9; 51:10; 51:11; 51:17; 51:18; 52:1; 52:4; 52:5; 53:2; 53:3; 53:4; 54:4; 54:5; 55:1; 55:3; 55:4; 55:5; 55:9; 55:12; 55:15; 55:20; 55:21; 55:22; 56:2; 56:5; 56:6; 56:7; 56:8; 56:12; 56:13; 57:1; 57:3; 57:4; 57:5; 57:6; 57:8; 57:10; 57:11; 58:2; 58:3; 58:4; 58:6; 58:7; 58:9; 58:10; 59:7; 59:9; 59:13; 59:16; 59:17; 60:1; 60:2; 60:3; 60:4; 60:7; 60:8; 60:10; 60:12; 61:2; 61:4; 61:5; 62:2; 62:6; 62:7; 62:10; 62:11; 62:12; 63:7; 64:3; 64:6; 64:7; 64:8; 64:10; 65:6; 65:11; 65:12; 66:9; 66:11; 66:12; 67:1; 68:1; 68:2; 68:4; 68:5; 68:6; 68:7; 68:9; 68:11; 68:19; 68:21; 68:22; 68:23; 68:26; 68:30; 68:33; 69:1; 69:2; 69:6; 69:7; 69:8; 69:9; 69:11; 69:12; 69:14; 69:15; 69:16; 69:18; 69:20; 69:21; 69:22; 69:23; 69:24; 69:32; 70:2; 70:4; 70:5; 71:1; 71:3; 71:9; 71:12; 71:19; 71:20; 72:3; 72:4; 72:7; 72:8; 72:9; 73:2; 73:7; 73:13; 73:19; 73:21; 73:27; 73:28; 74:1; 74:9; 74:12; 74:13; 74:14; 74:15; 74:18; 74:19; 74:20; 74:23; 75:3; 75:4; 75:5; 75:7; 75:8; 75:10; 76:3; 76:4; 76:10; 77:17; 78:21; 78:23; 78:27; 78:33; 78:35; 78:38; 78:45; 78:46; 78:50; 78:62; 78:63; 78:65; 78:71; 78:72; 79:6; 79:8; 79:11; 79:12; 79:13; Notes; 80:1; 80:3; 80:5; 80:7; 80:8; 80:9; 80:14; 80:18; 80:19; 81:10; 81:12; 81:13; 81:16; 82:5; 82:8; 83:12; 83:16; 83:18; 84:5; 84:9; 84:11; 85:2; 85:3; 85:4; 85:8; 85:9; 85:11; 86:11; 86:15; 86:16; 87:4; 87:5; 87:6; 87:7; 88:3; 88:5; 88:6; 88:7; 88:8; 88:13; 88:14; 88:16; 88:17; 89:2; 89:4; 89:8; 89:14; 89:15; 89:18; 89:24; 89:26; 89:27; 89:28; 89:32; 89:45; 89:46; 89:51; 90:1; 90:4; 90:5; 90:7; 90:8; 90:13; 91:1; 91:2; 91:4; 91:9; 91:10; 91:11; 91:13; 91:16; 92:10; 92:13; 92:14; 92:15; 93:1; 93:4; 93:5; 94:1; 94:4; 94:5; 94:11; 94:13; 94:22;

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Metonymy

Description

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]]

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.

> … 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:** Psalms 1:1; 1:5; 1:6; 2:1; 2:4; 3:3; 3:4; 3:7; 4:4; 4:6; 4:7; 5:9; 5:11; 6:5; 6:6; 6:7; 7:5; 7:6; 7:9; 8:1; 8:6; 8:9; 9:2; 9:4; 9:7; 9:8; 9:10; 9:11; 9:19; 10:7; 10:12; 10:13; 10:15; 10:17; 12:2; 12:3; 12:4; 14:7; 15:1; 15:3; 16:4; 16:6; 16:9; 17:2; 17:4; 17:6; 17:7; 17:11; 17:14; 18:1; 18:20; 18:24; 18:35; 18:40; 18:43; 18:49; 19:14; 20:1; 20:5; 20:6; 20:7; 21:8; 21:13; 22:3; 22:14; 22:19; 22:20; 22:22; 22:24; 22:28; 22:29; 22:30; 23:3; 23:4; 23:5; 24:4; 24:6; 25:11; 25:15; 25:17; 25:22; 26:8; 26:9; 27:1; 27:6; 27:7; 27:8; 27:9; 28:2; 28:3; 28:4; 28:5; 28:6; 28:8; Notes; 29:2; 29:3; 29:7; 29:9; 29:10; 29:11; 30:3; 30:5; 30:9; 30:11; 31:3; 31:5; 31:10; 31:15; 31:17; 31:18; 31:20; 32:8; 33:6; 33:8; 33:10; 33:12; 33:15; 33:18; 33:21; 34:1; 34:3; 34:15; 35:6; 35:10; 35:23; 36:1; 37:4; 37:17; 37:23; 37:24; 37:31; 37:33; 37:38; 38:2; 39:1; 39:13; 40:2; 40:3; 40:6; 40:8; 40:9; 40:10; 40:12; 41:3; 42:4; 43:3; 44:2; 44:3; 44:4; 44:5; 44:8; 44:18; 44:20; 44:21; 45:1; 45:2; 45:4; 45:6; 45:8; 45:10; 45:17; 46:4; 46:6; 46:7; 47:4; 48:2; 48:4; 48:10; 48:11; 49:3; 50:1; 50:4; 50:6; 51:6; 51:10; 51:14; 51:17; 52:7; 52:9; 53:5; 53:6; 54:1; 54:2; 54:3; 54:7; 55:1; 55:3; 55:4; 55:9; 55:17; 55:18; 55:20; 55:21; 55:23; 56:6; 56:8; 56:13; 57:7; 58:2; 59:1; 59:5; 59:9; 59:11; 59:12; 59:13; 59:17; 60:1; 60:3; 60:4; 60:5; 61:5; 61:6; 61:8; 62:4; 63:4; 63:8; 63:10; 64:2; 64:3; 64:8; 65:5; 65:8; 65:9; 66:1; 66:2; 66:4; 66:17; 67:4; 67:7; 68:4; 68:31; 69:12; 69:22; 69:26; 69:28; 69:29; 69:30; 69:33; 69:35; 69:36; 71:2; 71:4; 71:5; 71:8; 72:3; 72:5; 72:11; 72:14; 72:17; 72:19; 73:5; 73:9; 74:9; 74:10; 74:11; 74:23; 75:6; 76:1; 76:8; 77:4; 77:10; 78:19; 78:32; 78:36; 78:39; 78:46; 78:51; 78:54; 78:61; 78:62; 78:64; 78:67; 79:3; 79:4; 79:6; 79:7; 79:9; 79:10; 79:13; 80:1; 80:15; 80:17; 81:5; 81:8; 81:14; Notes; 82:4; 82:8; 83:4; 83:6; 83:7; 83:8; 83:9; 83:16; 84:6; 85:1; 85:9; 85:13; 86:9; 86:11; 86:12; 87:2; 87:4; 88:3; 88:4; 88:9; 89:4; 89:5; 89:10; 89:12; 89:13; 89:14; 89:16; 89:21; 89:22; 89:24; 89:25; 89:29; 89:36; 89:39; 89:42; 89:43; 89:44; 89:48; 89:50; 89:51; 90:2; 91:5; 91:10; 91:12; 92:1; 92:10; 94:2; 94:5; 94:15; 94:20; 95:7; 96:1; 96:2; 96:6; 96:8; 96:9; 96:11; 96:13; 97:2; 97:6; 97:8; 97:9; 97:10; 97:12; 98:1; 98:3; 98:4; 98:7; 98:9; 99:1; 99:2; 99:4; 100:1; 100:4; 102:13; 102:15; 103:1; 103:5; 103:19; 103:22; 104:1; 105:1; 105:3; 105:5; 105:8; 105:33; 105:38; 106:5; 106:8; 106:10; 106:20; 106:32; 106:41; 106:47; 107:2; 107:42; 108:5; 108:6; 109:15; 110:5; 110:6; 111:1; 111:9; 112:3; 112:10; 113:1; 113:3; 113:9; 114:1; 114:2; 114:7; 115:1; 115:9; 115:10; 115:12; 116:4; 116:8; 116:13; 116:17; 116:19; 118:2; 118:3; 118:10; 118:15; 118:26; 119:7; 119:55; 119:67; 119:69; 119:70; 119:72; 119:73; 119:80; 119:112; 119:132; 119:163; 120:2; 120:5; 121:1; 121:3; 121:4; 121:5; 121:7; 122:4; 122:5; 123:1; 123:2; 124:3; 125:3; 125:4; 130:3; 130:6; 131:2; 132:5; 132:13; 132:18; 135:1; 135:2; 135:4; 135:13; 135:21; 136:15; 137:2; 137:7; 137:8; 138:1; 138:2; 139:14; 140:6; 140:13; 141:2; 141:5; 141:9; 142:4; 142:5; 142:6; 142:7; 143:1; 143:6;

143:11; 143:12; 144:7; 144:10; 144:11; 144:14; 145:1; 145:2; 145:21; 146:1; 146:10; 147:10; 147:12; 148:5; 148:7; 148:11; 148:13; 149:3; 149:6; 149:7)

Nominal Adjectives

Description

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]]

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.

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:** Psalms 9:16; 25:9; 26:5; 31:17; 31:18; 31:23; 32:11; 34:2; 34:15; 34:18; 34:19; 34:21; 37:11; 37:12; 37:14; 37:16; 37:18; 37:30; 37:34; 37:39; 40:4; 50:16; 68:2; 68:3; 68:6; 68:10; 69:32; 69:33; 71:4; 72:2; 72:7; 72:13; 73:3; 75:4; 82:3; 82:4; 84:10; 86:14; 88:5; 94:15; 94:16; 97:11; 101:6; 101:8; 102:1; 102:17; 104:35; 105:43; 106:5; 106:28; 107:2; 107:36; 107:41; 107:42; 109:2; 109:16; 115:17; 116:6; 119:51; 119:69; 119:78; 119:85; 119:110; 119:119; 119:122; 119:158; 123:4; 132:15; 140:8; 146:7; 146:8; 149:4)

Numbers

Description

This page answers the question: *How do I translate numbers?*

In order to understand this topic, it would be good to read:

Translate Unknowns

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.

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:

[[rc://en/ta/man/translate/translate-ordinal]]
[[rc://en/ta/man/translate/translate-fraction]]

(**Go back to:** Psalms 50:10; 60:1; 68:17; 84:10; 90:4; 90:10; 95:10; 105:8; 144:13)

Order of Events

Description

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:

Writing Styles
[[rc://en/ta/man/translate/figs-verbs]]

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.

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 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:

[[rc://en/ta/man/translate/writing-background]]
Connecting Words and Phrases
[[rc://en/ta/man/translate/writing-newevent]]
[[rc://en/ta/man/translate/translate-versebridge]]

(**Go back to:** Psalms 41:11)

Parallelism

Description

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]]

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."

> 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:** Introduction to Psalms; Psalms 1:1; 1:6; 2:1; 2:2; 2:8; 2:9; 2:10; 3:1; 3:7; 4:1; 4:2; 5:1; 5:3; 5:11; 6:1; 6:5; 6:6; 6:9; 7:1; 8:1; 8:6; 9:1; 9:8; 10:1; 11:1; 12:1; 13:1; 14:1; 14:7; 15:1; 16:1; 17:1; 17:5; 17:6; 17:12; 17:14; 18:1; 18:5; 18:6; 18:14; 18:15; 18:22; 18:28; 19:1; 20:1; 21:1; 21:8; 21:9; 21:10; 22:1; 22:6; 22:7; 22:12; 22:23; 22:27; 22:29; 23:1; 24:1; 24:2; 24:3; 24:6; 24:7; 24:9; 25:1; 25:4; 26:1; 26:4; 27:1; 27:5; 28:1; 28:4; 29:1; 30:1; 31:1; 31:2; 31:7; 31:20; 32:1; 33:1; 33:4; 33:7; 33:10; 34:1; 34:13; 35:1; 36:1; 37:1; 37:2; 37:6; 37:22; 37:40; 38:1; 38:12; 38:19; 38:21; 39:1; 39:4; 39:9; 39:12; 40:1; 40:2; 40:5; 40:17; 41:1; 42:1; 43:1; 44:1; 44:13; 44:14; 44:18; 44:25; 45:1; 46:1; 46:10; 47:1; 47:3; 47:5; 47:6; 48:1; 48:8; 48:12; 49:1; 49:7; 50:1; 50:20; 51:1; 51:2; 52:1; 52:5; 53:1; 53:6; 54:1; 55:1; 56:1; 57:1; 57:10; 58:1; 58:3; 58:6; 59:1; 60:1; 61:1; 61:6; 62:1; 62:9; 63:1; 63:6; 64:1; 65:1; 65:7; 66:1; 66:2; 66:8; 66:19; 67:1; 67:5; 68:1; 68:7; 68:8; 68:15; 69:1; 69:8; 69:14; 70:1; 70:5; 71:1; 71:9; 72:1; 73:1; 74:1; 75:1; 76:1; 77:1; 77:3; 77:5; 78:1; 78:58; 79:1; 79:6; 80:1; 80:5; 81:1; 82:1; 83:1; 83:13; 83:14; 83:15; 84:1; 85:1; 86:1; 87:1; 88:1; 88:11; 88:12; Notes; 89:1; 89:6; 89:21; 90:1; 90:15; 91:1; 91:4; 92:1; 93:1; 94:1; 95:1; 96:1; 96:13; 97:1; 97:11; 98:1; 99:1; 100:1; 101:1; 101:7; 102:1; 102:19; 102:21; 103:1; 103:9; 103:10; 103:18; 104:1; 104:7; 105:1; 105:8; 105:9; 105:13; 105:20; 105:27; 105:35; 105:36; 105:43; 105:45; 106:1; 106:10; 106:18; 106:27; 107:1; 107:11; 107:16; 107:35; 108:1; 108:4; 109:1; 109:6; 109:13; 109:29; 110:1; 111:1; 112:1; 113:1; 113:7; 113:8; 114:1; 114:7; 114:8; 115:1; 115:17; 116:1; 117:1; 118:1; 119:1; 119:15; 120:1; 121:1; 122:1; 122:7; 123:1; 123:2; 123:4; 124:1; 125:1; 126:1; 127:1; 128:1; 129:1; 130:1; 131:1; 132:1; 133:1; 134:1; 135:1; 136:1; 137:1; 138:1; 139:1; 139:7; 139:21; 139:23; 140:1; 141:1; 142:1; 143:1; 144:1; 145:1; 146:1; 147:1; 147:19; 148:1; 149:1; 150:1)

Personification

Description

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]]

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.

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:

Apostrophe
[[rc://en/ta/man/translate/bita-part1]]

(**Go back to:** Psalms 16:11; 17:3; 18:4; 18:5; 18:6; 18:9; 18:10; 18:15; 19:1; 19:2; 19:4; 19:13; 24:7; 24:9; 25:6; 25:21; 31:5; 34:21; 35:8; 40:11; 40:12; 41:8; 42:7; 45:4; 45:15; 48:6; 48:11; 49:14; 49:15; 50:4; 50:6; 55:10; 55:11; 55:15; 57:8; 58:4; 65:1; 65:3; 65:11; 65:12; 65:13; 66:19; 67:6; 69:9; 69:15; 69:34; 74:11; 74:13; 77:9; 77:16; 77:17; 77:18; 77:19; 78:21; 78:23; 78:31; 78:49; 78:50; 78:62; 85:10; 85:11; 85:13; 88:18; 89:12; 89:37; 89:48; 91:6; 91:10; 93:3; 96:6; 96:11; 96:12; 97:1; 97:3; 97:4; 97:6; 98:7; 98:8; 101:3; 104:4; 104:7; 104:8; 104:9; 104:19; 106:17; 107:20; 108:2; 110:3; 114:3; 114:4; 114:6; 114:7; 116:3; 116:19; 118:18; 119:24; 119:53; 119:91; 119:133; 119:143; 119:161; 122:2; 122:6; 122:7; 122:8; 132:13; 132:14; 132:15; 136:8; 136:9; 137:5; 140:11; 141:1; 143:7; 147:12; 147:15; 148:3; 148:4; 148:8; 148:9)

Poetry

Description

This page answers the question: *What is poetry and how do I translate it into my language?*

In order to understand this topic, it would be good to read:

[[rc://en/ta/man/translate/figs-intro]]
Writing Styles

Poetry is one of the ways that people use the words and sounds of their language to make their speech and writing more beautiful and to express strong emotion. Through poetry, people can communicate deeper emotion than they can through simple non-poetic forms. Poetry gives more weight and elegance to statements of truth, such as proverbs, and is also easier to remember than ordinary speech.

In poetry we commonly find:

- many figures of speech such as Apostrophe
- arrangements of clauses into particular patterns such as:
    - parallel lines (See Parallelism)
    - acrostics (beginning lines with successive letters of the alphabet)
    - chiasms (in which the first line relates to the last line, the second to the next-to-last line, etc.):
      > You should not give what is holy to the dogs,
      >
      >> and should not throw your pearls in front of the pigs.
      >>
      >> Otherwise they will trample them under their feet,
      >
      > and having turned, they might tear you to pieces. (Matt 7:6 ULT)
- repetition of some or all of a line:

> Praise him, all his angels; praise him, all his hosts. Praise him, sun and moon; praise him, all you shining stars. (Psalm 148:2-3 ULT)

- lines of similar length:

> Listen to my call to you,
>
> Yahweh; think about my groanings.
>
> Listen to the sound of my call, my King and my God,
>
> for it is to you that I pray. (Psalm 5:1-2 ULT)

- the same sound used at the end or at the beginning of two or more lines:

> “Twinkle, twinkle little **star**. How I wonder what you **are**.” (from an English rhyme)

- the same sound repeated many times:

> “Peter, Peter, pumpkin eater” (from an English rhyme)

We also find:

- old words and expressions
- dramatic imagery
- different use of grammar — including:

- incomplete sentences
- lack of connective words

Some places to look for poetry in your language

Songs, particularly old songs or songs used in children's games
Religious ceremony or chants of priests or witch doctors
Prayers, blessings, and curses
Old legends

Elegant or fancy speech

Elegant or fancy speech is similar to poetry in that it uses beautiful language, but it does not use all of the language's features of poetry, and it does not use them as much as poetry does. Popular speakers in the language often use elegant speech, and this is probably the easiest source of text to study to find out what makes speech elegant in your language.

Reasons This Is a Translation Issue:

- Different languages use poetry for different things. If a poetic form would not communicate the same meaning in your language, you may need to write it without the poetry.
- Different languages use different poetic devices. A poetic device that conveys elegance or emotion in a biblical language may be confusing or misunderstood in another language.
- In some languages, using poetry for a particular part of the Bible would make it much more powerful.

Examples From the Bible

The Bible uses poetry for songs, teaching, and prophecy. Almost all of the books of the Old Testament have poetry in them and many of the books are completely made up of poetry.

> ... for you saw my affliction; you knew the distress of my soul. (Psalm 31:7b ULT)

This example of Parallelism has two lines that mean the same thing.

> Yahweh, judge the nations; vindicate me, Yahweh, because I am righteous and innocent, Most High. (Psalm 7:8 ULT)

This example of parallelism shows the contrast between what David wants God to do to him and what he wants God to do to the unrighteous nations. (See Parallelism.)

> Keep your servant also from arrogant sins; let them not rule over me. (Psalm 19:13a ULT)

This example of personification speaks of sins as if they could rule over a person. (See Personification.)

> Oh, give thanks to Yahweh; for he is good,
>
> for his covenant faithfulness endures forever.
>
> Oh, give thanks to the God of gods,
>
> for his covenant faithfulness endures forever.

> Oh, give thanks to the Lord of lords,
>
> for his covenant faithfulness endures forever.
>
> (Psalm 136:1-3 ULT)

This example repeats the phrases “give thanks” and “his covenant faithfulness endures forever.”

Translation Strategies

If the style of poetry that is used in the source text would be natural and give the right meaning in your language, consider using it. If not, here are some other ways of translating it.

(1) Translate the poetry using one of your styles of poetry.

(2) Translate the poetry using your style of elegant speech.

(3) Translate the poetry using your style of ordinary speech.

If you use poetry it may be more beautiful.

If you use ordinary speech it may be more clear.

Examples of Translation Strategies Applied

> Blessed is the man who does not walk in the advice of the wicked, or stand in the pathway with sinners, or sit in the assembly of mockers. But his delight is in the law of Yahweh, and on his law he meditates day and night. (Psalm 1:1-2 ULT)

The following are examples of how people might translate Psalm 1:1-2.

(1) Translate the poetry using one of your styles of poetry. (The style in this example has words that sound similar at the end of each line.)

> > “Happy is the person not encouraged **to sin**, Disrespect for God he will not **begin**, To those who laugh at God he is **no kin.** God is his constant **delight**, He does what God says **is right**, He thinks of it all day **and night**.”

(2) Translate the poetry using your style of elegant speech.

> > This is the kind of person who is truly blessed: the one who does not follow the advice of wicked people nor stop along the road to speak with sinners nor join the gathering of those who mock God. Rather, he takes great joy in Yahweh’s law, and he meditates on it day and night.

(3) Translate the poetry using your style of ordinary speech.

> > The people who do not listen to the advice of bad people are really happy. They do not spend time with people who continually do evil things or join with those who do not respect God. Instead, they love to obey Yahweh’s law, and they think about it all the time.

Next we recommend you learn about:

Symbolic Language

(**Go back to:** Psalms 1:1; 2:1; 3:1; 4:1; 5:1; 6:1; 7:1; 8:1; 9:1; 10:1; 11:1; 12:1; 13:1; 14:1; 15:1; 16:1; 17:1; 18:1; 19:1; 20:1; 21:1; 22:1; 23:1; 24:1; 25:1; 26:1; 27:1; 28:1; 29:1; 30:1; 31:1; 32:1; 33:1; 34:1; 35:1; 36:1; 37:1; 38:1; 39:1; 40:1; 41:1; 42:1; 43:1; 44:1; 45:1; 46:1; 47:1; 48:1; 49:1; 50:1; 51:1; 52:1; 53:1; 54:1; 55:1; 56:1; 57:1; 58:1; 59:1; 60:1; 61:1; 62:1; 63:1; 64:1; 65:1; 66:1; 67:1; 68:1; 69:1; 70:1; 71:1; 72:1; 73:1; 74:1; 75:1; 76:1; 77:1; 78:1; 79:1; 80:1; 81:1; 82:1; 83:1; 84:1; 85:1; 86:1; 87:1; 88:1; 89:1; 90:1; 91:1; 92:1; 93:1; 94:1; 95:1; 96:1; 97:1; 98:1; 99:1; 100:1; 101:1; 102:1; 103:1; 104:1; 105:1; 106:1; 107:1; 108:1; 109:1; 110:1; 111:1; 112:1; 113:1; 114:1; 115:1; 116:1; 117:1; 118:1; 119:1; 120:1; 121:1; 122:1; 123:1; 124:1; 125:1; 126:1; 127:1; 128:1; 129:1; 130:1; 131:1; 132:1; 133:1; 134:1; 135:1; 136:1; 137:1; 138:1; 139:1; 140:1; 141:1; 142:1; 143:1; 144:1; 145:1; 146:1; 147:1; 148:1; 149:1; 150:1)

Possession

Description

This page answers the question: *What is possession and how can I translate phrases that show it?*

In order to understand this topic, it would be good to read:

[[rc://en/ta/man/translate/figs-partsofspeech]]
Sentence Structure

In English, the grammatical form that commonly indicates possession is also used to indicate a variety of relationships between people and objects or people and other people. In English, that grammatical relationship is shown by using the word "**of**," by using **an apostrophe and the letter "s"**, or by using a **possessive pronoun**. The following examples are different ways to indicate that my grandfather owns a house.

- the house **of** my grandfather
- my grandfather**'s** house
- **his** house

Possession is used in Hebrew, Greek, and English for a variety of situations. Here are a few common situations that it is used for.

- Ownership — Someone owns something.
    - My clothes — The clothes that I own
- Social Relationship — Someone has some kind of social relationship with another.
    - my mother — the woman who gave birth to me, or the woman who cared for me
    - my teacher — the person who teaches me
- Association — A particular thing is associated with a particular person, place, or thing.
    - David's sickness — the sickness that David is experiencing
    - the fear of the Lord — the fear that is appropriate for a human being to have when relating to the Lord
- Contents — Something has something in it.
    - a bag of clothes — a bag that has clothes in it, or a bag that is full of clothes
- Part and whole: One thing is part of another.
    - my head — the head that is part of my body
    - the roof of a house — the roof that is part of a house

In some languages there is a special form of possession, termed **inalienable possession.** This form of possession is used for things that cannot be removed from you, as opposed to things you could lose. In the examples above, *my head* and *my mother* are examples of inalienable possession (at least in some languages), while *my clothes* or *my teacher* would be alienably possessed. What may be considered alienable vs. inalienable may differ by language.

Reasons This Is a Translation Issue

- You (the translator) need to understand the relationship between two ideas represented by the two nouns when one is in the grammatical relationship of possessing the other.
- Some languages do not use grammatical possession for all of the situations that your source text Bible might use it for.

Examples From the Bible

Ownership — In the example below, the son owned the money.

> The younger son ... wasted his wealth by living recklessly. (Luke 15:13b)

Social Relationship — In the example below, the disciples were people who learned from John.

> Then **the disciples of John** came to him. (Matthew 9:14a ULT)

Association — In the example below, the gospel is the message associated with Paul because he preaches it.

> Remember Jesus Christ, raised from the dead, from the seed of David, according to **my gospel**, (2 Timothy 2:8 ULT)

Material — In the example below, the material used for making the crowns was gold.

> On their heads were something like **crowns of gold.** (Revelation 9:7b)

Contents — In the example below, the cup has water in it.

> For whoever gives you **a cup of water** to drink ... will not lose his reward. (Mark 9:41 ULT)

Part of a whole — In the example below, the door was a part of the palace.

> But Uriah slept at **the door of the king's palace.** (2 Samuel 11:9a ULT)

Part of a group — In the example below, "us" refers to the whole group and "each one" refers to the individual members.

> Now to **each one of us** grace has been given according to the measure of the gift of Christ. (Ephesians 4:7 ULT)

Events and Possession

Sometimes one or both of the nouns is an abstract noun that refers to an event or action. In the examples below, the abstract nouns are in **bold** print. These are just some of the relationships that are possible between two nouns when one of them refers to an event.

Subject — Sometimes the word after "of" tells who would do the action named by the first noun. In the example below, **John baptized people**.

> The **baptism of John**, was it from heaven or from men? Answer me. (Mark 11:30)

In the example below, **Christ loves us**.

> Who will separate us from the **love of Christ**? (Romans 8:35)

Object — Sometimes the word after "of" tells who or what something would happen to. In the example below, **people love money**.

> For the **love of money** is a root of all kinds of evil. (1 Timothy 6:10a ULT)

Instrument — Sometimes the word after "of" tells how something would happen. In the example below, God would **punish people by sending enemies to attack them with swords**.

> Then be afraid of the sword, because wrath brings **the punishment of the sword**. (Job 19:29a ULT)

Representation — In the example below, John was baptizing people who were repenting of their sins. They were being baptized to show that they were repenting. Their **baptism represented their repentance**.

> John came, baptizing in the wilderness and preaching **a baptism of repentance** for the forgiveness of sins. (Mark 1:4 ULT)

Strategies for learning what the relationship is between the two nouns

(1) Read the surrounding verses to see if they help you to understand the relationship between the two nouns.

(2) Read the verse in the UST. Sometimes it shows the relationship clearly.

(3) See what the notes say about it.

Translation Strategies

If possession would be a natural way to show a particular relationship between two nouns, consider using it. If it would be strange or hard to understand, consider these.

(1) Use an adjective to show that one noun describes the other.

(2) Use a verb to show how the two are related.

(3) If one of the nouns refers to an event, translate it as a verb.

Examples of Translation Strategies Applied

(1) Use an adjective to show that one noun describes the other.

> On their heads were something like **crowns of gold.** (Revelation 9:7b)
>
> > "On their heads were **gold crowns**"

(2) Use a verb to show how the two are related.

> Whoever gives you **a cup of water** to drink ... will not lose his reward. (Mark 9:41 ULT)
>
> > Whoever gives you a **cup that has water in it** to drink ... will not lose his reward.
>
> Wealth is worthless on **the day of wrath.** (Proverbs 11:4a ULT)
>
> > Wealth is worthless on **the day when God shows his wrath**.
> > or:
> > Wealth is worthless on the **day when God punishes people because of his wrath**.

(3) If one of the nouns refers to an event, translate it as a verb. (In the example below, there are two possession relationships, "punishment of Yahweh" and "your God.")

> Notice that I am not speaking to your children, who have not known or seen **the punishment of Yahweh your God.** (Deuteronomy 11:2a ULT)
>
> > Notice that I am not speaking to your children who have not known or seen **how Yahweh, the God whom you worship, punished the people of Egypt**.
>
> You will only observe and see the **punishment of the wicked**. (Psalms 91:8 ULT)
>
> > You will only observe and see **how Yahweh punishes the wicked**.
>
> You will receive **the gift of the Holy Spirit**. (Acts 2:38b ULT)
>
> > You will receive the **Holy Spirit, whom God will give to you**.

(**Go back to:** Psalms 106:22)

Pronouns

Description

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]]

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.

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:** Psalms 75:4; 75:5; 119:140; 132:13; 149:1)

Proverbs

Description

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
Writing Styles

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)

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:** Psalms 118:22)

Quotes within Quotes

Description

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

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.

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:** Psalms 89:26)

Reflexive Pronouns

Description

This page answers the question: *What are reflexive pronouns?*

In order to understand this topic, it would be good to read:

Pronouns
Sentence Structure

All languages have ways of showing that the same person fills two different roles in a sentence. English does this by using reflexive pronouns. These are pronouns that refer to someone or something that has already been mentioned in a sentence. In English the reflexive pronouns are: “myself,” “yourself,” “himself,” “herself,” “itself,” “ourselves,” “yourselves,” and “themselves.” Other languages may have other ways to show this.

Reason This Is a Translation Issue

- Languages have different ways of showing that the same person fills two different roles in a sentence. For those languages, translators will need to know how to translate the English reflexive pronouns.
- The reflexive pronouns in English also have other functions.

Uses of Reflexive Pronouns

- To show that the same person or things fills two different roles in a sentence
- To emphasize a person or thing in the sentence
- To show that someone did something alone
- To show that someone or something was alone

Examples From the Bible

Reflexive pronouns are used to show the same person or thing fills two different roles in a sentence.

> If **I** should testify about **myself**, my testimony would not be true. (John 5:31 ULT)

> Now the Passover of the Jews was near, and **many** went up to Jerusalem from the country before the Passover in order to purify **themselves**. (John 11:55 ULT)

Reflexive pronouns are used to emphasize a person or thing in the sentence.

> **Jesus himself** was not baptizing, but his disciples were. (John 4:2 ULT)

> So they left the crowd, taking Jesus with them, just as he was, in the boat. There also were other boats with him. Then a violent windstorm arose and the waves were breaking into the boat so that the boat was already full of water. But **Jesus himself** was in the stern, asleep on the cushion. (Mark 4:36-38a ULT)

Reflexive pronouns are used to show that someone did something alone.

> When Jesus realized that they were about to come and seize him by force to make him king, he withdrew again up the mountain **by himself**. (John 6:15 ULT)

Reflexive pronouns are used to show that someone or something was alone.

> He saw the linen cloths lying there and the cloth that had been on his head. **It** was not lying with the linen cloths but was folded up in a place **by itself**. (John 20:6b-7 ULT)

Translation Strategies

If a reflexive pronoun would have the same function in your language, consider using it. If not, here are some other strategies.

(1) In some languages people put something on the verb to show that the object of the verb is the same as the subject.
(2) In some languages people emphasize a certain person or thing by referring to it in a special place in the sentence.
(3) In some languages people emphasize a certain person or thing by adding something to that word or putting another word with it.
(4) In some languages people show that someone did something alone by using a word like "alone."
(5) In some languages people show that something was alone by using a phrase that tells about where it was.

Examples of Translation Strategies Applied

(1) In some languages people modify the verb to show that the object of the verb is the same as the subject.

> If I should testify about **myself** alone, my testimony would not be true. (John 5:31)
>
> > "If I should **self-testify** alone, my testimony would not be true."

> Now the Passover of the Jews was near, and many went up to Jerusalem from the country before the Passover in order to **purify themselves**. (John 11:55)
>
> > "Now the Passover of the Jews was near, and many went up to Jerusalem out from country before the Passover in order to **self-purify**."

(2) In some languages people emphasize a certain person or thing by referring to it in a special place in the sentence.

> **He himself** took our sickness and bore our diseases. (Matthew 8:17 ULT)
>
> > "**It was he who** took our sickness and bore our diseases."

> **Jesus himself** was not baptizing, but his disciples were. (John 4:2)
>
> > "**It was not Jesus who** was baptizing, but his disciples were."

(3) In some languages people emphasize a certain person or thing by adding something to that word or putting another word with it. English adds the reflexive pronoun.

> But Jesus said this to test Philip, for he **himself** knew what he was going to do. (John 6:6)

(4) In some languages people show that someone did something alone by using a word like "alone."

> When Jesus realized that they were about to come and seize him by force to make him king, he withdrew again up the mountain **by himself**. (John 6:15)
>
> > "When Jesus realized that they were about to come and seize him by force to make him king, he withdrew again **alone** up the mountain."

(5) In some languages people show that something was alone by using a phrase that tells about where it was.

> He saw the linen cloths lying there and the cloth that had been on his head. It was not lying with the linen cloths but was folded up in a place **by itself**. (John 20:6b-7 ULT)

> > “He saw the linen cloths lying there and the cloth that had been on his head. It was not lying with the linen cloths but was folded up and lying **in it’s own place**.”

(**Go back to:** Psalms 87:5)

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 orignal 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:** Psalms 2:1; 4:2; 4:6; 6:3; 6:5; 8:4; 10:1; 10:13; 11:1; 11:3; 12:4; Notes; 13:1; 13:2; 14:4; 18:31; 19:12; 22:1; Notes; 25:12; 27:1; 27:13; 30:9; 34:12; 35:10; 35:17; 39:7; 42:2; 42:3; 42:5; 42:10; 42:11; 43:2; 43:5; 44:21; 44:23; 44:24; 49:5; 50:13; 50:17; 52:1; 53:4; 56:4; 56:8; 56:11; 58:1; 59:7; 60:10; 62:3; 64:5; 68:13; 68:16; 71:19; 73:11; 73:25; 74:1; 74:10; 74:11; 76:7; 77:9; 77:13; 78:19; 78:20; 79:5; 79:10; 82:2; 85:5; 85:6; 88:10; 88:11; 88:12; 89:6; 89:8; 89:46; 89:48; 89:49; 90:11; 90:13; 94:3; 94:8; 94:9; 94:10; 94:16; 94:20; 106:2; 108:11; 113:5; 113:6; 114:5; 115:2; 116:12; 118:6; 119:9; 119:84; 120:3; 121:1; 130:3; 139:7; 139:21; 144:3; 147:17)

Sentence Structure

Description

This page answers the question: *What are the parts of a sentence?*

In order to understand this topic, it would be good to read:

[[rc://en/ta/man/translate/figs-partsofspeech]]

The simplest sentence structure in English includes a **subject** and an **action** word:

- The boy ran.

Subject

The **subject** is who or what the sentence is about. In these examples, the subject is bolded:

- **The boy** is running.
- **He** is running.

Subjects are typically noun phrases or pronouns. (See Parts of Speach.) In the examples above, “the boy” is a noun phrase that has the noun “boy,” and “he” is a pronoun.

When the sentence is a command, in many languages it does not have a subject pronoun. People understand that the subject is “you.”

- Close the door.

Predicate

The predicate is the part of a sentence that tells something about the subject. It usually has a verb. (See Verbs.) In the sentences below, the subjects are “the man” and “he.” The predicates are in bold.

- The man is **strong**.
- He worked **hard**.
- He made **a garden**.

Compound Sentences

A sentence can be made up of more than one sentence. Each of the two lines below has a subject and a predicate and is a full sentence.

- He planted the yams.
- His wife planted the maize.

The compound sentence below contains the two sentences above. In English, compound sentences are joined with a conjunction such as “and,” “but,” or “or.”

- He planted the yams **and** his wife planted the maize.

Clauses

Sentences can also have clauses and other phrases. Clauses are like sentences because they have a subject and a predicate, but they do not normally occur by themselves. Here are some examples of clauses. The subjects are in bold, and the predicates are bolded.

- when **the maize was ready**
- after **she picked it**
- because **it tasted so good**

Sentences can have many clauses, and so they can become long and complex. But each sentence has to have at least one **independent clause**, that is, a clause that can be a sentence all by itself. The other clauses that cannot be sentences by themselves are called the **dependent clauses**. Dependent clauses depend on the independent clause to complete their meaning. The dependent clauses are bolded in the sentences below.

- **When the maize was ready**, she picked it.
- **After she picked it**, she carried it home and cooked it.
- Then she and her husband ate it all, **because it tasted so good**.

The following phrases can each be a whole sentence. They are the independent clauses from the sentences above.

- She picked it.
- She carried it home and cooked it.
- Then she and her husband ate it all.

Relative Clauses

In some languages, clauses can be used with a noun that is part of a sentence. These are called **relative clauses**.

In the sentence below, “the corn that was ready” is part of the predicate of the whole sentence. The relative clause “that was ready” is used with the noun “corn” to tell which corn she picked.

- His wife picked **the maize that was ready**.

In the sentence below “her mother, who was very annoyed” is part of the predicate of the whole sentence. The relative clause “who was very annoyed” is used with the noun “mother” to tell how her mother felt when she did not get any maize.

- She did not give any maize to **her mother**, **who was very annoyed**.

Translation Issues

- Languages have different orders for the parts of a sentence. (See Information Structure.)
- Some languages do not have relative clauses, or they use them in a limited way. (See Distinguishing versus Informing or Reminding.)

Next we recommend you learn about:

[[rc://en/ta/man/translate/figs-order]]
Distinguishing Versus Informing or Reminding

(**Go back to:** Psalms 59:17; 119:50; 119:66)

Simile

Description

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]]

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.”

> 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:** Psalms 1:3; 1:4; 2:9; 5:12; 7:2; 9:6; 10:9; 12:6; 17:8; 17:12; 18:13; 18:32; 18:33; 18:39; 18:42; 19:5; 22:13; 22:14; 22:15; 29:6; 31:12; 32:4; 32:9; 33:7; 35:5; 35:14; 36:6; 37:2; 37:6; 37:20; 37:35; 38:13; 38:14; 39:5; 39:6; 39:11; 39:12; 42:10; 44:11; 49:14; 51:7; 52:2; 52:8; 53:4; 55:21; 58:4; 58:7; 58:8; 59:6; 59:14; 63:5; 64:3; 68:14; 72:6; 72:16; 73:6; 73:20; 77:20; 78:27; 78:49; 78:52; 78:69; 79:3; 79:5; 80:8; 83:10; 83:13; 83:14; 83:15; 88:5; 88:17; 89:29; 89:36; 89:37; 89:46; 90:4; 90:5; 90:9; 92:7; 92:10; 92:12; 93:1; 97:5; 102:3; 102:4; 102:6; 102:7; 102:9; 102:11; 103:5; 103:11; 103:12; 103:13; 103:15; 103:16; 104:2; 104:6; 106:9; 107:41; 109:19; 109:29; 118:12; 119:83; 119:119; 119:176; 125:1; 125:2; 127:4; 128:3; 129:6; 129:7; 130:6; 133:2; 133:3; 135:18; 141:2; 141:5; 144:4; 147:16; 147:17)

Statements — Other Uses

Description

This page answers the question: *What other uses are there for statements?*

In order to understand this topic, it would be good to read:

[[rc://en/ta/man/translate/figs-sentencetypes]]

Normally statements are used to give information. Sometimes they are used in the Bible for other functions.

Reason This Is a Translation Issue

Some languages would not use a statement for some of the functions that statements are used for in the Bible.

Examples From the Bible

Statements are normally used to give **information**. All of the sentences in John 1:6-8 below are statements, and their function is to give information.

> There was a man who was sent from God, whose name was John. He came as a witness in order to testify about the light, that all might believe through him. John was not the light, but came that he might testify about the light. (John 1:6-8 ULT)

A statement can also be used as a **command** to tell someone what to do. In the examples below, the high priest used statements with the verb "will" to tell people what to do.

> He commanded them, saying, "This is what you **must** do. A third of you who come on the Sabbath **will** keep watch over the king's house, and a third **will** be at the Sur Gate, and a third at the gate behind the guardhouse." (2 Kings 11:5 ULT)

A statement can also be used to give **instructions**. The speaker below was not just telling Joseph about something Joseph would do in the future; he was telling Joseph what he needed to do.

> She will give birth to a son, and **you will call his name Jesus**, for he will save his people from their sins. (Matthew 1:21 ULT)

A statement can also be used to make a **request**. The man with leprosy was not just saying what Jesus was able to do. He was also asking Jesus to heal him.

> Behold, a leper came to him and bowed before him, saying, "Lord, if you are willing, **you can make me clean**." (Matthew 8:2 ULT)

A statement can also be used to **perform** something. By telling Adam that the ground was cursed because of him, God actually cursed it.

> ... **cursed is the ground** because of you; (Genesis 3:17b ULT)

By telling a man that his sins were forgiven, **Jesus forgave** the man's sins.

> When Jesus saw their faith, he said to the paralyzed man, "**Son, your sins are forgiven**." (Mark 2:5 ULT)

Translation Strategies

(1) If the function of a statement would not be understood correctly in your language, **use a sentence type** that would express that function.

(2) If the function of a statement would not be understood correctly in your language, **add a sentence type** that would express that function.

(3) If the function of a statement would not be understood correctly in your language, **use a verb form** that would express that function.

Examples of Translation Strategies Applied

(1) If the function of a statement would not be understood correctly in your language, use a sentence type that would express that function.

> She will give birth to a son, and **you will call his name Jesus**, for he will save his people from their sins. (Matthew 1:21 ULT)

The phrase “you will call his name Jesus” is an instruction. It can be translated using the sentence type of a normal instruction.

> > She will give birth to a son. **Name him Jesus**, because he will save his people from their sins.

(2) If the function of a statement would not be understood correctly in your language, add a sentence type that would express that function.

> Lord, **please heal me**, because I know you are able to heal me if you are willing to. (Matthew 8:2 ULT)

The function of “I know you can” is to make a request. In addition to the statement, a request can be added.

> > Lord, **I know you can heal me**. If you are willing, please do so**.**
>
> > Lord, if you are willing, please heal me. **I know you can do so.**

(3) If the function of a statement would not be understood correctly in your language, use a verb form that would express that function.

> She will give birth to a son, and **you will call his name Jesus**, for he will save his people from their sins. (Matthew 1:21 ULT)
>
> > She will give birth to a son, and **you must call his name Jesus**, for he will save his people from their sins.
>
> Son, your sins are forgiven. (Mark 2:5 ULT)
>
> > Son, I forgive your sins.
>
> > Son, God has forgiven your sins.

(**Go back to:** Psalms 41:10)

Symbolic Action

Description

This page answers the question: *What is a symbolic action and how do I translate it?*

In order to understand this topic, it would be good to read:

Translate Unknowns

A symbolic action is something that someone does in order to express a certain idea. For example, in some cultures people nod their heads up and down to mean “yes” or turn their heads from side to side to mean “no.” Symbolic actions do not mean the same things in all cultures. In the Bible, sometimes people perform symbolic actions and sometimes they only refer to the symbolic action.

Examples of symbolic actions

- In some cultures people shake hands when they meet to show that they are willing to be friendly.
- In some cultures people bow when they meet to show respect to each other.

Reason This Is a Translation Issue

An action may have a meaning in one culture and a different meaning or no meaning at all in another culture. For example, in some cultures raising the eyebrows means “I am surprised” or “What did you say?” In other cultures it means “yes.”

In the Bible, people did things that had certain meanings in their culture. When we read the Bible, we might not understand what someone meant if we interpret the action based on what it means in our own culture today.

You (the translator) need to understand what people in the Bible meant when they used symbolic actions. If an action does not mean the same thing in your own culture, then you need to figure out how to translate what the action meant.

Examples From the Bible

> And behold, a man came whose name was Jairus, and he was a ruler of the synagogue. And **falling at the feet of Jesus**, he begged him to come to his house. (Luke 8:41 ULT)

Meaning of symbolic action: He did this to show great respect to Jesus.

> Look, I am standing at the door and am knocking. If anyone hears my voice and opens the door, I will come into him and will eat with him, and he with me. (Revelation 3:20 ULT)

Meaning of symbolic action: When people wanted someone to welcome them into their home, they stood at the door and knocked on it.

Translation Strategies

If people would correctly understand what a symbolic action meant to the people in the Bible, consider using it. If not, here are some strategies for translating it.

(1) Tell what the person did and why he did it.

(2) Do not tell what the person did, but tell what he meant.

(3) Use an action from your own culture that has the same meaning. Do this only in poetry, parables, and sermons. Do not do this when there actually was a person who did a specific action.

Examples of Translation Strategies Applied

(1) Tell what the person did and why he did it.

> And **falling at the feet of Jesus** (Luke 8:41 ULT)
>
> > Jairus fell down at Jesus' feet in order to show that he greatly respected him.

> Look, I am **standing at the door and am knocking**. (Revelation 3:20 ULT)
>
> > Look, I stand at the door and knock on it, asking you to let me in.

(2) Do not tell what the person did, but tell what he meant.

> And **falling at the feet of Jesus** (Luke 8:41 ULT)
>
> > Jairus showed Jesus great respect.

> Look, I am **standing at the door and am knocking**. (Revelation 3:20 ULT)
>
> > Look, I stand at the door and ask you to let me in.

(3) Use an action from your own culture that has the same meaning.

> And **falling at the feet of Jesus** (Luke 8:41 ULT) — Since Jairus actually did this, you should not substitute an action from your own culture.

> Look, I am **standing at the door and am knocking**. (Revelation 3:20 ULT) — Jesus was not standing at a real door. Rather he was speaking about wanting to have a relationship with people. So in cultures where it is polite to clear one's throat when wanting to be let into a house, you could use that.
>
> > Look, I stand at the door and clear my throat.

(**Go back to:** Psalms 2:12; 3:7; 10:5; 20:5; 21:3; 22:7; 22:27; 26:6; 28:2; 29:2; 35:13; 35:14; 35:16; 44:20; 45:7; 60:8; 68:31; 69:10; 69:11; 88:9; 89:13; 89:19; 89:20; 89:39; 89:42; 95:6; 96:9; 108:9; 112:10; 113:7; 118:16; 119:132; 134:2; 138:2; 140:9; 146:8; 148:14)

Symbolic Language

Description

This page answers the question: *What is symbolic language and how do I translate it?*

In order to understand this topic, it would be good to read:

Writing Styles

Symbolic language in speech and writing is the use of symbols to represent other things, other events, etc. In the Bible it occurs most in prophecy and poetry, especially in visions and dreams about things that will happen in the future. Though people may not immediately know the meaning of a symbol, it is important to keep the symbol in the translation.

> Eat this scroll; then go speak to the house of Israel. (Ezekiel 3:1 ULT)

This was in a dream. Eating the scroll is a symbol of Ezekiel reading and understanding well what was written on the scroll, and accepting these words from God into himself.

Purposes of Symbolism

- One purpose of symbolism is to help people understand the importance or severity of an event by putting it in other, very dramatic terms.
- Another purpose of symbolism is to tell some people about something while hiding the true meaning from others who do not understand the symbolism.

Reason This Is a Translation Issue

People who read the Bible today may find it hard to recognize that the language is symbolic, and they may not know what the symbol stands for.

Translation Principles

- When symbolic language is used, it is important to keep the symbol in the translation.
- It is also important not to explain the symbol more than the original speaker or writer did, since he may not have wanted everyone living then to be able to understand it easily.

Examples From the Bible

> After this I saw in my visions of the night **a fourth animal**, terrifying, frightening, and very strong. It had **large iron teeth**; it devoured, broke in pieces, and trampled underfoot what was left. It was different from the other animals, and it had **ten horns**. (Daniel 7:7 ULT)

The meaning of the bolded symbols is explained in Daniel 7:23-24 as shown below. The animals represent kingdoms, iron teeth represent a powerful army, and the horns represent powerful leaders.

> This is what that person said, ‘As for the fourth animal, it will be **a fourth kingdom** on earth that will be different from all the other kingdoms. It will devour the whole earth, and it will trample it down and break it into pieces. As for the ten horns, out of this kingdom **ten kings** will arise, and another will arise after them. He will be different from the previous ones, and he will conquer the three kings.’ (Daniel 7:23-24 ULT)

> I turned around to see the voice that was speaking to me, and as I turned I saw **seven golden lampstands**. In the middle of the lampstands there was one like a son of man ... He had **seven**

> **stars** in his right hand and **a sword with two sharp edges** was coming out of his mouth. As for the hidden meaning about the seven stars that you saw in my right hand, and the seven golden lampstands: **The seven stars are the angels of the seven churches**, and **the seven lampstands are the seven churches**. (Revelation 1:12-13a, 16a, 20 ULT)

This passage explains the meaning of the seven lampstands and the seven stars. The two-edged sword represents God's word and judgment.

Translation Strategies

(1) Translate the text with the symbols. Often the speaker or author explains the meaning later in the passage.

(2) Translate the text with the symbols. Then explain the symbols in footnotes.

Examples of Translation Strategies Applied

(1) Translate the text with the symbols. Often the speaker or author explains the meaning later in the passage.

> This is what that person said, 'As for the fourth animal, it will be **a fourth kingdom** on earth that will be different from all the other kingdoms. It will devour the whole earth, and it will trample it down and break it into pieces. As for the ten horns, out of this kingdom **ten kings** will arise, and another will arise after them. He will be different from the previous ones, and he will conquer the three kings.' (Daniel 7:23-24 ULT)

(2) Translate the text with the symbols. Then explain the symbols in footnotes.

> After this I saw in my visions of the night **a fourth animal**, terrifying, frightening, and very strong. It had **large iron teeth**; it devoured, broke in pieces, and trampled underfoot what was left. It was different from the other animals, and it had **ten horns**. (Daniel 7:7 ULT)

> > After this I saw in my dream at night a fourth animal, [1] terrifying, frightening, and very strong. It had large iron teeth; [2] it devoured, broke in pieces, and trampled underfoot what was left. It was different from the other animals, and it had ten horns. [3]

> The footnotes would look like:

> > [1] The animal is a symbol for a kingdom.
> > [2] The iron teeth is a symbol for the kingdom's powerful army.
> > [3] The horns are a symbol of powerful kings.

(**Go back to:** Psalms 37:12; 46:4)

Synecdoche

Description

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]]

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 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)

> > I looked on all the deeds that **I** had accomplished

Next we recommend you learn about:

Metonymy
[[rc://en/ta/man/translate/bita-part2]]

(**Go back to:** Psalms 4:7; 6:2; 7:7; 8:3; 10:8; 11:4; 12:3; 12:4; 13:1; 13:5; 14:7; 17:1; 17:2; 17:3; 17:10; 17:15; 18:24; 18:33; 18:34; 18:36; 19:7; 19:8; 20:4; 21:2; 22:20; 22:21; 22:26; 24:6; 24:7; 24:9; 26:10; 26:12; 27:3; 27:8; 27:14; 28:7; 30:3; 30:12; 31:5; 31:7; 31:8; 31:9; 31:22; 32:2; 32:3; 32:4; 32:11; 33:11; 33:17; 33:19; 33:21; 34:5; 34:13; 34:15; 34:20; 35:3; 35:4; 35:7; 35:17; 35:21; 36:1; 36:10; 36:11; 37:14; 37:15; 37:25; 37:30; 38:3; 38:7; 38:8; 38:9; 38:16; 39:3; 40:2; 40:3; 41:6; 42:5; 42:11; 43:5; 44:16; 49:3; 49:15; 49:18; 50:19; 51:6; 51:15; 52:2; 52:4; 54:2; 54:6; 54:7; 55:17; 56:13; 57:8; 60:1; 63:3; 63:5; 63:11; 66:7; 66:14; 66:16; 66:17; 68:12; 68:14; 68:32; 69:32; 71:8; 71:13; 71:15; 71:23; 71:24; 72:3; 72:14; 73:9; 73:21; 73:23; 77:2; 77:20; 78:1; 78:25; 80:17; 81:1; 81:4; 81:5; 81:6; 83:16; 84:2; 85:1; 87:2; 89:34; 89:43; 90:17; 91:12; 92:4; 92:11; 95:5; 95:7; 97:11; 101:7; 102:3; 102:4; 102:15; 103:1; 105:3; 105:16; 107:12; 108:1; 110:7; 111:7; 112:8; 115:4; 116:1; 116:4; 116:7; 116:8; 119:59; 119:82; 119:101; 119:108; 119:111; 119:120; 119:123; 119:133; 119:145; 119:161; 119:171; 119:172; 119:173; 120:2; 120:3; 122:2; 122:7; 123:2; 127:2; 128:2; 130:2; 130:6; 131:1; 131:2; 132:4; 132:12; 132:15; 138:4; 139:13; 140:7; 141:5; 141:8; 142:7; 143:3; 143:6; 143:7; 144:1; 144:8; 144:11; 145:15; 145:21; 146:3; 147:10; 147:13; 149:6)

Textual Variants

Description

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]]
[[rc://en/ta/man/translate/translate-manuscripts]]

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.

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. 15There 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]]
[[rc://en/ta/man/translate/translate-manuscripts]]
[[rc://en/ta/man/translate/translate-terms]]
[[rc://en/ta/man/translate/translate-original]]

(**Go back to:** Psalms 46:9)

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:

Sentence Structure

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:** Psalms 2:9; 45:8; 46:1; 51:7; 56:1; 57:1; 60:1; 80:13; 81:2; 84:3; 149:3; 150:4; 150:5)

When Masculine Words Include Women

In the Bible, sometimes the words “men,” “brothers,” and “sons” refer only to men. At other times, those words include both men and women. In those places where the writer meant both men and women, you (the translator) need to translate it in a way that does not limit the meaning to men.

This page answers the question: *How do I translate “brother” or “he” when it could refer to anyone, male or female?*

In order to understand this topic, it would be good to read:

Pronouns

Generic Noun Phrases

Description

In some languages a word that normally refers to men can also be used in a more general way to refer to both men and women. For example, the Bible sometimes says “brothers” when it refers to both brothers and sisters.

Also in some languages, the masculine pronouns “he” and “him” can be used in a more general way for any person if it is not important whether the person is a man or a woman. In the example below, the pronoun is “his,” but it is not limited to males.

> A wise son makes **his** father rejoice
> but a foolish son brings grief to **his** mother. (Proverbs 10:1 ULT)

Reason This Is a Translation Issue

- In some cultures words like “man,” “brother,” and “son” can only be used to refer to men. If those words are used in a translation in a more general way, people will think that what is being said does not apply to women.
- In some cultures, the masculine pronouns “he” and “him” can only refer to men. If a masculine pronoun is used, people will think that what is said does not apply to women.

Translation Principles

When a statement applies to both men and women, translate it in such a way that people will be able to understand that it applies to both.

Examples From the Bible

> Now we want you to know, **brothers**, the grace of God that has been given to the churches of Macedonia. (2 Corinthians 8:1 ULT)

This verse is addressing the believers in Corinth, not only men, but **men and women**.

> Then said Jesus to his disciples, “If anyone wants to follow me, **he** must deny **himself**, take up **his** cross, and follow me.” (Matthew 16:24 ULT)

Jesus was not speaking only of men, but of **men and women**.

Caution: Sometimes masculine words are used specifically to refer to men. Do not use words that would lead people to think that they include women. The words below are specifically about men.

> Moses said, ‘If **someone** dies, not having children, **his brother** must marry **his** wife and have children for **his brother**.’ (Matthew 22:24 ULT)

Translation Strategies

If people would understand that that masculine words like “man,” “brother,” and “he” can include women, then consider using them. Otherwise, here are some ways for translating those words when they include women.

(1) Use a noun that can be used for both men and women.

(2) Use a word that refers to men and a word that refers to women.

(3) Use pronouns that can be used for both men and women.

Examples of Translation Strategies Applied

(1) Use nouns that can be used for both men and women.

> The wise **man** dies just like the fool dies. (Ecclesiastes 2:16b ULT)
>
> > “The wise **person** dies just like the fool dies.”
> > “Wise **people** die just like fools die.”

(2) Use a word that refers to men and a word that refers to women.

> For we do not want you to be uninformed, **brothers**, about the troubles that happened to us in Asia. (2 Corinthians 1:8) — Paul was writing this letter to both men and women.
>
> > “For we do not want you to be uninformed, **brothers and sisters**, about the troubles that happened to us in Asia.”

(3) Use pronouns that can be used for both men and women.

> “If anyone wants to follow me, he must deny himself, take up his cross, and follow me.” (Matthew 16:24 ULT)

English speakers can change the masculine singular pronouns, “he,” “himself,” and “his” to plural pronouns that do not mark gender, “they,” “themselves,” and “their” in order to show that it applies to all people, not just men.
>

> > “If **people** want to follow me, **they** must deny **themselves**, take up **their** cross, and follow me.”

(**Go back to:** Psalms 84:5; 84:12; 89:47; 90:3)

Writing Styles

Description

This page answers the question: *What are the different types of writing and the issues involved?*

In order to understand this topic, it would be good to read:

[[rc://en/ta/man/translate/writing-decisions]]

There are different kinds or types of writing, and each type of writing has its own purpose. Because these purposes are different, the different kinds of writing are organized in different ways. They use different verbs, different kinds of sentences, and refer to the people and things that they write about in different ways. These differences help the reader to quickly know the purpose of the writing, and they work to communicate the author's meaning in the best way.

Types of Writing

These four basic types of writing exist in every language. Each of them has a different purpose:

- **Narrative** or **Parable** — tells a story or event
- **Explanatory** — explains facts or teaches principles
- **Procedural** — tells how to do something
- **Argumentative** — tries to persuade someone to do something

Reason This Is a Translation Issue

Every language has its own way of organizing these different types of writing. You (the translator) must understand the type of writing that you are translating, understand how it is organized in the source language, and also know how your language organizes this kind of writing. You must put the writing into the form that your language uses for that type of writing so that people will understand it correctly. In every translation, the way that words, sentences, and paragraphs are arranged will affect how people will understand the message.

Writing Styles

The following are ways of writing that may combine with the four basic types above. These writing styles often present challenges in translation.

- **Poetry** — expresses ideas and feelings in a beautiful way
- **Proverbs** — briefly teaches a truth or gives wise advice
- **Symbolic Language** — uses symbols to represent things and events
- **Symbolic Prophecy** — uses symbolic language to show what will happen in the future
- **Hypothetical Situations** — tells about what would happen if something were real or expresses an emotion about something that is not real

Discourse Features

The differences between the different types of writing in a language can be called their discourse features. The purpose of a particular text will influence what kinds of discourse features are used. For example, in a narrative, discourse features would include:

- telling about events that happen before and after other events
- introducing people in the story
- introducing new events in the story
- conversation and the use of quotes
- referring to people and things with nouns or pronouns

Languages have different ways of using these different discourse features. The translator will need to study the way his language does each of these things, so that his translation communicates the right message in a clear and natural way. Other types of writing have other discourse features.

Specific Discourse Topics

Introduction of a New Event — Phrases like “One day” or “It came about that” or “This is how it happened” or “Sometime after that” signal to the reader that a new event is about to be told.
Introduction of New and Old Participants — Languages have ways of introducing new people and of referring to those people again.
Background Information — An author may use background information for several reasons: (1) to add interest to the story, (2) to provide information that is important for understanding the story or (3) to explain why something in the story is important.
Pronouns — When to Use Them — Languages have patterns for how frequently to use pronouns. If that pattern is not followed, wrong meaning can result.
End of Story — Stories can end with various kinds of information. Languages have different ways of showing how that information is related to the story.
Quotations and Quote Margins — Languages have different ways of reporting what someone said.
Connecting Words — Languages have patterns for how to use connecting words (such as “and,” “but,” or “then”).

Next we recommend you learn about:

[[rc://en/ta/man/translate/writing-background]]
Connecting Words and Phrases
[[rc://en/ta/man/translate/writing-newevent]]
[[rc://en/ta/man/translate/writing-participants]]
Order of Events
Poetry
Proverbs
[[rc://en/ta/man/translate/writing-quotations]]
Symbolic Language

(**Go back to:** Psalms 119:66)

unfoldingWord® Translation Words

Version 27

Almighty

Facts:

The term “Almighty” literally means “all-powerful.” In the Bible, this term always refers to God.

- The titles “the Almighty” or “the Almighty One” refer to God and reveal that he has complete power and authority over everything.
- This term is also used to describe God in the titles “Almighty God” and “God Almighty” and “Lord Almighty” and “Lord God Almighty.”

Translation Suggestions:

- This term could also be translated as “All-powerful” or “Completely Powerful One” or “God, who is completely powerful.”
- Ways to translate the phrase “Lord God Almighty” could include “God, the Powerful Ruler” or “Powerful Sovereign God” or “Mighty God who is Master over everything.”

(Translation suggestions: How to Translate Names)

(See also: God, lord, power)

Bible References:

- Exodus 6:2-5
- Genesis 17:1
- Genesis 35:11-13
- Job 8:3
- Numbers 24:15-16
- Revelation 1:7-8
- Ruth 1:19-21

Word Data:

- Strong’s: H7706, G38410

(**Go back to:** Psalm 24 General Notes)

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:** Psalm 16 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:** Psalm 74 General Notes; Notes; 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:** Psalm 78 General Notes; Notes)

bless, blessed, blessing

Definition:

To “bless” someone or something means to cause good and beneficial things to happen to the person or thing that is being blessed.

- Blessing someone also means expressing a desire for positive and beneficial things to happen to that person.
- In Bible times, a father would often pronounce a formal blessing on his children.
- When people “bless” God or express a desire that God be blessed, this means they are praising him.
- The term “bless” is sometimes used for consecrating food before it is eaten, or for thanking and praising God for the food.

Translation Suggestions:

- To “bless” could also be translated as to “provide abundantly for” or to “be very kind and favorable toward.”
- “God has brought great blessing to” could be translated as “God has given many good things to” or “God has provided abundantly for” or “God has caused many good things to happen to”.
- “He is blessed” could be translated as “he will greatly benefit” or “he will experience good things” or “God will cause him to flourish.”
- “Blessed is the person who” could be translated as “How good it is for the person who.”
- Expressions like “blessed be the Lord” could be translated as “May the Lord be praised” or “Praise the Lord” or “I praise the Lord.”
- In the context of blessing food, this could be translated as “thanked God for the food” or “praised God for giving them food” or “consecrated the food by praising God for it.”

(See also: praise)

Bible References:

- 1 Corinthians 10:16
- Acts 13:34
- Ephesians 1:3
- Genesis 14:20
- Isaiah 44:3
- James 1:25
- Luke 6:20
- Matthew 26:26
- Nehemiah 9:5
- Romans 4:9

Examples from the Bible stories:

- **1:7** God saw that it was good and he **blessed** them.
- **1:15** God made Adam and Eve in his own image. He **blessed** them and told them, “Have many children and grandchildren and fill the earth.”
- **1:16** So God rested from all he had been doing. He **blessed** the seventh day and made it holy, because on this day he rested from his work.
- **4:4** “I will make your name great. I will **bless** those who **bless** you and curse those who curse you. All families on earth will be **blessed** because of you.”

- **4:7** Melchizedek **blessed** Abram and said, “May God Most High who owns heaven and earth **bless** Abram.”
- **7:3** Isaac wanted to give his **blessing** to Esau.
- **8:5** Even in prison, Joseph remained faithful to God, and God **blessed** him.

Word Data:

- Strong’s: H0833, H0835, H1288, H1289, H1293, G17570, G21270, G21280, G21290, G31060, G31070, G31080, G60500

(**Go back to:** Psalm 1 General Notes; Notes; Notes; Notes; Notes; Notes; Notes; Notes; Notes; Notes; Notes; Notes; Notes; Notes)

blood

Definition:

The term “blood” refers to the red liquid that comes out of a person’s skin when there is an injury or wound. Blood brings life-giving nutrients to a person’s entire body. In the Bible, the term “blood” is often used figuratively to mean “life” and/or several other concepts.

- When people made sacrifices to God, they killed an animal and poured its blood on the altar. This symbolized the sacrifice of the animal’s life to pay for people’s sins.
- The expression “flesh and blood” refers to human beings.
- The expression “own flesh and blood” refers to people who are biologically related.

Translation Suggestions:

- This term should be translated with the term that is used for blood in the target language.
- The expression “flesh and blood” could be translated as “people” or “human beings.”
- Depending on the context, the expression “my own flesh and blood” could be translated as “my own family” or “my own relatives” or “my own people.”
- If there is an expression in the target language that is used with this meaning, that expression could be used to translate “flesh and blood.”

(See also: bloodshed; flesh; life)

Bible References:

- 1 John 1:7
- 1 Samuel 14:32
- Acts 2:20
- Acts 5:28
- Colossians 1:20
- Galatians 1:16
- Genesis 4:11
- Psalms 16:4
- Psalms 105:28-30

Examples from the Bible stories:

- **8:3** Before Joseph’s brothers returned home, they tore Joseph’s robe and dipped it in goat’s **blood**.
- **10:3** God turned the Nile River into **blood**, but Pharaoh still would not let the Israelites go.
- **11:5** All the houses of the Israelites had **blood** around the doors, so God passed over those houses and everyone inside was safe. They were saved because of the lamb’s **blood**.
- **13:9** The **blood** of the animal that was sacrificed covered the person’s sin and made that person clean in God’s sight.
- **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.”
- **48:10** When anyone believes in Jesus, the **blood** of Jesus takes away that person’s sin, and God’s punishment passes over him.

Word Data:

- Strong’s: H1818, H5332, G01290, G01300, G01310

(**Go back to:** Psalm 50 General Notes)

call, call out

Definition:

The terms “call” and “call out” usually mean to speak loudly, but the term “call” can also mean to name or summon a person. There are also some other meanings.

- To “call out” to someone means to shout, to announce, or to proclaim. It can also mean to ask someone for help, especially God.
- Often in the Bible, “call” has a meaning of “summon” or “command to come” or “request to come.”
- God calls people to come to him and be his people. This is their “calling.”
- When God “calls” people, it means that God has appointed or chosen people to be his children, to be his servants and proclaimers of his message of salvation through Jesus.
- This term is also used in the context of naming someone. For example, “His name is called John,” means “He is named John” or “His name is John.”
- To be “called by the name of” means that someone is given the name of someone else. God says that he has called his people by his name.
- A different expression, “I have called you by name” means that God has specifically chosen that person.

Translation Suggestions:

- The term “call” could be translated by a word that means “summon,” which includes the idea of being intentional or purposeful in calling.
- The expression “call out to you” could be translated as “ask you for help” or “pray to you urgently.”
- When the Bible says that God has “called” us to be his servants, this could be translated as “specially chose us” or “appointed us” to be his servants.
- “You must call his name” can also be translated as “you must name him.”
- “His name is called” could also be translated as “his name is” or “he is named.”
- To “call out” could be translated as “say loudly” or “shout” or “say with a loud voice.” Make sure the translation of this does not sound like the person is angry.
- The expression “your calling” could be translated as “your purpose” or “God’s purpose for you” or “God’s special work for you.”
- To “call on the name of the Lord” could be translated as “seek the Lord and depend on him” or “trust in the Lord and obey him.”
- To “call for” something could be translated by “demand” or “ask for” or “command.”
- The expression “you are called by my name” could be translated as “I have given you my name, showing that you belong to me.”
- When God says, “I have called you by name,” this could be translated as “I know you and have chosen you.”

(See also: pray, cry)

Bible References:

- 1 Kings 18:24
- 1 Thessalonians 4:7
- 2 Timothy 1:9
- Ephesians 4:1
- Galatians 1:15
- Matthew 2:15
- Philippians 3:14

Word Data:

- Strong's: H0559, H2199, H4744, H6817, H7121, H7123, H7769, H7773, G01540, G03630, G14580, G15280, G19410, G19510, G20280, G20460, G25640, G28210, G28220, G28400, G29190, G30040, G31060, G33330, G33430, G36030, G36860, G36870, G43160, G43410, G43770, G47790, G48670, G54550, G55370, G55810

(**Go back to:** Psalm 12 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:** Psalm 2 General Notes; Notes; Notes; Notes; Notes; Notes)

confess, confession

Definition:

To confess means to admit or assert that something is true. A “confession” is a statement or admission that something is true.

- The term “confess” can refer to boldly stating the truth about God. It can also refer to admitting that we have sinned.
- The Bible says that if people confess their sins to God, he will forgive them.
- James the apostle wrote in his letter that when believers confess their sins to each other, this brings spiritual healing.
- The apostle Paul wrote to the Philippians that someday everyone will confess or declare that Jesus is Lord.
- Paul also said that if people confess that Jesus is Lord and believe that God raised him from the dead, they will be saved.

Translation Suggestions:

- Depending on the context, ways to translate “confess” could include, “admit” or “testify” or “declare” or “acknowledge” or “affirm.”
- Different ways to translate “confession” could be, “declaration” or “testimony” or “statement about what we believe” or “admitting sin.”

(See also: faith, testimony)

Bible References:

- 1 John 1:8-10
- 2 John 1:7-8
- James 5:16
- Leviticus 5:5-6
- Matthew 3:4-6
- Nehemiah 1:6-7
- Philippians 2:9-11
- Psalms 38:17-18

Word Data:

- Strong’s: H3034, H8426, G18430, G36700, G36710

(**Go back to:** Psalm 32 General Notes; Notes)

cross

Definition:

In Bible times, a cross was an upright wooden post stuck into the ground, with a horizontal wooden beam attached to it near the top.

- During the time of the Roman Empire, the Roman government would execute criminals by tying or nailing them to a cross and leaving them there to die.
- Jesus was falsely accused of crimes he did not commit and the Romans put him to death on a cross.
- Note that this is a completely different word from the verb “cross” that means to go over to the other side of something, such as a river or lake.

Translation Suggestions:

- This term could be translated using a term in the target language that refers to the shape of a cross.
- Consider describing the cross as something on which people were killed, using phrases such as “execution post” or “tree of death.”
- Also consider how this word is translated in a Bible translation in a local or national language. (See: How to Translate Unknowns)

(See also: crucify, Rome)

Bible References:

- 1 Corinthians 1:17
- Colossians 2:15
- Galatians 6:12
- John 19:18
- Luke 9:23
- Luke 23:26
- Matthew 10:38
- Philippians 2:8

Examples from the Bible stories:

- **40:1** After the soldiers mocked Jesus, they led him away to crucify him. They made him carry the **cross** on which he would die.
- **40:2** The soldiers brought Jesus to a place called “the Skull” and nailed his arms and feet to the **cross**.
- **40:5** The Jewish leaders and the other people in the crowd mocked Jesus. They said to him, “If you are the Son of God, come down from the **cross** and save yourself! Then we will believe you.”
- **49:10** When Jesus died on the **cross**, he received your punishment.
- **49:12** You must believe that Jesus is the Son of God, that he died on the **cross** instead of you, and that God raised him to life again.

Word Data:

- Strong’s: G47160

(**Go back to:** Psalm 22 General Notes)

crucify, crucified

Definition:

The term “crucify” means to execute someone by attaching him to a cross and leaving him there to suffer and die in great pain.

- The victim was either tied to the cross or nailed to it. Crucified people died from blood loss or from suffocation.
- The ancient Roman Empire frequently used this method of execution to punish and kill people who were terrible criminals or who had rebelled against the authority of their government.
- The Jewish religious leaders asked the Roman governor to order his soldiers to crucify Jesus. The soldiers nailed Jesus to a cross. He suffered there for six hours, and then died.

Translation Suggestions:

- The term “crucify” could be translated as “kill on a cross” or “execute by nailing to a cross.”

(See also: cross, Rome)

Bible References:

- Acts 2:23
- Galatians 2:20-21
- Luke 23:20-22
- Luke 23:34
- Matthew 20:17-19
- Matthew 27:23-24

Examples from the Bible stories:

- **39:11** But the Jewish leaders and the crowd shouted, “**Crucify** him (Jesus)!”
- **39:12** Pilate became afraid that the crowd would begin to riot, so he ordered his soldiers to **crucify** Jesus.played a major role in the crucifixion of Jesus Christ.
- **40:1** After the soldiers mocked Jesus, they led him away to **crucify** him. They made him carry the cross on which he would die.
- **40:4** Jesus was **crucified** between two robbers.
- **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. But you **crucified** him!”
- **43:9** “You **crucified** this man, Jesus.”
- **44:8** Peter answered them, “This man stands before you healed by the power of Jesus the Messiah. You **crucified** Jesus, but God raised him to life again!”

Word Data:

- Strong’s: G03880, G43620, G47170, G49570

(**Go back to:** Psalm 22 General Notes)

deliver, hand over, turn over, release, rescue

Definition:

To “deliver” someone means to rescue that person. The term “deliverer” refers to someone who rescues or frees people from slavery, oppression, or other dangers. The term “deliverance” refers to what happens when someone rescues or frees people from slavery, oppression, or other dangers.

- In the Old Testament, God appointed deliverers to protect the Israelites by leading them in battle against other people groups who came to attack them.
- These deliverers were also called “judges” and the Old Testament book of Judges records the time in history when these judges were governing Israel.
- God is also called a “deliverer.” Throughout the history of Israel, he delivered or rescued his people from their enemies.
- The term “deliver over to” or “deliver up to” has a very different meaning of handing or turning someone over to an enemy, such as when Judas delivered Jesus over to the Jewish leaders.

Translation Suggestions:

- In the context of helping people escape from their enemies, the term “deliver” can be translated as “rescue” or “liberate” or “save.”
- When it means to deliver someone over to the enemy, “deliver over” can be translated as “betray to” or “hand over” or “give over.”
- The word “deliverer” can also be translated as “rescuer” or “liberator.”
- When the term “deliverer” refers to the judges who led Israel, it could also be translated as “governor” or “judge” or “leader.”

(See also: judge, save)

Bible References:

- 2 Corinthians 1:10
- Acts 7:35
- Galatians 1:4
- Judges 10:12

Examples from the Bible stories:

- **16:3** Then God provided a **deliverer** who rescued them from their enemies and brought peace to the land.
- **16:16** They (Israel) finally asked God for help again, and God sent them another **deliverer**.
- **16:17** Over many years, God sent many **deliverers** who saved the Israelites from their enemies.

Word Data:

- Strong’s: H1350, H2020, H2502, H3205, H3444, H3467, H4042, H4422, H4672, H5337, H5414, H5462, H6299, H6403, H6413, H6475, H6561, H7725, H7804, H8199, G03250, G05250, G06290, G10800, G13250, G15600, G16590, G18070, G19290, G26730, G30860, G38600, G45060, G49910, G50880, G54830

(**Go back to:** Psalm 4 General Notes; Notes; Notes;

eternity, everlasting, eternal, forever

Definition:

The terms “everlasting” and “eternal” have very similar meanings and refer to something that will always exist or that lasts forever.

- The term “eternity” refers to a state of being that has no beginning or end. It can also refer to life that never ends.
- After this present life on earth, humans will spend eternity either in heaven with God or in hell apart from God.
- The terms “eternal life” and “everlasting life” are used in the New Testament to refer to living forever with God in heaven.

The term “forever” refers to never-ending time.

- The phrase “forever and ever” has the idea of time that never ends and expresses what eternity or eternal life is like. It emphasizes that something will always happen or exist. It refers to time that never ends.
- God said that David’s throne would last “forever.” This is referred to the fact that David’s descendant Jesus will reign as king forever.

Translation Suggestions:

- Other ways to translate “eternal” or “everlasting” could include “unending” or “never stopping” or “always continuing.”
- The terms “eternal life” and “everlasting life” could also be translated as “life that never ends” or “life that continues without stopping” or “the raising up of our bodies to live forever.”
- Depending on the context, different ways to translate “eternity” could include “existing outside of time” or “unending life” or “life in heaven.”
- Also consider how this word is translated in a Bible translation in a local or national language. (See: How to Translate Unknowns)
- “Forever” could also be translated by “always” or “never ending.”
- The phrase “will last forever” could also be translated as “always exist” or “will never stop” or “will always continue.”
- The emphatic phrase “forever and ever” could also be translated as “for always and always” or “not ever ending” or “which never, ever ends.”
- David’s throne lasting forever could be translated as “David’s descendant will reign forever” or “a descendant of David will always be reigning.”

(See also: David, reign, life)

Bible References:

- Genesis 17:8
- Genesis 48:4
- Exodus 15:17
- 2 Samuel 3:28-30
- 1 Kings 2:32-33
- Job 4:20-21
- Psalms 21:4
- Isaiah 9:6-7
- Isaiah 40:27-28
- Daniel 7:18

- Luke 18:18
- Acts 13:46
- Romans 5:21
- Hebrews 6:19-20
- Hebrews 10:11-14
- 1 John 1:2
- 1 John 5:12
- Revelation 1:4-6
- Revelation 22:3-5

Examples from the Bible stories:

- **27:1** One day, an expert in the Jewish law came to Jesus to test him, saying, “Teacher, what must I do to inherit **eternal life**?”
- **28:1** One day, a rich young ruler came up to Jesus and asked him, “Good Teacher, what must I do to have **eternal life**?” Jesus said to him, “Why do you ask me about what is good? There is only One who is good, and that is God. But if you want to have **eternal life**, obey God’s laws.”
- **28:10** Jesus answered, “Everyone who has left houses, brothers, sisters, father, mother, children, or property for my name’s sake, will receive 100 times more and will also receive **eternal life**.”

Word Data:

- Strong’s: H3117, H4481, H5331, H5703, H5705, H5769, H5865, H5957, H6924, G01260, G01650, G01660, G13360

(**Go back to:** Psalm 49 General Notes; Notes; Notes)

evil, wicked, unpleasant

Definition:

In the Bible, the term “evil” can refer either to the concept of moral wickedness or emotional unpleasantness. The context will usually make it clear which meaning is intended in the specific instance of the term.

- While “evil” may describe a person’s character, “wicked” may refer more to a person’s behavior. However, both terms are very similar in meaning.
- The term “wickedness” refers to the state of being that exists when people do wicked things.
- The results of evil are clearly shown in how people mistreat others by killing, stealing, slandering and being cruel and unkind.

Translation Suggestions:

- Depending on the context, the terms “evil” and “wicked” can be translated as “bad” or “sinful” or “immoral.”
- Other ways to translate these could include “not good” or “not righteous” or “not moral.”
- Make sure the words or phrases that are used to translate these terms fit the context that is natural in the target language.

(See also: disobey, sin, good, righteous, demon)

Bible References:

- 1 Samuel 24:11
- 1 Timothy 6:10
- 3 John 1:10
- Genesis 2:17
- Genesis 6:5-6
- Job 1:1
- Job 8:20
- Judges 9:57
- Luke 6:22-23
- Matthew 7:11-12
- Proverbs 3:7
- Psalms 22:16-17

Examples from the Bible stories:

- **2:4** “God just knows that as soon as you eat it, you will be like God and will understand good and **evil** like he does.”
- **3:1** After a long time, many people were living in the world. They had become very **wicked** and violent.
- **3:2** But Noah found favor with God. He was a righteous man living among **wicked** people.
- **4:2** God saw that if they all kept working together to do **evil**, they could do many more sinful things.
- **8:12** “You tried to do **evil** when you sold me as a slave, but God used the **evil** for good!”
- **14:2** They (Canaanites) worshiped false gods and did many **evil** things.
- **17:1** But then he (Saul) became a **wicked** man who did not obey God, so God chose a different man who would one day be king in his place.
- **18:11** In the new kingdom of Israel, all the kings were **evil**.
- **29:8** The king was so angry that he threw the **wicked** servant into prison until he could pay back all of his debt.

- **45:2** They said, “We heard him (Stephen) speak **evil** things about Moses and God!”
- **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: H0205, H0605, H1100, H1681, H1942, H2154, H2162, H2254, H2617, H3399, H3415, H4209, H4849, H5753, H5766, H5767, H5999, H6001, H6090, H7451, H7455, H7489, H7561, H7562, H7563, H7564, G00920, G01130, G04590, G09320, G09870, G09880, G14260, G25490, G25510, G25540, G25550, G25560, G25570, G25590, G25600, G26350, G26360, G41510, G41890, G41900, G41910, G53370

(**Go back to:** Psalm 1 General Notes; Notes)

exalt, exalted, exaltation

Definition:

To exalt is to highly praise and honor someone. It can also mean to put someone in a high position.

- In the Bible, the term “exalt” is most often used for exalting God.
- When a person exalts himself, it means he is thinking about himself in a proud or arrogant way.

Translation Suggestions:

- Ways to translate “exalt” could include “highly praise” or “honor greatly” or “extol” or “speak highly of.”
- In some contexts it could be translated by a word or phrase that means “put in a higher position” or “give more honor to” or “talk about proudly.”
- “Do not exalt yourself” could also be translated as “Do not think of yourself too highly” or “Do not brag about yourself.”
- “Those that exalt themselves” could also be translated as “Those who think proudly about themselves” or “Those who boast about themselves.”

(See also: praise, worship, glory, boast, proud)

Bible References:

- 1 Peter 5:5-7
- 2 Samuel 22:47
- Acts 5:31
- Philippians 2:9-11
- Psalms 18:46

Word Data:

- Strong’s: H1361, H4984, H5375, H5549, H5927, H7311, H7426, H7682, G18690, G52290, G52510, G53110, G53120

(**Go back to:** Psalm 8 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:** Psalm 92 General Notes; Notes)

favor, favorable, favoritism

Definition:

The term “favor” generally means approval. Someone who favors another person regards that person positively and approves of them.

- Jesus grew up “in favor with” God and men. This means that both God and others approved of his character and behavior.
- The expression “find favor” with someone means that someone is approved of by that person.
- When a king shows favor to someone, it often means that he approves of that person’s request and grants it.
- A “favor” can also be a gesture or action towards or for another person for their benefit.
- The term “favoritism” means an attitude of acting favorably toward some people but not others. It means the inclination to pick one person over another or one thing over another because the person or item is preferred. Generally, favoritism is considered unfair.

Translation Suggestions:

- Other ways to translate the term “favor” could include “approval” or “blessing” or “benefit.”
- The “favorable year of Yahweh” could be translated as “the year (or time) when Yahweh will bring great blessing.”
- The term “favoritism” could be translated as “partiality” or “being prejudiced” or “unjust treatment.” This word is related to the word “favorite,” which means to prefer above all others.

Bible References:

- 1 Samuel 2:25-26
- 2 Chronicles 19:7
- 2 Corinthians 1:11
- Acts 24:27
- Genesis 41:16
- Genesis 47:25
- Genesis 50:5

Word Data:

- Strong’s: H0995, H1156, H1293, H1779, H1921, H2580, H2603, H2896, H5278, H5375, H5414, H5922, H6213, H6437, H6440, H7521, H7522, H7965, G11840, G36850, G43800, G43820, G54850, G54860

(**Go back to:** Psalm 82 General Notes)

fear, afraid, frighten

Definition:

The terms “fear” refers to the unpleasant emotion a person feels when experiencing a potential threat to their safety or well-being. In the Bible, however, the term “fear” can also mean an attitude of worship, respect, awe, or obedience toward another person, usually someone powerful such as God or a king.

Translation Suggestions:

- Depending on the context, the term “fear” can be translated in various ways. Some possibilities include: “be afraid;” “deeply respect,” or “deep respect;” “revere,” or “reverence;” or perhaps “be in awe of.”
- The phrase “fear not” could also be translated as “do not be afraid” or “stop being afraid.”
- The sentence “The fear of God fell on all of them” might be translated in various ways. Some possibilities include: “Suddenly they all felt a deep awe and respect for God;” or “Immediately, they all felt very amazed and revered God deeply;” or “Right then, they all felt very afraid of God (because of his great power).”

(See also: awe, Yahweh, Lord, marvel, power)

Bible References:

- 1 John 4:18
- Acts 2:43
- Acts 19:15-17
- Genesis 50:21
- Isaiah 11:3-5
- Job 6:14
- Jonah 1:9
- Luke 12:5
- Matthew 10:28
- Proverbs 10:24-25

Word Data:

- Strong’s: H0367, H0926, H1204, H1481, H1672, H1674, H1763, H2119, H2296, H2727, H2729, H2730, H2731, H2844, H2849, H2865, H3016, H3025, H3068, H3372, H3373, H3374, H4032, H4034, H4035, H4116, H4172, H6206, H6342, H6343, H6345, H6427, H7264, H7267, H7297, H7374, H7461, H7493, H8175, G08700, G11670, G11680, G11690, G16300, G17190, G21240, G21250, G29620, G53980, G53990, G54000, G54010

(**Go back to:** Psalm 13 General Notes)

forgive, forgiven, forgiveness, pardon, pardoned

Definition:

To forgive someone means to not hold a grudge against that person even though they did something hurtful. “Forgiveness” is the act of forgiving someone.

- Forgiving someone often means not punishing that person for something he has done wrong.
- This term can be used figuratively to mean “cancel,” as in the expression “forgive a debt.”
- When people confess their sins, God forgives them based on Jesus’ sacrificial death on the cross.
- Jesus taught his disciples to forgive others as he has forgiven them.

The term “pardon” means to forgive and not punish someone for his sin.

- This word has the same meaning as “forgive” but may also include the meaning of a formal decision to not punish someone who is guilty.
- In a court of law, a judge can pardon a person found guilty of a crime.
- Even though we are guilty of sin, Jesus Christ pardoned us from being punished in hell, based on his sacrificial death on the cross.

Translation Suggestions:

- Depending on the context, “forgive” could be translated as “pardon” or “cancel” or “release” or “not hold against” (someone).
- The term “forgiveness” could be translated by a word or phrase that means “practice of not resenting” or “declaring (someone) as not guilty” or “the act of pardoning.”
- If the language has a word for a formal decision to forgive, that word could be used to translate “pardon.”

(See also: guilt)

Bible References:

- Genesis 50:17
- Numbers 14:17-19
- Deuteronomy 29:20-21
- Joshua 24:19-20
- 2 Kings 5:17-19
- Psalms 25:11
- Psalms 25:17-19
- Isaiah 55:6-7
- Isaiah 40:2
- Luke 5:21
- Acts 8:22
- Ephesians 4:31-32
- Colossians 3:12-14
- 1 John 2:12

Examples from the Bible stories:

- **7:10** But Esau had already **forgiven** Jacob, and they were happy to see each other again.
- **13:15** Then Moses climbed the mountain again and prayed that God would **forgive** the people. God listened to Moses and **forgave** them.
- **17:13** David repented of his sin and God **forgave** him.

- **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.
- **29:1** One day Peter asked Jesus, "Master, how many times should I **forgive** my brother when he sins against me?"
- **29:8** I **forgave** your debt because you begged me.
- **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."

Word Data:

- H5546, H5547, H3722, H5375, H5545, H5547, H7521, G859, G863, G5483

(**Go back to:** Psalm 32 General Notes; Notes; Notes; Notes)

glory, glorious, glorify

Definition:

The term “glory” is a general term for a family of concepts including value, worth, importance, honor, splendor, or majesty. The term “glorify” means to ascribe glory to someone or something, or to show or tell how glorious something or someone is.

- In the Bible, the term “glory” is especially used to describe God, who is more valuable, more worthy, more important, more honorable, more splendid, and more majestic than anyone or anything in the universe. Everything about his character reveals his glory.
- People can glorify God by telling about the wonderful things he has done. They can also glorify God by living in accordance with God’s character, because doing so shows to others his value, worth, importance, honor, splendor, and majesty.
- The expression to “glory in” means to boast about or take pride in something.

Old Testament

- The specific phrase “the glory of Yahweh” in the Old Testament usually refers to some perceptible manifestation of Yahweh’s presence in a particular location.

New Testament

- God the Father will glorify God the Son by revealing to all people the full extent of how glorious Jesus is.
- Everyone who believes in Christ will be glorified with him. This use of the term “glorify” carries a unique meaning. It means that when people who believe in Christ are raised to life, they will be changed physically to be like Jesus as he appeared after his resurrection.

Translation Suggestions:

- Depending on the context, different ways to translate “glory” could include “splendor” or “majesty” or “awesome greatness” or “extreme value.”
- The term “glorious” could be translated as “full of glory” or “extremely valuable” or “brightly shining” or “awesomely majestic.”
- The expression “give glory to God” could be translated as “honor God’s greatness” or “praise God because of his splendor” or “tell others how great God is.”
- The expression “glory in” could also be translated as “praise” or “take pride in” or “boast about” or “take pleasure in.”
- “Glorify” could also be translated as “give glory to” or “bring glory to” or “cause to appear great.”
- The phrase “glorify God” could also be translated as “praise God” or “talk about God’s greatness” or “show how great God is” or “honor God (by obeying him).”
- The term “be glorified” could also be translated as “be shown to be very great” or “be praised” or “be exalted.”

(See also: honor, majesty, exalt, obey, praise)

Bible References:

- Exodus 24:17
- Numbers 14:9-10
- Isaiah 35:2

- Luke 18:43
- Luke 2:9
- John 12:28
- Acts 3:13-14
- Acts 7:1-3
- Romans 8:17
- 1 Corinthians 6:19-20
- Philippians 2:14-16
- Philippians 4:19
- Colossians 3:1-4
- 1 Thessalonians 2:5
- James 2:1-4
- 1 Peter 4:15-16
- Revelation 15:4

Examples from the Bible stories:

- **23:7** Suddenly, the skies were filled with angels praising God, saying, "**Glory** to God in heaven and peace on earth to the people he favors!"
- **25:6** Then Satan showed Jesus all the kingdoms of the world and all their **glory** and said, "I will give you all this if you bow down and worship me."
- **37:1** When Jesus heard this news, he said, "This sickness will not end in death, but it is for the **glory** of God."
- **37:8** Jesus responded, "Did I not tell you that you would see God's **glory** if you believe in me?"

Word Data:

- Strong's: H0117, H0142, H0155, H0215, H1342, H1921, H1926, H1935, H1984, H3367, H3513, H3519, H3520, H6286, H6643, H7623, H8597, G13910, G13920, G17400, G17410, G27440, G48880

(**Go back to:** Psalm 8 General Notes; Notes; Notes; Notes)

god, false god, goddess, idol, idolater, idolatrous, idolatry

Definition:

A false god is something that people worship instead of the one true God. The term “goddess” refers specifically to a female false god.

- These false gods or goddesses do not exist. Yahweh is the only God.
- People sometimes make objects into idols to worship as symbols of their false gods.
- In the Bible, God’s people frequently turned away from obeying him in order to worship false gods.
- Demons often deceive people into believing that the false gods and idols they worship have power.
- Baal, Dagon, and Molech were three of the many false gods that were worshiped by people in Bible times.
- Asherah and Artemis (Diana) were two of the goddesses that ancient peoples worshiped.

An idol is an object that people make so they can worship it. Something is described as “idolatrous” if it involves giving honor to something other than the one true God.

- People make idols to represent the false gods that they worship.
- These false gods do not exist; there is no God besides Yahweh.
- Sometimes demons work through an idol to make it seem like it has power, even though it does not.
- Idols are often made of valuable materials like gold, silver, bronze, or expensive wood.
- An “idolatrous kingdom” means a “kingdom of people who worship idols” or a “kingdom of people who worship earthly things.”
- The term “idolatrous figure” is another word for a “carved image” or an “idol.”

Translation Suggestions:

- There may already be a word for “god” or “false god” in the language or in a nearby language.
- The term “idol” could be used to refer to false gods.
- In English, a lower case “g” is used to refer to false gods, and upper case “G” is used to refer to the one true God. Other languages also do that.
- Another option would be to use a completely different word to refer to the false gods.
- Some languages may add a word to specify whether the false god is described as male or female.

(See also: God, Asherah, Baal, Molech, demon, image, kingdom, worship)

Bible References:

- Genesis 35:2
- Exodus 32:1
- Psalms 31:6
- Psalms 81:8-10
- Isaiah 44:20
- Acts 7:41
- Acts 7:43
- Acts 15:20
- Acts 19:27
- Romans 2:22
- Galatians 4:8-9
- Galatians 5:19-21
- Colossians 3:5
- 1 Thessalonians 1:9

Examples from the Bible stories:

- **10:2** Through these plagues, God showed Pharaoh that he is more powerful than Pharaoh and all of Egypt's **gods**.
- **13:4** Then God gave them the covenant and said, "I am Yahweh, your God, who saved you from slavery in Egypt. Do not worship other **gods**."
- **14:2** They (Canaanites) worshiped false **gods** and did many evil things.
- **16:1** The Israelites began to worship the Canaanite **gods** instead of Yahweh, the true God.
- **18:13** But most of Judah's kings were evil, corrupt, and they worshiped idols. Some of the kings even sacrificed their children to false **gods**.

Word Data:

- Strong's: H0205, H0367, H0410, H0426, H0430, H0457, H1322, H1544, H1892, H2553, H3649, H4656, H4906, H5236, H5566, H6089, H6090, H6091, H6456, H6459, H6673, H6736, H6754, H7723, H8163, H8251, H8267, H8441, H8655, G14930, G14940, G14950, G14960, G14970, G22990, G27120

(**Go back to:** Psalm 16 General Notes; 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:** Psalm 1 General Notes; Notes; Notes)

good, right, pleasant, better, best

Definition:

The term “good” generally refers to a positive evaulation of the quality of something or someone, often in a moral or emotional sense. However, the term conveys various nuances throughout the Bible depending on the context.

- Something that is “good” could be emotionally pleasant, morally right, excellent, helpful, suitable, or profitable.
- In the Bible, the general meaning of “good” is often contrasted with “evil.”

Translation Suggestions:

- The general term for “good” in the target language should be used wherever this general meaning is accurate and natural, especially in contexts where it is contrasted to evil.
- Depending on the context, other ways to translate this term could include “kind” or “excellent” or “pleasing to God” or “righteous” or “morally upright” or “profitable.”
- “Good land” could be translated as “fertile land” or “productive land”; a “good crop” could be translated as a “plentiful harvest” or “large amount of crops.”
- The phrase “do good to” means to do something that benefits others and could be translated as “be kind to” or “help” or “benefit” someone or “cause someone to prosper.”
- To “do good on the Sabbath” means to “do things that help others on the Sabbath.”
- Depending on the context, ways to translate the term “goodness” could include “blessing” or “kindness” or “moral perfection” or “righteousness” or “purity.”

(See also: righteous, prosper, evil)

Bible References:

- Galatians 5:22-24
- Genesis 1:12
- Genesis 2:9
- Genesis 2:17
- James 3:13
- Romans 2:4

Examples from the Bible stories:

- **1:4** God saw that what he had created was **good**.
- **1:11** God planted the tree of the knowledge of **good** and evil.
- **1:12** Then God said, “It is not **good** for man to be alone.”
- **2:4** “God just knows that as soon as you eat it, you will be like God and will understand **good** and evil like he does.”
- **8:12** “You tried to do evil when you sold me as a slave, but God used the evil for **good**!”
- **14:15** Joshua was a **good** leader because he trusted and obeyed God.
- **18:13** Some of these kings were **good** men who ruled justly and worshiped God.
- **28:1** “**Good** teacher, what must I do to have eternal life?” Jesus said to him, “Why do you call me ‘**good**?’ There is only one who is **good**, and that is God.”

Word Data:

- Strong's: H0117, H0145, H0155, H0202, H0239, H0410, H1580, H1926, H1935, H2532, H2617, H2623, H2869, H2895, H2896, H2898, H3190, H3191, H3276, H3474, H3788, H3966, H4261, H4399, H5232, H5750, H6287, H6643, H6743, H7075, H7368, H7399, H7443, H7999, H8231, H8232, H8233, H8389, H8458, G00140, G00150, G00180, G00190, G05150, G07440, G08650, G09790, G13800, G20950, G20970, G21060, G21070, G21080, G21090, G21140, G21150, G21330, G21400, G21620, G21630, G21740, G22930, G25650, G25670, G25700, G25730, G28870, G29860, G31400, G36170, G37760, G41470, G46320, G46740, G48510, G52230, G52240, G53580, G55420, G55430, G55440

(**Go back to:** Psalm 10 General Notes; Notes; Notes; Notes; Notes; Notes; Notes; Notes; Notes; Notes; Notes; Notes; Notes)

grace, gracious

Definition:

The word “grace” refers to help or blessing that is given to someone who has not earned it. The term “gracious” describes someone who shows grace to others.

- God’s grace toward sinful human beings is a gift that is freely given.
- The concept of grace also refers to being kind and forgiving to someone who has done wrong or hurtful things.
- The expression to “find grace” is an expression that means to receive help and mercy from God. Often it includes the meaning that God is pleased with someone and helps him.

Translation Suggestions:

- Other ways that “grace” could be translated include “divine kindness” or “God’s favor” or “God’s kindness and forgiveness for sinners” or “merciful kindness.”
- The term “gracious” could be translated as “full of grace” or “kind” or “merciful” or “mercifully kind.”
- The expression “he found grace in the eyes of God” could be translated as “he received mercy from God” or “God mercifully helped him” or “God showed his favor to him” or “God was pleased with him and helped him.”

Bible References:

- Acts 4:33
- Acts 6:8
- Acts 14:4
- Colossians 4:6
- Colossians 4:18
- Genesis 43:28-29
- James 4:7
- John 1:16
- Philippians 4:21-23
- Revelation 22:20-21

Word Data:

- Strong’s: H2580, H2587, H2589, H2603, H8467, G21430, G54850, G55430

(**Go back to:** Psalm 13 General Notes)

heaven, sky, heavens, heavenly

Definition:

The term that is translated as “heaven” usually refers to where God lives. The same word can also mean “sky,” depending on the context.

- The term “heavens” refers to everything we see above the earth, including the sun, moon, and stars. It also includes the heavenly bodies, such as far-off planets, that we can’t directly see from the earth.
- The term “sky” refers to the blue expanse above the earth that has clouds and the air we breathe. Often the sun and moon are also said to be “up in the sky.”
- In some contexts in the Bible, the word “heaven” could refer to either the sky or the place where God lives.

Translation Suggestions:

- For “kingdom of heaven” in the book of Matthew, it is best to keep the word “heaven” since this is distinctive to Matthew’s gospel.
- The terms “heavens” or “heavenly bodies” could also be translated as “sun, moon, and stars” or “all the stars in the universe.”
- The phrase, “stars of heaven” could be translated as “stars in the sky” or “stars in the galaxy” or “stars in the universe.”

(See also: kingdom of God)

Bible References:

- 1 Kings 8:22-24
- 1 Thessalonians 1:8-10
- 1 Thessalonians 4:17
- Deuteronomy 9:1
- Ephesians 6:9
- Genesis 1:1
- Genesis 7:11
- John 3:12
- John 3:27
- Matthew 5:18
- Matthew 5:46-48

Examples from the Bible stories:

- **4:2** They even began building a tall tower to reach **heaven**.
- **14:11** He (God) gave them bread from **heaven**, called “manna.”
- **23:7** Suddenly, the skies were filled with angels praising God, saying, “Glory to God in **heaven** and peace on earth to the people he favors!”
- **29:9** Then Jesus said, “This is what my **heavenly** Father will do to every one of you if you do not forgive your brother from your heart.”
- **37:9** Then Jesus looked up to **heaven** and said, “Father, thank you for hearing me.”
- **42:11** Then Jesus went up to **heaven**, and a cloud hid him from their sight.

Word Data:

- Strong’s: H1534, H6160, H6183, H7834, H8064, H8065, G09320, G20320, G33210, G37700, G37710, G37720

(**Go back to:** Psalm 8 General Notes; Notes; 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 to 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:** Psalm 110 General Notes)

innocent

Definition:

The term “innocent” means to not be guilty of a crime or other wrongdoing. It can also refer more generally to people who are not involved in evil things.

- A person accused of doing something wrong is innocent if he has not committed that wrong.
- Sometimes the term “innocent” is used to refer to people who have done nothing wrong to deserve the bad treatment they are receiving, as in an enemy army attacking “innocent people.”
- In the Bible, “blood” can represent “killing,” so “innocent blood” refers to “killing people who did not deserve to die.”

Translation Suggestions:

- In most contexts, the term “innocent” can be translated as “not guilty” or “not responsible” or “not to blame” for something.
- When referring in general to innocent people, this term could be translated as “who have done nothing wrong” or “who are not involved in evil.”
- “To shed innocent blood” can be translated as “to kill people who did not deserve to die.”

(See also: guilt)

Bible References:

- 1 Corinthians 4:4
- 1 Samuel 19:5
- Acts 20:26
- Exodus 23:7
- Jeremiah 22:17
- Job 9:23
- Romans 16:18

Examples from the Bible stories:

- **8:6** After two years, Joseph was still in prison, even though he was **innocent**.
- **40:4** One of them mocked Jesus, but the other said, “Do you have no fear of God? We are guilty, but this man is **innocent**.”
- **40:8** When the soldier guarding Jesus saw everything that happened, he said, “Certainly, this man was **innocent**. He was the Son of God.”

Word Data:

- Strong’s: H2136, H2600, H2643, H5352, H5355, H5356, G01210

(**Go back to:** Psalm 10 General Notes; Notes)

joy, joyful, rejoice, glad

Definition:

joy

The term “joy” refers to a feeling of delight or deep satisfaction. The related term “joyful” describes a person who feels very glad and is full of deep happiness.

- A person feels joy when he has a deep sense that what he is experiencing is very good.
- God is the one who gives true joy to people.
- Having joy does not depend on pleasant circumstances. God can give people joy even when very difficult things are happening in their lives.
- Sometimes places are described as joyful, such as houses or cities. This means that the people who live there are joyful.

rejoice

The term “rejoice” means to be full of joy and gladness.

- This term often refers to being very happy about the good things that God has done.
- It could be translated as “be very happy” or “be very glad” or “be full of joy.”
- When Mary said “my soul rejoices in God my Savior,” she meant “God my Savior has made me very happy” or “I feel so joyful because of what God my Savior has done for me.”

Translation Suggestions:

- The term “joy” could also be translated as “gladness” or “delight” or “great happiness.”
- The phrase, “be joyful” could be translated as “rejoice” or “be very glad” or it could be translated “be very happy in God’s goodness.”
- A person who is joyful could be described as “very happy” or “delighted” or “deeply glad.”
- A phrase such as “make a joyful shout” could be translated as “shout in a way that shows you are very happy.”
- A “joyful city” or “joyful house” could be translated as “city where joyful people live” or “house full of joyful people” or “city whose people are very happy.” (See: metonymy)

Bible References:

- Nehemiah 8:10
- Psalm 48:2
- Isaiah 56:6-7
- Jeremiah 15:15-16
- Matthew 2:9-10
- Luke 15:7
- Luke 19:37-38
- John 3:29
- Acts 16:32-34
- Romans 5:1-2
- Romans 15:30-32
- Galatians 5:23
- Philippians 4:10-13

- 1 Thessalonians 1:6-7
- 1 Thessalonians 5:16
- Philemon 1:4-7
- James 1:2
- 3 John 1:1-4

Examples from the Bible stories:

- **33:7** “The rocky ground is a person who hears God’s word and accepts it with **joy**.”
- **34:4** “The kingdom of God is also like hidden treasure that someone hid in a field.. Another man found the treasure and then buried it again. He was so filled with **joy**, that he went and sold everything he had and used the money to buy that field.”
- **41:7** The women were full of fear and great **joy**. They ran to tell the disciples the good news.

Word Data:

- Strong’s: H1523, H1524, H1525, H2302, H2304, H2305, H2654, H2898, H4885, H5937, H5947, H5965, H5970, H6342, H6670, H7440, H7442, H7444, H7445, H7797, H7832, H8055, H8056, H8057, H8342, H8643, G00200, G00210, G21650, G21670, G27440, G46400, G47960, G49130, G54630, G54790

(**Go back to:** Psalm 126 General 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:** Psalm 12 General Notes; Notes; Notes)

just, justice, unjust, injustice, justify, justification

Definition:

"Just" and "justice" refer to treating people fairly according to God's laws. Human laws that reflect God's standard of right behavior toward others are also just.

- To be "just" is to act in a fair and right way toward others. It also implies honesty and integrity to do what is morally right in God's eyes.
- To act "justly" means to treat people in a way that is right, good, and proper according to God's laws.
- To receive "justice" means to be treated fairly under the law, either being protected by the law or being punished for breaking the law.
- Sometimes the term "just" has the broader meaning of "righteous" or "following God's laws."

The terms "unjust" and "unjustly" refer to treating people in an unfair and often harmful manner.

- An "injustice" is something bad that is done to someone that the person did not deserve. It refers to treating people unfairly.
- Injustice also means that some people are treated badly while others are treated well.
- Someone who is acting in an unjust way is being "partial" or "prejudiced" because he is not treating people equally.

The terms "justify" and "justification" refer to causing a guilty person to be righteous. Only God can truly justify people.

- When God justifies people, he forgives their sins and makes it as though they have no sin. He justifies sinners who repent and trust in Jesus to save them from their sins.
- "Justification" refers to what God does when he forgives a person's sins and declares that person to be righteous in his sight.

Translation Suggestions:

- Depending on the context, other ways to translate "just" could include "morally right" or "fair."
- The term "justice" could be translated as "fair treatment" or "deserved consequences."
- To "act justly" could be translated as "treat fairly" or "behave in a just way."
- In some contexts, "just" could be translated as "righteous" or "upright."
- Depending on the context, "unjust" could also be translated as "unfair" or "partial" or "unrighteous."
- The phrase "the unjust" could be translated as "the unjust ones" or "unjust people" or "people who treat others unfairly" or "unrighteous people" or "people who disobey God."
- The term "unjustly" could be translated as "in an unfair manner" or "wrongly" or "unfairly."
- Ways to translate "injustice" could include, "wrong treatment" or "unfair treatment" or "acting unfairly." (See: abstractnouns)
- Other ways to translate "justify" could include "declare (someone) to be righteous" or "cause (someone) to be righteous."
- The term "justification" could be translated as "being declared righteous" or "becoming righteous" or "causing people to be righteous."
- The phrase "resulting in justification" could be translated as "so that God justified many people" or "which resulted in God causing people to be righteous."
- The phrase "for our justification" could be translated as "in order that we could be made righteous by God."

(See also: forgive, guilt, judge, righteous, righteous)

Bible References:

- Genesis 44:16
- 1 Chronicles 18:14
- Isaiah 4:3-4
- Jeremiah 22:3
- Ezekiel 18:16-17
- Micah 3:8
- Matthew 5:43-45
- Matthew 11:19
- Matthew 23:23-24
- Luke 18:3
- Luke 18:8
- Luke 18:13-14
- Luke 21:20-22
- Luke 23:41
- Acts 13:38-39
- Acts 28:4
- Romans 4:1-3
- Galatians 3:6-9
- Galatians 3:11
- Galatians 5:3-4
- Titus 3:6-7
- Hebrews 6:10
- James 2:24
- Revelation 15:3-4

Examples from the Bible stories:

- **17:9** David ruled with **justice** and faithfulness for many years, and God blessed him.
- **18:13** Some of these kings (of Judah) were good men who ruled **justly** and worshiped God.
- **19:16** They (the prophets) all told the people to stop worshiping idols and to start showing **justice** and mercy to others.
- **50:17** Jesus will rule his kingdom with peace and **justice**, and he will be with his people forever.

Word Data:

- Strong's: H0205, H2555, H3477, H4941, H5765, H5766, H5767, H6662, H6663, H6664, H6666, H8003, H8264, H8636, G00910, G00930, G00940, G13420, G13440, G13450, G13460, G13470, G17380

(**Go back to:** Psalm 11 General Notes; Notes; Notes; Notes; Notes)

lament, lamentation

Definition:

The terms “lament” and “lamentation” refer to a strong expression of mourning, sorrow, or grief.

- Sometimes this includes deep regret for sin, or compassion for people who have experienced disaster.
- A lamentation could include moaning, weeping, or wailing.

Translation Suggestions:

- The term to “lament” could be translated as to “deeply mourn” or to “wail in grief” or to “be sorrowful.”
- A “lamentation” (or a “lament”) could be translated as “loud wailing and weeping” or “deep sorrow” or “sorrowful sobbing” or “mournful moaning.”

Bible References:

- Amos 8:9-10
- Ezekiel 32:1-2
- Jeremiah 22:18
- Job 27:15-17
- Lamentations 2:5
- Lamentations 2:8
- Micah 2:4
- Psalm 102:1-2
- Zechariah 11:2

Word Data:

- Strong’s: H0056, H0421, H0578, H0592, H1058, H4553, H5091, H5092, H5594, H6088, H6969, H7015, H8567, G23540, G23550, G28700, G28750

(**Go back to:** Psalm 10 General Notes; Notes; Notes; 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:** Psalm 1 General Notes; Notes; Notes)

life, live, living, alive

Definition:

The term “life” refers to being physically alive as opposed to being physically dead.

1. Physical life

- A “life” can also refer to an individual person as in “a life was saved”.
- Sometimes the word “life” refers to the experience of living as in, “his life was enjoyable.”
- It can also refer to a person’s lifespan, as in the expression, “the end of his life.”
- The term “living” may refer to being physically alive, as in “my mother is still living.” It may also refer to dwelling somewhere as in, “they were living in the city.”
- In the Bible, the concept of “life” is often contrasted with the concept of “death.”

2. Eternal life

- A person has eternal life when he believes in Jesus. God gives that person a transformed life with the Holy Spirit living in him.
- The opposite of eternal life is eternal death, which means being separated from God and experiencing eternal punishment.

Translation Suggestions:

- Depending on the context, “life” can be translated as “existence” or “person” or “soul” or “being” or “experience.”
- The term “live” could be translated by “dwell” or “reside” or “exist.”
- The expression “end of his life” could be translated as “when he stopped living.”
- The expression “spared their lives” could be translated as “allowed them to live” or “did not kill them.”
- The expression “they risked their lives” could be translated as “they put themselves in danger” or “they did something that could have killed them.”
- When the Bible text talks about eternal life, the term “life” could be translated in the following ways: “eternal life” or “God making us alive in our spirits” or “new life by God’s Spirit” or “being made alive in our inner self.”
- Depending on the context, the expression “give life” could also be translated as “cause to live” or “give eternal life” or “cause to live eternally.”

(See also: death, everlasting)

Bible References:

- 2 Peter 1:3
- Acts 10:42
- Genesis 2:7
- Genesis 7:22
- Hebrews 10:20
- Jeremiah 44:2
- John 1:4
- Judges 2:18
- Luke 12:23
- Matthew 7:14

Examples from the Bible stories:

- **1:10** So God took some dirt, formed it into a man, and breathed **life** into him.
- **3:1** After a long time, many people were _*living* _ in the world.
- **8:13** When Joseph's brothers returned home and told their father, Jacob, that Joseph was still **alive**, he was very happy.
- **17:9** However, toward the end of his [David's] **life** he sinned terribly before God.
- **27:1** One day, an expert in the Jewish law came to Jesus to test him, saying, "Teacher, what must I do to inherit eternal **life**?"
- **35:5** Jesus replied, "I am the Resurrection and the **Life**."
- **44:5** "You are the ones who told the Roman governor to kill Jesus. You killed the author of **life**, but God raised him from the dead."

Word Data:

- Strong's: H1934, H2416, H2417, H2421, H2425, H5315, G01980, G02220, G02270, G08060, G05900

(**Go back to:** Psalm 15 General Notes; Notes; Notes; 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:** Psalm 36 General Notes; Notes; Notes; Notes)

mercy, merciful

Definition:

The terms “mercy” and “merciful” refer to helping people who are in need, especially when they are in a lowly or humbled condition.

- The term “mercy” can also include the meaning of not punishing people for something they have done wrong.
- A powerful person such as a king is described as “merciful” when he treats people kindly instead of harming them.
- Being merciful also means to forgive someone who has done something wrong against us.
- We show mercy when we help people who are in great need.
- God is merciful to us, and he wants us to be merciful to others.

Translation Suggestions:

- Depending on the context, “mercy” could be translated as “kindness” or “compassion” or “pity.”
- The term “merciful” could be translated as “showing pity” or “being kind to” or “forgiving.”
- To “show mercy to” or “have mercy on” could be translated as “treat kindly” or “be compassionate toward.”

(See also: compassion, forgive)

Bible References:

- 1 Peter 1:3-5
- 1 Timothy 1:13
- Daniel 9:17
- Exodus 34:6
- Genesis 19:16
- Hebrews 10:28-29
- James 2:13
- Luke 6:35-36
- Matthew 9:27
- Philippians 2:25-27
- Psalms 41:4-6
- Romans 12:1

Examples from the Bible stories:

- **19:16** They (the prophets) all told the people to stop worshiping idols and to start showing justice and **mercy** to others.
- **19:17** He (Jeremiah) sank down into the mud that was in the bottom of the well, but then the king had **mercy** on him and ordered his servants to pull Jeremiah out of the well before he died.
- **20:12** The Persian Empire was strong but **merciful** to the people it conquered.
- **27:11** Then Jesus asked the law expert, “What do you think? Which one of the three men was a neighbor to the man who was robbed and beaten?” He replied, “The one who was **merciful** to him.”
- **32:11** But Jesus said to him, “No, I want you to go home and tell your friends and family about everything that God has done for you and how he has had **mercy** on you.”
- **34:9** “But the tax collector stood far away from the religious ruler, did not even look up to heaven. Instead, he pounded on his chest and prayed, ‘God, please be **merciful** to me because I am a sinner.’”

Word Data:

- Strong's: H2551, H2603, H2604, H2616, H2617, H2623, H3722, H3727, H4627, H4819, H5503, H5504, H5505, H5506, H6014, H7349, H7355, H7356, H7359, G16530, G16550, G16560, G24330, G24360, G36280, G36290, G37410, G46980

(**Go back to:** Psalm 16 General Notes; Notes)

miracle, wonder, sign

Definition:

A “miracle” is something amazing that is not possible unless God causes it to happen.

- Examples of miracles that Jesus did include calming a storm and healing a blind man.
- Miracles are sometimes called “wonders” because they cause people to be filled with wonder or amazement.
- The term “wonder” can also refer more generally to amazing displays of God’s power, such as when he created the heavens and the earth.
- Miracles can also be called “signs” because they are used as indicators or evidence that God is the all-powerful one who has complete authority over the universe.
- Some miracles were God’s acts of redemption, such as when he rescued the Israelites from being slaves in Egypt and when he protected Daniel from being hurt by lions.
- Other wonders were God’s acts of judgment, such as when he sent a worldwide flood in Noah’s time and when he brought terrible plagues on the land of Egypt during the time of Moses.
- Many of God’s miracles were the physical healings of sick people or bringing dead people back to life.
- God’s power was shown in Jesus when he healed people, calmed storms, walked on water, and raised people from the dead. These were all miracles.
- God also enabled the prophets and the apostles to perform miracles of healing and other things that were only possible through God’s power.

Translation Suggestions:

- Possible translations of “miracles” or “wonders” could include “impossible things that God does” or “powerful works of God” or “amazing acts of God.”
- The frequent expression “signs and wonders” could be translated as “proofs and miracles” or “miraculous works that prove God’s power” or “amazing miracles that show how great God is.”
- Note that this meaning of a miraculous sign is different from a sign that gives proof or evidence for something. The two can be related.

(See also: power, prophet, apostle, sign)

Bible References:

- 2 Thessalonians 2:8-10
- Acts 4:17
- Acts 4:22
- Daniel 4:1-3
- Deuteronomy 13:1
- Exodus 3:19-22
- John 2:11
- Matthew 13:58

Examples from the Bible stories:

- **16:8** Gideon asked God for two **signs** so he could be sure that God would use him to save Israel.
- **19:14** God did many **miracles** through Elisha.
- **37:10** Many of the Jews believed in Jesus because of this **miracle**.
- **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.”

- **49:2** Jesus did many **miracles** that prove he is God. He walked on water, calmed storms, healed many sick people, drove out demons, raised the dead to life, and turned five loaves of bread and two small fish into enough food for over 5,000 people.

Word Data:

- Strong's: H0226, H0852, H2368, H2858, H4150, H4159, H4864, H5251, H5824, H5953, H6381, H6382, H6383, H6395, H6725, H7560, H7583, H8047, H8074, H8539, H8540, G08800, G12130, G12290, G14110, G15690, G17180, G17700, G18390, G22850, G22960, G22970, G31670, G39020, G45910, G45920, G50590

(**Go back to:** Psalm 111 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:** Psalm 58 General Notes; 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:** Psalm 46 General Notes; Notes; Notes)

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:** Psalm 115 General Notes; Notes)

promise, promised

Definition:

When used as a verb, the term “promise” refers to the action of a person saying that he will do something in such way that he obligates himself to fulfill what he has said. When used as a noun, the term “promise” refers to the thing that a person obligates himself to do.

- The Bible records many promises that God has made for his people.
- Promises are an important part of formal agreements such as covenants.

Translation Suggestions:

- The term “promise” could be translated as “commitment” or “assurance” or “guarantee.”
- To “promise to do something” could be translated as “assure someone that you will do something” or “commit to doing something.”

(See also: covenant, oath, vow)

Bible References:

- Galatians 3:15-16
- Genesis 25:31-34
- Hebrews 11:9
- James 1:12
- Numbers 30:2

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.”Â
- **3:16** God then made the first rainbow as a sign of his **promise**. Every time the rainbow appeared in the sky, God would remember what he **promised** and so would his people.
- **4:8** God spoke to Abram and **promised** again that he would have a son and as many descendants as the stars in the sky. Abram believed God’s **promise**.
- **5:4** “Your wife, Sarai, will have a son—he will be the son of **promise**.”
- **8:15** The covenant **promises** that God gave to Abraham were passed on to Isaac, then to Jacob, and then to Jacob’s twelve sons and their families.
- **17:14** Though David had been unfaithful to God, God was still faithful to his **promises**.
- **50:1** Jesus **promised** he would return at the end of the world. Though he has not yet come back, he will keep his **promise**.

Word Data:

- Strong’s: H0559, H0562, H1696, H8569, G18430, G18600, G18610, G18620, G36700, G42790

(**Go back to:** Psalm 15 General Notes; Notes; Notes; Notes)

Promised Land

Facts:

The term “Promised Land” only occurs in the Bible stories, not the Bible text. It is an alternate way of referring to the land of Canaan which God had promised to give to Abraham and his descendants.

- When Abram was living in the city of Ur, God commanded him to go live in the land of Canaan. He and his descendants, the Israelites, lived there for many years.
- When a severe famine caused there to be no food in Canaan, the Israelites moved to Egypt.
- Four hundred years later, God rescued the Israelites from slavery in Egypt and brought them back to Canaan again, the land God had promised to give them.

Translation Suggestions:

- The term “Promised Land” can be translated as the “land that God said he would give to Abraham” or “land that God promised to Abraham” or “land God promised to his people” or “land of Canaan.”
- In the Bible text, this term occurs as some form of “the land God promised.”

(See also: Canaan, promise)

Bible References:

- Deuteronomy 8:1-2
- Ezekiel 7:26-27

Examples from the Bible stories:

- **12:1** They (Israelites) were no longer slaves, and they were going to the **Promised Land**!
- **14:1** After God had told the Israelites the laws he wanted them to obey as part of his covenant with them, God began leading them from Mount Sinai toward the **Promised Land**, which was also called Canaan.
- **14:2** God had promised Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob that he would give the **Promised Land** to their descendants, but now there were many people groups living there.
- **14:14** Then God led the people to the edge of the **Promised Land** again.
- **15:2** The Israelites had to cross the Jordan River to enter into the **Promised Land**.
- **15:12** After this battle, God gave each tribe of Israel its own section of the **Promised Land**.
- **20:9** This period of time when God’s people were forced to leave the **Promised Land** is called the Exile.

Word Data:

- Strong’s: H0776, H3068, H3423, H5159, H5414, H7650

(**Go back to:** Psalm 44 General Notes; Notes; Notes; Notes; 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:** Psalm 110 General 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:** Psalm 51 General Notes)

rest, rested, restless

Definition:

The term “rest” generally means to stop working in order to relax or regain strength. However, the term can refer to various kinds of rest besides only rest from working. For example, a person might rest from fighting, rest from speaking, or rest from moving, etc.

- An object can be said to be “resting” somewhere, which means it is “standing” or “sitting” there.
- Something that “comes to rest” somewhere has “stopped” there.
- When a person or animals rest, they are sitting or lying down in order to refresh themselves.
- God commanded the Israelites to rest on the seventh day of the week. This day of not working was called the “Sabbath” day.
- To rest an object on something means to “place” or “put” it there.

Translation Suggestions:

- Depending on the context, to “rest (oneself)” could also be translated as to “stop working” or to “refresh himself” or to “stop carrying burdens.”
- To “rest” an object on something could be translated as to “place” or “put” or “set” that object on something.
- When Jesus said, “I will give you rest,” this could also be translated as “I will cause you to stop carrying your burden” or “I will help you be at peace” or “I will empower you to relax and trust in me.”
- God said, “they will not enter my rest,” and this statement could be translated as “they will not experience my blessings of rest” or “they will not experience the joy and peace that comes from trusting in me.”
- The term “the rest” could be translated as “those that remain” or “all the other people” or “everything that is left.”

(See also: remnant, Sabbath)

Bible References:

- 2 Chronicles 6:41
- Genesis 2:3
- Jeremiah 6:16-19
- Matthew 11:29
- Revelation 14:11

Word Data:

- Strong’s: H0014, H1824, H1826, H2308, H3498, H3499, H4494, H4496, H4771, H5117, H5118, H5183, H5564, H6314, H7258, H7280, H7599, H7604, H7605, H7606, H7611, H7673, H7677, H7901, H7931, H7954, H8058, H8172, H8252, H8300, G03720, G03730, G04250, G15150, G18790, G19540, G19810, G22700, G26630, G26640, G26810, G28380, G30620, G45200

(**Go back to:** Psalm 127 General Notes)

resurrection

Definition:

The term “resurrection” refers to the act of becoming alive again after having died.

- To resurrect someone means to bring that person back to life again. Only God has the power to do this.
- The word “resurrection” often refers to Jesus’ coming back to life after he died.
- When Jesus said, “I am the Resurrection and the Life” he meant that he is the source of resurrection, and the one who causes people to come back to life.

Translation Suggestions:

- A person’s “resurrection” could be translated as his “coming back to life” or his “becoming alive again after being dead.”
- The literal meaning of this word is “a rising up” or “the act of being raised (from the dead).” These would be other possible ways to translate this term.

(See also: life, death, raise)

Bible References:

- 1 Corinthians 15:13
- 1 Peter 3:21
- Hebrews 11:35
- John 5:28-29
- Luke 20:27
- Luke 20:36
- Matthew 22:23
- Matthew 22:30
- Philippians 3:11

Examples from the Bible stories:

- **21:14** Through the Messiah’s death and **resurrection**, God would accomplish his plan to save sinners and start the New Covenant.
- **37:5** Jesus replied, “I am the **Resurrection** and the Life. Whoever believes in me will live, even though he dies.”

Word Data:

- Strong’s: G03860, G14540, G18150

(**Go back to:** Psalm 16 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:** Psalm 1 General Notes; Notes; Notes; Notes; 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:** Psalm 11 General Notes; Notes; Notes; Notes; Notes; Notes; Notes; Notes; Notes; Notes; Notes; Notes; Notes; Notes; Notes; 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 “rebelling 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 **sinners** 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:** Psalm 1 General Notes; Notes; Notes; Notes; Notes; Notes; Notes; Notes; Notes)

Son of God, the Son

Facts:

The term “Son of God” refers to Jesus, the Word of God, who came into the world as a human being. He is also often referred to as “the Son.”

- The Son of God has the same nature as God the Father, and is fully God.
- God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit are all of one essence.
- Unlike human sons, the Son of God has always existed.
- In the beginning, the Son of God was active in creating the world, along with the Father and the Holy Spirit.

Because Jesus is God’s Son, he loves and obeys his Father, and his Father loves him.

Translation Suggestions:

- For the term “Son of God,” it is best to translate “Son” with the same word the language would naturally use to refer to a human son.
- Make sure the word used to translate “son” fits with the word used to translate “father” and that these words are the most natural ones used to express a true father-son relationship in the project language.
- Using a capital letter to begin “Son” may help show that this is talking about God.
- The phrase “the Son” is a shortened form of “the Son of God,” especially when it occurs in the same context as “the Father.”

(Translation suggestions: How to Translate Names)

(See also: Christ, ancestor, God, God the Father, Holy Spirit, Jesus, son, sons of God)

Bible References:

- 1 John 4:10
- Acts 9:20
- Colossians 1:17
- Galatians 2:20
- Hebrews 4:14
- John 3:18
- Luke 10:22
- Matthew 11:27
- Revelation 2:18
- Romans 8:29

Examples from the Bible stories:

- **22:5** The angel explained, “The Holy Spirit will come to you, and the power of God will overshadow you. So the baby will be holy, the **Son of God**.”
- **24:9** God had told John, “The Holy Spirit will come down and rest on someone you baptize. That person is **the Son of God**.”
- **31:8** The disciples were amazed. They worshiped Jesus, saying to him, “Truly, you are **the Son of God**.”
- **37:5** Martha answered, “Yes, Master! I believe you are the Messiah, the **Son of God**.”
- **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.”
- **46:6** Right away, Saul began preaching to the Jews in Damascus, saying, “Jesus is the **Son of God**!”

- **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.

Word Data:

- Strong's: H0426, H0430, H1121, H1247, G23160, G52070

(**Go back to:** Psalm 2 General 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:** Psalm 3 General Notes; Notes; Notes; Notes; Notes; Notes; Notes)

testimony, testify, witness, eyewitness, evidence

Definition:

When a person gives “testimony” he makes a statement about something he knows, claiming that the statement is true. To “testify” is to give “testimony.”

- Often a person “testifies” about something he has experienced directly.
- A witness who gives “false testimony” does not tell the truth about what happened.
- Sometimes the term “testimony” refers to a prophecy that a prophet has stated.
- In the New Testament, this term was often used to refer to how Jesus’ followers testified about the events of Jesus’ life, death, and resurrection.

The term “witness” refers to a person who has personally experienced something that happened. Usually a witness is also someone who testifies about what they know is true. The term “eyewitness” emphasizes that the person was actually there and saw what happened.

- To “witness” something means to see it happen.
- At a trial, a witness “gives witness” or “bears witness.” This has the same meaning as “testify.”
- Witnesses are expected to tell the truth about what they have seen or heard.
- A witness who does not tell the truth about what happened is called a “false witness.” He is said to “give false witness” or to “bear false witness.”
- The expression “be a witness between” means that something or someone will be evidence that a contract has been made. The witness will make sure each person does what he has promised to do.

Translation Suggestions:

- The term “testify” or “give testimony” could also be translated as “tell the facts” or “tell what was seen or heard” or “tell from personal experience” or “give evidence” or “tell what happened.”
- Ways to translate “testimony” could include, “report of what happened” or “statement of what is true” or “evidence” or “what has been said” or “prophecy.”
- The phrase, “as a testimony to them” could be translated as to “show them what is true” or to “prove to them what is true.”
- The phrase, “as a testimony against them” could be translated as “which will show them their sin” or “exposing their hypocrisy” or “which will prove that they are wrong.”
- To “give false testimony” could be translated as “say false things about” or “state things that are not true.”
- The term “witness” or “eyewitness” could be translated with a word or phrase that means “person seeing it” or “the one who saw it happen” or “those who saw and heard (those things).”
- Something that is “a witness” could be translated as “guarantee” or “sign of our promise” or “something that testifies that this is true.”
- The phrase “you will be my witnesses” could also be translated as “you will tell other people about me” or “you will teach people the truth that I taught you” or “you will tell people what you have seen me do and heard me teach.”
- To “witness to” could be translated as to “tell what was seen” or to “testify” or to “state what happened.”
- To “witness” something could be translated as to “see something” or to “experience something happen.”

(See also: ark of the covenant, guilt, judge, prophet, testimony, true)

Bible References:

- Deuteronomy 31:28
- Micah 6:3
- Matthew 26:60

- Mark 1:44
- John 1:7
- John 3:33
- Acts 4:32-33
- Acts 7:44
- Acts 13:31
- Romans 1:9
- 1 Thessalonians 2:10-12
- 1 Timothy 5:19-20
- 2 Timothy 1:8
- 2 Peter 1:16-18
- 1 John 5:6-8
- 3 John 1:12
- Revelation 12:11

Examples from the Bible stories:

- **39:2** Inside the house, the Jewish leaders put Jesus on trial. They brought many **false witnesses** who lied about him.
- **39:4** The high priest tore his clothes in anger and shouted, “We do not need any more **witnesses**. You have heard him say that he is the Son of God. What is your judgment?”
- **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. They will do this starting in Jerusalem, and then go to all people groups everywhere. You are **witnesses** of these things.”
- **43:7** “We are **witnesses** to the fact that God raised Jesus to life again.”

Word Data:

- Strong’s: H5707, H5713, H5715, H5749, H6030, H8584, G02670, G12630, G19570, G26490, G31400, G31410, G31420, G31430, G31440, G43030, G48280, G49010, G55750, G55760, G55770, G60200

(**Go back to:** Psalm 48 General Notes)

true, truth

Definition:

The term “truth” refers to facts, events, and statements that correspond with reality. True facts describe the universe as it really exists. True events are events that actually happened. True statements are statements that are not false according the real world.

- “True” things are real, genuine, actual, rightful, legitimate, and factual.
- “Truth” means understandings, beliefs, facts, or statements that are true.
- To say that a prophecy “came true” or “will come true” mean that it actually happened as predicted or that it will happen that way.
- In the Bible the concept of “truth” includes the concept of acting in a way that is reliable and faithful.
- Jesus revealed God’s truth in the words that he spoke.
- The Bible is truth. It teaches what is true about God and about everything he has made.

Translation Suggestions:

- Depending on the context and what is being described, the term “true” could also be translated by “real” or “factual” or “correct” or “right” or “certain” or “genuine.”
- Ways to translate the term “truth” could include “what is true” or “fact” or “certainty” or “principle.”
- The expression “come true” could also be translated as “actually happen” or “be fulfilled” or “happen as predicted.”
- The expression “tell the truth” or “speak the truth” could also be translated as “say what is true” or “tell what really happened” or “say things that are reliable.”
- To “accept the truth” could be translated as “believe what is true about God.”
- In an expression such as “worship God in spirit and in truth,” the expression “in truth” could also be translated by “faithfully obeying what God has taught us.”

(See also: believe, faithful, fulfill, obey, prophet, understand)

Bible References:

- 1 Corinthians 5:6-8
- 1 John 1:5-7
- 1 John 2:8
- 3 John 1:8
- Acts 26:24-26
- Colossians 1:6
- Genesis 47:29-31
- James 1:18
- James 3:14
- James 5:19
- Jeremiah 4:2
- John 1:9
- John 1:16-18
- John 1:51
- John 3:31-33
- Joshua 7:19-21
- Lamentations 5:19-22
- Matthew 8:10
- Matthew 12:17
- Psalm 26:1-3

- Revelation 1:19-20
- Revelation 15:3-4

Examples from the Bible stories:

- **2:4** The snake responded to the woman, “That is not **true**! You will not die.”
- **14:6** Immediately Caleb and Joshua, the other two spies, said, “It is _*true*_ that the people of Canaan are tall and strong, but we can certainly defeat them!”
- **16:1** The Israelites began to worship the Canaanite gods instead of Yahweh, the _*true*_ God.
- **31:8** They worshiped Jesus, saying to him, “**Truly**, you are the Son of God.”
- **39:10** “I have come to earth to tell the **truth** about God. Everyone who loves the **truth** listens to me.” Pilate said, “What is **truth**?”

Word Data:

- Strong’s: H0199, H0389, H0403, H0529, H0530, H0543, H0544, H0551, H0571, H0935, H3321, H3330, H6237, H6656, H6965, H7187, H7189, G02250, G02260, G02270, G02280, G02300, G11030, G33030, G34830, G36890, G41030, G41370

(**Go back to:** Psalm 51 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:** Psalm 4 General Notes; Notes; Notes; Notes; Notes; Notes; Notes; Notes; Notes; Notes; Notes; 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:** Psalm 61 General Notes; Notes)

wise, wisdom

Definition:

The term “wise” describes someone who understands what is the right and moral thing to do and then does that. “Wisdom” is the understanding and practice of what is true and morally right.

- Being wise includes the ability to make good decisions, especially choosing to do what pleases God.
- People become wise by listening to God and humbly obeying his will.
- A wise person will show the fruits of the Holy Spirit in his life, such as joy, kindness, love, and patience.

Translation Suggestions:

- Depending on the context, other ways to translate “wise” could include “obedient to God” or “sensible and obedient” or “God-fearing.”
- “Wisdom” could be translated by a word or phrase that means “wise living” or “sensible and obedient living” or “good judgment.”
- It is best to translate “wise” and “wisdom” in such a way that they are different terms from other key terms like righteous or obedient.

(See also: obey, fruit)

Bible References:

- Acts 6:3
- Colossians 3:15-17
- Exodus 31:6
- Genesis 3:6
- Isaiah 19:12
- Jeremiah 18:18
- Matthew 7:24

Examples from the Bible stories:

- **2:5** She also wanted to be **wise**, so she picked some of the fruit and ate it.
- **18:1** When Solomon asked for **wisdom**, God was pleased and made him the **wisest** man in the world.
- **23:9** Some time later, **wise** men from countries far to the east saw an unusual star in the sky.
- **45:1** He (Stephen) had a good reputation and was full of the Holy Spirit and of **wisdom**.

Word Data:

- Strong’s: H0998, H1350, H2445, H2449, H2450, H2451, H2452, H2454, H2942, H3820, H3823, H6195, H6493, H6912, H7535, H7919, H7922, H8454, G46780, G46790, G46800, G49200, G54280, G54290, G54300

(**Go back to:** Psalm 1 General Notes; Notes; Notes; Notes; Notes; Notes; Notes; Notes; Notes; Notes; Notes; Notes; Notes; Notes; Notes; Notes; Notes; Notes)

work, works, deeds

Definition:

The term “work” refers generally either to the action of expending effort in order to accomplish something, or to the result of that action. The term “works” refers generally to actions as a whole (that is, things that have been done or that need to be done).

- In the Bible, these terms are commonly used both in reference to God and humans.
- When used in reference to God, the term “work” in the Bible often refers to God’s action of creating the universe or saving his people (either from enemies, from sin, or both).
- God’s works refer to all the things he does or has done, including creating the world, saving sinners, providing for the needs of all creation and keeping the entire universe in place.
- The works or deeds that a person does can be either good or evil.

Translation Suggestions:

- Other ways to translate “works” could be “deeds” or “actions” or “things that are done.”
- God’s “works” or “deeds” or the “work of his hands” could also be translated as “miracles” or “mighty acts” or “things that God does.”
- The expression “the work of God” could be translated as “the things that God is doing” or “the miracles God does” or “everything that God has accomplished.”
- The term “work” can just be the singular of “works” as in “every good work” or “every good deed.”
- When work is done for God or others, it can be translated as “service” or “ministry.”

(See also: fruit, Holy Spirit, miracle)

Bible References:

- 1 John 3:12
- Acts 2:8-11
- Daniel 4:37
- Exodus 34:10-11
- Galatians 2:15-16
- James 2:17
- Matthew 16:27-28
- Micah 2:7
- Romans 3:28
- Titus 3:4-5

Word Data:

- Strong’s: H4399, H4566, H4567, H4611, H4659, H5949, G20410

(**Go back to:** Psalm 26 General Notes; Notes; Notes)

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