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unfoldingWord® Translation Notes

Hosea

Introduction to Hosea

Part 1: General Introduction

Outline of Hosea

God tells Hosea to marry Gomer as a picture of how Israel relates to Yahweh (1:1–3:5)

Israel betrays, wanders, and sins; Yahweh appeals and pleads to return to him (4:1–7:3)

The conflict between Yahweh and Israel explained in various ways (7:4–13:8)

Similes: oven, cake, dove, bow (7:4–16)

Israel openly lies and rebels (8:1–14)

The end of Israel predicted (9:1–17)

Similes: grapes, vine, calf, lion, children, birds, and doves (10:1–11:11)

Israel sins, betrays, and breaks alliances (11:12–12:1)

Israel's history remembered (12:2–13:16)

Idolatry (13:1–8)

Israel is hostile to Yahweh (13:9–16)

Yahweh's last appeals to Israel (14:1–9)

What is the Book of Hosea about?

This book contains the prophecies of Hosea, son of Beeri. Hosea lived in the northern kingdom of Israel. He often called this kingdom Ephraim or Samaria. Hosea prophesied for about 38 years and predicted that Assyria would destroy the northern kingdom of Israel.

Hosea began to prophesy around 753 B.C., just before King Jeroboam II died. At this time, the kingdom of Israel was prosperous but spiritually weak. Hosea warned how Yahweh would punish Israel unless the people turned back to Yahweh and were faithful to him.

How should the title of this book be translated?

This book is traditionally named "The Book of Hosea" or just "Hosea." Translators may also call it "The Book About Hosea" or "The Sayings of Hosea." (See: [How to Translate Names](#))

Who wrote the Book of Hosea?

Although this book tells what Hosea prophesied, it is uncertain whether Hosea wrote the book himself. It was probably written after Samaria, the capital of the northern kingdom, was destroyed in 721 B.C.

Part 2: Important Religious and Cultural Concepts

Why did God command Hosea to marry a prostitute?

God told Hosea to marry the prostitute Gomer. This represented how the kingdom of Israel related to Yahweh. Israel was unfaithful to Yahweh and broke the covenant with him. This is compared to a woman who is unfaithful to her husband breaks her marriage agreement with him. (See: [Metaphor](#) and [faithful, faithfulness, trustworthy](#) and [covenant](#))

What is a lawsuit?

Many cultures have a process for resolving disputes through law courts. These legal disputes are called lawsuits. The Book of Hosea contains some legal terms. This is because Yahweh is spoken of as if he were a husband accusing his wife in court of being unfaithful to him. Part of the Book of Hosea follows the form of a lawsuit. A problem is identified (4:1), someone is accused (4:4), someone is found guilty (4:15), and the guilty ones will be punished (5:1).

Who did the people of the kingdom of Israel worship?

Israel was supposed to worship Yahweh alone. But they worshiped both Yahweh and the Canaanite gods such as Baal. This was a major reason why Yahweh judged the kingdom of Israel. (See: [god](#), [false god](#), [goddess](#), [idol](#), [idolater](#), [idolatrous](#), [idolatry](#) and [judge](#), [judgment](#))

Part 3: Important Translation Issues

What does the phrase “the declaration of Yahweh” mean?

The prophet used the phrase “the declaration of Yahweh” to mark a message as truly coming from God.

Why are English translations of Hosea very different?

Hosea 4–14 has many problems of interpretation. Some phrases in Hosea are beyond how we currently understand the Hebrew language. Many English versions have translated these difficult sections very differently.

What does the term “Israel” mean in Hosea?

In Hosea, “Israel” is used only to refer to the northern kingdom of Israel. It is not used to refer to the southern kingdom or to the two kingdoms together. (See: [kingdom of Israel](#))

Hosea 1

Hosea 1 General Notes

Structure and formatting

Some translations set each line of poetry farther to the right than the rest of the text to make it easier to read. The ULT does this with the poetry in 1:2-11.

Special concepts in this chapter

Hosea's marriage

God does not approve of prostitution, but he told Hosea to marry a prostitute so that the message of Israel's unfaithfulness would be shown to the people. (See: [faithful](#), [faithfulness](#), [trustworthy](#))

Hosea's marriage to Gomer is a metaphor for the kingdom of Israel's relationship to Yahweh. Israel was unfaithful to Yahweh and broke the covenant with him. Gomer was a woman who was unfaithful to her husband broke her marriage agreement with him. (See: [Metaphor](#) and [covenant](#))

Important figures of speech in this chapter

Metaphor

Hosea 1-4 is controlled by a metaphor that Hosea lived out. He was personifying the relationship between Israel and Yahweh. Hosea played the part of Yahweh, and Gomer played the part of Israel.

Hosea 1:1

the word of Yahweh that came

This is an idiom. Alternate translation: “the word that Yahweh God spoke” (See: [Idiom](#))

Beeri

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

Uzziah ... Jotham ... Ahaz ... Hezekiah ... Jeroboam ... Joash

The events in this book happened during the time of these kings. (See: [How to Translate Names](#))

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.

ULT

¹ This is the word of Yahweh that came to Hosea son of Beeri in the days of Uzziah, Jotham, Ahaz and Hezekiah, kings of Judah, and in the days of Jeroboam son of Joash, king of Israel.

Hosea 1:2

great prostitution

Here “prostitution” represents the people being unfaithful to God.
(See: [Metaphor](#))

ULT

² When Yahweh spoke at first through Hosea, Yahweh said to Hosea, “Go, take for yourself a wife of harlotry and have children of harlotry. For the land is committing flagrant harlotry by forsaking Yahweh.”

Hosea 1:3

Gomer ... Diblaim

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

ULT

³ So he went and took Gomer daughter of Diblaim, and she conceived and bore him a son.

Hosea 1:4

the house of Jehu

Here “house” means “family,” including Jehu’s descendants. (See: [Metaphor](#))

the house of Israel

This expression refers to kingdom of Israel. (See: [Metaphor](#))

ULT

⁴ Yahweh said to him, “Call his name Jezreel. For yet a little while I will avenge the blood of Jezreel upon the house of Jehu, and I will put an end to the kingdom of the house of Israel.”

Hosea 1:5

the bow of Israel

Here “bow” refers to the power of the army. Alternate translation: “the military power of Israel” (See: [Metonymy](#))

ULT

⁵ It will happen on that day that I break the bow of Israel in the Valley of Jezreel.”

Hosea 1:6

Lo-Ruhamah

This name means “no mercy.” The translator may choose to represent this meaning as the name. Alternate translation: “No Mercy” (See: [How to Translate Names](#))

ULT

⁶ She conceived again and bore a daughter. Then Yahweh said to Hosea, “Call her name Lo-Ruhamah, for I will no longer have mercy on the house of Israel, that I should forgive them at all.”

Hosea 1:7

(There are no notes for this verse.)

ULT

⁷ But I will have mercy on the house of Judah, and I will save them by Yahweh their God. I will not save them by bow, sword, battle, horses, or horsemen.”

Hosea 1:8

Lo-Ruhamah

This name means “no mercy.” The translator may choose to represent this meaning as the name. See how you translated this in [Hosea 1:6](#). Alternate translation: “No Mercy” (See: [How to Translate Names](#))

ULT

⁸ After she had weaned Lo-Ruhamah, she conceived and bore a son.

Hosea 1:9

Lo-Ammi

This name means “not my people.” The translator may choose to represent this meaning as the name. Alternate translation: “Not My People” (See: [How to Translate Names](#))

ULT

⁹ Then Yahweh said, “Call his name Lo-Ammi, for you are not my people, and I am not your God.”

Hosea 1:10

General Information:

Yahweh is speaking to Hosea.

like the sand of the seashore

This emphasizes the great number of Israelites. (See: [Simile](#))

which cannot be measured or counted

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: “which no one can measure or count” (See: [Active or Passive](#))

It will be that where it was said to them

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: “Where God said to them” (See: [Active or Passive](#))

where it was said to them

This expression probably refers to Jezreel, the city where crimes had been committed by kings of Israel, and which was a symbol of God’s punishment of them.

it will be said to them

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: “God will say to them” (See: [Active or Passive](#))

ULT

10 Yet the number of the sons of Israel will be like the sand of the seashore, which cannot be measured or counted. In the place where it was said to them, ‘You are not my people,’ it will be said to them, ‘You are sons of the living God.’

Hosea 1:11

will be gathered together

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: “God will gather them together” (See: [Active or Passive](#))

go up from the land

This expression might refer to the land where the people of Israel were in captivity.

the day of Jezreel

This refers to the time when God will put his people back in the land of Israel. The full meaning of this statement can be made explicit. (See: [Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information](#))

ULT

11 The people of Judah and the people of Israel will be gathered together. They will appoint one leader for themselves, and they will go up from the land, for great will be the day of Jezreel.

Hosea 2

Hosea 2 General Notes

Structure and formatting

Some translations prefer to set apart quotations. The ULT and many other English translations set the lines of this chapter, which is poetry, farther to the right on the page than the rest of the text. Hosea 1-2 is a single series forming one narrative.

Important figures of speech in this chapter

Metaphor

Many relationships are used in this chapter that are metaphors for the relationship between Israel and her God. Brother, sister, husband, wife, mother, and children are examples. (See: [Metaphor](#))

Other possible translation difficulties in this chapter

This chapter creates an abrupt change of address. The prophet is now addressing the children directly in the first few verses, but the whole chapter is written against Gomer as an illustration of Israel as an adulterous people. God uses Gomer as an illustration to teach the people of Israel how they should be faithful to him. (See: [adultery](#), [adulterous](#), [adulterer](#), [adulteress](#) and [faithful](#), [faithfulness](#), [trustworthy](#))

Hosea 2:1

Connecting Statement:

Yahweh is speaking to Hosea.

My people!

This exclamation may be presented as a statement. Alternate translation: "You are my people!" (See: [Exclamations](#))

You have been shown compassion

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "Yahweh has shown you compassion" (See: [Active or Passive](#))

compassion

"kindness" or "mercy"

ULT

¹ Say to your brothers, 'My people!' and to your sisters, 'You have been shown compassion.'

Hosea 2:2

General Information:

Yahweh is speaking to Hosea.

lawsuit

This is a complaint by one person against another person in a court of law.

your mother

Here “mother” refers to the nation of Israel. (See: [Metaphor](#))

for she is not my wife

Yahweh is stating that Israel, spoken of here as a woman, is no longer acting like a wife to Yahweh. Instead Israel has turned away from following and worshiping him. (See: [Metaphor](#))

neither am I her husband

Yahweh can no longer be in relationship with the nation of Israel as a husband would be to his wife. (See: [Metaphor](#))

her acts of adultery

A wife who is adulterous leaves her husband to sleep with another man. This is how Israel was acting toward Yahweh. (See: [Metaphor](#))

from between her breasts

This imagery suggests that Israel is relying on the idols and not Yahweh. (See: [Metaphor](#))

ULT

² Contend with your mother, contend, for she is not my wife, and neither am I her husband. Let her put away her harlotry from her face, and her adultery from between her breasts.

Hosea 2:3

I will strip her naked and show her nakedness as on the day that she was born

Yahweh will no longer protect and provide for Israel because the nation has turned away from him. In Israel, husbands were obliged by law to provide clothes for their wives. Not to do so was a sign that a man was rejecting his wife. The full meaning of this may be made clear. (See: [Metaphor](#) and [Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information](#))

ULT

³ If not, I will strip her naked and expose her as on the day that she was born. I will make her like the wilderness, and make her like a parched land, and I will make her die from thirst.

I will make her like the wilderness

Yahweh will change Israel to resemble the wilderness, which is a region that is bare and unproductive. (See: [Simile](#))

I will make her die from thirst

Here “thirst” refers to the need to worship and rely on Yahweh, not idols, or Israel will not be able to survive as a nation. (See: [Metaphor](#))

Hosea 2:4

General Information:

Yahweh is speaking to Hosea.

for they are children of prostitution

The Israelites are acting like they do not belong to Yahweh. Just as their parents did not worship God, Neither do they. (See: [Metaphor](#))

ULT

⁴ I will have no mercy on her children,
because they are children of harlotry.

Hosea 2:5

For their mother has been a prostitute

The previous generation who sought out other gods were considered prostitutes for they were unfaithful to Yahweh. (See: [Metaphor](#))

I will go after my lovers, for they give me my bread and water, my wool and my flax, my oil and drink

Here “my lovers” refers to Baal and other false gods, whom Israel has chosen to worship instead of Yahweh. The list of things are essential items that allow the people to live. (See: [Metonymy](#))

ULT

⁵ For their mother has played the harlot, and she who conceived them has acted shamefully. For she said, “I will go after my lovers, who give me my bread and my water, my wool and my flax, my oil and my drink.”

Hosea 2:6

General Information:

Yahweh is talking to Hosea.

Therefore I will build up a hedge to block her way with thorns. I will build up a wall against her so she cannot find her way

This passage indicates that Yahweh will prevent his people from finding success and prosperity, because they continue to worship idols. (See: [Metaphor](#) and [Parallelism](#))

ULT

⁶ Therefore, I will hedge up her way with thorns. I will build up a wall against her so she cannot find her paths.

Hosea 2:7

Then she will say, “I will return to my first husband, for it was better for me then than it is now.”

Israel will return to Yahweh not because of their love for him, but because they are disappointed by their worship of Baal. (See: [Metaphor](#))

ULT

⁷ She will pursue her lovers, but she will not overtake them. She will seek them, but she will not find them. Then she will say, “I will go and return to my first husband, for it was better for me then than it is now.”

Hosea 2:8

General Information:

Yahweh is speaking to Hosea.

ULT

⁸ For she had not known that it was I who gave her the grain, the new wine and the oil, and who lavished on her silver and gold, which they then used for Baal.

Hosea 2:9

I will take back my wool and flax that were used to cover her nakedness

This probably means that Israel's harvests and flocks will fail. Yahweh will remove his blessings from Israel, and the people will be left alone and in danger of attack. (See: [Metonymy](#))

were used to cover her nakedness

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "that the people used to clothe themselves" (See: [Active or Passive](#))

ULT

⁹ Therefore I will take back my grain in its time, and my new wine in its season. I will take away my wool and my flax that were used to cover her nakedness.

Hosea 2:10

General Information:

Yahweh is speaking to Hosea.

Then I will strip her naked in the sight of her lovers

This means God will humiliate the people of Israel in front of the other nations nearby. See how you translated this in [Hosea 2:3](#). (See: [Metaphor](#))

no one will rescue her out of my hand

No one will try to help Israel. Here “hand” refers to God’s power to punish. (See: [Metonymy](#))

ULT

¹⁰ Now I will uncover her lewdness in the sight of her lovers, and no one will rescue her out of my hand.

Hosea 2:11

(There are no notes for this verse.)

ULT

11 I will also put an end to all her mirth, her feasts, her new moon celebrations, her Sabbaths, and all her appointed festivals.

Hosea 2:12

General Information:

Yahweh is speaking to Hosea about what he will do to Israel.

These are the wages that my lovers gave me

This refers to payment that Israel received from the false gods or Baals. This direct quotation can be stated as an indirect quotation.

Alternate translation: "that these were the wages that her lovers had given to her" (See: [Metaphor](#) and [Direct and Indirect Quotations](#))

make them a forest

Yahweh will destroy the vineyards and fruit trees by allowing other trees and weeds to grow among them. (See: [Metaphor](#))

ULT

12 "I will destroy her vines and her fig trees, of which she has said, 'These are my wages that my lovers gave me.' I will make them a forest, and the animals of the field will devour them.

Hosea 2:13

this is Yahweh's declaration

Yahweh speaks of himself by name to express the certainty of what he is declaring. Alternate translation: "this is what Yahweh has declared" or "this is what I, Yahweh, have declared" (See: [First, Second or Third Person](#))

ULT

13 I will punish her for the feast days of the Baals, when she burned incense to them, when she adorned herself with her rings and jewelry, and she went after her lovers and forgot me— this is the declaration of Yahweh."

Hosea 2:14

Connecting Statement:

Yahweh is speaking about Israel.

So I am going to win her back

“I, Yahweh, will bring her back to me”

ULT

14 Therefore, behold, I am going to allure her. I will bring her into the wilderness and speak tenderly to her.

Hosea 2:15

the Valley of Achor as a door of hope

As Yahweh lead Israel out of Egypt, he will lead Israel to the Valley of Achor so that Israel will hope again in Yahweh.

She will answer me there as she did in the days of her youth, as in the days that she came out of the land of Egypt

Yahweh hopes that the nation of Israel will repent and again choose to worship him as their God. (See: [Metaphor](#))

She will answer

Some modern versions understand the Hebrew word to mean “She will sing.”

ULT

15 I will give her back her vineyards, and the Valley of Achor as a door of hope. She will answer me there as in the days of her youth, as in the days that she came out of the land of Egypt.

Hosea 2:16

My husband

This means the people of Israel will love and be faithful to Yahweh just as a wife is to a husband. (See: [Metaphor](#))

My Baal

“Baal” means “master” and also refers to the false god that the Canaanites worship. (See: [Metaphor](#))

ULT

16 “It will be in that day—this is the declaration of Yahweh— that you will call me, ‘My husband,’ and you will no longer call me, ‘My Baal.’

Hosea 2:17

For I will remove the names of the Baals from her mouth

The Israelites will not speak the names of Baal and the idols again. The people are represented by their mouths. Alternate translation: “For I will cause you to not speak the names of the Baals” (See: [Synecdoche](#))

ULT

¹⁷ For I will remove the names of the Baals from her mouth; and they will be remembered by their names no more.”

Hosea 2:18

Connecting Statement:

Yahweh is speaking to Hosea about what he will do to Israel.

On that day

This phrase is used to talk about a future restoration between Israel and Yahweh.

I will make a covenant for them

Yahweh's new covenant will include peace for the animals.

I will drive away the bow, the sword, and the battle from the land, and I will make you lie down in safety

Yahweh will keep Israel's enemies away from them, there will be no more war, the people will be safe. Here "the bow, the sword, and the battle" represent war. (See: [Metonymy](#))

lie down in safety

This expression refers to living in safety. (See: [Metonymy](#))

ULT

18 "On that day I will make a covenant for them with the beasts in the fields, with the birds in the sky, and with the crawling things on the ground. I will abolish the bow, the sword, and war from the land, and I will make you lie down in safety.

Hosea 2:19

General Information:

Yahweh is speaking to Hosea about what he will do for Israel.

I will promise to be your husband forever

Yahweh will be like the husband, and Israel will be like Yahweh's wife. (See: [Metaphor](#))

in righteousness, justice, covenant faithfulness, and mercy

This can be restated to remove the abstract nouns. Alternate translation: "and do what is right, just, faithful, and merciful" (See: [Abstract Nouns](#))

ULT

19 I will betroth you to me forever. I will betroth you to me in righteousness, in justice, in steadfast love, and in mercy.

Hosea 2:20

you will know Yahweh

Here “know” means to acknowledge Yahweh as their God and to be faithful to him.

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20 I will betroth you to me in faithfulness, and you will know Yahweh.

Hosea 2:21

General Information:

Yahweh is speaking to Hosea about what he will do for Israel.

ULT

²¹ On that day, I will answer—this is the declaration of Yahweh— I will answer the heavens, and they will answer the earth.

Hosea 2:22

The earth will answer the grain, the new wine and the oil, and they will answer Jezreel

The land will meet the need for grain, new wine, and olive oil. These things will also meet the needs of Jezreel. The land and these products are spoken of as if they were people who could meet the needs of others. (See: [Personification](#))

Jezreel

Here the name of this valley stands for all the people of Israel. (See: [Metaphor](#))

ULT

²² The earth will answer the grain, the new wine and the oil, and they will answer Jezreel.

Hosea 2:23

General Information:

Yahweh is speaking to Hosea about what he will do for Israel.

I will plant her for myself in the land

When God makes his people safe and prosperous in their land again, they are spoken of if they were agricultural crops. Alternate translation: "I will take care of the Israelite people as a farmer plants his crops and takes care of them" (See: [Metaphor](#))

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²³ I will sow her for myself in the land, and I will have mercy on Lo-Ruhamah. I will say to Lo-Ammi, 'You are my people,' and they will say, 'You are my God.'"

Lo-Ruhamah

This name means "no mercy." The translator may choose to represent this meaning as the name. See how you translated this in [Hosea 1:6](#). Alternate translation: "No Mercy" (See: [How to Translate Names](#))

Lo-Ammi

This name means "not my people." The translator may choose to represent this meaning as the name. See how you translated this in [Hosea 1:9](#). Alternate translation: "Not My People" (See: [How to Translate Names](#))

Ammi Attah

This name means "you are my people." The translator may choose to represent this meaning as the name. Alternate translation: "You Are My People" (See: [How to Translate Names](#))

Hosea 3

Hosea 3 General Notes

Structure and formatting

This chapter focuses on the meaning of the illustration of Hosea's marriage. It is a very short chapter written in prose to show the truth of Israel's relationship with Yahweh. After bearing a number of children for Hosea, Gomer leaves him and prostitutes herself with other men, showing little to no regard for their marriage covenant. (See: [covenant](#))

Important figures of speech in this chapter

Metaphor

This chapter contains a continuation of the metaphor played out in chapter 2. Hosea is told to go and buy his wife out of slavery. Gomer must have been captured and held as a slave due to her adulterous activity. (See: [Metaphor](#) and [adultery](#), [adulterous](#), [adulterer](#), [adulteress](#))

Hosea 3:1

Go again, love a woman, loved by her husband, but who is an adulteress

This refers back to [Hosea 1:2](#). Yahweh again tells Hosea to love an adulterous woman.

Love her just as I, Yahweh, love the people of Israel

By loving the adulterous woman, Hosea will be an example of Yahweh's love for Israel. (See: [Symbolic Action](#))

they turn to other gods and love raisin cakes

People ate raisin or fig cakes during festivals where they worshiped false gods.

ULT

¹ Yahweh said to me, "Go again, love a woman who is loved by another man and is an adulteress, even as Yahweh loves the sons of Israel, although they turn to other gods and love raisin cakes."

Hosea 3:2

fifteen pieces of silver and a homer and a letheck of barley

This was the price to buy a slave.

fifteen pieces

“15 pieces” (See: [Numbers](#))

a homer and a letheck of barley

This can be stated in modern units. Alternate translation: “330 liters of barley” (See: [Biblical Volume](#))

ULT

² So I bought her for myself for fifteen pieces of silver and a homer and a letheck of barley.

Hosea 3:3

(There are no notes for this verse.)

ULT

³ I said to her, "You must dwell with me many days. You will not play the harlot or belong to any other man. In the same way, I will be with you."

Hosea 3:4

For the people of Israel will live for many days without a king, prince, sacrifice, stone pillar, ephod or household idols

Just as Hosea lived without his wife because she committed adultery, Israel will live without a king and without worshiping God, because they committed idolatry.

ULT

⁴ For the sons of Israel will dwell for many days without a king, prince, sacrifice, stone pillar, ephod or household idols.

Hosea 3:5

seek Yahweh their God

Here “seek” means they are asking God to accept them and their worship.

David their king

Here “David” represents all the descendants of David. Alternate translation: “a descendant of David to be their king” (See: [Metonymy](#))

in the last days

“in the future”

they will come trembling before Yahweh and his goodness

Here “trembling” represents feelings of awe and humility. Alternate translation: “they will come back to Yahweh and will humble themselves, honor him, and ask for his blessings” (See: [Metonymy](#))

ULT

⁵ Afterward the sons of Israel will return and seek Yahweh their God and David their king, and in the last days, they will come trembling to Yahweh and to his goodness.

Hosea 4

Hosea 4 General Notes

Structure and formatting

The author stops using the metaphor of a husband/wife relationship and begins using a new illustration using lawsuits. God is suing the people of Israel because of all the wrong they have done. (See: [Metaphor](#))

Special concepts in this chapter

Lawsuits

Lawsuits are special cases where people go to court when they have a legal issue to resolve between them. Normally, one party is accusing another party of having done wrong.

Important figures of speech in this chapter

Metonymy

Metonymy is used in the first few verses of this chapter. Metonymy is a figure of speech in which a thing or idea is called not by its own name, but by the name of something closely associated with it. Bloodshed is associated with murder. Stumbling represents sinning. (See: [Metonymy](#) and [sin, sinful, sinner, sinning](#))

Hosea 4:1

General Information:

This chapter begins Yahweh's argument against the unfaithful Israelites.

Yahweh has a lawsuit against the inhabitants of the land

Yahweh stating that the people of Israel have sinned against him and broken his covenant is spoken of as if Yahweh were accusing them in court. (See: [Metaphor](#))

lawsuit

This is a complaint by one person against another person in a court of law. See how you translated this in [Hosea 2:2](#).

ULT

¹ Hear the word of Yahweh, O sons of Israel. For Yahweh has a lawsuit against the inhabitants of the land, because there is no faithfulness or steadfast love, no knowledge of God in the land.

Hosea 4:2

The people have broken all bounds

Here “bounds” stands for the limits of what the law allows. Alternate translation: “The people have disobeyed the law in every possible way” (See: [Metaphor](#))

bloodshed comes after bloodshed

Here “bloodshed” stands for “murder” which often involves making the victim bleed. Alternate translation: “you commit one murder after another” (See: [Abstract Nouns](#) and [Metonymy](#))

ULT

² There is cursing, lying, murder, stealing and adultery. They have broken all bounds, and bloodshed follows bloodshed.

Hosea 4:3

So the land is drying up

This expression refers to drought, when no rain falls for a long time.

wasting away

becoming weak and dying because of sickness or lack of food

are being taken away

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "are dying" (See: [Active or Passive](#))

ULT

³ Therefore the land mourns, and all who live in it are wasting away, along with the beasts in the fields and the birds in the sky, even the fish in the sea, are being taken away.

Hosea 4:4

General Information:

Yahweh is speaking about Israel.

lawsuit

a complaint by one person against another person in a court of law

do not let anyone accuse anyone else

No one should accuse another person of anything because everyone is guilty of something.

ULT

⁴ But let no one bring a lawsuit; and let no one accuse. For my contention is with you, O priests.

Hosea 4:5

You priests will stumble

Here “stumble” means to disobey God or even to stop trusting him.
(See: [Metaphor](#))

I will destroy your mother

Here “mother” refers to the nation of Israel. See how you translated this in [Hosea 2:2](#). (See: [Metaphor](#))

ULT

⁵ You will stumble by day; the prophets will also stumble with you by night, and I will destroy your mother.

Hosea 4:6

General Information:

In 4:6, Yahweh is talking to the priests about the people of Israel. But in 4:7, he is talking about the priests, not to them. It is possible for the translator to follow the example of the UST, which portrays Yahweh as talking to the priests also in 4:7.

My people are being destroyed because of the lack of knowledge

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: “My people are perishing because you, the priests, have not properly taught them about me so that they will obey me” (See: [Active or Passive](#))

knowledge

Here “knowledge” refers to the knowledge of God. (See: [Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information](#))

ULT

6 My people are destroyed because of the lack of knowledge. Because you have rejected knowledge, I also reject you from being priests to me. Because you have forgotten the law of your God, I also will forget your children.

Hosea 4:7

They exchanged their honor for shame

This could mean: (1) “honor” is a metonym that represents Yahweh, and “shame” is a metonym that represents idols. Alternate translation: “They have stopped worshiping me, their honorable God, and now worship shameful idols” or (2) some Bible versions translate this as “I will exchange their honor for shame.” This means Yahweh will take away the things which the priests honor and cause the priests to be ashamed. (See: [Metonymy](#))

ULT

⁷ The more they multiplied, the more they sinned against me. I will change their glory into shame.

Hosea 4:8

General Information:

Yahweh continues speaking about the priests.

They feed on the sin of my people

When people sinned, they would offer sacrifices so God would forgive them. The priests were allowed to eat these sacrifices. The priests eating these sacrifices for sin is spoken of as if they would actually feed on the people's sins. (See: [Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information](#) and [Metaphor](#))

they are greedy for more of their wickedness

The priests want the people to sin more so that the people will offer more sacrifices that the priests may eat. (See: [Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information](#))

ULT

⁸ They feed on the sin of my people;
they are greedy for their iniquity.

Hosea 4:9

It will be the same for the people as for the priests

“The people and the priests will be punished in the same way”

their practices

“their habits” or “their conduct”

ULT

⁹ It will be like people, like priests: I will punish them for their ways; I will repay them for their deeds.

Hosea 4:10

General Information:

Yahweh is talking about Israel.

but not increase

“but not have children”

they have gone far away

The people have stopped worshiping and following God.

from Yahweh

Yahweh is speaking about himself in the third person. This can be stated in the first person. Alternate translation: “from me” (See: [First, Second or Third Person](#))

ULT

¹⁰ They will eat but not have enough; they will play the harlot but not increase, because they have forsaken Yahweh to devote themselves to

Hosea 4:11

Connecting Statement:

Yahweh is talking about Israel.

sexual promiscuity, wine, and new wine, which have taken away their understanding

The people of Israel are pursuing sex outside of marriage and drinking too much wine. In doing these activities they have forgotten Yahweh's commands. These actions are spoken of here as if they were someone who could prevent other people from understanding the importance of obeying Yahweh. (See: [Personification](#))

ULT

¹¹ harlotry, wine, and new wine, which
take away the understanding.

Hosea 4:12

their walking sticks give them prophecies

Idol worshipers used walking sticks to help them predict the future. The walking sticks are spoken of here as if they were people who spoke prophecies. (See: [Personification](#))

a mind of promiscuity has misled them

Worshiping the idols and sleeping with the temple prostitutes has developed in the people of Israel the desire to always sin against Yahweh in these ways. Here "mind" is spoken of as if it were a separate person who was able to convince the people to disobey Yahweh. (See: [Personification](#))

has misled

has convinced the people to sin (See: [Metaphor](#))

ULT

12 My people consult their wooden idols, and their walking sticks inform them. For a spirit of harlotry has led them astray, and they have played the harlot, departing from their God.

Hosea 4:13

General Information:

Yahweh is talking about Israel.

on the tops of the mountains ... on the hills

It was common for the people to set up idols in these places, often called "high places" in the Old Testament.

ULT

¹³ They sacrifice on the tops of the mountains and burn incense on the hills, under oaks, poplars and terebinths, because the shade is good. Therefore your daughters play the harlot, and your daughters-in-law commit adultery.

Hosea 4:14

sacred prostitutes

These were women who had sexual relations with men who came to worship certain idols. This was viewed as a sacred action in honor of the false gods.

So this people who does not understand will be thrown down

Yahweh will destroy the nation of Israel because they do not understand or obey God's commandments. (See: [Metaphor](#))

ULT

14 I will not punish your daughters when they play the harlot, nor your daughters-in-law when they commit adultery. For the men themselves go aside with harlots, and they offer sacrifices with cult prostitutes. So the people without understanding will be thrown down.

Hosea 4:15

General Information:

Yahweh is talking about Judah and Israel.

may Judah not become guilty

God knows how sinful Israel has become and does not want Judah to do the same thing.

ULT

¹⁵ Though you, O Israel, play the harlot, let not Judah become guilty. Do not go to Gilgal, do not go up to Beth Aven, and do not swear, saying, "As Yahweh lives."

Do not go to Gilgal, you people; do not go up to Beth Aven

The people of Judah are being warned not to go to the cities of Gilgal or Beth Aven to worship idols in those places. Gilgal was once a place where Yahweh had been worshiped, but it had become a place of idol worship.

Beth Aven

This was a city on the border between the northern kingdom of Israel and the tribe of Benjamin in the southern kingdom. (See: [How to Translate Names](#))

Hosea 4:16

like a stubborn heifer

Israel is compared to a young cow that will not obey its master. (See: [Simile](#))

How can Yahweh bring them to pasture like lambs in a meadow?

Yahweh uses a question to emphasize that he cannot continue to take care of the people because they are stubborn. Yahweh no longer taking care of his people is spoken of as if he were a shepherd that could not take his lambs into the field to eat because they are stubborn. Alternate translation: "Yahweh will not shepherd a rebellious people." or "Therefore Yahweh will not continue to take care of them." (See: [Metaphor](#) and [Rhetorical Question](#))

How can Yahweh

Here Yahweh is speaking of himself in the third person. It can be stated in the first person. Alternate translation: "How can I" (See: [First, Second or Third Person](#))

ULT

16 Israel is stubborn, like a stubborn heifer; can Yahweh now feed them like lambs in a broad pasture?

Hosea 4:17

General Information:

Yahweh is talking about Israel.

Ephraim united himself with idols; leave him alone

Here “Ephraim” represents the whole northern kingdom of Israel, which is a metonym for the people who live there. They chose to worship idols, instead of Yahweh. Yahweh is commanding Hosea to not try to correct them. The people of Israel will not listen. (See: [Synecdoche](#) and [Metonymy](#))

ULT

¹⁷ Ephraim is joined to idols; leave him alone.

Hosea 4:18

her rulers dearly love their shame

The rulers are not ashamed of what they are doing when they worship idols and turn against Yahweh.

ULT

18 Even when their liquor is gone, they play the harlot continually; her rulers dearly love their shame.

Hosea 4:19

The wind will wrap her up in its wings

Here “wind” represents God’s judgment and anger against the nation of Israel. Yahweh will allow the enemy army to defeat the people of Israel and take them as captives. (See: [Metaphor](#) and [Metonymy](#))

ULT

19 The wind will wrap her up in its wings; and they will be ashamed because of their sacrifices.

Hosea 5

Hosea 5 General Notes

Structure and formatting

This chapter continues using the poetic form exclusively.

Special concepts in this chapter

The author uses Ephraim and Israel interchangeably. They both refer to the northern kingdom of Israel. Judah is also mentioned and refers to the southern kingdom of Judah. Benjamin is part of the southern kingdom of Judah. (See: [How to Translate Names](#))

Important figures of speech in this chapter

This chapter is full of metaphors and similes. The writer uses these figures of speech to show how Yahweh will treat his people for not obeying his instructions. (See: [Metaphor](#) and [Simile](#) and [people of God](#))

Hosea 5:1

Connecting Statement:

Yahweh is talking about Israel.

You have been a snare at Mizpah and a net spread over Tabor

A snare and a net are both objects used to catch prey. In this case, the priests and the royal household had devised ways to keep the people away from Yahweh, while enticing them into idolatry. Mizpah and Tabor were places for idol worship in the land of Israel. (See: [How to Translate Names](#) and [Metaphor](#))

ULT

¹ "Hear this, O priests! Pay attention, O house of Israel! Listen, O house of the king! For the judgment is for you, for you have been a snare at Mizpah and a net spread over Tabor.

Hosea 5:2

The rebels stand deep in slaughter

Here “rebels” refers to all of those people who had turned away from Yahweh, and “deep in slaughter” could refer to the murder of innocent people, or to the slaughter of animals offered to pagan idols. (See: [Metaphor](#))

ULT

² The rebels stand deep in slaughter,
but I will discipline all of them. ^[1]

The rebels

The translator can represent this as “You rebels,” because God is really talking to the rebellious people of Israel.

in slaughter

Some modern versions interpret the Hebrew expression as standing for wickedness.

I will punish all of them

The translator can represent this as “I will punish all of you.”

Hosea 5:3

General Information:

Yahweh is talking about Israel.

I know Ephraim, and Israel is not hidden from me

Here, "Ephraim" and "Israel" both refer to the whole northern kingdom of Israel, and represent the people who live there. Here God says that he knows what they are like and what they are doing. (See: [Synecdoche](#) and [Metonymy](#) and [Parallelism](#))

Ephraim, now you have become like a prostitute

Ephraim is presented in terms of a prostitute because the people have become unfaithful to God, as a prostitute is faithful to no man. (See: [Simile](#))

ULT

³ I know Ephraim, and Israel is not hidden from me; for now, O Ephraim, you have played the harlot; Israel is defiled.

Hosea 5:4

for the mind of adultery is in them

This means they have the desire to be unfaithful to God. They want to worship idols.

to turn to God ... they do not know Yahweh

The translator can represent this as “to turn to me ... they do not know me,” or “to turn to me ... they do not know me, Yahweh.”

they do not know Yahweh

Israel no longer obeys Yahweh in any way. They do not acknowledge Yahweh as their God.

ULT

⁴ Their deeds will not allow them to return to their God, for a spirit of harlotry is within them, and they do not know Yahweh.

Hosea 5:5

General Information:

Yahweh is talking about Israel.

The pride of Israel testifies against him

This describes “pride” as a person who testifies against the people of Israel in court. Their prideful attitude and behavior show that they are guilty of no longer obeying Yahweh. (See: [Personification](#))

so Israel and Ephraim will stumble in their guilt; and Judah also will stumble with them

The two kingdoms will become completely disobedient to God because of their pride and sin. (See: [Idiom](#))

ULT

⁵ The pride of Israel testifies against him; Israel and Ephraim will stumble in their guilt; Judah also will stumble with them.

Hosea 5:6

(There are no notes for this verse.)

ULT

⁶ They will go with their flocks and herds to seek Yahweh, but they will not find him, for he has withdrawn from them.

Hosea 5:7

They were unfaithful to Yahweh, for they have borne illegitimate children

This could mean: (1) this means the Israelites were marrying people from other nations and having children with them or (2) this means the Israelite parents were unfaithful to Yahweh and they were teaching their children to worship idols.

ULT

⁷ They were unfaithful to Yahweh, for they have borne illegitimate children. Now the new moon will devour them with their fields.

Now the new moon festivals will devour them with their fields

The people of Israel were supposed to celebrate during the new moon. Here this expression seems to describe the new moon festival as a beast that will eat the people and their fields. However, it is hard to interpret this expression; many versions translate it without making much sense of it. However, the overall meaning is certainly that God will punish the people for their unfaithfulness to him. (See: [Personification](#))

Hosea 5:8

General Information:

Yahweh is talking about Israel.

Blow the horn in Gibeah, and the trumpet in Ramah

Here “horn” and “trumpet” mean the same thing. This command is given to the people of Gibeah and Ramah to emphasize that the enemy is coming. (See: [Doublet](#))

Sound a battle cry at Beth Aven: ‘We will follow you, Benjamin!’

Here “Benjamin” represents the soldiers from the tribe of Benjamin. This may be a request for them to lead the people into battle. But modern versions make various attempts to interpret this expression. (See: [Synecdoche](#))

Beth Aven

This was a city on the border between the northern kingdom of Israel and the tribe of Benjamin in the southern kingdom. See how you translated this in [Hosea 4:15](#). (See: [How to Translate Names](#))

ULT

⁸ Blow the horn in Gibeah, and the trumpet in Ramah. Sound the alarm at Beth Aven: ‘We will follow you, O Benjamin!’

Hosea 5:9

Among the tribes of Israel I have declared what is certain to happen

“I will do to the tribes of Israel what I have declared”

ULT

⁹ Ephraim will become a desolation in the day of punishment. Among the tribes of Israel I declare what is certain.

Hosea 5:10

General Information:

Yahweh is talking about Judah and Israel.

The leaders of Judah are like those who move a boundary stone

To “move a boundary stone” refers to moving the landmark that marked the border of some property, which was a crime under Israelite law. (See: [Simile](#))

I will pour my wrath on them like water

Yahweh’s wrath against Judah will be like a large stream of water that destroys them. In the scriptures, emotions and moral qualities are often spoken of as if they were liquids. (See: [Metaphor](#))

ULT

¹⁰ The princes of Judah are like those who move a boundary. I will pour out my wrath on them like water.

Hosea 5:11

Ephraim is crushed; he is crushed in judgment

This can be stated in active form. This statement is made twice for emphasis. Here “Ephraim” refers to the people of the northern kingdom of Israel. Alternate translation: “I will punish the people of Israel severely” (See: [Parallelism](#) and [Synecdoche](#) and [Active or Passive](#))

ULT

¹¹ Ephraim is oppressed; he is crushed in judgment, because he was determined to go after idols.

walked after idols

Here “walked” represents the idea of worshiping. (See: [Metaphor](#))

idols

The Hebrew word translated here as “idols” is uncertain in its meaning, and is translated by modern versions in many different ways.

Hosea 5:12

General Information:

Yahweh is talking about Judah and Israel.

I will be like a moth to Ephraim, and like rot to the house of Judah

A moth on a piece of wool and rot in a piece of wood are both destructive. Yahweh will destroy both nations. (See: [Simile](#))

moth ... rot

These two terms are translated in various ways because the meaning of the Hebrew word is either very broad or it is uncertain.

ULT

12 So I will be like a moth to Ephraim,
and like rot to the house of Judah.

Hosea 5:13

When Ephraim saw his sickness, and Judah saw his wound

Both Ephraim (the northern kingdom of Israel) and Judah (the southern kingdom of Israel) realized that they were in danger. (See: [Metaphor](#))

then Ephraim went to Assyria, and Judah sent messengers to the great king

Ephraim and Judah asked Assyria for help instead of asking Yahweh for help. "Great king" was a title for the king of Assyria.

But he was not able

Here "he" refers to the king of Assyria.

ULT

¹³ When Ephraim saw his sickness, and Judah his wound, then Ephraim went to Assyria, and sent to the great king. But he is not able to cure you or heal your wound.

Hosea 5:14

General Information:

Yahweh is talking about Judah and Israel.

So I will be like a lion to Ephraim

Yahweh is going to pursue and attack Ephraim like a lion. (See: [Simile](#))

like a young lion to the house of Judah

Yahweh is going to treat Judah in a similar way. Yahweh is showing his displeasure with both the northern and the southern kingdoms. (See: [Simile](#))

I, even I

Yahweh is emphasizing that he is the one that is bringing judgment on all of his people.

will tear

As a lion tears apart the animal it is eating, so Yahweh will tear his people away from their homes and country. (See: [Metaphor](#))

ULT

14 For I will be like a lion to Ephraim, and like a young lion to the house of Judah. I, even I, will tear and go away; I will carry off, and there will be no one to rescue.

Hosea 5:15

I will go and return to my place

Yahweh will leave his rebellious people.

seek my face

Try to come into God's presence by means of worship and sacrifice.

Alternate translation: "ask me to pay attention to them" (See: [Metaphor](#))

ULT

¹⁵ I will go and return to my place, until they acknowledge their guilt and seek my face, until they earnestly seek me in their distress."

Hosea 6

Hosea 6 General Notes

Structure and formatting

This chapter continues using the poetic form to show how Yahweh will still show mercy to his wayward people, the northern kingdom of Israel and the southern kingdom of Judah. Gilead is an area in the northern kingdom of Israel where several of the tribes lived. (See: [mercy](#), [merciful](#))

Special concepts in this chapter

Change in speaker

There is a change in person from 6:1-3 to 6:4-11. In the first passage, the speaker is an anonymous Israelite, but in the rest of the chapter, the speaker is Yahweh.

Important figures of speech in this chapter

Metaphor

Throughout the chapter, the author uses the metaphor of prostitution to say that his people have abandoned him. (See: [Metaphor](#))

Hosea 6:1

Connecting Statement:

The people of Israel confess their need to repent.

he has torn us to pieces ... he has injured us

God has punished the people of Israel because they disobeyed him and worshiped idols. (See: [Parallelism](#))

he will heal us ... he will bandage our wounds

Israel believes that God will be merciful to them when they repent and he will deliver them from their troubles. (See: [Parallelism](#))

ULT

1 "Come, let us return to Yahweh. For he has torn us, but he will heal us; he has struck us down, but he will bandage us.

Hosea 6:2

After two days he will revive us; he will raise us up on the third day

This represents a short period of time. Israel believes God will quickly come to rescue them from their enemies. (See: [Idiom](#))

two days ... the third day

"2 days ... day 3" (See: [Numbers](#) and [Ordinal Numbers](#))

ULT

² After two days he will revive us; he will raise us up on the third day, that we may live before him.

Hosea 6:3

Let us know Yahweh

Here “know” means not only to learn God’s character and laws, but also to become faithful to him.

His coming out is as sure as the dawn

Yahweh will come to help his people just as surely as the sun rises each morning. (See: [Simile](#))

ULT

³ Let us know; let us press on to know Yahweh. His going forth is sure as the dawn; he will come to us like the showers, like the spring rains that water the earth.”

Hosea 6:4

Connecting Statement:

Yahweh is speaking.

what will I do with you?

God is expressing that his patience is coming to an end and what remains is judgment. Alternate translation: "it is hard to know what to do with you!" (See: [Rhetorical Question](#))

ULT

⁴ O Ephraim, what will I do with you? O Judah, what will I do with you? Your love is like a morning cloud, like the dew that goes away early.

Hosea 6:5

So I have cut them to pieces by the prophets

Through his prophets, Yahweh has pronounced destruction on the rebellious nation. The destruction, here called “cutting to pieces,” is as sure as the condemnation. (See: [Metaphor](#))

Your decrees are like the light that shines out

Here the prophet Hosea is speaking to God. He may mean that when God gives the command for someone to die as punishment, it is like a bolt of lightning that strikes. Or he may mean that God’s commandments allow people to know the truth, just as light makes objects visible. (See: [Simile](#))

Your decrees

“Yahweh’s commands”

ULT

⁵ Therefore I have cut them to pieces by the prophets, I have killed them with the words of my mouth. My judgments are like the light that goes forth.

Hosea 6:6

General Information:

Yahweh is speaking.

For I desire faithfulness and not sacrifice

This grammatical construction in Hebrew signals here the idea of “more than,” as the next line shows (“and the knowledge of God more than burnt offerings”). Alternate translation: “For I desire faithfulness more than sacrifice”

ULT

⁶ For I desire steadfast love and not sacrifice, and the knowledge of God rather than burnt offerings.

Hosea 6:7

Like Adam

This could mean: (1) this refers to Adam, the first man or (2) this is a metonym that represents the people who live in a city in Israel called Adam. Alternate translation: "Like the people in the city of Adam" or (3) this refers to people in general. The word "Adam" means "man" or "humankind." Alternate translation: "Like all of humankind" (See: [Metonymy](#))

ULT

⁷ Like Adam they have transgressed the covenant; there they were unfaithful to me.

Hosea 6:8

General Information:

Yahweh is speaking.

Gilead is a city ... with footprints of blood

“Footprints of blood” probably represents the evildoers and their acts of murder. (See: [Metonymy](#))

ULT

⁸ Gilead is a city of evildoers with footprints of blood.

Hosea 6:9

the priests band together to commit murder on the way to Shechem

We do not know what this refers to. Were priests actually guilty of attacking people on their way to Shechem, which was an important religious and political center? Or is the prophet saying that the priests have “killed” true knowledge and worship of Yahweh? It is best to translate this expression as plainly as possible.

ULT

⁹ As a band of raiders lie in wait for a man, so the priests band together to commit murder on the way to Shechem; surely they have committed shameful crimes.

Hosea 6:10

General Information:

Yahweh is speaking.

Ephraim's prostitution

Here "prostitution" refers to Ephraim's worship of false gods. (See: [Metonymy](#))

Israel has become unclean

Israel has become unacceptable to God because of her actions.

ULT

¹⁰ In the house of Israel I have seen a horrible thing; the harlotry of Ephraim is there; Israel is defiled.

Hosea 6:11

For you also, Judah, a harvest has been appointed

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "I have set a time of harvest for you also, Judah" (See: [Active or Passive](#))

harvest

Here "harvest" represents God's final judgment on Israel and Judah. (See: [Metaphor](#))

fortunes

prosperity and security

ULT

¹¹ For you also, Judah, a harvest has been appointed. When I restore the fortunes of my people,

Hosea 7

Hosea 7 General Notes

Structure and formatting

This chapter continues using poetic forms to speak of Yahweh's anger over the sin of the people. The people are not seeking Yahweh; they are seeking other gods and looking for salvation from other nations like Egypt and Assyria. (See: [sin](#), [sinful](#), [sinner](#), [sinning](#), [god](#), [false god](#), [goddess](#), [idol](#), [idolater](#), [idolatrous](#), [idolatry](#) and [save](#), [saved](#), [safe](#), [salvation](#))

Important figures of speech in this chapter

Baking

Baking of bread is an extended metaphor in this chapter. Yahweh uses various aspects of this activity to show his displeasure with their sins. (See: [Metaphor](#))

Other possible translation difficulties in this chapter

Israel and Ephraim

This chapter begins by using two different names for the same group of people: Israel and Ephraim. It also mentions Samaria, which was the capital of the northern kingdom of Israel.

Hosea 7:1

General Information:

Yahweh is speaking.

I want to heal Israel

Making Israel obedient to God again and receivers of his blessing is spoken of as if it were healing. (See: [Metaphor](#))

for they practice deceit

The people are selling and buying products dishonestly. (See: [Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information](#))

marauding band

This is a group of people who are attacking other people without cause.

ULT

¹ when I would heal Israel, the sin of Ephraim is exposed, as well as the evil deeds of Samaria, for they practice deceit; the thief breaks in, and the marauding band raids outside.

Hosea 7:2

their deeds surround them

The people's evil deeds are probably spoken of here as if they were other people ready to accuse them of their crimes. (See: [Metaphor](#))

they are before my face

Here God is represented by his "face" which emphasizes his presence and awareness. Alternate translation: "and I see it all" (See: [Synecdoche](#))

ULT

² But they do not realize in their hearts that I remember all their evil. Now their deeds surround them; they are before my face.

Hosea 7:3

General Information:

Yahweh is speaking. The Hebrew text is not clear in various places. However, many people interpret it as describing the royal officials as being unfaithful to God, and also as planning to assassinate the king, and then carrying out their plans. This seems to have happened more than once. These crimes are mentioned as illustrations of the wickedness into which the nation has sunk.

ULT

³ By their evil they make the king glad,
and by their lies the princes.

Hosea 7:4

They are all adulterers

The people committed spiritual adultery by worshiping idols and being unfaithful to Yahweh. They were probably also being unfaithful to their husbands or wives by sleeping with other people. (See: [Metaphor](#))

like an oven heated by the baker

This can be stated in active form. This means the people had strong desires to do evil. Alternate translation: “like an oven which the baker heats” (See: [Simile](#) and [Active or Passive](#))

kneading of the dough

This is a part of the process of making bread.

ULT

⁴ They are all adulterers, like an oven heated by the baker, who ceases to stir the fire from the kneading of the dough until it is leavened.

Hosea 7:5

On the day of our king

This is perhaps a festival held by the king.

He reached out with his hand

This probably means to unite or join with someone. It may mean that the king joins with his officials to mock things or people that should not be mocked, even God himself. (See: [Idiom](#))

ULT

⁵ On the day of our king the princes became sick with the heat of wine. He stretched out his hand with those who were mocking.

Hosea 7:6

General Information:

The court officials' plotting is described. Their anger is what motivates them to kill their king.

For with hearts like an oven

This means like a fire burns in an oven, these people have strong evil desires within them. The people's desires are represented by their "hearts." (See: [Simile](#) and [Metonymy](#))

Their anger smolders

The word "smolders" means something is burning slowly without a flame. Alternate translation: "Their anger grows slowly and quietly" (See: [Metaphor](#))

it burns high like a flaming fire

The intensity of their anger is spoken of as if it was a very hot fire. Alternate translation: "it gets very intense" (See: [Simile](#))

ULT

⁶ For with their hearts like an oven, they approach their intrigue. Their anger smolders all night; in the morning it burns like a flaming fire.

Hosea 7:7

They all are as hot as an oven

This compares their anger to the heat that comes from an oven.
(See: [Simile](#))

they devour those who rule over them

This seems to mean that the court officials kill their kings. (See: [Metaphor](#))

ULT

⁷ All of them are hot as an oven, and they devour those who rule over them. All their kings have fallen; none of them calls on me.

Hosea 7:8

General Information:

Yahweh is speaking.

Ephraim mixes himself among the peoples

This is probably a reference to the efforts made by the northern kingdom's kings to ally themselves with other nations for protection against attack.

Ephraim is a flat cake that has not been turned over

This can be stated in active form. Here "Ephraim" refers to the northern kingdom of Israel. The nation is weak, as flat bread that has not been doubled over in the oven by the baker for more strength. Alternate translation: "The people of Ephraim are like a cake that no one has turned over" (See: [Synecdoche](#) and [Metaphor](#) and [Active or Passive](#))

ULT

⁸ Ephraim mixes himself among the peoples. Ephraim is a flat cake that has not been turned over.

Hosea 7:9

Gray hairs are sprinkled on him

Here “gray hairs” represent old age. (See: [Metonymy](#))

but he does not know it

However, this “old age” is clearly a way of saying that the northern kingdom is getting weaker and weaker, because the nation does not know it is “old.” (See: [Metaphor](#))

ULT

⁹ Foreigners have devoured his strength, but he does not know it. Gray hairs are sprinkled on him, but he does not know it.

Hosea 7:10

General Information:

Yahweh is speaking.

The pride of Israel testifies against him

This describes “pride” as a person who testifies against the people of Israel in court. This means their prideful attitude and behavior show that they are guilty of no longer obeying Yahweh. (See: [Personification](#))

nor have they sought him

Israel’s lack of interest in Yahweh is spoken of as if he was lost and they were not trying to find him. Alternate translation: “nor have they tried to get him to pay attention to them” (See: [Metaphor](#))

in spite of all this

Here “this” refers God allowing foreigners to defeat them and make them weak.

ULT

¹⁰ The pride of Israel testifies against him; yet they have not returned to Yahweh their God, nor have they sought him, for all this.

Hosea 7:11

Ephraim is like a dove, gullible and without sense

Doves were thought to be foolish birds. (See: [Simile](#))

Egypt ... Assyria

These were powerful nations that Israel could ask for help.

ULT

¹¹ Ephraim is like a dove, silly and without sense, calling to Egypt, then going to Assyria.

Hosea 7:12

General Information:

Yahweh is speaking.

I will spread my net over them

This is a way to catch birds. Yahweh continues to compare the people of Israel to doves. When they go to Egypt or Assyria for help, Yahweh will punish them. (See: [Metaphor](#))

I will bring them down like the birds of the sky

Yahweh speaks of the way he will judge Israel as if they were birds that he would catch in a net. Alternate translation: "I will hunt them like birds" or "I will catch them like a hunter catches birds" (See: [Simile](#))

in their flocking together

This expression extends the metaphor of the birds.

ULT

¹² When they go, I will spread my net over them, I will bring them down like the birds of the sky. I will discipline them in accordance with the report to their assembly.

Hosea 7:13

(There are no notes for this verse.)

ULT

13 Woe to them! For they have strayed from me. Destruction to them! For they have rebelled against me! I would have redeemed them, but they spoke lies against me.

Hosea 7:14

General Information:

Yahweh is speaking.

they wail on their beds

It was usual for idol worshipers to eat ceremonial meals while reclining on couches or beds.

they turn away from me

Here no longer worshipping God is spoken of as turning away from him. Alternate translation: “they no longer worship me” (See: [Metaphor](#))

ULT

14 They do not cry to me with their heart, but they wail on their beds. They gather together for grain and new wine; they turn away from me. ^[1]

Hosea 7:15

Though I trained them and strengthened their arms

This may be a military metaphor, in which God training the Israelites to love him and obey him is spoken of as if he had been training their men for war. (See: [Metaphor](#))

ULT

¹⁵ Though I trained and strengthened their arms, yet they plot evil against me.

Hosea 7:16

General Information:

Yahweh is speaking.

They are like a slack bow

That is, a bow that has no bowstring, or that has no tension. (See: [Simile](#))

because of the insolence of their tongues

Here “tongue” refers to what the officials say. Alternate translation: “because they insult me” or “because they curse me” (See: [Metonymy](#))

This will become their mockery in the land of Egypt

The abstract noun “mockery” can be stated as an action. Alternate translation: “This is why people in Egypt will mock and laugh at Israel” (See: [Abstract Nouns](#))

ULT

16 They return, but not upward. They are like a slack bow. Their princes will fall by the sword because of the insolence of their tongues. This will be their derision in the land of Egypt.

Hosea 8

Hosea 8 General Notes

Structure and formatting

This chapter continues to use the poetic form to communicate several other ways the people of Israel have sinned against God. First, Yahweh notes that they have set up a king without consulting him. Next, they set up or reinstalled the golden calves of Samaria. Last, they were seeking help from other nations like Egypt and Assyria. (See: [sin](#), [sinful](#), [sinner](#), [sinning](#))

Special concepts in this chapter

This chapter contains some references to the “calf of Samaria.” This most likely refers to an image that was set up by an earlier king of Israel. He did this in order to discourage his people from going to Jerusalem, which was part of the southern kingdom of Judah.

Hosea 8:1

General Information:

Yahweh is speaking about the coming of the Assyrian army to attack the northern kingdom.

An eagle is coming over the house of Yahweh

The eagle, a bird of prey, is sometimes used to represent the enemies of Israel. Alternate translation: "As an eagle hunts another animal, the enemies of Israel are coming to capture my people" (See: [Metaphor](#))

broken my covenant

Here "broken" represents "disobeyed," "violated." (See: [Metaphor](#))

ULT

1 "Put the trumpet to your lips! One like a vulture is over the house of Yahweh because they have transgressed my covenant and rebelled against my law.

Hosea 8:2

know you

“are faithful to you”

ULT

² They cry out to me, ‘My God, we in Israel know you.’

Hosea 8:3

(There are no notes for this verse.)

ULT

³ Israel has rejected the good; the enemy will pursue him.

Hosea 8:4

General Information:

Yahweh is speaking.

but it was only so they might be cut off

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: “but the result will be that I will destroy the people” (See: [Active or Passive](#))

ULT

⁴ They have set up kings, but not by me. They have appointed princes, but I did not know. With their silver and gold they have made idols for themselves, so that they might be cut off.”

Hosea 8:5

Your calf has been rejected

This could mean: (1) this is the prophet speaking. Alternate translation: "Yahweh has rejected your calf" or (2) Yahweh is speaking. Alternate translation: "I myself have rejected your calf" (See: [First, Second or Third Person](#))

Your calf

The people worshiped an idol that looked like a calf, so Yahweh is speaking of their worship as if it were the calf itself. Alternate translation: "Because you worship your calf idol, your worship" (See: [Metonymy](#))

My anger is burning against these people

Anger is often spoken of as if it were a fire. Alternate translation: "I am very angry with these people" (See: [Metaphor](#))

For how long will they stay guilty?

Yahweh asks this question to express his anger about his people being impure. "I am angry with these people because they have no desire to be innocent." (See: [Rhetorical Question](#))

ULT

⁵ "Your calf has been rejected, O Samaria. My anger burns against them. How long will they be incapable of innocence?"

Hosea 8:6

General Information:

Yahweh is speaking.

ULT

⁶ For from Israel is even this; a craftsman made it; it is not God! Surely the calf of Samaria will be broken to pieces.

Hosea 8:7

For the people sow the wind and reap the whirlwind

To sow or plant the wind is to act in useless or destructive ways. To reap the whirlwind is to suffer disaster from one's own actions. (See: [Metaphor](#))

ULT

⁷ For they sow the wind and reap the whirlwind. The standing grain has no heads; it yields no flour. If it were to yield, strangers would devour it.

The standing grain has no heads

Here "head" refers to the part of the plant where the grain is. A stalk with no head has nothing to give to the farmer. In the same way, Israel's actions will result in nothing good. (See: [Idiom](#))

If it does come to maturity, foreigners will devour it

If any of Israel's actions do happen to result in something good, Israel's enemies will come and take it from them. (See: [Metaphor](#))

Hosea 8:8

General Information:

Yahweh is speaking.

Israel is swallowed up

“swallowed” means to be defeated and taken into exile. This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: “The enemies of Israel have taken the Israelites away to other lands” (See: [Metaphor](#) and [Active or Passive](#))

ULT

⁸ Israel is swallowed up; they are now among the nations like a vessel in which no one delights.

Hosea 8:9

like a wild donkey all alone

People often think of donkeys as being stubborn. This means the people of Israel refused to listen to Yahweh but instead went to the people of Assyria for help. (See: [Simile](#))

Ephraim has hired lovers for herself

Ephraim's alliances with other nations are spoken of as if they had paid them to become prostitutes for Ephraim. Alternate translation: "The people of Israel have tried to pay other nations to protect them" (See: [Metaphor](#))

ULT

⁹ For they have gone up to Assyria, a wild donkey all alone. Ephraim has hired lovers for herself.

Hosea 8:10

because of the oppression of the king of princes

That is, because the Assyrian king, also called “the Great King,” will make the people suffer.

ULT

¹⁰ Even though they hire lovers among the nations, I will now gather them together. They will begin to waste away because of the burden of the king of princes.

Hosea 8:11

General Information:

Yahweh is speaking.

ULT

¹¹ Since Ephraim has multiplied altars for sin offerings, they have become altars for sinning for him.

Hosea 8:12

I could write down my law for them ten thousand times, but they would

Yahweh is describing a hypothetical situation. Here “ten thousand times” is an exaggeration that means no matter how many times he gave the people the law, they would still refuse to obey him.

Alternate translation: “Even if I wrote down my law for them very many times, they would” (See: [Hypothetical Situations](#) and [Hyperbole](#))

ULT

¹² Were I to write for him my law ten thousand times, they would be regarded as something strange.

ten thousand

“10,000” (See: [Numbers](#))

Hosea 8:13

General Information:

Yahweh is speaking.

They will return to Egypt

Because of their sin, God will send his people away as slaves to the Egyptians.

ULT

13 As for my sacrificial gifts, they sacrifice meat and eat it, but Yahweh does not accept them. Now he will remember their iniquity and punish their sins. They will return to Egypt.

Hosea 8:14

(There are no notes for this verse.)

ULT

14 Israel has forgotten his Maker and has built palaces. Judah has multiplied fortified cities, but I will send fire on his cities; it will devour his fortresses.

Hosea 9

Hosea 9 General Notes

Structure and formatting

The chapter is written in poetic form to speak of Yahweh's displeasure with Israel's sins. He is showing the many ways in which they do not honor him. The priests and kings do not understand how they have totally broken their covenant with Yahweh. (See: [sin](#), [sinful](#), [sinner](#), [sinning](#) and [priest](#), [priesthood](#) and [covenant](#))

Special concepts in this chapter

Exile

Because the covenant has been broken, the people will be exiled into another land. This actually shows the mercy of God toward his people. He did not destroy them; he simply moved them to another place. However, this chapter goes into detail about many parts of their society to show how far they have moved away from truly worshiping Yahweh. (See: [mercy](#), [merciful](#) and [people of God](#))

Other possible translation difficulties in this chapter

Change in speaker

In verse 16, Yahweh is speaking; but in verse 17, Hosea starts speaking. There is a change in pronouns; the use of "my God" must imply that someone other than Yahweh is speaking.

Hosea 9:1

General Information:

Hosea the prophet is speaking.

ULT

¹ Do not rejoice, O Israel, with joy like the peoples. For you have played the harlot, forsaking your God. You have loved the wages of a harlot on all the threshing floors.

Hosea 9:2

But the threshing floor and the winepress will not feed them

This describes the threshing floor and the winepress as if they were humans that can feed someone. This means that the harvest will not provide enough grain for threshing to meet the needs of the people, and that it will not provide the grapes for pressing to make enough wine. (See: [Personification](#) and [Metonymy](#))

the new wine will fail them

There will not be enough grape juice to make wine with.

ULT

² The threshing floor and the winepress will not feed them; and the new wine will fail them.

Hosea 9:3

General Information:

Hosea the prophet is speaking.

Yahweh's land

This expression signals that Yahweh continues to view the land of Israel as his property, not the property of the Israelites.

unclean food

This is food that the Israelites would normally refuse to eat because it would make them unacceptable to Yahweh. (See: [Metaphor](#))

ULT

³ They will not remain in the land of Yahweh; instead, Ephraim will return to Egypt, and they will eat unclean food in Assyria.

Hosea 9:4

Their sacrifices will be to them like mourners' food

Here “mourners’ food” refers to what people would eat while they mourning because they were defiled and not acceptable to God. This means Yahweh will consider the people’s sacrifices to be defiled and he will not accept them. (See: [Simile](#))

For their food will be for themselves only; it will not come into the house of Yahweh

The people of Israel will have food to eat, but Yahweh will not accept it as a sacrifice.

it will not come into the house of Yahweh

The unclean food is spoken of as if it were able to go places by itself. Of course, people actually had to take it with them. (See: [Personification](#))

ULT

⁴ They will not pour out wine offerings to Yahweh, neither will their sacrifices be pleasing to him. It will be like the bread of mourners to them: all who eat it will be defiled. For their bread will be for themselves only; it will not come into the house of Yahweh.

Hosea 9:5

General Information:

Hosea the prophet is speaking.

What will you do on the day of an appointed festival, on the day of a festival for Yahweh?

Hosea uses this question to emphasize that the people will no longer be able to observe their festivals when their enemies defeat them and take them captive. Alternate translation: "You will not be able to celebrate the festivals that Yahweh appointed for you." (See: [Rhetorical Question](#))

the day of an appointed festival ... the day of a festival for Yahweh

Both of these mean the same thing. (See: [Parallelism](#))

ULT

⁵ What will you do on the day of an appointed festival, and on the day of a festival for Yahweh?

Hosea 9:6

if they escape

Here “they” still refers to the people of Israel. You can continue stating this is second person. Alternate translation: “if you escape” (See: [First, Second or Third Person](#))

Egypt will gather them, and Memphis will bury them

Egypt and Memphis refer to the people who live there. Alternate translation: “the army of Egypt will capture you. You will die there, and the people in the city of Memphis will bury you” (See: [Metonymy](#))

As for their treasures of silver—sharp briers will possess them

Briers growing in the places where Israelites stored their silver is spoken of as if the briers were human enemies that would take the Israelite’s precious possessions for themselves. Alternate translation: “Sharp briers will grow where they store their treasures of silver” (See: [Metaphor](#))

sharp briers will possess them, and thorns will fill their tents

Here “sharp briers” and “thorns” mean the same thing. To have briers and thorns growing represents a land that has become desolate and like a wilderness. (See: [Doublet](#) and [Metonymy](#))

their tents

Here “tents” represents the Israelites’ homes. (See: [Metonymy](#))

ULT

⁶ For behold, they go away from destruction, but Egypt will gather them, Memphis will bury them. As for their treasures of silver— sharp briers will possess them, thorns will be in their tents.

Hosea 9:7

General Information:

Hosea the prophet is speaking.

The days for punishment are coming; the days for retribution are coming

Hosea says these two similar phrases to emphasize that Yahweh will soon judge the people of Israel for their evil deeds. (See: [Parallelism](#))

The prophet is a fool, and the inspired man is insane

These phrases mean basically the same thing. This could mean: (1) that the people regarded the prophets as madmen or (2) that the prophets had become crazy because of the sins that the people had committed. (See: [Parallelism](#))

The prophet is a fool, and the inspired man is insane

Here “prophet” and “inspired man” both mean a person who claims to receive messages from God. It is implied that these people are false prophets and only thought they received messages from God. (See: [Doublet](#) and [Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information](#))

because of your great iniquity and great hostility

The phrases “great iniquity” and “great hostility” share similar meanings. The iniquity of the people manifested itself in hostility towards Yahweh and his prophets. (See: [Doublet](#))

ULT

⁷ The days of punishment have come; the days of retribution have come. Let Israel know these things. The prophet is a fool, the man of the spirit is insane, because of your great iniquity and great hostility.

Hosea 9:8

General Information:

Hosea the prophet is speaking.

The prophet is the watchman for my God over Ephraim

ULT

⁸ The prophet is the watchman with my God over Ephraim. But the snare of a fowler is on all of his ways, and hostility in the house of his God.

A “watchman” watches outside his city to see if danger is coming. The prophet warning the people when they are sinning and are in danger of having his God punish them is spoken of as if he were a watchman for the city.

Alternate translation: “The prophet is like a watchman for God over Ephraim” (See: [Metaphor](#))

The prophet is the watchman for my God over Ephraim

Some versions translate this passage as “The prophet with my God is the watchman over Ephraim.”

The prophet is

This refers to prophets in general that God has appointed. Alternate translation: “Prophets are” or “True prophets are” (See: [Generic Noun Phrases](#))

Ephraim

Here “Ephraim” represents all the people of Israel. (See: [Synecdoche](#))

a bird snare is on all of his paths

A “bird snare” is a trap used to catch a bird. This means the people of Israel do whatever they can to stop God’s prophet. Alternate translation: “the people set a trap for him wherever he goes” or “the people do all they can to harm him” (See: [Metaphor](#))

Hosea 9:9

They have deeply corrupted themselves as in the days of Gibeah

“The people of Israel have sinned and become very corrupt as they did at Gibeah long ago.” This is probably a reference to the shocking actions of the tribe of Benjamin recounted in Judges 19-21.

ULT

⁹ They have deeply corrupted themselves as in the days of Gibeah. He will remember their iniquity, he will punish their sins.

Hosea 9:10

General Information:

Yahweh is speaking.

When I found Israel

This refers to when Yahweh first started his relationship with the people of Israel by claiming them as his own special people.

**it was like finding grapes in the wilderness.
Like the very first fruit of the season on the fig tree**

Both of these statements emphasize situations that are pleasing to a person. This means Yahweh was very happy when his relationship with the people of Israel started. (See: [Parallelism](#) and [Simile](#))

Baal Peor

This is the name of a mountain in the land of Moab where the false god Baal was worshiped. (See: [How to Translate Names](#))

ULT

¹⁰ Like grapes in the wilderness, I found Israel. Like the first fruit on the fig tree in its first season, I saw your fathers. But they came to Baal Peor, and they devoted themselves to that shameful thing. They became detestable like that which they loved.

Hosea 9:11

General Information:

Yahweh is speaking.

their glory will fly away like a bird

The people of Ephraim, or the northern kingdom of Israel, will lose everything that makes other nations respect them. Their glory will quickly disappear, as a bird flies away. Alternate translation: “their glory will be like a bird that flies away from them” (See: [Simile](#))

ULT

11 As for Ephraim, their glory will fly away like a bird— no birth, no pregnancy, and no conception.

Hosea 9:12

when I turn away from them

When God stops helping the northern kingdom, it will be as if he physically turned away from them. (See: [Metaphor](#))

ULT

12 Even if they bring up their children, I will bereave them until no one is left. Yes, woe to them indeed when I turn away from them!

Hosea 9:13

General Information:

Hosea the prophet is speaking.

I have seen Ephraim, just like Tyre, planted in a meadow

This speaks of the people being in a safe place as if they were a tree planted in a peaceful meadow. Alternate translation: "The nation of Israel was once beautiful and pleasant like the city of Tyre, like a tree that someone plants in a meadow" (See: [Metaphor](#))

Ephraim ... Tyre

Here "Ephraim" represents the whole northern kingdom of Israel. These places refer to the people who live in them. (See: [Synecdoche](#) and [Metonymy](#))

but Ephraim will bring out his children

The word "children" are the people from that nation. Alternate translation: "but the people of Israel will bring out their children" (See: [Metonymy](#))

ULT

¹³ Ephraim, as I have seen, is like Tyre planted in a meadow; but Ephraim will bring out his children to him who slaughters."

Hosea 9:14

Give them, Yahweh—what will you give them?

Give them

Hosea uses a question to emphasize that he wants Yahweh to give the people of Israel what they deserve. Alternate translation: “This is what I ask you, Yahweh, to give them: give them” (See: [Rhetorical Question](#))

a miscarrying womb

To “miscarry” means that a pregnancy ends too early and the baby dies. Hosea is asking that all the nation’s women be like that.

ULT

¹⁴ Give them, O Yahweh—what will you give? Give them a miscarrying womb and dry breasts.

Hosea 9:15

General Information:

Yahweh is speaking.

I will drive them out of my house

Yahweh is stating that he will force Israel out of his land, the land of Canaan. Here “my house” represents Canaan. (See: [Metonymy](#))

their officials

the men who serve the king

ULT

15 “All their evil is in Gilgal, indeed I came to hate them there. Because of the wickedness of their deeds, I will drive them out of my house. I will love them no more; all their princes are rebels.

Hosea 9:16

General Information:

Yahweh is speaking in verse 16. Hosea begins speaking in verse 17.

Ephraim is diseased, and their root is dried up; they bear no fruit

Yahweh speaks of the people of Israel as if they were a diseased tree that does not produce fruit and is ready to be cut down. This is a statement that the people have become weak, and that soon their enemies will come and defeat them. (See: [Metaphor](#))

ULT

16 Ephraim is stricken; their root is dried up; they will bear no fruit. Even if they give birth, I will kill the precious ones of their womb."

Hosea 9:17

(There are no notes for this verse.)

ULT

17 My God will reject them because they have not listened to him. They will become wanderers among the nations.

Hosea 10

Hosea 10 General Notes

Structure and formatting

This chapter is written in poetic form and continues the theme of Israel's many sins against Yahweh. Even though Israel prospered for a time as they multiplied their sins, Yahweh was leading them toward destruction. (See: [sin](#), [sinful](#), [sinner](#), [sinning](#))

Special concepts in this chapter

Yahweh's relationship to his people was not based on his people's actions. Even though they rebelled, Yahweh still desired to rescue them. (See: [people of God](#))

Other possible translation difficulties in this chapter

Jacob

The repeated use of different names for the two kingdoms can be confusing. In verse 11, "Ephraim" refers to the northern kingdom of Israel, and "Judah" refers to the southern kingdom of Judah. However, Jacob is also mentioned. This use of "Jacob" makes us think of the earlier unified nation and may also refer to a future unified nation. (See: [How to Translate Names](#))

Hosea 10:1

General Information:

Hosea is speaking about Israel.

Israel is a luxuriant vine that produces his fruit

Israel is spoken of as a vine that was very fruitful. For a while the people prospered and were strong. (See: [Metaphor](#))

a luxuriant vine

This vine produces more fruit than normal.

As his fruit increased ... As his land produced more

Both of these mean as the people prospered and grew stronger and richer.

ULT

¹ Israel is a luxuriant vine that produces his fruit. The more his fruit increased, the more altars he built. As his land prospered, he improved his pillars.

Hosea 10:2

Their heart is deceitful

The “heart” refers to the whole person, emphasizing their emotions and desires. Alternate translation: “They are deceitful” (See: [Synecdoche](#))

now they must bear their guilt

Here “guilt” is a metonym for the punishment that is associated with it. This punishment is spoken of as if it was a heavy load for them to carry. Alternate translation: “now is the time that Yahweh will punish them for their sins” (See: [Metonymy](#) and [Metaphor](#))

ULT

² Their heart is deceitful; now they must bear their guilt. He will break down their altars; he will destroy their pillars.

Hosea 10:3

General Information:

Hosea is speaking about Israel.

and a king—what could he do for us?

The people will say that their kings could not have helped them. Alternate translation: “Even if we had a king now, he could not help us.” (See: [Rhetorical Question](#))

ULT

³ For now they will say, “We have no king, for we do not fear Yahweh, and a king—what could he do for us?”

Hosea 10:4

They speak empty words

Here “empty words” refers to lies. Alternate translation: “They speak lies” (See: [Idiom](#))

So justice springs up like poisonous weeds in the furrows of a field

What they people called justice in their laws and legal decisions is spoken of as if it were a plant sprouting up. Alternate translation: “So their decisions are not just; instead, they are harmful” (See: [Metaphor](#))

like poisonous weeds in the furrows of a field

Their lies and injustice spread throughout their nation and harm everyone like poisonous plants. (See: [Simile](#))

ULT

⁴ They speak mere words, they make covenants with worthless oaths. So judgment springs up like poisonous weeds in the furrows of a field.

Hosea 10:5

General Information:

Hosea is speaking about Israel.

Beth Aven

This was a city on the border between the northern kingdom of Israel and the tribe of Benjamin in the southern kingdom. See how you translated this in [Hosea 4:15](#). (See: [How to Translate Names](#))

ULT

⁵ The inhabitants of Samaria will be afraid for the calf of Beth Aven. Indeed, its people will mourn over it, as will its idolatrous priests who had rejoiced over it and over its splendor, for it has departed from them.

Hosea 10:6

They will be carried to Assyria

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: “The Assyrians will carry them away” (See: [Active or Passive](#))

Ephraim will be disgraced, and Israel will be ashamed of its idol

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: “And the people of Israel will be very ashamed because they had worshiped idols” (See: [Doublet](#) and [Active or Passive](#))

its idol

Many versions interpret the Hebrew word in this passage as “advice,” “plans,” or “intentions.”

ULT

⁶ The thing itself will be carried to Assyria as tribute for the great king. Ephraim will receive shame, and Israel will be ashamed of its idol.

Hosea 10:7

Samaria's king will be destroyed

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "The Assyrians will destroy the king of Samaria" (See: [Active or Passive](#))

like a chip of wood on the surface of the water

This means the king of Samaria will be as helpless as a small piece of wood that waves of the water toss back and forth. (See: [Simile](#))

ULT

⁷ The king of Samaria will be cut off, like a twig on the face of the waters.

Hosea 10:8

The high places of wickedness will be destroyed

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: “The Assyrians will destroy Israel’s high places, where the people acted very wickedly” (See: [Active or Passive](#))

The people will say to the mountains, “Cover us!” and to the hills, “Fall on us!”

People do not normally speak to things that cannot think or hear them. Translators may choose to have a different format for this passage if their languages do not allow such speech. Alternate translation: “The people will say, ‘We wish the mountains would cover us!’ and ‘We wish the hills would fall on us!’” (See: [Apostrophe](#))

ULT

⁸ The high places of Aven, the sin of Israel, will be destroyed. Thorns and thistles will grow up on their altars. Then they will say to the mountains, “Cover us!” and to the hills, “Fall on us!”

Hosea 10:9

General Information:

Yahweh is speaking.

days of Gibeah

This is probably a reference to the shocking actions of the tribe of Benjamin recounted in Judges 19-21. See how you translated this in [Hosea 9:9](#).

there you have remained

This passage probably means that the people of the present time continue to act in the same ways that their ancestors did at Gibeah. Alternate translation: “and you think just as they did” (See: [Metaphor](#))

Will not war overtake the sons of wrong in Gibeah?

Yahweh uses a question to emphasize that those in Gibeah who do wrong will certainly have to endure war. And this speaks of the people having to endure war when their enemies come as if war were a person that would catch up with them. Alternate translation: “War will certainly come on those who do wrong in Gibeah.” or “Enemies will certainly attack those who do wrong in Gibeah.” (See: [Rhetorical Question](#) and [Metaphor](#))

the sons of wrong

Here “son of” is an idiom that means “having the characteristic of.” Alternate translation: “those who do wrong” or “the evildoers” (See: [Idiom](#))

ULT

⁹ “O Israel, you have sinned since the days of Gibeah; there they have remained. Will not the war against the sons of injustice overtake them in Gibeah?”

Hosea 10:10

General Information:

Yahweh is speaking.

double iniquity

This refers to the many sins of Israel.

ULT

¹⁰ When it is my desire, I will discipline them; and the nations will be gathered against them when they are bound for their double iniquity.

Hosea 10:11

Ephraim is a trained heifer that loves to thresh

A heifer loves to thresh because they can walk around freely without a yoke. Yahweh means that he has allowed the people of Israel to be free and have a pleasant life. (See: [Metaphor](#))

ULT

¹¹ Ephraim is a trained heifer that loves to thresh, and I spared her fair neck; but I will harness Ephraim; Judah will plow; Jacob will harrow for himself.

I will put a yoke on her fair neck. I will put a yoke on Ephraim

Here “yoke” refers to suffering and slavery. Yahweh has been kind to the people of Israel, but the people have been unfaithful to him. So he will punish them and send them away as slaves. (See: [Metaphor](#))

Judah will plow; Jacob will pull the harrow by himself

Here “Judah” refers to the people of the southern kingdom and “Jacob” is the people of the northern kingdom. This means God will cause difficult times for both kingdoms. (See: [Metaphor](#) and [Metonymy](#))

harrow

a tool used to smooth the land and cover the seeds after plowing

Hosea 10:12

General Information:

Yahweh is speaking.

Sow righteousness for yourselves, and reap the fruit of covenant faithfulness

Righteousness and covenant faithfulness are spoken of as if they were crops that could be sown and harvested. The abstract nouns “righteousness” and “faithfulness” can be stated as “right” and “faithful.” Alternate translation: “Plow, now, and do what is right, and you will reap the fruit of faithful love” (See: [Metaphor](#) and [Abstract Nouns](#))

Break up your unplowed ground

When the ground is “unplowed” it is not ready to be planted. Yahweh means he wants the people to repent so they can start doing what is right. (See: [Metaphor](#))

ULT

¹² Sow for yourselves righteousness; reap in accordance with steadfast love. Break up your fallow ground, for it is time to seek Yahweh, until he comes and rains righteousness on you.

Hosea 10:13

You have plowed wickedness; you reaped injustice

Wickedness and injustice are spoken of as if they were crops that could be sown and harvested. (See: [Metaphor](#))

You have eaten the fruit of deception

The result of deception are spoken of as if they were a food that could be eaten. Alternate translation: "You now suffer the consequences of having deceived each other" (See: [Metaphor](#))

ULT

¹³ You have plowed wickedness; you reaped injustice. You have eaten the fruit of lies because you trusted in your way, in your many warriors.

Hosea 10:14

It will be as Shalman destroyed Beth Arbel on a day of battle

The coming war is being compared to a battle long ago.

Shalman

This is the name of a king who destroyed the city of Beth Arbel around 740 BC. His army murdered women and children in the attack. (See: [How to Translate Names](#))

Beth Arbel

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

ULT

¹⁴ Therefore a tumult will rise among your people, and all your fortresses will be destroyed, as Shalman destroyed Beth Arbel on the day of battle, when mothers were dashed to pieces with their children.

Hosea 10:15

So it will happen to you, Bethel, because of your great wickedness

Here “Bethel” represents the people who live there. The prophet addresses the people of Bethel as if they were there listening to him. (See: [Metonymy](#) and [Apostrophe](#))

ULT

¹⁵ So it will be done to you, O Bethel, because of your great wickedness. At dawn the king of Israel will be completely cut off.”

Hosea 11

Hosea 11 General Notes

Structure and formatting

This chapter continues using the poetic form to communicate about Yahweh's relationship to the northern kingdom of Israel.

Important figures of speech in this chapter

Metaphor

This chapter contains an extended metaphor of Israel as a male child in the care of Yahweh, his parent. (See: [Metaphor](#))

Rhetorical question

Yahweh uses rhetorical questions to show his disappointment and anger at Israel's persistent rejection of him. (See: [Rhetorical Question](#))

Hosea 11:1

General Information:

Yahweh is speaking of caring for Israel like a parent cares for a child.

When Israel was a young man

Yahweh is speaking about the people of Israel as if they were a young man. Yahweh is referring to when he first started his relationship with the nation. (See: [Metaphor](#))

I called my son out of Egypt

“son” refers to the people of God the Father. Alternate translation: “I led my son out of Egypt” (See: [Metaphor](#))

ULT

1 “When Israel was a child I loved him,
and out of Egypt I called my son.”

Hosea 11:2

The more they were called, the more they went away from me

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "The more I called them to be my people, the more they refused me" (See: [Active or Passive](#))

ULT

² The more they called them, the more they went away from me. They kept sacrificing to the Baals and burning incense to idols. ^[1]

Hosea 11:3

General Information:

Yahweh is speaking about how he cared for Israel.

it was I who taught Ephraim to walk

Yahweh refers to Israel as a small child whom he taught to walk. (See: [Metaphor](#))

lifted them up by their arms

This expression continues the metaphor. Alternate translation: “took care of them”

ULT

³ Yet it was I who taught Ephraim to walk. I took them by their arms, but they did not know that I healed them.

Hosea 11:4

I led them with cords of humanity, with bands of love

Yahweh loved his people in ways that they as humans could understand and appreciate. (See: [Parallelism](#))

I was to them like someone who eased the yoke on their jaws

Yahweh is speaking of the nation of Israel as a hardworking animal whose work he made easier. (See: [Simile](#))

I bent down to them and fed them

This expression continues the metaphor in which Israel is pictured as a young child. It may mean that Yahweh provided for all their physical needs.

ULT

⁴ I led them with cords of human kindness, with bands of love. I was to them like someone who eased the yoke on their jaws, and I bent down to them and fed them.

Hosea 11:5

General Information:

Yahweh is speaking about Israel.

Will they not return to the land of Egypt?

This question means that the nation of Israel will once again be slaves as they were in Egypt. (See: [Rhetorical Question](#))

Will Assyria not rule over them because they refuse to return to me?

The nation of Israel will be captives of Assyria as a result of their refusal to remain faithful to Yahweh. (See: [Rhetorical Question](#))

ULT

⁵ They will not return to the land of Egypt; but Assyria—he will be their king, because they refused to return to me.

Hosea 11:6

The sword will fall on their cities

Here “sword” represents the enemies of Israel who will destroy Israel’s cities. (See: [Metonymy](#))

destroy the bars of their gates

Gates offered security to city inhabitants from their enemies, and the bars secured the closed gates. To destroy the bars meant to take away the people’s security. (See: [Metonymy](#))

ULT

⁶ The sword will whirl against their cities, and destroy the bars of their gates, and devour them because of their own plans.

Hosea 11:7

Though they call to the Most High

Here God is speaking about himself in the third person. It can be stated in first person. Alternate translation: "Though they call to me, the Most High" (See: [First](#), [Second](#) or [Third Person](#))

no one will help them

Yahweh will not allow anyone to help Israel because they turned away from him.

ULT

⁷ My people are bent on turning away from me. Though they call to the Most High, he will not raise them up at all.

Hosea 11:8

General Information:

Yahweh is speaking about Israel.

How can I give you up, Ephraim? How can I hand you over, Israel?

Yahweh loves his people so much that he will not totally destroy them. These questions may be translated as statements. Alternate translation: "I will not give you up, Ephraim. I will not hand you over, Israel." (See: [Rhetorical Question](#))

How can I make you like Admah? How can I make you like Zeboyim?

Yahweh loves his people so much that he will not totally destroy them. These questions may be translated as statements. Alternate translation: "I do not want to act toward you as I acted toward Admah or make you like Zeboyim—cities that I destroyed along with Sodom" (See: [Rhetorical Question](#))

My heart has changed within me

Here "heart" represents God's will and decisions. (See: [Metonymy](#))

ULT

⁸ How can I give you up, O Ephraim?
How can I hand you over, O Israel? How
can I make you like Admah? How can I
make you like Zeboyim? My heart is
turned over within me; all my
compassions are aroused.

Hosea 11:9

For I am God and not a man

God is not like people, who often decide very quickly to take revenge.

I will not come in wrath

The abstract noun “wrath” can be stated as the adjective “angry.”

Alternate translation: “I will not come to you and be angry with you” (See: [Abstract Nouns](#))

ULT

⁹ I will not execute my fierce anger; I will not again destroy Ephraim. For I am God and not a man, the Holy One in your midst, and I will not come in wrath.

Hosea 11:10

General Information:

Yahweh is speaking about when he will restore his people.

They will follow Yahweh

Worshiping and honoring Yahweh is spoken of as if it were following him (See: [Metaphor](#))

he will roar like a lion

Yahweh making it possible for his people to return to his land is spoken of as if he were calling to his people. (See: [Simile](#))

ULT

¹⁰ They will go after Yahweh; he will roar like a lion. When he roars, his sons will come trembling from the west.

Hosea 11:11

They will come trembling like a bird ... like a dove

They will come home quickly as a bird returns to its nest. “Trembling” may refer to the fluttering of a bird’s wings. It may also signal the people’s feelings of humility and reverence for God (See: [Simile](#))

the declaration of Yahweh

“what Yahweh has declared” or “what Yahweh has solemnly said.” See how you translated this in [Hosea 2:13](#).

ULT

¹¹ They will come trembling like a bird from Egypt, like a dove from the land of Assyria. I will settle them in their homes —this is the declaration of Yahweh.

Hosea 11:12

General Information:

Yahweh is talking about Israel and Judah.

Ephraim surrounds me with falsehood, and the house of Israel with deceit

Lies and deceitful acts are spoken of as if they were objects that the people of the northern kingdom surrounded Yahweh with. (See: [Parallelism](#) and [Metaphor](#))

But Judah is still going about with me

Here “Judah” refers to the people who live there. This speaks of being loyal to God as “going about” with him. However, many versions have different interpretations of this difficult passage. (See: [Metonymy](#) and [Metaphor](#))

ULT

¹² Ephraim has surrounded me with lies, and the house of Israel with deceit. But Judah still goes about with God, and is faithful to the Holy One.”

Hosea 12

Hosea 12 General Notes

Special concepts in this chapter

Jacob

There is a parallel between Jacob and the northern kingdom of Israel. In the same way that Jacob returned to Yahweh, the northern kingdom should repent of their idolatry and turn back to Yahweh. (See: [repent](#), [repentance](#))

Hosea 12:1

General Information:

Hosea the prophet is speaking.

Ephraim feeds on the wind

Here “Ephraim” represents all the people of Israel. Also “wind” represents something that is useless or temporary. The people of Israel doing things that will not help them is spoken of as if they eat the wind. (See: [Synecdoche](#) and [Metaphor](#))

follows after the east wind

East winds were very hot and destructive to the land. Here it represents anything that is destructive. The people doing things that will destroy themselves is spoken of as if they are following the east wind. (See: [Metonymy](#) and [Metaphor](#))

carry olive oil to Egypt

The people of Israel sent olive oil as a present to the king of Egypt to try and persuade him to help them.

ULT

¹ Ephraim feeds on the wind and pursues the east wind all day. He multiplies lies and violence. They make a covenant with Assyria and olive oil is carried to Egypt.

Hosea 12:2

Yahweh also has a lawsuit against Judah

Yahweh stating that the people of Judah have sinned against him and broken his covenant is spoken of as if Yahweh were accusing them in court. See how you translated a similar phrase in [Hosea 4:1](#). (See: [Metaphor](#))

against Judah ... punish Jacob for what he has done ... repay him for his deeds

Here “Judah” and “Jacob” both represent the people of Judah. Alternate translation: “against the people of Judah ... punish them for what they have done ... repay them for their deeds” (See: [Doublet](#) and [Metonymy](#))

lawsuit

This is a complaint by one person against another person in a court of law. See how you translated this in [Hosea 2:2](#).

ULT

² Yahweh also has a dispute with Judah, and will punish Jacob according to his ways; he will repay him according to his deeds.

Hosea 12:3

General Information:

Hosea the prophet is speaking about Jacob the ancestor of the Israelites.

In the womb Jacob grasped his brother by the heel

Jacob wanted to take his brother's place as the firstborn, so he tried to keep his brother from being born first. (See: [Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information](#))

ULT

³ In the womb he took his brother by the heel, and in his manhood he struggled with God.

Hosea 12:4

He struggled with the angel and won

Jacob fought with an angel so that the angel would bless him. (See: [Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information](#))

ULT

⁴ He struggled with the angel and prevailed. He wept and begged for his favor. He found him at Bethel; and there he spoke with us.

Hosea 12:5

General Information:

Hosea the prophet is speaking.

is his name to be called on

This can be stated in active form. Here "name" represents the entire character of God. Alternate translation: "is his name to which we pray" or "is his name by which we worship him" (See: [Active or Passive](#) and [Metonymy](#))

ULT

⁵Yahweh, the God of hosts; Yahweh is his memorial name.

Hosea 12:6

Keep covenantal faithfulness and justice

This refers to obeying God's law and doing what is right.

ULT

⁶ But you must return to your God.
Keep covenantal love and justice, and
wait continually for your God.

Hosea 12:7

General Information:

Hosea the prophet is speaking about Israel.

false scales

The merchants use scales that do not accurately measure the weight of the money or products they are buying or selling.

they love to defraud

The merchants cheat their customers by lying to them and taking more money than they should.

ULT

⁷ A merchant has false scales in his hands; he loves to oppress.

Hosea 12:8

I have certainly become very rich; I have found wealth for myself

These two phrases mean the same thing and mean that the people of Ephraim consider themselves to be very prosperous. (See: [Parallelism](#))

I have found wealth

Becoming wealthy by trading is spoken of as finding wealth. Alternate translation: "I have made much money" (See: [Metaphor](#))

they will not find any iniquity in me, anything that would be sin

These two phrases mean the same thing and emphasize that the people of Ephraim consider themselves to be blameless. Learning that someone has sinned is spoken of as finding sin in that person. Alternate translation: "they will not discover that I have done anything sinful" (See: [Doublet](#) and [Metaphor](#))

ULT

⁸ Ephraim said, "Surely I have become rich; I have found wealth for myself. In all my labors they will not find iniquity in me, which would be sin."

Hosea 12:9

General Information:

Yahweh is speaking to the people of Israel.

I am Yahweh your God from the land of Egypt

This could mean: (1) "I am Yahweh your God, who brought your ancestors from the land of Egypt" or (2) "I have been your God ever since you were in the land of Egypt" or (3) "I became your God when you were in the land of Egypt"

I will again make you live in tents

This could mean: (1) Yahweh is threatening to force the people of Israel from their homes and make them live in tents. So, here to "live in tents" would represent being sent into exile, or (2) it is a promise that after their exile the people will live in tents again, and Yahweh will take care of them as he did when the Israelites left Egypt. So, here "to live in tents" would represent a return to an ideal situation when Yahweh took care of his people. (See: [Metonymy](#))

ULT

⁹ "I am Yahweh your God from the land of Egypt. I will again make you live in tents, as in the days of the appointed festival."

Hosea 12:10

By the hand of the prophets

Here “hand” represents the one who carries out an action. Alternate translation: “Through the prophets” (See: [Synecdoche](#))

ULT

10 I spoke to the prophets, and I multiplied visions. By the hand of the prophets I gave parables.”

Hosea 12:11

General Information:

Hosea the prophet is speaking.

their altars will be like heaps of stone in the furrows of the fields

The altars where the people worshiped will be thrown down and become piles of stones. (See: [Simile](#))

ULT

11 If there is iniquity in Gilead, surely they are worthless. In Gilgal they sacrifice bulls; their altars also will be like heaps of stone beside the furrows of the fields.

Hosea 12:12

Jacob fled to the land of Aram; Israel worked in order to get a wife

Here “Jacob” and “Israel” refer to the same person. Jacob’s name became Israel later in his life.

ULT

¹² Jacob fled to the land of Aram; Israel worked for a wife; and for a wife, he kept sheep.

Hosea 12:13

General Information:

Hosea the prophet is speaking.

by a prophet

That is, Moses.

ULT

¹³ Yahweh brought Israel up from Egypt by a prophet, and by a prophet he was kept.

Hosea 12:14

bitterly

The anger that the people have caused in Yahweh is extremely great.

So his Lord will leave his blood on him

Here “blood” refers to the guilt incurred by people who murder others. God will not forgive their sins. (See: [Metonymy](#))

will turn back on him his disgrace

The idea of making someone suffer the results of his own actions is spoken of as if those actions were objects that were thrown back at him. Alternate translation: “will make him suffer from his own disgraceful actions” (See: [Metaphor](#))

ULT

14 Ephraim has bitterly provoked to anger. So his Lord will leave his bloodguilt on him and will turn back his reproach to him.

Hosea 13

Hosea 13 General Notes

Structure and formatting

This chapter uses poetry to communicate Yahweh's disgust and anger with the northern kingdom of Israel.

Special concepts in this chapter

"Israel" and "Ephraim" are terms used to speak about the people of the northern kingdom. Samaria was the capital of the northern kingdom. (See: [How to Translate Names](#))

This chapter makes it clear that the northern kingdom is going to be nearly decimated as a people. They will no longer exist as a nation.

Important figures of speech in this chapter

Rhetorical question

Hosea uses rhetorical questions throughout this chapter. They are not questions requesting information but rather questions indicating some emotion like anger or dissatisfaction. (See: [Rhetorical Question](#))

Hosea 13:1

General Information:

Yahweh is speaking.

When Ephraim spoke

Hosea uses the term “Ephraim” to refer to the entire northern kingdom, although it was also the name of one of the ten tribes. Hosea seems to be speaking of a long-past time, when the northern kingdom was strong and honored, unlike at the present time. (See: [Synecdoche](#))

there was trembling

It is understood that people were trembling because they were afraid of Ephraim. This can be stated clearly. Alternate translation: “there was trembling among the people” or “people trembled in fear” (See: [Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information](#))

He exalted himself in Israel

Here “exalting” means to make oneself important. (See: [Metaphor](#))

but he became guilty because of Baal worship, and he died

When the people of Ephraim began worshiping Baal, they grew weak, and their enemies defeated them. Here “died” refers to the nation growing weak. (See: [Metaphor](#))

ULT

¹ “When Ephraim spoke, there was trembling. He exalted himself in Israel, but he became guilty through Baal and died.

Hosea 13:2

Now they sin more and more

Here “they” refers to the tribe of Ephraim and the entire nation of Israel, who followed Ephraim’s example.

These men who sacrifice kiss calves

Part of idol worship was kissing idol figures that were images of calves. (See: [Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information](#))

ULT

² And now they sin more and more, and they make for themselves cast metal images, idols skillfully made from their silver, all of them the work of craftsmen. They say of them, ‘Those who sacrifice people kiss calves.’

Hosea 13:3

So they will be like the morning clouds ... like the dew ... like the chaff ... like smoke out of a chimney

These expressions state that Israel is temporary and will soon disappear if they continue to worship idols instead of following Yahweh. (See: [Simile](#))

that is driven by the wind away

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "that the wind blows away" (See: [Active or Passive](#))

ULT

³ Therefore they will be like the morning clouds, and like the dew that goes away early, like the chaff that swirls from the threshing floor, and like smoke from a window.

Hosea 13:4

General Information:

Yahweh is speaking of his people as if they had been a flock of sheep that he found wandering in the wilderness. He says that he claimed them there for his own.

ULT

⁴ But I am Yahweh your God from the land of Egypt; and you were to know no god except me, for there is no savior besides me.

Hosea 13:5

I knew you in the wilderness

Yahweh claimed the Hebrew people as his own special people, and he took care of them there.

ULT

⁵ I knew you in the wilderness, in the land of drought.

Hosea 13:6

When you had pasture, then you became full

The image of sheep is continued with this expression.

your heart became lifted up

Becoming arrogant is spoken of as one's heart being lifted up.
Alternate translation: "you became proud" (See:[Metaphor](#))

ULT

⁶ When they had their pasture, then they became full; they were filled, and their heart became lifted up. Therefore they forgot me.

Hosea 13:7

General Information:

Yahweh is speaking.

like a lion ... like a leopard

These are wild animals that attack and kill other animals. Yahweh continues to say that he will destroy his people for their sins. (See: [Simile](#))

ULT

⁷ So I will become like a lion to them;
like a leopard I will lurk along the path.

Hosea 13:8

as a bear ... as a lion ... as a wild beast

These are wild animals that attack and kill other animals. Yahweh continues to say that he will destroy his people for their sins. (See: [Simile](#))

as a bear that is robbed of her cubs

The words “would attack” are left out because they are understood. This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: “like a bear would attack an animal that takes her cubs” (See: [Ellipsis](#) and [Active or Passive](#))

as a lion

The words “would devour them” are left out because they are understood. Alternate translation: “as a lion would devour them” (See: [Ellipsis](#))

ULT

⁸ I will encounter them like a bear robbed of her cubs. I will rip open their chests, and there I will devour them like a lion, as a wild beast would tear them apart.

Hosea 13:9

General Information:

Yahweh is speaking.

who will be able to help you?

Yahweh uses a question to emphasize that no one will be able to help the people of Israel. Alternate translation: "there will be no one able to help you." (See: [Rhetorical Question](#))

ULT

⁹ He destroys you, O Israel; for you are against me, against your helper.

Hosea 13:10

Where now is your king, that he may save you in all your cities? Where are your rulers, about whom you said to me, 'Give me a king and princes'?

Yahweh asks these questions to tell Israel that when they rebel against him, no king or ruler can help them. Only Yahweh can save them from destruction. (See: [Rhetorical Question](#))

ULT

¹⁰ Where now is your king, that he may save you in all your cities, and your rulers, about whom you said, 'Give me a king and princes'?

Hosea 13:11

(There are no notes for this verse.)

ULT

11 I gave you a king in my anger, and I took him away in my wrath.

Hosea 13:12

General Information:

Yahweh is speaking.

**Ephraim's iniquity has been stored up; his
guilt has been stored up**

These two phrases are similar and mean basically the same thing. (See: [Parallelism](#))

has been stored up

The northern kingdom's iniquity and guilt are spoken of as if they were objects that could be kept for a purpose. (See: [Metaphor](#))

ULT

¹² The iniquity of Ephraim is bound up;
his sin is stored up.

Hosea 13:13

Pains of childbirth will come on him

Here Yahweh speaks of the suffering the people of Israel will suffer as if it were the pains of child birth. (See: [Metaphor](#))

but he is an unwise son, for when it is time to be born, he does not come out of the womb

Yahweh now describes the people of Israel as the baby to which the mother is giving birth. The baby is unwise because it does not want to be born. The people do not want to repent and obey Yahweh. (See: [Metaphor](#))

ULT

13 Pains of childbirth will come on him, but he is an unwise son, for when it is time to be born, he does not come out of the womb.

Hosea 13:14

General Information:

Yahweh is speaking.

Will I rescue them from the hand of Sheol? Will I rescue them from death?

Yahweh uses these questions to tell the people of Israel that he is not going to save them from dying. He will certainly punish them. Alternate translation: "I will certainly not rescue them from death and from going down to Sheol." (See: [Rhetorical Question](#) and [Parallelism](#))

Where, death, are your plagues? Where, Sheol, is your destruction?

Yahweh speaks to "death" and "Sheol" as if they were people. Yahweh uses questions to say that he will destroy the people soon. Alternate translation: "Now I will cause plagues and let the people of Israel die. I will destroy them and send them to Sheol." (See: [Personification](#) and [Rhetorical Question](#) and [Parallelism](#))

Compassion is hidden from my eyes

Not to think about having compassion is spoken of as if compassion were hidden so that it cannot be seen. The abstract noun "compassion" can be translated with an adjective. Alternate translation: "I have no compassion for them" or "I will not be compassionate towards them" (See: [Metaphor](#) and [Abstract Nouns](#))

ULT

14 Will I rescue them from the hand of Sheol? Will I rescue them from death? Where, death, are your plagues? Where, Sheol, is your destruction? Compassion is hidden from my eyes."

Hosea 13:15

General Information:

Hosea the prophet is speaking.

his brothers

This expression seems to stand for the nations around the northern kingdom, especially Judah, the southern kingdom. (See: [Metaphor](#))

an east wind will come; the wind of Yahweh

A wind from the east was very hot and destructive. Here it refers to the armies from the east that Yahweh will send to destroy the people of Israel. (See: [Metaphor](#))

Ephraim's spring will dry up, and his well will have no water

Hosea continues to describe how God will punish the people of Israel. Here water represents life, vitality, and strength. (See: [Metaphor](#))

his storehouse

This refers to all of the peoples' possessions. (See: [Metaphor](#))

ULT

15 Though Ephraim is prosperous among his brothers, an east wind will come; the wind of Yahweh will blow in from the wilderness. Ephraim's spring will dry up, and his well will have no water. His enemy will plunder his storehouse of every precious object.

Hosea 13:16

General Information:

Hosea the prophet is speaking.

Samaria will be guilty, for she has rebelled against her God

Here “Samaria” refers to the people in the city of Samaria who are guilty of rebelling against God. (See: [Metonymy](#))

They will fall

Here to “fall” represents dying. (See: [Euphemism](#))

by the sword

Here the “sword” represents the enemy soldiers who used swords in battle. (See: [Metonymy](#))

their young children will be dashed to pieces, and their pregnant women will be ripped open

These phrases can be put into the active voice. Alternate translation: “the enemy will dash their young children to pieces, and they will rip open the pregnant women” (See: [Active or Passive](#))

ULT

16 Samaria will be guilty, for she has rebelled against her God. They will fall by the sword; their young children will be dashed to pieces, and their pregnant women will be ripped open.

Hosea 14

Hosea 14 General Notes

Structure and formatting

This last chapter of Hosea ends with hope. In this chapter, Hosea calls for Israel to confess to Yahweh and repent. This chapter continues to be written in poetic form, using metaphors and other devices to communicate God's love for his sinful people. (See: [confess](#), [confession](#), [repent](#), [repentance](#), [love](#), [beloved](#), [sin](#), [sinful](#), [sinner](#), [sinning](#) and [people of God](#) and [Metaphor](#))

Why are confession and repentance even suggested here for a people that Yahweh has already condemned to be destroyed? It is because this is a teaching that Yahweh is a merciful God who loves his people. (See: [mercy](#), [merciful](#))

Other possible translation difficulties in this chapter

Speaker

The use of first and second person in this chapter often signifies a change in speaker. In this chapter, Hosea is speaking to the northern kingdom to tell them that Yahweh loves them. There are several places in this chapter where the writer switches from the third person to the second or the first person. This may cause some confusion about who is speaking.

Hosea 14:1

General Information:

Hosea the prophet is speaking.

for you have fallen because of your iniquity

Sinning is spoken of here as if it were falling. (See: [Metaphor](#))

ULT

¹ Israel, return to Yahweh your God, for you have fallen because of your iniquity.

Hosea 14:2

Take with you words

This probably means words of confession and praise. Alternate translation: "Confess your sins" (See: [Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information](#))

the fruit of our lips

What a person says is called the fruit of his lips. Modern versions have different translations of this difficult passage. Alternate translation: "our words and songs of praise" (See: [Metonymy](#))

ULT

² Take with you words and return to Yahweh. Say to him, "Take away all our iniquity and accept what is good, so that we may offer to you the fruit of our lips."
[1]

Hosea 14:3

General Information:

Hosea is speaking

to the work of our hands

Here people are represented by their “hands” to refer to the people making things. Alternate translation: “to the idols we made” (See: [Synecdoche](#))

the fatherless person

This expression stands perhaps for the entire nation. It indicates God’s enormous compassion for his people.

finds compassion

Here the act of God having compassion is spoken of as if it were an object that someone experiencing that compassion had found. The abstract noun “compassion” can be translated with an adjective. Alternate translation: “finds one who is compassionate” (See: [Abstract Nouns](#))

ULT

³ Assyria will not save us; we will not ride on horses to war. Neither will we say anymore to the work of our hands, ‘You are our gods,’ for in you the fatherless person finds compassion.”

Hosea 14:4

General Information:

Yahweh is speaking.

I will heal their turning away

Stopping the people from turning away from God is spoken of as if he were healing them. (See: [Metaphor](#))

their turning away

The failure of the people to obey God is spoken of as if they had physically turned away from him. (See: [Metaphor](#))

ULT

⁴ "I will heal their turning away; I will love them freely, for my anger has turned away from him.

Hosea 14:5

I will be like the dew to Israel; he will blossom like the lily

God is spoken of as if he were dew that brought needed moisture to plants, and Israel is spoken of as if it were one person, and as if he were a flower that could blossom. (See: [Simile](#) and [Metaphor](#))

take root like a cedar in Lebanon

The picture of Israel in the form of a plant is continued here, but this time in the form of a tall cedar tree in Lebanon, which was known for such trees. (See: [Simile](#))

ULT

⁵ I will be like the dew to Israel; he will blossom like the lily and take root like a cedar in Lebanon.

Hosea 14:6

His branches will spread out ... like the cedars in Lebanon

This passage continues the same image. (See: [Simile](#))

ULT

⁶ His branches will spread out; his beauty will be like the olive trees, and his fragrance like the cedars in Lebanon.

Hosea 14:7

General Information:

Yahweh is speaking.

The people who live in his shade will return

The people of Israel will once again live protected by God. Israel is spoken of as living in his shade. (See: [Metaphor](#))

they will revive like grain and blossom like vines

Israel's new prosperity is spoken of in agricultural terms. (See: [Simile](#))

His fame will be like the wine of Lebanon

Just as Lebanon's wine was famous, so Israel will be famous. Alternate translation: "People everywhere will know about the nation of Israel" (See: [Simile](#))

ULT

⁷ The people who live in his shade will return; they will revive like grain and blossom like vines. His fame will be like the wine of Lebanon.

Hosea 14:8

what more have I to do with idols?

This passage signifies that God will stop the people of Israel from worshiping idols any longer. (See: [Rhetorical Question](#))

a cypress whose leaves are always green

A cypress is a tree whose leaves stay green all year. This represents Yahweh and his blessings on Israel. (See: [Simile](#))

from me comes your fruit

Here “fruit” represents every good thing that comes from Yahweh. (See: [Metaphor](#))

ULT

⁸ Ephraim, what more have I to do with idols? I will answer him and care for him. I am like a cypress whose leaves are always green; from me comes your fruit.”

Hosea 14:9

General Information:

Hosea the prophet is speaking.

Who is wise that he may understand these things? Who understands these things so that he may know them?

The prophet uses these questions to say that wise people will understand and listen to what has been said to them. (See: [Rhetorical Question](#) and [Parallelism](#))

For the ways of Yahweh are right, and the righteous will walk in them

Yahweh's commandments are spoken of as ways to walk in. (See: [Metaphor](#))

stumble

Disobeying Yahweh is spoken of as if it were stumbling while walking. (See: [Metaphor](#))

ULT

⁹ Who is wise that he may understand these things? Who understands these things so that he may know them? For the ways of Yahweh are right, and the righteous will walk in them, but the rebellious will stumble in them.



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Version 24

Abstract Nouns

Description

Abstract nouns are nouns that refer to attitudes, qualities, events, or situations. These are things that cannot be seen or touched in a physical sense, such as happiness, weight, unity, friendship, health, and reason. This is a translation issue because some languages may express a certain idea with an abstract noun, while others would need a different way to express it.

This page answers the question: *What are abstract nouns and how do I deal with them in my translation?*

In order to understand this topic, it would be good to read:

[[rc://en/ta/man/translate/figs-partsofspeech]]
[[rc://en/ta/man/translate/figs-sentences]]

Remember that nouns are words that refer to a person, place, thing, or idea. Abstract nouns are the nouns that refer to ideas. These can be attitudes, qualities, events, situations, or even relationships between those ideas. These are things that cannot be seen or touched in a physical sense, such as joy, peace, creation, goodness, contentment, justice, truth, freedom, vengeance, slowness, length, weight, and many, many more.

Some languages, such as Biblical Greek and English, use abstract nouns a lot. They provide a way of giving names to actions or qualities. With names, people who speak these languages can talk about the concepts as though they were things. For example, in languages that use abstract nouns, people can say, "I believe in the forgiveness of sin."

But some languages do not use abstract nouns very much. In these languages, speakers may not have the two abstract nouns "forgiveness" and "sin," but they would express the same meaning in other ways. For example, they would express, "I believe that God is willing to forgive people after they have sinned," by using verb phrases instead of nouns for those ideas.

Reason This Is a Translation Issue

The Bible that you translate from may use abstract nouns to express certain ideas. Your language might not use abstract nouns for some of those ideas. Instead, it might use phrases to express those ideas. Those phrases will use other kinds of words such as adjectives, verbs, or adverbs to express the meaning of the abstract noun. For example, "What is its **weight**?" could be expressed as "How much does it **weigh**?" or "How **heavy** is it?"

Examples From the Bible

From **childhood** you have known the sacred writings ... (2 Timothy 3:15a ULT)

The abstract noun "childhood" refers to when someone was a child.

But **godliness** with **contentment** is great **gain**. (1 Timothy 6:6 ULT)

The abstract nouns "godliness" and "contentment" refer to being godly and content. The abstract noun "gain" refers to something that benefits or helps someone.

Today **salvation** has come to this house, because he too is a son of Abraham. (Luke 19:9 ULT)

The abstract noun "salvation" here refers to being saved.

The Lord does not move slowly concerning his promises, as some consider **slowness** to be (2 Peter 3:9a ULT)

The abstract noun "slowness" refers to the lack of speed with which something is done.

He will both bring to light the hidden things of darkness and reveal the **purposes** of the heart. (1 Corinthians 4:5b ULT)

The abstract noun “purposes” refers to the things that people want to do and the reasons they want to do them.

Translation Strategies

If an abstract noun would be natural and give the right meaning in your language, consider using it. If not, here is another option:

(1) Reword the sentence with a phrase that expresses the meaning of the abstract noun. Instead of a noun, the new phrase will use a verb, an adverb, or an adjective to express the idea of the abstract noun.

Examples of Translation Strategies Applied

(1) Reword the sentence with a phrase that expresses the meaning of the abstract noun. Instead of a noun, the new phrase will use a verb, an adverb, or an adjective to express the idea of the abstract noun. Alternative translations are indented below the Scripture example.

... from **childhood** you have known the sacred writings ... (2 Timothy 3:15a ULT)

Ever since **you were a child** you have known the sacred writings.

But **godliness** with **contentment** is great **gain**. (1 Timothy 6:6 ULT)

But **being godly** and **content** is very **beneficial**. But we **benefit** greatly when we **are godly** and **content**. But we **benefit** greatly when we **honor and obey God** and when we are **happy with what we have**.

Today **salvation** has come to this house, because he too is a son of Abraham. (Luke 19:9 ULT)

Today the people in this house **have been saved** ... Today God **has saved** the people in this house ...

The Lord does not move slowly concerning his promises, as some consider **slowness** to be. (2 Peter 3:9a ULT)

The Lord does not move slowly concerning his promises, as some consider **moving slowly** to be.

He will bring to light the hidden things of darkness and reveal the **purposes** of the heart. (1 Corinthians 4:5b ULT)

He will bring to light the hidden things of darkness and reveal **the things that people want to do and the reasons that they want to do them**.

(Go back to: [Hosea 2:19](#); [4:2](#); [7:16](#); [10:12](#); [11:9](#); [13:14](#); [14:3](#))

Active or Passive

Some languages use both active and passive sentences. In active sentences, the subject does the action. In passive sentences, the subject is the one that receives the action. Here are some examples with their subjects bolded:

- Active: **My father** built the house in 2010.
- Passive: **The house** was built in 2010.

Translators whose languages do not use passive sentences will need to know how they can translate passive sentences that they find in the Bible. Other translators will need to decide when to use a passive sentence and when to use the active form.

This page answers the question: *What do active and passive mean, and how do I translate passive sentences?*

In order to understand this topic, it would be good to read:

[[rc://en/ta/man/translate/figs-sentences]]
[[rc://en/ta/man/translate/figs-verbs]]

Description

Some languages have both active and passive forms of sentences.

- In the active form, the subject does the action and is always mentioned.
- In the passive form, the action is done to the subject, and the one who does the action is not always mentioned.

In the examples of active and passive sentences below, we have bolded the subject.

- active: **My father** built the house in 2010.
- passive: **The house** was built by my father in 2010.
- passive: **The house** was built in 2010. (This does not tell who did the action.)

Reasons This Is a Translation Issue

All languages use active forms. Some languages use passive forms, and some do not. Some languages use passive forms only for certain purposes, and the passive form is not used for the same purposes in all of the languages that use it.

Purposes for the Passive

- The speaker is talking about the person or thing the action was done to, not about the person who did the action.
- The speaker does not want to tell who did the action.
- The speaker does not know who did the action.

Translation Principles Regarding the Passive

- Translators whose language does not use passive forms will need to find another way to express the idea.
- Translators whose language has passive forms will need to understand why the passive is used in a particular sentence in the Bible and decide whether or not to use a passive form for that purpose in his translation of the sentence.

Examples From the Bible

Then their shooters shot at your soldiers from off the wall, and some of the king's servants **were killed**, and your servant Uriah the Hittite **was killed** too. (2 Samuel 11:24 ULT)

This means that the enemy's shooters shot and killed some of the king's servants, including Uriah. The point is what happened to the king's servants and Uriah, not who shot them. The purpose of the passive form here is to keep the focus on the king's servants and Uriah.

When the men of the city arose early in the morning, and see, the altar of Baal **was torn down**. (Judges 6:28a ULT)

The men of the town saw what had happened to the altar of Baal, but they did not know who broke it down. The purpose of the passive form here is to communicate this event from the perspective of the men of the town.

It would be better for him if a millstone **were put** around his neck and he **were thrown** into the sea. (Luke 17:2a ULT)

This describes a situation in which a person ends up in the sea with a millstone around his neck. The purpose of the passive form here is to keep the focus on what happens to this person. Who does these things to the person is not important.

Translation Strategies

If your language would use a passive form for the same purpose as in the passage that you are translating, then use a passive form. If you decide that it is better to translate without a passive form, here are some strategies that you might consider.

- (1) Use the same verb in an active sentence and tell who or what did the action. If you do this, try to keep the focus on the person receiving the action.
- (2) Use the same verb in an active sentence, and do not tell who or what did the action. Instead, use a generic expression like "they" or "people" or "someone."
- (3) Use a different verb.

Examples of Translation Strategies Applied

- (1) Use the same verb in an active sentence and tell who did the action. If you do this, try to keep the focus on the person receiving the action.

A loaf of bread **was given** him every day from the street of the bakers. (Jeremiah 37:21b ULT)

The king's servants gave Jeremiah a loaf of bread every day from the street of the bakers.

- (2) Use the same verb in an active sentence, and do not tell who did the action. Instead, use a generic expression like "they" or "people" or "someone."

It would be better for him if a millstone **were put** around his neck and he **were thrown** into the sea. (Luke 17:2a ULT)

It would be better for him if **they were to put** a millstone around his neck and **throw** him into the sea.

It would be better for him if **someone were to put** a heavy stone around his neck and **throw** him into the sea.

- (3) Use a different verb in an active sentence.

A loaf of bread **was given** him every day from the street of the bakers. (Jeremiah 37:21 ULT)

He **received** a loaf of bread every day from the street of the bakers.

Next we recommend you learn about:

[Abstract Nouns](#)

[[rc://en/ta/man/translate/figs-order]]

(Go back to: [Hosea 1:10](#); [1:11](#); [2:1](#); [2:9](#); [4:3](#); [4:6](#); [5:11](#); [6:11](#); [7:4](#); [7:8](#); [8:4](#); [8:8](#); [10:6](#); [10:7](#); [10:8](#); [11:2](#); [12:5](#); [13:3](#); [13:8](#); [13:16](#))

Apostrophe

Description

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.

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:

[\[\[rc://en/ta/man/translate/figs-intro\]\]](#)

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: [Hosea 10:8](#); [10:15](#))

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: [Hosea 1:11](#); [2:3](#); [4:6](#); [4:8](#); [7:1](#); [9:7](#); [12:3](#); [12:4](#); [13:1](#); [13:2](#); [14:2](#))

Biblical Volume

Description

The following terms are the most common units of volume used in the Bible to state how much a certain container could hold. The containers and measurements are given for both liquids (such as wine) and dry solids (such as grain). The metric values are not exactly equal to the biblical measures. The biblical measures probably differed in exact amount from time to time and place to place. The equivalents below are an attempt to give an average measurement.

This page answers the question: *How can I translate the measures of volume that are in the Bible?*

In order to understand this topic, it would be good to read:

[\[\[rc://en/ta/man/translate/translate-decimal\]\]](#)

Type	Original Measure	Liters
Dry	omer	2 liters
Dry	ephah	22 liters
Dry	homer	220 liters
Dry	cor	220 liters
Dry	seah	7.7 liters
Dry	letheke	114.8 liters
Liquid	metrete	40 liters
Liquid	bath	22 liters
Liquid	hin	3.7 liters
Liquid	kab	1.23 liters
Liquid	log	0.31 liters

Translation Principles

- The people in the Bible did not use modern measures such as meters, liters, and kilograms. Using the original measures can help readers know that the Bible really was written long ago in a time when people used those measures.
- Using modern measures can help readers understand the text more easily.
- Whatever measures you use, it would be good, if possible, to tell about the other kinds of measures in the text or a footnote.
- If you do not use the biblical measures, try not to give the readers the idea that the measurements are exact. For example, if you translate one hin as “3.7 liters,” readers might think that the measurement is exactly 3.7 liters, not 3.6 or 3.8. It would be better to use a more approximate measure such as “three and a half liters” or “four liters.”
- When God tells people how much of something to use, and when people use those amounts in obedience to him, do not say “about” in the translation. Otherwise it will give the impression that God did not care exactly how much they used.

When the unit of measure is stated

Translation Strategies

- (1) Use the measurements from the ULT. These are the same kinds of measurements that the original writers used. Spell them in a way that is similar to the way they sound or are spelled in the ULT. (See Copy or Borrow Words.)
- (2) Use the metric measurements given in the UST. The translators of the UST have already figured how to represent the amounts in the metric system.
- (3) Use measurements that are already used in your language. In order to do this you would need to know how your measurements relate to the metric system and figure out each measurement.
- (4) Use the measurements from the ULT and include measurements that your people know in the text or a note.
- (5) Use measurements that your people know, and include the measurements from the ULT in the text or in a note.

Translation Strategies Applied

The strategies are all applied to Isaiah 5:10 below.

For a ten-yoke vineyard will yield only one bath, and one homer of seed will yield only an ephah. (Isaiah 5:10 ULT)

- (1) Use the measurements from the ULT. These are the same kinds of measurements that the original writers used. Spell them in a way that is similar to the way they sound or are spelled in the ULT. (See Copy or Borrow Words.)

“For a ten-yoke vineyard will yield only one **bat**, and one **homer** of seed will yield only an **efa**.”

- (2) Use the measurements given in the UST. Usually they are metric measurements. The translators of the UST have already figured how to represent the amounts in the metric system.

“For a ten-yoke vineyard will yield only **22 liters** and **220 liters** of seed will yield only **22 liters**.”

“For a ten-yoke vineyard will yield only **22**, and **ten baskets** of seed will yield only **one basket**.”

- (3) Use measurements that are already used in your language. In order to do this you would need to know how your measurements relate to the metric system and figure out each measurement.

“For a ten-yoke vineyard will yield only **six gallons**, and **six and a half bushels** of seed will yield only **20 quarts**.”

- (4) Use the measurements from the ULT and include measurements that your people know in the text or a note. The following shows both measurements in the text.

“For a ten-yoke vineyard will yield only **one bath (six gallons)**, and **one homer (six and a half bushels)** of seed will yield only **an ephah (20 quarts)**.”

- (5) Use measurements that your people know, and include the measurements from the ULT in the text or in a note. The following shows the ULT measurements in footnotes.

“For a ten-yoke vineyard will yield only 22 liters¹, and 220 liters² of seed will yield only 22 liters³.”

The footnotes would look like:

- [1] one bath
- [2] one homer
- [3] one ephah

When the unit of measure is implied

Sometimes the Hebrew does not specify a particular unit of volume but only uses a number. In these cases, many English versions, including the ULT and UST, add the word “measure.”

When you came to a heap of **20 measures** of grain, there were only **ten**, and when you came to the wine vat to draw out **50 measures** of wine, there were only 20. (Haggai 2:16 ULT)

Translation Strategies

- (1) Translate literally by using the number without a unit.
- (2) Use a generic word like “measure” or “quantity” or “amount.”
- (3) Use the name of an appropriate container, such as “basket” for grain or “jar” for wine.
- (4) Use a unit of measure that you are already using in your translation.

Translation Strategies Applied

The strategies are all applied to Haggai 2:16 below.

When you came to a heap of **20 measures** of grain, there were only **ten**, and when you came to the wine vat to draw out **fifty measures** of wine, there were only **20**. (Haggai 2:16 ULT)

- (1) Translate literally by using the number without a unit.

When you came to a heap of **20** of grain, there were only **ten**, and when you came to the wine vat to draw out **50** of wine, there were only **20**.

- (2) Use a generic word like “measure” or “quantity” or “amount.”

When you came to a heap of **20 amounts** of grain, there were only **ten**, and when you came to the wine vat to draw out **fifty amounts** of wine, there were only **20**.

- (3) Use the name of an appropriate container, such as “basket” for grain or “jar” for wine.

When you came to a heap of **20 baskets** of grain, there were only **ten**, and when you came to the wine vat to draw out **50 jars** of wine, there were only **20**.

- (4) Use a unit of measure that you are already using in your translation.

When you came to a heap for **20 liters** of grain, there were only **ten liters**, and when you came to the wine vat to draw out **50 liters** of wine, there were only **20 liters**.

Next we recommend you learn about:

[[rc://en/ta/man/translate/translate-fraction]]

[[rc://en/ta/man/translate/figs-explicitinfo]]

(Go back to: [Hosea 3:2](#))

Direct and Indirect Quotations

Description

There are two kinds of quotations: direct quotations and indirect quotations.

A direct quotation occurs when someone reports what another person said from the viewpoint of that original speaker. People usually expect that this kind of quotation will represent the original speaker's exact words. In the example below, John would have said "I" when referring to himself, so the narrator, who is reporting John's words, uses the word "I" in the quotation to refer to John. To show that these are John's exact words, many languages put the words between quotation marks: "".

- John said, "I do not know at what time I will arrive."

An indirect quotation occurs when a speaker reports what someone else said, but in this case, the speaker is reporting it from his own point of view instead and not from the original person's point of view. This kind of quotation usually contains changes in pronouns, and it often includes changes in time, in word choices, and in length. In the example below, the narrator refers to John as "he" in the quotation and uses the word "would" to replace the future tense, indicated by "will."

- John said that he did not know at what time he would arrive.

Reason This Is a Translation Issue

In some languages, reported speech can be expressed by either direct or indirect quotations. In other languages, it is more natural to use one than the other. There may be a certain meaning implied by using one rather than the other. So for each quotation, translators need to decide whether it is best to translate it as a direct quotation or as an indirect quotation.

Examples From the Bible

The verses in the examples below contain both direct and indirect quotations. In the explanation below the verse, we have marked in bold the words that are quoted.

And he commanded him to tell no one, but, "Go, show yourself to the priest and offer a sacrifice for your cleansing, according to what Moses commanded, for a testimony to them."
(Luke 5:14 ULT)

- Indirect quote: He commanded him **to tell no one**,
- Direct quote: but told him, "**Go, show yourself to the priest ...**"

And being asked by the Pharisees when the kingdom of God was coming, he answered them and said, "The kingdom of God is not coming with careful observation. Neither will they say, 'Look, here it is!' or 'There it is!' For indeed, the kingdom of God is among you."
(Luke 17:20-21 ULT)

- Indirect quote: Being asked by the Pharisees **when the kingdom of God was coming**,
- Direct quote: he answered them and said, "**The kingdom of God is not coming with careful observation. Neither will they say, 'Look, here it is!' or 'There it is!' For indeed, the kingdom of God is among you.**"
- Direct quotes: Neither will they say, '**Look, here it is!**' or, '**There it is!**'

This page answers the question: *What are direct and indirect quotations?*

In order to understand this topic, it would be good to read:

[\[\[rc://en/ta/man/translate/figs-pronouns\]\]](#)

[\[\[rc://en/ta/man/translate/figs-verbs\]\]](#)

[\[\[rc://en/ta/man/translate/writing-quotations\]\]](#)

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:

[\[\[rc://en/ta/man/translate/figs-quotesinquotes\]\]](https://en/ta/man/translate/figs-quotesinquotes)

(Go back to: [Hosea 2:12](#))

Doublet

Description

We are using the word “doublet” to refer to two words or phrases that are used together and either mean the same thing or mean very close to the same thing. Often they are joined with the word “and.” Unlike Hendiadys, in which one of the words modifies the other, in a doublet the two words or phrases are equal and are used to emphasize or intensify the one idea that is expressed by the two words or phrases.

This page answers the question: *What are doublets and how can I translate them?*

In order to understand this topic, it would be good to read:

[[rc://en/ta/man/translate/figs-intro]]

Reason This Is a Translation Issue

In some languages people do not use doublets. Or they may use doublets, but only in certain situations, so a doublet might not make sense in their language in some verses. People might think that the verse is describing two ideas or actions, when it is only describing one. In this case, translators may need to find some other way to express the meaning expressed by the doublet.

Examples From the Bible

He has one people **scattered** and **dispersed** among the peoples (Esther 3:8 ULT)

The bolded words mean the same thing. Together they mean the people were spread out.

He attacked two men **more righteous** and **better** than himself. (1 Kings 2:32b ULT)

This means that they were “much more righteous” than he was.

You have decided to prepare **false** and **deceptive** words. (Daniel 2:9b ULT)

This means that they had decided to lie, which is another way of saying that they intended to deceive people.

... like of a lamb **without blemish** and **without spot**. (1 Peter 1:19b ULT)

This means that he was like a lamb that did not have any defect—not even one.

Translation Strategies

If a doublet would be natural and give the right meaning in your language, consider using it. If not, consider these strategies.

- (1) Translate only one of the words or phrases.
- (2) If the doublet is used to intensify the meaning, translate one of the words or phrases and add a word that intensifies it such as “very” or “great” or “many.”
- (3) If the doublet is used to intensify or emphasize the meaning, use one of your language’s ways of doing that.

Translation Strategies Applied

(1) Translate only one of the words.

You have decided to prepare **false** and **deceptive** words. (Daniel 2:9b ULT)

“You have decided to prepare **false** things to say.”

(2) If the doublet is used to intensify the meaning, translate one of the words and add a word that intensifies it such as “very” or “great” or “many.”

He has one people **scattered** and **dispersed** among the peoples (Esther 3:8 ULT)

“He has one people **very spread out**.”

(3) If the doublet is used to intensify or emphasize the meaning, use one of your language’s ways of doing that.

... like a lamb **without blemish** and **without spot**. (1 Peter 1:19b ULT)

• English can emphasize this with “any” and “at all.”

“... like a lamb **without any blemish at all**.”

(Go back to: [Hosea 5:8](#); [9:6](#); [9:7](#); [10:6](#); [12:2](#); [12:8](#))

Ellipsis

Description

An ellipsis¹ occurs when a speaker or writer leaves out one or more words that normally should be in the sentence. The speaker or writer does this because he knows that the hearer or reader will understand the meaning of the sentence and supply the words in his mind when he hears or reads the words that are there. For example:

So the wicked will not stand in the judgment, **nor sinners in the assembly of the righteous.**
(Psalm 1:5 ULT)

There is ellipsis in the second part because “nor sinners in the assembly of the righteous” is not a complete sentence. The speaker assumes that the hearer will understand what it is that sinners will not do in the assembly of the righteous by filling in the action from the previous clause. With the action filled in, the complete sentence would read:

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

[¹] English has a punctuation symbol which is also called an ellipsis. It is a series of three dots (...) used to indicate an intentional omission of a word, phrase, sentence or more from text without altering its original meaning. This translationAcademy article is not about the punctuation mark, but about the concept of omission of words that normally should be in the sentence.

Two Types of Ellipsis

A Relative Ellipsis happens when the reader has to supply the omitted word or words from the context. Usually the word is in the previous sentence, as in the example above.

An Absolute Ellipsis happens when the omitted word or words are not in the context, but the phrases are common enough in the language that the reader is expected to supply what is missing from this common usage or from the nature of the situation.

Reason This Is a Translation Issue

Readers who see incomplete sentences or phrases may not know that there is information missing that the writer expects them to fill in. Or readers may understand that there is information missing, but they may not know what information is missing because they do not know the original biblical language, culture, or situation as the original readers did. In this case, they may fill in the wrong information. Or readers may misunderstand the ellipsis if they do not use ellipsis in the same way in their language.

Examples From the Bible

Relative Ellipsis

He makes Lebanon skip like a calf **and Sirion like a young ox.** (Psalm 29:6 ULT)

The writer wants his words to be few and to make good poetry. The full sentence with the information filled in would be:

This page answers the question: *What is ellipsis ?* ([¹])

In order to understand this topic, it would be good to read:

[[rc://en/ta/man/translate/figs-intro]]

[[rc://en/ta/man/translate/figs-sentences]]

He makes Lebanon skip like a calf and **he makes** Sirion **skip** like a young ox.

Watch carefully, therefore, how you walk—**not as unwise but as wise**. (Ephesians 5:15b ULT)

The information that the reader must understand in the second parts of these sentences can be filled in from the first parts:

Watch carefully, therefore, how you walk—**walk** not as unwise but **walk** as wise,

Absolute Ellipsis

Then when he had come near, he asked him, “What do you want me to do for you?” And so he said, “Lord, **that I might recover my sight**.” (Luke 18:40b-41 ULT)

It seems that the man answered in an incomplete sentence because he wanted to be polite and not directly ask Jesus for healing. He knew that Jesus would understand that the only way he could receive his sight would be for Jesus to heal him. The complete sentence would be:

“Lord, **I want you to heal me so** that I might receive my sight.”

To Titus, a true son in our common faith. Grace and peace from God the Father and Christ Jesus our Savior. (Titus 1:4 ULT)

The writer assumes that the reader will recognize this common form of a blessing or wish, so he does not need to include the full sentence, which would be:

To Titus, a true son in our common faith. **May you receive** grace and peace from God the Father and Christ Jesus our Savior.

Translation Strategies

If ellipsis would be natural and give the right meaning in your language, consider using it. If not, here is another option:

(1) Add the missing words to the incomplete phrase or sentence.

Examples of Translation Strategies Applied

(1) Add the missing words to the incomplete phrase or sentence.

So the wicked will not stand in the judgment, nor **sinner in the assembly** of the righteous. (Psalm 1:5 ULT)

So the wicked will not stand in the judgment, and **sinner will not stand in the assembly** of the righteous.

Then when he had come near, he asked him, “What do you want me to do for you?” And so he said, “Lord, **that I might recover my sight**.” (Luke 18:40b-41 ULT)

Then when the man was near, Jesus asked him, “What do you want me to do for you?” He said, “Lord, **I want you to heal me** that I might receive my sight.”

He makes Lebanon skip like a calf **and Sirion like a young ox**. (Psalm 29:6 ULT)



He makes Lebanon skip like a calf, and **he makes** Sirion **skip** like a young ox.

(Go back to: [Hosea 13:8](#))

Euphemism

Description

A euphemism is a mild or polite way of referring to something that is unpleasant, embarrassing, or socially unacceptable, such as death or activities usually done in private.

... they found Saul and his sons **fallen** on Mount Gilboa.
(1 Chronicles 10:8b ULT)

This means that Saul and his sons “were dead.” It is a euphemism because the important thing was not that Saul and his sons had fallen but that they were dead. Sometimes people do not like to speak directly about death because it is unpleasant.

This page answers the question: *What is a euphemism?*

In order to understand this topic, it would be good to read:

[[rc://en/ta/man/translate/figs-intro]]

Reason This Is a Translation Issue

Different languages use different euphemisms. If the target language does not use the same euphemism as in the source language, readers may not understand what it means and they may think that the writer means only what the words literally say.

Examples From the Bible

... where there was a cave. Saul went inside to **cover his feet**. (1 Samuel 24:3b ULT)

The original hearers would have understood that Saul went into the cave to use it as a toilet, but the writer wanted to avoid offending or distracting them, so **he did not say specifically** what Saul did or what he left in the cave.

But Mary said to the angel, “How will this be, since I have not **known a man?**” (Luke 1:34 ULT)

In order **to be polite**, Mary uses a euphemism to say that she has never had sexual intercourse with a man.

Translation Strategies

If euphemism would be natural and give the right meaning in your language, consider using it. If not, here are other options:

- (1) Use a euphemism from your own culture.
- (2) State the information plainly without a euphemism if it would not be offensive.

Examples of Translation Strategies Applied

- (1) Use a euphemism from your own culture.

... where there was a cave. Saul went inside to **cover his feet**. (1 Samuel 24:3b ULT) — Some languages might use euphemisms like these:

“... where there was a cave. Saul went into the cave to **dig a hole**”

“... where there was a cave. Saul went into the cave to **have some time alone**”

But Mary said to the angel, “How will this be, since I have not **known a man?**” (Luke 1:34 ULT)

But Mary said to the angel, “How will this be, since I have not **slept with a man?**”

(2) State the information plainly without a euphemism if it would not be offensive.

They found Saul and his sons **fallen** on Mount Gilboa. (1 Chronicles 10:8b ULT)

“They found Saul and his sons **dead** on Mount Gilboa.”

(Go back to: [Hosea 13:16](#))

Exclamations

Description

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.

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]]

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: [Hosea 2:1](#))

First, Second or Third Person

Normally a speaker refers to himself as “I” and the person he is speaking to as “you.” Sometimes in the Bible a speaker refers to himself or to the person he is speaking to with terms other than “I” or “you.”

Description

- First person — This is how a speaker normally refers to himself. English uses the pronouns “I” and “we.” (Also: me, my, mine; us, our, ours)
- Second person — This is how a speaker normally refers to the person or people he is speaking to. English uses the pronoun “you.” (Also: your, yours)
- Third person — This is how a speaker refers to someone else. English uses the pronouns “he,” “she,” “it,” and “they.” (Also: him, his, her, hers, its; them, their, theirs) Noun phrases like “the man” or “the woman” are also third person.

This page answers the question: *What are first, second, and third person, and how do I translate when a third person form does not refer to the third person?*

In order to understand this topic, it would be good to read:

[[rc://en/ta/man/translate/figs-explicitinfo]]
[[rc://en/ta/man/translate/figs-pronouns]]

Reason This Is a Translation Issue

Sometimes in the Bible a speaker uses the third person to refer to himself or to the people he is speaking to. Readers might think that the speaker was referring to someone else. They might not understand that he meant “I” or “you.”

Examples From the Bible

Sometimes people used the third person instead of “I” or “me” to refer to themselves.

But David said to Saul, “**Your servant** used to keep **his** father’s sheep.” (1 Samuel 17:34 ULT)

David referred to himself in the third person as “your servant” and used “his.” He was calling himself Saul’s servant in order to show his humility before Saul.

Then Yahweh answered Job out of a fierce storm and said,
“... Do you have an arm like **God’s**? Can you thunder with a voice like **his**?” (Job 40:6, 9 ULT)

God referred to himself in the third person with the words “God’s” and “his.” He did this to emphasize that he is God, and he is powerful.

Sometimes people use the third person instead of “you” or “your” to refer to the person or people they are speaking to.

Abraham answered and said, “Look, I have undertaken to speak to my Lord, even though I am only dust and ashes!” (Genesis 18:27 ULT)

Abraham was speaking to the Lord, and referred to the Lord as “My Lord” rather than as “you.” He did this to show his humility before God.

So also my heavenly Father will do to you, if **each of you** does not forgive **his** brother from your heart. (Matthew 18:35 ULT)

After saying “each of you,” Jesus used the third person “his” instead of “your.”

Translation Strategies

If using the third person to mean “I” or “you” would be natural and give the right meaning in your language, consider using it. If not, here are some other options.

- (1) Use the third person phrase along with the pronoun “I” or “you.”
- (2) Simply use the first person (“I”) or second person (“you”) instead of the third person.

Examples of Translation Strategies Applied

- (1) Use the third person phrase along with the pronoun “I” or “you.”

But David said to Saul, “**Your servant** used to keep **his** father’s sheep.” (1 Samuel 17:34)

But David said to Saul, “**I, your servant**, used to keep **my** father’s sheep.”

- (2) Simply use the first person (“I”) or second person (“you”) instead of the third person.

Then Yahweh answered Job out of a fierce storm and said, “... Do you have an arm like **God’s**? Can you thunder with a voice like **his**?” (Job 40:6, 9 ULT)

Then Yahweh answered Job out of a fierce storm and said, “... Do you have an arm like **mine**? Can you thunder with a voice like **mine**?”

So also my heavenly Father will do to you if **each of you** does not forgive **his** brother from your heart. (Matthew 18:35 ULT)

So also my heavenly Father will do to you if **each of you** does not forgive **your** brother from your heart.

Next we recommend you learn about:
 [[rc://en/ta/man/translate/figs-you]]

(Go back to: [Hosea 2:13](#); [4:10](#); [4:16](#); [8:5](#); [9:6](#); [11:7](#))

Generic Noun Phrases

Description

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."

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]]

(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:

[\[\[rc://en/ta/man/translate/figs-gendernotations\]\]](#)

(Go back to: [Hosea 9:8](#))

How to Translate Names

Description

The Bible contains the names of many people, groups of people, and places. Some of these names may sound strange and be hard to say. Sometimes readers may not know what a name refers to, and sometimes they may need to understand what a name means. This page will help you see how you can translate these names and how you can help people understand what they need to know about them.

This page answers the question: *How can I translate names that are new to my culture?*

In order to understand this topic, it would be good to read:

[[rc://en/ta/man/translate/translate-unknown]]

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:

[[rc://en/ta/man/translate/translate-transliterate]]

(Go back to: [Introduction to Hosea](#); [Hosea 1:1](#); [1:3](#); [1:6](#); [1:8](#); [1:9](#); [2:23](#); [4:15](#); [Notes](#); [5:1](#); [5:8](#); [9:10](#); [Notes](#); [10:5](#); [10:14](#); [Notes](#))

Hyperbole

Description

A speaker or writer can use exactly the same words to say something that he means as completely true, or as generally true, or as a hyperbole. This is why it can be hard to decide how to understand a statement. For example, the sentence below could mean three different things.

It rains here every night.

The speaker means this as literally true if he means that it really does rain here every night.

The speaker means this as a **generalization** if he means that it rains here most nights.

The speaker means this as a **hyperbole** if he wants to say that it rains more than it actually does, usually in order to express a strong attitude toward the amount or frequency of rain, such as being annoyed or being happy about it.

This page answers the question: *What are hyperboles? What are generalizations? How can I translate them?*

In order to understand this topic, it would be good to read:

[[rc://en/ta/man/translate/figs-intro]]

Hyperbole

In hyperbole, a figure of speech that uses exaggeration, a speaker deliberately describes something with an extreme or even unreal statement, usually to show his strong feeling or opinion about it. He expects people to understand that he is exaggerating.

They will not leave **stone upon stone in you**. (Luke 19:44b ULT)

This is an exaggeration. It means that the enemies will completely destroy Jerusalem.

Moses was educated in **all the wisdom of the Egyptians**. (Acts 7:22a ULT)

This hyperbole means that he had learned everything an Egyptian education could offer.

Generalization

This is a statement that is true most of the time or in most situations that it could apply to.

The one who ignores instruction **will have poverty and shame**, but **honor will come** to him who learns from correction. (Proverbs 13:18)

These generalizations tell about what normally happens to people who ignore instruction and what normally happens to people who learn from correction. There may be some exceptions to these statements, but they are generally true.

And when you pray, do not make useless repetitions as **the Gentiles do, for they think that they will be heard because of their many words**. (Matthew 6:7)

This generalization tells about what Gentiles were known for doing. Many Gentiles did this. It does not matter if a few did not. The point was that the hearers should not join in this well-known practice.

Even though a hyperbole or a generalization may have a strong-sounding word like "all," "always," "none," or "never," it does not necessarily mean **exactly** "all," "always," "none," or "never." It simply means "most," "most of the time," "hardly any," or "rarely."

Reason This Is a Translation Issue

Readers need to be able to understand whether or not a statement is literally true.

If readers realize that a statement is not literally true, they need to be able to understand whether it is a hyperbole, a generalization, or a lie. (Though the Bible is completely true, it tells about people who did not always tell the truth.)

Examples From the Bible

Examples of Hyperbole

If your hand causes you to stumble, **cut it off**. It is better for you to enter into life maimed ... (Mark 9:43a ULT)

When Jesus said to cut off your hand, he meant that we should **do whatever extreme things** we need to do in order not to sin. He used this hyperbole to show how extremely important it is to try to stop sinning.

The Philistines gathered together to fight against Israel with 3,000 chariots, 6,000 men to drive the chariots, and troops **as numerous as the sand on the seashore**. (1 Samuel 13:5a ULT)

The bolded phrase is an exaggeration for the purpose of expressing the emotion that the Philistine army was overwhelming in number. It means that there were **many, many** soldiers in the Philistine army.

But as his anointing teaches you **everything** and is true and is not a lie, and just as it has taught you, remain in him. (1 John 2:27b ULT)

This is a hyperbole. It expresses the assurance that God's Spirit teaches us about **all things that we need to know**. God's Spirit does not teach us about everything that it is possible to know.

When they found him, they also said to him, "**Everyone** is looking for you." (Mark 1:37 ULT)

The disciples probably did not mean that everyone in the city was looking for Jesus, but that **many people** were looking for him, or that all of Jesus' closest friends there were looking for him. This is an exaggeration for the purpose of expressing the emotion that they and many others were worried about him.

Examples of Generalization

Can **any good thing** come out of Nazareth? (John 1:46b ULT)

This rhetorical question is meant to express the generalization that there is nothing good in Nazareth. The people there had a reputation for being uneducated and not strictly religious. Of course, there were exceptions.

One of them, of their own prophets, has said, "**Cretans are always liars, evil beasts, lazy bellies**." (Titus 1:12 ULT)

This is a generalization that means that Cretans had a reputation to be like this because, in general, this is how Cretans behaved. It is possible that there were exceptions.

A lazy hand causes a person to be poor, but the hand of the diligent person gains riches. (Proverbs 10:4 ULT)

This is generally true, and it reflects the experience of most people. It is possible that there are exceptions in some circumstances.

Caution

- Do not assume that something is an exaggeration just because it seems to be impossible. God does miraculous things.

They saw Jesus **walking on the sea** and coming near the boat. (John 6:19b ULT)

This is not hyperbole. Jesus really walked on the water. It is a literal statement.

- Do not assume that the word “all” is always a generalization that means “most.”
 - > Yahweh is righteous in **all** his ways
 - > and gracious in **all** he does. (Psalms 145:17 ULT)

Yahweh is always righteous. This is a completely true statement.

Translation Strategies

If the hyperbole or generalization would be natural and people would understand it and not think that it is a lie, consider using it. If not, here are other options.

- (1) Express the meaning without the exaggeration.
- (2) For a generalization, show that it is a generalization by using a phrase like “in general” or “in most cases.”
- (3) For a hyperbole or a generalization, add a word like “many” or “almost” to show that the hyperbole or generalization is not meant to be exact.
- (4) For a hyperbole or a generalization that has a word like “all,” “always,” “none,” or “never,” consider deleting that word.

Examples of Translation Strategies Applied

- (1) Express the meaning without the exaggeration.

The Philistines gathered together to fight against Israel: 3,000 chariots, 6,000 men to drive the chariots, and troops **as numerous as the sand on the seashore**. (1 Samuel 13:5a ULT)

The Philistines gathered together to fight against Israel: 3,000 chariots, 6,000 men to drive the chariots, and **a great number of troops**.

- (2) For a generalization, show that it is a generalization by using a phrase like “in general” or “in most cases.”

The one who ignores instruction will have poverty and shame. (Proverbs 13:18a ULT)

In general, the one who ignores instruction will have poverty and shame

When you pray, do not make useless repetitions as the **Gentiles do**, for they think that they will be heard because of their many words. (Matthew 6:7 ULT)

And when you pray, do not make useless repetitions as the Gentiles **generally** do, for they think that they will be heard because of their many words.

- (3) For a hyperbole or a generalization, add a word like “many” or “almost” to show that the hyperbole or generalization is not meant to be exact.

The **whole** country of Judea and **all** the people of Jerusalem went out to him. (Mark 1:5a ULT)

Almost all the country of Judea and **almost all** the people of Jerusalem went out to him.
or:

Many of the country of Judea and **many** of the people of Jerusalem went out to him.

(4) For a hyperbole or a generalization that has a word like “all,” “always,” “none,” or “never,” consider deleting that word.

The **whole** country of Judea and **all** the people of Jerusalem went out to him. (Mark 1:5a ULT)

The country of Judea and the people of Jerusalem went out to him.

(Go back to: [Hosea 8:12](#))

Hypothetical Situations

Consider these phrases: “If the sun stopped shining ...” “What if the sun stopped shining ...” “Suppose the sun stopped shining ...” and “If only the sun had not stopped shining.” We use such expressions to set up hypothetical situations, imagining what might have happened or what could happen in the future but probably will not. We also use them to express regret or wishes. Hypothetical expressions occur often in the Bible. You (the translator) need to translate them in a way that people will know that the event did not actually happen and so that they will understand why the event was imagined.

This page answers the question: *What is a hypothetical situation?*

In order to understand this topic, it would be good to read:

[\[\[rc://en/ta/man/translate/writing-intro\]\]](#)

Description

Hypothetical situations are situations that are not real. They can be in the past, present, or future. Hypothetical situations in the past and present have not happened, are not happening now, and ones in the future are not expected to happen.

People sometimes tell about conditions and what would happen if those conditions were met, but they know that these things have not happened or probably will not happen. (The conditions comprise a phrase that starts with “if.”)

- If he had lived to be 100 years old, he would have seen his grandson’s grandson. (But he did not.)
- If he lived to be 100 years old, he would still be alive today. (But he is not.)
- If he lives to be 100 years old, he will see his grandson’s grandson. (But he probably will not.)

People sometimes express wishes about things that have not happened or that are not expected to happen.

- I wish he had come.
- I wish he were here.
- I wish he would come.

People sometimes express regrets about things that have not happened or that are not expected to happen.

- If only he had come.
- If only he were here.
- If only he would come.

Reason This Is a Translation Issue

- Translators need to recognize the different kinds of hypothetical situations in the Bible and understand that they are unreal.
- Translators need to know their own language’s ways of talking about different kinds of hypothetical situations.

Examples From the Bible

Hypothetical Situations in the Past

“Woe to you, Chorazin! Woe to you, Bethsaida! **If the mighty deeds had been done** in Tyre and Sidon which were done in you, **they would have repented** long ago in sackcloth and ashes.” (Matthew 11:21 ULT)

Here in Matthew 11:21, Jesus said that **if** the people living in the ancient cities of Tyre and Sidon had been able to see the miracles that he performed, they would have repented long ago. The people of Tyre and Sidon did not actually see his miracles, and they did not repent. He said this to rebuke the people of Chorazin and Bethsaida who had seen his miracles and yet did not repent.

Martha then said to Jesus, “Lord, **if you had been here, my brother would not have died.**” (John 11:21 ULT)

Martha said this to express her wish that Jesus would have come sooner so that her brother would not have died. But Jesus did not come sooner and her brother did die.

Hypothetical Situations in the Present

And no man puts new wine into old wineskins. **But if he did do that, the new wine would burst the wineskins, and it would be spilled out, and the wineskins would be destroyed.** (Luke 5:37 ULT)

Jesus told about what would happen if a person were to put new wine into old wineskins. But no one would do that. He used this imaginary situation as an example to show that there are times when it is unwise to mix new things with old things. He did this so that people could understand why his disciples were not fasting as people traditionally did.

Jesus said to them, “What man would there be among you, who, **if he had just one sheep, and if this sheep fell into a deep hole on the Sabbath, would not grasp hold of it and lift it out?**” (Matthew 12:11 ULT)

Jesus asked the religious leaders what they would do on the Sabbath if one of their sheep fell into a hole. He was not saying that their sheep would fall into a hole. He used this imaginary situation to show them that they were wrong to judge him for healing people on the Sabbath.

Hypothetical Situation in the Future

Unless those days are shortened, no flesh would be saved. But for the sake of the elect, those days will be shortened. (Matthew 24:22 ULT)

Jesus was talking about a future time when very bad things would happen. He told what would happen if those days of trouble were to last a long time. He did this to show how bad those days will be—so bad that if they lasted a long time, no one would be saved. But then he clarified that God will shorten those days of trouble so that the elect (those he has chosen) will be saved.

Expressing Emotion About a Hypothetical Situation

People sometimes talk about hypothetical situations in order to express regrets and wishes. Regrets are about the past and wishes are about the present and future.

The Israelites said to them, “**If only we had died by Yahweh’s hand in the land of Egypt when we were sitting by the pots of meat and were eating bread to the full.** For you have brought us out into this wilderness to kill our whole community with hunger.” (Exodus 16:3 ULT)

Here the Israelites were afraid that they would have to suffer and die of hunger in the wilderness, and so they wished that they had stayed in Egypt and died there with full stomachs. They were complaining, expressing regret that this had not happened.

I know what you have done, and that you are neither cold nor hot. **I wish that you were either cold or hot!** (Revelation 3:15 ULT)

Jesus wished that the people were either hot or cold, but they are neither. He was rebuking them, expressing anger at this.

Translation Strategies

Find out how people speaking your language show:

- that something could have happened, but did not.
- that something could be true now, but is not.
- that something could happen in the future, but will not unless something changes.
- that they wish for something, but it does not happen.
- that they regret that something did not happen.

Use your language's ways of showing these kinds of things.

You may also want to watch the video at https://ufw.io/figs_hypo.

(Go back to: [Hosea 8:12](#))

Idiom

An idiom is a figure of speech made up of a group of words that, as a whole, has a meaning that is different from what one would understand from the meanings of the individual words. Someone from outside of the culture usually cannot understand an idiom without someone inside the culture explaining its true meaning. Every language uses idioms. Some English examples are:

- You are pulling my leg. (This means, “You are teasing me by telling me something that is not true.”)
- Do not push the envelope. (This means, “Do not take a matter to its extreme.”)
- This house is under water. (This means, “The debt owed for this house is greater than its actual value.”)
- We are painting the town red. (This means, “We are going around town tonight celebrating very intensely.”)

This page answers the question: *What are idioms and how can I translate them?*

In order to understand this topic, it would be good to read:

[[rc://en/ta/man/translate/figs-intro]]

Description

An idiom is a phrase that has a special meaning to the people of the language or culture who use it. Its meaning is different than what a person would understand from the meanings of the individual words that form the phrase.

He **set his face** to go to Jerusalem. (Luke 9:51b ULT)

The words “set his face” is an idiom that means “decided.”

Sometimes people may be able to understand an idiom from another culture, but it might sound like a strange way to express the meaning.

I am not worthy that you would **come under my roof**. (Luke 7:6b ULT)

The phrase “come under my roof” is an idiom that means “enter my house.”

Put these words **into your ears**. (Luke 9:44a ULT)

This idiom means “Listen carefully and remember what I say.”

Purpose: An idiom is probably created in a culture somewhat by accident when someone describes something in an unusual way. But, when that unusual way communicates the message powerfully and people understand it clearly, other people start to use it. After a while, it becomes a normal way of talking in that language.

Reasons This Is a Translation Issue

- People can easily misunderstand idioms in the original languages of the Bible if they do not know the cultures that produced the Bible.
- People can easily misunderstand idioms that are in the source language Bibles if they do not know the cultures that made those translations.
- It is useless to translate idioms literally (according to the meaning of each word) when the target language audience will not understand what they mean.

Examples From the Bible

Then all Israel came to David at Hebron and said, “Look, we are your **flesh and bone**.” (1 Chronicles 11:1 ULT)

This means, “We and you belong to the same race, the same family.”

▮ The children of Israel went out **with a high hand**. (Exodus 14:8b ASV)

This means, “The Israelites went out defiantly.”

▮ the one who **lifts up my head** (Psalm 3:3b ULT)

This means, “the one who helps me.”

Translation Strategies

If the idiom would be clearly understood in your language, consider using it. If not, here are some other options.

- (1) Translate the meaning plainly without using an idiom.
- (2) Use a different idiom that people use in your own language that has the same meaning.

Examples of Translation Strategies Applied

- (1) Translate the meaning plainly without using an idiom.

▮ Then all Israel came to David at Hebron and said, “Look, we are your **flesh and bone**.” (1 Chronicles 11:1 ULT)

▮ Look, we all **belong to the same nation**.

▮ Then he **set his face** to go to Jerusalem. (Luke 9:51b ULT)

▮ He started to travel to Jerusalem, **determined to reach it**.

▮ I am not worthy that you would come **under my roof**. (Luke 7:6b ULT)

▮ I am not worthy that you should enter **my house**.

- (2) Use an idiom that people use in your own language that has the same meaning.

▮ Put these words **into your ears**. (Luke 9:44a ULT)

▮ **Be all ears** when I say these words to you.

▮ My **eyes grow dim** from grief. (Psalm 6:7a ULT)

▮ I am crying my **eyes out**

(Go back to: [Hosea 1:1](#); [5:5](#); [6:2](#); [7:5](#); [8:7](#); [10:4](#); [10:9](#))

Metaphor

Description

A metaphor is a figure of speech in which someone speaks of one thing as if it were a different thing because he wants people to think about how those two things are alike.

For example, someone might say, “The girl I love is a red rose.”

A girl and a rose are very different things, but the speaker considers that they are alike in some way. The hearer’s task is to understand in what way they are alike.

This page answers the question: *What is a metaphor and how can I translate a Bible passage that has one?*

In order to understand this topic, it would be good to read:

[\[\[rc://en/ta/man/translate/figs-intro\]\]](#)

[Simile](#)

The Parts of a Metaphor

The example above shows us that a metaphor has three parts. In this metaphor, the speaker is talking about “the girl I love.” This is the **Topic**. The speaker wants the hearer to think about what is similar between her and “a red rose.” The red rose is the **Image** to which he compares the girl. Most probably, he wants the hearer to consider that they are both beautiful. This is the **Idea** that the girl and the rose both share, and so we may also call it the **Point of Comparison**.

Every metaphor has three parts:

- The **Topic**, the item being immediately discussed by the writer/speaker.
- The **Image**, the physical item (object, event, action, etc.) which the speaker uses to describe the topic.
- The **Idea**, the abstract concept or quality that the physical **Image** brings to the mind of the hearer when he thinks of how the **Image** and the **Topic** are similar. Often, the **Idea** of a metaphor is not explicitly stated in the Bible, but it is only implied from the context. The hearer or reader usually needs to think of the **Idea** himself.

Using these terms, we can say that a metaphor is a figure of speech that uses a physical **Image** to apply an abstract **Idea** to the speaker’s **Topic**.

Usually, a writer or speaker uses a metaphor in order to express something about a **Topic**, with at least one **Point of Comparison (Idea)** between the **Topic** and the **Image**. Often in metaphors, the **Topic** and the **Image** are explicitly stated, but the **Idea** is only implied. The writer/speaker often uses a metaphor in order to invite the readers/listeners to think about the similarity between the **Topic** and the **Image** and to figure out for themselves the **Idea** that is being communicated.

Speakers often use metaphors in order to strengthen their message, to make their language more vivid, to express their feelings better, to say something that is hard to say in any other way, or to help people remember their message.

Sometimes speakers use metaphors that are very common in their language. However, sometimes speakers use metaphors that are uncommon, and even some metaphors that are unique. When a metaphor has become very common in a language, often it becomes a “passive” metaphor, in contrast to uncommon metaphors, which we describe as being “active.” Passive metaphors and active metaphors each present a different kind of translation problem, which we will discuss below.

Passive Metaphors

A passive metaphor is a metaphor that has been used so much in the language that its speakers no longer regard it as one concept standing for another. Linguists often call these “dead metaphors.” Passive metaphors are extremely common. Examples in English include the terms “table **leg**,” “family **tree**,” “book **leaf**” (meaning a page

in a book), or the word “crane” (meaning a large machine for lifting heavy loads). English speakers simply think of these words as having more than one meaning. Examples of passive metaphors in Biblical Hebrew include using the word “hand” to represent “power,” using the word “face” to represent “presence,” and speaking of emotions or moral qualities as if they were “clothing.”

Patterned Pairs of Concepts Acting as Metaphors

Many ways of metaphorical speaking depend on pairs of concepts, where one underlying concept frequently stands for a different underlying concept. For example, in English, the direction “up” (the Image) often represents the concepts of “more” or “better” (the Idea). Because of this pair of underlying concepts, we can make sentences such as “The price of gasoline is going **up**,” “A **highly** intelligent man,” and also the opposite kind of idea: “The temperature is going **down**,” and “I am feeling very **low**.”

Patterned pairs of concepts are constantly used for metaphorical purposes in the world’s languages because they serve as convenient ways to organize thought. In general, people like to speak of abstract qualities (such as power, presence, emotions, and moral qualities) as if they were body parts, or as if they were objects that could be seen or held, or as if they were events that could be watched as they happened.

When these metaphors are used in normal ways, it is rare that the speaker and audience regard them as figurative speech. Examples of metaphors in English that go unrecognized are:

- “Turn the heat **up**.” More is spoken of as up.
- “Let us **go ahead** with our debate.” Doing what was planned is spoken of as walking or advancing.
- “You **defend** your theory well.” Argument is spoken of as war.
- “A **flow** of words.” Words are spoken of as liquids.

English speakers do not view these as metaphorical expressions or figures of speech, so it would be wrong to translate them into other languages in a way that would lead people to pay special attention to them as figurative speech. For a description of important patterns of this kind of metaphor in biblical languages, please see [Biblical Imagery — Common Patterns](#) and the pages it will direct you to.

When translating something that is a passive metaphor into another language, do not treat it as a metaphor. Instead, just use the best expression for that thing or concept in the target language.

Active Metaphors

These are metaphors that people recognize as one concept standing for another concept, or one thing for another thing. Metaphors make people think about how the one thing is like the other thing, because in most ways the two things are very different. People also easily recognize these metaphors as giving strength and unusual qualities to the message. For this reason, people pay attention to these metaphors. For example,

But for you who fear my name, the sun of righteousness will rise with healing in its wings.
(Malachi 4:2a ULT)

Here, God speaks about his salvation as if it were the sun rising in order to shine its rays on the people whom he loves. He also speaks of the sun’s rays as if they were wings. Also, he speaks of these wings as if they were bringing medicine that would heal his people. Here is another example:

And he said to them, “Go and tell that fox ...” (Luke 13:32a ULT)

Here, “that fox” refers to King Herod. The people listening to Jesus certainly understood that Jesus was intending for them to apply certain characteristics of a fox to Herod. They probably understood that Jesus intended to communicate that Herod was evil, either in a cunning way or as someone who was destructive, murderous, or who took things that did not belong to him, or all of these.

Active metaphors require the translator's special care to make a correct translation. To do so, you need to understand the parts of a metaphor and how they work together to produce meaning.

Jesus said to them, "I am the bread of life; he who comes to me will not be hungry, and he who believes in me will never be thirsty." (John 6:35 ULT)

In this metaphor, Jesus called himself the bread of life. The **Topic** is "I" (meaning Jesus himself) and the **Image** is "bread." Bread was the primary food that people ate in that place and time. The similarity between bread and Jesus is that people need both to live. Just as people need to eat food in order to have physical life, people need to trust in Jesus in order to have eternal life. The **Idea** of the metaphor is "life." In this case, Jesus stated the central Idea of the metaphor, but often the Idea is only implied.

Purposes of Metaphor

- One purpose of metaphor is to teach people about something that they do not know (the **Topic**) by showing that it is like something that they already do know (the **Image**).
- Another purpose is to emphasize that something (the **Topic**) has a particular quality (the **Idea**) or to show that it has that quality in an extreme way.
- Another purpose is to lead people to feel the same way about the **Topic** as they would feel about the **Image**.

Reasons This Is a Translation Issue

- People may not recognize that something is a metaphor. In other words, they may mistake a metaphor for a literal statement, and thus, misunderstand it.
- People may not be familiar with the thing that is used as an image, and so, not be able to understand the metaphor.
- If the topic is not stated, people may not know what the topic is.
- People may not know the points of comparison that the speaker wants them to understand. If they fail to think of these points of comparison, they will not understand the metaphor.
- People may think that they understand the metaphor, but they do not. This can happen when they apply points of comparison from their own culture, rather than from the biblical culture.

Translation Principles

- Make the meaning of a metaphor as clear to the target audience as it was to the original audience.
- Do not make the meaning of a metaphor more clear to the target audience than you think it was to the original audience.

Examples From the Bible

Listen to this word, **you cows of Bashan**, (Amos 4:1q ULT)

In this metaphor Amos speaks to the upper-class women of Samaria ("you," the Topic) as if they were cows (the Image). Amos does not say what similarity(s) he intends between these women and cows. He wants the reader to think of them, and he fully expects that readers from his culture will easily do so. From the context, we can see that he means that the women are like cows in that they are fat and interested only in feeding themselves. If we were to apply similarities from a different culture, such as that cows are sacred and should be worshiped, we would get the wrong meaning from this verse.

NOTE: Amos does not actually mean that the women are cows. He speaks to them as human beings.

Yet, Yahweh, you are our father; **we are the clay. You are our potter**; and we all are the work of your hand. (Isaiah 64:8 ULT)

The example above has two related metaphors. The Topic(s) are “we” and “you,” and the Image(s) are “clay” and “potter.” The similarity between a potter and God is the fact that both make what they wish out of their material. The potter makes what he wishes out of the clay, and God makes what he wishes out of his people. The Idea being expressed by the comparison between the potter’s clay and “us” is that **neither the clay nor God’s people have a right to complain about what they are becoming.**

Jesus said to them, “Take heed and beware of **the yeast of the Pharisees and Sadducees.**”
The disciples reasoned among themselves and said, “It is because we did not take bread.”
(Matthew 16:6-7 ULT)

Jesus used a metaphor here, but his disciples did not realize it. When he said “yeast,” they thought he was talking about bread, but “yeast” was the Image in his metaphor, and the Topic was the teaching of the Pharisees and Sadducees. Since the disciples (the original audience) did not understand what Jesus meant, it would not be good to state clearly here what Jesus meant.

Translation Strategies

If people would understand the metaphor in the same way that the original readers would have understood it, go ahead and use it. Be sure to test the translation to make sure that people do understand it in the right way.

If people do not or would not understand it, here are some other strategies.

(1) If the metaphor is a common expression in the source language or expresses a patterned pair of concepts in a biblical language (that is, it is a passive metaphor), then express the **Idea** in the simplest way preferred by your language.

(2) If the metaphor seems to be an active metaphor, you can translate it literally **if you think that the target language also uses this metaphor in the same way to mean the same thing as in the Bible.** If you do this, be sure to test it to make sure that the language community understands it correctly.

(3) If the target audience does not realize that it is a metaphor, then change the metaphor to a simile. Some languages do this by adding words such as “like” or “as.” See [Simile](#).

(4) If the target audience would not know the **Image**, see Translate Unknowns for ideas on how to translate that image.

(5) If the target audience would not use that **Image** for that meaning, use an image from your own culture instead. Be sure that it is an image that could have been possible in Bible times.

(6) If the target audience would not know what the **Topic** is, then state the topic clearly. (However, do not do this if the original audience did not know what the Topic was.)

(7) If the target audience would not know the intended similarity (the **Idea**) between the topic and the image, then state it clearly.

(8) If none of these strategies is satisfactory, then simply state the **Idea** plainly without using a metaphor.

Examples of Translation Strategies Applied

(1) If the metaphor is a common expression in the source language or expresses a patterned pair of concepts in a biblical language (that is, a passive metaphor), then express the Idea in the simplest way preferred by your language.

Then, see, one of the leaders of the synagogue, named Jairus, came, and when he saw him, **fell at his feet**. (Mark 5:22 ULT)

Then one of the leaders of the synagogue, named Jairus, came, and when he saw him, **immediately bowed down in front of him**.

(2) If the metaphor seems to be an active metaphor, you can translate it literally **if you think that the target language also uses this metaphor in the same way to mean the same thing as in the Bible**. If you do this, be sure to test it to make sure that the language community understands it correctly.

But Jesus said to them, “He wrote this commandment to you because of your **hardness of heart**.” (Mark 10:5 ULT)

It was because of your **hard hearts** that he wrote you this law.

We made no change to this one, but it must be tested to make sure that the target audience correctly understands this metaphor.

(3) If the target audience does not realize that it is a metaphor, then change the metaphor to a simile. Some languages do this by adding words such as “like” or “as.”

Yet, Yahweh, you are our father; we **are the clay**. You **are our potter**; and we all are the work of your hand. (Isaiah 64:8 ULT)

And yet, Yahweh, you are our father; we are **like** clay. You are **like** a potter; and we all are the work of your hand.

(4) If the target audience would not know the **Image**, see Translate Unknowns for ideas on how to translate that image.

Saul, Saul, why do you persecute me? It is hard for you **to kick against a goad**. (Acts 26:14b ULT)

Saul, Saul, why do you persecute me? It is hard for you to **kick against a pointed stick**.

(5) If the target audience would not use that **Image** for that meaning, use an image from your own culture instead. Be sure that it is an image that could have been possible in Bible times.

Yet, Yahweh, you are our father; we are the **clay**. You are our **potter**; and we all are the work of your hand. (Isaiah 64:8 ULT)

“And yet, Yahweh, you are our father; we are the **wood**. You are our **carver**; and we all are the work of your hand.”

“And yet, Yahweh, you are our father; we are the **string**. You are the **weaver**; and we all are the work of your hand.”

(6) If the target audience would not know what the **Topic** is, then state the topic clearly. (However, do not do this if the original audience did not know what the topic was.)

Yahweh lives; may **my rock** be praised. May the God of my salvation be exalted. (Psalm 18:46 ULT)

Yahweh lives; **He is my rock**. May he be praised. May the God of my salvation be exalted.

(7) If the target audience would not know the intended similarity between the Topic and the Image, then state it clearly.

Yahweh lives; may **my rock** be praised. May the God of my salvation be exalted. (Psalm 18:46 ULT)

Yahweh lives; may he be praised because he is the rock **under which I can hide from my enemies**. May the God of my salvation be exalted.

Saul, Saul, why do you persecute me? It is hard for you **to kick against a goad**. (Acts 26:14 ULT)

Saul, Saul, why do you persecute me? You **fight against me and hurt yourself like an ox that kicks against its owner's pointed stick**.

(8) If none of these strategies are satisfactory, then simply state the idea plainly without using a metaphor.

I will make you to become **fishers of men**. (Mark 1:17b ULT)

I will make you to become **people who gather men**.
Now you gather fish. I will make you **gather people**.

To learn more about specific metaphors, see Biblical Imagery — Common Patterns.

(Go back to: [Introduction to Hosea](#); [Hosea 1 General Notes](#); [1:2](#); [1:4](#); [Notes](#); [2:2](#); [2:3](#); [2:4](#); [2:5](#); [2:6](#); [2:7](#); [2:10](#); [2:12](#); [2:15](#); [2:16](#); [2:19](#); [2:22](#); [2:23](#); [Notes](#); [Notes](#); [4:1](#); [4:2](#); [4:5](#); [4:8](#); [4:12](#); [4:14](#); [4:16](#); [4:19](#); [Notes](#); [5:1](#); [5:2](#); [5:10](#); [5:11](#); [5:13](#); [5:14](#); [5:15](#); [Notes](#); [6:5](#); [6:11](#); [Notes](#); [7:1](#); [7:2](#); [7:4](#); [7:6](#); [7:7](#); [7:8](#); [7:9](#); [7:10](#); [7:12](#); [7:14](#); [7:15](#); [8:1](#); [8:5](#); [8:7](#); [8:8](#); [8:9](#); [9:3](#); [9:6](#); [9:8](#); [9:12](#); [9:13](#); [9:16](#); [10:1](#); [10:2](#); [10:4](#); [10:9](#); [10:11](#); [10:12](#); [10:13](#); [Notes](#); [11:1](#); [11:3](#); [11:10](#); [11:12](#); [12:1](#); [12:2](#); [12:8](#); [12:14](#); [13:1](#); [13:6](#); [13:12](#); [13:13](#); [13:14](#); [13:15](#); [Notes](#); [14:1](#); [14:4](#); [14:5](#); [14:7](#); [14:8](#); [14:9](#))

Metonymy

Description

Metonymy is a figure of speech in which an item (either physical or abstract) is called not by its own name, but by the name of something closely associated with it. A metonym is a word or phrase used as a substitute for something that it is associated with.

This page answers the question: *What is a metonymy?*

In order to understand this topic, it would be good to read:

[\[\[rc://en/ta/man/translate/figs-intro\]\]](#)

... and **the blood** of Jesus his Son cleanses us from every sin. (1 John 1:7b ULT)

The blood represents Christ's death.

And he took **the cup** in the same way after supper, saying, "**This cup** is the new covenant in my blood, which is poured out for you." (Luke 22:20 ULT)

The cup represents the wine that is in the cup.

Metonymy can be used

- as a shorter way of referring to something
- to make an abstract idea more meaningful by referring to it with the name of a physical object associated with it

Reason This Is a Translation Issue

The Bible uses metonymy very often. Speakers of some languages are not familiar with metonymy and they may not recognize it when they read it in the Bible. If they do not recognize the metonymy, they will not understand the passage or, worse yet, they will get a wrong understanding of the passage. Whenever a metonym is used, people need to be able to understand what it represents.

Examples From the Bible

The Lord God will give to him **the throne** of his father David. (Luke 1:32b ULT)

A throne represents the authority of a king. "Throne" is a metonym for "kingly authority," "kingship," or "reign." This means that God would make him become a king who would follow King David.

Then immediately his **mouth** was opened (Luke 1:64a ULT)

The mouth here represents the power to speak. This means that he was able to talk again.

Who warned you to flee from **the wrath** that is coming? (Luke 3:7b ULT)

The word "wrath" or "anger" is a metonym for "punishment." God was extremely angry with the people and, as a result, he would punish them.

Translation Strategies

If people would easily understand the metonym, consider using it. Otherwise, here are some options.

- (1) Use the metonym along with the name of the thing it represents.
- (2) Use only the name of the thing the metonym represents.

Examples of Translation Strategies Applied

- (1) Use the metonym along with the name of the thing it represents.

And he took the cup in the same way after the supper, saying, “**This cup** is the new covenant in my blood, which is poured out for you.” (Luke 22:20 ULT)

He took the cup in the same way after supper, saying, “**The wine in this cup** is the new covenant in my blood, which is poured out for you.”

This verse also contains a second metonym: The cup, (representing the wine it contains) also represents the new covenant made with the blood Christ shed for us.

- (2) Use the name of the thing the metonym represents.

The Lord God will give him **the throne** of his father David. (Luke 1:32b ULT)

“The Lord God will give him **the kingly authority** of his father, David.”
or:
“The Lord God will **make him king** like his ancestor, King David.”

Who warned you to flee from **the wrath** that is coming? (Luke 3:7b ULT)

“Who warned you to flee from God’s coming **punishment**?”

To learn about some common metonymies, see [Biblical Imagery — Common Metonymies](#).

(Go back to: [Hosea 1:5](#); [2:5](#); [2:9](#); [2:10](#); [2:18](#); [3:5](#); [Notes](#); [4:2](#); [4:7](#); [4:17](#); [4:19](#); [5:3](#); [6:7](#); [6:8](#); [6:10](#); [7:6](#); [7:9](#); [7:16](#); [8:5](#); [9:2](#); [9:6](#); [9:13](#); [9:15](#); [10:2](#); [10:11](#); [10:15](#); [11:6](#); [11:8](#); [11:12](#); [12:1](#); [12:2](#); [12:5](#); [12:9](#); [12:14](#); [13:16](#); [14:2](#))

Numbers

Description

There are many numbers in the Bible. They can be written as words (“five”) or as numerals (“5”). Some numbers are very large, such as “two hundred” (200), “twenty-two thousand” (22,000), or “one hundred million” (100,000,000). Some languages do not have words for all of these numbers. Translators need to decide how to translate numbers and whether to write them as words or numerals.

This page answers the question: *How do I translate numbers?*

In order to understand this topic, it would be good to read:

[[rc://en/ta/man/translate/translate-unknown]]

Some numbers are exact and others are rounded.

▮ Abram was **86** years old when Hagar bore Ishmael to Abram. (Genesis 16:16 ULT)

Eighty-six (86) is an exact number.

▮ That day about **3,000** of the people died. (Exodus 32:28b ULT)

Here the number three thousand (3,000) is a round number. It may have been a little more than that or a little less than that. The word “about” shows that it is not an exact number.

Reason This Is a Translation Issue

Some languages do not have words for some of these numbers.

Translation Principles

- Exact numbers should be translated as closely and specifically as they can be.
- Rounded numbers can be translated more generally.

Examples From the Bible

▮ When Jared had lived **162** years, he became the father of Enoch. After he became the father of Enoch, Jared lived **800** years. He became the father of more sons and daughters. Jared lived **962** years, and then he died. (Genesis 5:18-20 ULT)

The numbers 162, 800, and 962 are exact numbers and should be translated with something as close to those numbers as possible.

▮ Our sister, may you be the mother of **thousands of ten thousands**. (Genesis 24:60b ULT)

This is a rounded number. It does not say exactly how many descendants she should have, but it was a huge number of them.

Translation Strategies

- (1) Write numbers using numerals.
- (2) Write numbers using your language’s words or the Gateway Language words for those numbers.
- (3) Write numbers using words, and put the numerals in parentheses after them.

(4) Combine words for large numbers.

(5) Use a very general expression for very large rounded numbers and write the numeral in parentheses afterward.

Examples of Translation Strategies Applied

We will use the following verse in our examples:

Now, see, at great effort I have prepared for Yahweh's house **100,000** talents of gold, **1,000,000** talents of silver, and bronze and iron in large quantities. (1 Chronicles 22:14a ULT)

(1) Write numbers using numerals.

I have prepared for Yahweh's house **100,000** talents of gold, **1,000,000** talents of silver, and bronze and iron in large quantities.

(2) Write numbers using your language's words or the Gateway Language words for those numbers.

I have prepared for Yahweh's house **one hundred thousand** talents of gold, **one million** talents of silver, and bronze and iron in large quantities.

(3) Write numbers using words, and put the numerals in parenthesis after them.

I have prepared for Yahweh's house one **hundred thousand (100,000)** talents of gold, **one million (1,000,000)** talents of silver, and bronze and iron in large quantities.

(4) Combine words for large numbers.

I have prepared for Yahweh's house **one hundred thousand** talents of gold, **a thousand thousand** talents of silver, and bronze and iron in large quantities.

(5) Use a very general expression for very large rounded numbers and write the numeral in parentheses afterward.

I have prepared for Yahweh's house **a great amount of gold (100,000 talents), ten times that amount of silver (1,000,000 talents)**, and bronze and iron in large quantities.

Consistency

Be consistent in your translations. Decide how the numbers will be translated, using numbers or numerals. There are different ways of being consistent.

- Use words to represent numbers all of the time. (You might have very long words.)
- Use numerals to represent numbers all of the time.
- Use words to represent the numbers that your language has words for and use numerals for the numbers that your language does not have words for.
- Use words for low numbers and numerals for high numbers.
- Use words for numbers that require few words and numerals for numbers that require more than a few words.
- Use words to represent numbers, and write the numerals in parentheses after them.

Consistency in the ULT and UST

The *unfoldingWord*® *Literal Text* (ULT) and the *unfoldingWord*® *Simplified Text* (UST) use words for the numbers one through ten and use numerals for all numbers above ten.

When Adam had lived **130** years, he became the father of a son in his own likeness, after his image, and he called his name Seth. After Adam became the father of Seth, he lived **800** years. He became the father of more sons and daughters. Adam lived **930** years, and then he died. (Genesis 5:3-5 ULT)

Next we recommend you learn about:

[Ordinal Numbers](#)

[[rc://en/ta/man/translate/translate-fraction]]

(Go back to: [Hosea 3:2](#); [6:2](#); [8:12](#))

Ordinal Numbers

Description

Ordinal numbers are used in the Bible mainly to tell the position of something in a list.

And God has indeed appointed some in the church, **first** apostles, **second** prophets, **third** teachers, then miracles. (1 Corinthians 12:28a ULT)

This page answers the question: *What are ordinal numbers and how can I translate them?*

In order to understand this topic, it would be good to read:

[Numbers](#)

This is a list of workers that God gave to the church in their order.

Ordinal Numbers in English

Most ordinal numbers in English simply have “-th” added to the end.

Numeral	Number	Ordinal Number
4	four	fourth
10	ten	tenth
100	one hundred	one hundredth
1,000	one thousand	one thousandth

Some ordinal numbers in English do not follow that pattern.

Numeral	Number	Ordinal Number
1	one	first
2	two	second
3	three	third
5	five	fifth
12	twelve	twelfth

Reason This Is a Translation Issue

Some languages do not have special numbers for showing the order of items in a list. There are different ways to deal with this.

Examples From the Bible

The **first** lot went to Jehoiarib, the **second** to Jedaiah, the **third** to Harim, the **fourth** to Seorim ... the **twenty-third** to Delaiah, and the **twenty-fourth** to Maaziah. (1 Chronicles 24:7-18 ULT)

The people cast lots and one went to each of these people in the order given.

You must place in it four rows of precious stones. The **first** row must have a ruby, a topaz, and a garnet. The **second** row must have an emerald, a sapphire, and a diamond. The **third** row must have a jacinth, an agate, and an amethyst. The **fourth** row must have a beryl, and an onyx, and a jasper. They must be mounted in gold settings. (Exodus 28:17-20 ULT)

This describes four rows of stones. The first row is probably the top row, and the fourth row is probably the bottom row.

Translation Strategies

If your language has ordinal numbers and using them would give the right meaning, consider using them. If not, here are some strategies to consider:

- (1) Use “one” with the first item and “another” or “the next” with the rest.
- (2) Tell the total number of items and then list them or the things associated with them.

Examples of Translation Strategies Applied

- (1) Tell the total number of items, and use “one” with the first item and “another” or “the next” with the rest.

The first lot went to Jehoiarib, the second to Jedaiah, the third to Harim, the fourth to Seorim ... the twenty-third to Delaiah, and the twenty-fourth to Maaziah. (1 Chronicles 24:7-18 ULT)

There were **24** lots. **One lot** went to Jehoiarib, **another** to Jedaiah, **another** to Harim ... **another** to Delaiah, **and the last** went to Maaziah.

There were **24** lots. **One lot** went to Jehoiarib, **the next** to Jedaiah, **the next** to Harim ... **the next** to Delaiah, **and the last** went to Maaziah.

A river went out of Eden to water the garden. From there it divided and became **four** rivers. The name of **the first** is Pishon. It is the one which flows throughout the whole land of Havilah, where there is gold. The gold of that land is good. There is also bdellium and the onyx stone there. The name of **the second** river is Gihon. This one flows throughout the whole land of Cush. The name of **the third** river is Tigris, which flows east of Asshur. **The fourth** river is the Euphrates. (Genesis 2:10-14 ULT)

A river went out of Eden to water the garden. From there it divided and became **four** rivers. The name of **one** is Pishon. It is the one which flows throughout the whole land of Havilah, where there is gold. The gold of that land is good. There is also bdellium and the onyx stone there. The name of **the next** river is Gihon. This one flows throughout the whole land of Cush. The name of **the next** river is Tigris, which flows east of Asshur. The **last** river is the Euphrates.

- (2) Tell the total number of items and then list them or the things associated with them.

The **first** lot went to Jehoiarib, the **second** to Jedaiah, the **third** to Harim, the **fourth** to Seorim ... the **twenty-third** to Delaiah, and the **twenty-fourth** to Maaziah. (1 Chronicles 24:7-18 ULT)

They cast **24** lots. The lots went to Jerhoiarib, Jedaiah, Harim, Seorim ... Delaiah, and Maaziah.

Next we recommend you learn about:

[[rc://en/ta/man/translate/translate-fraction]]

(Go back to: [Hosea 6:2](#))

Parallelism

Description

Parallelism is a poetic device in which two phrases or clauses that are similar in structure or idea are used together. The following are some of the different kinds of parallelism.

- The second clause or phrase means the same as the first. This is called synonymous parallelism.
- The second clarifies or strengthens the meaning of the first.
- The second completes what is said in the first.
- The second says something that contrasts with the first, but adds to the same idea.

Parallelism is most commonly found in Old Testament poetry, such as in the books of Psalms and Proverbs. It also occurs in Greek in the New Testament, both in the four gospels and in the apostles' letters.

This article will only discuss synonymous parallelism, the kind in which the two parallel phrases mean the same thing, because that is the kind that presents a problem for translation. Note that we use the term "synonymous parallelism" for long phrases or clauses that have the same meaning. We use the term "**doublet**" for words or very short phrases that mean basically the same thing and are used together.

In the poetry of the original languages, synonymous parallelism has several effects:

- It shows that something is very important by saying it more than once and in more than one way.
- It helps the hearer to think more deeply about the idea by saying it in different ways.
- It makes the language more beautiful and raises it above the ordinary way of speaking.

Reason This Is a Translation Issue

Some languages would not use synonymous parallelism. They would either think it odd that someone said the same thing twice, or, since it is in the Bible, they would think that the two phrases must have some difference in meaning. For them it would be confusing, rather than beautiful. They would not understand that the repetition of the idea in different words serves to emphasize the idea.

Examples From the Bible

Your word is a lamp to my feet
and a light for my path. (Psalm 119:105 ULT)

Both parts of the sentence are metaphors saying that God's word teaches people how to live. That is the single idea. The words "lamp" and "light" are similar in meaning because they refer to light. The words "my feet" and "my path" are related because they refer to a person walking. Walking is a metaphor for living.

You make him to rule over the works of your hands;
you have put all things under his feet (Psalm 8:6 ULT)

Both lines say that God made man the ruler of everything. "To rule over" is the same idea as putting things "under his feet," and "the works of your [God's] hands" is the same idea as "all things."

This page answers the question: *What is parallelism?*

In order to understand this topic, it would be good to read:

[[rc://en/ta/man/translate/figs-intro]]

Yahweh sees everything a person does
and watches all the paths he takes. (Proverbs 5:21 ULT)

The first phrase and the second phrase mean the same thing. There are three ideas that are the same between these two phrases. “Sees” corresponds to “watches,” “everything...does” corresponds to “all the paths...takes,” and “a person” corresponds to “he.”

Praise Yahweh, all you nations;
exalt him, all you peoples! (Psalm 117:1 ULT)

Both parts of this verse tell people everywhere to praise Yahweh. The words ‘Praise’ and ‘exalt’ mean the same thing. The words ‘Yahweh’ and ‘him’ refer to the same person. The terms ‘all you nations’ and ‘all you peoples’ refer to the same people.

For Yahweh has a lawsuit with his people,
and he will fight in court against Israel. (Micah 6:2b ULT)

The two parts of this verse say that Yahweh has a serious disagreement with his people, Israel. These are not two different disagreements or two different groups of people.

Translation Strategies

For most kinds of parallelism, it is good to translate both of the clauses or phrases. For synonymous parallelism, it is good to translate both clauses if people in your language understand that the purpose of saying something twice is to strengthen a single idea. But if your language does not use parallelism in this way, then consider using one of the following translation strategies.

- (1) Combine the ideas of both clauses into one.
- (2) If it appears that the clauses are used together to show that what they say is really true, you could combine the ideas of both clauses into one and include words that emphasize the truth such as “truly” or “certainly.”
- (3) If it appears that the clauses are used together to intensify an idea in them, you could combine the ideas of both clauses into one and use words like “very,” “completely,” or “all.”

Examples of Translation Strategies Applied

- (1) Combine the ideas of both clauses into one.

Until now you have dealt deceitfully with me and you have spoken lies to me. (Judges 16:13, ULT)

Delilah expressed this idea twice to emphasize that she was very upset.

Until now you have deceived me with your lies.
Yahweh sees everything a person does and watches all the paths he takes. (Proverbs 5:21 ULT)

The phrase “all the paths he takes” is a metaphor for “all he does.”

Yahweh pays attention to everything a person does.
For Yahweh has a lawsuit with his people, and he will fight in court against Israel. (Micah 6:2 ULT)

This parallelism describes one serious disagreement that Yahweh had with one group of people. If this is unclear, the phrases can be combined:

For Yahweh has a lawsuit with his people, Israel.

(2) If it appears that the clauses are used together to show that what they say is really true, you could combine the ideas of both clauses into one and include words that emphasize the truth such as “truly” or “certainly.”

Yahweh sees everything a person does and watches all the paths he takes. (Proverbs 5:21 ULT)

Yahweh truly sees everything a person does.

You make him to rule over the works of your hands; you have put all things under his feet (Psalm 8:6 ULT)

You have certainly made him to rule over everything that you have created.

(3) If it appears that the clauses are used together to intensify an idea in them, you could combine the ideas of both clauses into one and use words like “very,” “completely” or “all.”

Until now you have dealt deceitfully with me and you have spoken lies to me. (Judges 16:13, ULT)

All you have done is lie to me.

Yahweh sees everything a person does and watches all the paths he takes. (Proverbs 5:21 ULT)

Yahweh sees absolutely everything that a person does.

Next we recommend you learn about:

[Personification](#)

(Go back to: [Hosea 2:6](#); [5:3](#); [5:11](#); [6:1](#); [9:5](#); [9:7](#); [9:10](#); [11:4](#); [11:12](#); [12:8](#); [13:12](#); [13:14](#); [14:9](#))

Personification

Description

Personification is a figure of speech in which someone speaks of something as if it could do things that animals or people can do. People often do this because it makes it easier to talk about things that we cannot see:

Such as wisdom:

Does not Wisdom call out? (Proverbs 8:1a ULT)

Or sin:

Sin crouches at the door. (Genesis 4:7b ULT)

People also use personification because it is sometimes easier to talk about people's relationships with non-human things such as wealth as if they were relationships between people.

You cannot serve God and wealth. (Matthew 6:24b ULT)

In each case, the purpose of the personification is to highlight a certain characteristic of the non-human thing. As in metaphor, the reader needs to think of the way that the thing is like a certain kind of person.

Reasons This Is a Translation Issue

- Some languages do not use personification.
- Some languages use personification only in certain situations.

Examples From the Bible

You cannot **serve** God and wealth. (Matthew 6:24b ULT)

Jesus speaks of wealth as if it were a master whom people might serve. Loving money and basing one's decisions on it is like serving it as a slave would serve his master.

Does not Wisdom **call** out? Does not Understanding **raise her voice**? (Proverbs 8:1 ULT)

The author speaks of wisdom and understanding as if they were woman who calls out to teach people. This means that they are not something hidden, but something obvious that people should pay attention to.

Translation Strategies

If the personification would be understood clearly, consider using it. If it would not be understood, here are some other ways for translating it.

- (1) Add words or phrases to make the human (or animal) characteristic clear.
- (2) In addition to Strategy (1), use words such as "like" or "as" to show that the sentence is not to be understood literally.
- (3) Find a way to translate it without the personification.

This page answers the question: *What is personification?*

In order to understand this topic, it would be good to read:

[[rc://en/ta/man/translate/figs-intro]]

Examples of Translation Strategies Applied

(1) Add words or phrases to make the human (or animal) characteristic clear.

Sin crouches at the door. (Genesis 4:7b ULT) — God speaks of sin as if it were a wild animal that is waiting for the chance to attack. This shows how dangerous sin is. An additional phrase can be added to make this danger clear.

Sin is at your door, **waiting to attack you**.

(2) In addition to Strategy (1), use words such as “like” or “as” to show that the sentence is not to be understood literally.

Sin crouches at the door. (Genesis 4:7b ULT) — This can be translated with the word “as.”

Sin is crouching at the door, **just as a wild animal does as it waits to attack a person..**

(3) Find a way to translate it without the personification.

Even the **winds and the sea obey him**. (Matthew 8:27b ULT) — The men speak of the “wind and the sea” as if they are able to hear and obey Jesus, just as people can. This could also be translated without the idea of obedience by speaking of Jesus controlling them.

He even **controls the winds and the sea**.

NOTE: We have broadened our definition of “personification” to include “zoomorphism” (speaking of other things as if they had animal characteristics) and “anthropomorphism” (speaking of non-human things as if they had human characteristics) because the translation strategies for them are the same.

Next we recommend you learn about:

[Apostrophe](#)

[[rc://en/ta/man/translate/bita-part1]]

(Go back to: [Hosea 2:22](#); [4:11](#); [4:12](#); [5:5](#); [5:7](#); [7:10](#); [9:2](#); [9:4](#); [13:14](#))

Rhetorical Question

A rhetorical question is a question that a speaker asks when he is more interested in expressing his attitude about something than in getting information about it. Speakers use rhetorical questions to express deep emotion or to encourage hearers to think deeply about something. The Bible contains many rhetorical questions, often to express surprise, to rebuke or scold the hearer, or to teach. Speakers of some languages use rhetorical questions for other purposes as well.

This page answers the question: *What are rhetorical questions and how can I translate them?*

In order to understand this topic, it would be good to read:

[\[\[rc://en/ta/man/translate/figs-intro\]\]](#)

[\[\[rc://en/ta/man/translate/figs-sentencetypes\]\]](#)

Description

A rhetorical question is a question that strongly expresses the speaker's attitude toward something. Often the speaker is not looking for information at all. Or, if he is asking for information, it is not usually the information that the question appears to ask for. The speaker is more interested in expressing his attitude than in getting information.

But those who stood by said, **“Are you insulting the high priest of God?”** (Acts 23:4 ULT)

The people who asked Paul this question were not asking if he was insulting God's high priest. Rather, they used this question to accuse Paul of insulting the high priest.

The Bible contains many rhetorical questions. These rhetorical questions might be used for the purposes: of expressing attitudes or feelings, rebuking people, teaching something by reminding people of something they know and encouraging them to apply it to something new, or introducing something they want to talk about.

Reasons This Is a Translation Issue

- Some languages do not use rhetorical questions; for them a question is always a request for information.
- Some languages use rhetorical questions, but for purposes that are different or more limited than in the Bible.
- Because of these differences between languages, some readers might misunderstand the purpose of a rhetorical question in the Bible.

Examples From the Bible

Do you not still rule the kingdom of Israel? (1 Kings 21:7b ULT)

Jezebel used the question above to remind King Ahab of something he already knew: he still ruled the kingdom of Israel. The rhetorical question made her point more strongly than if she had merely stated it, because it forced Ahab to admit the point himself. She did this in order to rebuke him for being unwilling to take over a poor man's property. She was implying that, since he was the king of Israel, he had the power to take the man's property.

Will a virgin forget her jewelry, a bride her veils? Yet my people have forgotten me for days without number! (Jeremiah 2:32 ULT)

God used the question above to remind his people of something they already knew: a young woman would never forget her jewelry or a bride forget her veils. He then rebuked his people for forgetting him who is so much greater than those things.

Why did I not die when I came out from the womb? (Job 3:11a ULT)

Job used the question above to show deep emotion. This rhetorical question expresses how sad he was that he did not die as soon as he was born. He wished that he had not lived.

And how has this happened to me that the mother of my Lord would come to me? (Luke 1:43 ULT)

Elizabeth used the question above to show how surprised and happy she was that the mother of her Lord came to her.

Or what man is there among you, of whom his son will ask for a loaf of bread, but he will give him a stone? (Matthew 7:9 ULT)

Jesus used the question above to remind the people of something they already knew: a good father would never give his son something bad to eat. By introducing this point, Jesus could go on to teach them about God with his next rhetorical question:

Therefore, if you who are evil know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your Father who is in heaven give good things to those who ask him? (Matthew 7:11 ULT)

Jesus used this question to teach the people in an emphatic way that God gives good things to those who ask him.

What is the kingdom of God like, and what can I compare it to? It is like a mustard seed that a man took and threw into his garden ... (Luke 13:18b-19a ULT)

Jesus used the question above to introduce what he was going to talk about. He was about to compare the kingdom of God to something. In this case, he compared the kingdom of God to a mustard seed.

Translation Strategies

In order to translate a rhetorical question accurately, first be sure that the question you are translating truly is a rhetorical question and is not an information question. Ask yourself, "Does the person asking the question already know the answer to the question?" If so, it is a rhetorical question. Or, if no one answers the question, did the person who asked it expect to receive an answer? If not, it is a rhetorical question.

When you are sure that the question is rhetorical, then be sure that you understand the purpose for the rhetorical question. Is it to encourage or rebuke or shame the hearer? Is it to bring up a new topic? Is it to do something else?

When you know the purpose of the rhetorical question, then think of the most natural way to express that purpose in the target language. It might be as a question, or a statement, or an exclamation.

If using the rhetorical question would be natural and give the right meaning in your language, consider doing so. If not, here are other options:

- (1) Add the answer after the question.
- (2) Change the rhetorical question to a statement or exclamation.
- (3) Change the rhetorical question to a statement, and then follow it with a short question.
- (4) Change the form of the question so that it communicates in your language what the original speaker communicated in his.

Examples of Translation Strategies Applied

- (1) Add the answer after the question.

Will a virgin forget her jewelry, a bride her veils? Yet my people have forgotten me for days without number! (Jeremiah 2:32 ULT)

Will a virgin forget her jewelry, a bride her veils? **Of course not!** Yet my people have forgotten me for days without number!

Or what man is there among you, of whom his son will ask for a loaf of bread, but he will give him a stone? (Matthew 7:9 ULT)

Or what man is there among you, of whom his son will ask for a loaf of bread, but he will give him a stone? **None of you would do that!**

(2) Change the rhetorical question to a statement or exclamation.

What is the kingdom of God like, and what can I compare it to? It is like a mustard seed. (Luke 13:18-19a ULT)

This is what the kingdom of God is like. It is like a mustard seed ...

Are you insulting the high priest of God? (Acts 23:4b ULT) (Acts 23:4 ULT)

You should not insult God's high priest!

Why did I not die when I came out from the womb? (Job 3:11a ULT)

I wish I had died when I came out from the womb!

And how has this happened to me that the mother of my Lord should come to me? (Luke 1:43 ULT)

How wonderful it is that the mother of my Lord has come to me!

(3) Change the rhetorical question to a statement, and then follow it with a short question.

Do you not still rule the kingdom of Israel? (1 Kings 21:7b ULT)

You still rule the kingdom of Israel, **do you not?**

(4) Change the form of the question so that it communicates in your language what the original speaker communicated in his.

Or what man is there among you, of whom his son will ask for a loaf of bread, but he will give him a stone? (Matthew 7:9 ULT)

If your son asks you for a loaf of bread, **would you give him a stone?**

Will a virgin forget her jewelry, a bride her veils? Yet my people have forgotten me for days without number! (Jeremiah 2:32 ULT)

What virgin would forget her jewelry, and what bride would forget her veils? Yet my people have forgotten me for days without number

(Go back to: [Hosea 4:16](#); [6:4](#); [8:5](#); [9:5](#); [9:14](#); [10:3](#); [10:9](#); [Notes](#); [11:5](#); [11:8](#); [Notes](#); [13:9](#); [13:10](#); [13:14](#); [14:8](#); [14:9](#))

Simile

Description

A simile is a comparison of two things that are not normally thought to be similar. The simile focuses on a particular trait the two items have in common, and it includes the words “like,” “as,” or “than.”

This page answers the question: *What is a simile?*

In order to understand this topic, it would be good to read:

[[rc://en/ta/man/translate/figs-intro]]

When he saw the crowds, he had compassion for them, because they were troubled and discouraged, **like sheep not having a shepherd**. (Matthew 9:36)

Jesus compared the crowds of people to sheep without a shepherd. Sheep grow frightened when they do not have a good shepherd to lead them in safe places. The crowds were like that because they did not have good religious leaders.

See, I send you out **as sheep in the midst of wolves**, so be as wise **as the serpents** and harmless **as the doves**. (Matthew 10:16 ULT)

Jesus compared his disciples to sheep and their enemies to wolves. Wolves attack sheep; Jesus' enemies would attack his disciples.

For the word of God is living and active and sharper **than any two-edged sword**. (Hebrews 4:12a ULT)

God's word is compared to a two-edged sword. A two-edged sword is a weapon that can easily cut through a person's flesh. God's word is very effective in showing what is in a person's heart and thoughts.

Purposes of Simile

- A simile can teach about something that is unknown by showing how it is similar to something that is known.
- A simile can emphasize a particular trait, sometimes in a way that gets people's attention.
- Similes help form a picture in the mind or help the reader experience what he is reading about more fully.

Reasons This Is a Translation Issue

- People may not know how the two items are similar.
- People may not be familiar with both of the items being compared.

Examples From the Bible

Suffer hardship with me, **as a good soldier** of Christ Jesus. (2 Timothy 2:3 ULT)

In this simile, Paul compares suffering with what soldiers endure, and he encourages Timothy to follow their example.

Just as the lightning flashing from a place under the sky shines to another place under the sky, so will the Son of Man be. (Luke 17:24b ULT)

This verse does not tell how the Son of Man will be like the lightning. But in context we can understand from the verses before it that just as lightning 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: [Hosea 1:10](#); [2:3](#); [4:16](#); [Notes](#); [5:3](#); [5:10](#); [5:12](#); [5:14](#); [6:3](#); [6:5](#); [7:4](#); [7:6](#); [7:7](#); [7:11](#); [7:12](#); [7:16](#); [8:9](#); [9:4](#); [9:10](#); [9:11](#); [10:4](#); [10:7](#); [11:4](#); [11:10](#); [11:11](#); [12:11](#); [13:3](#); [13:7](#); [13:8](#); [14:5](#); [14:6](#); [14:7](#); [14:8](#))

Symbolic Action

Description

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.

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:

[[rc://en/ta/man/translate/translate-unknown]]

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: [Hosea 3:1](#))

Synecdoche

Description

Synecdoche is a figure of speech in which a speaker uses a part of something to refer to the whole thing, or uses the whole to refer to a part.

■ **My soul** magnifies the Lord. (Luke 1:46b ULT)

Mary was very happy about what the Lord was doing, so she said “my soul,” which means the inner, emotional part of herself, to refer to her whole self.

■ So **the Pharisees** said to him, “Look, why are they doing that which is not lawful?” (Mark 2:24a ULT)

The Pharisees who were standing there did not all say the same words at the same time. Instead, it is more likely that one man representing the group said those words.

Reasons This Is a Translation Issue

- Some readers may not recognize the synecdoche and thus misunderstand the words as a literal statement.
- Some readers may realize that they are not to understand the words literally, but they may not know what the meaning is.

Example From the Bible

■ Then I looked on all the deeds that **my hands** had accomplished. (Ecclesiastes 2:11a ULT)

“My hands” is a synecdoche for the whole person because clearly the arms and the rest of the body and the mind were also involved in the person’s accomplishments. The hands are chosen to represent the person because they are the parts of the body most directly involved in the work.

Translation Strategies

If the synecdoche would be natural and give the right meaning in your language, consider using it. If not, here is another option:

(1) State specifically what the synecdoche refers to.

Examples of Translation Strategies Applied

(1) State specifically what the synecdoche refers to.

■ **“My soul** magnifies the Lord.” (Luke 1:46b ULT)

■ **“I** magnify the Lord.”

So **the Pharisees** said to him ... (Mark 2:24a ULT)

■ **A representative of the Pharisees** said to him ...

Then I looked on all the deeds that **my hands** had accomplished. (Ecclesiastes 2:11a ULT)

This page answers the question: *What is a synecdoche, and how can I translate such a thing into my language?*

In order to understand this topic, it would be good to read:

[[rc://en/ta/man/translate/figs-intro]]

I looked on all the deeds that I had accomplished

Next we recommend you learn about:

[Metonymy](#)

[[rc://en/ta/man/translate/bit-part2]]

(Go back to: [Hosea 2:17](#); [4:17](#); [5:3](#); [5:8](#); [5:11](#); [7:2](#); [7:8](#); [9:8](#); [9:13](#); [10:2](#); [12:1](#); [12:10](#); [13:1](#); [14:3](#))



unfoldingWord® Translation Words

Version 27

adultery, adulterous, adulterer, adulteress

Definition:

The term “adultery” refers to a sin that occurs when a married person has sexual relations with someone who is not that person’s spouse. Both of them are guilty of adultery. The term “adulterous” describes this kind of behavior or any person who commits this sin.

- The term “adulterer” refers generally to any person who commits adultery.
- Sometimes the term “adulteress” is used to specify that it was a woman who committed adultery.
- Adultery breaks the promises that a husband and wife made to each other in their covenant of marriage.
- God commanded the Israelites to not commit adultery.

Translation Suggestions:

- If the target language does not have one word that means “adultery,” this term could be translated with a phrase such as “having sexual relations with someone else’s wife” or “being intimate with another person’s spouse.”
- Some languages may have an indirect way of talking about adultery, such as “sleeping with someone else’s spouse” or “being unfaithful to one’s wife.” (See: [euphemism](#))

(See also: [commit](#), [covenant](#), sexual immorality, sleep with, [faithful](#))

Bible References:

- Exodus 20:14
- Hosea 4:1-2
- Luke 16:18
- Matthew 5:28
- Matthew 12:39
- Revelation 2:22

Examples from the Bible stories:

- **13:6** “Do not commit **adultery**.”
- **28:2** Do not commit **adultery**.
- **34:7** “The religious leader prayed like this, ‘Thank you, God, that I am not a sinner like other men—such as robbers, unjust men, **adulterers**, or even like that tax collector.’”

Word Data:

- Strong’s: H5003, H5004, G34280, G34290, G34300, G34310, G34320

(Go back to: [Hosea 2 General 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: [Hosea 14 General Notes](#))

covenant

Definition:

In the Bible, the term “covenant” refers to a formal, binding agreement between two parties that one or both parties must fulfill.

- This agreement can be between individuals, between groups of people, or between God and people.
- When people make a covenant with each other, they promise that they will do something, and they must do it.
- Examples of human covenants include marriage covenants, business agreements, and treaties between countries.
- Throughout the Bible, God made several different covenants with his people.
- In some of the covenants, God promised to fulfill his part without conditions. For example, when God established his covenant with mankind promising to never destroy the earth again with a worldwide flood, this promise had no conditions for people to fulfill.
- In other covenants, God promised to fulfill his part only if the people obeyed him and fulfilled their part of the covenant.

The term “new covenant” refers to the commitment or agreement God made with his people through the sacrifice of his Son, Jesus.

- God’s “new covenant” was explained in the part of the Bible called the “New Testament.”
- This new covenant is in contrast to the “old” or “former” covenant that God had made with the Israelites in Old Testament times.
- The new covenant is better than the old one because it is based on the sacrifice of Jesus, which completely atoned for people’s sins forever. The sacrifices made under the old covenant did not do this.
- God writes the new covenant on the hearts those who become believers in Jesus. This causes them to want to obey God and to begin to live holy lives.
- The new covenant will be completely fulfilled in the end times when God establishes his reign on earth. Everything will once again be very good, as it was when God first created the world.

Translation Suggestions:

- Depending on the context, ways to translate this term could include, “binding agreement” or “formal commitment” or “pledge” or “contract.”
- Some languages may have different words for covenant depending on whether one party or both parties have made a promise they must keep. If the covenant is one-sided, it could be translated as “promise” or “pledge.”
- Make sure the translation of this term does not sound like people proposed the covenant. In all cases of covenants between God and people, it was God who initiated the covenant.
- The term “new covenant” could be translated as “new formal agreement” or “new pact” or “new contract.”
- The word “new” in these expressions has the meaning of “fresh” or “new kind of” or “another.”

(See also: [covenant](#), promise)

Bible References:

- Genesis 9:12
- Genesis 17:7
- Genesis 31:44
- Exodus 34:10-11
- Joshua 24:24-26

- 2 Samuel 23:5
- 2 Kings 18:11-12
- Mark 14:24
- Luke 1:73
- Luke 22:20
- Acts 7:8
- 1 Corinthians 11:25-26
- 2 Corinthians 3:6
- Galatians 3:17-18
- Hebrews 12:24

Examples from the Bible stories:

- **4:9** Then God made a **covenant** with Abram. A **covenant** is an agreement between two parties.
- **5:4** "I will make Ishmael a great nation, too, but my **covenant** will be with Isaac."
- **6:4** After a long time, Abraham died and all of the promises that God had made to him in the **covenant** were passed on to Isaac.
- **7:10** "The **covenant** promises God had promised to Abraham and then to Isaac now passed on to Jacob."
- **13:2** God said to Moses and the people of Israel, "If you will obey my voice and keep my **covenant**, you will be my prized possession, a kingdom of priests, and a holy nation."
- **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."
- **15:13** Then Joshua reminded the people of their obligation to obey the **covenant** that God had made with the Israelites at Sinai.
- **21:5** Through the prophet Jeremiah, God promised that he would make a **New Covenant**, but not like the covenant God made with Israel at Sinai. 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. The Messiah would start the **New Covenant**.
- **21:14** Through the Messiah's death and resurrection, God would accomplish his plan to save sinners and start the **New Covenant**.
- **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. Do this to remember me every time you drink it."
- **48:11** But God has now made a **New Covenant** that is available to everyone. Because of this **New Covenant**, anyone from any people group can become part of God's people by believing in Jesus.

Word Data:

- Strong's: H1285, H2319, H3772, G08020, G12420, G49340

(Go back to: [Introduction to Hosea](#); [Hosea 1 General Notes](#); [Notes](#); [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:** [Introduction to Hosea](#); [Hosea 1 General 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: [Introduction to Hosea](#); [Hosea 7 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: [Introduction to Hosea](#))

kingdom of Israel

Facts:

What had been the northern part of the nation of Israel became the kingdom of Israel when the twelve tribes of Israel were divided into two kingdoms after Solomon died.

- The kingdom of Israel in the north had ten tribes, and the kingdom of Judah in the south had two tribes.
- The capital city of the kingdom of Israel was Samaria. It was about 50 km from Jerusalem, the capital city of the kingdom of Judah.
- All the kings of the kingdom of Israel were evil. They influenced the people to to serve idols and false gods.
- God sent the Assyrians to attack the kingdom of Israel. Many Israelites were captured and taken away to live in Assyria.
- The Assyrians brought foreigners to live among the remaining people of the kingdom of Israel. These foreigners intermarried with the Israelites, and their descendants became the Samaritan people.

(See also: Assyria, Israel, Judah, Jerusalem, kingdom, Samaria)

Bible References:

- 2 Chronicles 35:18
- Jeremiah 5:11
- Jeremiah 9:26

Examples from the Bible stories:

- **18:8** The other ten tribes of the nation of Israel that rebelled against Rehoboam appointed a man named Jeroboam to be their king. They set up their kingdom in the northern part of the land and were called the **kingdom of Israel**.
- **18:10** The **kingdoms of Judah and Israel** became enemies and often fought against each other.
- **18:11** In the new **kingdom of Israel**, all the kings were evil.
- **20:1** The **kingdoms of Israel** and Judah both sinned against God.
- **20:2** The **kingdom of Israel** was destroyed by the Assyrian Empire, a powerful, cruel nation. The Assyrians killed many people in the **kingdom of Israel**, took away everything of value, and burned much of the country.
- **20:4** Then the Assyrians brought foreigners to live in the land where the **kingdom of Israel** had been. The foreigners rebuilt the destroyed cities and married the Israelites who were left there. The descendants of the Israelites who married foreigners were called Samaritans.

Word Data:

- Strong's: H3478, H4410, H4467, H4468

(Go back to: [Introduction to Hosea](#))

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: [Hosea 14 General 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 worshipping 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: [Hosea 6 General Notes](#); [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: [Hosea 5 General Notes](#); [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: [Hosea 9 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: [Hosea 12 General 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: [Hosea 7 General Notes](#))

sin, sinful, sinner, sinning

Definition:

The term “sin” refers to actions, thoughts, and words that are against God’s will and laws. Sin can also refer to not doing something that God wants us to do.

- Sin includes anything we do that does not obey or please God, even things that other people don’t know about.
- Thoughts and actions that disobey God’s will are called “sinful.”
- Because Adam sinned, all human beings are born with a “sinful nature,” a nature that that controls them and causes them to sin.
- A “sinner” is someone who sins, so every human being is a sinner.
- Sometimes the word “sinners” was used by religious people like the Pharisees to refer to people who didn’t keep the law as well as the Pharisees thought they should.
- The term “sinner” was also used for people who were considered to be worse sinners than other people. For example, this label was given to tax collectors and prostitutes.

Translation Suggestions:

- The term “sin” could be translated with a word or phrase that means “disobedience to God” or “going against God’s will” or “evil behavior and thoughts” or “wrongdoing.”
- To “sin” could also be translated as to “disobey God” or to “do wrong.”
- Depending on the context “sinful” could be translated as “full of wrongdoing” or “wicked” or “immoral” or “evil” or “rebellious against God.”
- Depending on the context the term “sinner” could be translated with a word or phrase that means “person who sins” or “person who does wrong things” or “person who disobeys God” or “person who disobeys the law.”
- The term “sinners” could be translated by a word or phrase that means “very sinful people” or “people considered to be very sinful” or “immoral people.”
- Ways to translate “tax collectors and sinners” could include “people who collect money for the government, and other very sinful people” or “very sinful people, including (even) tax collectors.”
- Make sure the translation of this term can include sinful behavior and thoughts, even those that other people don’t see or know about.
- The term “sin” should be general, and different from the terms for “wickedness” and “evil.”

(See also: disobey, evil, flesh, tax collector)

Bible References:

- 1 Chronicles 9:1-3
- 1 John 1:10
- 1 John 2:2
- 2 Samuel 7:12-14
- Acts 3:19
- Daniel 9:24
- Genesis 4:7
- Hebrews 12:2
- Isaiah 53:11
- Jeremiah 18:23
- Leviticus 4:14
- Luke 15:18
- Matthew 12:31

- Romans 6:23
- Romans 8:4

Examples from the Bible stories:

- **3:15** God said, "I promise I will never again curse the ground because of the evil things people do, or destroy the world by causing a flood, even though people are **sinful** from the time they are children."
- **13:12** God was very angry with them because of their **sin** and planned to destroy them.
- **20:1** The kingdoms of Israel and Judah both **sinned** against God. They broke the covenant that God made with them at Sinai.
- **21:13** The prophets also said that the Messiah would be perfect, having no **sin**. He would die to receive the punishment for other people's **sin**.
- **35:1** One day, Jesus was teaching many tax collectors and other **sinner**s who had gathered to hear him.
- **38:5** Then Jesus took a cup and said, "Drink this. It is my blood of the New Covenant that is poured out for the forgiveness of **sins**."
- **43:11** Peter answered them, "Every one of you should repent and be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ so that God will forgive your **sins**."
- **48:8** We all deserve to die for our **sins**!
- **49:17** Even though you are a Christian, you will still be tempted to **sin**. But God is faithful and says that if you confess your **sins**, he will forgive you. He will give you strength to fight against **sin**.

Word Data:

- Strong's: H0817, H0819, H2398, H2399, H2400, H2401, H2402, H2403, H2408, H2409, H5771, H6588, H7683, H7686, G02640, G02650, G02660, G02680, G03610, G37810, G39000, G42580

(Go back to: [Hosea 4 General Notes](#); [Notes](#); [Notes](#); [Notes](#); [Notes](#); [Notes](#))

Contributors

unfoldingWord® Translation Notes Contributors

Door43 World Missions Community

Aaron Fenlason

Abner Bauman

Adam Van Goor

Alan Bird

Alan Borkenhagen

Alfred Van Dellen

Alice Wright

Allen Bair

Allyson Presswood Nance

Amanda Adams

Andrew Belcher

Andrew Johnson

Andrew Rice

Angelo Palo

Anita Moreau

April Linton

Aurora Lee

Barbara Summers

Barbara White

Becky Hancock

Beryl Carpenter

Bethany Fenlason

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Bob Britting

Bram van den Heuvel

Brian Metzger

Bruce Bridges

Bruce Collier

Bruce Smith

Caleb Worgess

Carlyle Kilmore

Carol Pace

Carol Heim

Caroline Crawford

Caroline Fleming

Caroline S Wong

Carol Lee

Carol Moyer

Carolyn Lafferty

Catherine C Newton

Charese Jackson

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Charlotte Hobbs

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Christian Berry
Christine Harrison
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Craig Lins
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Patty Li
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Linda Homer
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Nancy VanCott
Neal Snook
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Pat Giddens
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Patricia Carson
Patricia Cleveland
Patricia Foster
Patricia Middlebrooks
Paul Mellema
Paula Carlson
Paula Oestreich
Paul Holloway

Paul Nungesser
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Peggyrose Swartzentruber
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Phillip Harms
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Priscilla Enggren
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Rachel Ropp
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Ray Puen
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Sandy Blanes
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Sara Van Cott (Barnes)
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Sharon Peterson
Sharon Shortess
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Sherie Nelson
Sherman Sebastien
Sherry Mosher
Stacey Swanson
Steve Gibbs
Steve Mercier
Susan Langohr
Susan Quigley
Susan Snook

Suzanne Richards
Sylvia Thomas
Sze Suze Lau
Tabitha Price
Tammy L Enns
Tammy White
Teresa Everett-Leone
Teresa Linn
Terri Collins
Theresa Baker
Thomas Jopling
Thomas Nickell
Thomas Warren
Tim Coleman
Tim Ingram
Tim Linn
Tim Lovestrand
Tim Mentink
Tom Penry
Tom William Warren
Toni Shuma
Tracie Pogue
Tricia Coffman
Vicki Ivester
Victoria G DeKraker
Victor M Prieto
Vivian Kamph
Vivian Richardson
Ward Pyles
Warren Blaisdell
Wayne Homer
Wendy Coleman
Wendy Colon
Wilbur Zirk
Wil Gipson
William Carson
William Cline
William Dickerson
William Smitherman
William Wilder
Yvonne Tallent

unfoldingWord® Literal Text Contributors

Nicholas Alsop
Scott Bayer
Larry T Brooks, M.Div., Assemblies of God Theological Seminary
Matt Carlton
George "Drew" Curley, M.Div., PhD, Professor of Biblical Languages
Dan Dennison
Jamie Duguid
Paul M Fahnestock, M.Div. Reformed Theological Seminary, D.Min. Pittsburgh Theological Seminary
Michael Francis
Laura Glassel, MA in Bible Translation
Jesse Griffin, BA Biblical Studies, MA Biblical Languages

Jesse Harris
C. Harry Harriss, M.Div.
Alrick G. Headley, M.Div., Th.M.
Bram van den Heuvel, M.A.
John Huffman
D. Allen Hutchison, MA in Old Testament, MA in New Testament
Jack Messarra
Gene Mullen
Adam W. Nagelvoort, M.Div. Academic Ministries, Columbia International University
Timothy Neu, Ph.D. Biblical Studies
Kristy Nickell
Tom Nickell
Elizabeth Oakes, BA in Religious Studies, Linguistics
Perry Oakes, PhD in Old Testament, MA in Linguistics
James N. Pohlig, M.Div., MA in Linguistics, D. Litt. in Biblical Languages
Ward Pyles, M.Div., Western Baptist Theological Seminary
Susan Quigley, MA in Linguistics
Dean Ropp
Joel D. Ruark, M.A.Th., Th.M., Ph.D. in Old Testament, University of Stellenbosch
Larry Sallee, Th.M Dallas Theological Seminary, D.Min. Columbia Biblical Seminary
Peter Smircich, BA Philosophy
Doug Smith, M.T.S., M.Div., Th.M., Midwestern Baptist Theological Seminary
Leonard Smith
Suzanna Smith
Tim Span
Dave Statezni, BA Orig langs., M.Div. Fuller Theological Seminary
Maria Tijerina
David Trombold, M. Div.
Aaron Valdizan, M.Div., Th.M. in Old Testament, The Masters Seminary
James Vigen
Hendrik "Henry" de Vries
Thomas Warren, M.Div., Trinity Evangelical Divinity School, D.Min, Reformed Theological Seminary
Angela Westmoreland, M.A. in Theological Studies (Biblical Language track)
Henry Whitney, BA Linguistics
Benjamin Wright, MA Applied Linguistics, Dallas International University
Grant Ailie, BA Biblical Studies, M.Div.
Door43 World Missions Community

unfoldingWord® Translation Academy Contributors

Jesse Griffin, BA in Biblical Studies, MA in Biblical Languages
Perry Oakes, PhD in Old Testament, MA in Linguistics, MA in Theology, BA in Biblical Studies
Susan Quigley, MA in Linguistics
Henry Whitney, BA in Linguistics
James N. Pohlig, M.Div., MA in Linguistics, D. Litt. in Biblical Languages
Ben Jore, BA Biblical Studies, M.Div.
Joel D. Ruark, PhD in Old Testament, MA in Theology
Todd L. Price, PhD in New Testament/Linguistics
Bev Staley
Carol Brinneman
Jody Garcia
Kara Anderson
Kim Puterbaugh
Lizz Carlton
Door43 World Missions Community

unfoldingWord® Translation Words Contributors

Andrew Belcher

David Book

Jesse Griffin, BA Biblical Studies, MA Biblical Languages

Henry Whitney, Bible translator, Papua New Guinea, 1982–2000

Larry Sallee, Th.M Dallas Theological Seminary, D.Min. Columbia Biblical Seminary

Lizz Carlton

Jan Zanutto

Matthew Latham

Perry Oakes, PhD in Old Testament, MA in Linguistics

Richard Joki

Door43 World Missions Community