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unfoldingWord® Translation Notes

Numbers

Introduction to Numbers

Part 1: General Introduction

Outline of Numbers

Preparing to leave Sinai (1:1–10:10)
Counting and assembling the tribes (1:1–4:49)
Regulations (5:1–6:27)
Dedicating the altar (7:1–89)
Setting up the lampstand (8:1–4)
Setting apart the Levites (8:5–29)
Second Passover; the cloud to lead them; trumpets (9:1–10:10)
Sinai to Moab, through the wilderness (10:11–17:13)
Complaining and murmuring (10:11–11:15)
The quails (11:16–35)
Miriam's leprosy (12:1–16)
The spies selected and sent (13:1–14:45)
Commands (15:1–41)
Korah's rebellion (16:1–17:13)
The Priests and purifying (18:1–19:22)
Priests and Levites (18:1–32)
The law about purifying (19:1–22)
Conflicts (20:1–21:35)
Miriam's death (20:1–13)
Edom's refusal and Aaron's death (20:14–29)
Journey to Moab (21:1–35)
The Plains of Moab (22:1–36:13)
Balaam (22:1–24:25)
Baal Peor (25:1–18)
The second counting (26:1–65)
Inheritance rights for daughters (27:1–11)
Joshua succeeds Moses (27:12–23)
Offerings and women's vows (28:1–30:16)
Midianite war (31:1–54)
Across the Jordan (32:1–42)
The people set up camp (33:1–56)
Land west of the Jordan; cities for Levites and cities of refuge (34:1–35:34)
Female heirs marry (36:1–13)

What is the Book of Numbers about?

The Book of Numbers tells about the people of Israel as they traveled from Mount Sinai in the wilderness to the Jordan River. While traveling, the Israelites became discouraged. So they rebelled against the leaders whom God had given them. At the Jordan River, the people of Israel refused to enter the Promised Land. Because the Israelites were afraid and did not trust God, he delayed their entry into the Promised Land for forty years (13:1–14:45). (See: [Promised Land](#))

How should the title of this book be translated?

The title of this book, “Numbers,” refers to when the number of the Israelites was counted. The people of the project language may already be familiar with the name “Numbers” from other Bible versions. If not, the translator could consider a clearer name for the book, such as “The Counting of the People of Israel.” (See: [census](#))

Who wrote the Book of Numbers?

The writers of both the Old and New Testament present Moses as being very involved with writing the Book of Numbers. However, at a later time, scribes and priests probably put the book into its present form. They may have included text from other sources. One such source was “the scroll of the Wars of Yahweh” (21:14).

Part 2: Important Religious and Cultural Concepts

How does Numbers present the idea of the whole community being responsible when only a few people sinned?

The people understood and assumed that God would punish the whole community of Israel if some of the people rebelled against him. God did often punish the entire nation when some of them sinned. All of the people in the ancient Near East would have understood and expected this. However, Moses and Aaron prayed for God to punish only those who were guilty.

Part 3: Important Translation Issues

Why does Moses speak using third person pronouns about himself?

When an author wrote about something he was involved in, it was common for him to use the pronoun “he” instead of “I,” or “they” instead of “we.” The translator may decide to use the project’s normal pronouns instead.

Numbers 1

Numbers 1 General Notes

Structure and formatting

The ULT sets the lines in 1:5-15 farther to the right on the page than the rest of the text because they are long lists.

Census

They counted how many men of military age were in each tribe of Israel. These men would also become the heads of families. It is possible the numbers in this chapter are rounded to the nearest 100.

Numbers 1:1

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.

the first day of the second month

This is the second month of the Hebrew calendar. The first day is near the middle of April on Western calendars. (See: [Hebrew Months](#) and [Ordinal Numbers](#))

the second year

“year 2” (See: [Ordinal Numbers](#))

ULT

¹ Then Yahweh spoke to Moses in the tent of meeting in the wilderness of Sinai on 1 of the second month in the second year of their going out from the land of Egypt, saying,

Numbers 1:2

Count them by name

This means to count the men by recording their names. Alternate translation: "Count them, recording each man's name" (See: [Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information](#))

ULT

² "Lift up the heads of all the congregation of the sons of Israel, according to their clans, according to the house of their fathers, by the number of names, every male according to their skulls,

Numbers 1:3

twenty years old

“20 years old” (See: [Numbers](#))

record the number of men in their armed groups

This refers to assigning the men to their military divisions.

ULT

³ from a son of 20 years and upward,
every one who goes out to war in Israel.
You and Aaron must count them
according to their armies.

Numbers 1:4

a clan head

“a leader of a clan”

serve with you

“help you”

ULT

⁴ And with you will be a man, a man of the tribe. He will be the head man of the house of his fathers.

Numbers 1:5

Elizur ... Shedeur

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

ULT

⁵ And these are the names of the men who will stand with you: Of Reuben, Elizur the son of Shedeur,

Numbers 1:6

Shelumiel ... Zurishaddai

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

ULT

⁶ of Simeon, Shelumiel the son of Zurishaddai;

Numbers 1:7

General Information:

Yahweh continues to list the leaders of the tribes to Moses. (See: [How to Translate Names](#))

ULT

⁷ of Judah, Nahshon the son of Amminadab;

Numbers 1:8

(There are no notes for this verse.)

ULT

⁸ of Issachar, Nethanel the son of Zuar;

Numbers 1:9

(There are no notes for this verse.)

ULT

⁹ of Zebulun, Eliab the son of Helon;

Numbers 1:10

General Information:

Yahweh continues to list the leaders of the tribes to Moses. (See: [How to Translate Names](#))

ULT

10 of the sons of Joseph: of Ephraim, Elishama the son of Ammihud; of Manasseh, Gamaliel the son of Pedahzur;

Numbers 1:11

(There are no notes for this verse.)

ULT

11 of Benjamin, Abidan the son of
Gideoni;

Numbers 1:12

General Information:

Yahweh continues to list the leaders of the tribes to Moses. (See: [How to Translate Names](#))

ULT

12 of Dan, Ahiezer the son of
Ammishaddai;

Numbers 1:13

(There are no notes for this verse.)

ULT

13 of Asher, Pagiel the son of Okran;

Numbers 1:14

(There are no notes for this verse.)

ULT

14 of Gad, Eliasaph the son of Deuel;

Numbers 1:15

(There are no notes for this verse.)

ULT

15 of Naphtali, Ahira the son of Enan.”

Numbers 1:16

the men appointed

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

ULT

16 These were the called ones of the congregation, the leaders of the tribes of their fathers. They were the heads of the thousands of Israel.

Numbers 1:17

took these men

“gathered these men together”

who were recorded by name

ULT

17 And Moses and Aaron took these men, who were designated by names.

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: “whose names they had recorded” (See: [Active or Passive](#))

Numbers 1:18

the first day of the second month

This is the second month of the Hebrew calendar. The first day is near the middle of April on Western calendars. See how you translated this in [Numbers 1:1](#). (See: [Hebrew Months](#) and [Ordinal Numbers](#))

Then each man ... identified his ancestry. He had to name the clans and families descended from his ancestors

The second sentence means basically the same thing as the first and is added for clarification. (See: [Parallelism](#))

He had to name

Here “name” means to “say.” Alternate translation: “Each man had to say” (See: [Idiom](#))

ULT

18 And they assembled all the congregation on 1 of the second month. And they declared their ancestry in accordance with their clans, according to the house of their fathers, by the number of the names, from a son of 20 years and upward, according to their skulls.

Numbers 1:19

(There are no notes for this verse.)

ULT

19 And he counted them in the wilderness of Sinai, just as Yahweh had commanded Moses.

Numbers 1:20

were counted all the names

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: “they counted all the names” (See: [Active or Passive](#))

able to go to war

“who was able to go to war”

ULT

20 And the sons of Reuben, the firstborn of Israel, their generations according to their clans, according to the house of their fathers, by the number of the names, according to their skulls, every male from a son of 20 years and upward, every one who goes out to war,

Numbers 1:21

46,500 men

“forty-six thousand five hundred men” (See: [Numbers](#))

ULT

²¹ their counted ones of the tribe of Reuben were 46,500.

Numbers 1:22

were counted all the names of each and every man ... clans and families

The phrase “were counted” can be stated in active form. This long phrase is repeated multiple times in the census. See how you translated it in [Numbers 1:20](#). Alternate translation: “they counted all the names of each and every man ... clans and families” (See: [Active or Passive](#))

ULT

²² Of the sons of Simeon, their generations according to their clans, according to the house of their fathers, his counted ones by the number of the names, according to their skulls, every male from a son of 20 years and upward, every one who goes out to war,

Numbers 1:23

59,300 men

“fifty-nine thousand three hundred men” (See: [Numbers](#))

ULT

²³ their counted ones of the tribe of Simeon were 59,300.

Numbers 1:24

were counted all the names of each and every man ... clans and families

The phrase “were counted” can be stated in active form. This long phrase is repeated multiple times in the census. See how you translated it in [Numbers 1:20](#). Alternate translation: “they counted all the names of each and every man ... clans and families” (See: [Active or Passive](#))

ULT

²⁴ Of the sons of Gad, their generations according to their clans, according to the house of their fathers, by the number of the names, from a son of 20 years and upward, every one who goes out to war,

Numbers 1:25

45,650 men

“forty-five thousand six hundred and fifty men” (See: [Numbers](#))

ULT

²⁵ their counted ones of the tribe of Gad were 45,650.

Numbers 1:26

were counted all the names of each and every man ... clans and families

The phrase “were counted” can be stated in active form. This long phrase is repeated multiple times in the census. See how you translated it in [Numbers 1:20](#). Alternate translation: “they counted all the names of each and every man ... clans and families” (See: [Active or Passive](#))

ULT

²⁶ Of the sons of Judah, their generations according to their clans, according to the house of their fathers, by the number of the names, from a son of 20 years and upward, every one who goes out to war,

Numbers 1:27

74,600 men

“seventy-four thousand six hundred men” (See: [Numbers](#))

ULT

²⁷ their counted ones of the tribe of Judah were 74,600.

Numbers 1:28

were counted all the names of each and every man ... clans and families

The phrase “were counted” can be stated in active form. This long phrase is repeated multiple times in the census. See how you translated it in [Numbers 1:20](#). Alternate translation: “they counted all the names of each and every man ... clans and families” (See: [Active or Passive](#))

ULT

²⁸ Of the sons of Issachar, their generations according to their clans, according to the house of their fathers, by the number of the names, from a son of 20 years and upward, every one who goes out to war,

Numbers 1:29

54,400 men

“fifty-four thousand four hundred men” (See: [Numbers](#))

ULT

²⁹ their counted ones of the tribe of Issachar were 54,400.

Numbers 1:30

were counted all the names of each and every man ... clans and families

The phrase “were counted” can be stated in active form. This long phrase is repeated multiple times in the census. See how you translated it in [Numbers 1:20](#). Alternate translation: “they counted all the names of each and every man ... clans and families” (See: [Active or Passive](#))

ULT

³⁰ Of the sons of Zebulun, their generations according to their clans, according to the house of their fathers, by the number of the names, from a son of 20 years and upward, every one who goes out to war,

Numbers 1:31

57,400 men

“fifty-seven thousand four hundred men” (See: [Numbers](#))

ULT

³¹ their counted ones of the tribe of Zebulun were 57,400.

Numbers 1:32

were counted all the names of each and every man ... clans and families

The phrase “were counted” can be stated in active form. This long phrase is repeated multiple times in the census. See how you translated it in [Numbers 1:20](#). Alternate translation: “they counted all the names of each and every man ... clans and families” (See: [Active or Passive](#))

ULT

³² Of the sons of Joseph: of the sons of Ephraim, their generations according to their clans, according to the house of their fathers, by the number of the names, from a son of 20 years and upward, every one who goes out to war,

Numbers 1:33

40,500 men

“forty thousand five hundred men” (See: [Numbers](#))

ULT

³³ their counted ones of the tribe of Ephraim were 40,500.

Numbers 1:34

were counted all the names of each and every man ... clans and families

The phrase “were counted” can be stated in active form. This long phrase is repeated multiple times in the census. See how you translated it in [Numbers 1:20](#). Alternate translation: “they counted all the names of each and every man ... clans and families” (See: [Active or Passive](#))

ULT

³⁴ Of the sons of Manasseh, their generations according to their clans, according to the house of their fathers, by the number of the names, from a son of 20 years and upward, every one who goes out to war,

Numbers 1:35

32,200 men

“thirty-two thousand two hundred men” (See: [Numbers](#))

ULT

³⁵ their counted ones of the tribe of Manasseh were 32,200.

Numbers 1:36

were counted all the names of each and every man ... clans and families

The phrase “were counted” can be stated in active form. This long phrase is repeated multiple times in the census. See how you translated it in [Numbers 1:20](#). Alternate translation: “they counted all the names of each and every man ... clans and families” (See: [Active or Passive](#))

ULT

³⁶ Of the sons of Benjamin, their generations according to their clans, according to the house of their fathers, by the number of the names, from a son of 20 years and upward, every one who goes out to war,

Numbers 1:37

35,400 men

“thirty-five thousand four hundred men” (See: [Numbers](#))

ULT

³⁷ their counted ones of the tribe of Benjamin were 35,400.

Numbers 1:38

were counted all the names of each and every man ... clans and families

The phrase “were counted” can be stated in active form. This long phrase is repeated multiple times in the census. See how you translated it in [Numbers 1:20](#). Alternate translation: “they counted all the names of each and every man ... clans and families” (See: [Active or Passive](#))

ULT

³⁸ Of the sons of Dan, their generations according to their clans, according to the house of their fathers, by the number of the names, from a son of 20 years and upward, every one who goes out to war,

Numbers 1:39

They counted 62,700

“They counted sixty-two thousand seven hundred” (See: [Numbers](#))

ULT

³⁹ their counted ones of the tribe of Dan were 62,700.

Numbers 1:40

were counted all the names of each and every man ... clans and families

The phrase “were counted” can be stated in active form. This long phrase is repeated multiple times in the census. See how you translated it in [Numbers 1:20](#). Alternate translation: “they counted all the names of each and every man ... clans and families” (See: [Active or Passive](#))

ULT

⁴⁰ Of the sons of Asher, their generations according to their clans, according to the house of their fathers, by the number of the names, from a son of 20 years and upward, every one who goes out to war,

Numbers 1:41

They counted 41,500

“They counted forty-one thousand five hundred” (See: [Numbers](#))

ULT

41 their counted ones of the tribe of Asher were 41,500.

Numbers 1:42

were counted all the names of each and every man ... clans and families

The phrase “were counted” can be stated in active form. This long phrase is repeated multiple times in the census. See how you translated it in [Numbers 1:20](#). Alternate translation: “they counted all the names of each and every man ... clans and families” (See: [Active or Passive](#))

ULT

⁴² Of the sons of Naphtali, their generations according to their clans, according to the house of their fathers, by the number of the names, from a son of 20 years and upward, every one who goes out to war,

Numbers 1:43

They counted 53,400

“They counted fifty-three thousand four hundred” (See: [Numbers](#))

ULT

⁴³ their counted ones of the tribe of Naphtali were 53,400.

Numbers 1:44

(There are no notes for this verse.)

ULT

⁴⁴ These were the counted ones, whom Moses and Aaron had counted, and the leaders of Israel, 12 men, they were one man for the house of his fathers.

Numbers 1:45

So all the men of Israel ... were counted in each of their families

The phrase “were counted” can be stated in active form. This long phrase is repeated multiple times in the census. See how you translated it in [Numbers 1:20](#). Alternate translation: “So they counted all the men of Israel ... in each of their families” (See: [Active or Passive](#))

ULT

⁴⁵ And they were all the counted ones of the sons of Israel according to the house of their fathers, from a son of 20 years and upward, every one who goes out to war in Israel.

Numbers 1:46

603,550 men

“six hundred and three thousand five hundred and fifty men” (See: [Numbers](#))

ULT

⁴⁶ And all the counted ones were 603,550.

Numbers 1:47

the men who were descended from Levi were not counted

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: “Moses and Aaron did not count the men who were descended from Levi” (See: [Active or Passive](#))

ULT

⁴⁷ And the Levites according to the tribe of their father were not counted in the midst of them.

who were descended from Levi

In some languages this is a passive verb. If needed, this can be written differently. Alternate translation: “who were from the tribe of Levi” (See: [Active or Passive](#))

Numbers 1:48

(There are no notes for this verse.)

ULT

⁴⁸ And Yahweh spoke to Moses, saying,

Numbers 1:49

must not count the tribe of Levi

Here the “tribe of Levi” refers to all of the men in the tribe of Levi.
 Alternate translation: “must not count the men of the tribe of Levi”
 (See: [Synecdoche](#))

ULT

49 “Only the tribe of Levi you must not count. And you must not lift up their heads in the midst of the sons of Israel.

Numbers 1:50

the tabernacle of the covenant decrees

The tabernacle was also called by this longer name because the ark with the law of God was placed inside it.

everything in it

Here “it” refers to the tabernacle.

The Levites must carry the tabernacle

It was their job to carry the tabernacle when they traveled. Alternate translation: “When you travel, the Levites must carry the tabernacle” (See: [Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information](#))

make their camp around it

This means that they were to set up their tents around the tabernacle. Alternate translation: “set up their tents around it” (See: [Idiom](#))

ULT

50 And you, appoint the Levites over the dwelling of the testimony and over all its vessels and over all that belongs to it. They themselves must carry the dwelling and all its vessels, and they themselves must serve it. And they must camp around the dwelling.

Numbers 1:51

When the tabernacle is to be set up

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: “When it is time to set up the tabernacle” (See: [Active or Passive](#))

Any stranger ... must be killed

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: “Any stranger ... must die” or “You must kill any stranger who comes near the tabernacle” (See: [Active or Passive](#))

ULT

51 And when the dwelling sets out, the Levites must take it down. And when the dwelling camps, the Levites must raise it up. And the stranger who comes near must be put to death.

Numbers 1:52

the banner

a large flag

his armed group

“his military division”

ULT

⁵² And the sons of Israel will camp, a man at his camp, and a man at his banner, according to their armies.

Numbers 1:53

the tabernacle of the covenant decrees

The tabernacle was also called by this longer name because the ark with the law of God was placed inside it. See how you translated this in [Numbers 1:50](#).

so that my anger does not come upon the people of Israel

Here Yahweh speaks of not punishing the Israelites as his anger not coming upon them. The phrase “come upon” refers to his anger being applied to them. Alternate translation: “so that in my anger I do not punish the people of Israel” (See: [Metaphor](#))

ULT

53 And the Levites must camp around the dwelling of the testimony and wrath will not be upon the congregation of the sons of Israel. And the Levites must keep the keeping of the dwelling of the testimony.”

Numbers 1:54

Yahweh commanded through Moses

Yahweh had commanded Moses everything that the Israelites were to do, and then Moses had commanded the Israelites. (See: [Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information](#))

ULT

⁵⁴ And the sons of Israel did according to all that Yahweh commanded Moses, so they did.

Numbers 2

Numbers 2 General Notes

Structure and formatting

Camping

Moses told each tribe where to camp. They were each given a specific area in which to stay.

Numbers 2:1

(There are no notes for this verse.)

ULT

¹ And Yahweh spoke to Moses and to Aaron, saying,

Numbers 2:2

around his standard

The “standards” were four larger groups that the tribes were divided into. Each standard was commanded to camp together. The standards was represented by a banner.

with the banners of their fathers’ houses

Each extended family also had a banner under with the camp, which was within the area designated for their standard.

banners

A banner is a large flag.

ULT

2 “The sons of Israel will camp, a man at his banner, with the sign of the house of their fathers. They will camp away from the front, around the tent of meeting.

Numbers 2:3

under their standard

The “standards” were four larger groups that the tribes were divided into. Each standard was commanded to camp together, and was represented by a banner. See how you translated “standards” in [Numbers 2:2](#).

Nahshon son of Amminadab

See how you translated this man’s name in [Numbers 1:7](#).

ULT

³ And the ones camping to the east, to the sunrise, will be the banner of the camp of Judah according to their armies. And the leader of the sons of Judah is Nahshon the son of Amminadab.

Numbers 2:4

74600

“seventy-four thousand six hundred” (See: [Numbers](#))

ULT

⁴ And his army and their counted ones are 74,600.

Numbers 2:5

General Information:

Yahweh continues telling Moses where each tribe and its army will camp around the tent of meeting. (See: [Numbers](#))

Nethanel son of Zuar

See how you translated this man's name in [Numbers 1:8](#).

ULT

⁵ And the ones camping beside him are the tribe of Issachar. And the leader of the sons of Issachar is Nethanel the son of Zuar.

Numbers 2:6

division

This is a military term for a large group of soldiers. Each tribe was its own “division.”

54,400 men

“fifty-four thousand four hundred men” (See: [Numbers](#))

ULT

⁶ And his army and his counted ones are 54,400.

Numbers 2:7

General Information:

Yahweh continues telling Moses where each tribe and its army will camp around the tent of meeting. (See: [Numbers](#))

Eliab son of Helon

See how you translated this man's name in [Numbers 1:9](#).

ULT

⁷ The tribe of Zebulun: and the leader of the sons of Zebulun is Eliab the son of Helon.

Numbers 2:8

57400

“fifty-seven thousand four hundred.” This refers to the number of men. Alternate translation: “57,400 men” (See: [Numbers](#) and [Ellipsis](#))

ULT

⁸ And his army and his counted ones are 57,400.

Numbers 2:9

All the number ... is 186,400

"All the number ... is one hundred and eighty-six thousand four hundred." This number includes all of the men in the tribes that camped under the standard of Judah. Alternate translation: "The number of the men camped under the standard of Judah is 186,400" (See: [Numbers](#) and [Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information](#))

ULT

⁹ All the counted ones of the camp of Judah are 186,400 according to their armies. They will set out first.

the camp of Judah

This refers to the three tribes that camp east of the tent of meeting: the tribes of Judah, Issachar, and Zebulun.

They will set out first

This means that when the Israelite camp moves, the camp of Judah will start walking out before the other tribes do. Alternate translation: "When travelling, the camp of Judah will start walking first" or "When the Israelites leave, those tribes will leave first" (See: [Ordinal Numbers](#) and [Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information](#))

Numbers 2:10

General Information:

Yahweh continues telling Moses where each tribe and its army will camp around the tent of meeting. (See: [Numbers](#))

under their standard

The “standards” were four larger groups that the tribes were divided into. Each standard was commanded to camp together. The standards were represented by a banner. See how you translated “standards” in [Numbers 2:2](#).

Elizur son of Shedeur

See how you translated this man’s name in [Numbers 1:5](#).

ULT

10 The banner of the camp of Reuben will be to the south of their armies. And the leader of the sons of Reuben is Elizur the son of Shedeur.

Numbers 2:11

46500

“forty-six thousand five hundred.” This refers to the number of men.
Alternate translation: “46,500 men” (See: [Numbers](#) and [Ellipsis](#))

ULT

11 And his army and his counted ones are 46,500.

Numbers 2:12

General Information:

Yahweh continues telling Moses where each tribe and its army will camp around the tent of meeting. (See: [Numbers](#))

Shelumiel son of Zurishaddai

See how you translated this man's name in [Numbers 1:6](#).

ULT

12 And the ones camping beside him will be the tribe of Simeon. And the leader of the sons of Simeon is Shelumiel the son of Zurishaddai.

Numbers 2:13

59300

“Fifty-nine thousand three hundred.” This refers to the number of men. Alternate translation: “59,300 men” (See: [Numbers](#) and [Ellipsis](#))

ULT

13 And his army and their counted ones are 59,300.

Numbers 2:14

General Information:

Yahweh continues telling Moses where each tribe and its army will camp around the tent of meeting. (See: [Numbers](#))

Eliasaph son of Deuel

See how you translated this man's name in [Numbers 1:14](#).

ULT

14 And the tribe of Gad: and the leader of the sons of Gad is Eliasaph the son of Reuel.

Numbers 2:15

45650

“forty-five thousand six hundred and fifty.” This refers to the number of men. Alternate translation: “45,650 men” (See: [Numbers](#) and [Ellipsis](#))

ULT

15 And his army and their counted ones are 45,650.

Numbers 2:16

The number of all the men ... is 151,450

“The number of all the men ... is one hundred and fifty-one thousand four hundred and fifty.” This number includes all of the men in the tribes that camped under the standard of Reuben. Alternate translation: “The number of all the men camped under the standard of Reuben, according to their divisions, is 151,450” (See: [Numbers](#) and [Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information](#))

ULT

16 All the counted ones of the camp of Reuben are 151,450 according to their armies. And they will set out second.

They will set out second

This means that when the Israelite camp moves, the camp of Reuben will start walking out after the camp of Judah goes out. Alternate translation: “When travelling, the camp of Reuben will start walking second” or “When the Israelites leave, those tribes will leave next” (See: [Ordinal Numbers](#) and [Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information](#))

Numbers 2:17

the tent of meeting must go out ... in the middle of all the camps

This means that the tent of meeting must be carried by the Levites in the middle of the tribes as they travel.

They must go out

“They” refers to the twelve tribes.

by his banner

Each man does not have his own personal banner; rather, this refers to the banner belonging to his tribe. Alternate translation: “by his tribe’s banner” (See: [Synecdoche](#))

ULT

¹⁷ And the tent of meeting will set out from the camp of the Levites in the midst of the camps. As they came so will they set out, a man on his hand, according to their banners.

Numbers 2:18

General Information:

Yahweh continues telling Moses where each tribe and its army will camp around the tent of meeting. (See: [How to Translate Names](#) and [Numbers](#))

under their standard

The “standards” were four larger groups that the tribes were divided into. Each standard was commanded to camp together. The standards were represented by a banner. See how you translated “standards” in [Numbers 2:2](#).

ULT

18 The banner of the camp of Ephraim according to their armies will be to the west. And the leader of the sons of Ephraim is Elishama the son of Ammihud.

Numbers 2:19

40500

“Forty thousand five hundred.” This refers to the number of men.
Alternate translation: “40,500 men” (See: [Numbers](#) and [Ellipsis](#))

ULT

19 And his army and their counted ones are 40,500.

Numbers 2:20

General Information:

Yahweh continues telling Moses where each tribe and its army will camp around the tent of meeting. (See: [How to Translate Names](#) and [Numbers](#))

Next to them

This means that the tribe of Manasseh will set out next, after the tribe of Ephraim.

ULT

20 And beside him is the tribe of Manasseh. And the leader of the sons of Manasseh is Gamaliel the son of Pedahzur.

Numbers 2:21

32200

“Thirty-two thousand two hundred.” This refers to the number of men. Alternate translation: “32,200 men” (See: [Numbers](#) and [Ellipsis](#))

ULT

²¹ And his army and their counted ones are 32,200.

Numbers 2:22

General Information:

Yahweh continues telling Moses where each tribe and its army will camp around the tent of meeting. (See: [Numbers](#))

Abidan son of Gideoni

See how you translated this man's name in [Numbers 1:11](#).

ULT

²² And the tribe of Benjamin: and the leader of the sons of Benjamin is Abidan the son of Gideoni.

Numbers 2:23

35400

“Thirty-five thousand four hundred.” This refers to the number of men. Alternate translation: “35,400 men” (See: [Numbers](#) and [Ellipsis](#))

ULT

²³ And his army and their counted ones are 35,400.

Numbers 2:24

General Information:

Yahweh continues telling Moses where each tribe and its army will camp around the tent of meeting. (See: [How to Translate Names](#) and [Numbers](#))

ULT

²⁴ All the counted ones of the camp of Ephraim are 108,100 according to their armies. And they will set out third.

All those numbered...108,100

“All those numbered ... one hundred and eight thousand one hundred.” This number includes all of the men in the tribes that camped under the standard of Ephraim. Alternate translation: “The number of the men camped under the standard of Ephraim is 108,100” (See: [Numbers](#) and [Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information](#))

They will set out third

This means that when the Israelite camp moves, the camp of Ephraim will start walking out after the camp of Judah and the camp of Reuben go out. Alternate translation: “When travelling, the camp of Ephraim will start walking third” or “When the Israelites leave, those tribes will leave next” (See: [Ordinal Numbers](#) and [Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information](#))

Numbers 2:25

General Information:

Yahweh continues telling Moses where each tribe and its army will camp around the tent of meeting. (See: [How to Translate Names](#) and [Numbers](#))

the divisions of the camp of Dan

The this refers to the divisions of Dan, Asher, and Naphtali that are under the standard of Dan. Alternate translation: “the divisions that camp under the standard of Dan” (See: [Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information](#))

Ahiezer son of Ammishaddai

See how you translated this man’s name in [Numbers 1:12](#).

ULT

²⁵ The banner of the camp of Dan will be to the north according to their armies. And the leader of the sons of Dan is Ahiezer the son of Ammishaddai.

Numbers 2:26

62700

“Sixty-two thousand seven hundred.” This refers to the number of men. Alternate translation: “62,700 men” (See: [Numbers](#) and [Ellipsis](#))

ULT

²⁶ And his army and their counted ones are 62,700.

Numbers 2:27

General Information:

Yahweh continues telling Moses where each tribe and its army will camp around the tent of meeting. (See: [Numbers](#))

Pagiel son of Okran

See how you translated this man's name in [Numbers 1:13](#).

ULT

27 And the ones camping beside him will be the tribe of Asher. And the leader of the sons of Asher is Pagiel the son of Okran.

Numbers 2:28

41500

“forty-one thousand five hundred.” This refers to the number of men. Alternate translation: “41,500 men” (See: [Numbers](#) and [Ellipsis](#))

ULT

²⁸ And his army and their counted ones are 41,500.

Numbers 2:29

General Information:

Yahweh continues telling Moses where each tribe and its army will camp around the tent of meeting. (See: [How to Translate Names](#) and [Numbers](#))

Ahira son of Enan

See how you translated this man's name in [Numbers 1:15](#).

ULT

²⁹ And the tribe of Naphtali: and the leader of the sons of Naphtali is Ahira the son of Enan.

Numbers 2:30

53400

“fifty-three thousand four hundred.” This refers to the number of men. Alternate translation: “53,400 men” (See: [Numbers](#) and [Ellipsis](#))

ULT

³⁰ And his army and their counted ones are 53,400.

Numbers 2:31

General Information:

Yahweh continues telling Moses where each tribe and its army will camp around the tent of meeting. (See: [How to Translate Names](#) and [Numbers](#))

ULT

³¹ All the counted ones of the camp of Dan are 157,600. They will set out last, according to their banners.”

All those numbered...157,600

“All those numbered ... one hundred and fifty-seven thousand six hundred.” This number includes all of the men in the tribes that camped under the standard of Dan. Alternate translation: “The number of the men camped under the standard of Dan is 157,600” (See: [Numbers](#) and [Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information](#))

Numbers 2:32

All those counted

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: “Moses and Aaron counted them all” (See: [Active or Passive](#))

by their divisions

Here “their” refers to the people of Israel.

are 603,550

“are six hundred and three thousand five hundred and fifty” (See: [Numbers](#))

ULT

³² These are the counted ones of the sons of Israel according to the houses of their fathers. All the counted ones of the camps according to their armies are 603,550.

Numbers 2:33

(There are no notes for this verse.)

ULT

³³ And they did not count the Levites in the midst of the sons of Israel, just as Yahweh had commanded Moses.

Numbers 2:34

They went out from the camp

This refers to when they would travel to another place. Alternate translation: "When they traveled, they went out from the camp" (See: [Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information](#))

ULT

³⁴ And the sons of Israel did according to all that Yahweh commanded Moses. So they camped according to their banners and so they set out, a man according to his clans, in accordance with the house of his fathers.

Numbers 3

Numbers 3 General Notes

Structure and formatting

The tribe of Levi

The Levites were given a special function in Israel. They belonged to or were specially dedicated to serve Yahweh. They were to be priests and because of this were held to a higher standard than the rest of Israel. Only one of Aaron's sons survived because the others offered improper sacrifices. This tribe had a lot of responsibility during this time. (See: [priest](#), [priesthood](#))

Numbers 3:1

Now

Here the author uses the word “now” to shift to telling a new historical account.

ULT

¹ And these are the generations of Aaron and Moses in the day Yahweh spoke with Moses on the mountain of Sinai.

Numbers 3:2

Nadab the firstborn

“Nadab, who was the firstborn”

Nadab ... Abihu ... Ithamar

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

ULT

² And these are the names of the sons of Aaron: Nadab the firstborn and Abihu, Eleazar and Ithamar.

Numbers 3:3

the priests who were anointed and who were ordained

This can be stated in active form Alternate translation: “the priests whom Moses anointed and ordained” (See: [Active or Passive](#))

ULT

³ These are the names of the sons of Aaron, the priests, the ones who were anointed, whose hand he filled to serve as priest.

Numbers 3:4

Nadab ... Abihu ... Ithamar

See how you translated these men's names in [Numbers 3:2](#).

fell dead before Yahweh

The phrase “fell dead” means to suddenly die. Alternate translation: “suddenly died before Yahweh” (See: [Idiom](#))

before Yahweh

This refers to Yahweh's presence, meaning that Yahweh saw everything that happened. Alternate translation: “in Yahweh's presence” (See: [Metonymy](#))

they offered to him unacceptable fire

Here the word “fire” is used to refer to “burning incense.” Alternate translation: “they burned an incense offering in a way that Yahweh did not approve of” (See: [Metonymy](#))

ULT

⁴ And Nadab died and Abihu before the face of Yahweh when they offered unfamiliar fire before the face of Yahweh in the wilderness of Sinai. And sons were not belonging to them. And Eleazar served as priest and Ithamar with the face of Aaron their father.

Numbers 3:5

(There are no notes for this verse.)

ULT

⁵ And Yahweh spoke to Moses, saying,

Numbers 3:6

Bring the tribe of Levi

Here the word “tribe” refers to the men in the tribe. Alternate translation: “Bring the men of the tribe of Levi” (See: [Metonymy](#))

ULT

⁶ “Bring near the tribe of Levi and stand it before the face of Aaron the priest. And they shall serve him.

Numbers 3:7

on behalf of

“for.” This means to do something for someone else, as a representative for them.

ULT

⁷ And they shall keep his keeping and the keeping of all the congregation before the face of the tent of meeting, to serve the service of the dwelling.

Numbers 3:8

help the tribes of Israel

Here the “tribes of Israel” refer to the people of Israel. Alternate translation: “help the people of Israel” (See: [Metonymy](#))

they must help the tribes of Israel to carry out the tabernacle service

The phrase “carry out” means to “serve.” Alternate translation: “they must help the tribes of Israel by serving in the tabernacle” (See: [Idiom](#))

tabernacle service

“work of the tabernacle”

ULT

⁸ And they shall keep all the vessels of the tent of meeting and the keeping of the sons of Israel, to serve the service of the dwelling.

Numbers 3:9

You must give

“You” refers to Moses.

They are wholly given

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: “I have given them entirely” (See: [Active or Passive](#))

ULT

⁹ And you shall give the Levites to Aaron and to his sons. They are given, given to him from with the sons of Israel.

Numbers 3:10

any foreigner who comes near must be put to death

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: “you must kill any foreigner who comes near” or “any foreigner who comes near must die” (See: [Active or Passive](#))

ULT

¹⁰ And you shall appoint Aaron and his sons, and they shall keep their priesthood. And the stranger who comes near shall be put to death.”

but any foreigner who comes near

The full meaning of this statement can be made explicit. Alternate translation: “but any foreigner who comes near the tabernacle” (See: [Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information](#))

Numbers 3:11

(There are no notes for this verse.)

ULT

11 And Yahweh spoke to Moses, saying,

Numbers 3:12

Look

“Listen” or “Pay attention to what I am about to tell you”

I have taken the Levites

“I have chosen the Levites”

ULT

¹² “And I, behold, I have taken the Levites from the midst of the sons of Israel instead of every firstborn, the opener of the womb from the sons of Israel. And the Levites are for me.

Numbers 3:13

(There are no notes for this verse.)

ULT

13 For every firstborn belongs to me. In the day of my striking down every firstborn in the land of Egypt I set apart for me every firstborn in Israel, from human up to livestock. They are for me. I am Yahweh."

Numbers 3:14

(There are no notes for this verse.)

ULT

¹⁴ And Yahweh spoke to Moses in the wilderness of Sinai, saying,

Numbers 3:15

Count the descendants

Yahweh was commanding Moses to only count the male descendants. Alternate translation: "Count the male descendants" (See: [Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information](#))

ULT

15 "Count the sons of Levi according to the house of their fathers, according to their clans. You shall count them, every male from a son of a month and upward."

Numbers 3:16

following the word of Yahweh, just as he was commanded to do

These two phrases mean basically the same thing and are used together to emphasize that he obeyed Yahweh. (See: [Parallelism](#))

ULT

¹⁶ And Moses counted them in accordance with the mouth of Yahweh, just as he was commanded.

Numbers 3:17

General Information:

This is a list of the descendants of Levi. (See: [How to Translate Names](#))

ULT

17 And these were the sons of Levi by their names: Gershon, and Kohath, and Merari.

Numbers 3:18

The clans coming from

Here the author speaks of “descending” as if it were “coming.”
Alternate translation: “The clans descending from” (See: [Metaphor](#))

ULT

18 And these are the names of the sons of Gershon according to their clans: Libni and Shimei.

Numbers 3:19

(There are no notes for this verse.)

ULT

19 And the sons of Kohath according to their clans were Amram and Izhar, Hebron and Uzziel.

Numbers 3:20

(There are no notes for this verse.)

ULT

²⁰ And the sons of Merari according to their clans were Mahli and Mushi. These are they, the clans of the Levites according to the house of their fathers.

Numbers 3:21

come from Gershon

Here the author speaks of “descending” as if it were “coming.”
Alternate translation: “descend from Gershon” (See: [Metaphor](#))

Libnites ... Shimeites ... Gershonites

“Libnites” and “Shimeites” are the name of clans, named after the head of their family. The “Gershonites” is the name of people who descended from Gershon. (See: [How to Translate Names](#))

ULT

21 Of Gershon were the clan of the Libnite and the clan of the Shimeite. These are they, the clans of the Gershonite.

Numbers 3:22

All the males from a month old and older were counted

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: “Moses counted all the males from a month old and older” (See: [Active or Passive](#))

ULT

²² Their counted ones by the number of every male from a son of a month and upward, their counted ones were 7,500.

7500

“seventy-five hundred” or “seven thousand five hundred” (See: [Numbers](#))

Numbers 3:23

(There are no notes for this verse.)

ULT

²³ The clans of the Gershonites were to camp behind the dwelling, to the west.

Numbers 3:24

Eliasaph ... Lael

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

ULT

²⁴ And the leader of the house of the father of the Gershonite was Eliasaph the son of Lael.

Numbers 3:25

(There are no notes for this verse.)

ULT

²⁵ And the keeping of the sons of Gershon in the tent of meeting was the dwelling and the tent, its covering, and the curtain of the opening of the tent of meeting,

Numbers 3:26

the courtyard hangings

“the curtains in the courtyard”

the courtyard that surrounds the sanctuary and the altar

“that is, the courtyard that surrounds the sanctuary and the altar”

ULT

²⁶ and the hangings of the courtyard,
and the curtains of the opening of the
courtyard that is upon the dwelling and
upon the altar all around, and its ropes
for all its service.

Numbers 3:27

General Information:

This is a list of clans that descended from Kohath. (See: [How to Translate Names](#))

Kohath

See how you translated this man's name in [Numbers 3:17](#).

ULT

27 And of Kohath were the clan of the Amramite, and the clan of the Izharite, and the clan of the Hebronite, and the clan of the Uzzielite. These are they, the clans of the Kohathite.

Numbers 3:28

8,600 males have been counted

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "Moses counted 8,600 males" (See: [Active or Passive](#))

8,600 males

"eight thousand six hundred males" (See: [Numbers](#))

aged one month old and older

"from a month old and older"

ULT

²⁸ By the number of every male from a son of a month and upward, 8,600 were the keepers of the keeping of the holy place.

Numbers 3:29

(There are no notes for this verse.)

ULT

²⁹ The clans of the sons of Kohath were to camp on the side of the dwelling, to the south.

Numbers 3:30

General Information:

These verses give us information about the clans that descended from Kohath. (See: [How to Translate Names](#))

ULT

³⁰ And the leader of the house of the father of the clans of the Kohathite was Elizaphan the son of Uzziel.

Numbers 3:31

the holy things that are used in their service

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: “the holy things which the priests use for service” (See: [Active or Passive](#))

ULT

31 And their duty was the box, and the table, and the lampstand, and the altar, and the vessels of the holy place with which they serve, and the covering, and all its service.

Numbers 3:32

(There are no notes for this verse.)

ULT

³² And the leader of the leaders of the Levites was Eleazar the son of Aaron the priest, the oversight of the keepers of the keeping of the holy place.

Numbers 3:33

General Information:

This is a list of clans that descended from Merari. (See: [How to Translate Names](#))

ULT

³³ Of Merari were the clan of the
Mahlite and the clan of the Mushite.
These are they, the clans of Merari.

Numbers 3:34

6,200 males have been counted

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: “Moses counted 6,200 males” (See: [Active or Passive](#))

6,200 males

“six thousand two hundred males” (See: [Numbers](#))

ULT

³⁴ And their counted ones by the number of every male from a son of a month and upward were 6,200.

Numbers 3:35

(There are no notes for this verse.)

ULT

³⁵ And the leader of the house of the father of the clans of Merari was Zuriel the son of Abihail. They were to camp on the side of the dwelling, to the north.

Numbers 3:36

the framing

This to the panels that they made by joining together smaller pieces of wood.

crossbars

These are support beams that give stability to the structure.

posts

A post is a strong piece of wood set upright and used as a support.

bases

The bases held the posts in place.

hardware

This means everything used to join the crossbars, posts, and bases together.

ULT

³⁶ And the oversight of the duty of the sons of Merari was the boards of the dwelling, and its bars, and its pillars, and its bases, and all its vessels, and all its service,

Numbers 3:37

with their sockets

Here “their” refers to the “pillars and posts.”

sockets, pegs, and ropes

These are all items used secure the pillars and posts into place.

ULT

³⁷ and the pillars of the courtyard all around, and their bases, and their pegs, and their ropes.

Numbers 3:38

his sons

Here “his” refers to Aaron

toward the sunrise

This is the east side of the tabernacle. Alternate translation: “on the east side, where the sun rises” (See: [Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information](#))

for the fulfillment of the duties

The word “fulfilment” is an abstract noun that can be expressed as a verb. Alternate translation: “to perform the duties” (See: [Abstract Nouns](#))

Any foreigner who approaches the sanctuary must be put to death

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: “You must kill any foreigner who approaches the sanctuary” or “Any foreigner who approaches the sanctuary must die” (See: [Active or Passive](#))

ULT

³⁸ And the ones camping before the face of the dwelling to the east, before the face of the tent of meeting toward the sunrise were to be Moses and Aaron and his sons, the keepers of the keeping of the holy place, according to the keeping of the sons of Israel. And the stranger who comes near shall be put to death.

Numbers 3:39

twenty-two thousand men

“22,000 men” or “22,000 males” (See: [Numbers](#))

ULT

³⁹ All the counted ones of the Levites whom Moses and Aaron counted in accordance with the mouth of Yahweh, according to their clans, every male from a son of a month and upward, were 22,000.

Numbers 3:40

(There are no notes for this verse.)

ULT

⁴⁰ And Yahweh said to Moses, “Count every firstborn male of the sons of Israel from a son of a month and upward. And lift up the number of their names.

Numbers 3:41

the livestock of the Levites

This refers to all the Levites' livestock. Alternate translation: "you must take all the Levites' livestock" (See: [Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information](#))

ULT

41 And you shall take the Levites for me —I am Yahweh—instead of all the firstborn of the sons of Israel, and the livestock of the Levites instead of all the firstborn among the livestock of the sons of Israel."

Numbers 3:42

all the firstborn people

“all the firstborn sons”

ULT

⁴² And Moses counted all the firstborn of the sons of Israel, just as Yahweh had commanded him.

Numbers 3:43

22,273 men

“twenty-two thousand two hundred and seventy-three men” (See: [Numbers](#))

ULT

43 And it happened that every firstborn male by the number of the names from a son of a month and upward, according to their counted ones, was 22,273.

Numbers 3:44

(There are no notes for this verse.)

ULT

⁴⁴ And Yahweh spoke to Moses, saying,

Numbers 3:45

(There are no notes for this verse.)

ULT

⁴⁵ "Take the Levites instead of all the firstborn among the sons of Israel, and the livestock of the Levites instead of their livestock (and the Levites shall belong to me—I am Yahweh),

Numbers 3:46

for the redemption of

The noun “redemption” can be translated with the verb “redeem.”
Alternate translation: “to redeem” (See: [Abstract Nouns](#))

273 firstborn

“two hundred and seventy-three firstborn” (See: [Numbers](#))

firstborn people of Israel

“firstborn sons of Israel”

five shekels

A shekel is a unit of weight equal to about 11 grams. Alternate translation: “about 55 grams of silver” (See: [Biblical Weight](#) and [Biblical Money](#))

who exceed the number of the Levites

This means that there are 273 more firstborn males among the other tribes of the Israelites than there are total number of Levite males.

ULT

⁴⁶ and the ransoms of the 273, the ones in excess over the Levites from the firstborn of the sons of Israel.

Numbers 3:47

You must use the shekel of the sanctuary as your standard weight

This means that the shekel must weight the same as those in the sanctuary. Alternate translation: "You must use the weight of the shekels in the sanctuary as your stand weight" (See: [Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information](#))

ULT

⁴⁷ And you shall take five, five shekels for the skull. You shall take by the shekel of the holy place, 20 gerahs is the shekel.

twenty gerahs

"20 gerahs." A gerah is a unit of weight equal to about .57 kilograms. (See: [Numbers](#) and [Biblical Weight](#))

Numbers 3:48

the price of redemption that you paid

Here the word “price” refers to the shekels that Moses collected.
Alternate translation: “the money that you collected for their redemption” (See: [Metonymy](#))

ULT

48 And you shall give the silver to Aaron and to his sons, the ransom of the ones in excess among them.

Numbers 3:49

of redemption from

The noun “redemption” can be translated with the verb “redeem.”
Alternate translation: “to redeem” (See: [Abstract Nouns](#))

ULT

49 And Moses took the silver of the ransom from with the ones in excess over the ransomed ones of the Levites.

Numbers 3:50

1,365 shekels

“one thousand three hundred and sixty-five shekels.” A shekel is 11 grams. Alternate translation: “about 15 kilograms of silver” (See: [Numbers](#) and [Biblical Money](#))

ULT

⁵⁰ From with the firstborn of the sons of Israel he took the silver: 1,365 by the shekel of the holy place.

Numbers 3:51

the redemption money

This refers to the money that Moses collected.

to his sons

Here “his” refers to Aaron

ULT

⁵¹ And Moses gave the silver of the ransom to Aaron and to his sons in accordance with the mouth of Yahweh, just as Yahweh had commanded Moses.

he was told to do by Yahweh’s word, as Yahweh had commanded him

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

he was told to do by Yahweh’s word

Here “Yahweh’s word” refers to Yahweh who spoke to Moses. This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: “that Yahweh had told him to do” (See: [Active or Passive](#) and [Metonymy](#))

Numbers 4

Numbers 4 General Notes

Special concepts in this chapter

Counting the Levites by clans

Moses gave special instructions for each of the families of the tribes of Levi. Each family was given a special role in the ministry of the tabernacle. (See: [tabernacle](#))

Numbers 4:1

(There are no notes for this verse.)

ULT

¹ And Yahweh spoke to Moses and to Aaron, saying,

Numbers 4:2

Kohath

See how you translated this man's name in [Numbers 3:17](#).

ULT

² "Lift up the head of the sons of Kohath from the midst of the sons of Levi, according to their clans, according to the house of their fathers,

Numbers 4:3

thirty to fifty years old

“30 to 50 years old” (See: [Numbers](#))

join the company

The word “company” refers to the rest of the people working in the tent of meeting.

ULT

³ from a son of 30 years and upward, and up to a son of 50 years, all who come to the company to do work in the tent of meeting.

Numbers 4:4

reserved for me

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: “that I have specially selected for myself” (See: [Active or Passive](#))

ULT

⁴ This is the service of the sons of Kohath in the tent of meeting, the holy thing of the holy things.

Numbers 4:5

When the camp prepares

Here “camp” refers to all of the people in the camp. Alternate translation: “When the people prepare” (See: [Metonymy](#))

to move forward

This refers to the people moving to another location. Alternate translation: “to move to another location” (See: [Idiom](#))

cover the ark of the testimony with it

The word “it” refers to the curtain that separated the most holy place from the holy place.

ULT

⁵ And Aaron and his sons shall come when the camp sets out. And they shall take down the curtain of the covering and with it they shall cover the box of the testimony.

Numbers 4:6

insert the poles

The poles were inserted into rings on the sides of the ark so that the poles could be used to carry the ark. This can be stated clearly.
Alternate translation: "insert the poles into the rings on the ark's sides" (See: [Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information](#))

ULT

⁶ And they shall put upon it a cover of the skin of the porpoise. And they shall spread a cloth entirely of blue above. And they shall place its poles.

Numbers 4:7

the bread of the presence

This bread represents the presence of Yahweh. Alternate translation: “the bread of Yahweh’s presence” (See: [Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information](#))

On it they must put

Here “it” refers to the blue cloth.

bowls, and jars for pouring

The full meaning of this statement can be made explicit. Alternate translation: “bowls and jars used to pour out drink offerings” (See: [Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information](#))

Bread must always continue to be

There must always be bread”

ULT

⁷ And over the table of the face they shall spread a cloth of blue. And they shall put on it the dishes and the pans and the sacrificial bowls and the jars of the drink offering. And the bread of continuity shall be on it.

Numbers 4:8

They are to spread over them

Here the word “them” refers to “the dishes, spoons, bowls, and jars” (verse 7).

scarlet cloth

“red cloth”

insert poles

The poles were inserted into rings on the corners of the table so that the poles could be used to carry the table. This can be stated clearly. Alternate translation: “insert poles into the rings at the corners of the table” (See: [Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information](#))

ULT

⁸ And they shall spread on them a cloth of the worms of scarlet. And they shall cover it with a covering of the skin of the porpoise. And they shall place its poles.

Numbers 4:9

(There are no notes for this verse.)

ULT

⁹ And they shall take a cloth of blue and cover the lampstand of the light source, and its lamps, and its snuffers, and its trays, and all the vessels of its oil with which they serve it.

Numbers 4:10

They must put ... into a covering of fine leather

“They must cover ... with fine leather”

they must put it on a carrying frame

“they must place all of these things on a frame for carrying them”

ULT

¹⁰ And they shall put it and all its vessels into the covering of the skin of the porpoise. And they shall put it on the carrying bar.

Numbers 4:11

insert the carrying poles

The poles were inserted into rings on the sides of the altar so they could be used to carry it. This can be stated clearly. Alternate translation: "insert the carrying poles into the rings on the sides of the altar" (See: [Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information](#))

ULT

11 And upon the altar of gold they shall spread a cloth of blue. And they shall cover it with a covering of the skin of the porpoise. And they shall place its poles.

Numbers 4:12

the carrying frame

a wooden rectangle made with poles used to carry things

for the work in the holy place

The word “work” is an abstract noun that can be expressed with the verb “serving.” Alternate translation: “used when serving Yahweh in the holy place” (See: [Abstract Nouns](#))

ULT

12 And they shall take all the implements of the service with which they serve in the holy place and they shall put them into a cloth of blue. And they shall cover them with a covering of the skin of the porpoise. And they shall put it on the carrying bar.

Numbers 4:13

(There are no notes for this verse.)

ULT

13 And they shall remove the fatty ashes from the altar and they shall spread on it a cloth of purple.

Numbers 4:14

in the work of the altar

The word “work” is an abstract noun that can be expressed with the verb “serving.” Alternate translation: “when serving at the altar” (See: [Abstract Nouns](#))

insert the carrying poles

The poles were inserted into rings on the sides of the altar so they could be used to carry it. This can be stated clearly. Alternate translation: “insert the carrying poles into the rings on the sides of the altar” (See: [Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information](#))

ULT

14 And they shall put on it all its implements with which they serve on it: the trays, the meat forks, and the shovels, and the bowls—all the implements of the altar. And they shall spread on it a covering of the skin of the porpoise. And they shall place its poles.

Numbers 4:15

to carry the holy place

Here the holy place refers to all the items that make up the holy place that Aaron and his sons covered in cloth and skins. Alternate translation: “to carry all of the items of the holy place” (See: [Synecdoche](#))

when the camp moves forward

Here the word “camp” refers to all of the people in the camp. Alternate translation: “when the people move forward” (See: [Metonymy](#))

Kohath

See how you translated this man’s name in [Numbers 3:17](#).

the holy instruments

“the holy equipment”

ULT

15 And Aaron and his sons shall finish to cover the holy place and all the implements of the holy place when the camp sets out. And afterward the sons of Kohath shall come to carry them, and they shall not touch the holy thing and die. These are the load of the sons of Kohath in the tent of meeting.

Numbers 4:16

the oil for the light

Here the word “light” is used to refer to the “lamps.” Alternate translation: “the oil for the lamps” (See: [Metonymy](#))

the care of

Here the abstract noun “care” can be expressed as a verb. Alternate translation: “those who care for” (See: [Abstract Nouns](#))

ULT

16 And the oversight of Eleazar the son of Aaron the priest is the oil of the light source, and the incense of the spices, and the grain offering of the continuity, and the oil of the anointment, the oversight of all the dwelling and all that is in it, with the holy place and with its implements.”

Numbers 4:17

(There are no notes for this verse.)

ULT

17 And Yahweh spoke to Moses and to Aaron, saying,

Numbers 4:18

to be removed from among the Levites

This phrase refers to the death of the Kohathites. This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: “to do anything that will cause me to completely remove them from among the Levites” (See: [Active or Passive](#) and [Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information](#))

ULT

18 “Do not let the tribe of the clans of the Kohathite be cut off from the midst of the Levites.

Numbers 4:19

by doing this

This phrase refers to what Yahweh says next. Moses will protect the Kohathites by not allowing them to go in and see the holy place.

ULT

19 And do this for them and they will live and not die when they approach the holiest holy thing. Aaron and his sons shall come and place them man by man in accordance with his service and according to his load.

Numbers 4:20

Kohathites

This refers to the descendants of Kohath. See how you translated this in [Numbers 3:27](#).

to his work, to his special tasks

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

ULT

²⁰ And they shall not enter to look at the holy place like a gulp and die.”

Numbers 4:21

(There are no notes for this verse.)

ULT

²¹ And Yahweh spoke to Moses, saying,

Numbers 4:22

of the descendants of Gershon

This refers only to men. Alternate translation: “of the male descendants of Gershon” (See: [Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information](#))

Gershon

See how you translated this man’s name in [Numbers 3:17](#).

ULT

²² “Lift up the head of the sons of Gershon, even them, according to the house of their fathers, according to their clans.

Numbers 4:23

thirty years old to fifty years old

“30 years old to 50 years old” (See: [Numbers](#))

join the company to serve in the tent of meeting

The word “company” refers to the rest of the people working in the tent of meeting. See how you translated this phrase in [Numbers 4:3](#).

ULT

23 You shall count them from a son of 30 years and upward, up to a son of 50 years, every one who comes to serve service, to work work in the tent of meeting.

Numbers 4:24

This is the work of the clans ... when they serve and what they carry

This sentence is a description that tells us what the following verses are about.

ULT

²⁴ This is the work of the clans of the Gershonite, for working and for a load.

Gershonites

This refers to the descendants of Gershon. See how you translated this in [Numbers 3:21](#).

Numbers 4:25

the covering of fine leather hides that is on it

This is an outer covering that is placed on top of the tent of meeting's covering. Alternate translation: "the covering of fine leather hides that is placed on top of that" or "the outer covering made of fine leather hides" (See: [Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information](#))

ULT

²⁵ And they shall carry the curtains of the dwelling and the tent of meeting, its covering, the covering of porpoise which is on it above, and the covering of the opening of the tent of meeting,

Numbers 4:26

Whatever should be done with these things

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: “Whatever work that these things require” (See: [Active or Passive](#))

ULT

²⁶ and the hangings of the courtyard, and the covering of the opening of the gate of the courtyard that is beside the dwelling and beside the altar all around, and their ropes, and all the implements of their work, and all that is to be done for them. And they shall work.

Numbers 4:27

must direct all the service of the descendants of the Gershonites

“must tell the descendants of the Gershonites how they are to serve Yahweh in the tent of meeting”

ULT

²⁷ In accordance with the mouth of Aaron and his sons will be all the work of the sons of the Gershonite, according to all their load, and according to all their work. And you shall appoint for them by duty all their load.

Numbers 4:28

This is the service of the clans of the descendants of the Gershonites for the tent of meeting

Here the word “service” is an abstract noun that can be expressed by a verb. Here the word “This” refers to what Yahweh just said.

Alternate translation: “This is how the clans of the descendants of the Gershonites will serve in the tent of meeting” (See: [Abstract Nouns](#))

ULT

²⁸ This is the work of the clans of the sons of the Gershonite in the tent of meeting and their duty in the hand of Ithamar the son of Aaron the priest.

Ithamar

See how you translated this man’s name in [Numbers 1:2](#).

Numbers 4:29

the descendants of Merari

This refers only to men. Alternate translation: “the male descendants of Merari” (See: [Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information](#))

Merari

See how you translated this man’s name in [Numbers 3:17](#).

order them

“list them”

ULT

29 You shall count them, the sons of Merari according to their clans, according to the house of their fathers.

Numbers 4:30

thirty years old ... fifty years old

“30 years old...50 years old” (See: [Numbers](#))

join the company and serve in the tent of meeting

The word “company” refers to the rest of the people working in the tent of meeting. See how you translated this phrase in [Numbers 4:3](#).

ULT

30 You shall count them from a son of 30 years and upward, and up to a son of 50 years, every one who comes to the company, to serve the service of the tent of meeting.

Numbers 4:31

This is their responsibility

“This” refers to what Yahweh says next.

crossbars, posts, and sockets

These are all parts of the framing of the tabernacle. See how you translated all of these parts in [Numbers 3:36-37](#).

ULT

³¹ And this is the duty of their load according to all their service in the tent of meeting: the boards of the dwelling, and its bars, and its pillars, and its bases,

Numbers 4:32

their sockets, pegs, and their ropes, with all their hardware

Here “their” refers to the posts of the court.

sockets, pegs, and their ropes

These are all parts of the framing of the tabernacle. See how you translated all of these parts in [Numbers 3:36-37](#).

List by name the articles they must carry

“List by each man’s name the articles he must carry”

ULT

³² and the pillars of the courtyard all around, and their bases, and their pegs, and their ropes, for all their implements and for all their work. And by names you shall appoint the implements of the duty of their load.

Numbers 4:33

under the direction of Ithamar son of Aaron the priest

The word “direction” is an abstract noun that is expressed by a verb.
Alternate translation: “as Ithamar son of Aaron the priest directs them” (See: [Abstract Nouns](#))

Ithamar

See how you translated this man’s name in [Numbers 1:2](#).

ULT

³³ This is the service of the clans of the sons of Merari for all their service in the tent of meeting, by the hand of Ithamar the son of Aaron the priest.

Numbers 4:34

the descendants of the Kohathites

The refers to men. Alternate translation: “the male descendants of the Kohathites” (See: [Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information](#))

Kohathites

This refers to the descendants of Kohath. See how you translated this in [Numbers 3:27](#).

ULT

³⁴ And Moses and Aaron and the leaders of the congregation counted the sons of the Kohathite according to their clans and according to the house of their fathers,

Numbers 4:35

thirty years old ... fifty years old

“30 years old...50 years old” (See: [Numbers](#))

everyone who would join the company

Here the word “would” does not mean that the men “chose” to join the company but rather that they were “assigned” to the company. Alternate translation: “everyone who was assigned to join the company” (See: [Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information](#))

ULT

³⁵ from a son of 30 years and upward, and up to a son of 50 years, every one who comes to the company for service in the tent of meeting.

join the company to serve in the tent of meeting

The word “company” refers to the rest of the people working in the tent of meeting. See how you translated this phrase in [Numbers 4:3](#).

Numbers 4:36

2,750 men

“two thousand seven hundred and fifty men” (See: [Numbers](#))

ULT

³⁶ And their counted ones according to their clans were 2,750.

Numbers 4:37

(There are no notes for this verse.)

ULT

³⁷ These were the counted ones of the clans of the Kohathite, every one who serves in the tent of meeting, whom Moses and Aaron had counted in accordance with the mouth of Yahweh by the hand of Moses.

Numbers 4:38

The descendants of Gershon

This refers to the men. Alternate translation: "The male descendants of Gershon" (See: [Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information](#))

The descendants of Gershon were counted

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "Moses and Aaron counted the descendants of Gershon" (See: [Active or Passive](#))

ULT

38 And the counted ones of the sons of Gershon, according to their clans and according to the house of their fathers,

Numbers 4:39

from thirty to fifty years old

“from 30 to 50 years old” (See: [Numbers](#))

everyone who would join the company

Here the word “would” does not mean that the men “chose” to join the company but rather that they were “assigned” to the company. Alternate translation: “everyone who was assigned to join the company” (See: [Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information](#))

ULT

³⁹ from a son of 30 years and upward, and up to a son of 50 years, every one who comes to the company for service in the tent of meeting.

join the company to serve in the tent of meeting

The word “company” refers to the rest of the people working in the tent of meeting. See how you translated this phrase in [Numbers 4:3](#).

Numbers 4:40

counted by their clans

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: “whom Moses and Aaron counted by their clans” (See: [Active or Passive](#))

2630

“two thousand six hundred and thirty.” This refers to 2,630 men. (See: [Numbers](#) and [Ellipsis](#))

ULT

⁴⁰ And their counted ones according to their clans, according to the house of their fathers were 2,630.

Numbers 4:41

they obeyed

The word “they” refers to Moses and Aaron.

ULT

⁴¹ These were the counted ones of the clans of the sons of Gershon, every one who serves in the tent of meeting, whom Moses and Aaron had counted in accordance with the mouth of Yahweh.

Numbers 4:42

The descendants of Merari were counted

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: “Moses and Aaron counted the descendants of Merari” (See: [Active or Passive](#))

ULT

⁴² And the counted ones of the clans of the sons of Merari, according to their clans, according to the house of their fathers,

Numbers 4:43

from thirty to fifty years old

“from 30 to 50 years old” (See: [Numbers](#))

everyone who would join the company

Here the word “would” does not mean that the men “chose” to join the company but rather that they were “assigned” to the company. Alternate translation: “everyone who was assigned to join the company” (See: [Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information](#))

ULT

⁴³ from a son of 30 years and upward, and up to a son of 50 years, every one who comes to the company for service in the tent of meeting.

join the company to serve in the tent of meeting

The word “company” refers to the rest of the people working in the tent of meeting. See how you translated this phrase in [Numbers 4:3](#).

Numbers 4:44

counted by their clans

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: “whom Moses and Aaron counted by their clans” (See: [Active or Passive](#))

numbered 3,200

“numbered three thousand two hundred” (See: [Numbers](#))

ULT

44 And their counted ones according to their clans were 3,200.

Numbers 4:45

they obeyed

The word “they” refers to Moses and Aaron.

ULT

⁴⁵ These are the counted ones of the clans of the sons of Merari, whom Moses and Aaron had counted in accordance with the mouth of Yahweh by the hand of Moses,

Numbers 4:46

(There are no notes for this verse.)

ULT

⁴⁶ all the counted ones whom Moses and Aaron and the leaders of Israel had counted, the Levites according to their clans and according to the house of their fathers,

Numbers 4:47

from thirty to fifty

This refers to men. Alternate translation: “men from thirty to fifty”
(See: [Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information](#))

from thirty to fifty

“from 30 to 50” (See: [Numbers](#))

ULT

47 from a son of 30 years and upward, and up to a son of 50 years, every one who comes to serve the service of service and the service of load in the tent of meeting.

Numbers 4:48

8,580 men

“eight thousand five hundred and eighty men” (See: [Numbers](#))

ULT

⁴⁸ And their counted ones were 8,580.

Numbers 4:49

At Yahweh's command

"As Yahweh commanded"

keeping count of each by the type ... He counted each man by the kind of responsibility he would bear

These two phrase have similar meaning and are used together to emphasize how Moses counted all the men.

by the type of work he was assigned to do

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "by his type of work assignment" or "by the type of work he had assigned each man to do" (See: [Active or Passive](#))

he would bear

"he would have"

they obeyed what Yahweh had commanded them

Here "they" and "them" refer to Moses and Aaron.

ULT

⁴⁹ In accordance with the mouth of Yahweh he counted them by the hand of Moses, man by man in accordance with his work and in accordance with his load, and his numbered ones that Yahweh had commanded Moses.

Numbers 5

Numbers 5 General Notes

Special concepts in this chapter

Israel's camp

Israel's entire camp was to be a "clean" place. This meant that people who could not be made acceptable to God were not allowed inside the camp. (See: [clean](#), [wash](#))

Vengeance

There are several laws in this chapter regarding restitution. These laws were meant to limit the ways in which people who had been wronged could seek to be compensated. These laws were intended to make it difficult for such people to avenge a wrong when they were angry. (See: [avenge](#), [avenger](#), [revenge](#), [vengeance](#) and [jealous](#), [jealousy](#))

Numbers 5:1

(There are no notes for this verse.)

ULT

¹ And Yahweh spoke to Moses, saying,

Numbers 5:2

infectious skin disease

This refers to leprosy, which is a sickness that affects the skin and easily spreads to other people.

oozing sore

This refers to an open cut that is leaking fluids.

whoever is unclean through touching a dead body

If a person touched a dead body they were considered unclean. A person who is not acceptable for God's purposes is spoken of as if the person were physically unclean. (See: [Metaphor](#))

ULT

² "Command the sons of Israel and they shall send away from the camp every one with an infectious skin disease, and every one who flows, and every one unclean by a dead person.

Numbers 5:3

you must send

Here “you” is plural and refers to the people of Israel. (See: [Forms of You](#))

ULT

³ From male up to female you shall send, to the outside of the camp you shall send them. And they shall not defile their camp, because I am dwelling in the midst of them.”

Numbers 5:4

The people of Israel did so

This means that they sent the unclean people away. The full meaning of this statement can be made explicit. Alternate translation: “The people of Israel sent those who were unclean out of the camp” (See: [Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information](#))

ULT

⁴ And the sons of Israel did so. And they sent them to the outside of the camp. Thus the sons of Israel did just as Yahweh had spoken to Moses.

Numbers 5:5

(There are no notes for this verse.)

ULT

⁵ And Yahweh spoke to Moses, saying,

Numbers 5:6

any sin such as people do to one another

“any sin that people usually commit against one another”

is unfaithful to me

If someone sins against another person, it means that they have also sinned against Yahweh and Yahweh considers that person as unfaithful to him. Alternate translation: “they have also wronged me” (See: [Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information](#))

ULT

6 “Speak to the sons of Israel: ‘When a man or woman does from any of the sins of the human to act unfaithfully in unfaithfulness against Yahweh, then that person has done wrong.’

Numbers 5:7

the price of his guilt

Here the person's "sin" is referred to as his "guilt." Alternate translation: "what is considered a suitable amount of money for the wrong that he has done" (See: [Metonymy](#))

add to the price one-fifth more

This means the person must pay an extra one-fifth of the price that he owes.

one-fifth

This is one part out of five equal parts. (See: [Fractions](#))

ULT

⁷ And they shall confess their sin that they did. And he shall return his price of wrongdoing by its head and he shall add its fifth in addition to it. And he shall give to whom he has done wrong to.

Numbers 5:8

But if the wronged person has no close relative to receive the payment

Usually the wronged person would receive the payment but if that person has died the payment goes to the closest relative. The full meaning of this statement can be made explicit. Alternate translation: "But if the wronged person has died and has no close relative to receive the payment" (See: [Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information](#))

ULT

⁸ And if there is not a redeemer for the man to return the price of wrongdoing to him, the price of wrongdoing will be returned to Yahweh, to the priest, apart from the ram of the atonement with which he shall make atonement for him.

if the wronged person

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "if the person whom the guilty person has wronged" (See: [Active or Passive](#))

he must pay the price for his guilt to me through a priest

If a person made a payment to a priest to pay for his guilt it was the same as if the person had made the payment to Yahweh.

to atone for himself

The atonement is made for the man's sin. Here Yahweh refers to the man's sin as the man who committed it. Alternate translation: "to atone for his sin" (See: [Metonymy](#))

Numbers 5:9

the things that are set aside and brought to the priest by the people of Israel

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: “the things that the people of Israel set aside and bring to the priest” (See: [Active or Passive](#))

ULT

⁹ And every contribution of all the holy things of the sons of Israel that they offer to the priest, it shall belong to him.

Numbers 5:10

The offerings of every person will be for the priest; if anyone gives anything to the priest, it will belong to him

These two phrases mean basically the same thing and may be combined to state that the offerings that someone gives belong to the priest to whom they have been given. (See: [Parallelism](#))

ULT

¹⁰ And a man, his holy things shall belong to him; what a man gives to the priest shall belong to him.'"

Numbers 5:11

The words “Suppose that a man’s wife turns away” begin a long description of a hypothetical situation, something that has not happened but might happen. Yahweh tells Moses what to do if it does happen. (See: [Hypothetical Situations](#))

ULT

11 And Yahweh spoke to Moses, saying,

Numbers 5:12

a man's wife turns away

This means that she goes away from him and is unfaithful to him.
Alternate translation: "a man's wife is unfaithful" (See: [Idiom](#))

sins against her husband

This means that she is unfaithful to her husband and sins against him by sleeping with another man. The full meaning of this statement can be made explicit. Alternate translation: "sins against her husband by sleeping with another man" (See: [Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information](#))

ULT

12 "Speak to the sons of Israel and say to them, 'Man by man, if his wife turns aside and acts unfaithfully against him in unfaithfulness,

Numbers 5:13

Connecting Statement:

Moses continues to describe the hypothetical situation he began describing in [Numbers 5:12](#).

If a man lies with her

This is a euphemism. Alternate translation: “If a man has sexual relations with her” (See: [Euphemism](#))

her

the woman who turns away and sins against her husband ([Numbers 5:12](#))

in the act

This refers to the act of adultery. The full meaning of this statement can be made explicit. Alternate translation: “in the act of adultery” or “sleeping with him” (See: [Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information](#))

ULT

13 and a man lies the lying of seed with her and it is concealed from the eyes of her husband, and it is hidden, and she herself is defiled, and there is no witness against her, and she herself has not been caught,

Numbers 5:14

his wife is defiled ... his wife is not defiled

These phrases can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "his wife has defiled herself ... his wife has not defiled herself" (See: [Active or Passive](#))

a spirit of jealousy might still inform the husband

Here the word "spirit" refers to a person's attitude and emotions. His "jealously" is spoken of as if it were a person who spoke to him. Alternate translation: "the husband might feel jealous and become suspicious" (See: [Metonymy](#) and [Personification](#))

a spirit of jealousy might falsely come on a man

Here the word "spirit" refers to a person's attitude and emotions. The idea of the spirit "coming on him" means that he began to have these jealous feelings. Alternate translation: "a man might feel jealous for no reason" (See: [Metonymy](#) and [Idiom](#))

ULT

14 and a spirit of jealousy passes over upon him and he is jealous of his wife and she herself is defiled, or a spirit of jealousy comes over upon him and he is jealous of his wife but she herself is not defiled;

Numbers 5:15

Connecting Statement:

Moses begins to describe what the people are to do if the hypothetical situation he began describing in [Numbers 5:12](#) ever happens.

a tenth

This is one part out of ten equal parts. (See: [Fractions](#))

a tenth of an ephah

This can be written in modern measurements. Alternate translation: “a tenth of an ephah (which is about 2 liters)” or “2 liters” (See: [Biblical Volume](#))

a grain offering of jealousy

“a grain offering for jealousy”

a reminder of the iniquity

A “reminder” is something that shows evidence that something had occurred that required justice. In this case, he made the offering to determine whether his wife had committed adultery or not.

ULT

¹⁵ then the man shall bring his wife to the priest. And he shall bring her offering for her, the tenth of the ephah of the flour of barley. He shall not pour oil upon it and he shall not put frankincense upon it, for it is a grain offering of jealousy, a grain offering of remembrance, one that causes iniquity to be remembered.

Numbers 5:16

Connecting Statement:

Moses continues to describe what the people are to do if the hypothetical situation he began describing in [Numbers 5:12](#) ever happens.

ULT

16 And the priest shall bring her near.
And he shall stand her before the face
of Yahweh.

near and place her before Yahweh

“in the presence of Yahweh.” The priest would bring her near the altar. Alternate translation: “near the altar and place her in the presence of Yahweh” (See: [Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information](#))

Numbers 5:17

(There are no notes for this verse.)

ULT

17 And the priest shall take the holy water in the vessel of clay. And the priest shall take some of the dust that is on the floor of the dwelling. And he shall put it into the water.

Numbers 5:18

Connecting Statement:

Moses continues to describe what the people are to do if the hypothetical situation he began describing in [Numbers 5:12](#) ever happens.

before Yahweh

“in the presence of Yahweh”

grain offering of suspicion

See how you translated this phrase in [Numbers 5:15](#).

ULT

18 And the priest shall stand the woman before the face of Yahweh. And he shall unbind the head of the woman. And he shall put upon her palm the grain offering of remembrance. It is the grain offering of jealousy. And in the hand of the priest shall be the water of bitterness that brings a curse.

Numbers 5:19

no other man has lain with you

This is a euphemism. Alternate translation: “no other man has had sexual relations with you” (See: [Euphemism](#))

if you have not gone astray

The words “gone astray” is an idiom that means “to be unfaithful.” Alternate translation: “if you have not been unfaithful to your husband” (See: [Idiom](#))

and committed impurity

“by committing impurity.” This phrase refers to committing adultery.

you will be free from this bitter water

The phrase to “be free” from something means to not be harmed by it. Alternate translation: “this bitter water will not harm you, though it is able to” (See: [Idiom](#))

this bitter water that can bring a curse

Here the bitter water is described as being able to bring a curse. This means that when the woman drinks the water it cause her to be unable to bear children, if she is guilty. Alternate translation: “this bitter water can be a curse to you” (See: [Personification](#))

ULT

19 And the priest shall make her swear and he shall say to the woman, “If a man has not lain with you, and if you have not turned aside to uncleanness under your husband, you will be free from this water of bitterness that brings a curse.”

Numbers 5:20

Connecting Statement:

Moses continues to describe what the people are to do if the hypothetical situation he began describing in [Numbers 5:12](#) ever happens.

have gone astray

The words “gone astray” is an idiom that means “to be unfaithful.” Alternate translation: “have been unfaithful to your husband” (See: [Idiom](#))

ULT

²⁰ But if you have turned aside under your husband, and if you are defiled and a man apart from your husband has given his lying with you,”

Numbers 5:21

that can bring down a curse on her

The phrase “bring down a curse” is an idiom meaning for a curse to come upon her. Alternate translation: “that can cause a curse to come upon her” (See: [Idiom](#))

Yahweh will make you into a curse ... your people to be such

Here the author speaks about the woman bearing the curse that Yahweh gives her, which causes other people to curse her. This is spoken of as if the woman herself becomes a curse. Alternate translation: “Because Yahweh curses you, other people will curse you as well, and Yahweh will show people that you are truly cursed” (See: [Metaphor](#))

that will be shown to your people to be such

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: “that he will show to your people as a curse” (See: [Active or Passive](#))

your thigh to waste away and your abdomen to swell

This could mean: (1) that the woman will become unable to have children or (2) that the woman’s pregnancy will end too early and the baby will die.

your thigh to waste away

Here the word “thigh” is a polite way of referring to the woman’s womb or her private parts. Alternate translation: “your womb to be useless” (See: [Euphemism](#))

ULT

21 (and the priest shall make the woman swear with an oath of the curse). And the priest shall say to the woman, “Yahweh will make you into a curse and into an oath in the midst of your people when Yahweh makes your thigh fall away and your abdomen swell.

Numbers 5:22

(There are no notes for this verse.)

ULT

²² And this water that brings a curse will enter in your inward parts to cause swelling of the abdomen and to cause falling away of your thigh." And the woman shall say, "Truly, truly."

Numbers 5:23

Connecting Statement:

Moses continues to describe what the people are to do if the hypothetical situation he began describing in [Numbers 5:12](#) ever happens.

he must wash away the written curses

This means that he is to wash the ink off of the scroll.

the written curses

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: “the curses he has written” (See: [Active or Passive](#))

ULT

²³ And the priest shall write these curses in the book and he shall wipe it off into the water of bitterness.

Numbers 5:24

General Information:

Verse 24 explains in a general way what the priest must do and what is expected to happen when the woman drinks the water. Verse 25 and 26 explains in detail how the priest is to do this work. The priest gives the water to the woman and she drinks it only once.

ULT

24 And he shall cause the woman to drink the water of bitterness that brings a curse. And the water that brings a curse of bitterness will enter in her.

Connecting Statement:

Moses continues to describe what the people are to do if the hypothetical situation he began describing in [Numbers 5:12](#) ever happens.

Numbers 5:25

grain offering of jealousy

“a grain offering for jealousy.” See how you translated this in [Numbers 5:15](#).

ULT

²⁵ And the priest shall take the grain offering of jealousy from the hand of the woman. And he shall wave the grain offering before the face of Yahweh and he shall bring it near to the altar.

Numbers 5:26

a representative offering

The handful of the grain offering represents the whole grain offering. This means the whole offering belongs to Yahweh.

ULT

²⁶ And the priest shall grasp from the grain offering its memorial portion and he shall burn it up at the altar. And after he shall make the woman drink the water.

Numbers 5:27

Connecting Statement:

Moses continues to describe what the people are to do if the hypothetical situation he began describing in [Numbers 5:12](#) ever happens.

if she is defiled because she has committed

This can be written in active form. Alternate translation: “if she has defined herself by committing” (See: [Active or Passive](#))

committed a sin

Here the “sin” refers specifically to committing adultery. The meaning of this statement can be made clear. Alternate translation: “committed adultery” (See: [Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information](#))

Her abdomen will swell and her thigh will waste away

This could mean: (1) that the woman will become unable to have children or (2) that the woman’s pregnancy will end too early and the baby will die. Here the word “thigh” is a polite way of referring to the woman’s womb or her private parts. (See: [Euphemism](#)) See how you translated these concepts in [Numbers 5:21](#).

The woman will be cursed among her people

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: “Her people will curse her” (See: [Active or Passive](#))

ULT

²⁷ And he shall make her drink the water. And it will be that if she is defiled and has acted unfaithfully in unfaithfulness with her husband, then the water that brings a curse of bitterness will enter in her and her abdomen will swell and her thigh will fall away. And the woman will become a curse in the midst of her people.

Numbers 5:28

is not defiled

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: “has not defiled herself” (See: [Active or Passive](#))

if she is clean

Here “being innocent” is spoken of as “being clean.” (See: [Metaphor](#))

then she must be free

This could mean: (1) “then she will not be cursed” or (2) “then she is free from guilt.” (See: [Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information](#))

conceive children

“become pregnant”

ULT

28 And if the woman is not defiled then she herself is clean. And she will be free and she will be sown with seed.

Numbers 5:29

Connecting Statement:

Moses continues to describe what the people are to do if the hypothetical situation he began describing in [Numbers 5:12](#) ever happens.

ULT

²⁹ This is the law of jealousy, when a woman turns aside under her husband and is defiled.

the law of jealousy

“the law for dealing with jealousy”

who strays away from her husband

The words “strays away” is an idiom that means “to be unfaithful.” Alternate translation: “who is unfaithful to her husband” (See: [Idiom](#))

is defiled

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

Numbers 5:30

a spirit of jealousy

This phrase refers to the man's attitude and emotions of jealousy. See how you translated this in [Numbers 5:14](#). Alternate translation: "who is jealous" (See: [Metonymy](#))

when he is jealous of his wife

This is an idiom that means that he suspects that his wife has been unfaithful to him by sleeping with another man. Alternate translation: "and suspects that his wife has been unfaithful to him" or "and suspects that his wife has slept with another man" (See: [Idiom](#))

before Yahweh

"in the presence of Yahweh"

ULT

³⁰ or a man, when a spirit of jealousy passes over upon him and he is jealous of his wife. And he shall stand the woman before the face of Yahweh. And the priest shall do all this law to her.

Numbers 5:31

Connecting Statement:

Moses continues to describe what the people are to do if the hypothetical situation he began describing in [Numbers 5:12](#) ever happens.

ULT

³¹ And the man will be free from iniquity. And this woman will carry her iniquity.'"

will be free from guilt for bringing his wife to the priest

"will not be guilty of doing something wrong by bringing his wife to the priest"

must bear

"must endure"

Numbers 6

Numbers 6 General Notes

Special concepts in this chapter

Nazirite vow

The Nazirite vow was a special type of vow between a person and Yahweh. This chapter gives the rules for people to be consecrated to God as Nazirites. (See: [vow](#) and [consecrate, consecrated, consecration](#))

Numbers 6:1

(There are no notes for this verse.)

ULT

¹ And Yahweh spoke to Moses, saying,

Numbers 6:2

separates himself

“To separate yourself to someone” means to “dedicate yourself” to that person. Alternate translation: “dedicates himself” (See: [Idiom](#))

ULT

² “Speak to the sons of Israel and say to them, ‘When a man or a woman does something extraordinary by vowing the vow of a separate one to separate to Yahweh,

Numbers 6:3

he must keep himself from

This idiom means that he must not eat or drink them. Alternate translation: “he must not consume” (See: [Idiom](#))

vinegar made from wine

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: “vinegar that people make from wine” (See: [Active or Passive](#))

vinegar

a drink produced when wine and other strong drinks ferment too long and become sour

or from strong drink

You can make clear the understood information. Alternate translation: “or vinegar that people make from strong drink” (See: [Ellipsis](#))

raisins

dried grapes

ULT

³ he shall separate from wine and intoxicating drink. He shall not drink the vinegar of wine and the vinegar of intoxicating drink. And he shall not drink any of the juice of grapes. And he shall not eat moist and dried grapes.

Numbers 6:4

he is separate

“To separate yourself to someone” means to “dedicate yourself” to that person. Alternate translation: “he dedicates himself” (See: [Idiom](#))

he is separate to me

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: “he separates himself to me” (See: [Active or Passive](#))

nothing that is made from grapes

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: “nothing that people make from grapes” (See: [Active or Passive](#))

from the seeds to their skins

These two extremes are given to emphasize the entire grape may not be eaten. Alternate translation: “from any part of a grape” (See: [Merism](#))

ULT

⁴ All the days of his separation he shall not eat from all that is made from the vine of the wine, from seeds and up to skin.

Numbers 6:5

vow of separation

This is an idiom. Here “separation” means “dedication.” Alternate translation: “vow of dedication” (See: [Idiom](#))

no razor is to be used on his head

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: “no one is to use a razor on his head” (See: [Active or Passive](#))

the days of his separation to Yahweh

The word “separation” is an abstract noun that can be expressed as a verb. Here “separation” is an idiom that means “dedication.” Alternate translation: “the days that he has separated himself to Yahweh” or “the days that he has dedicated himself to Yahweh” (See: [Abstract Nouns](#) and [Idiom](#))

to Yahweh are fulfilled

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

He must be set apart to Yahweh

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: “He must set himself apart to Yahweh” (See: [Active or Passive](#))

ULT

⁵ All the days of the vow of his separation a razor shall not pass over his head. Until the fulfilling of the days that he has separated to Yahweh he shall be holy, the locks of the hair of his head shall grow long.

Numbers 6:6

separates

This is an idiom for dedication. Alternate translation: “dedicates”
(See: [Idiom](#))

ULT

6 All the days of his separation to
Yahweh he shall not go near a person
who is dead.

Numbers 6:7

separated

This is an idiom for dedication. Alternate translation: “dedicated”
(See: [Idiom](#))

unclean

A person who is not acceptable for God’s purposes is spoken of as if the person were physically unclean. (See: [Metaphor](#))

he is separated

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: “he has separated himself” (See: [Active or Passive](#))

ULT

⁷ For his father and for his mother, for his brother and for his sister, he shall not defile himself for them with their death, because the separation of his God is on his head.

Numbers 6:8

separation

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

ULT

⁸ All the days of his separation he shall be holy to Yahweh.

of his separation

The abstract noun “separation” can be expressed as a verb. Alternate translation: “that he has separated himself”

reserved for Yahweh

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: “he has reserved himself for Yahweh” or “set apart for Yahweh” (See: [Active or Passive](#))

Numbers 6:9

defiles his consecrated head

Here “head” represents the Nazirite man’s hair, which symbolizes his vow. Alternate translation: “defiles his long hair which shows everyone he is separated to God” or “he becomes defiled” (See: [Metonymy](#))

the seventh day

“day 7” (See: [Ordinal Numbers](#))

ULT

⁹ And if one who is dead dies near him in suddenness suddenly and he defiles the head of his separation, then he shall shave his head on the day of his cleansing, on the seventh day he shall shave it

Numbers 6:10

the eighth day

“day 8” (See: [Ordinal Numbers](#))

ULT

¹⁰ And on the eighth day he shall bring two of the turtedoves or two of the sons of the dove to the priest, to the opening of the tent of meeting.

Numbers 6:11

(There are no notes for this verse.)

ULT

11 And the priest shall make one for a sin offering and one for a burnt up offering. And he shall make atonement for him because he sinned on account of the person. And he shall make his head holy on that day.

Numbers 6:12

for the days of his consecration

“during the time he is being set apart again”

He must bring a male lamb ... as a guilt offering

The man is to bring the lamb to the priest so that it can be sacrificed.

The full meaning of this statement can be made explicit. Alternate translation: “He must bring a male lamb one year old to the priest as a guilt offering” (See: [Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information](#))

ULT

¹² And he shall separate to Yahweh the days of his separation. And he shall bring a male lamb, a son of his year, for a guilt offering. And the first days shall fall because his separation was defiled.

The days before he defiled himself must not be counted

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: “He must not count the days before he defiled himself” (See: [Active or Passive](#))

his consecration was defiled

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: “he defiled himself” or “he made himself unacceptable” (See: [Active or Passive](#))

Numbers 6:13

of his separation

Here “separation” means “dedication.” Also, this abstract noun can be expressed as a verb. Alternate translation: “of his dedication” or “that he has dedicated himself” (See: [Idiom](#) or [Abstract Nouns](#))

He must be brought

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: “Someone must bring him” or “He must go” (See: [Active or Passive](#))

ULT

13 And this is the law of the separate one. On a day fulfilling the days of his separation he shall bring him to the opening of the tent of meeting.

Numbers 6:14

He must present his offering to Yahweh

He must bring his offering to the priest to be sacrificed to Yahweh. The full meaning of this statement can be made clear. Alternate translation: “He must present his offering to Yahweh by bringing it to the priest to be sacrificed” or “He must present his offering to Yahweh by bringing it to the priest who will sacrifice it” (See: [Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information](#))

ULT

14 And he shall offer his offering to Yahweh, one male lamb without defect, a son of his year, for a burnt up offering, and one female lamb without defect, a daughter of her year, for a sin offering, and one ram without defect for peace offerings,

Numbers 6:15

bread made without yeast

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: “bread he made without yeast” (See: [Active or Passive](#))

fine flour mixed with oil

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: “fine flour that he mixed with oil” (See: [Active or Passive](#))

wafers without yeast rubbed with oil

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: “wafers without yeast which he rubbed with oil” (See: [Active or Passive](#))

wafers without yeast

small pieces of flat bread

together with their grain offering and drink offerings

The word “their” refers to the other offerings that the Nazirite man was told to bring. Often grain offerings and drink offerings were required to accompany other types of sacrifices. The full meaning of this statement can be made clear. Alternate translation: “together with the grain offering and drink offering that Yahweh required to accompany the other offerings” (See: [Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information](#))

ULT

¹⁵ and a basket of unleavened bread, cakes of fine flour mixed with the oil, and wafers of unleavened bread smeared with the oil and their grain offering and their drink offerings.

Numbers 6:16

He must offer his sin offering

“He” refers to the priest and “his” refers to the man who took a vow.

ULT

16 And the priest shall offer before the face of Yahweh and he shall make his sin offering and his burnt up offering.

Numbers 6:17

the fellowship offering

“as the fellowship offering”

The priest must present also ... drink offering

You can make clear the understood information. Alternate translation: “The priest must present also ... the drink offering to Yahweh” (See: [Ellipsis](#))

ULT

17 And he shall make the ram a sacrifice of peace offerings to Yahweh with the basket of the unleavened bread. And the priest shall make his grain offering and his drink offering.

Numbers 6:18

indicating his separation

Here “separation” means “dedication.” Also, this abstract noun may be written as a verb. Alternate translation: “indicating his dedication” or “indicating how he has separated himself” (See: [Idiom](#) and [Abstract Nouns](#))

ULT

18 And the separate one shall shave the head of his separation at the opening of the tent of meeting. And he shall take the hair of the head of his separation. And he shall put it on the fire that is under the sacrifice of the peace offerings.

Numbers 6:19

the boiled shoulder of the ram

This means that he had boiled the ram's shoulder. This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "the shoulder of the ram that he boiled" (See: [Active or Passive](#))

indicating separation

Here "separation" means "dedication." Also, this abstract noun can be expressed with the verb "separated." Alternate translation:

"indicating dedication" or "indicating that he has dedicated himself to Yahweh" (See: [Idiom](#) and [Abstract Nouns](#))

ULT

19 And the priest shall take the boiled shoulder from the ram and one cake of unleavened bread from the basket and one wafer of unleavened bread. And he shall put them on the palms of the separate one after his shaving his separation.

Numbers 6:20

The priest must wave them

After handing the items to the Nazirite, the priest takes them back to offer them to Yahweh. The full meaning of this statement can be made clear. Alternate translation: "Then the priest must take them back and wave them" (See: [Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information](#))

together with

"as well as"

that was waved

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

that was presented

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

ULT

20 And the priest shall wave them as a wave offering before the face of Yahweh. It is a holy thing to the priest with the breast of the wave offering and with the thigh of the contribution. And after the separate one may drink wine.

Numbers 6:21

his separation

- Here “separation” means “dedication.” Also, this abstract noun may be written as a verb. Alternate translation: “his dedication” or “for having dedicated himself to Yahweh” (See: [Idiom](#) and [Abstract Nouns](#))

ULT

21 This is the law of the separate one who vows his offering to Yahweh for his separation, apart from what his hand reaches. According to the mouth of his vow that he vowed, so he shall do in accordance with the law of his separation.’”

Whatever else he may give

This refers to the Nazirite deciding to give other offering beyond what he has been commanded to give. The full meaning of this statement can be made clear. Alternate translation: “If he decides to give any additional offerings” (See: [Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information](#))

he must keep the obligations of the vow he has taken

“he must still obey the requirements of the vow he has taken”

he must keep the obligations ... to keep the promise indicated by the law for the Nazirite

These two phrases mean basically the same thing and are combined to emphasize that he must obey the obligations of his vow. (See: [Parallelism](#))

the promise indicated by the law for the Nazirite

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: “the promise that the law for the Nazirite indicates” (See: [Active or Passive](#))

Numbers 6:22

(There are no notes for this verse.)

ULT

²² And Yahweh spoke to Moses, saying,

Numbers 6:23

You must bless the people of Israel

“You” is plural. (See: [Forms of You](#))

ULT

²³ “Speak to Aaron and to his sons, saying, ‘Thus you shall bless the sons of Israel, saying to them,

Numbers 6:24

May Yahweh bless you and keep you

Here “you” is singular. (See: [Forms of You](#))

keep you

This is an idiom. Here “keep” means to “protect.” (See: [Idiom](#))

ULT

²⁴ “May Yahweh bless you and keep you.”

Numbers 6:25

make his face shine on you

This is an idiom which means to have kind intentions towards someone. It can also be expressed by smiling. Alternate translation: “smile at you” or “look at you with kindness” (See: [Idiom](#))

on you ... to you

Here “you” is singular. (See: [Forms of You](#))

ULT

²⁵ May Yahweh cause his face to shine to you and may he be gracious to you.

Numbers 6:26

look on you with favor

Here the phrase “look on” means to show a certain attitude towards that person. Alternate translation: “show you favor” (See: [Idiom](#))

on you ... give you

Here “you” is singular. (See: [Forms of You](#))

ULT

²⁶ May Yahweh lift up his face to you
and may he set peace for you.”

Numbers 6:27

they must give my name

Here Yahweh speaks about claiming the Israelites as his own by saying that he is giving them “his name.” Alternate translation: “they must let the people of Israel know that they are mine” (See: [Metaphor](#))

ULT

27 And they shall set my name upon the sons of Israel and I shall bless them.”

Numbers 7

Numbers 7 General Notes

Structure and formatting

Consecrating the altar

When the tabernacle was completed, they consecrated the altar. Each tribe brought an offering to consecrate the altar. (See: [tabernacle](#) and [consecrate](#), [consecrated](#), [consecration](#))

Numbers 7:1

Moses completed the tabernacle

“Moses finished setting up the tabernacle”

ULT

¹ And it happened on the day Moses finished erecting the dwelling that he anointed it and made it holy, and all its vessels and the altar and all its vessels. And he anointed them and made them holy.

Numbers 7:2

the leaders of Israel ... the heads of their ancestor's families

These two phrases describe the same group of people two different ways. Alternate translation: "the leaders of Israel who are also the heads of their ancestors families" (See: [Parallelism](#))

the heads of their ancestor's families

Here the leaders of the families are referred to as "heads." Alternate translation: "the leaders of their ancestor's families" (See: [Metonymy](#))

had overseen the counting of the men

The abstract noun "counting" can be stated as a verb. Alternate translation: "had helped Aaron and Moses to count the men" (See: [Abstract Nouns](#))

ULT

² And the leaders of Israel, the heads of the house of their fathers, made an offering. They were the leaders of the tribes. They were the ones standing over the counted ones.

Numbers 7:3

They brought their offerings before Yahweh ... They presented these things in front of the tabernacle

This means that they gave their offerings to Yahweh and brought them to the tabernacle. These phrases may be combined to add clarity. Alternate translation: "They brought their offerings to Yahweh and presented them to him in front of the tabernacle" (See: [Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information](#))

six covered carts and twelve oxen

"6 covered carts and 12 oxen" (See: [Numbers](#))

ULT

³ And they brought their offering before the face of Yahweh, six covered carts and 12 cattle, a cart for two of the leaders and an ox for one. And they offered them before the face of the dwelling.

Numbers 7:4

(There are no notes for this verse.)

ULT

⁴ And Yahweh said to Moses, saying,

Numbers 7:5

to each one as his work needs them

“to each man as he needs them for his work”

ULT

⁵ “Take from with them and they shall be for serving the service of the tent of meeting. And you shall give them to the Levites, a man according to the mouth of his service.”

Numbers 7:6

(There are no notes for this verse.)

ULT

⁶ And Moses took the carts and the cattle. And he gave them to the Levites.

Numbers 7:7

Gershon

See how you translated this man's name in [Numbers 3:17](#).

because of what their work needed

"because it was what they needed to do their work"

ULT

⁷ He gave two of the carts and four of the cattle to the sons of Gershon, according to the mouth of their service.

Numbers 7:8

Merari

See how you translated this man's name in [Numbers 3:17](#).

in the care of Ithamar son of Aaron the priest

"under the supervision of Ithamar son of Aaron the priest" or
"Ithamar son of Aaron the priest oversaw their work"

Ithamar

See how you translated this man's name in [Numbers 1:2](#).

He did this because

The word "he" refers to Moses.

because of what their work required

"because it was what they needed to do their work"

ULT

⁸ And he gave four of the carts and eight of the cattle to the sons of Merari, according to the mouth of their service, by the hand of Ithamar the son of Aaron the priest.

Numbers 7:9

none of those things

This refers to the carts and oxen.

Kohath

See how you translated this man's name in [Numbers 3:17](#).

theirs would be the work

"their work would be"

the things that belong to Yahweh

You can make explicit the implicit meaning of what belongs to Yahweh. Alternate translation: "the things that Yahweh reserved for the tabernacle" (See: [Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information](#))

ULT

⁹ But he did not give to the sons of Kohath, for the service of the holy place was on them, they carried on the shoulder.

Numbers 7:10

offered their goods

“offered gifts”

ULT

10 And the leaders offered the dedication of the altar on the day it was anointed. And the leaders offered their offering before the face of the altar.

Numbers 7:11

Each leader must offer on his own day his sacrifice

“Each day, one leader must offer his sacrifice”

ULT

¹¹ And Yahweh said to Moses, “One leader for the day, one leader for the day, shall they offer their offering for the dedication of the altar.”

Numbers 7:12

the first day

“day 1” or “day number 1” (See: [Ordinal Numbers](#))

Nahshon son of Amminadab

These are the names of men. See how you translated these names in [Numbers 1:7](#)

ULT

¹² And it happened that the one who offered his offering on the first day was Nahshon the son of Amminadab of the tribe of Judah.

Numbers 7:13

weighing 130 shekels

“weighing one hundred and thirty shekels.” If necessary, these weights can be written in modern measurements. Alternate translation: “weighing nearly one and a half kilograms” or “weighing one kilogram and 430 grams” (See: [Numbers](#) and [Biblical Weight](#))

one silver bowl weighing seventy shekels

“one silver bowl weighing 70 shekels.” If necessary, these weights can be written in modern measurements. Alternate translation: “one silver bowl weighing nearly eight tenths of a kilogram” or “one silver bowl weighing 770 grams” (See: [Biblical Weight](#) and [Numbers](#))

by the standard weight of the sanctuary shekel

There were shekels of different weights. This is the one that people had to use in the sanctuary of the sacred tent. If you are converting the weights to modern measures, here is another way to translate this phrase. Alternate translation: “measured by the standard weights used in the sanctuary” (See: [Biblical Weight](#))

fine flour mixed with oil

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: “fine flour that he had mixed with oil” (See: [Active or Passive](#))

ULT

13 And his offering was one silver dish, its weight was 130, one silver bowl of 70 shekels by the shekel of the holy place, the two of them were full of fine flour mixed with the oil for a grain offering,

Numbers 7:14

one gold dish that weighed ten shekels

If necessary, this can be written in modern measurements. Alternate translation: "one gold dish that weighed one tenth of a kilogram" or "one gold dish that weighed 110 grams" (See: [Biblical Weight](#))

ULT

14 one pan of ten gold full of incense,

Numbers 7:15

(There are no notes for this verse.)

ULT

¹⁵ one bull, a son of cattle, one ram, one male lamb, a son of his year, for a burnt up offering,

Numbers 7:16

(There are no notes for this verse.)

ULT

¹⁶ one buck of the goats for a sin offering,

Numbers 7:17

that were a year old

“that were each one year old”

This was the sacrifice of Nahshon son of Amminadab

“This was what Nahshon son of Amminadab presented”

Nahshon son of Amminadab

See how you translated this man’s name in [Numbers 1:7](#).

ULT

17 and for the sacrifice of the peace offerings: two cattle, five rams, five male goats, five male lambs, sons of a year. This was the offering of Nahshon the son of Amminadab.

Numbers 7:18

the second day

“day 2” or “day number 2” (See: [Ordinal Numbers](#))

Nethanel son of Zuar

See how you translated this man’s name in [Numbers 1:8](#).

ULT

18 On the second day, Nethanel the son of Zuar, the leader of Issachar made an offering.

Numbers 7:19

one silver platter weighing 130 shekels

If necessary, these weights can be written in modern measurements. See how you translated these same weights in [Numbers 7:13](#). Alternate translation: “one silver platter weighing nearly one and a half kilograms” or “one silver platter weighing one kilogram and 430 grams” (See: [Biblical Weight](#) and [Numbers](#))

one silver bowl weighing seventy shekels

“one silver bowl weighing 70 shekels.” If necessary, these weights can be written in modern measurements. See how you translated these same weights in [Numbers 7:13](#). Alternate translation: “one silver bowl weighing nearly eight tenths of a kilogram” or “one silver bowl weighting 770 grams” (See: [Biblical Weight](#) and [Numbers](#))

by the standard weight of the sanctuary shekel

There were shekels of different weights. This is the one that people had to use in the sanctuary of the sacred tent. See how you translated this phrase in [Numbers 7:13](#). Alternate translation: “measured by the standard weights used in the sanctuary” (See: [Biblical Weight](#))

fine flour mixed with oil

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: “fine flour that he had mixed with oil” (See: [Active or Passive](#))

ULT

19 He offered his offering: one silver dish, its weight was 130, one silver bowl of 70 shekels by the shekel of the holy place, the two of them were full of fine flour mixed with the oil for a grain offering,

Numbers 7:20

one gold dish weighing ten shekels

If necessary, this can be written in modern measurements. See how you translated these same weights in [Numbers 7:14](#). Alternate translation: “one gold dish weighing one tenth of a kilogram” or “one gold dish weighting 110 grams” (See: [Biblical Weight](#))

ULT

²⁰ one pan of ten gold full of incense,

Numbers 7:21

(There are no notes for this verse.)

ULT

²¹ one bull, a son of cattle, one ram, one male lamb, a son of his year, for a burnt up offering,

Numbers 7:22

(There are no notes for this verse.)

ULT

²² one buck of the goats for a sin offering,

Numbers 7:23

that were a year old

“that were each one year old”

This was the sacrifice of Nethanel son of Zuar

“This was what Nethanel son of Zuar presented”

Nethanel son of Zuar

See how you translated this man’s name in [Numbers 1:8](#).

ULT

²³ and for the sacrifice of the peace offerings: two cattle, five rams, five male goats, five male lambs, sons of a year. This was the offering of Nethanel the son of Zuar.

Numbers 7:24

the third day

“day 3” or “day number 3” (See: [Ordinal Numbers](#))

Eliab son of Helon

See how you translated this man’s name in [Numbers 1:9](#).

ULT

²⁴ On the third day, the leader of the sons of Zebulun, Eliab the son of Helon,

Numbers 7:25

one silver platter weighing 130 shekels

If necessary, these weights can be written in modern measurements. See how you translated these same weights in [Numbers 7:13](#). Alternate translation: “one silver platter weighing nearly one and a half kilograms” or “one silver platter weighing one kilogram and 430 grams” (See: [Biblical Weight](#) and [Numbers](#))

ULT

²⁵ his offering was one silver dish, its weight was 130, one silver bowl of 70 shekels by the shekel of the holy place, the two of them were full of fine flour mixed with the oil for a grain offering,

one silver bowl weighing seventy shekels

“one silver bowl weighing 70 shekels.” If necessary, these weights can be written in modern measurements. See how you translated these same weights in [Numbers 7:13](#). Alternate translation: “one silver bowl weighing nearly eight tenths of a kilogram” or “one silver bowl weighting 770 grams” (See: [Biblical Weight](#) and [Numbers](#))

by the standard weight of the sanctuary shekel

There were shekels of different weights. This is the one that people had to use in the sanctuary of the sacred tent. See how you translated this phrase in [Numbers 7:13](#). Alternate translation: “measured by the standard weights used in the sanctuary” (See: [Biblical Weight](#))

fine flour mixed with oil

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: “fine flour that he had mixed with oil” (See: [Active or Passive](#))

Numbers 7:26

one gold dish weighing ten shekels

If necessary, this can be written in modern measurements. See how you translated these same weights in [Numbers 7:14](#). Alternate translation: “one gold dish weighing one tenth of a kilogram” or “one gold dish weighting 110 grams” (See: [Biblical Weight](#))

ULT

²⁶ one pan of ten gold full of incense,

Numbers 7:27

(There are no notes for this verse.)

ULT

²⁷ one bull, a son of cattle, one ram, one male lamb, a son of his year, for a burnt up offering,

Numbers 7:28

(There are no notes for this verse.)

ULT

²⁸ one buck of the goats for a sin offering,

Numbers 7:29

that were a year old

“that were each one year old”

This was the sacrifice of Eliab son of Helon

“This was what Eliab son of Helon gave as a sacrifice”

Eliab son of Helon

See how you translated this man’s name in [Numbers 1:9](#).

ULT

²⁹ and for the sacrifice of the peace offerings: two cattle, five rams, five male goats, five male lambs, sons of a year. This was the offering of Eliab the son of Helon.

Numbers 7:30

the fourth day

“day 4” or “day number 4” (See: [Ordinal Numbers](#))

Elizur son of Shedeur

See how you translated this man’s name in [Numbers 1:5](#).

ULT

³⁰ On the fourth day, the leader of the sons of Reuben, Elizur the son of Shedeur,

Numbers 7:31

one silver platter weighing 130 shekels

If necessary, these weights can be written in modern measurements. See how you translated these same weights in [Numbers 7:13](#).

Alternate translation: “one silver platter weighing nearly one and a half kilograms” or “one silver platter weighing one kilogram and 430 grams” (See: [Biblical Weight](#) and [Numbers](#))

ULT

³¹ his offering was one silver dish, its weight was 130, one silver bowl of 70 shekels by the shekel of the holy place, the two of them were full of fine flour mixed with the oil for a grain offering,

one silver bowl weighing seventy shekels

“one silver bowl weighing 70 shekels.” If necessary, these weights can be written in modern measurements. See how you translated these same weights in [Numbers 7:13](#). Alternate translation: “one silver bowl weighing nearly eight tenths of a kilogram” or “one silver bowl weighting 770 grams” (See: [Biblical Weight](#) and [Numbers](#))

by the standard weight of the sanctuary shekel

There were shekels of different weights. This is the one that people had to use in the sanctuary of the sacred tent. See how you translated this phrase in [Numbers 7:13](#). Alternate translation: “measured by the standard weights used in the sanctuary” (See: [Biblical Weight](#))

fine flour mixed with oil

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: “fine flour that he had mixed with oil” (See: [Active or Passive](#))

Numbers 7:32

one gold dish weighing ten shekels

If necessary, this can be written in modern measurements. See how you translated these same weights in [Numbers 7:14](#). Alternate translation: “one gold dish weighing one tenth of a kilogram” or “one gold dish weighting 110 grams” (See: [Biblical Weight](#))

ULT

³² one pan of ten gold full of incense,

Numbers 7:33

(There are no notes for this verse.)

ULT

³³ one bull, a son of cattle, one ram, one male lamb, a son of his year, for a burnt up offering,

Numbers 7:34

(There are no notes for this verse.)

ULT

³⁴ one buck of the goats for a sin offering,

Numbers 7:35

that were a year old

“that were each one year old”

This was the sacrifice of Elizur son of Shedeur

“This was what Elizur son of Shedeur gave as a sacrifice”

Elizur son of Shedeur

See how you translated this man’s name in [Numbers 1:5](#).

ULT

³⁵ and for the sacrifice of the peace offerings: two cattle, five rams, five male goats, five male lambs, sons of a year. This was the offering of Elizur the son of Shedeur.

Numbers 7:36

the fifth day

“day 5” or “day number 5” (See: [Ordinal Numbers](#))

Shelumiel son of Zurishaddai

See how you translated this man’s name in [Numbers 1:6](#).

ULT

³⁶ On the fifth day, the leader of the sons of Simeon, Shelumiel the son of Zurishaddai,

Numbers 7:37

one silver platter weighing 130 shekels

If necessary, these weights can be written in modern measurements. See how you translated these same weights in [Numbers 7:13](#). Alternate translation: “one silver platter weighing nearly one and a half kilograms” or “one silver platter weighing one kilogram and 430 grams” (See: [Biblical Weight](#) and [Numbers](#))

ULT

³⁷ his offering was one silver dish, its weight was 130, one silver bowl of 70 shekels by the shekel of the holy place, the two of them were full of fine flour mixed with the oil for a grain offering,

one silver bowl weighing seventy shekels

“one silver bowl weighing 70 shekels.” If necessary, these weights can be written in modern measurements. See how you translated these same weights in [Numbers 7:13](#). Alternate translation: “one silver bowl weighing nearly eight tenths of a kilogram” or “one silver bowl weighting 770 grams” (See: [Biblical Weight](#) and [Numbers](#))

by the standard weight of the sanctuary shekel

There were shekels of different weights. This is the one that people had to use in the sanctuary of the sacred tent. See how you translated this phrase in [Numbers 7:13](#). Alternate translation: “measured by the standard weights used in the sanctuary” (See: [Biblical Weight](#))

fine flour mixed with oil

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: “fine flour that he had mixed with oil” (See: [Active or Passive](#))

Numbers 7:38

one gold dish weighing ten shekels

If necessary, this can be written in modern measurements. See how you translated these same weights in [Numbers 7:14](#). Alternate translation: “one gold dish weighing one tenth of a kilogram” or “one gold dish weighting 110 grams” (See: [Biblical Weight](#))

ULT

³⁸ one pan of ten gold full of incense,

Numbers 7:39

(There are no notes for this verse.)

ULT

³⁹ one bull, a son of cattle, one ram, one male lamb, a son of his year, for a burnt up offering,

Numbers 7:40

(There are no notes for this verse.)

ULT

⁴⁰ one buck of the goats for a sin offering,

Numbers 7:41

that were a year old

“that were each one year old”

This was the sacrifice of Shelumiel son of Zurishaddai

“This was what Shelumiel son of Zurishaddai gave as a sacrifice.”

“Shelumiel” and “Zurishaddai” are names of men. (See: [How to Translate Names](#))

Shelumiel son of Zurishaddai

See how you translated this man’s name in [Numbers 1:6](#).

ULT

⁴¹ and for the sacrifice of the peace offerings: two cattle, five rams, five male goats, five male lambs, sons of a year. This was the offering of Shelumiel the son of Zurishaddai.

Numbers 7:42

the sixth day

“day 6” or “day number 6” (See: [Ordinal Numbers](#))

Eliasaph son of Deuel

See how you translated this man’s name in [Numbers 1:14](#).

ULT

⁴² On the sixth day, the leader of the sons of Gad, Eliasaph the son of Deuel,

Numbers 7:43

one silver platter weighing 130 shekels

If necessary, these weights can be written in modern measurements. See how you translated these same weights in [Numbers 7:13](#). Alternate translation: “one silver platter weighing nearly one and a half kilograms” or “one silver platter weighing one kilogram and 430 grams” (See: [Biblical Weight](#) and [Numbers](#))

ULT

⁴³ his offering was one silver dish, its weight was 130, one silver bowl of 70 shekels by the shekel of the holy place, the two of them were full of fine flour mixed with the oil for a grain offering,

one silver bowl weighing seventy shekels

“one silver bowl weighing 70 shekels.” If necessary, these weights can be written in modern measurements. See how you translated these same weights in [Numbers 7:13](#). Alternate translation: “one silver bowl weighing nearly eight tenths of a kilogram” or “one silver bowl weighting 770 grams” (See: [Biblical Weight](#) and [Numbers](#))

by the standard weight of the sanctuary shekel

There were shekels of different weights. This is the one that people had to use in the sanctuary of the sacred tent. See how you translated this phrase in [Numbers 7:13](#). Alternate translation: “measured by the standard weights used in the sanctuary” (See: [Biblical Weight](#))

fine flour mixed with oil

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: “fine flour that he had mixed with oil” (See: [Active or Passive](#))

Numbers 7:44

one gold dish weighing ten shekels

If necessary, this can be written in modern measurements. See how you translated these same weights in [Numbers 7:14](#). Alternate translation: “one gold dish weighing one tenth of a kilogram” or “one gold dish weighting 110 grams” (See: [Biblical Weight](#))

ULT

44 one pan of ten gold full of incense,

Numbers 7:45

(There are no notes for this verse.)

ULT

⁴⁵ one bull, a son of cattle, one ram, one male lamb, a son of his year, for a burnt up offering,

Numbers 7:46

(There are no notes for this verse.)

ULT

⁴⁶ one buck of the goats for a sin offering,

Numbers 7:47

that were a year old

“that were each one year old”

This was the sacrifice of Eliasaph son of Deuel

“This was what Eliasaph son of Deuel gave as a sacrifice”

Eliasaph son of Deuel

See how you translated this man’s name in [Numbers 1:14](#).

ULT

⁴⁷ and for the sacrifice of the peace offerings: two cattle, five rams, five male goats, five male lambs, sons of a year. This was the offering of Eliasaph the son of Deuel.

Numbers 7:48

the seventh day

“day 7” or “day number 7” (See: [Ordinal Numbers](#))

Elishama son of Ammihud

See how you translated this man’s name in [Numbers 1:10](#).

ULT

⁴⁸ On the seventh day, the leader of the sons of Ephraim, Elishama the son of Ammihud,

Numbers 7:49

one silver platter weighing 130 shekels

If necessary, these weights can be written in modern measurements. See how you translated these same weights in [Numbers 7:13](#).

Alternate translation: “one silver platter weighing nearly one and a half kilograms” or “one silver platter weighing one kilogram and 430 grams” (See: [Biblical Weight](#) and [Numbers](#))

ULT

⁴⁹ his offering was one silver dish, its weight was 130, one silver bowl of 70 shekels by the shekel of the holy place, the two of them were full of fine flour mixed with the oil for a grain offering,

one silver bowl weighing seventy shekels

“one silver bowl weighing 70 shekels.” If necessary, these weights can be written in modern measurements. See how you translated these same weights in [Numbers 7:13](#). Alternate translation: “one silver bowl weighing nearly eight tenths of a kilogram” or “one silver bowl weighting 770 grams” (See: [Biblical Weight](#) and [Numbers](#))

by the standard weight of the sanctuary shekel

There were shekels of different weights. This is the one that people had to use in the sanctuary of the sacred tent. See how you translated this phrase in [Numbers 7:13](#). Alternate translation: “measured by the standard weights used in the sanctuary” (See: [Biblical Weight](#))

fine flour mixed with oil

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: “fine flour that he had mixed with oil” (See: [Active or Passive](#))

Numbers 7:50

one gold dish weighing ten shekels

If necessary, this can be written in modern measurements. See how you translated these same weights in [Numbers 7:14](#). Alternate translation: “one gold dish weighing one tenth of a kilogram” or “one gold dish weighting 110 grams” (See: [Biblical Weight](#))

ULT

⁵⁰ one pan of ten gold full of incense,

Numbers 7:51

(There are no notes for this verse.)

ULT

⁵¹ one bull, a son of cattle, one ram, one male lamb, a son of his year, for a burnt up offering,

Numbers 7:52

(There are no notes for this verse.)

ULT

⁵² one buck of the goats for a sin offering,

Numbers 7:53

that were a year old

“that were each one year old”

This was the sacrifice of Elishama son of Ammihud

“This was what Elishama son of Ammihud presented”

Elishama son of Ammihud

See how you translated this man’s name in [Numbers 1:10](#).

ULT

⁵³ and for the sacrifice of the peace offerings: two cattle, five rams, five male goats, five male lambs, sons of a year. This was the offering of Elishama the son of Ammihud.

Numbers 7:54

the eighth day

“day 8” or “day number 8” (See: [Ordinal Numbers](#))

Gamaliel son of Pedahzur

See how you translated this man’s name in [Numbers 1:10](#).

ULT

⁵⁴ On the eighth day, the leader of the sons of Manasseh, Gamaliel the son of Pedahzur,

Numbers 7:55

one silver platter weighing 130 shekels

If necessary, these weights can be written in modern measurements. See how you translated these same weights in [Numbers 7:13](#). Alternate translation: “one silver platter weighing nearly one and a half kilograms” or “one silver platter weighing one kilogram and 430 grams” (See: [Biblical Weight](#) and [Numbers](#))

ULT

⁵⁵ his offering was one silver dish, its weight was 130, one silver bowl of 70 shekels by the shekel of the holy place, the two of them were full of fine flour mixed with the oil for a grain offering,

one silver bowl weighing seventy shekels

“one silver bowl weighing 70 shekels.” If necessary, these weights can be written in modern measurements. See how you translated these same weights in [Numbers 7:13](#). Alternate translation: “one silver bowl weighing nearly eight tenths of a kilogram” or “one silver bowl weighting 770 grams” (See: [Biblical Weight](#) and [Numbers](#))

by the standard weight of the sanctuary shekel

There were shekels of different weights. This is the one that people had to use in the sanctuary of the sacred tent. See how you translated this phrase in [Numbers 7:13](#). Alternate translation: “measured by the standard weights used in the sanctuary” (See: [Biblical Weight](#))

fine flour mixed with oil

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: “fine flour that he had mixed with oil” (See: [Active or Passive](#))

Numbers 7:56

one gold dish weighing ten shekels

If necessary, this can be written in modern measurements. See how you translated these same weights in [Numbers 7:14](#). Alternate translation: “one gold dish weighing one tenth of a kilogram” or “one gold dish weighting 110 grams” (See: [Biblical Weight](#))

ULT

⁵⁶ one pan of ten gold full of incense,

Numbers 7:57

(There are no notes for this verse.)

ULT

⁵⁷ one bull, a son of cattle, one ram, one male lamb, a son of his year, for a burnt up offering,

Numbers 7:58

(There are no notes for this verse.)

ULT

⁵⁸ one buck of the goats for a sin offering,

Numbers 7:59

that were a year old

“that were each one year old”

This was the sacrifice of Gamaliel son of Pedahzur

“This was what Gamaliel son of Pedahzur gave as a sacrifice”

Gamaliel son of Pedahzur

See how you translated this man’s name in [Numbers 1:10](#).

ULT

⁵⁹ and for the sacrifice of the peace offerings: two cattle, five rams, five male goats, five male lambs, sons of a year. This was the offering of Gamaliel the son of Pedahzur.

Numbers 7:60

the ninth day

“day 9” or “day number 9” (See: [Ordinal Numbers](#))

Abidan son of Gideoni

See how you translated this man’s name in [Numbers 1:11](#).

ULT

⁶⁰ On the ninth day, the leader of the sons of Benjamin, Abidan the son of Gideoni,

Numbers 7:61

one silver platter weighing 130 shekels

If necessary, these weights can be written in modern measurements. See how you translated these same weights in [Numbers 7:13](#). Alternate translation: “one silver platter weighing nearly one and a half kilograms” or “one silver platter weighing one kilogram and 430 grams” (See: [Biblical Weight](#) and [Numbers](#))

ULT

61 his offering was one silver dish, its weight was 130, one silver bowl of 70 shekels by the shekel of the holy place, the two of them were full of fine flour mixed with the oil for a grain offering,

one silver bowl weighing seventy shekels

“one silver bowl weighing 70 shekels.” If necessary, these weights can be written in modern measurements. See how you translated these same weights in [Numbers 7:13](#). Alternate translation: “one silver bowl weighing nearly eight tenths of a kilogram” or “one silver bowl weighting 770 grams” (See: [Biblical Weight](#) and [Numbers](#))

by the standard weight of the sanctuary shekel

There were shekels of different weights. This is the one that people had to use in the sanctuary of the sacred tent. See how you translated this phrase in [Numbers 7:13](#). Alternate translation: “measured by the standard weights used in the sanctuary” (See: [Biblical Weight](#))

fine flour mingled with oil

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: “fine flour that he had mixed with oil” (See: [Active or Passive](#))

Numbers 7:62

one gold dish weighing ten shekels

If necessary, this can be written in modern measurements. See how you translated these same weights in [Numbers 7:14](#). Alternate translation: “one gold dish weighing one tenth of a kilogram” or “one gold dish weighting 110 grams” (See: [Biblical Weight](#))

ULT

⁶² one pan of ten gold full of incense,

Numbers 7:63

(There are no notes for this verse.)

ULT

⁶³ one bull, a son of cattle, one ram, one male lamb, a son of his year, for a burnt up offering,

Numbers 7:64

(There are no notes for this verse.)

ULT

⁶⁴ one buck of the goats for a sin offering,

Numbers 7:65

that were a year old

“that were each one year old”

This was the sacrifice of Abidan son of Gideoni

“This was what Abidan son of Gideoni gave as a sacrifice”

Abidan son of Gideoni

See how you translated this man’s name in [Numbers 1:11](#).

ULT

⁶⁵ and for the sacrifice of the peace offerings: two cattle, five rams, five male goats, five male lambs, sons of a year. This was the offering of Abidan the son of Gideoni.

Numbers 7:66

the tenth day

“day 10” or “day number 10” (See: [Ordinal Numbers](#))

Ahiezer son of Ammishaddai

See how you translated this man’s name in [Numbers 1:12](#).

ULT

⁶⁶ On the tenth day, the leader of the sons of Dan, Ahiezer the son of Ammishaddai,

Numbers 7:67

one silver platter weighing 130 shekels

If necessary, these weights can be written in modern measurements. See how you translated these same weights in [Numbers 7:13](#). Alternate translation: “one silver platter weighing nearly one and a half kilograms” or “one silver platter weighing one kilogram and 430 grams” (See: [Biblical Weight](#) and [Numbers](#))

ULT

67 his offering was one silver dish, its weight was 130, one silver bowl of 70 shekels by the shekel of the holy place, the two of them were full of fine flour mixed with the oil for a grain offering,

one silver bowl weighing seventy shekels

“one silver bowl weighing 70 shekels.” If necessary, these weights can be written in modern measurements. See how you translated these same weights in [Numbers 7:13](#). Alternate translation: “one silver bowl weighing nearly eight tenths of a kilogram” or “one silver bowl weighting 770 grams” (See: [Biblical Weight](#) and [Numbers](#))

by the standard weight of the sanctuary shekel

There were shekels of different weights. This is the one that people had to use in the sanctuary of the sacred tent. See how you translated this phrase in [Numbers 7:13](#). Alternate translation: “measured by the standard weights used in the sanctuary” (See: [Biblical Weight](#))

fine flour mixed with oil

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: “fine flour that he had mixed with oil” (See: [Active or Passive](#))

Numbers 7:68

one gold dish weighing ten shekels

If necessary, this can be written in modern measurements. See how you translated these same weights in [Numbers 7:14](#). Alternate translation: “one gold dish weighing one tenth of a kilogram” or “one gold dish weighting 110 grams” (See: [Biblical Weight](#))

ULT

⁶⁸ one pan of ten gold full of incense,

Numbers 7:69

(There are no notes for this verse.)

ULT

⁶⁹ one bull, a son of cattle, one ram, one male lamb, a son of his year, for a burnt up offering,

Numbers 7:70

(There are no notes for this verse.)

ULT

⁷⁰ one buck of the goats for a sin offering,

Numbers 7:71

that were a year old

“that were each one year old”

This was the sacrifice of Ahiezer son of Ammishaddai

“This was what Ahiezer son of Ammishaddai gave as a sacrifice”

Ahiezer son of Ammishaddai

See how you translated this man’s name in [Numbers 1:12](#).

ULT

⁷¹ and for the sacrifice of the peace offerings: two cattle, five rams, five male goats, five male lambs, sons of a year. This was the offering of Ahiezer the son of Ammishaddai.

Numbers 7:72

the eleventh day

“day 11” or “day number 11” (See: [Ordinal Numbers](#))

Pagiel son of Okran

See how you translated this man’s name in [Numbers 1:13](#).

ULT

⁷² On the day of the eleventh day, the leader of the sons of Asher, Pagiel the son of Okran,

Numbers 7:73

one silver platter weighing 130 shekels

If necessary, these weights can be written in modern measurements. See how you translated these same weights in [Numbers 7:13](#). Alternate translation: “one silver platter weighing nearly one and a half kilograms” or “one silver platter weighing one kilogram and 430 grams” (See: [Biblical Weight](#) and [Numbers](#))

ULT

73 his offering was one silver dish, its weight was 130, one silver bowl of 70 shekels by the shekel of the holy place, the two of them were full of fine flour mixed with the oil for a grain offering,

one silver bowl weighing seventy shekels

“one silver bowl weighing 70 shekels.” If necessary, these weights can be written in modern measurements. See how you translated these same weights in [Numbers 7:13](#). Alternate translation: “one silver bowl weighing nearly eight tenths of a kilogram” or “one silver bowl weighting 770 grams” (See: [Biblical Weight](#) and [Numbers](#))

by the standard weight of the sanctuary shekel

There were shekels of different weights. This is the one that people had to use in the sanctuary of the sacred tent. See how you translated this phrase in [Numbers 7:13](#). Alternate translation: “measured by the standard weights used in the sanctuary” (See: [Biblical Weight](#))

fine flour mingled with oil

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: “fine flour that he had mixed with oil” (See: [Active or Passive](#))

Numbers 7:74

one gold dish weighing ten shekels

If necessary, this can be written in modern measurements. See how you translated these same weights in [Numbers 7:14](#). Alternate translation: “one gold dish weighing one tenth of a kilogram” or “one gold dish weighting 110 grams” (See: [Biblical Weight](#))

ULT

⁷⁴ one pan of ten gold full of incense,

Numbers 7:75

(There are no notes for this verse.)

ULT

⁷⁵ one bull, a son of cattle, one ram, one male lamb, a son of his year, for a burnt up offering,

Numbers 7:76

(There are no notes for this verse.)

ULT

⁷⁶ one buck of the goats for a sin offering,

Numbers 7:77

that were a year old

“that were each one year old”

This was the sacrifice of Pagiel son of Okran

“This was what Pagiel son of Okran gave as a sacrifice.” “Pagiel” and “Okran” were names of men. See how you translated their names in [Numbers 1:13](#). (See: [How to Translate Names](#))

ULT

77 and for the sacrifice of the peace offerings: two cattle, five rams, five male goats, five male lambs, sons of a year. This was the offering of Pagiel the son of Okran.

Numbers 7:78

the twelfth day

“day 12” or “day number 12” (See: [Ordinal Numbers](#))

Ahira son of Enan

See how you translated this man’s name in [Numbers 1:15](#).

ULT

⁷⁸ On the day of the twelfth day, the leader of the sons of Naphtali, Ahira the son of Enan,

Numbers 7:79

one silver platter weighing 130 shekels

If necessary, these weights can be written in modern measurements. See how you translated these same weights in [Numbers 7:13](#).

Alternate translation: “one silver platter weighing nearly one and a half kilograms” or “one silver platter weighing one kilogram and 430 grams” (See: [Biblical Weight](#) and [Numbers](#))

ULT

⁷⁹ his offering was one silver dish, its weight was 130, one silver bowl of 70 shekels by the shekel of the holy place, the two of them were full of fine flour mixed with the oil for a grain offering,

one silver bowl weighing seventy shekels

“one silver bowl weighing 70 shekels.” If necessary, these weights can be written in modern measurements. See how you translated these same weights in [Numbers 7:13](#). Alternate translation: “one silver bowl weighing nearly eight tenths of a kilogram” or “one silver bowl weighting 770 grams” (See: [Biblical Weight](#) and [Numbers](#))

by the standard weight of the sanctuary shekel

There were shekels of different weights. This is the one that people had to use in the sanctuary of the sacred tent. See how you translated this phrase in [Numbers 7:13](#). Alternate translation: “measured by the standard weights used in the sanctuary” (See: [Biblical Weight](#))

fine flour mixed with oil

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: “fine flour that he had mixed with oil” (See: [Active or Passive](#))

Numbers 7:80

one gold dish weighing ten shekels

If necessary, this can be written in modern measurements. See how you translated these same weights in [Numbers 7:14](#). Alternate translation: “one gold dish weighing one tenth of a kilogram” or “one gold dish weighting 110 grams” (See: [Biblical Weight](#))

ULT

⁸⁰ one pan of ten gold full of incense,

Numbers 7:81

(There are no notes for this verse.)

ULT

⁸¹ one bull, a son of cattle, one ram, one male lamb, a son of his year, for a burnt up offering,

Numbers 7:82

(There are no notes for this verse.)

ULT

⁸² one buck of the goats for a sin offering,

Numbers 7:83

that were a year old

“that were each one year old”

This was the sacrifice of Ahira son of Enan

“This was what Ahira son of Enan gave as a sacrifice”

Ahira son of Enan

See how you translated this man’s name in [Numbers 1:15](#).

ULT

⁸³ and for the sacrifice of the peace offerings: two cattle, five rams, five male goats, five male lambs, sons of a year. This was the offering of Ahira the son of Enan.

Numbers 7:84

set all these apart

The phrase “set apart” means to be dedicated to a specific purpose. In this case, the offerings were dedicated to Yahweh. (See: [Idiom](#))

on the day that Moses anointed the altar

Here the word “day” refers to a general period of time. The leaders of Israel dedicated these things over the course of 12 days. Alternate translation: “when Moses anointed the altar”

ULT

84 This is the dedication of the altar on the day it was anointed from with the leaders of Israel: 12 dishes of silver, 12 bowls of silver, 12 pans of gold.

Numbers 7:85

Each silver platter weighed 130 shekels

If necessary, these weights can be written in modern measurements. See how you translated this same weight in [Numbers 7:13](#). Alternate translation: “each silver platter weighed nearly one and a half kilograms” or “each silver platter weighed one kilogram and 430 grams” (See: [Biblical Weight](#) and [Numbers](#))

ULT

⁸⁵ One silver bowl was 130 and one bowl was 70. All the silver of the vessels was 2,400 by the shekel of the holy place.

each bowl weighed seventy shekels

“each bowl weighted 70 shekels.” If necessary, these weight can be written in modern measurements. See how you translated this same weight in [Numbers 7:13](#). Alternate translation: “each bowl weighed nearly eight tenths of a kilogram” or “each bowl weighed 770 grams” (See: [Biblical Weight](#) and [Numbers](#))

2,400 shekels

“two thousand four hundred shekels” or “twenty-four hundred shekels” (See: [Numbers](#))

by the standard weight of the sanctuary shekel

There were shekels of different weights. This is the one that people had to use in the sanctuary of the sacred tent. See how you translated this phrase in [Numbers 7:13](#). Alternate translation: “measured by the standard weights used in the sanctuary” (See: [Biblical Weight](#))

All the silver vessels weighed

“All the silver vessels together weighed”

the silver vessels

This refers to all of the offerings that were made of silver, both the platters and the bowls.

Numbers 7:86

All the gold dishes weighed

“All the gold dishes together weighed”

Each of the twelve gold dishes ... weighed ten shekels

“Each of the 12 gold dishes ... weighed 10 shekels.” If necessary, this can be written in modern measurements. See how you translated these same weights in [Numbers 7:14](#). Alternate translation: “Each of the 12 gold dishes ... weighed one tenth of a kilogram” or “Each of the 12 gold dishes ... weighed 110 grams” (See: [Biblical Weight](#) and [Numbers](#))

120 shekels

“one hundred and twenty shekels” (See: [Numbers](#))

ULT

⁸⁶ The pans of gold were 12, full of incense. The pan was ten by ten by the shekel of the holy place. All the gold of the pans was 120.

Numbers 7:87

twelve

“12.” This number may be written with a numeral instead of with a word. (See: [Numbers](#))

ULT

87 All the cattle for the burnt up offering were 12 bulls, 12 rams, 12 male lambs, sons of a year, and their grain offering. And 12 bucks of the goats were for a sin offering.

Numbers 7:88

twenty-four ... sixty

“24...60.” These numbers may be written with numerals instead of with words. (See: [Numbers](#))

a year old

“that were one year old”

after it was anointed

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: “after Moses had anointed it” (See: [Active or Passive](#))

ULT

88 And all the cattle of the sacrifice of the peace offerings were 24 bulls, 60 rams, 60 male goats, 60 male lambs, sons of a year. This is the dedication of the altar after it was anointed.

Numbers 7:89

he heard his voice speaking to him

Here “his voice” refers to Yahweh. Alternate translation: “he heard Yahweh speaking to him” (See: [Synecdoche](#))

from above the atonement lid ... from between the two cherubim

These two phrases describe the same location. (See: [Parallelism](#))

ark of the testimony

See how you translated this phrase in [Numbers 4:5](#).

He spoke to him

“Yahweh spoke to Moses”

ULT

89 And when Moses entered into the tent of meeting to speak with him, then he heard the voice speaking to him from above the atonement lid that is on the box of the testimony, from between the two cherubim. And he spoke to him.

Numbers 8

Numbers 8 General Notes

Structure and formatting

The consecration of the tabernacle continues in this chapter. The people obeyed Yahweh's exact instructions. (See: [consecrate](#), [consecrated](#), [consecration](#) and [tabernacle](#))

Numbers 8:1

(There are no notes for this verse.)

ULT

¹ And Yahweh spoke to Moses, saying,

Numbers 8:2

must give light in front

“must shine towards the front”

ULT

² “Speak to Aaron and say to him,
‘When you lift up the lamps to the front
of the face of the lampstand, the seven
lamps shall give light.’”

Numbers 8:3

to give light

“to shine”

ULT

³ And Aaron did so. To the front of the face of the lampstand he lifted up its lamps, just as Yahweh had commanded Moses.

Numbers 8:4

The lampstand was made

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: “They had made the lampstand” (See: [Active or Passive](#))

with hammered cups like blossoms

They were commanded to form the hammered cups so that they resembled flower blossoms. Alternate translation: “with hammered cups that resemble flower blossoms” (See: [Simile](#))

ULT

⁴ And this is the work of the lampstand, a hammered gold work. It was a hammered work up to its base, up to its blossom. According to the appearance that Yahweh showed Moses, so he made the lampstand.

Numbers 8:5

(There are no notes for this verse.)

ULT

⁵ And Yahweh spoke to Moses, saying,

Numbers 8:6

(There are no notes for this verse.)

ULT

⁶ "Take the Levites from the midst of the sons of Israel and make them clean.

Numbers 8:7

to purify them

Here “them” refers to the Levites.

Sprinkle the water of atonement on them

Moses sprinkling water on them was symbolic of their atonement. Alternate translation: “Sprinkle on their the water that symbolizes atonement” (See: [Symbolic Action](#))

wash their clothes

The Levites are supposed to wash their own clothes. You can make clear the understood information. Alternate translation: “then make them wash their clothes” (See: [Ellipsis](#))

ULT

⁷ And thus you shall do to them to make them clean: Sprinkle on them the water of the sin offering. And they shall pass a razor over all their body, and they shall wash their garments, and they shall make themselves clean.

Numbers 8:8

a young bull and its grain offering

When offering a young bull, a grain offering was usually required to accompany it.

of fine flour mingled with oil

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: “of fine flour that they have mingled with oil” (See: [Active or Passive](#))

ULT

⁸ And they shall take a bull, a son of cattle, and its grain offering of fine flour mixed with the oil. And you shall take a second bull, a son of cattle, for a sin offering.

Numbers 8:9

assemble the whole community

“gather the whole community”

ULT

⁹ And you shall bring the Levites near
before the face of the tent of meeting.
And you shall assemble all the
congregation of the sons of Israel.

Numbers 8:10

before Yahweh

Here Yahweh refers to himself by his own name.

the people of Israel must lay their hands on the Levites

The action “laying on hands” on someone was often done to dedicate them to Yahweh’s work or service. Alternate translation: “The people Israel must lay their hands on the Levites, dedicating them to me” (See: [Symbolic Action](#))

ULT

10 And you shall bring the Levites near before the face of Yahweh. And the sons of Israel shall lay their hands on the Levites.

Numbers 8:11

as a wave offering

Aaron was to present the Levites to Yahweh with the same amount of dedication as if they were a sacrifice given to him. Alternate translation: "if they were a wave offering" (See: [Simile](#))

ULT

11 And Aaron shall wave the Levites as a wave offering before the face of Yahweh from with the sons of Israel. And they shall be for serving the service of Yahweh.

Numbers 8:12

The Levites must place their hands on the heads of the bulls

This is a symbolic action that identifies the Levites with the animals being offered. In this way the person is offering himself through the animal to Yahweh. (See: [Symbolic Action](#))

ULT

¹² And the Levites shall lay their hands on the head of the bulls. And make the one as a sin offering and the one as a burnt offering to Yahweh, to make atonement for the Levites.

Numbers 8:13

lift them up as a wave offering to me

Aaron was to present the Levites to Yahweh as if he were lifting up an offering to Yahweh. Alternate translation: “dedicate them to me, as if you were lifting them up a wave offering to me” (See: [Simile](#))

ULT

13 And you shall stand the Levites before the face of Aaron and before the face of his sons. And you shall wave them as a wave offering to Yahweh.

Numbers 8:14

(There are no notes for this verse.)

ULT

14 And you shall separate the Levites from the midst of the sons of Israel. And the Levites shall be for me.

Numbers 8:15

You must purify them. You must offer them as a wave offering

Yahweh repeats these things to emphasize their importance. This must happen before the Levites go to serve at the tent of meeting. The full meaning of this statement can be made clear. Alternate translation: "But first, you must purify them. You must offer them as a wave offering" (See: [Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information](#))

ULT

¹⁵ And afterwards the Levites shall enter to serve the tent of meeting. And you shall make them clean and you shall wave them as a wave offering.

You must offer them as a wave offering

Aaron was to present the Levites to Yahweh as if they were a wave offering to him. Alternate translation: "You must dedicate them to me, as if you were presenting a wave offering to me" (See: [Simile](#))

Numbers 8:16

each male child who opens the womb, the firstborn

These two phrases mean basically the same thing and are combined for emphasize the firstborn sons. (See: [Parallelism](#))

male child who opens the womb

This is an idiom. "To open the womb" means to give birth for the first time. Here this refers to the first male child to which a mother gives birth. Alternate translation: "child who is the firstborn son of his mother" (See: [Idiom](#))

ULT

¹⁶ For they are given, given to me from the midst of the sons of Israel. Instead of the opener of every womb, the firstborn of all from the sons of Israel, I have taken them for myself.

Numbers 8:17

I took the lives

This is a polite way of referring to when a person kills someone.
Alternate translation: "I killed" (See: [Euphemism](#))

I set them apart

Here "them" refers to "the firstborn from among the people of Israel."

ULT

17 For every firstborn among the sons of Israel, among the human and among the livestock, belongs to me. On the day of my striking every firstborn in the land of Egypt I set them apart for me.

Numbers 8:18

I have taken the Levites ... instead of all the firstborn

The idea of “taking” is understood from the first part of the sentence and can be repeated in the second. Alternate translation: “I have taken the Levites ... instead taking all of the firstborn” (See: [Ellipsis](#))

ULT

¹⁸ And I have taken the Levites instead of every firstborn among the sons of Israel.

Numbers 8:19

I have given the Levites as a gift to Aaron and his sons

Yahweh appointing the Levites to help Aaron and his sons is spoken of as if they were a gift that Yahweh were giving to Aaron and his sons. (See: [Metaphor](#))

I have taken them ... I have given them

Here “them” refers to the Levites.

when they come near

Here “they” refers to the people of Israel.

ULT

¹⁹ And I have given the Levites as given ones to Aaron and to his sons, from the midst of the sons of Israel, to serve the service of the sons of Israel in the tent of meeting, and to make atonement for the sons of Israel. And there shall be no plague among the sons of Israel at the coming of the sons of Israel to the holy place.”

Numbers 8:20

Moses, Aaron, and the whole community of the people of Israel ... The people of Israel did this with them

Here there are three parallel sentences that give the same information. It is repeated to emphasize that the people did to the Levites as Yahweh had commanded. Alternate translation: "Moses, Aaron, and the whole community of the people of Israel did with the Levites everything that Yahweh had commanded Moses concerning the Levites" (See: [Parallelism](#))

ULT

²⁰ And Moses and Aaron and all the assembly of the sons of Israel did to the Levites, according to all that Yahweh had commanded Moses for the Levites, so the sons of Israel did to them.

Numbers 8:21

(There are no notes for this verse.)

ULT

²¹ And the Levites purified themselves of sin and they washed their garments and Aaron waved them as a wave offering before the face of Yahweh. And Aaron made atonement for them to make them clean.

Numbers 8:22

to do their service

The word “service,” an abstract noun, can be expressed as a verb.
Alternate translation: “to serve” (See: [Abstract Nouns](#))

before Aaron and before Aaron’s sons

“in the presence of Aaron and his sons”

This was

“What they did was”

They treated all the Levites in this way

“They did to the Levites what Yahweh commanded.” The word “They” refers to the people of Israel.

ULT

22 And afterward the Levites entered to serve their service in the tent of meeting before the face of Aaron and before the face of his sons, just as Yahweh had commanded Moses concerning the Levites, so he did to them.

Numbers 8:23

(There are no notes for this verse.)

ULT

²³ And Yahweh spoke to Moses, saying,

Numbers 8:24

All of this is for the Levites

"All of these commandments are for the Levites"

twenty-five years old

"25 years old" (See: [Numbers](#))

must join the company to serve in the tent of meeting

The word "company" refers to the rest of the people working in the tent of meeting. See how you translated this phrase in [Numbers 4:3](#).

ULT

²⁴ "This is what is for the Levites. From a son of 25 years and above he shall enter to serve service in the work of the tent of meeting.

Numbers 8:25

at the age of fifty years

“at 50 years old” or “when they become 50 years old” (See: [Numbers](#))

ULT

²⁵ And from a son of 50 years he shall return from the service of the work and he shall not work more.

Numbers 8:26

(There are no notes for this verse.)

ULT

²⁶ And he shall serve his brothers in the tent of meeting to keep duty but work he shall not work. Thus you shall do for the Levites in their duties.”

Numbers 9

Numbers 9 General Notes

Special concepts in this chapter

==Passover ==

This chapter records the celebration of the Passover for the first time since it began. The people kept the Passover as directed by the Lord. (See: [Passover](#))

Numbers 9:1

in the first month of the second year after they came out from the land of Egypt

This means that they had come out of Egypt a year earlier. They were beginning their second year in the wilderness. (See: [Ordinal Numbers](#))

ULT

¹ And Yahweh spoke to Moses in the wilderness of Sinai, in the second year of their going out from the land of Egypt, in the first month, saying,

in the first month

This is the first month of the Hebrew calendar. It marks when God brought the people of Israel out of Egypt. (See: [Hebrew Months](#) and [Ordinal Numbers](#))

after they came out from the land of Egypt

Here “they” refers to the people of Israel. The phrase “came out” means to leave. Alternate translation: “after they left the land of Egypt” (See: [Idiom](#))

Numbers 9:2

Let the people ... at its fixed time of year

The word “fixed” means “previously set.” This means that this is when the observe it every year. Alternate translation: “Let the people ... at the time of year they currently observe it” (See: [Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information](#))

ULT

² “And let the sons of Israel do the Passover at its appointed time.

Numbers 9:3

On the fourteenth day ... at its fixed time of year

This is the set time of year that they celebrate the Passover. The full meaning of this statement can be made clear. Alternate translation: "On the fourteenth day ... and observe it, for this is the time you do celebrate it every year" (See: [Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information](#))

ULT

³ On day 14 in this month, between the evenings, you shall do it at its appointed time. According to all its statutes and according to all its ordinances you shall do it."

the fourteenth day

"day 14" (See: [Ordinal Numbers](#))

follow all the regulations, and obey all the decrees

These two phrases mean basically the same thing and are combined to emphasize that they needed to obey the commands. (See: [Parallelism](#))

You must keep it

Here the phrase "keep it" is an idiom which means to observe it. Alternate translation: "You must observe it" or "You must celebrate it" (See: [Idiom](#))

Numbers 9:4

keep the Festival of the Passover

Here the word “keep” means to observe. Alternate translation: “observe the Festival of the Passover” or “celebrate the Festival of the Passover” (See: [Idiom](#))

ULT

⁴ And Moses spoke to the sons of Israel to do the Passover.

Numbers 9:5

in the first month, on the fourteenth day of the month

“on day 14 of the first month.” This refers to time in the Jewish calendar. (See: [Hebrew Months](#) and [Ordinal Numbers](#))

ULT

⁵ And they did the Passover in the first, on day 14 of the month, between the evenings, in the wilderness of Sinai. According to all that Yahweh had commanded Moses, so did the sons of Israel.

Numbers 9:6

became unclean by the body of a dead man

This implies that they touched the dead man, which made them unclean. You can make clear the full meaning of this statement. Alternate translation: “became unclean because they touched the body of a dead man” (See: [Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information](#))

unclean

A person who God considers spiritually unacceptable or defiled is spoken of as if the person were physically unclean. (See: [Metaphor](#))

keep the Passover

Here the word “keep” means to observe. Alternate translation: “observe the Passover” or “celebrate the Passover” (See: [Idiom](#))

ULT

⁶ And there were men who were unclean by the body of a man and they were not able to do the Passover on that day. And they came near before the face of Moses and before the face of Aaron on that day.

Numbers 9:7

because of the dead body of a man

This means that they had touched a dead man's body. You can make the full meaning of this statement clear. Alternate translation: "because we have touched the body of a dead man" (See: [Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information](#))

Why do you keep us from offering the sacrifice ... among the people of Israel?

The men ask this question in order to complain that they are not allowed to participate in celebrating the Passover. This rhetorical question can be translated as a statement. Alternate translation: "It is not fair that you keep us away from offering the sacrifice ... among the people of Israel." (See: [Rhetorical Question](#))

fixed

set or predetermined

ULT

⁷ And those men said to him, "We are unclean by the body of a man. Why are we restrained to not offer an offering of Yahweh at its appointed time in the midst of the sons of Israel?"

Numbers 9:8

(There are no notes for this verse.)

ULT

⁸ And Moses said to them, “Stand and I shall hear what Yahweh commands for you.”

Numbers 9:9

(There are no notes for this verse.)

ULT

⁹ And Yahweh spoke to Moses, saying,

Numbers 9:10

unclean

A person who God considers spiritually unacceptable or defiled is spoken of as if the person were physically unclean. (See: [Metaphor](#))

because of a dead body

This refers to someone touching a dead body. Alternate translation: “because you have touched a dead body” (See: [Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information](#))

keep the Passover

Here the word “keep” means to observe. Alternate translation: “observe the Passover” or “celebrate the Passover” (See: [Idiom](#))

ULT

10 “Speak to the sons of Israel, saying, ‘If a man, a man is unclean by a body or is on a distant road, for you or for your generations, then he may do the Passover to Yahweh,

Numbers 9:11

eat the Passover

Here the word “eat” means to observe. Alternate translation: “observe the Passover” or “celebrate the Passover” (See: [Idiom](#))

the second month on the fourteenth day

“day 14 of month 2.” This refers to time in the Jewish calendar. (See: [Hebrew Months](#) and [Ordinal Numbers](#))

at evening

“at sunset”

with bread that is made without yeast

“with bread that contains no yeast”

bitter herbs

These are small plants that have a strong and usually bad taste.

ULT

11 in the second month on day 14
between the evenings, they shall do it.
With unleavened bread and bitter herbs
they shall eat it.

Numbers 9:12

or break any of its bones

“and they must not break any of its bones”

ULT

¹² They shall not leave some of it until morning. And a bone, they shall not break it. According to every statute of the Passover they shall do it.

Numbers 9:13

any person who is clean

A person who God considers spiritually acceptable is spoken of as if the person were physically clean. (See: [Metaphor](#))

keep the Passover

Here the word “keep” means to observe. Alternate translation: “observe the Passover” or “celebrate the Passover” (See: [Idiom](#))

that person must be cut off

Here the phrase “cut off” means to be disowned and sent away. Alternate translation: “that person must be sent away” or “you must send that person away” (See: [Metaphor](#) and [Active or Passive](#))

fixed

set or predetermined

That man must carry his sin

Here the concept of the man having to bear the consequences of his sin is spoken of as if his sin were a heavy object that he had to carry. Alternate translation: “That man must bear the punishment for his sin” (See: [Metaphor](#))

ULT

13 And the man, he who is clean and is not on a road but ceases to do the Passover, and that person shall be cut off from his people because he did not offer the offering of Yahweh at its appointed time. That man shall carry his sin.

Numbers 9:14

lives among you

Here “you” is plural and refers to the people of Israel. (See: [Forms of You](#))

he must keep it according to the statute of the Passover and according to its rule

“that stranger must keep it and do all that Yahweh has commanded concerning the Passover.” The words “statute” and “rule” mean basically the same thing and are used together to emphasize that the stranger must obey all of the rules about the Passover. (See: [Parallelism](#))

in the land

“in the land of Israel”

ULT

14 And if a sojourner sojourns with you and does the Passover to Yahweh, according to the statute of the Passover and according to its ordinance, so he shall do. One statute shall be for you and for the sojourner and for the native of the land.”

Numbers 9:15

the tabernacle was set up

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: “the Levites set up the tabernacle” (See: [Active or Passive](#))

the tent of the covenant decrees

This is another name for the tabernacle. See how you translated the phrase “the tabernacle of the covenant decrees” in [Numbers 1:50](#).

It appeared like fire until morning

This refers to the cloud’s appearance during the night. Here the cloud is compared to looking like a fire. Alternate translation: “During the night the cloud looked like a huge fire until morning” (See: [Simile](#))

ULT

15 And on the day of raising up the dwelling the cloud covered the dwelling of the tent of the testimony and in the evening it was above the dwelling like the appearance of fire until morning.

Numbers 9:16

It continued that way

It may be helpful to explain that this refers to the cloud being over the tabernacle. Alternate translation: “The cloud remained this way over the tabernacle” (See: [Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information](#))

ULT

16 So it was continually. The cloud covered it and the appearance of fire at night.

appeared like fire at night

The cloud’s appearance is compared to a huge fire. Alternate translation: “it looked like a huge fire at night” (See: [Simile](#))

Numbers 9:17

the cloud was taken up

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: “moved” or “Yahweh took up the cloud” (See: [Active or Passive](#))

the cloud stopped

“the cloud stopped moving”

ULT

17 And according to the mouth the cloud was lifted from above the tent, then afterward the sons of Israel set out. And in the place there where the cloud dwelled, there the sons of Israel camped.

Numbers 9:18

At Yahweh's command

The word "command" can be expressed as a verb. Alternate translation: "When Yahweh commanded" (See: [Abstract Nouns](#))

ULT

18 In accordance with the mouth of Yahweh the sons of Israel set out, and in accordance with the mouth of Yahweh they camped. They camped all the days that the cloud dwelled above the dwelling.

Numbers 9:19

(There are no notes for this verse.)

ULT

¹⁹ And when the cloud prolonged above the dwelling many days, then the sons of Israel kept the keeping of Yahweh and did not set out.

Numbers 9:20

on the tabernacle

“over the tabernacle”

make camp

Here the word “make” means to “set up.” Alternate translation: “set up their camp” (See: [Idiom](#))

ULT

²⁰ And it was when the cloud was days of number above the dwelling, they camped in accordance with the mouth of Yahweh and they set out in accordance with the mouth of Yahweh.

Numbers 9:21

from evening until morning

This means that the cloud only stayed over the tabernacle for one night. You make clear the full meaning of this statement. Alternate translation: “only from evening until morning” or “over the tabernacle for only one night” (See: [Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information](#))

If it continued

The full meaning of this statement can be made explicit. “If the cloud stayed over the tabernacle” (See: [Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information](#))

only when the cloud lifted would they journey on

“then after the cloud moved they would travel”

ULT

21 And it was when the cloud was from evening until morning and the cloud was taken up in the morning then they set out, or in the daytime and night, and the cloud was taken up then they set out.

Numbers 9:22

the cloud was taken up

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: “the cloud rose up” or “Yahweh took up the cloud” (See: [Active or Passive](#))

ULT

22 Whether two days or a month or days, when the cloud prolonged above the dwelling to dwell above it, the sons of Israel camped and did not set out. And when it was taken up they set out.

Numbers 9:23

at Yahweh's command

The word "command" can be expressed as a verb. Alternate translation: "what Yahweh commanded" (See: [Abstract Nouns](#))

Yahweh's command given through Moses

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "the command that Yahweh had given through Moses" (See: [Active or Passive](#))

ULT

²³ They camped in accordance with the mouth of Yahweh and they set out in accordance with the mouth of Yahweh. They kept the keeping of Yahweh in accordance with the mouth of Yahweh by the hand of Moses.

Numbers 10

Numbers 10 General Notes

Special concepts in this chapter

Trumpets

In the ancient Near East, trumpets were used for many purposes. They were used to call people together. They were also used to lead people into battle.

Israel starts to move

Each tribe had its place in line as did the tabernacle. Their movements through the desert were very deliberate and ordered. (See: [tabernacle](#))

Numbers 10:1

(There are no notes for this verse.)

ULT

¹ And Yahweh spoke to Moses, saying,

Numbers 10:2

Make two silver trumpets

This means that Yahweh commanded Moses to have someone make the trumpet. He did not make them himself. Alternate translation: "Tell someone to make two silver trumpets" (See: [Metonymy](#))

You must use the trumpets

Moses will not blow the trumpets himself, but he will command the priests to blow them. (See: [Metonymy](#))

ULT

2 "Make for you two trumpets of silver. You shall make them hammered work. And they shall be for you for the calling of the congregation and for pulling up the camps.

Numbers 10:3

in front of you

“while you are present.” This means that Moses was to be there with the priest when he blew the trumpets.

ULT

³ And they shall blow them and they shall congregate themselves to you, all the congregation, to the opening of the tent of meeting.

Numbers 10:4

the leaders, the heads of the clans of Israel

These two phrases refer to the same group of people. Here the second phrase is used to describe the first phrase. Alternate translation: “the leaders, who are the heads of the clans of Israel” (See: [Parallelism](#))

ULT

⁴ And if they blow one, then the leaders, the heads of the thousands of Israel, shall congregate themselves to you.

Numbers 10:5

When you blow a loud signal

Here the word “you” is plural. Yahweh is speaking to Moses, but he is referring to the priests. The priests will blow the trumpets, Moses will not. Alternate translation: “When they blow a loud signal” (See: [Forms of You](#) and [Metonymy](#))

ULT

⁵ And you shall blow a blast and the camps camping to the east shall set out.

Numbers 10:6

When you blow a loud signal

Here the word “you” is plural. Yahweh is speaking to Moses, but he is referring to the priests. The priests will blow the trumpets, Moses will not. Alternate translation: “When they blow a loud signal” (See: [Forms of You](#) and [Metonymy](#))

the second time

“time number 2” or “again” (See: [Ordinal Numbers](#))

They must blow a loud signal for their journeys

“They” refers to the priests and the word “their” refers to the people of Israel.

ULT

⁶ And you shall blow a second blast and the camps camping to the south shall set out. They shall blow a blast for their setting out.

Numbers 10:7

When the community gathers together

“To gather the community together”

ULT

⁷ And when assembling the assembly
you shall blow but you shall not blast.

Numbers 10:8

be a regulation for you

“be a rule for you.” Here “you” is plural and refers to the people of Israel. (See: [Forms of You](#))

ULT

⁸ And the sons of Aaron, the priests, shall blow the trumpets And it shall be for you for a statute forever, for your generations.

Numbers 10:9

When you go to war ... oppresses you

Yahweh is speaking to Moses and uses the word “you,” but he is actually referring the people of Israel going to war. Alternate translation: “When the people of Israel to war ... oppresses Israel” (See: [Synecdoche](#))

then you must sound an alarm with the trumpets

Here Yahweh again speaks to Moses using the word “you” but actually wants Moses to have the priests blow the trumpets. Alternate translation: “then you must command the priests to sound an alarm with the trumpets” (See: [Metonymy](#))

call you to mind

This phrase “call to mind” means to remember. Alternate translation: “remember you” (See: [Idiom](#))

ULT

⁹ And when you enter battle in your land against the opponents who oppose you, then you shall blast the trumpets. And you shall be remembered before the face of Yahweh your God, and you shall be saved from your enemies.

Numbers 10:10

of celebration

The noun “celebration” can be expressed with the verb “celebrate.” Alternate translation: “when you celebrate” (See: [Abstract Nouns](#))

you must blow the trumpets

Here Yahweh again speaks to Moses using the word “you,” but actually wants him to have the priests blow the trumpets. Alternate translation: “you must command the priests to blow the trumpets” (See: [Metonymy](#)),

ULT

10 And on a day of your joy and at your appointed times and at the heads of your months, then you shall blow the trumpets with your burnt up offerings and with the sacrifices of your peace offerings. And it will be for you for a memorial before the face of your God. I am Yahweh your God.

at the beginnings of the months

There are 12 months on the Hebrew calendar. The beginning phase of the moon with its sliver of light marked the beginning of each month in the lunar calendar. (See: [Hebrew Months](#))

your burnt offerings ... your fellowship offerings ... you to me

In these phrases the words “your” and “you” are plural and refer to the people of Israel. (See: [Forms of You](#))

over the sacrifices

“in honor of the sacrifices”

will act as a reminder of you to me

“will act as a memorial for you of me.” The word “reminder” can be expressed with the verb “remind.” Alternate translation: “will always remind you of me” (See: [Abstract Nouns](#))

These will act

The word “these” refers to the trumpets and the sacrifices.

Numbers 10:11

In the second year

“In year 2.” This refers to the second year after Yahweh brought the Israelites out of Egypt. (See: [Ordinal Numbers](#))

in the second month, on the twentieth day of the month

“on day 20 of month 2.” This is the second month of the Hebrew calendar. (See: [Hebrew Months](#) and [Ordinal Numbers](#))

the cloud was lifted

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: “the cloud rose up” or “Yahweh lifted the cloud” (See: [Active or Passive](#))

the tabernacle of the covenant decrees

The tabernacle was also called by this longer name because the ark with the law of God was placed inside it. See how you translated this in [Numbers 1:50](#).

ULT

11 And it happened that in the second year, in the second month, on 20 in the month, the cloud was taken up from above the dwelling of the testimony.

Numbers 10:12

(There are no notes for this verse.)

ULT

¹² And the sons of Israel set out from the wilderness of Sinai according to their tribes. And the cloud dwelled in the wilderness of Paran.

Numbers 10:13

Yahweh's command given through Moses

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: “the commands that Yahweh had given through Moses” (See: [Active or Passive](#))

ULT

13 And they set out at the first in accordance with the mouth of Yahweh by the hand of Moses.

Numbers 10:14

The camp under the banner of Judah's descendants

This camp includes the three tribes under the division of Judah: Judah, Issachar, and Zebulun.

went out first

They packed up their camp and they left that place before all the others left. (See: [Ordinal Numbers](#))

Nahshon son of Amminadab

See how you translated this man's name in [Numbers 1:7](#).

ULT

¹⁴ And the banner of the camp of the sons of Judah set out at the first according to their armies. And over his army was Nahson the son of Amminadab.

Numbers 10:15

Nethanel son of Zuar

See how you translated this man's name in [Numbers 1:8](#).

ULT

15 And over the army of the tribe of the sons of Issachar was Nethanel the son of Zuar.

Numbers 10:16

Eliab son of Helon

See how you translated this man's name in [Numbers 1:9](#).

ULT

16 And over the army of the tribe of the sons of Zebulun was Eliab the son of Helon.

Numbers 10:17

Gershon ... Merari

See how you translated these men's names in [Numbers 3:17](#).

ULT

17 And the dwelling was taken down.
And the sons of Gershon and the sons
of Merari, the lifters of the dwelling, set
out.

Numbers 10:18

the armies under the banner of Reuben's camp

This refers to the armies of the tribes under the division of Reuben: Reuben, Simeon, and Gad.

Elizur son of Shedeur

See how you translated this man's name in [Numbers 1:5](#).

ULT

¹⁸ And the banner of the tribe of Reuben set out according to their armies. And over his company was Elizur the son of Shedeur.

Numbers 10:19

Shelumiel son of Zurishaddai

See how you translated this man's name [Numbers 1:6](#).

ULT

19 And over the army of the tribe of the sons of Simeon was Shelumiel the son of Zurishaddai.

Numbers 10:20

Eliasaph son of Deuel

See how you translated this man's name in [Numbers 1:14](#).

ULT

²⁰ And over the army of the tribe of the sons of Gad was Eliasaph the son of Deuel.

Numbers 10:21

Kohathites

This refers to the descendants of Kohath. See how you translated this in [Numbers 3:27](#).

ULT

21 And the Kohathites, lifters of the holy place, set out. And they raised up the dwelling until their coming.

Numbers 10:22

The armies under the banner of Ephraim's descendants

This refers to the armies of the tribes under the division of Ephraim: Ephraim, Manasseh, and Benjamin.

Elishama son of Ammihud

See how you translated this man's name in [Numbers 1:10](#).

ULT

²² And the banner of the camp of the sons of Ephraim set out according to their armies. And over his army was Elishama the son of Ammihud.

Numbers 10:23

Gamaliel son of Pedahzur

See how you translated this man's name in [Numbers 1:10](#).

ULT

²³ And over the army of the tribe of the sons of Manasseh was Gamaliel the son of Pedahzur.

Numbers 10:24

Abidan son of Gideoni

See how you translated this man's name in [Numbers 1:11](#).

ULT

²⁴ And over the army of the tribe of the sons of Benjamin was Abidan the son of Gideoni.

Numbers 10:25

The armies that camped under the banner of Dan's descendants

This refers to the armies of the tribes under the division of Dan: Dan, Asher, and Naphtali.

Ahiezer son of Ammishaddai

See how you translated this man's name in [Numbers 1:12](#).

ULT

²⁵ And the banner of the camp of the sons of Dan, gatherer for all the camps according to their armies, set out. And over his army was Ahiezer the son of Ammishaddai.

Numbers 10:26

Pagiel son of Okran

See how you translated this man's name in [Numbers 1:13](#).

ULT

²⁶ And over the army of the tribe of the sons of Asher was Pagiel the son of Okran.

Numbers 10:27

Ahira son of Enan

See how you translated this man's name in [Numbers 1:15](#).

ULT

²⁷ And over the army of the tribe of the sons of Naphtali was Ahira the son of Enan.

Numbers 10:28

(There are no notes for this verse.)

ULT

²⁸ These were the tribes of the sons of Israel according to their armies. And they set out.

Numbers 10:29

Hobab son of Reuel

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

that Yahweh described

“that Yahweh described to us”

we will do you good

“we will treat you well”

ULT

²⁹ And Moses said to Hobab the son of Reuel the Midianite, the father-in-law of Moses, “We are about to set out to the place that Yahweh said, ‘I shall give it to you.’ Go with us and we will do good to you. For Yahweh has spoken good for Israel.”

Numbers 10:30

(There are no notes for this verse.)

ULT

³⁰ And he said to him, "I will not go, but I will go to my land and to my family."

Numbers 10:31

You must watch out for us

The phrase “watch out” means to guide and to take care of.
Alternate translation: “You can guide us and show us how to live in the desert” (See: [Idiom](#))

ULT

31 And he said, “Please do not leave us! Because you know our camping in the wilderness and you could be for eyes for us.”

Numbers 10:32

(There are no notes for this verse.)

ULT

³² And it will happen that if you go with us, then it will happen that that good which Yahweh shall do good with us even we will do good to you.”

Numbers 10:33

They journeyed

“They” refers to the people of Israel.

the mountain of Yahweh

This refers to Mount Sinai. The full meaning of this statement can be made explicit. Alternate translation: “Mount Sinai, the mountain of Yahweh” (See: [Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information](#))

ULT

³³ And they set out from the mountain of Yahweh a road of three days. And the box of the covenant of Yahweh was setting out before the face of them a road of three days, to seek out for them a resting place.

The ark of the covenant of Yahweh went before them

The group of Levites carrying the ark of the covenant went before the people of Israel as they traveled. Alternate translation: “Men carried the ark of the covenant of Yahweh before them as they traveled” (See: [Personification](#))

Numbers 10:34

by daylight

“every day” or “during the day”

ULT

³⁴ And the cloud of Yahweh was over them by day when they set out from the camp.

Numbers 10:35

Whenever the ark set out

Here the ark is spoken of as if were a person traveling. The ark was really being carried by men. Alternate translation: “Whenever the people carrying the ark set out” (See: [Personification](#))

Rise up, Yahweh

Here the phrase “rise up” is a request for Yahweh to act, in this case Moses is asking him to scatter their enemies. (See: [Metaphor](#))

Make those who hate you run from you

Here Moses speaks about Yahweh causing their enemies to flee from the people of Israel as if they were fleeing from Yahweh himself. Alternate translation: “Make those who hate you run away from your ark and your people” (See: [Metaphor](#))

ULT

³⁵ And it happened when the box set out that Moses said, “Rise up, Yahweh, and your enemies will be scattered, and those who hate you will flee from your face.”

Numbers 10:36

Whenever the ark stopped

Here the ark is spoken of as if were a person traveling. The ark was really being carried by men. Alternate translation: “Whenever the people carrying the ark stopped” (See: [Personification](#))

many tens of thousands

This refers to people. The full meaning of this statement can be made explicit. Alternate translation: “many tens of thousands of people” (See: [Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information](#))

ULT

³⁶ And when it rested, he said, “Return, Yahweh, to the multitudes of the thousands of Israel.”

Numbers 11

Numbers 11 General Notes

Special concepts in this chapter

Complaining

Moses complained about having too much responsibility. Therefore, God gave seventy men the spirit of prophecy to help Moses. The people complained about food, even though Yahweh was miraculously providing them with their food. The people complained because they did not have meat or fish to eat. God sent them quail. He punished some of the people, but it does not say why God did this. (See: [spirit](#), [wind](#), [breath](#) and [prophet](#), [prophecy](#), [prophesy](#), [seer](#), [prophetess](#))

Numbers 11:1

Fire from Yahweh burned

“Yahweh sent fire that burned”

ULT

¹ And when the people were complaining it was evil in the ears of Yahweh. And Yahweh heard and his nose burned. And the fire of Yahweh burned among them and it ate at the end of the camp.

Numbers 11:2

(There are no notes for this verse.)

ULT

² And the people cried out to Moses.
And Moses prayed to Yahweh and the
fire sank.

Numbers 11:3

That place was named

This can be stated in the active form. Alternate translation: “They named that place” (See: [Active or Passive](#))

ULT

³ And the name of that place was called Taberah, for the fire of Yahweh burned among them.

Numbers 11:4

Who will give us meat to eat?

The Israelites ask this question in order to complain and to express their desire for something other than manna to eat. This can be expressed as a statement. Alternate translation: "We wish that we had meat to eat." (See: [Rhetorical Question](#))

ULT

⁴ And the gathered rabble that was in its inner part desired a desire. And they turned back and they wept, also the sons of Israel. And they said, "Who will let us eat meat?"

Numbers 11:5

(There are no notes for this verse.)

ULT

⁵ We remember the fish that we ate in Egypt for nothing, the cucumbers, and the melons, and the leeks, and the onions, and the garlic.

Numbers 11:6

our appetite is gone

“we do not want to eat” or “we cannot eat”

ULT

⁶ And now our life is dried up, there is not anything except for the manna in our eyes.”

Numbers 11:7

coriander seed

Coriander is also known as cilantro. This seed serves as a spice when dried.

resin

This is a sticky substance with a pale yellow color.

ULT

⁷ And the manna, it was like the seed of coriander. And its eye was like the eye of bdellium.

Numbers 11:8

(There are no notes for this verse.)

ULT

⁸ The people went around and picked up and ground with the handmill or crushed with the mortar and boiled in the pot and made it cakes. And its taste was like the taste of the delicacy of the oil.

Numbers 11:9

(There are no notes for this verse.)

ULT

⁹ And when the dew came down on the camp at night, the manna came down on it.

Numbers 11:10

in Moses' eyes

he eyes represent seeing, and seeing represents thoughts or judgment. Alternate translation: "in Moses' opinion" or "in Moses' judgement" (See: [Metaphor](#))

ULT

10 And Moses heard the people weeping according to its clans, a man to the opening of his tent. And the nose of Yahweh burned exceedingly and it was evil in the eyes of Moses.

Numbers 11:11

General Information:

Moses complains to Yahweh using several rhetorical questions. (See: [Rhetorical Question](#))

**Why have you treated your servant so badly?
Why are you not pleased with me?**

Moses used these questions to complain about the way God was treating him. They can be expressed as statements. Moses speaks of himself in the third person. Alternate translation: "You should not treat me, your servant, so badly. You should not be angry with me!" or "I, your servant, have done nothing wrong for you to treat me so badly!" (See: [Rhetorical Question](#) and [First, Second or Third Person](#))

You make me carry the load of all these people

Moses complains and speaks of leading the people and providing for them as if he were carrying a heavy load. Alternate translation: "You make me responsible for all these people, but it's too hard for me" (See: [Metaphor](#))

ULT

11 And Moses said to Yahweh, "Why do you do evil to your servant? And why have I not found favor in your eyes, by putting the burden of all this people on me?"

Numbers 11:12

Did I conceive all these people?

Moses used this question to remind God that Moses was not their father. Alternate translation: "I am not the father of all these people." (See: [Rhetorical Question](#))

Have I given them birth so that you should say to me, 'Carry ... baby?'

Moses wants God to remember that God told him to take care of the Israelites even though Moses was not their father. Alternate translation: "I have not given them birth, so you have no right to say to me, 'Carry ... baby!'" (See: [Rhetorical Question](#))

Carry them closely to your chest

To take care of the Israelites is spoken of as if it were to carry a helpless newborn baby. (See: [Metaphor](#))

Should I carry them ... to give them?

This rhetorical question can be translated as a statement. Alternate translation: "You should not expect me to carry them ... to give them!" or "I am not able to carry them ... to give them!" (See: [Rhetorical Question](#))

ULT

¹² Did I conceive all of this people? Did I give birth to him so that you could say to me, 'Carry him in your bosom just as the one who nourishes carries the one who sucks over the ground that you have sworn to his fathers?'

Numbers 11:13

Where can I find meat to give to all this people?

Moses used this question to complain that it was impossible for him to give meat to all the people. Alternate translation: "I cannot possibly find enough meat to give to all these people." (See: [Rhetorical Question](#))

ULT

¹³ From where is meat for me to give to all of this people? For they weep beside me, saying, 'Give to us meat and let us eat.'

Numbers 11:14

I cannot bear all these people alone

Moses speaks of leading and providing for the people as if he were carrying them. Alternate translation: "I cannot provide for all these people alone" (See: [Metaphor](#))

They are too much for me

This is an idiom. Alternate translation: "This responsibility is too difficult for me" (See: [Idiom](#))

ULT

14 I am not able by myself to carry all of this people, for they are heavier than me.

Numbers 11:15

(There are no notes for this verse.)

ULT

15 And if you are going to do thus to me, please slay me quickly, if I have found favor in your eyes. And do not let me look on my evil.”

Numbers 11:16

(There are no notes for this verse.)

ULT

16 And Yahweh said to Moses, "Gather for me 70 men from the elders of Israel whom you know, so that they will be elders of the people and its officers. And take them to the tent of meeting and they shall station themselves there with you."

Numbers 11:17

some of the Spirit that is on you

The “Spirit” here represents the power that God’s Spirit had given to Moses so that Moses could do what God told him to do. Alternate translation: “some of the power that the Spirit has given you” (See: [Metonymy](#))

They will bear the burden of the people with you

God speaks of the responsibility of leading and providing for the people as if it were a burden that Moses and the leaders would carry. Alternate translation: “They will help you care for the people” (See: [Metaphor](#))

You will not have to bear it alone

God speaks of the responsibility of leading and providing for the people as if it were a burden that Moses and the leaders would carry. Alternate translation: “You will not care for them alone” (See: [Metaphor](#))

ULT

17 And I will come down and speak with you there. And I will withdraw some of the spirit that is on you and put it on them. And they will carry with you the burden of the people. And you will not carry by yourself.

Numbers 11:18

General Information:

Yahweh continues speaking to Moses.

Who will give us meat to eat?

The Israelites had asked this question in order to complain and to express their desire for something other than manna to eat. It can be expressed as a statement. Alternate translation: "We wish that we had meat to eat." (See: [Rhetorical Question](#))

ULT

18 And to the people you shall say,
'Make yourselves holy for tomorrow,
and you shall eat meat. For you have
wept in the ears of Yahweh, saying,
"Who will let us eat meat? For it was
good for us in Egypt." And Yahweh will
give to you meat, and you will eat.

Numbers 11:19

(There are no notes for this verse.)

ULT

19 You will eat not one day, and not two days, and not five days, and not ten days, and not twenty days,

Numbers 11:20

until it comes out of your nostrils

This could mean: (1) God speaks of vomiting as if the food would come out through their nostrils. Alternate translation: “until you are sick and vomit” or (2) they would eat so much meat that it would be as if it would come out of their nostrils. Alternate translation: “until it feels like it would have to come out of your nostrils” (See: [Metaphor](#))

Why did we leave Egypt?

The people had used this question to express regret and to complain. Alternate translation: “We never should have left Egypt.” (See: [Rhetorical Question](#))

ULT

²⁰ until a month of days, until when it goes out from your nose. And it shall be for disgust for you, because that you rejected Yahweh who is in the midst of you. And you wept before his face, saying, “Why this—we went out from Egypt?””

Numbers 11:21

600,000 people

“six hundred thousand people” (See: [Numbers](#))

ULT

²¹ And Moses said, “The people are 600,000 on foot who I am in the midst of, and you have said, ‘I shall give to them meat and they shall eat a month of days.’

Numbers 11:22

Should we kill flocks and herds to satisfy them? Should we catch all the fish in the sea to satisfy them?

Moses uses these questions to express his doubt that there could be enough meat to feed all of the people. Alternate translation: “We would have to kill entire flocks and herds and catch all the fish in the sea to satisfy them!” (See: [Rhetorical Question](#))

ULT

²² Shall flock and herd be slaughtered for them then one find for them? If all the fish of the sea were gathered for them then one will find for them.”

flocks and herds

These two words mean basically the same thing. Together they emphasize a great number of animals. (See: [Doublet](#))

all the fish in the sea

The word “all” is an exaggeration to show how impossible it was to provide food for all the people of Israel. (See: [Hyperbole](#))

to satisfy them

“to satisfy their hunger”

Numbers 11:23

Is my hand short?

Here the word “hand” represents God’s power. God uses this question to rebuke Moses for thinking that God did not have the power to provide enough meat for the people. Alternate translation: “Do you think that I am not powerful enough to do this?” or “You should know I am more than strong enough to do this.” (See: [Metonymy](#) and [Rhetorical Question](#))

ULT

23 And Yahweh said to Moses, “Is the hand of Yahweh short? Now you will see whether my word will happen to you or not.”

Numbers 11:24

Yahweh's words

"what Yahweh had said"

ULT

²⁴ And Moses went out and he spoke to the people the words of Yahweh. And he gathered 70 men from the elders of the people. And he had them stand round about the tent.

Numbers 11:25

some of the Spirit that was on Moses

The “Spirit” here represents the power that God’s Spirit had given to Moses. See how you translated a similar phrase in [Numbers 11:17](#). Alternate translation: “some of the power that the Spirit had given to Moses” (See: [Metonymy](#))

put it on the seventy elders

Giving power to the elders is spoken of as putting the Spirit on them. See how you translated a similar phrase in [Numbers 11:17](#). Alternate translation: “gave it to the seventy elders” (See: [Metaphor](#))

When the Spirit rested on them

Having power from the Spirit is spoken of as if the Spirit rested on them. Alternate translation: “When they had power from the Spirit” (See: [Metaphor](#))

ULT

25 And Yahweh came down in the cloud and he spoke to him. And he withdrew some of the spirit that was on him and he put it on 70 men, the elders. And it happened when the spirit rested on them that they prophesied but did not again.

Numbers 11:26

The Spirit also rested on them

The Spirit giving them power is spoken of as if the Spirit rested on them. Alternate translation: “The Spirit also gave them power” (See: [Metaphor](#))

Their names were written on the list

This can be written in active form. Alternate translation: “Moses had written their names on the list” (See: [Active or Passive](#))

ULT

²⁶ And two of the men were left in the camp, the name of the one was Eldad and the name of the second was Medad. And the spirit rested on them and they were among the written down ones but they had not gone out to the tent. And they prophesied in the camp.

Numbers 11:27

(There are no notes for this verse.)

ULT

²⁷ And the young man ran and reported to Moses, and he said, Eldad and Medad are prophesying in the camp."

Numbers 11:28

stop them

“tell them to stop prophesying”

ULT

²⁸ And Joshua the son of Nun, the server of Moses from his youth, responded and said, “My master Moses, restrain them.”

Numbers 11:29

Are you jealous for my sake?

Moses uses this question to rebuke Joshua. It can be translated as a statement, if necessary. Alternate translation: "You should not be jealous for my sake." (See: [Rhetorical Question](#))

Are you jealous for my sake?

What Joshua might have been jealous about can be stated clearly if needed. Alternate translation: "Are you concerned that they might be taking away something that belongs to me?" or "Are you concerned that people will not respect my authority?" (See: [Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information](#))

that he would put his Spirit on them all

Moses speaks of God's Spirit giving people power as if God were to put his Spirit on them. Alternate translation: "that God's Spirit would give them all power" (See: [Metaphor](#))

ULT

29 And Moses said to him, "Are you being jealous for me? And if only he would make all the people of Yahweh prophets, that Yahweh would put his Spirit on them!"

Numbers 11:30

(There are no notes for this verse.)

ULT

³⁰ And Moses withdrew to the camp, he and the elders of Israel.

Numbers 11:31

quail

a small bird (See: [Translate Unknowns](#))

about a day's journey on one side and a day's journey on the other side

"in each direction for as far as a person could walk in one day"

about two cubits

A cubit is a unit of measurement equal to about 46 centimeters. Alternate translation: "about 92 centimeters" or "about 1 meter" (See: [Biblical Distance](#) and [Numbers](#))

ULT

³¹ And a wind set out from with Yahweh and it brought over quail from the sea and it left on the camp like a road of a day here and like a road of a day here, round about the camp, and like two cubits upon the face of the land.

Numbers 11:32

No one gathered less than ten homers of quail

This is a double negative which can be expressed as a positive statement. Alternate translation: "Everyone gathered at least ten homers of quail" (See: [Double Negatives](#))

ten homers

A homer is a unit of volume equal to about 220 liters. Alternate translation: "2,200 liters" (See: [Biblical Volume](#))

ULT

³² And the people rose all that day and all the night and all the day of the next day, and they gathered the quail. The one who did little gathered ten homers. And they spread out for them, spreading out round about the camp.

Numbers 11:33

While the meat was still between their teeth, while they were chewing it

These two phrases mean basically the same thing. Together they emphasize that God punished them immediately, even while they were eating the meat. Alternate translation: "While they were still eating the meat" (See: [Parallelism](#))

ULT

³³ The meat was still between their teeth before it was chewed, and the nose of Yahweh burned against the people. And Yahweh struck the people an exceedingly great blow.

Numbers 11:34

That place was named Kibroth Hattaavah

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: “They named that place Kibroth Hattaavah” (See: [Active or Passive](#) and [How to Translate Names](#))

ULT

³⁴ And he called the name of that place Kibroth Hattaavah, because there they buried the people who had desired.

Numbers 11:35

Hazeroth

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

ULT

³⁵ From Kibroth Hattaavah the people set out to Hazeroth. Then they were in Hazeroth.

Numbers 12

Numbers 12 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 12:6-8.

Important figures of speech in this chapter

Idiom

God used the idiom “mouth to mouth” meaning “speaking directly with both people present.” This indicated that Moses was more than just a prophet and greater than other prophets. (See: [Idiom](#) and [prophet](#), [prophecy](#), [prophesy](#), [seer](#), [prophetess](#))

Numbers 12:1

(There are no notes for this verse.)

ULT

¹ And Miriam and Aaron spoke against Moses on account of the Cushite wife that he had taken because he had taken a Cushite wife.

Numbers 12:2

Has Yahweh spoken only with Moses? Has he not spoken also with us?

Miriam and Aaron use these questions to complain that Moses had so much authority and they did not. This can be expressed as a statement. Alternate translation: "Yahweh has not spoken only with Moses. He has also spoken with us." (See: [Rhetorical Question](#))

ULT

² And they said, "Has Yahweh really only spoken with Moses? Has he not spoken also with us?" And Yahweh heard.

Now Yahweh heard

The word "Now" hear draws attention to the important point that follows.

Numbers 12:3

Now the man Moses

“Now” is used to mark a break in the main story line. The narrator tells background information about Moses’ character. (See:

[Background Information](#))

ULT

³ (And the man Moses was exceedingly humble, more than every human who was on the face of the ground.)

Numbers 12:4

(There are no notes for this verse.)

ULT

⁴ And Yahweh said immediately to Moses and to Aaron and to Miriam, "The three of you go out to the tent of meeting." And the three of them went out.

Numbers 12:5

a pillar of cloud

The shape of the cloud is spoken of as if it were a pillar. Alternate translation: "a cloud shaped like a pillar" or "a tall cloud" (See: [Metaphor](#))

ULT

⁵ And Yahweh came down in a column of cloud. And he stood at the opening of the tent. And he called Aaron and Miriam and the two of them went out.

Numbers 12:6

(There are no notes for this verse.)

ULT

⁶ And he said, "Hear now my words! If one is your prophet, I, Yahweh will make myself known to him in the vision. I will speak with him in the dream.

Numbers 12:7

My servant Moses is not like that

“I do not speak to Moses like that”

He is faithful in all my house

Here “my house” represents the nation of Israel. Being faithful in God’s house represents being faithful in leading Israel. Alternate translation: “Moses leads my people faithfully” or “Moses is the one whom I trust to lead my people Israel” (See: [Metonymy](#))

ULT

⁷ Not so my servant Moses. He is trustworthy in all my house.

Numbers 12:8

So why are you unafraid to speak against my servant, against Moses?

Yahweh asks this question to rebuke Miriam and Aaron. It can be translated as a statement. Alternate translation: “You should be afraid to speak against my servant, against Moses.” (See: [Rhetorical Question](#))

ULT

⁸ I speak with him mouth to mouth and with appearance and not with riddles. And he looks at the form of Yahweh. And why are you not afraid to speak against my servant, against Moses?”

against my servant, against Moses

The phrase “against Moses” clarifies that he is the “servant” of whom Yahweh speaks. Alternate translation: “against my servant, Moses” (See: [Parallelism](#))

Numbers 12:9

Yahweh's anger burned against them

Yahweh's anger is spoken of as if it were a fire. Alternate translation: "Yahweh became very angry with them" (See: [Metaphor](#))

ULT

⁹ And the nose of Yahweh burned against them and he went.

Numbers 12:10

was as white as snow

Leprosy turned Miriam's skin white. Alternate translation: "became very white" (See: [Simile](#))

ULT

10 And the cloud departed from over the tent. And behold, Miriam was with a skin disease, like the snow. And Aaron turned to Miriam, and behold, she was with a skin disease.

Numbers 12:11

do not hold this sin against us

To hold people's sin against them is to say that they are guilty for their sin. Here it represents punishing them for their sin. (See:

[Metonymy](#))

ULT

11 And Aaron said to Moses, "Please, my master, please do not put upon us sin which we did foolishly and which we sinned.

Numbers 12:12

Please do not let her be like a dead newborn whose flesh is half consumed

Miriam's leprosy would cause her body to decay until she died. The flesh being decayed is spoken of as if it were eaten. Alternate translation: "Please do not let her be like a dead newborn baby whose flesh is half decayed" (See: [Simile](#) and [Metaphor](#))

ULT

¹² Please do not let her be like the dead one who when he comes out from the womb of his mother and half of his flesh is eaten."

Numbers 12:13

Please heal her, God, please

Here “please” is repeated for emphasis.

ULT

13 And Moses cried out to Yahweh, saying, “God, please, please heal her!”

Numbers 12:14

If her father had spit in her face

This describes something that could have happened but did not. Spitting in someone's face was a terrible insult. (See: [Hypothetical Situations](#) and [Symbolic Action](#))

ULT

14 And Yahweh said to Moses, "If her father surely spit in her face, would she not be humiliated seven days? She shall be shut up seven days from outside of the camp and afterward she may be brought in."

Numbers 12:15

Miriam was shut outside the camp

Being sent out of the camp and not being allowed to go back in is spoken of as if there were a door that was closed behind her. Alternate translation: “Miriam was sent outside the camp” or “Miriam was kept outside the camp” (See: [Metaphor](#))

Miriam was shut outside the camp

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: “Moses shut Miriam outside the camp” or “Moses sent Miriam outside the camp” (See: [Active or Passive](#))

ULT

15 And Miriam was shut up from outside of the camp seven days. And the people did not set out until the bringing in of Miriam.

Numbers 12:16

Hazeroth

This is the name of a place in the desert. See how you translated it in [Numbers 11:35](#).

ULT

16 And after the people set out from Hazeroth. And they camped in the wilderness of Paran.

Numbers 13

Numbers 13 General Notes

Special concepts in this chapter

Spies

Leaders from each of the tribes went to spy on the Promised Land in Canaan. Yahweh was not concerned with how many people were there, because he could defeat them. It appears that he is testing the faith of the people. The people were supposed to be excited to enter this wonderful land, instead they were afraid. (See: [Promised Land](#) and [test, tested, testing, testing in the fire](#) and [faith](#))

Numbers 13:1

(There are no notes for this verse.)

ULT

¹ And Yahweh spoke to Moses, saying,

Numbers 13:2

which I have given

God had decided that the land of Canaan would belong to the people of Israel, but they had not yet moved into it. Alternate translation: “which I have decided to give” or “which I will soon give” (See: [Predictive Past](#))

Each man must be a leader among them

“Each man whom you send must be a leader among his tribe”

ULT

² “Send for yourself men and they shall explore the land of Canaan, which I am giving to the sons of Israel. You shall send one man by one man according to the tribe of his fathers, every leader among them.”

Numbers 13:3

(There are no notes for this verse.)

ULT

³ And Moses sent them from the wilderness of Paran in accordance with the mouth of Yahweh. All of them were men, they were the heads of the sons of Israel

Numbers 13:4

Shammua son of Zaccur

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

ULT

⁴ And these are their names: of the tribe of Reuben was Shammua the son of Zaccur,

Numbers 13:5

Shaphat ... Hori

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

ULT

⁵ of the tribe of Simeon was Shaphat
the son of Hori,

Numbers 13:6

Jephunneh

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

ULT

⁶ of the tribe of Judah was Caleb the son of Jephunneh,

Numbers 13:7

Igal

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

ULT

⁷ of the tribe of Issachar was Igal the son of Joseph,

Numbers 13:8

Nun

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

ULT

⁸ of the tribe of Ephraim was Hoshea
the son of Nun,

Numbers 13:9

Palti ... Raphu

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

ULT

⁹ of the tribe of Benjamin was Palti the son of Raphu,

Numbers 13:10

Gaddiel ... Sodi

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

ULT

¹⁰ of the tribe of Zebulun was Gaddiel
the son of Sodi,

Numbers 13:11

Gaddi ... Susi

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

from the tribe of Joseph (that is to say, from the tribe Manasseh)

The relationship between Joseph and Manasseh can be stated clearly. Alternate translation: "from the tribe of Joseph's son Manasseh" (See: [Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information](#))

ULT

11 of the tribe of Joseph, of the tribe of Manasseh, was Gaddi the son of Susi,

Numbers 13:12

Ammiel ... Gemalli

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

ULT

¹² of the tribe of Dan was Ammiel the son of Gemalli,

Numbers 13:13

Sethur ... Michael

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

ULT

13 of the tribe of Asher was Sethur the son of Michael,

Numbers 13:14

Nahbi ... Vophsi

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

ULT

¹⁴ of the tribe of Naphtali was Nahbi the son of Vophsi,

Numbers 13:15

Geuel ... Maki

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

ULT

¹⁵ of the tribe of Gad was Geuel the son of Maki.

Numbers 13:16

Hoshea son of Nun

See how you translated these men's names in [Numbers 13:8](#).

ULT

16 These are the names of the men
whom Moses sent to explore the land.
And Moses called Hoshea the son of
Nun Joshua.

Numbers 13:17

(There are no notes for this verse.)

ULT

17 And Moses sent them to explore the land of Canaan. And he said to them, "Go up here through the Negev and you shall go up the hill country.

Numbers 13:18

(There are no notes for this verse.)

ULT

18 And you shall see the land, how it is;
and the people who dwell on it, whether
he is strong or weak, whether he is few
or many;

Numbers 13:19

Is it good or bad? What cities are there? Are they like camps, or are they fortified cities?

Moses asks these questions to explain the kind of information that the men were to report back to him. These can be expressed as a statement. Alternate translation: "See if the land is good or bad, what kind of cities are there, and whether those cities are only camps, or whether they have defensive walls around them." (See: [Rhetorical Question](#))

ULT

¹⁹ and how is the land in which he is dwelling, whether it is good or evil; and how are the cities in which he is dwelling, whether in camps or in fortifications;

Are they like camps, or are they fortified cities

Fortified cities had strong walls around them to protect them from enemy armies. Camps did not have these walls.

Numbers 13:20

(There are no notes for this verse.)

ULT

²⁰ and how is the land,,whether it is fat or lean, whether there are trees in it or not. And you shall strengthen yourselves and you shall take from the fruit of the land.” (And the days were the days of the firstfruits of the grapes.)

Numbers 13:21

Zin ... Rehob

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

the wilderness of Zin

The word “Zin” here is the Hebrew name of the wilderness. (See: [Copy or Borrow Words](#))

ULT

²¹ And they went up and they explored the land from the wilderness of Zin to Rehob, to enter Hamath.

Numbers 13:22

Zoan

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

Hebron had been built seven years before Zoan in Egypt

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: “the Canaanites had built Hebron 7 years before the Egyptians built Zoan” (See: [Active or Passive](#) and [Numbers](#))

Ahiman ... Sheshai ... Talmai

These are names of clans that were named after their ancestors. (See: [How to Translate Names](#))

Anak

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

ULT

²² And they went up through the Negev and they came to Hebron. And Ahiman, Sheshai, and Talmai, those born of the Anak, were there. (And Hebron had been built seven years before Zoan of Egypt.)

Numbers 13:23

Eshkol

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

between two of their group

“between two men of their group”

ULT

23 And they came to the wadi of Eschol. And from there they cut a branch and one cluster of grapes. And they carried it by the pole with two men, and some of the pomegranates, and some of the figs.

Numbers 13:24

That place was named

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: “They named that place” (See: [Active or Passive](#))

ULT

24 He called that place the wadi of Eshkol, on account of the cluster that the sons of Israel cut from there.

Numbers 13:25

After forty days

“After 40 days” (See: [Numbers](#))

ULT

²⁵ And they returned from exploring the land at the end of 40 days.

Numbers 13:26

They brought back word

Here “word” refers to a report. Alternate translation: “They brought back their report” or “They reported what they had seen” (See: [Metonymy](#))

ULT

26 And they went and they came to Moses and to Aaron and to all the congregation of the sons of Israel, to the wilderness of Paran at Kadesh. And they brought back them and all the congregation word. And they showed them the fruit of the land.

Numbers 13:27

It certainly flows with milk and honey

“Milk and honey certainly flow there.” They spoke of the land being good for animals and plants as if the milk and honey from those animals and plants were flowing through the land. Alternate translation: “It is certainly excellent for raising livestock and growing crops” or “It is certainly very fertile land” (See: [Metaphor](#) and [Metonymy](#))

ULT

27 And they recounted to him. And they said, “We entered into the land where you sent us. And it is certainly flowing with milk and honey. And this is its fruit.

milk

Since milk comes from cows and goats, it represents livestock and the food produced from the livestock. Alternate translation: “food from livestock” (See: [Metonymy](#))

honey

Since honey is produced from flowers, it represents crops and the food produced from the crops. Alternate translation: “food from crops” (See: [Metonymy](#))

Numbers 13:28

(There are no notes for this verse.)

ULT

²⁸ However, the people who dwell in the land are fierce. And the cities are fortified very large. And also we saw those born of the Anak there.

Numbers 13:29

(There are no notes for this verse.)

ULT

²⁹ Amalek is dwelling in the land of the Negev. And the Hittite, and the Jebusite, and the Amorite is dwelling in the hill country. And the Canaanite is dwelling beside the sea and beside the hand of the Jordan.”

Numbers 13:30

(There are no notes for this verse.)

ULT

³⁰ And Caleb hushed the people near Moses. And he said, “We will certainly go up and take possession of it, for we are certainly able to prevail over it.”

Numbers 13:31

(There are no notes for this verse.)

ULT

³¹ And the men who went up with him said, "We are not able to go up against the people because he is stronger than us."

Numbers 13:32

they spread around ... They said

Here “they” refers to all of the men who examined the land except for Caleb and Joshua.

the land that they had examined

Here “they” refers to all of the men who examined the land including Caleb and Joshua.

a land that eats up its inhabitants

The men speak of the land, or the people of the land, being very dangerous as if the land ate up people. Alternate translation: “a very dangerous land” or “a land where the people will kill us” (See: [Metaphor](#))

ULT

32 And they caused an evil report of the land, it that they had explored, to go out to the sons of Israel, saying, “The land in which we passed through to explore it, it is a land that eats those who dwell in it. And all the people whom we saw in the midst of it were men of size.”

Numbers 13:33

Anak

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

In our own sight ... in their sight

Here sight represents evaluation and judgement. Alternate translation: “In our own opinion ... in their opinion” or “In our own judgement ... in their judgement” (See: [Metaphor](#))

we were like grasshoppers in comparison with them

The men speak of grasshoppers to show how very small they thought themselves to be compared to the people of the land. Alternate translation: “we are as small as grasshoppers in comparison with them” (See: [Simile](#))

ULT

33 And there we saw the Nephilim, the sons of Anak from the Nephilim. And we were like grasshoppers in our eyes, and so we were in their eyes.”

Numbers 14

Numbers 14 General Notes

Important figures of speech in this chapter

Rhetorical Questions

The author uses several rhetorical questions in this chapter. These questions indicate that people did not have faith in Yahweh. Yahweh also uses rhetorical questions to show the people's lack of faith. (See: [Rhetorical Question](#) and [faith](#))

Numbers 14:1

(There are no notes for this verse.)

ULT

¹ And all the congregation lifted up and gave their voice. And the people wept in that night.

Numbers 14:2

(There are no notes for this verse.)

ULT

² And all the sons of Israel murmured against Moses and against Aaron. And all the congregation said to them, “If only we had died in the land of Egypt, or if only we had died in this wilderness!

Numbers 14:3

Why did Yahweh bring us to this land to die by the sword?

The people use this question in order to complain and accuse Yahweh of treating them unfairly. It can be translated as a statement. Alternate translation: "Yahweh should not have brought us to this land only to die by the sword." (See: [Rhetorical Question](#))

ULT

³ And why is Yahweh bringing us to this land to fall by the sword? Our wives and our children will be for plunder. Is it not good for us to return to Egypt?"

to die by the sword

Here "the sword" represents either being killed by the sword or being killed in battle. Alternate translation: "to die when people attack us with swords" or "to die in battle" or (See: [Metonymy](#))

Is it not better for us to return to Egypt?

The people use this question to encourage people to agree with them that it would be better to return to Egypt. It can be translated as a statement. Alternate translation: "It would be better for us to return to Egypt than to try to conquer Canaan." (See: [Rhetorical Question](#))

Numbers 14:4

They said to each another

This refers to the people of Israel.

ULT

⁴ And they said, a man to his brother,
“Let us set a head and let us return to
Egypt.”

Numbers 14:5

lay facedown

“lay down with their faces touching the ground.” Moses and Aaron did this to show that they were humbling themselves before God. They feared that God might punish the people for rebelling against him. Alternate translation: “lay facedown in humility to God” or “lay facedown to pray to God” (See: [Symbolic Action](#))

ULT

⁵ And Moses and Aaron fell on their faces before the face of all the assembly of the congregation of the sons of Israel.

Numbers 14:6

Nun ... Jephunneh

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

who were some of those sent

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: “who were some of those whom Moses sent” (See: [Active or Passive](#))

tore their clothes

Tearing one’s clothes was a gesture indicating the person is very troubled and is mourning. (See: [Symbolic Action](#))

ULT

⁶ And Joshua the son of Nun and Caleb the son of Jephunneh, from the ones who explored the land, tore their garments.

Numbers 14:7

(There are no notes for this verse.)

ULT

⁷ And they spoke to all the congregation of the sons of Israel, saying, "The land in which we passed through to explore it is a very exceedingly good land.

Numbers 14:8

The land flows with milk and honey

They spoke of the land being good for animals and plants as if the milk and honey from those animals and plants flowed through it. See how you translated this in [Numbers 13:27](#). Alternate translation: “It is excellent for raising livestock and growing crops” or “It is very fertile land” (See: [Metaphor](#))

ULT

⁸ If Yahweh delights in us, then he will bring us into this land. And he will give it to us, a land that is flowing with milk and honey.

Numbers 14:9

Connecting Statement:

Joshua and Caleb continue speaking to the people of Israel.

for they are bread to us

Joshua and Caleb speak of destroying their enemies as easily as if they were eating bread. Alternate translation: "We will destroy them as easily as we can eat food" (See: [Metaphor](#) and [Simile](#))

ULT

⁹ Only you must not rebel against Yahweh and you must not fear the people of the land, for they are our food. He has turned their shadow from over them and Yahweh is with us. You must not fear them!"

Their protection will be removed from them

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "Yahweh will remove their protection from them" (See: [Active or Passive](#))

Their protection

The abstract noun "protection" can be stated as "protect." Alternate translation: "Anyone that might protect them" (See: [Abstract Nouns](#))

Numbers 14:10

(There are no notes for this verse.)

ULT

¹⁰ And all the congregation said to stone them with stones. But the glory of Yahweh appeared in the tent of meeting to all the sons of Israel.

Numbers 14:11

How long must this people despise me? How long must they fail to trust me, despite all the signs ... them?

Yahweh uses these questions to show that he was angry and had lost patience with the people. They can be translated as statements. Alternate translation: "This people has despised me for too long. They have failed to trust me for too long, despite all the signs ... them." (See: [Rhetorical Question](#))

ULT

¹¹ And Yahweh said to Moses, "Until when will this people spurn me? And until when will they not trust in me, despite all the signs that I have done in the midst of them?"

Numbers 14:12

disinherit them

“reject them from being my people.” This may imply that he would destroy them, and some versions translate it that way.

make from your own clan

Here “your” is singular and refers to Moses. (See: [Forms of You](#))

ULT

12 I will strike him down with the plague and I will disinherit him. And I will make you into a nation greater and more numerous than them.”

Numbers 14:13

(There are no notes for this verse.)

ULT

13 And Moses said to Yahweh, “And the Egyptians have heard that you brought this people up with your power from the midst of him.

Numbers 14:14

you are seen face to face

This could mean: (1) Moses speaks of God showing himself to his people as if God had allowed them to actually see his face. Alternate translation: “they have seen you” or (2) Moses speaks of the intimate relationship between him and God as if Moses could see God’s face when God spoke to him. This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: “you speak directly to me” (See: [Metaphor](#) and [Active or Passive](#))

ULT

14 And they have said to those dwelling in this land. They have heard that you, Yahweh, are in the midst of this people, that you, Yahweh, have been seen eye by eye, and your cloud is standing over them, and in a column of cloud you are going before their face by day and in a column of fire at night.

Numbers 14:15

as one man

Killing them all at the same time is spoken of as killing them as one person. Alternate translation: “all at one time” (See: [Metaphor](#))

ULT

15 If you kill this people like one man,
then the nations will say that they heard
hearing of you, saying,

Numbers 14:16

(There are no notes for this verse.)

ULT

16 'Because Yahweh was not able to bring this people into the land that he swore to them, so he slaughtered them in the wilderness.'

Numbers 14:17

(There are no notes for this verse.)

ULT

17 And now, please let the power of my Lord be great, just as you have spoken, saying,

Numbers 14:18

abundant in covenant faithfulness

The abstract noun “faithfulness” can be stated as “faithful” or “faithfully.” Alternate translation: “always faithful to his covenant” or “always faithfully loves his people” (See: [Abstract Nouns](#))

He will by no means clear the guilty

“he will certainly not clear guilty people.” Clearing away people’s sin is a metaphor for refusing to punish them. God would not clear away the sin of guilty people. Alternate translation: “He will always punish the guilty” (See: [Metaphor](#))

ULT

18 ‘Yahweh is long of nostrils and abundant of covenant faithfulness, lifting up iniquity and transgression. But surely he will not leave unpunished, appointing the iniquity of fathers on sons, on thirds, and on fourths.’

when he brings the punishment of the ancestors’ sin on their descendants

Punishing people is spoken of as if punishment were an object that could be brought and put on people. Alternate translation: “when he punishes the guilty people’s descendants for the guilty people’s sins” (See: [Metaphor](#))

Numbers 14:19

(There are no notes for this verse.)

ULT

¹⁹ Please forgive this people of the iniquity according to the greatness of your covenant faithfulness, and just as you have lifted up this people from Egypt and to here.”

Numbers 14:20

(There are no notes for this verse.)

ULT

²⁰ And Yahweh said, "I have forgiven according to your word.

Numbers 14:21

all the earth will be filled with my glory

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: “my glory will fill all the earth” (See: [Active or Passive](#))

ULT

21 But truly, I live, and all the earth will be filled with the glory of Yahweh.

Numbers 14:22

they have still tempted me

“they have continued to test me”

these ten times

Here the number 10 represents too many times. Alternate translation: “too many times” (See: [Idiom](#))

have not listened to my voice

Here “listened” represents obedience, and God’s voice represents what he said. Alternate translation: “have not obeyed what I have said” (See: [Metonymy](#))

ULT

²² For all the men who have seen my glory and my signs that I did in Egypt and in the wilderness, and they tested me this ten times and have not listened to my voice,

Numbers 14:23

Connecting Statement:

Yahweh continues speaking to Moses.

ULT

²³ if they see the land that I have sworn to their fathers...and all those who spurn me will not see it.

Numbers 14:24

because he had another spirit

Here “spirit” represents his attitude. Caleb was willing to obey God. What his attitude was can be stated clearly. Alternate translation: “because he had a different attitude” or “because he was willing to obey God” (See: [Metonymy](#) and [Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information](#))

ULT

24 But my servant Caleb, because another spirit is with him and he was fully after me, I will bring him into the land that he will come to there. And his seed will inherit it.

Numbers 14:25

(There are no notes for this verse.)

ULT

²⁵ (And the Amalekite and the Canaanite was dwelling in the valley.) Tomorrow turn and set out for yourselves to the wilderness, the way of the Sea of Reeds.”

Numbers 14:26

(There are no notes for this verse.)

ULT

²⁶ And Yahweh spoke to Moses and to Aaron, saying,

Numbers 14:27

How long must I tolerate this evil community that criticizes me?

Yahweh asks this question because he has lost patience with the people. It can be translated as a statement. Alternate translation: "I have tolerated this evil community who has criticized me long enough." (See: [Rhetorical Question](#))

ULT

²⁷ "Until when must I listen to this evil congregation, they who are murmuring against me the murmurings of the sons of Israel, they who are murmuring against me?"

I have heard the complaining of the people of Israel

The word "complaining," an abstract noun, can be expressed as a verb. Alternate translation: "I have heard the people of Israel complain" (See: [Abstract Nouns](#))

Numbers 14:28

as you have spoken in my hearing

“as I have heard you say”

ULT

²⁸ Say to them, ‘I live,’ the declaration of Yahweh, ‘surely just as you have spoken in my ears, so I will do to you.’

Numbers 14:29

Your dead bodies will fall

Their dead bodies falling represents them dying. Alternate translation: "You will die" (See: [Metonymy](#))

you who were counted in the census

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "you whom Moses counted in the census" (See: [Active or Passive](#))

from twenty years old and upward

"twenty years old and older"

ULT

29 In this wilderness your corpses will fall and all your counted ones according to all your number, from a son of 20 years and upward, who have murmured against me.

Numbers 14:30

(There are no notes for this verse.)

ULT

³⁰ If you enter into the land that I have
lifted up my hand to make you dwell
in...except Caleb the son of Jephunneh
and Joshua the son of Nun.

Numbers 14:31

(There are no notes for this verse.)

ULT

³¹ And your children who you said would be for plunder, and I will bring them and they will know the land, it that you have rejected.

Numbers 14:32

your dead bodies will fall

Their dead bodies falling represents them dying. Alternate translation: "you will die" (See: [Metonymy](#))

ULT

³² And you, your corpses will fall in this wilderness.

Numbers 14:33

Your children will be shepherds in the wilderness

Some modern versions choose to translate, “Your children will wander in the wilderness.” This is because in ancient times, shepherds usually wandered from place to place so their flocks and herds could find pasture.

ULT

³³ And your sons will be those who herd in the wilderness 40 years. And they will carry your fornications until the finishing of your corpses in the wilderness.

They must bear the consequences of your acts

“They must suffer the consequences of your acts” or “They must suffer because of your acts”

until the end of your corpses

A corpse is a dead body. The end of their corpses represents the last of the them dying. Alternate translation: “until the last one of you dies” or “until all of you die” (See: [Metonymy](#))

Numbers 14:34

bear the consequences of your sins

“suffer the consequences of your sins” or “suffer because of your sins”

ULT

³⁴ By the number of the days that you explored the land, 40 days, a day for the year, a day for the year, you will carry your iniquities 40 years. And you will know my opposition.

Numbers 14:35

They will be completely cut off

This probably means that they will no longer exist. Alternate translation: "they will come to an end" or "they will all be destroyed" (See: [Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information](#))

ULT

³⁵ I, Yahweh, have spoken. Surely I will do this to all this evil congregation, the ones who have congregated themselves against me. In this wilderness they will finish and there they will die.'"

Numbers 14:36

(There are no notes for this verse.)

ULT

³⁶ And the men whom Moses had sent to explore the land and had returned and caused all the congregation to murmur against him by causing an evil report against the land to go out,

Numbers 14:37

**these men who had brought out a bad report
about the land were struck down, and they
died of a plague before Yahweh**

The phrase “plague before Yahweh” shows that Yahweh struck them down. This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation:

“Yahweh struck down these men who had brought out a bad report about the land, and they died” (See: [Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information](#))

ULT

³⁷ even the men who had caused to go out the evil report of the evil land, died by the plague before the face of Yahweh.

Numbers 14:38

(There are no notes for this verse.)

ULT

³⁸ But Joshua the son of Nun and Caleb the son of Jephunneh lived from those men, the ones who went to explore the land.

Numbers 14:39

(There are no notes for this verse.)

ULT

³⁹ And Moses spoke these words to all the sons of Israel. And the people mourned exceedingly.

Numbers 14:40

Look, we are here

They use these words to emphasize that they have changed their minds and now want to do what they should have done the day before. Your language may have a different way of showing this.

ULT

40 And they rose early in the morning and went up to the head of the mountain, saying, "Here we are, and we will go up to the place that Yahweh has said, for we have sinned."

Numbers 14:41

Why are you now violating Yahweh's command?

Moses asks this question to rebuke the people of Israel. This rhetorical question can be translated as a statement. Alternate translation: "You should not be violating Yahweh's command again." (See: [Rhetorical Question](#))

ULT

⁴¹ And Moses said, "Why this—are you passing over the mouth of Yahweh? And it will not succeed."

Numbers 14:42

Yahweh is not with you

Helping them is spoken of as being with them. Alternate translation: “Yahweh will not help you” (See: [Metaphor](#))

to prevent you from being defeated by your enemies

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: “to prevent your enemies from defeating you” or “to give you victory over your enemies” (See: [Active or Passive](#))

ULT

42 You must not go up because Yahweh is not in the midst of you, that you not be struck down before the face of your enemies.

Numbers 14:43

you will die by the sword

Here “the sword” refers to battle. Alternate translation: “you will die in battle” or “they will kill you when you fight against them” (See: [Metonymy](#))

you turned back from following Yahweh

Obedying Yahweh is spoken of as following him, and stopping doing that is spoken of as turning away from him. Alternate translation: “you stopped obeying Yahweh” or “you have decided not to obey Yahweh” (See: [Metaphor](#))

he will not be with you

Helping them is spoken of as being with them. Alternate translation: “he will not help you” (See: [Metaphor](#))

ULT

43 For the Amalekite and the Canaanite are there before your face and you will fall by the sword. For therefore you have turned from after Yahweh, and Yahweh will not be with you.”

Numbers 14:44

they presumed to go up into the hill country

“they dared to go up into the hill country even though God did not approve”

into the hill country

Much of the land of Israel is elevated. When the Israelites crossed the Jordan River valley to attack the Canaanites, there were hills that they had to climb in order to go farther into the land of Canaan.

ULT

44 And they presumed to go up to the head of the mountain, but the box of the covenant of Yahweh and Moses did not depart from the midst of the camp.

Numbers 14:45

(There are no notes for this verse.)

ULT

⁴⁵ And the Amalekite and the Canaanite who dwelled on that mountain, came down. And they smote them and beat them to pieces as far as the Hormah.

Numbers 15

Numbers 15 General Notes

Special concepts in this chapter

Purifying the people

As the people travel through the wilderness, Yahweh is purifying them. He is doing this so that they are able to enter into the Promised Land. (See: [pure](#), [purify](#), [purification](#) and [Promised Land](#))

Other possible translation difficulties in this chapter

Prostitution

The imagery of prostitution is commonly used in Scripture to indicate that Yahweh alone is to be worshiped. The people are compared to the prostitute because a husband is to only have a sexual relationship with his wife. Both the prostitute and the worship of other gods are violations of this exclusive relationship. Many cultures will struggle with this imagery because of a desire to use euphemisms. (See: [god](#), [false god](#), [goddess](#), [idol](#), [idolater](#), [idolatrous](#), [idolatry](#) and [Euphemism](#))

Numbers 15:1

General Information:

Numbers 15:1-32 tells what God told Moses to tell the people of Israel.

ULT

¹ And Yahweh spoke to Moses, saying,

Numbers 15:2

(There are no notes for this verse.)

ULT

² “Speak to the sons of Israel and say to them, ‘When you enter into the land of your dwellings, which I am giving to you,

Numbers 15:3

to produce a pleasing aroma for Yahweh from the herd or the flock

“to produce from the herd or flock a smell that pleases Yahweh.” The Lord’s pleasure with the aroma represents his pleasure with the person who burns the offering. Alternate translation: “to please Yahweh by burning a sacrifice from the herd or the flock” (See: [Metaphor](#))

ULT

³ then you shall make an offering made by fire to Yahweh, a burnt up offering or a sacrifice, to do an extraordinary vow or with a voluntary offering, or at your appointed times, to make an aroma of soothing for Yahweh from the herd or from the flock.

Numbers 15:4

a burnt offering

This refers to the offerings spoken of in [Numbers 15:3](#).

a tenth of an ephah

An ephah is a unit of volume equal to about 22 liters. Alternate translation: “about 2 liters” or “two liters” (See: [Biblical Volume](#))

one-fourth of a hin

A hin is a unit of volume equal to about 3.7 liters. Alternate translation: “about 1 liter” or “one liter” (See: [Biblical Volume](#))

ULT

⁴ And the one who is offering shall offer his offering to Yahweh, a grain offering, a tenth of fine flour mixed with a fourth of the hin of oil.

Numbers 15:5

(There are no notes for this verse.)

ULT

⁵ And wine for the drink offering, a fourth of the hin, you shall make with the burnt up offering or for the sacrifice, for the one male lamb.

Numbers 15:6

two-tenths of an ephah

An ephah is a unit of volume equal to about 22 liters. Alternate translation: “4 liters” or “four and a half liters” (See: [Biblical Volume](#))

a third of a hin

A hin is a unit of volume equal to about 3.7 liters. Alternate translation: “one liter” (See: [Biblical Volume](#))

ULT

⁶ Or for the ram you shall make a grain offering, two tenths fine flour mixed with a third of the hin of oil.

Numbers 15:7

It will produce a sweet aroma for Yahweh

“It will produce a smell that pleases Yahweh.” The Lord’s pleasure with the aroma represents his pleasure with the person who burns the offering. Alternate translation: “You will please Yahweh by offering it” (See: [Metaphor](#))

ULT

⁷ And wine for the drink offering, a third of the hin, you shall offer as an aroma of soothing for Yahweh.

Numbers 15:8

(There are no notes for this verse.)

ULT

⁸ And when you make a son of cattle a burnt up offering or a sacrifice, to do an extraordinary vow or peace offerings to Yahweh,

Numbers 15:9

three-tenths of an ephah

You may convert this to a modern measure. Alternate translation: “six and one half liters” (See: [Biblical Volume](#))

half a hin

You may convert this to a modern measure Alternate translation: “two liters” (See: [Biblical Volume](#))

ULT

⁹ then you shall offer with the son of the cattle a grain offering, three tenths fine flour mixed with a half of the hin of the oil,

Numbers 15:10

made by fire

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: “that you burn on the altar” (See: [Active or Passive](#))

to produce a sweet aroma for Yahweh

“to produce a smell that pleases Yahweh.” The Lord being pleased with the sincere worshiper who offers the sacrifice is spoken of as if God were pleased with the aroma of the sacrifice. Alternate translation: “to please Yahweh by offering it” (See: [Metaphor](#))

ULT

10 and you shall offer a half of the hin of wine for the drink offering; an offering made by fire, an aroma of soothing for Yahweh.

Numbers 15:11

It must be done

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: “You must do it” (See: [Active or Passive](#))

ULT

11 Thus it shall be done for the one ox or for the one ram, or for the small livestock among the male lambs or among the goats.

Numbers 15:12

must be done as described

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: “you must do as I have described” (See: [Active or Passive](#))

ULT

¹² According to the number that you do, thus you shall do for the one according to their number.

Numbers 15:13

made by fire

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: “that they burn on the altar” (See: [Active or Passive](#))

to produce an aroma that is pleasing to Yahweh

“to produce a smell that pleases Yahweh.” Yahweh being pleased with the sincere worshiper who offers the sacrifice is spoken of as if Yahweh were pleased with the aroma of the sacrifice. Alternate translation: “to please Yahweh by offering it” (See: [Metaphor](#))

ULT

13 Every native shall do these things thus for offering an offering made by fire, an aroma of soothing for Yahweh.

Numbers 15:14

he must make an offering made by fire

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: “he must burn an offering on the altar” (See: [Active or Passive](#))

to produce a sweet aroma for Yahweh

“to produce a smell that pleases Yahweh.” The Lord being pleased with the sincere worshiper who offers the sacrifice is spoken of as if God were pleased with the aroma of the sacrifice. Alternate translation: “to please Yahweh by offering it” (See: [Metaphor](#))

ULT

14 And if a sojourner sojourns with you, or whoever is in the midst of you for your generations, and he makes an offering made by fire, an aroma of soothing for Yahweh, just as you shall do so he shall do.

Numbers 15:15

As you are, so also must be the traveler

This could mean: (1) “You and the traveler staying with you are alike before Yahweh” or (2) “The same law applies to both you and the traveler”

He must act as you act before Yahweh

“He must act as you act in Yahweh’s presence.” Because it says that they must act as the Israelites in Yahweh’s presence, it is implied that they must obey all of Yahweh’s commands. Alternate translation: “he must act as you act and obey all of Yahweh’s commands” (See: [Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information](#))

ULT

15 The assembly statute is one for you and for the sojourner, the one who is sojourning, a statute of eternity for your generations. As you, so the sojourner shall be before the face of Yahweh.

Numbers 15:16

(There are no notes for this verse.)

ULT

16 One instruction and one ordinance shall be for you and for the sojourner, the one who is sojourning with you.”

Numbers 15:17

(There are no notes for this verse.)

ULT

17 And Yahweh spoke to Moses, saying,

Numbers 15:18

(There are no notes for this verse.)

ULT

18 “Speak to the sons of Israel and say to them, ‘When you enter into the land there which I am bringing you,

Numbers 15:19

the food produced in the land

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: “the food that the land produces” or “the food that you produce in the land” (See: [Active or Passive](#))

ULT

19 and it shall be that when you eat from the bread of the land, you shall raise a raised offering to Yahweh.

Numbers 15:20

the first of your dough

This could mean: (1) the first grain that they would gather during the harvest or (2) the dough that they would make from the first of their grain. (See: [Metonymy](#))

a loaf

Calling it a loaf implies that they would cook the dough first.

to raise it up as a raised offering

This idiom “raise it up” refers to offering it as a gift. Alternate translation: “to offer it as a gift” (See: [Idiom](#))

a raised offering from the threshing floor

The offering is spoken of as being from the threshing floor because this is where they would separate the grain from the other parts of the plant.

ULT

20 The first of your dough shall be a cake you shall raise as a raised offering. Like a raised offering of the threshing floor, so you shall raise it.

Numbers 15:21

(There are no notes for this verse.)

ULT

²¹ From the first of your dough you shall give a raised offering to Yahweh for your generations.

Numbers 15:22

General Information:

The word “you” here refers to Israelite people.

Connecting Statement:

God continues telling Moses what he must tell the people.

ULT

²² And when you stray and do not do all these commandments that Yahweh has spoken to Moses,

Numbers 15:23

(There are no notes for this verse.)

ULT

²³ all that Yahweh has commanded to you by the hand of Moses, from the day that Yahweh commanded and beyond for your generations,

Numbers 15:24

to produce a sweet aroma for Yahweh

“to produce a smell that pleases Yahweh.” The Lord being pleased with the sincere worshipers who offer the sacrifice is spoken of as if God were pleased with the aroma of the sacrifice. Alternate translation: “to please Yahweh by burning it” (See: [Metaphor](#))

must be made a grain offering and drink offering

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: “you must make a grain offering and drink offering” (See: [Active or Passive](#))

as commanded by the decree

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: “as the decree commands” or “as I commanded when I made the decree” (See: [Active or Passive](#))

ULT

²⁴ and it shall be that if it was done as unintentional sin away from the eyes of the congregation, then all the congregation shall make a bull, one son of cattle, for a burnt up offering, for an aroma of soothing for Yaweh, and its grain offering and its drink offering according to the ordinance, and one buck of the goats for a sin offering.

Numbers 15:25

They will be forgiven

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

made by fire

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: “that they made by fire” or “that they burned on the altar” (See: [Active or Passive](#))

ULT

25 And the priest shall make atonement for all the congregation of the sons of Israel, and it shall be forgiven for them. For it was an unintentional sin and they have brought their offering, an offering made by fire, to Yahweh, and their sin offering before the face of Yahweh for their unintentional sin.

Numbers 15:26

all the community of the people of Israel will be forgiven

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "I will forgive all the community of the people of Israel" (See: [Active or Passive](#))

ULT

²⁶ And it shall be forgiven for all the congregation of the sons of Israel and for the sojourner, the one who is sojourning in the midst of them, because of all the people with unintentional sin.

Numbers 15:27

a female goat a year old

“a 1-year-old female goat”

ULT

²⁷ And if one person sins with an unintentional sin, then he shall offer a female goat, a daughter of its year, for a sin offering.

Numbers 15:28

That person will be forgiven when atonement has been made

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: “I will forgive that person when the priest has made atonement” (See: [Active or Passive](#))

ULT

²⁸ And the priest shall make atonement for the person, the one who sinned unintentionally with a sin, with an unintentional sin, before the face of Yahweh, to make atonement for him and it shall be forgiven for him.

Numbers 15:29

(There are no notes for this verse.)

ULT

²⁹ The native among the sons of Israel and for the sojourner, the one who is sojourning in the midst of them, one instruction shall be for you for the one who does an unintentional sin.

Numbers 15:30

That person must be cut off from among his people

The metaphor “cut off” has at least three possible meanings. They can be expressed in active form: (1) “his people must send him away” or (2) “I will no longer consider him to be one of the people of Israel” or (3) “his people must kill him.” (See: [Metaphor](#) and [Active or Passive](#))

ULT

³⁰ But the person who does with a raised hand, from the native and from the sojourner, he is blaspheming Yahweh. And that person shall be cut off from the midst of his people.

Numbers 15:31

has broken my commandment

Not obeying a commandment is spoken of as breaking it. Alternate translation: "has disobeyed my commandment" or "has not obeyed what I commanded" (See: [Metonymy](#))

His sin will be on him

Here, **sin** could mean: (1) punishment for that sin or (2) guilt of that sin. Sin being on him is a metaphor that could mean: (1) being punished or (2) being guilty. Alternate translation: (1) "I will punish him because of his sin" or (2) "I will consider him guilty" (See: [Metonymy](#) and [Metaphor](#))

ULT

31 Because he has despised the word of Yahweh and has broken his commandment, that person shall certainly be cut off. His iniquity shall be on him."

Numbers 15:32

(There are no notes for this verse.)

ULT

³² And the sons of Israel were in the wilderness. And they found a man gathering pieces of wood on the day of the Sabbath.

Numbers 15:33

(There are no notes for this verse.)

ULT

³³ And the ones who found him gathering pieces of wood brought him near to Moses and to Aaron and to all the congregation.

Numbers 15:34

it had not been declared what should be done with him

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: “Yahweh had not declared what they should do with him” (See: [Active or Passive](#))

ULT

³⁴ And they made him rest in the keeping place because it had not been declared what should be done to him.

Numbers 15:35

The man must surely be put to death

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: “You must surely put the man to death” or “The man must surely die” (See: [Active or Passive](#))

ULT

³⁵ And Yahweh said to Moses, “The man shall certainly die, all the congregation stoning him with the stones from the outside of the camp.”

Numbers 15:36

(There are no notes for this verse.)

ULT

³⁶ And all the congregation brought him out to the outside of the camp. And they stoned him with the stones and he died, just as Yahweh had commanded Moses.

Numbers 15:37

(There are no notes for this verse.)

ULT

³⁷ And Yahweh spoke to Moses, saying,

Numbers 15:38

the descendants of Israel

“the people of Israel”

ULT

38 “Speak to the sons of Israel and say to them, ‘And they shall make for themselves a tassel on the wings of their garments for their generations. And they shall put a cord of blue on the tassel of the wing.’”

Numbers 15:39

to carry them out

“to obey them”

so that you do not look to your own heart and your own eyes

“Look to” here is a metaphor for think about. The heart represents what a person wants, and the eyes represent what a person sees and wants. Alternate translation: “so that you do not think about whatever you want” (See: [Metaphor](#) and [Metonymy](#))

prostitute yourselves to them

Being unfaithful to God by choosing to do whatever they want is spoken of as if they were women who were unfaithful to their husband by choosing to have sinful relationships with other men. It can be stated clearly that this was a shameful thing to do. Alternate translation: “be shamefully unfaithful to me” or “do those things instead of obeying me” (See: [Metaphor](#) and [Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information](#))

ULT

³⁹ And it shall be for you for a tassel and you shall see it and you shall remember all the commandments of Yahweh, and you shall do them. And you shall not explore after your heart and after your eyes, them which you are prostituting after,

Numbers 15:40

Connecting Statement:

God continues telling Moses what to tell the people of Israel. The word “you” refers to the people.

call to mind

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

ULT

⁴⁰ so that you shall remember and do all my commandments. And you shall be holy ones for your God.

Numbers 15:41

I am Yahweh your God

This clause is repeated for emphasis.

ULT

⁴¹ I am Yahweh your God, who brought you out from the land of Egypt, to become a God for you. I am Yahweh your God.”

Numbers 16

Numbers 16 General Notes

Special concepts in this chapter

Rebellion and punishment

A certain Levite and a few men from the tribe of Reuben claimed that they were just as good as Moses and Aaron, and they also could do the work of sacrificing animals at the sacred tent. So Moses told them to come to the sacred tent and burn incense to Yahweh. God then made the earth open and swallow up these leaders and their families. He also sent fire to destroy 250 other men who had joined with those leaders. These actions showed that only the Levites, those whom Yahweh appointed, could be priests. Also, it taught the people that to rebel against Yahweh's anointed was to rebel against Yahweh. (See: [appoint](#), [appointed](#) and [priest](#), [priesthood](#) and [anoint](#), [anointed](#), [anointing](#))

Numbers 16:1

Kohath

See how you translated this man's name in [Numbers 3:17](#).

ULT

¹ And Korah the son of Izhar the son of Kohath the son of Levi, and Dathan and Abiram, the sons of Eliab, and On the son of Peleth, the sons of Reuben, took men.

Numbers 16:2

rose up against Moses

Rebelling or criticizing someone in authority is spoken of as if they were standing up to fight. Alternate translation: “rebelled against Moses” (See: [Metaphor](#))

two hundred and fifty

“250” (See: [Numbers](#))

well-known members in the community

“famous members of the community” or “important men in the community”

ULT

² And they rose up before the face of Moses, and men from the sons of Israel, 250 leaders of the congregation, the called ones of the appointed meeting, men of name.

Numbers 16:3

You have gone too far

This represents doing more than one should. Alternate translation: “You have done more than you should” or “You assume to have more authority than you should” (See: [Idiom](#))

Why do you lift up yourselves above the rest of Yahweh’s community?

The men ask this question to rebuke Moses and Aaron. It can be translated as a statement. Alternate translation: “You are wrong to lift up yourselves above the rest of Yahweh’s community.” (See: [Rhetorical Question](#))

lift up yourselves above the rest

Considering someone to be important is spoken of as lifting it up. Alternate translation: “consider yourselves more important than the rest” (See: [Metaphor](#))

ULT

³ And they assembled against Moses and against Aaron. And they said to them, “It is much for you! For all of the congregation, all of them, are holy and Yahweh is in their midst. And why do you lift up yourselves above the assembly of Yahweh?”

Numbers 16:4

he lay facedown

This indicates that Moses was humbling himself before God. He was afraid that God would punish the people for rebelling against God and his chosen leaders. (See: [Symbolic Action](#))

ULT

⁴ And Moses heard and fell upon his face.

Numbers 16:5

who is set apart to him

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: “whom Yahweh has set apart for himself” (See: [Active or Passive](#))

ULT

⁵ And he spoke to Korah and to all his congregation, saying, “And in the morning Yahweh will make known who belongs to him and is the holy one and whom he will bring near to him. And him whom he chooses he will bring near to him.”

Numbers 16:6

Connecting Statement:

Moses continues speaking to Korah and the men who were with Korah.

censers

containers in which to burn incense

ULT

⁶ Do this, Korah and all his congregation, take for yourselves censers.

Numbers 16:7

before Yahweh

This is an idiom. Alternate translation: “in Yahweh’s presence” (See: [Idiom](#))

that man will be set apart to Yahweh

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: “Yahweh will set apart that man for himself” (See: [Active or Passive](#))

You have gone too far

This represents doing more than one should. Alternate translation: “You have done more than you should” or “You assume to have more authority than you should” (See: [Idiom](#))

ULT

⁷ And put fire in them and set incense on them before the face of Yahweh tomorrow. And it will happen that the man whom Yahweh chooses, he will be the holy one. It is much for you, sons of Levi!”

Numbers 16:8

(There are no notes for this verse.)

ULT

⁸ And Moses said to Korah, “Now listen, sons of Levi:

Numbers 16:9

is it a small thing for you ... to serve them?

Moses uses this question to rebuke Korah and the men with him. It can be translated as a statement. Alternate translation: “You behave as though it is a small thing for you ... to serve them!” or “You should not consider it a small thing ... to serve them!” (See: [Rhetorical Question](#))

a small thing for you

“not enough for you” or “unimportant to you”

ULT

⁹ is it a small thing for you that the God of Israel has separated you from the congregation of Israel, to bring you near to him, to serve the service of the dwelling of Yahweh and to stand before the face of the congregation to minister to them?

Numbers 16:10

you are seeking the priesthood also

Wanting to have the priesthood is spoken of as if they were looking for it. Alternate translation: “you want to have the priesthood too” or “you want to be priests also” (See: [Metaphor](#))

ULT

10 And he has brought you near, and all your brothers, the sons of Levi, with you. And you are seeking the priesthood also!

Numbers 16:11

Who is Aaron that you grumble against him?

Moses uses this question to show them that when they complain about what Aaron does, they are really complaining against Yahweh, because Aaron was doing what Yahweh told him to do. Alternate translation: "You are not really complaining about Aaron, but about Yahweh, whom Aaron obeys!" (See: [Rhetorical Question](#))

ULT

11 Therefore you and all your congregation are the ones congregating against Yahweh. And Aaron, what is he that you grumble against him?"

Numbers 16:12

(There are no notes for this verse.)

ULT

¹² And Moses sent to call for Dathan and for Abiram, the sons of Eliab. And they said, "We will not go up.

Numbers 16:13

Is it a small thing that you have brought us ... to kill us in the wilderness?

Dathan and Abiram use this question to rebuke Moses. It can be translated as a statement. Alternate translation: “You behave as though it was a small thing for you to bring us ... and kill us in the wilderness.” (See: [Rhetorical Question](#))

a small thing

“not enough” or “unimportant”

a land flowing with milk and honey

They spoke of the land being good for animals and plants as if the milk and honey from those animals and plants were flowing through the land. See how you translated this in [Numbers 14:8](#). Alternate translation: “that is excellent for raising livestock and growing crops” or “a very fertile land” (See: [Metaphor](#) and [Metonymy](#))

to kill us

The people exaggerate because they will hold Moses responsible if any of them die. Alternate translation: “to have us die” (See: [Hyperbole](#))

ULT

¹³ Is it a small thing that you have brought us up from a land flowing with milk and honey, to make us die in the wilderness? But you have made yourself ruler over us, even to make yourself ruler!

Numbers 16:14

as an inheritance

They spoke of what God would give them to be theirs forever as if it were an inheritance. (See: [Metaphor](#))

Now do you want to blind us with empty promises?

The people used this question to accuse Moses. It can be translated as a statement. Alternate translation: “Now you want to blind us with empty promises.” (See: [Rhetorical Question](#))

to blind us

Deceiving people is spoken of as making them blind. Alternate translation: “to deceive us” (See: [Metaphor](#))

with empty promises

They speak of promises that are not kept as if they are empty containers. Alternate translation: “with promises that you do not keep” or “by promising to do things that you do not do” (See: [Metaphor](#))

ULT

14 Moreover, you have not brought us into a land flowing with milk and honey, or given to us an inheritance of field or vineyard. Will you gouge out the eyes of these men? We will not go up.”

Numbers 16:15

I have not taken one donkey from them

One donkey here represents anything that a person may take from someone else. Alternate translation: "I have not taken anything from them, not even one donkey" (See: [Synecdoche](#))

ULT

15 And it burned exceedingly for Moses and he said to Yahweh, "Do not turn to their offering. I have not taken one donkey from them. And I have not harmed one of them."

Numbers 16:16

(There are no notes for this verse.)

ULT

16 And Moses said to Korah, “You and all your congregation be before the face of Yahweh, you, and they, and Aaron, tomorrow.

Numbers 16:17

censer

a container in which to burn incense

ULT

17 And take, a man, his censer and put incense on them. And bring before the face of Yahweh, a man his censer, 250 censers. And you and Aaron, a man his censer.”

Numbers 16:18

(There are no notes for this verse.)

ULT

18 And they took a man his censer, and they put fire on it, and set incense on it. And they stood at the opening of the tent of meeting with Moses and Aaron.

Numbers 16:19

(There are no notes for this verse.)

ULT

19 And Korah assembled all the congregation against them at the opening of the tent of meeting. And the glory of Yahweh appeared to all the congregation.

Numbers 16:20

(There are no notes for this verse.)

ULT

²⁰ And Yahweh spoke to Moses and to Aaron, saying,

Numbers 16:21

that I may consume them

Destroying them is spoken of as if God were to eat them. Alternate translation: “that I may destroy them” or “and I will destroy them” (See: [Metaphor](#))

ULT

21 “Separate yourselves from the midst of this congregation and I shall finish them in a moment.”

Numbers 16:22

lay facedown

This shows that Moses and Aaron were humbling themselves before God. (See: [Symbolic Action](#))

the God of the spirits of all humanity

Here “spirits” represents the ability to live. Alternate translation: “the God who gives life to all humanity” (See: [Metonymy](#))

if one man sins, must you be angry with all the community?

Moses and Aaron use this question to plead with God for the people. It can be translated as a statement. Alternate translation: “please do not be angry with all the community because one man sins” (See: [Rhetorical Question](#))

ULT

22 And they fell on their faces and said, “God, the God of the spirits of all flesh, will one man sin and you become furious against all the congregation?”

Numbers 16:23

(There are no notes for this verse.)

ULT

²³ And Yahweh spoke to Moses, saying,

Numbers 16:24

(There are no notes for this verse.)

ULT

²⁴ "Speak to the congregation, saying, 'Get yourselves up from around the dwellings of Korah, Dathan, and Abiram.'"

Numbers 16:25

(There are no notes for this verse.)

ULT

²⁵ And Moses rose and went to Dathan and Abiram. And the elders of Israel went after him.

Numbers 16:26

you will be consumed

Being destroyed is spoken of as if they would be eaten. Alternate translation: "you will be destroyed" (See: [Metaphor](#))

you will be consumed by all their sins

Being destroyed because of their sins is spoken of as if the sins would destroy them. Alternate translation: "you will be destroyed because of all their sins" (See: [Metaphor](#))

you will be consumed by all their sins

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "all their sins will destroy you" or "Yahweh will destroy you because of all their sins" (See: [Active or Passive](#))

ULT

26 And he spoke to the congregation, saying, "Now turn from beside the tents of these wicked men and do not touch anything that belongs to them, lest you be swept away by all their sins."

Numbers 16:27

(There are no notes for this verse.)

ULT

²⁷ And they got themselves up from beside the dwelling of Korah, Dathan, and Abiram, from all around. And Dathan and Abiram went out, standing at the opening of their tents with their wives and their sons and their little children.

Numbers 16:28

By this you will know

Here “this” refers to what Moses will say next.

ULT

²⁸ And Moses said, “By this you will know that Yahweh has sent me to do all these deeds, that they are not from my heart:

Numbers 16:29

(There are no notes for this verse.)

ULT

²⁹ If these ones die like the death of every man and the appointment of every man is appointed to them, Yahweh has not sent me.

Numbers 16:30

the earth opens its mouth and swallows them

Moses speaks as if the earth were alive and the opening in the ground into which these people would fall were a large mouth that would eat them. Alternate translation: “and they fall into it and are buried underneath the ground” (See: [Simile](#))

ULT

³⁰ But if Yahweh creates a creation and the ground opens its mouth and swallows them and all that belongs to them and they go down alive to Sheol, then you will know that these men have spurned Yahweh.”

Numbers 16:31

(There are no notes for this verse.)

ULT

³¹ And it happened when he finished speaking all these words that the ground that was under them split open.

Numbers 16:32

The earth opened its mouth and swallowed them

Moses speaks of the earth as if it were alive, and the hole that the people fell into as if it were the earth's mouth. Alternate translation: "The earth opened up like a large mouth, and they fell into it and were buried in it" or "There was a giant hole in the ground, and they fell into it and were buried in it" (See: [Metaphor](#))

ULT

³² And the earth opened its mouth and swallowed them and their houses and every man who belonged to Korah and all the property.

Numbers 16:33

went down alive into Sheol

A similar phrase occurs in [Numbers 16:30](#). See how you translated it there.

ULT

33 And they went down to Sheol alive, they and all that belonged to them. And the earth covered over them and they perished from the midst of the assembly.

Numbers 16:34

They exclaimed

“They” refers to “All Israel.”

The earth may swallow us up also

The people speak of the earth as if it were alive. Alternate translation: “The earth might open up and we too will fall into it” or “If the earth opens up again, we too will fall into it and be buried” (See: [Metaphor](#))

ULT

³⁴ And all Israel who was surrounding them fled from their sound, for they said, “Lest the earth swallow us!”

Numbers 16:35

fire flashed out from Yahweh and devoured the 250 men

Being destroyed by fire is spoken of as if they were eaten by the fire.
Alternate translation: "fire flashed out from Yahweh and destroyed the 250 men" (See: [Metaphor](#))

250 men

"two hundred and fifty men" (See: [Numbers](#))

ULT

³⁵ And fire went out from with Yahweh.
And it ate the 250 men offering the incense.

Numbers 16:36

(There are no notes for this verse.)

ULT

³⁶ And Yahweh spoke to Moses, saying,

Numbers 16:37

out of the flames

This refers to the flames that burned the 250 men.

ULT

37 “Say to Eleazar the son of Aaron the priest and he shall lift up the censers from between the burning and scatter the fire abroad, for they are holy.

Numbers 16:38

those who lost their lives

Losing their lives represents dying. Alternate translation: “those who died” (See: [Metonymy](#))

Let them be made

Here “them” refers to the censers. This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: “Let Eleazar make them” (See: [Active or Passive](#))

they are set apart ... They will be a sign

Here “they” and “They” refer to the censers.

ULT

38 And the censers of these sinners against their lives, make them hammered sheets of thin metal, plating for the altar. For they offered them before the face of Yahweh and they are holy. And they shall be for a sign for the sons of Israel.”

Numbers 16:39

that had been used by the men who were burned up

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: “that the men whom the fire had burned up had used” (See: [Active or Passive](#))

ULT

³⁹ And Eleazar the priest took the censers of bronze that the burned ones had offered and they hammered them as a plating for the altar,

Numbers 16:40

(There are no notes for this verse.)

ULT

⁴⁰ a reminder for the sons of Israel, so that an unfamiliar man, he who is not from the seed of Aaron, shall not come near to burn incense before the face of Yahweh. And he shall not be like Korah and his congregation, just as Yahweh spoke by the hand of Moses to him.

Numbers 16:41

(There are no notes for this verse.)

ULT

⁴¹ And all the congregation of the sons of Israel grumbled against Moses and against Aaron from the next day, saying, “You yourselves killed the people of Yahweh!”

Numbers 16:42

Then it happened

This phrase is used here to mark an important event in the story. If your language has a way for doing this, you could consider using it here.

had assembled against Moses and Aaron

“had assembled to complain against Moses and Aaron”

behold, the cloud

“suddenly, the cloud.” Here “behold” shows that the people were surprised by what they saw.

ULT

42 And it happened when the congregation assembled against Moses and against Aaron that they turned to the tent of meeting. And behold, the cloud covered it and the glory of Yahweh was seen.

Numbers 16:43

(There are no notes for this verse.)

ULT

⁴³ And Moses and Aaron came to the face of the tent of meeting.

Numbers 16:44

(There are no notes for this verse.)

ULT

⁴⁴ And Yahweh spoke to Moses, saying,

Numbers 16:45

so that I may consume them

God speaks of destroying them as if he would eat them. Alternate translation: "so that I may destroy them" or "and I will destroy them" (See: [Metaphor](#))

lay down with their faces to the ground

This indicates that Moses and Aaron are humbling themselves before God. (See: [Symbolic Action](#))

ULT

45 "Get yourselves up from the midst of this congregation and I shall finish them in a moment. And they fell on their faces.

Numbers 16:46

anger is coming from Yahweh

Anger coming from God represents God showing his anger.

Alternate translation: "Yahweh is showing us his anger" or "Yahweh is very angry and is acting according to his anger" (See: [Metonymy](#))

ULT

46 And Moses said to Aaron, "Take the censer and put fire on it from on the altar and set incense. And go quickly into the congregation and make atonement for them, because the wrath has gone out from before the face of Yahweh. The plague has begun."

Numbers 16:47

he put in the incense

Putting the incense in the censer here represents burning it.
Alternate translation: "he burned the incense" (See: [Metonymy](#))

ULT

47 And Aaron took just as Moses said and ran into the midst of the assembly. And behold, the plague had begun among the people. And he put the incense and made atonement for the people.

Numbers 16:48

the plague was stopped

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: “the plague stopped spreading” (See: [Active or Passive](#))

ULT

48 And he stood between the ones who died and the ones who lived. And the plague was stopped.

Numbers 16:49

14,700 in number

“fourteen thousand seven hundred in number” (See: [Numbers](#))

ULT

⁴⁹ And the ones who died by the plague were 14,700, apart from the ones who died on account of the matter of Korah.

Numbers 16:50

(There are no notes for this verse.)

ULT

⁵⁰ And Aaron returned to Moses, to the opening of the tent of meeting. And the plague was stopped.

Numbers 17

Numbers 17 General Notes

Special concepts in this chapter

Which tribe should be special workers for God?

God told Moses that each tribe should bring one wooden staff and leave it overnight at the temple. The next day Aaron's staff representing the tribe of Levi bloomed and produced ripe almond nuts. This showed that the tribe of Levi was still the tribe chosen to be Yahweh's priests. (See: [chosen](#), [choose](#), [chosen people](#), [Chosen One](#), [elect](#) and [priest](#), [priesthood](#))

Numbers 17:1

(There are no notes for this verse.)

ULT

¹ And Yahweh spoke to Moses, saying,

Numbers 17:2

twelve

“12” (See: [Numbers](#))

ULT

² “Speak to the sons of Israel and take a staff from with them, a staff for the house of a father, from with all their leaders for the house of their fathers, 12 staffs. You shall write a man his name on his staff.

Numbers 17:3

Connecting Statement:

Yahweh continues speaking to Moses.

Levi's staff

The name Levi here refers to the tribe of Levi.

for each leader from his ancestors' tribe

Here "his" refers to "each leader."

ULT

³ And you shall write the name of Aaron on the staff of Levi, for one staff is for the head of the house of their fathers.

Numbers 17:4

the covenant decrees

The phrase “the covenant decrees” refers to the box that held the tablets that the covenant decrees were written on. Alternate translation: “the ark of the covenant” or “the box that holds the covenant decrees” (See: [Synecdoche](#))

ULT

⁴ And you shall rest them in the tent of meeting, before the face of the testimony, there where I meet with you.

Numbers 17:5

the staff of the man whom I choose will bud

“buds will start to grow on the staff of the man whom I choose”

cause the complaints from the people of Israel to stop, which they are speaking against you

Here “complaints” is an abstract noun that can be expressed as a verb. Alternate translation: “make the people of Israel stop complaining against you” (See: [Abstract Nouns](#))

ULT

⁵ And it will happen that the man, him whom I choose, his staff will bud. And I will make the grumbings of the sons of Israel that they are grumbling against you cease from against me.”

Numbers 17:6

selected from each of the ancestral tribes

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: “whom Moses selected from each of the ancestor’s tribes” (See: [Active or Passive](#))

ULT

⁶ And Moses spoke to the sons of Israel and all their leaders gave to him a staff for one leader, a staff for one leader, for the house of their fathers, 12 staffs. And the staff of Aaron was in the midst of their staffs.

Numbers 17:7

the tent of the covenant decrees

The phrase “the covenant decrees” refers to the box that held the tablets that the covenant decrees were written on. Alternate translation: “the tent of the covenant box” or “the tent that the covenant decrees are in” (See: [Synecdoche](#))

ULT

⁷ And Moses rested the staffs before the face of Yahweh in the tent of testimony.

Numbers 17:8

behold

The word “behold” here shows that something especially important has happened. You might have a similar word in your language.

ULT

8 And it happened from the next day that Moses came into the tent of the testimony. And behold, the staff of Aaron for the house of Levi had budded, and it brought out a bud and it blossomed a flower and it ripened almonds!

Numbers 17:9

(There are no notes for this verse.)

ULT

⁹ And Moses brought out all the staffs from before the face of Yahweh to all the sons of Israel. And they saw and took, a man his staff.

Numbers 17:10

the covenant decrees

The phrase “the covenant decrees” refers to the box that held the tablets that the covenant decrees were written on. Alternate translation: “the ark of the covenant” or “the box that holds the covenant decrees” (See: [Synecdoche](#))

so that you may end complaints against me

The word “complaints” is an abstract noun that can be expressed as a verb. Alternate translation: “so that you may stop them from complaining against me” (See: [Abstract Nouns](#))

or they will die

This is what would happen if the people were to continue complaining. God wanted to prevent this. Alternate translation: “so that they will not die”

ULT

10 And Yahweh said to Moses, “Return the staff of Aaron to the face of the testimony for keeping for a sign for the sons of rebellion. And you shall end their grumbings from against me and they shall not die.”

Numbers 17:11

(There are no notes for this verse.)

ULT

11 And Moses did just as Yahweh had commanded him, thus he did.

Numbers 17:12

We will die here. We will all perish!

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

ULT

12 And the sons of Israel spoke to Moses, saying, "Look, we will expire! We will perish! All of us will perish!"

Numbers 17:13

(There are no notes for this verse.)

ULT

13 All who come near, who come near to the dwelling of Yahweh die. Will we be finished by expiring?"

Numbers 18

Numbers 18 General Notes

Special concepts in this chapter

Tithes and offerings

The tribes of Israel were required to bring a tithe to the Levites in order to free them to serve Yahweh as priests. There is a detailed description of what belonged to Yahweh in this chapter. (See: [priest](#), [priesthood](#))

Numbers 18:1

all sins committed against the sanctuary

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: “all sins that anyone commits against the sanctuary” (See: [Active or Passive](#))

all sins committed by anyone in the priesthood

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: “all sins that anyone in the priesthood commits” (See: [Active or Passive](#))

anyone in the priesthood

“any priest”

ULT

¹ And Yahweh said to Aaron, “You and your sons and the house of your father with you shall bear the iniquity of the holy place. And you and your sons with you shall bear the iniquity of your priesthood.”

Numbers 18:2

(There are no notes for this verse.)

ULT

² And also bring with you your brothers, the staff of Levi, the tribe of your father, and they shall be joined to you and serve you. And you and your sons with you shall be before the face of the tent of the testimony.

Numbers 18:3

Connecting Statement:

Yahweh continues speaking to Aaron.

They must serve you

“They” refers to members of the tribe of Levi; the word “you” is singular and refers to Aaron. (See: [Forms of You](#))

or they and also you will die

Here “they” refers to any member of the tribe of Levi who comes “near to anything in the sanctuary;” the word “you” is plural and refers to both Aaron and the rest of the Levites who are serving in approved roles. (See: [Pronouns](#))

ULT

³ And they shall keep your keeping and the keeping of all of the tent. However, they shall not come near to the vessels of the holy place or to the altar, and they will not die, both them and you.

Numbers 18:4

They must join you

“They” refers to members of the tribe of Levi; the word “you” is singular and refers to Aaron. (See: [Forms of You](#))

not come near you

Here “you” is plural and refers to both Aaron and the rest of the Levites. (See: [Forms of You](#))

ULT

⁴ And they shall be joined to you and shall keep the keeping of the tent of meeting, for all the service of the tent. And a stranger shall not come near to you.

Numbers 18:5

You must take responsibility

Here “you” is plural and refers to both Aaron and the rest of the Levites. (See: [Forms of You](#))

so that my anger does not come on the people of Israel again

This could mean: (1) this represents God being extremely angry with his people. Alternate translation: “so that I do not become very angry with the people of Israel again” or (2) this represents God punishing them because of his anger. Alternate translation: “so that I do not punish the people of Israel again” (See: [Metonymy](#))

ULT

⁵ And you shall keep the keeping of the holy place and the keeping of the altar. And there shall not again be fury against the sons of Israel.

Numbers 18:6

Connecting Statement:

Yahweh continues speaking to Aaron.

They are a gift to you

Yahweh appointing the Levites to help Aaron is spoken of as if they were a gift that Yahweh were giving to Aaron. Alternate translation: "They are like a gift to you" (See: [Metaphor](#))

given to me

Here "given" to God represents being set apart to serve God. This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "which I have set apart for myself" or "and I have set them apart for myself" (See: [Metonymy](#) and [Active or Passive](#))

ULT

⁶ And I, behold, I have taken your brothers the Levites from the midst of the sons of Israel as a gift for you, ones given to Yahweh to serve the service of the tent of meeting.

Numbers 18:7

only you and your sons

Here “you” and “your” are singular and refer to Aaron. Other occurrences of “you” and “your” are plural and refer to Aaron and his sons. (See: [Forms of You](#))

exercise the priesthood

“do the work of priests”

everything inside the curtain

Being inside the curtain represents being inside the room behind the curtain. Alternate translation: “everything in the room behind the curtain” (See: [Metonymy](#))

Any foreigner who approaches must be put to death

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: “Any foreigner who approaches must die” or “You must put to death any foreigner who approaches” (See: [Active or Passive](#))

who approaches

What they should not approach can be stated clearly. Alternate translation: “who approaches the sacred things” (See: [Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information](#))

ULT

⁷ And you and your sons with you shall keep your priesthood for all the things of the altar and for the inside of the curtain. And you shall serve. I have given your priesthood as a gift of service. And a stranger who comes near shall be put to death.

Numbers 18:8

the offerings raised up to me

Here “raised up to me” represents giving or offering something to God. This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: “the offerings that people give to me” (See: [Idiom](#) and [Active or Passive](#))

I have given these offerings to you

God speaks as if he had already done this because it is a decision that he had already made. Alternate translation: “I give these offerings to you”

as your ongoing share

A share is a portion of something that someone receives. Alternate translation: “as the portion that you will continually receive”

ULT

⁸ And Yahweh spoke to Aaron, “And I, behold, I have given to you the keeping of my contribution, of all the holy things of the sons of Israel I have given them to you for a portion and to your sons for a statute of eternity.”

Numbers 18:9

kept from the fire

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: “that you do not completely burn on the altar” (See: [Active or Passive](#))

ULT

⁹ This will belong to you from the holiest holy thing from the fire: every offering of theirs, of every grain offering of theirs and of every sin offering of theirs and of every guilt offering of theirs which they return to me, a holiest holy thing it is for you and for your sons.

Numbers 18:10

Connecting Statement:

God continues speaking to Aaron.

ULT

10 You shall eat it as a holiest holy thing.
Every male shall eat it. It is holy for you.

Numbers 18:11

(There are no notes for this verse.)

ULT

11 And this belongs to you: the contribution of their gift, of all the wave offerings of the sons of Israel, I have given them to you and to your sons and to your daughters with you for a statute of eternity. Every clean one in your house shall eat it.

Numbers 18:12

Connecting Statement:

God continues speaking to Aaron.

the firstfruits

This refers to the first of the best oil, wine, and grain that they harvest.

ULT

¹² All the fat of fresh oil and all the fat of new wine and grain, their firstfruits which they will give to Yahweh, I have given them to you.

Numbers 18:13

Everyone who is clean in your family

Being acceptable to God is spoken of as if they were clean. Alternate translation: "Everyone in your family who is acceptable to me" (See: [Metaphor](#))

ULT

13 The firstfruits of all that is in the land which they will bring to Yahweh will belong to you. Every clean one in your house shall eat it.

Numbers 18:14

Connecting Statement:

God continues speaking to Aaron.

ULT

¹⁴ Every dedicated thing in Israel will belong to you.

Numbers 18:15

Everything that opens the womb, all the firstborn

These two phrases mean basically the same thing. Alternate translation: "Every firstborn male" (See: [Parallelism](#))

Everything that opens the womb

The idiom "opens the womb" means to be the first male that a mother gives birth to. (See: [Idiom](#))

the people must certainly buy back every firstborn son

Instead of sacrificing their firstborn sons, people had to pay the priests for their sons.

ULT

¹⁵ Every opener of the womb of all flesh that they offer to Yahweh, among mankind and among livestock, will belong to you. But you shall surely redeem the firstborn of mankind, and you shall redeem the firstborn of the unclean livestock.

Numbers 18:16

Those that are to be bought back by the people must be bought back after becoming one month old

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: “The people must buy them back when they become one month old” (See: [Active or Passive](#))

ULT

¹⁶ And his redeemed ones from a son of a month you shall redeem by your valuation, five silver shekels by the shekel of the holy place, it is 20 gerahs.

Those that are to be bought back

Most likely this refers only to firstborn humans that must be bought back and not to firstborn unclean animals.

five shekels ... which equals twenty gerahs

If it is necessary to use modern weight units, here are two ways of doing it. Alternate translation: “five pieces of silver ... each of which equals ten grams” or “fifty grams of silver, using the standard weights that are used in the sanctuary” (See: [Biblical Weight](#))

five shekels

A shekel is a unit of weight. What was weighed can be stated clearly. Alternate translation: “five shekels of silver” (See: [Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information](#))

sanctuary shekel

There were shekels of different weights. This is the one that people had to use in the sanctuary of the sacred tent. It weighed twenty gerahs, which was about 11 grams. (See: [Biblical Weight](#))

Numbers 18:17

Connecting Statement:

God continues speaking to Aaron.

You must sprinkle their blood

That he must kill the animals first can be stated clearly. Alternate translation: “You must kill them and sprinkle their blood” (See: [Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information](#))

ULT

17 But the firstborn of a cow, or the firstborn of a sheep, or the firstborn of a goat you shall not redeem; they are holy. You shall throw their blood on the altar and you shall make their fat smoke as an offering made by fire for an aroma of soothing for Yahweh.

made by fire

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: “that you make by fire” or “that you burn with fire on the altar” (See: [Active or Passive](#))

an aroma pleasing to Yahweh

The Lord’s pleasure with the aroma represents his pleasure with the person who burns the offering. Alternate translation: “and Yahweh will be pleased with you” (See: [Metaphor](#))

Numbers 18:18

the raised breast and the right thigh

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: “the breast and the right thigh that you lift up as a gift to me” (See: [Active or Passive](#))

ULT

18 And their flesh will belong to you like the breast of the wave offering or like the right thigh it will belong to you.

Numbers 18:19

Connecting Statement:

God continues speaking to Aaron.

I have given to you

God speaks as if he had already done this because it is a decision that he had already made. Alternate translation: "I give to you"

as a continual share

A share is a portion of something that someone receives. Alternate translation: "as the portion that you will continually receive"

an everlasting covenant of salt ... a binding covenant forever

The two phrases refer to the same thing. Together they emphasize that the covenant will endure forever. Alternate translation: "an agreement forever" (See: [Parallelism](#))

an everlasting covenant of salt

"a covenant made with salt." Salt represented permanence and was used in offerings and covenant meals. Alternate translation: "a permanent covenant" or "an everlasting covenant" (See: [Symbolic Action](#))

ULT

19 All the contributions of the holy things which the sons of Israel lift up to Yahweh, I have given to you and to your sons and to your daughters with you for a statute of eternity. It is an eternal covenant of salt before the face of Yahweh for you and for your seed with you."

Numbers 18:20

You will have no inheritance in the people's land

God speaks of the land that the other people will possess as if they will inherit it. Alternate translation: "You will not possess any of the people's land" or "You will not receive any of the land that the Israelites will possess" (See: [Metaphor](#))

ULT

²⁰ And Yahweh said to Aaron, "You shall not inherit in their land and a portion in their midst shall not belong to you. I am your portion and your inheritance in the midst of the sons of Israel."

I am your share and inheritance

God speaks of the great honor that Aaron and his descendants will have by serving him as priests as if God were something that they will inherit. Alternate translation: "Instead, I am what you will have" or "Instead, I will allow you to serve me and I will provide for you through that service" (See: [Metaphor](#))

Numbers 18:21

Connecting Statement:

God continues speaking to Aaron.

look, I have given

The word “look” here adds emphasis to what follows. Alternate translation: “indeed, I have given”

as their inheritance

God speaks of what Aaron and his descendants will receive as if they will inherit it. Alternate translation: “as their portion of what I give to all Israel” (See: [Metaphor](#))

ULT

²¹ And to the sons of Levi, behold, I have given every tenth in Israel for an inheritance in exchange for their service which they are serving, the service of the tent of meeting.

Numbers 18:22

(There are no notes for this verse.)

ULT

²² And the sons of Israel shall not again come near to the tent of meeting to bear sin to die.

Numbers 18:23

Connecting Statement:

God continues speaking to Aaron.

Among the people of Israel they must have no inheritance

God speaks of the land that the other people of Israel will possess as if they will inherit it. The Levites would not receive any of the land.

Alternate translation: "they must not have any of the land that the other people of Israel receive" (See: [Metaphor](#))

ULT

²³ And the Levite, he shall serve the service of the tent of meeting and they shall bear their iniquity. It is a statute of eternity for your generations and in the midst of the sons of Israel you shall not inherit an inheritance.

Numbers 18:24

as their inheritance

God speaks of what Aaron and his descendants will receive as if they will inherit it. Alternate translation: “as their portion of what I give to all Israel” (See: [Metaphor](#))

ULT

24 For I have given to the Levites for an inheritance the tenth of the sons of Israel which they lift up to Yahweh as a contribution. Therefore I have said to them, ‘You shall not inherit an inheritance in the midst of the sons of Israel.’”

Numbers 18:25

(There are no notes for this verse.)

ULT

²⁵ And Yahweh spoke to Moses, saying,

Numbers 18:26

When you receive from the people of Israel the tenth that I have given to you from them

The people of Israel would offer Yahweh a tenth of their crops and animals, and Yahweh would give that to the Levites.

for your inheritance

God speaks of what Aaron and his descendants will receive as if they will inherit it. Alternate translation: “as your portion of what I give to all Israel” (See: [Metaphor](#))

ULT

²⁶ “And speak to the Levites and say to them, ‘When you take from with the sons of Israel the tenth that I have given to you from with them as your inheritance, then you shall lift up from it a contribution of Yahweh, a tenth from the tenth.’”

Numbers 18:27

Your contribution must be considered by you

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "You must consider your contribution" (See: [Active or Passive](#))

ULT

27 And it shall be reckoned to you as your contribution like the grain from the threshing floor and like the fullness from the winepress.

Numbers 18:28

Connecting Statement:

God continues tell Moses what he must tell the Levites.

you must give his contribution to Aaron the priest

Here “his” refers to Yahweh. It was Yahweh’s contribution in the sense that they had to give it to Yahweh. Alternate translation: “you must give Aaron the priest the contribution that you owe Yahweh”

ULT

28 Thus you shall lift up, also you, the contribution of Yahweh from all your tenths which you took from with the sons of Israel. And you shall give from it the contribution of Yahweh to Aaron the priest.

Numbers 18:29

that have been given to you

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: “that the people of Israel give to you” (See: [Active or Passive](#))

ULT

²⁹ From all your gifts you shall lift up all of the contribution of Yahweh, from all its fat, its holy part from it.'

Numbers 18:30

Connecting Statement:

God continues speaking to Moses.

the best of it

“the best of what you have received from the people of Israel”

ULT

³⁰ And you shall say to them, ‘When you lift up its fat from it, then it shall be reckoned to the Levites like the product of the threshing floor and like the product of the winepress.’

Numbers 18:31

the rest of your gifts

The “gifts” are the offerings that the Israelites give to God and that the Levites receive from them.

ULT

³¹ And you shall eat it in every place, you and your house, because it is a wage for you in exchange for your service in the tent of meeting.

Numbers 18:32

You will not incur any guilt by eating and drinking it

"You will not be guilty when you eat and drink it"

ULT

³² And you shall not bear sin on account of it when you lift up its fat from it. And the holy things of the sons of Israel you shall not defile and not die."

Numbers 19

Numbers 19 General Notes

Special concepts in this chapter

Ritually clean

This chapter talks about being clean. Some of these rituals were required to make a priest clean in order to set them apart to serve Yahweh. Other rituals were required because they prevented people from getting sick. (See: [clean, wash](#))

Numbers 19:1

(There are no notes for this verse.)

ULT

¹ And Yahweh spoke to Moses and to Aaron, saying,

Numbers 19:2

a statute, a law

These two words share similar meanings. Alternate translation: “a statute of the law” or “a legal statute” (See: [Doublet](#))

bring to you

Here “you” is singular and refers to Moses.

flaw or blemish

These two words mean basically the same thing and emphasize that this animal is to have no imperfections. (See: [Doublet](#))

ULT

2 “This is the statute of the law which Yahweh has commanded, saying, ‘Speak to the sons of Israel and they shall bring to you an unblemished red heifer in which there is no defect, on which a yoke has not gone up.

Numbers 19:3

(There are no notes for this verse.)

ULT

³ And you shall give it to Eleazar the priest. And he shall bring it out to the outside of the camp and shall slaughter it before his face.

Numbers 19:4

(There are no notes for this verse.)

ULT

⁴ And Eleazar the priest shall take some of its blood with his finger and shall sprinkle some of its blood to opposite the face of the tent of meeting seven times.

Numbers 19:5

in his sight

“in his view” or “so he could see it”

ULT

⁵ And he shall burn the heifer before his eyes. He shall burn its skin and its flesh, and its blood with its dung.

Numbers 19:6

priest must take cedarwood

“The priest” refers to Eleazar.

scarlet wool

“red wool”

ULT

⁶ And the priest shall take wood of cedar, and hyssop, and scarlet material of a worm, and throw into the midst of the burning of the heifer.

Numbers 19:7

Then he must wash his clothes

Here “he” refers to Eleazar the priest.

he will remain unclean

Being unacceptable to God or unfit to do any sacred work is spoken of as not being clean. (See: [Metaphor](#))

ULT

⁷ And the priest shall wash his garments and bathe his flesh in the water and afterward he shall enter into the camp. And the priest shall be unclean until the evening.

Numbers 19:8

(There are no notes for this verse.)

ULT

⁸ And the one who burned it shall wash his garments in the water and bathe his flesh in the water. And he shall be unclean until the evening.

Numbers 19:9

Someone who is clean

Being acceptable to God and fit to do sacred work is spoken of as being clean. (See: [Metaphor](#))

These ashes must be kept

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: “You must keep these ashes” (See: [Active or Passive](#))

in a clean place

Being acceptable to God is spoken of as being clean. (See: [Metaphor](#))

ULT

⁹ And a clean man shall gather the ashes of the heifer and rest them in a clean place outside of the camp. And it shall be for the congregation of the sons of Israel to keep for the water of purification. It is a sin offering.

Numbers 19:10

He will remain unclean

Being unacceptable to God or unfit to do any sacred work is spoken of as not being clean. (See: [Metaphor](#))

ULT

10 And the one who gathers the ashes of the heifer shall wash his garments and be unclean until the evening. And it shall be for the sons of Israel and for the sojourner who sojourns in their midst for a statute of eternity.

Numbers 19:11

General Information:

The ideas of “clean” and “purify” represent being acceptable to God. The ideas of “unclean,” “defile,” “impurity,” and “uncleanness” represent not being acceptable to God. (See: [Metaphor](#) and [Metaphor](#))

ULT

11 The one who touches a dead body of any human life will be unclean seven days.

the dead body of any man

“the dead body of any person”

Numbers 19:12

purify himself

The person would ask someone who is clean to purify him by sprinkling on him some water mixed with the cows ashes. Asking someone to purify him is spoken of as if he were to purify himself. Alternate translation: "ask someone to purify him" (See: [Metonymy](#))

if he does not purify himself the third day, then he will not be clean on the seventh day

This can be stated in a positive form. Alternate translation: "he will be clean on the seventh day only if he purifies himself the third day" (See: [Double Negatives](#))

ULT

¹² He she purify himself with it on the third day and on the seventh day he will be clean. And if he does not purify himself on the third day then on the seventh day he will not be clean.

Numbers 19:13

That person must be cut off

Here the phrase “be cut off” means to be disowned and sent away. See how you translated this in [Numbers 9:13](#). Alternate translation: “That person must be sent away” or “you must send that person away” (See: [Metaphor](#) and [Active or Passive](#))

the water for impurity was not sprinkled on him

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: “no one sprinkled the water for impurity on him” (See: [Active or Passive](#))

the water for impurity

“the water that is sprinkled on impure things to make them pure” or “the water for making things pure”

He will remain unclean; his uncleanness will remain on him

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

ULT

13 Every one who touches a dead body, a human person who has died, and does not purify himself makes the dwelling of Yahweh unclean. And that person shall be cut off from Israel. Because the water of purification was not sprinkled on him, he will be unclean, his uncleanness is still on him.

Numbers 19:14

General Information:

The idea of “unclean” represents not being acceptable to God or fit for use. (See: [Metaphor](#))

ULT

14 This is the law of a man who dies in a tent: Every one who enters into the tent and everyone who is in the tent will be unclean seven days.

Numbers 19:15

Every open container with no cover becomes unclean

This can be stated in a positive form. Alternate translation: “Open containers will remain clean only if they have covers” (See: [Double Negatives](#))

ULT

¹⁵ And every opened vessel on which there is no fastened cover, it is unclean.

Numbers 19:16

someone who has been killed with a sword

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: “someone whom someone else has killed with a sword” (See: [Active or Passive](#))

ULT

16 And all who touch one pierced of the sword or a dead body or a bone of a human or a grave on the face of the field will be unclean seven days.

Numbers 19:17

General Information:

The idea of “unclean” represents not being acceptable to God or fit for use. (See: [Metaphor](#))

General Information:

The ideas of “clean” and “purify” here represent being acceptable to God. (See: [Metaphor](#))

ULT

17 And they shall take for the unclean one some of the ashes of the burning of the sin offering. And he shall put living water with it into a vessel.

Numbers 19:18

(There are no notes for this verse.)

ULT

18 And a clean man shall take and dip hyssop in the water. And he shall sprinkle on the tent and on all the vessels and on the lives who were there, and on the one who touched the bone, or the pierced one, or the dead body, or the grave.

Numbers 19:19

(There are no notes for this verse.)

ULT

19 And the clean one shall sprinkle on the unclean one on the third day and on the seventh day. And he shall purify him on the seventh day. And he shall wash his garments and bathe in the water and he will be unclean until the evening.

Numbers 19:20

General Information:

The ideas of “clean” and “purify” represent being acceptable to God and making something acceptable to God. The ideas of “unclean,” “defile,” and “impurity,” represent not being acceptable to God, making something unacceptable to God, and the state of being unacceptable to God. (See: [Metaphor](#)) (See: [Metaphor](#))

that person will be cut off

Here the phrase “be cut off” means to be disowned and sent away. See how you translated this in [Numbers 9:13](#). Alternate translation: “That person must be sent away” or “you must send that person away” (See: [Metaphor](#) and [Active or Passive](#))

The water for impurity has not been sprinkled on him

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: “No one has sprinkled the water for impurity on him” (See: [Active or Passive](#))

ULT

20 And a man who is unclean and does not purify himself, that person shall be cut off from the midst of the assembly because he has made the holy place of Yahweh unclean. He has not thrown on himself the water of purification. He is unclean.

Numbers 19:21

the water for impurity

“the water that is sprinkled on impure things to make them pure” or “the water for making things pure.” See how you translated this in [Numbers 19:13](#)

ULT

21 And it shall be for them for a statute of eternity, and the one who sprinkles the water of purification shall wash his garments and the one who touches the water of purification will be unclean until the evening.

Numbers 19:22

(There are no notes for this verse.)

ULT

²² And all who touch him, the unclean one, will be unclean. And the person who touches will be unclean until the evening.”

Numbers 20

Numbers 20 General Notes

Special concepts in this chapter

Moses' sin

God told Moses to command water to come out of a rock for the people who were complaining that they had no water. Moses became angry with the people and hit the rock twice. God told him that he and Aaron would not be allowed to go into Canaan because he disobeyed by hitting the rock instead of just speaking to it. (See: [sin](#), [sinful](#), [sinner](#), [sinning](#))

Important figures of speech in this chapter

“It would have been better if we had died when our fellow Israelites died in front of Yahweh”

It is possible that this statement should be taken as hyperbole, but it does not have to be taken this way. The translator should probably avoid treating this as hyperbole. (See: [Hyperbole](#))

Other possible translation difficulties in this chapter

Wilderness of Sin

Sin is the name of a place in this chapter. It is not a place that is known for its sin. The name is not related to the meaning of the word “sin.” (See: [sin](#), [sinful](#), [sinner](#), [sinning](#))

Numbers 20:1

the wilderness of Zin

The word “Zin” here is the Hebrew name of the wilderness. (See: [Copy or Borrow Words](#))

the first month

This is the first month of the Hebrew calendar. It marks when God rescued the Israelites from the Egyptians. The first month is during the last part of March and the first part of April on the Western calendar. (See: [Hebrew Months](#))

was buried

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: “they buried her” (See: [Active or Passive](#))

ULT

¹ And the sons of Israel, all the congregation, entered the wilderness of Zin in the first month, and the people stayed at Kadesh. And Miriam died there and was buried there.

Numbers 20:2

they assembled

Here “they” refers to the community.

assembled together

“came as a mob”

ULT

² And there was no water for the congregation, and they assembled against Moses and against Aaron.

Numbers 20:3

in front of Yahweh

This represents being in front of Yahweh's tent. (See: [Metonymy](#))

ULT

³ And the people quarreled with Moses, and spoke, saying, "If only we had expired when our brothers expired before the face of Yahweh!

Numbers 20:4

Connecting Statement:

The people of Israel continue to complain to Moses and Aaron.

Why have you brought Yahweh's community into this wilderness to die here, we and our animals?

The people use this question in order to complain against Moses and Aaron. It can be translated as a statement. Alternate translation: "You should not have brought Yahweh's community into this wilderness to die here, we and our animals." (See: [Rhetorical Question](#))

ULT

⁴ And why have you brought the assembly of Yahweh into this wilderness to die here, we and our livestock?

Numbers 20:5

Why did you make us come up out of Egypt to bring us to this horrible place?

The people use this question in order to complain against Moses and Aaron. It can be translated as a statement. Alternate translation: "You should not have made us leave Egypt to bring us to this horrible place." (See: [Rhetorical Question](#))

ULT

⁵ And why did you bring us up from Egypt to bring us into this evil place? It is not a place of seed or fig free or vine or pomegranate tree, and there is no water to drink!"

Numbers 20:6

lay facedown

This indicates that Moses and Aaron are humbling themselves before God. (See: [Symbolic Action](#))

ULT

⁶ And Moses and Aaron went from the face of the assembly to the opening of the tent of meeting. And they fell on their faces and the glory of Yahweh appeared to them.

Numbers 20:7

(There are no notes for this verse.)

ULT

⁷ And Yahweh spoke to Moses, saying,

Numbers 20:8

before their eyes

Here the people are represented by their “eyes” to emphasize what they see. Alternate translation: “while they watch you” (See: [Synecdoche](#))

ULT

8 “Take the staff and assemble the congregation, you and Aaron your brother, and you shall speak to the rock before their eyes and it will give its water. And you shall bring out water to them from the rock. And you shall have the congregation and their livestock drink.”

Numbers 20:9

from before Yahweh

This represents Yahweh's tent. Alternate translation: "from Yahweh's tent" (See: [Metonymy](#))

ULT

⁹ And Moses took the staff from before the face of Yahweh, just as he had commanded him.

Numbers 20:10

Must we bring water out of this rock for you?

Moses asks this question out of frustration to rebuke the people for complaining. It can be translated as a statement. Alternate translation: "You complain that there is no water. Well, we will make water come out of this rock." or "You would not be happy even if we caused water to come out of this rock. But I will do it anyway." (See: [Rhetorical Question](#))

ULT

10 And Moses and Aaron assembled the assembly at the face of the rock. And he said to them, "Listen now, the rebellious ones, shall we bring out from this rock water for you?"

Must we bring

Here "we" refers to Moses and Aaron and may include Yahweh, but does not include the people. (See: [Exclusive and Inclusive 'We'](#))

Numbers 20:11

(There are no notes for this verse.)

ULT

11 And Moses lifted up his hand and struck the rock with his staff twice. And abundant water came out and the congregation and their livestock drank.

Numbers 20:12

Because you did not trust me or honor me as holy in the eyes of the people of Israel

How Moses showed that he did not trust and honor God can be stated clearly. Alternate translation: "Because you did not trust me or honor me as holy in the eyes of the people of Israel, but struck the rock instead of speaking to it as I told you" (See: [Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information](#))

in the eyes of the people of Israel

Here the people are represented by their "eyes" to emphasize what they see. Alternate translation: "while the people of Israel were watching you" (See: [Synecdoche](#))

ULT

¹² And Yahweh said to Moses and to Aaron, "Because you did not trust in me to regard me as holy before the eyes of the sons of Israel, therefore you shall not bring this assembly into the land that I have given to them."

Numbers 20:13

This place was called

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: “People called this place” (See: [Active or Passive](#))

ULT

13 These are the waters of Meribah where the sons of Israel quarreled with Yahweh and he showed himself holy among them.

Numbers 20:14

Your brother Israel

Moses uses this phrase to emphasize that the Israelites and the Edomites are related because their ancestors, Jacob and Esau, were brothers.

ULT

14 And Moses sent messengers from Kadesh to the king of Edom, "Thus says your brother Israel: you yourself know all the hardship that we found.

Numbers 20:15

(There are no notes for this verse.)

ULT

15 And our fathers went down to Egypt and we dwelled in Egypt many days. And the Egyptians did evil to us and to our fathers.

Numbers 20:16

When we called out to Yahweh

“When we prayed to Yahweh begging him to help us”

he heard our voice

Here “voice” represents their crying or what they said to him.

Alternate translation: “he heard our cry” or “he heard what we asked for” (See: [Metonymy](#))

ULT

16 And we cried out to Yahweh and he heard our voice and sent a messenger and brought us out from Egypt. And behold, we are in Kadesh, the city of the end of your border.

Look

The word “look” here shows that they have stopped speaking about the past and are now speaking about their present situation.

Numbers 20:17

Connecting Statement:

The messengers continue speaking to the king of Edom.

We will not turn aside to the right hand or to the left

Here “turn aside” represents leaving the road. Alternate translation: “We will not leave the road in any direction” (See: [Metonymy](#))

the king’s highway

This is the main road that connects Damascus in the north to the Gulf of Aqabah in the south.

ULT

17 Please let us pass through your land. We will not pass through field or vineyard, and will we not drink the water of a well. We will go on the road of the king. We will not turn right or left until we have passed through your border.”

Numbers 20:18

You may not pass ... to attack you

Here “you” is singular and refers to Moses, who represents the people of Israel. Alternate translation: “Your people may not pass ... to attack them” (See: [Forms of You](#) and [Synecdoche](#))

ULT

18 And Edom said to him, “You may not pass through me, lest I go out to meet you with the sword.”

I will come with the sword

Here the sword represents the king’s army. Alternate translation: “I will send my army” (See: [Metonymy](#))

Numbers 20:19

the people of Israel

This phrase refers to the Israelite messengers.

walk through on foot

This idiom means that they would simply travel through the area by walking. They would not come in chariots to attack the people of Edom. (See: [Idiom](#))

ULT

19 And the sons of Israel said to him, "We will go on the highway. And if we drink your water, me or my livestock, then we will give their value. Only, there is no matter, let me pass through with my feet."

Numbers 20:20

the king of Edom came against Israel with a strong hand with many soldiers

Here the hand represents the king's powerful army. Alternate translation: "the king of Edom sent a strong army of many soldiers to attack Israel" (See: [Metonymy](#))

ULT

²⁰ And he said, "You may not pass through." And Edom came out to meet him with a heavy people and a strong hand.

Numbers 20:21

cross over their border

Here “their” refers to the Edomites.

ULT

²¹ And Edom refused to give Israel passage through his territory. And Israel turned from near him.

Numbers 20:22

The people of Israel, the whole community

The phrase “the whole community” emphasizes that every person who was a part of “the people of Israel” was present, without exception. (See: [Doublet](#))

ULT

22 And the sons of Israel, all the congregation, set out from Kadesh and came to Mount Hor.

Numbers 20:23

(There are no notes for this verse.)

ULT

²³ And Yahweh spoke to Moses and to Aaron at Mount Hor, near the border of the land of Edom, saying,

Numbers 20:24

Aaron must be gathered to his people

This is a gentle way to say that Aaron must die. It means that it is time for Aaron to die and for his spirit to go to the place where his ancestors are. Alternate translation: "Aaron must die" (See: [Euphemism](#))

rebelled against my word

"refused to do what I said"

ULT

24 "Aaron will be gathered to his people, because he will not enter into the land that I have given to the sons of Israel because you rebelled against my mouth before the waters of Meribah."

Numbers 20:25

Connecting Statement:

God continues speaking to Moses.

ULT

²⁵ Take Aaron and Eleazar his son, and bring them up Mount Hor.

Numbers 20:26

must die and be gathered to his people

These two phrases mean basically the same thing. They mean that it is time for Aaron to die and for his spirit to go to the place where his ancestors are. (See: [Parallelism](#) and [Euphemism](#))

ULT

²⁶ And strip Aaron of his garments and put them on Eleazar his son. And Aaron shall be gathered and die there.”

Numbers 20:27

(There are no notes for this verse.)

ULT

²⁷ And Moses did just as Yahweh had commanded. And they went up to Mount Hor before the eyes of all the congregation.

Numbers 20:28

(There are no notes for this verse.)

ULT

²⁸ And Moses stripped Aaron of his garments and put them on Eleazar his son. And Aaron died there on the head of the mountain. And Moses and Eleazar came down from the mountain.

Numbers 20:29

thirty days

“30 days” (See: [Numbers](#))

ULT

²⁹ And all the congregation saw that Aaron had expired. And all the house of Israel bewailed Aaron 30 days.

Numbers 21

Numbers 21 General Notes

Structure and formatting

Some translations set each line of poetry farther to the right than the rest of the text to make it easier to read. The ULT does this with the poetry in 21:14-15, 17-18, 27-30.

Special concepts in this chapter

Ungrateful

The Israelites said, “Why have you brought us up out of Egypt to die in the wilderness? There is no bread, no water, and we hate this miserable food.” After all Yahweh had done, they were very ungrateful. This showed their lack of faith and trust in Yahweh. (See: [faith](#) and [trust](#), [trusted](#), [trustworthy](#), [trustworthiness](#))

Numbers 21:1

he fought against Israel

Here “he fought” means that his army fought. Alternate translation: “his army fought against Israel” (See: [Metonymy](#))

ULT

¹ And the Canaanite king of Arad, who dwelled in the Negev, heard that Israel had come by the road of the Atharim. And he fought against Israel and took captive some of them as captives.

Numbers 21:2

Israel vowed

This refers to the people of Israel. Alternate translation: “The people of Israel vowed” or “The Israelites made a vow” (See: [Metonymy](#))

ULT

² And Israel vowed a vow to Yahweh and said, “If you surely give this people into my hand, then I will dedicate their cities by ban.”

Numbers 21:3

listened to Israel's voice

Here "listen" means that Yahweh did as they asked. Alternate translation: "did what Israel asked" (See: [Metonymy](#))

Israel's voice

Here "voice" is a metonym that refers to their request. Alternate translation: "what Israel asked" (See: [Metonymy](#))

ULT

³ And Yahweh listened to the voice of Israel and gave the Canaanites. And he dedicated them and their cities by ban. And he called the name of the place Hormah.

They completely destroyed them and their cities

"The people of Israel completely destroyed the Canaanite army and their cities"

That place was called Hormah

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "They called that place Hormah" (See: [Active or Passive](#))

Numbers 21:4

(There are no notes for this verse.)

ULT

⁴ And they set out from Mount Hor by the road of the Sea of Reeds to go around the land of Edom. And the soul of the people was short on the road.

Numbers 21:5

Why have you brought us up out of Egypt to die in the wilderness?

The people used this question in order to rebuke Moses. This can be translated as a statement. Alternate translation: “You should not made us leave Egypt to die in the wilderness!” (See: [Rhetorical Question](#))

ULT

⁵ And the people spoke against God and against Moses: “Why did you bring us up from Egypt to die in the wilderness? For there is no bread, and there is no water, and our soul detests the worthless bread.”

Numbers 21:6

(There are no notes for this verse.)

ULT

⁶ And Yahweh sent snakes, fiery ones, among the people and they bit the people. And many people from Israel died.

Numbers 21:7

we have spoken against Yahweh and you

“we have said bad things about Yahweh and you”

we have spoken ... from us

The words “we” and “us” here refer to the people but not to Moses.
(See: [Exclusive and Inclusive ‘We’](#))

ULT

⁷ And the people came to Moses and said, “We have sinned because we have spoken against Yahweh and against you. Pray to Yahweh and may he remove from on us the snake.” And Moses prayed on behalf of the people.

Numbers 21:8

Make a snake

Since it is impossible for Moses to make a real snake, it is implied that he was to make a model of a snake. This implied information can be made clear. Alternate translation: “Make a model of a snake” (See: [Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information](#))

everyone who is bitten

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: “everyone whom a snake bites” (See: [Active or Passive](#))

ULT

⁸ And Yahweh said to Moses, “Make for yourself a snake and set it on a pole. And it will happen that any of the bitten will see it and live.”

Numbers 21:9

a bronze snake

“a snake out of bronze”

if he looked at the bronze snake, he survived

Here “he” refers to “any person” who was bitten by a snake.

ULT

⁹ And Moses made a snake of bronze and he set it on the pole. And it happened that if the snake bit a man then he looked to the snake of bronze and he lived.

Numbers 21:10

(There are no notes for this verse.)

ULT

10 And the sons of Israel set out and camped at Oboth.

Numbers 21:11

that faces Moab

Here “faces” is an idiom that means “is across from” or “is next to.”
Alternate translation: “that is next to Moab” (See: [Idiom](#))

ULT

11 And they set out from Oboth and camped at Iye Abarim in the wilderness that is on the face of Moab from the rising of the sun.

Numbers 21:12

(There are no notes for this verse.)

ULT

¹² From there they set out and camped at the wadi of Zered.

Numbers 21:13

forms the border of Moab, between Moab and the Amorites

This means that the two peoples lived on different sides of the river, which was a boundary between them. The Moabite people lived south of the river and the Amorites lived on the north.

ULT

¹³ From there they set out and camped on the other side of the Arnon, which is in the wilderness that goes out from the border of the Amorite, because the Arnon is the border of Moab, between Moab and the Amorite.

Numbers 21:14

Waheb in Suphah

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

ULT

14 Therefore it says in the book of the Wars of Yahweh, "...Waheb in Suphah, and the wadis of the Arnon,

Numbers 21:15

the slope of the valleys that lead toward the town of Ar and lie along the border of Moab

“the valleys that go downhill to the town of Ar and lie along the border of Moab”

ULT

¹⁵ and the slope of the wadis that spreads out to the dwelling of Ar and it leans to the border of Moab.”

Numbers 21:16

to Beer, the well

This can be stated as two sentences. Alternate translation: “to Beer. There was a well there”

where Yahweh said to Moses, “Gather the people together for me to give them water.”

This can be stated as an indirect quote. Alternate translation: “where Yahweh told Moses to gather the people together for him to give them water” (See: [Direct and Indirect Quotations](#))

ULT

16 And from there to Beer. It is the well where Yahweh said to Moses, “Gather the people and I will give water to them.”

Numbers 21:17

Spring up, well

Here “well” represents the water in the well. The Israelites are speaking to the water as if it were a person who could hear them, and they are asking for it to fill the well. Alternate translation: “Water, fill up the well” (See: [Metonymy](#) and [Personification](#))

ULT

17 Then Israel sang this song: “Rise up, well! Sing for it,

Numbers 21:18

the well that our leaders dug, the well the nobles of the people dug

These two phrases mean basically the same thing and emphasize the role of the leaders in digging the well. (See: [Parallelism](#))

with the scepter and their staffs

A scepter was carried by those with authority, and the staff was carried by everyone. Neither of these are digging tools. These two items emphasize that they were not too proud to use any means available. Alternate translation: “using even their scepter and staffs” (See: [Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information](#))

ULT

¹⁸ the well leaders dug, the noblemen of the people dug it, with a decreer’s staff and their staffs.” And from the wilderness to Mattanah,

Numbers 21:19

Nahaliel ... Bamoth

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

ULT

¹⁹ and from Mattanah to Nahaliel, and
from Nahaliel to Bamoth,

Numbers 21:20

Mount Pisgah

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

looks down on the wilderness

This is an idiom. It is a way of saying that the mountain is high, and speaks of the mountain as if it were a person who looks down to see the wilderness below him. Alternate translation: “rises above the wilderness” (See: [Idiom](#) and [Personification](#))

ULT

²⁰ and from Bamoth to the valley that is in the field of Moab, the head of the Pisgah, and is looking down on the face of the wasteland.

Numbers 21:21

Then Israel

Here “Israel” refers to the people of Israel, and especially to their leaders. Alternate translation: “Then the Israelites” (See: [Metonymy](#))

ULT

21 And Israel sent messengers to Sihon the king of the Amorite, saying,

Numbers 21:22

We will not turn into any field or vineyard

“We will not go into any of your fields or vineyards”

the king’s highway

This is the main road that connects Damascus in the north to the Gulf of Aqabah in the south. See how you translated this in [Numbers 20:17](#).

ULT

22 “Let us pass through your land. We will not turn into a field or into a vineyard. We will not drink the water of a well. We will go by the road of the king until we have passed through your border.”

Numbers 21:23

to pass through their border

“to cross over their border.” Here “their” refers to the Amorites.

Jahaz

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

he fought against Israel

Here “he” refers to King Sihon who represents himself and his army. Alternate translation: “they fought against the Israelites” (See: [Synecdoche](#))

ULT

23 And Sihon did not give Israel passage through his boundary. And Sihon gathered all his people and went out to the wilderness to meet Israel. And he came to Jahaz and fought with Israel.

Numbers 21:24

Israel attacked

Here “Israel” refers to the people of Israel. Alternate translation: “The Israelites attacked” (See: [Metonymy](#))

with the edge of the sword

“with the sharp part of the sword.” The “edge of the sword” is associated with death and complete destruction. Alternate translation: “and completely defeated them” (See: [Metonymy](#))

took their land

“conquered the land of the Amorites.” Here the word “their” refers to the Amorites.

was fortified

“was strongly defended.” The Israelites did not attack the Ammonites.

ULT

24 And Israel struck him by the mouth of the sword and took possession of his land from the Arnon as far as the Jabbok, as far as the sons of Ammon, because the border of the sons of Ammon was fortified.

Numbers 21:25

Heshbon and all of its villages

Here “its” is possessive to show that a relationship existed between the city of Heshbon and these nearby villages. Alternate translation: “Heshbon and the nearby villages that it controlled”

ULT

²⁵ And Israel took all these cities. And Israel dwelled in all the cities of the Amorite in Heshbon and in all its daughters.

Numbers 21:26

Sihon had taken all his land

Here “his” refers to the king of Moab.

ULT

²⁶ For Heshbon, it was the city of Sihon the king of the Amorite. And he had fought with the previous king of Moab and had taken all his land from his hand as far as the Arnon.

Numbers 21:27

Heshbon ... city of Sihon

These are two names that refer to the same city. (See: [Parallelism](#))

Let the city of Sihon be rebuilt and established again

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "Let someone rebuild and establish again the city of Sihon" (See: [Active or Passive](#))

rebuilt and established

These two terms are very similar and emphasize that the city will be fully rebuilt. Alternate translation: "completely rebuilt" (See: [Doublet](#))

ULT

²⁷ Therefore the speakers of proverbs say, "Come to Heshbon. Let the city of Sihon be built and established."

Numbers 21:28

A fire blazed from Heshbon, a flame from the city of Sihon

These two phrases mean basically the same thing and emphasize that destruction will begin at Heshbon. The fire refers to a destroying army. Alternate translation: “King Sihon led a strong army from the city of Heshbon” (See: [Parallelism](#) and [Metaphor](#))

ULT

²⁸ For fire went out from Heshbon, a flame from the city of Sihon. It ate Ar of Moab, the lords of the high places of Arnon.

devoured Ar of Moab

The army of Sihon is spoken of as if it was an animal that ate up the city of Ar. Alternate translation: “destroyed the town of Ar in the land of Moab” (See: [Metaphor](#))

Numbers 21:29

Moab ... people of Chemosh

These two phrases refer to the same people. (See: [Parallelism](#))

people of Chemosh

“Chemosh” was the name of the false god whom the Moabites worshiped. Alternate translation: “the people who worship Chemosh”

He has made his sons

“He” and “his” refer to Chemosh.

ULT

²⁹ Woe to you, Moab! You have perished, people of Chemosh. He has given his sons to be escapees and his daughters into the captivity of Sihon the king of the Amorites.

Numbers 21:30

we have conquered

Here “we” refers to the Israelites who defeated Sihon.

Heshbon is devastated

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: “We have devastated Heshbon” (See: [Active or Passive](#))

ULT

³⁰ And we have shot them. Heshbon has perished as far as Dibon. And we have made devastation as far as Nophah, which is as far as Medeba.”

Heshbon ... all the way to Dibon ... all the way to Nophah ... to Medeba

These are all places in Sihon’s kingdom. This means the Israelites destroyed Sihon’s entire nation. (See: [How to Translate Names](#) and [Merism](#))

Numbers 21:31

(There are no notes for this verse.)

ULT

³¹ And Israel dwelled in the land of the Amorites.

Numbers 21:32

drove out

“chased away”

ULT

³² And Moses sent to spy out Jazer and they captured her daughters. And they dispossessed the Amorites who were there.

Numbers 21:33

went out against them

“attacked them”

ULT

³³ And they turned and went up the road of the Bashan. And Og the king of the Bashan went out to meet them, he and all his people, to the battle at Edrei.

Numbers 21:34

Do to him as you did to Sihon king of the Amorites

The Israelites had completely destroyed Sihon. Alternate translation: "Destroy him like you destroyed Sihon king of the Amorites"

ULT

³⁴ And Yahweh said to Moses, "Do not fear him, because I have given into your hand him, and all his people, and his land. And you shall do to him just as you did to Sihon the king of the Amorite, who dwelled in Heshbon."

Numbers 21:35

So they killed him

“So the army of Israel killed Og”

none of his people were left alive

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: “all of his people were dead” (See: [Active or Passive](#))

they took over his land

“they took control of his land”

ULT

³⁵ And they struck him and his sons and all his people until they had left no survivor for him. And they took possession of his land.

Numbers 22

Numbers 22 General Notes

Structure and formatting

The chapter begins a section on Balaam. The king of Moab wanted the prophet Balaam to come and curse Israel. God told him not to go but he wanted to go; so God told him to say only what God wanted him to say. Yahweh was able to use Balaam, even though he was not a prophet of Yahweh. (See: [prophet](#), [prophecy](#), [prophesy](#), [seer](#), [prophetess](#) and [curse](#), [cursed](#), [cursing](#))

Numbers 22:1

on the other side of the Jordan River from the city

The Israelites were camped on the east side of the Jordan River. Jericho was on the west side of the river.

ULT

¹ And the sons of Israel set out and camped in the plains of Moab, from the other side of the Jordan at Jericho.

Numbers 22:2

Balak son of Zippor

Balak was king of Moab. (See: [How to Translate Names](#))

Zippor

Zippor is the father of Balak. (See: [How to Translate Names](#))

ULT

² And Balak the son of Zippor saw all that Israel had done to the Amorite.

Numbers 22:3

Moab was very afraid of the people ... Moab was in terror of the people of Israel

These two phrases mean the same thing, and emphasize how afraid Moab was. (See: [Parallelism](#))

Moab was very afraid

Here “Moab” refers to the people of Moab. Alternate translation: “All of the Moabites were very afraid” (See: [Metonymy](#))

because they were many

“because there were many of them”

ULT

³ And Moab was extremely terrified because of the face of the people, because they were numerous. And Moab was sick with terror because of the face of the sons of Israel.

Numbers 22:4

The king of Moab said to the elders of Midian

The Moabites and the Midianites were two different groups of people, but the Midianites were living in the land of Moab at that time.

This multitude will eat up all that is around us as an ox eats up the grass in a field

The way the Israelites will destroy their enemies is spoken of as if they were an ox eating up the grass in a field. (See: [Simile](#))

Now Balak son of Zippor was king of Moab at that time

This changes from the main story to background information about Balak. (See: [Background Information](#))

ULT

⁴ And Moab said to the elders of Midian, "Now the assembly will lick up all that is around us like an ox licks up the green of the field. And Balak the son of Zippor was the king of Moab at that time.

Numbers 22:5

He sent messengers

“Balak sent messengers”

Beor

This is the name of Balaam’s father. (See: [How to Translate Names](#))

Pethor

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

of his nation and his people

“of Balaam’s nation and people”

He called him

“Balak called Balaam.” Balak did not speak to Balaam directly, but did so through the messengers he sent.

They cover the face of the earth

This is an exaggeration to emphasize how many of them there were. Alternate translation: “They are extremely numerous” (See: [Hyperbole](#))

the face of the earth

This refers to the surface of the earth. (See: [Idiom](#))

ULT

⁵ And he sent messengers to Balaam the son of Beor at Pethor, which is near the River, the land of the sons of his people, to summon him, saying, “Behold, a people went out from Egypt. Behold, he has covered the eye of the land and he is dwelling opposite me.

Numbers 22:6

drive them

“chase them”

I know that whomever you bless will be blessed, and whomever you curse will be cursed

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: “I know you have the power to bless or to curse people” (See: [Active or Passive](#))

ULT

⁶ And now please go curse this people for me because they are more numerous than I. Perhaps I will be able to strike them and drive them out from the land. For I know whom you bless will be blessed and whom you curse will be cursed.

Numbers 22:7

payment for divination

The abstract noun “divination” can be stated as an action. Alternate translation: “money to pay Balaam to curse Israel” (See: [Abstract Nouns](#))

They came to Balaam

You may prefer to say “They went to Balaam” (See: [Go and Come](#))

spoke to him Balak’s words

“told him the message from Balak”

Balak

This is the name of a man. See how you translated this in [Numbers 22:2](#).

ULT

⁷ And the elders of Moab and the elders of Midian went and divination fees were in their hand. And they came to Balaam and spoke to him the words of Balak.

Numbers 22:8

I will bring you

Balaam's report is spoken of as if it were something that he would carry to the messengers. Alternate translation: "I will tell you" (See: [Metaphor](#))

ULT

⁸ And he said to them, "Lodge here tonight and I will bring you back a word, just as Yahweh speaks to me." And the leaders of Moab stayed with Balaam.

Numbers 22:9

God came to Balaam

"God appeared to Balaam"

Who are these men who came to you?

Yahweh uses a question to introduce a new topic of conversation. This rhetorical question can be translated as a statement. Alternate translation: "Tell me about these men who came to you." (See: [Rhetorical Question](#))

ULT

⁹ And God came to Balaam and said,
"Who are these men with you?"

Numbers 22:10

Balak ... Zippor

These are the names of men. See how you translated these in [Numbers 22:2](#).

ULT

10 And Balaam said to God, “Balak the son of Zippor, the king of Moab, has sent to me.”

Numbers 22:11

Look ... drive them out

Balaam restates the message that Balak sent to him. See how you translated these phrases in [Numbers 22:5-6](#).

drive them out

“chase them away”

ULT

11 ‘Behold, the people who have come out from Egypt and have covered the eye of the land! Now go curse them for me. Perhaps I will be able to fight them and drive them out.’”

Numbers 22:12

because they have been blessed

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: “because I have blessed them” (See: [Active or Passive](#))

ULT

12 And God said to Balaam, “You shall not go with them. You shall not curse the people because they are blessed.”

Numbers 22:13

Balak

This is the name of a man. See how you translated this in [Numbers 22:2](#).

ULT

13 And Balaam rose in the morning and said to the leaders of Balak, "Go to your land because Yahweh has refused to grant me to go with you."

Numbers 22:14

(There are no notes for this verse.)

ULT

14 And the leaders of Moab rose and came to Balak. And they said, "Balaam refused to come with us."

Numbers 22:15

Balak

This is the name of a man. See how you translated this in [Numbers 22:2](#).

ULT

15 And Balak added again and sent many leaders and they were more honored than these.

Numbers 22:16

They came to Balaam

You may prefer to say "They went to Balaam" (See: [Go and Come](#))

ULT

16 And they came to Balaam and said to him, "Thus says Balak the son of Zippor, 'Please do not refrain from coming to me.

Numbers 22:17

this people

The singular noun refers to the Israelites as a group. Alternate translation: "this group of people"

ULT

17 For I will very greatly honor you and I will do all that you say to me. And please go curse this people for me.'"

Numbers 22:18

Balak

This is the name of a man. See how you translated this in [Numbers 22:2](#).

Even if Balak would give me his palace full of silver and gold

Balaam is describing something that would never happen. He is emphasizing that there is nothing that could make him disobey Yahweh. (See: [Hypothetical Situations](#))

I cannot go beyond the word of Yahweh ... and do less or more than what he tells me

This means Balaam cannot disobey Yahweh in any way.

ULT

18 And Balaam answered and said to the servants of Balak, "If Balak gives to me his house full of silver and gold, I will not be able to go beyond the mouth of Yahweh my God to do small or big.

Numbers 22:19

(There are no notes for this verse.)

ULT

19 And now, you also please stay in this place tonight. And may I know what Yahweh will add to speak with me.”

Numbers 22:20

(There are no notes for this verse.)

ULT

²⁰ And God came to Balaam at night and said to him, "If the men have come to summon you, rise and go with them. And only the word that I speak to you, it you shall do."

Numbers 22:21

saddled his donkey

A saddle is a seat put on the back of an animal in order to ride it.

ULT

21 And Balaam rose in the morning and saddled his female donkey, and went with the leaders of Moab.

Numbers 22:22

God's anger was kindled

The increase in God's anger is spoken of as if it was a fire starting to burn. This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "God became very angry" (See: [Idiom](#) and [Active or Passive](#))

as someone hostile to Balaam

"as an enemy to Balaam" or "in order to stop Balaam"

ULT

22 And the nose of God burned because he was going. And the angel of Yahweh stationed himself in the road as an adversary to him. And he was riding on his female donkey and two of his servants were with him.

Numbers 22:23

with his drawn sword

A sword is drawn from its sheath in order to be ready to use.

Alternate translation: "with his sword ready to attack" (See: [Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information](#))

The donkey turned off the road and went into a field

The donkey did this to avoid the angel of Yahweh.

to turn her back

Sometimes animals are referred to as "her" or "she." Alternate translation: "to turn it back"

ULT

²³ And the female donkey saw the angel of Yahweh stationed in the road and his drawn sword was in his hand. And the female donkey turned aside from the road and went in the field. And Balaam struck the female donkey to turn her to the road.

Numbers 22:24

(There are no notes for this verse.)

ULT

²⁴ And the angel of Yahweh stood in the narrow pass of the vineyards, a wall on this side and a wall on that side.

Numbers 22:25

She went against the wall

This was an attempt to escape from the angel of Yahweh in the road.

She went

Sometimes animals are referred to as “her” or “she.” Alternate translation: “It went”

pinned Balaam’s foot against it

“pushed Balaam’s foot against it” or “hurt Balaam’s foot against it”

ULT

²⁵ And the female donkey saw the angel of Yahweh and she pressed herself to the wall. And she pressed the foot of Balaam to the wall. And he struck her again.

Numbers 22:26

(There are no notes for this verse.)

ULT

²⁶ And the angel of Yahweh passed on again and stood in a narrow place where there was no road to turn right or left.

Numbers 22:27

Balaam's anger was kindled

The increase in Balaam's anger is spoken of as if it was a fire starting to burn. This can be stated in active form. See how you translated a similar phrase in [Numbers 22:22](#). Alternate translation: "Balaam became very angry" (See: [Idiom](#) and [Active or Passive](#))

ULT

27 And the female donkey saw the angel of Yahweh and lay down under Balaam. And the nose of Balaam burned and he struck the female donkey with the staff.

Numbers 22:28

Then Yahweh opened the donkey's mouth so she could talk

Opening the mouth is associated with the ability to speak. Alternate translation: "Then Yahweh gave the donkey the ability to speak like a human would speak" (See: [Metonymy](#))

She said to Balaam

"The donkey said to Balaam"

ULT

²⁸ And Yahweh opened the mouth of the female donkey. And she said to Balaam, "What have I done to you that you struck me these three times?"

Numbers 22:29

(There are no notes for this verse.)

ULT

²⁹ And Balaam said to the female donkey, "Because you acted mockingly with me! If only there was a sword in my hand! Surely I would slay you!"

Numbers 22:30

Am not I your donkey on which you have ridden all your life long to this present day?

This rhetorical question was used to convict Balaam that his judgment of the donkey was unfair. This can be translated as a statement. Alternate translation: "I am your donkey on which you have ridden all your life, right up to the present moment." (See: [Rhetorical Question](#))

ULT

³⁰ And the female donkey said to Balaam, "Am I not your female donkey on which you have ridden from your continuance until this day? Have I ever been accustomed to doing thus to you?" And he said, "No."

Have I ever been in the habit of doing such things to you before?

This rhetorical question was used to further convict Balaam that his judgment of the donkey was unfair. This can be translated as a statement. Alternate translation: "I have never been in the habit of doing such things to you!" (See: [Rhetorical Question](#))

Numbers 22:31

Then Yahweh opened Balaam's eyes, and he saw the angel of Yahweh

To “open one's eyes” is associated with being able to see. Alternate translation: “Then Yahweh gave Balaam the ability to see the angel of Yahweh” (See: [Metonymy](#))

with his drawn sword

A sword is drawn from its sheath in order to be ready to use. See how you translated this in [Numbers 22:23](#). Alternate translation: “with his sword ready to attack” (See: [Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information](#))

Balaam lowered his head and lay facedown

This indicates that Balaam is humbling himself before the angel. (See: [Symbolic Action](#))

ULT

³¹ And Yahweh uncovered the eyes of Balaam, and he saw the angel of Yahweh stationed in the road and his drawn sword in his hand. And he bowed and bowed down his nose.

Numbers 22:32

Why have you struck your donkey these three times?

This rhetorical question is used to accuse Balaam of doing wrong. This can be translated as a statement. Alternate translation: "You should not have struck your donkey these three times." (See: [Rhetorical Question](#))

as someone hostile to you

"as an enemy to you" or "to oppose you"

ULT

³² And the angel of Yahweh said to him, "On account of what have you struck your female donkey these three times? Behold, I myself have gone out as an adversary because your way has been perverse in front of me."

Numbers 22:33

If she had not turned ... killed you and spared her life

This hypothetical statement indicated what could have happened, but it did not because the donkey's actions saved Balaam. (See: [Hypothetical Situations](#))

ULT

³³ And the female donkey saw me and turned aside before my face these three times. If she had not turned aside from me, surely now even you I would have slain and kept her alive."

Numbers 22:34

So now, if it is displeasing to you

“So if you do not want me to continue going”

ULT

³⁴ And Balaam said to the angel of Yahweh, “I have sinned, because I did not know that you were stationed to meet me in the road. And now, if it is evil in your eyes, I will return to me.”

Numbers 22:35

with the leaders of Balak

“with the leaders whom Balak had sent.” See how you translated “Balak” in [Numbers 22:2](#).

ULT

³⁵ And the angel of Yahweh said to Balaam, “Go with the men. And only the word that I speak to you, it you must speak.” And Balaam went with the leaders of Balak.

Numbers 22:36

Arnon

This is the name of a river. See how you translated it in [Numbers 21:13](#).

ULT

³⁶ And Balak heard that Balaam had come. And he went out to meet him at a city of Moab, that is near the border of the Arnon, which is at the end of the border.

Numbers 22:37

Did I not send men to you to summon you?

This rhetorical question is used to rebuke Balaam for delaying to come. This can be translated as a statement. Alternate translation: "Surely I sent men to summon you." (See: [Rhetorical Question](#))

Why did you not come to me?

This rhetorical question is used to rebuke Balaam for delaying to come. This can be translated as a statement. Alternate translation: "You should have come to me!" (See: [Rhetorical Question](#))

Am I not able to honor you?

This rhetorical question is used to rebuke Balaam for delaying to come. This can be translated as a statement. Alternate translation: "Surely you know that I am able to pay you money for coming to me." (See: [Rhetorical Question](#))

ULT

37 And Balak said to Balaam, "Did I not indeed send to you to summon you? Why did you not come to me? Am I truly not able to honor you?"

Numbers 22:38

Do I now have any power to say anything?

Balaam uses this rhetorical question to tell Balak that he will not be able to do everything that Balak asks him to do. This can be translated as a statement. Alternate translation: "But I have no power to say anything I want" (See: [Rhetorical Question](#))

the words that God puts into my mouth

The message is spoken of as if it is something that God put into his mouth. Alternate translation: "the message that God wants me to say" (See: [Metaphor](#))

ULT

38 And Balaam said to Balak, "Behold, I have come to you. Am I now at all able to speak anything? The word that God puts in my mouth, it will I speak."

Numbers 22:39

Kiriath Huzoth

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

ULT

³⁹ And Balaam went with Balak, and they came to Kiriath Huzoth.

Numbers 22:40

some meat

“some of the meat from the sacrifices”

ULT

40 And Balak sacrificed cattle and sheep and sent to Balaam and to the leaders who were with him.

Numbers 22:41

the high place of Baal

This could mean: (1) this refers to the same place as Bamoth in [Numbers 21:19](#). The word Bamoth means “the high place,” or (2) this is another high place where people sacrificed to Baal.

ULT

41 And it happened in the morning that Balak took Balaam and brought him up to the high place of Baal. And from there he saw the edge of the people.

Numbers 23

Numbers 23 General Notes

Structure and formatting

The story of Balaam continues in this chapter.

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 23:7-10, 18-24.

Special concepts in this chapter

Cursing God's people

God does not allow others to curse his people. Balaam blessed Israel twice when he was supposed to curse them. This may be taken as humor or an ironic situation. (See: [curse](#), [cursed](#), [cursing](#) and [people of God](#))

Numbers 23:1

Balak

This is the king of Moab. See how you translated this in [Numbers 22:2](#).

prepare seven bulls and seven rams

“kill seven bulls and seven rams as a sacrifice”

ULT

¹ And Balaam said to Balak, “Build for me in this place seven altars and prepare for me in this place seven bulls and seven rams.”

Numbers 23:2

(There are no notes for this verse.)

ULT

² And Balak did just as Balaam had said.
And Balak and Balaam offered up a bull
and a ram on the altar.

Numbers 23:3

Stand at your burnt offering and I will go

“Stay here with your burnt offering and I will go a distance away”

ULT

³ And Balaam said to Balak, “Station yourself beside your burnt up offering and I will go. Perhaps Yahweh will be met to meet me. And I will declare to you the word of what he shows me.” And he went to a bare high place.

Numbers 23:4

I have offered up a bull and a ram

It has already been stated that he killed these animals as a burnt offering. Alternate translation: "I have killed a bull and a ram and burnt them as an offering" (See: [Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information](#))

ULT

⁴ And God met with Balaam and he said to him, "I have arranged seven altars and offered up a bull and a ram on the altar."

Numbers 23:5

Yahweh put a message in Balaam's mouth

Here Yahweh giving Balaam a message to speak is spoken of as if Yahweh placed it in his mouth. Alternate translation: "Yahweh told Balaam what he wanted him to say to Balak" (See: [Metaphor](#))

ULT

⁵ And Yahweh put a word in the mouth of Balaam and said, "Return to Balak and speak thus."

Numbers 23:6

(There are no notes for this verse.)

ULT

⁶ And he returned to him, and behold,
he was stationed beside his burnt up
offering, he and all the leaders of Moab.

Numbers 23:7

Balak has brought me from Aram ... the king of Moab from the eastern mountains

These phrases mean the same thing. (See: [Parallelism](#))

‘Come, curse Jacob for me,’ ... ‘Come, defy Israel.’

Both of these statements mean the same thing. They emphasize that Balak wants Balaam to curse the people of Israel. (See: [Parallelism](#))

ULT

⁷ And he lifted up his oracle and said, “Balak has led me from Aram, the king of Moab from the mountains of the east. ‘Go curse Jacob for me, and go denounce Israel.’

Numbers 23:8

How can I curse those whom God has not cursed? How can I oppose those whom Yahweh does not oppose?

These rhetorical questions emphasize Balaam's refusal to disobey God. They can be translated as statements. Alternate translation:

"But I cannot curse those whom God has not cursed. I cannot fight against those whom Yahweh does not fight!"
(See: [Rhetorical Question](#))

ULT

⁸ How can I curse? God has not cursed.
And how can I denounce? Yahweh has not denounced.

Numbers 23:9

from the top of the rocks I see him ... from the hills I look at him

These two phrases mean the same thing. Balaam viewed Israel from the top of a hill. (See: [Parallelism](#))

I see him ... I look at him

Here “him” is a metonym that refers to the people of Israel. (See: [Metonymy](#))

there is a people

“there is a group of people”

do not consider themselves as just an ordinary nation

This negative statement is used to stress that the opposite is true. Alternate translation: “they consider themselves to be a special nation” (See: [Litotes](#))

ULT

⁹ For from the head of the rocks I see him. And from the hills I look at him. Behold, the people dwells by itself and it does not reckon itself among the nations.

Numbers 23:10

Who can count the dust of Jacob or number even only one-fourth of Israel?

Here “dust of Jacob” is a metaphor that speaks of the number of Israelites as if they were as numerous as the specks of dust. This rhetorical question can be translated as a statement. Alternate translation: “There are too many Israelites to count. No one could count even a fourth of them because there are so many.” (See: [Rhetorical Question](#) and [Metaphor](#))

ULT

¹⁰ Who can count the dust of Jacob or number the fourth part of Israel? Let my life die the death of the upright ones, and let my end be like his!”

the death of a righteous person

It is understood that this will be a peaceful death. This can be stated. Alternate translation: “the peaceful death of a righteous person” (See: [Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information](#))

a righteous person ... like his

These are metonymies that refer to the people of Israel as a single person. (See: [Metonymy](#))

Numbers 23:11

Balak

This is the king of Moab. See how you translated this in [Numbers 22:2](#).

What have you done to me?

Balak uses this question to scold Balaam. This rhetorical question can be translated as a statement. Alternate translation: "I cannot believe you did this to me!" (See: [Rhetorical Question](#))

but look

This emphasizes the shocking action that follows.

ULT

11 And Balak said to Balaam, "What have you done to me? I took you to curse my enemies, and behold, you have blessed indeed!"

Numbers 23:12

Should I not be careful to say only what Yahweh puts in my mouth?

Balaam uses this rhetorical question to defend his actions. This can be translated as a statement. Alternate translation: "I must be very careful to say only what Yahweh tells me to say." (See: [Rhetorical Question](#))

ULT

¹² And he answered and said, "Should I not be careful to speak it that Yahweh puts in my mouth?"

to say only what Yahweh puts in my mouth

The message is spoken of as if it is something that God put into his mouth. See how you translated a similar phrase in [Numbers 22:38](#). Alternate translation: "to say only what Yahweh wants me to say" (See: [Metaphor](#))

Numbers 23:13

There you will curse them for me

“There you will curse the Israelites for me”

ULT

13 And Balak said to him, “Please go with me to another place from which you can see him. You will only see his edge and you will not see all of him. And you will curse him for me from there.”

Numbers 23:14

field of Zophim

Translators may add a footnote that says: "The word 'Zophim' means 'to watch' or 'to spy.'" (See: [How to Translate Names](#))

Mount Pisgah

This is the name of a mountain. See how you translated this in [Numbers 21:20](#). (See: [How to Translate Names](#))

ULT

14 And he took him to the field of Zophim, to the head of the Pisgah. And he built seven altars and offered up a bull and a ram on the altar.

Numbers 23:15

(There are no notes for this verse.)

ULT

15 Then he said to Balak, "Station yourself here beside your burnt offering, and I will be met with there."

Numbers 23:16

put a message in his mouth

The message is spoken of as if it is something that God put into his mouth. See how you translated a similar phrase in [Numbers 22:38](#). Alternate translation: “told him what to say” (See: [Metaphor](#))

He said

“Then Yahweh said”

ULT

16 And Yahweh met with Balaam and put a word in his mouth. And he said, “Return to Balak and thus you shall speak.”

Numbers 23:17

(There are no notes for this verse.)

ULT

17 And he came to him, and behold, he was stationed beside his altar and the leaders of Moab were with him. And Balak said to him, "What did Yahweh speak?"

Numbers 23:18

Balak, and hear ... Listen to me, you son of Zippor

These two phrases mean the same thing and are repeated to emphasize how important it was for Balak to pay attention. (See: [Parallelism](#))

Balak ... son of Zippor

See how you translated these names in [Numbers 22:2](#).

ULT

¹⁸ And he lifted up his oracle and said,
"Rise up, Balak, and listen. Give ear to
me, son of Zippor."

Numbers 23:19

**Has he promised anything without doing it?
Has he said he would do something without
carrying it out?**

Both of these questions mean the same thing and emphasize that God does what he says he will. These rhetorical questions can be translated as statements. Alternate translation: "He has never promised a thing without fulfilling what he promised. He has always done exactly what he said he would do." (See: [Parallelism](#) and [Rhetorical Question](#))

ULT

¹⁹ God is not a man, that he would lie,
Or a son of mankind, that he would
change his mind. Has he said and not
done, Or spoken and not made it arise?

Numbers 23:20

I have been commanded to bless

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: “God has commanded me to bless the Israelites” (See: [Active or Passive](#))

ULT

²⁰ Behold, I have received to bless. And he has blessed, and I can not turn it back.

Numbers 23:21

hardship in Jacob ... trouble in Israel

These two phrases mean the same thing. This could mean: (1) God has given Israel only good things or (2) there is no sin in Israel that would cause him to judge them. (See: [Parallelism](#))

shouts for their king are among them

“they shout with joy because Yahweh is their king”

ULT

21 He has not looked at hardship in Jacob and he has not seen trouble in Israel. Yahweh his God is with him, and the shout of the king is with him.

Numbers 23:22

with strength like that of a wild ox

This simile says that Yahweh's great strength is equal to an ox. (See: [Simile](#))

ULT

²² God is bringing them out from Egypt like the horns of a wild ox for him.

Numbers 23:23

There is no sorcery that works against Jacob ... no fortune-telling harms Israel

These two lines mean the same thing, that no curse that anyone puts on the nation of Israel will be effective. Here “Jacob” is a metonym that refers to Israel. (See: [Parallelism](#) and [Metonymy](#))

ULT

²³ For there is no omen against Jacob, and no divination against Israel. At this time it shall be said of Jacob and of Israel, ‘What God has done!’

it must be said

This can be stated in active form. “people must say” (See: [Active or Passive](#))

Look what God has done!

It is implied that what God did for them was good. Alternate translation: “Look at the good things God has done for them!”

Numbers 23:24

the people rise like a lioness ... he has killed

This verse is a long metaphor that speaks of Israel defeating her enemies as if Israel was a lion devouring its prey. (See: [Metaphor](#))

ULT

²⁴ Look, a people rises like a lioness, and like a lion he lifts himself up. He will not lie down until he eats prey and drinks the blood of the pierced ones.”

Numbers 23:25

Balak

This is the king of Moab. See how you translated this in [Numbers 22:2](#).

ULT

²⁵ And Balak said to Balaam, “Even do not curse him at all, also do not bless him at all!”

Numbers 23:26

Did I not tell you that I must say all that Yahweh tells me to say?

Balaam uses this rhetorical question to remind Balak that Balaam refused to disobey God even before he came to Balak. It can be translated as a statement. Alternate translation: "I told you before that I must say all that Yahweh tells me to say." (See: [Rhetorical Question](#))

ULT

²⁶ And Balaam answered and said to Balak, "Did I not speak to you, saying, 'All that Yahweh speaks, it I must do?'"

Numbers 23:27

(There are no notes for this verse.)

ULT

²⁷ And Balak said to Balaam, "Come now, I will take you to another place. Perhaps it will be right in the eyes of God and you will curse him for me from there."

Numbers 23:28

which looks down on the wilderness

It is understood that this wilderness was where Israel was camped. Alternate translation: “which looks down on the wilderness where Israel was” (See: [Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information](#))

ULT

28 And Balak took Balaam to the head of the Peor, looking down on the face of the wasteland.

Numbers 23:29

(There are no notes for this verse.)

ULT

²⁹ And Balaam said to Balak, "Build for me in this place seven altars and prepare for me in this place seven bulls and seven rams."

Numbers 23:30

(There are no notes for this verse.)

ULT

³⁰ And Balak did just as Balaam had said. And he offered up a bull and a ram on the altar.

Numbers 24

Numbers 24 General Notes

Structure and formatting

The story of Balaam continues in this chapter.

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 24:3-9, 15-24.

Special concepts in this chapter

Cursing God's people

God does not allow others to curse his people. Balaam blesses Israel again and the king is angry and sends him home. This may be taken as humor or an ironic situation. (See: [curse](#), [cursed](#), [cursing](#) and [people of God](#))

Numbers 24:1

as at the other times

“like he did the previous times”

ULT

¹ And Balaam saw that it was good in the eyes of Yahweh to bless Israel. And he did not go as time by time to meet omens. And he set his face to the wilderness.

Numbers 24:2

He raised his eyes

Here “raised his eyes” is an idiom that means to look up. Alternate translation: “He looked up” (See: [Idiom](#))

Spirit of God came on him

This mean’s God’s Spirit took control of him to prophesy.

ULT

² And Balaam lifted up his eyes and he saw Israel dwelling according to its tribes. And the Spirit of God was on him.

Numbers 24:3

He received this prophecy

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: “God gave him this prophecy” (See: [Active or Passive](#))

Balaam son of Beor

Beor was Balaam’s father. See how you translated this in [Numbers 22:5](#).

whose eyes are wide open

This idiom means he sees and understands clearly. (See: [Idiom](#))

ULT

³ And he lifted up his discourse and said, “The declaration of Balaam the son of Beor, and the declaration of the man opened of eye,

Numbers 24:4

General Information:

Balaam continues to prophesy under the control of the Spirit of God.

He speaks ... He sees ... he bows

Here Balaam refers to himself as "He." (See: [First, Second or Third Person](#))

he bows down

This is an act of humility. (See: [Symbolic Action](#))

with his eyes open

Here "eyes open" is an idiom that means Balaam has received the ability to know what God wants to say. (See: [Idiom](#))

ULT

⁴ the declaration of the hearer of the words of God, who sees the vision of the Almighty, falling down and opened of eyes:

Numbers 24:5

How beautiful are your tents, Jacob, the place where you live, Israel!

Both of these statements mean the same thing. They emphasize the Israelite camp was beautiful to Balaam. (See: [Parallelism](#))

ULT

⁵ How good are your tents, Jacob, your dwellings, Israel!

Numbers 24:6

General Information:

Balaam continues to prophesy under the control of the Spirit of God.

Like valleys they spread out

Balaam speaks of the Israelies as if they were numerous enough to cover entire valleys. (See: [Simile](#))

like gardens by the riverside

Balaam speaks of the Israelies as if they were well-watered gardens that produce an abundant harvest. (See: [Simile](#))

aloes planted by Yahweh

Aloes are plants with a pleasant smell that grow well even in dry conditions. Balaam speaks of the Israelies as if they would thrive and be pleasant like aloe plants. This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "aloes which Yahweh has planted" (See: [Translate Unknowns](#) and [Simile](#) and [Active or Passive](#))

like cedars beside the waters

Cedar trees were the largest trees in Israel. Balaam speaks of the Israelies as if they grew as large as well-watered cedar trees. (See: [Simile](#))

ULT

6 Like wadis they spread out, like gardens beside a river, like aloes Yahweh has planted, like cedars beside water.

Numbers 24:7

General Information:

Balaam continues to prophesy under the control of the Spirit of God.

Water flows ... well-watered

Abundant water is associated with God's blessing on the crops of the land. Alternate translation: "God will bless Israel with plenty of water for their crops" (See: [Metonymy](#))

their seed is well-watered

Well-watered seed refers to God's blessing on his people so that they will have abundant crops. Alternate translation: "they will have plenty of water for their seed to grow healthy crops" (See: [Metonymy](#))

Their king is to be higher ... their kingdom will be honored

These two phrases have similar meaning, emphasizing how much God will bless them compared to other nations. (See: [Parallelism](#))

Their king is to be higher than Agag

Here "higher" refers to greater honor and power. This means the future king of Israel will have more honor and will be more powerful than Agag. Agag was king of the Amalekites. (See: [How to Translate Names](#) and [Metonymy](#))

their kingdom will be honored

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "other people will give honor to their kingdom" (See: [Active or Passive](#))

ULT

⁷ Water will flow from his buckets, and his seed with much water. And his king will be higher than Agag, and his kingdom will lift itself up.

Numbers 24:8

General Information:

Balaam continues to prophesy under the control of the Spirit of God.

God brings him

“God brings the Israelites”

with strength like a wild ox

This simile emphasizes that the Israelites have great strength. (See: [Simile](#))

He will eat up the nations

Balaam speaks of the Israelites as if they are wild animals that eat their enemies. This means they will destroy their enemies. (See: [Metaphor](#))

ULT

⁸ God is bringing him out from Egypt, like the horns of a wild ox for him. He will eat the nations, his enemies. And he will break their bones. And he will strike his arrows.

Numbers 24:9

General Information:

Balaam finishes the prophecy under the control of the Spirit of God.

He crouches down like a lion, like a lioness

In this simile, Balaam compares the Israelites to both male and female lions. This means they are dangerous and always ready to attack. (See: [Simile](#))

ULT

⁹ He crouched, he lay down like a lion, and like a lioness. Who will get him up? Those who bless you are blessed; and those who curse you are cursed."

Who dares disturb him?

Balaam uses a question to warn all the people to not provoke the Israelites. This can be translated as a statement. Alternate translation: "No one dares to disturb him!" (See: [Rhetorical Question](#))

May everyone who blesses him be blessed; may everyone who curses him be cursed

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "May God bless those who bless the Israelites; may he curse those who curse the Israelites" (See: [Active or Passive](#))

Numbers 24:10

Balak's anger was kindled

The increase in Balak's anger is spoken of as if it was a fire starting to burn. This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "Balak became very angry" (See: [Idiom](#) and [Active or Passive](#))

struck his hands together in anger

This was a sign of great frustration and anger. (See: [Symbolic Action](#))

ULT

10 And the nose of Balak burned toward Balaam and he struck his palms. And Balak said to Balaam, "I called you to curse my enemies, and behold, you have repeatedly blessed these three times!"

Numbers 24:11

(There are no notes for this verse.)

ULT

11 And now, flee for yourself to your place. I said I would honor you greatly, and behold, Yahweh has held you back from honor."

Numbers 24:12

(There are no notes for this verse.)

ULT

¹² And Balaam said to Balak, "Did I not also speak to the messengers that you sent to me, saying.

Numbers 24:13

Even if Balak gave me his palace full of silver and gold

Balaam is describing something that would never happen. This statement emphasizes that there is nothing that would make Balaam disobey God. (See: [Hypothetical Situations](#))

Did I not say this to them?

Balaam uses a question to remind Balak about what he said earlier. This rhetorical question can be translated as a statement. "Alternate translation: I said this to them." (See: [Rhetorical Question](#))

ULT

¹³ 'If Balak gives to me his house full of silver and gold, I will not be able to go beyond the mouth of Yahweh to do good or evil from my heart; what Yahweh speaks, it I must speak?"

Numbers 24:14

this people

“the Israelites”

ULT

14 And now, behold I am about to go to my people. Come, I will advise you what this people will do to your people in the future days.”

Numbers 24:15

Balaam son of Beor

Beor was Balaam's father. See how you translated this in [Numbers 22:5](#).

whose eyes are wide open

This idiom means he sees and understands clearly. See how you translated this in [Numbers 24:3](#). (See: [Idiom](#))

ULT

15 And he lifted up his discourse and said, "The declaration of Balaam the son of Beor, and the declaration of the man opened of eye,

Numbers 24:16

who has knowledge from the Most High

The abstract term “knowledge” can be stated as an action. Alternate translation: “who knows things that God Most High has revealed to him” (See: [Abstract Nouns](#))

bows down

This is a sign of submission to God. (See: [Symbolic Action](#))

ULT

16 the declaration of the hearer of the words of God, and the knower of the knowledge of the Most High, he sees the vision of the Almighty, falling down and opened of eyes:

Numbers 24:17

General Information:

Balaam continues the first of his four prophecies.

I see him, but he is not here now. I look at him, but he is not near

Both of these statements mean the same thing. Balaam is having a vision of a future event. The word “him” refers to a future leader of Israel. (See: [Parallelism](#))

A star will come out of Jacob

Here “star” refers to an Israelite king that will rise in power. (See: [Symbolic Language](#))

out of Jacob

Here “Jacob” refers to the descendants of Jacob. Alternate translation: “from among the descendants of Jacob” (See: [Metonymy](#))

a scepter will rise out of Israel

This means the same thing as the first part of the sentence. Here “scepter” refers to a powerful king. (See: [Parallelism](#))

out of Israel

Here “Israel” refers to future Israelites. Alternate translation: “from among the Israelites in the future” (See: [Metonymy](#))

shatter Moab’s leaders

This could mean: (1) he will break the heads of the leaders of Moab or (2) he will destroy the leaders of Moab.

all the descendants of Seth

This also refers to the Moabites, who were descendants of Seth.

ULT

17 I will see him, but not now. I will look at him, but not near. A star has marched from Jacob, and a rod has risen from Israel. And he will strike the sides of Moab and destroy all the sons of Seth.

Numbers 24:18

General Information:

Balaam finishes the first of his four prophecies.

Edom will become a possession of Israel

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: “The Israelites will occupy Edom” (See: [Active or Passive](#))

Seir will also become their possession

Here “Seir” refers to the people who lived near Mount Seir. This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: “Israel will also conquer the people of Seir” (See: [Active or Passive](#) and [Metonymy](#))

ULT

18 And Edom will become a possession, and Seir will become a possession, his enemies. And Israel will act strongly.

Numbers 24:19

Out of Jacob a king will come

Jacob was the ancestor of the Israelites. "Jacob" is a metonym that refers to the whole people group. (See: [Metonymy](#))

of their city

This refers to the city of Ar where Balak met Balaam. (See: [Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information](#))

ULT

19 And he will rule from Jacob, and he will destroy the survivor from a city."

Numbers 24:20

Balaam looked at Amalek

Here “Amalek” is a metonym that refers to the people of Amalek. This continues Balaam’s vision while turning to look in the direction of the Amalek nation, and then he prophecies about the Amalekites. (See: [Metonymy](#))

his final end

A singular pronoun is used because the Amalekites are spoken of as a single person. (See: [First, Second or Third Person](#))

ULT

20 And he saw Amalek and lifted up his discourse, and said, “The first of the nations is Amalek, and his end will be up to destruction.”

Numbers 24:21

the Kenites

This is the name of a people group who descended from Kain. (See: [How to Translate Names](#))

The place where you live is strong

“The place where you live is well defended”

your nest is in the rocks

This is a metaphor that means that they live in a secure place. Alternate translation: “your location is as secure as a nest high in the rocks” (See: [Metaphor](#))

ULT

21 And he saw the Kenite, and he lifted up his discourse, and said, “Your dwelling is permanent, and your nest is set in the cliff.”

Numbers 24:22

Nevertheless you Kenites will be consumed by fire when Assyria carries you away captive

Here the destruction of the Kenites is spoken of as if they were burned up in a fire. This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "Nevertheless the Assyrians will destroy you Kenites like a fire, and take you away as captives" (See: [Active or Passive](#))

ULT

²² But the Kenite will be for burning.
Until when will Assyria take you
captive?"

Numbers 24:23

Who will survive when God does this?

This rhetorical question can be translated as a statement. Alternate translation: "No one will survive when God does this!" (See: [Rhetorical Question](#))

ULT

23 And he lifted up his discourse and said, "Woe! Who can live apart from God establishing him?"

Numbers 24:24

Kittim

This is the name of a city on an island in the Mediterranean Sea.
(See: [How to Translate Names](#))

they, too, will end in destruction

The abstract noun “destruction” can be stated as an action. Alternate translation: “God will destroy them also”
(See: [Abstract Nouns](#))

ULT

24 And ships will be from the hand of Kittim, and they will afflict Asshur and will afflict Eber, and he, too, will be up to destruction.”

Numbers 24:25

Balak

This is the king of Moab. See how you translated this in [Numbers 22:2](#).

ULT

²⁵ And Balaam got up, and went, and returned to his place. And Balak also went on his way.

Numbers 25

Numbers 25 General Notes

Structure and formatting

The story of Balaam concludes in this chapter.

Special concepts in this chapter

Foreign women

Balaam told the young women from Moab to act friendly to the Israelite men and invite them to feasts in honor of their god Baal. The men went to the feasts and worshiped Baal. God was angry and killed 24,000 Israelite men.

Foreign women are often the source of problems in Israel. They caused the men to worship their false gods. (See: [god, false god, goddess, idol, idolater, idolatrous, idolatry](#))

Numbers 25:1

Shittim

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

ULT

¹ And Israel dwelled in Shittim, and the people began to prostitute themselves with the daughters of Moab,

Numbers 25:2

bowed down

This was an act of worship. (See: [Symbolic Action](#))

ULT

² And they called the people to the sacrifices of their gods. And the people ate and they worshipped their gods.

Numbers 25:3

Peor

Peor was the name of a mountain. See how you translated this in [Numbers 23:28](#).

Yahweh's anger was kindled

The increase in Yahweh's anger is spoken of as if it was a fire starting to burn. This can be stated in active form. See how you translated a similar phrase in [Numbers 21:20](#). Alternate translation: "Yahweh became very angry" (See: [Idiom](#) and [Active or Passive](#))

ULT

³ And Israel bound himself to Baal of Peor. And the nose of Yahweh burned against Israel.

Numbers 25:4

all the leaders of the people

It is implied that this refers to the leaders who were guilty of idolatry. The full meaning of this statement can be made clear. Alternate translation: "all the leaders of the people who are guilty of idolatry" (See: [Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information](#))

to expose them in the daylight

This means that the leaders of Israel will kill these people and leave their dead bodies out where all the people can see them.

ULT

⁴ And Yahweh said to Moses, "Take all the heads of the people and hang them up before Yahweh in front of the sun. And the burning of the nose of Yahweh may turn back from Israel."

Numbers 25:5

to Israel's leaders

"to Israel's leaders who were not guilty of idolatry"

Peor

Peor was the name of a mountain. See how you translated this in [Numbers 23:28](#).

ULT

⁵ And Moses said to the judges of Israel,
"Slay a man his men, the ones who
bound themselves to Baal of Peor."

Numbers 25:6

brought among his family members a Midianite woman

It is implied that he brought her among his camp to have sex with her. The full meaning of this statement can be made clear. Alternate translation: "brought a Midianite woman to the Israelite camp to sleep with her" (See: [Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information](#))

in the sight of Moses and all the community of the people of Israel

Here "in the sight of" is an idiom that means they heard about it, or found out about it. (See: [Idiom](#))

ULT

⁶ And behold, a man from the sons of Israel came and brought near to his brothers the Midianite woman, before the eyes of Moses and before the eyes of all the congregation of the sons of Israel. And they were weeping at the opening of the tent of meeting.

Numbers 25:7

Eleazar

This is the name of Aaron's son. See how you translated it in [Numbers 3:2](#).

ULT

⁷ And Phinehas the son of Eleazar the son of Aaron the priest, saw and rose up from the midst of the congregation, and took a spear in his hand.

Numbers 25:8

He followed

“Phinehas followed”

ULT

⁸ And he came after the man of Israel into the domed tent, and he pierced the two of them, the man of Israel and the woman in her stomach. And the plague was stopped from on the sons of Israel.

Numbers 25:9

(There are no notes for this verse.)

ULT

⁹ And the ones who died by the plague were 24,000.

Numbers 25:10

(There are no notes for this verse.)

ULT

¹⁰ And Yahweh spoke to Moses, saying,

Numbers 25:11

Connecting Statement:

Yahweh begins to speak to Moses.

turned my rage away from the people of Israel

God's rage is spoken of as if it were something that could be physically pushed aside in order to stop it. Alternate translation: "caused me to no longer be angry with the people of Israel" (See: [Metaphor](#))

ULT

11 "Phinehas the son of Eleazar the son of Aaron the priest, has turned my heat from on the sons of Israel by his being zealous with my zeal in the midst of them. And I will not make an end of the sons of Israel in my zeal.

I have not consumed the people of Israel in my fierceness

God is spoken of as if he were a fierce animal that could have eaten up the people of Israel. Alternate translation: "I have not destroyed the people of Israel in my terrible anger" (See: [Metaphor](#))

Numbers 25:12

Connecting Statement:

This continues Yahweh's speech from verse 11.

ULT

¹² Therefore say, 'Behold, I am giving to him my covenant of peace.

Numbers 25:13

Connecting Statement:

This is the end of Yahweh's speech that begins in verse 11.

For him ... of Israel.'''

This is the end of Yahweh's speech from [Numbers 25:11](#). This has quotations within quotations. The direct quotations can be stated as indirect quotation. "Therefore say to them that Yahweh says that he is giving to Phinehas his covenant of peace. For him and his descendants after him, it will be a covenant of an everlasting priesthood because he was zealous for Yahweh, his God. He has atoned for the people of Israel." (See: [Quotes within Quotes](#) and [Direct and Indirect Quotations](#))

ULT

13 And it will be a covenant of a priesthood of eternity for him and for his seed after him, because he was zealous for his God and he made atonement for the sons of Israel.'''

Numbers 25:14

Now

This switches from the main story line to background information about Zimri and Kozbi. (See: [Background Information](#))

who was killed

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: “whom Phinehas killed” (See: [Active or Passive](#))

Zimri ... Salu

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

ULT

14 And the name of the man of Israel, the struck down one who was struck down with the Midianite woman, was Zimri the son of Salu, the leader of a house of a father of the Simeonites.

Numbers 25:15

Zur

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

Kozbi

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

ULT

15 And the name of the woman, the struck down Midanite woman, was Kozbi the daughter of Zur, who was the head of a tribe of a house of a father in Midian.

Numbers 25:16

(There are no notes for this verse.)

ULT

16 And Yahweh spoke to Moses, saying,

Numbers 25:17

(There are no notes for this verse.)

ULT

17 “Vex the Midianites and you shall strike them down.

Numbers 25:18

with their deceitfulness

The abstract noun “deceitfulness” can be stated as a verb. Alternate translation: “by deceiving you” (See: [Abstract Nouns](#))

They led you into evil

“They persuaded you to do this evil thing”

in the case of Peor ... in the matter of Peor

Both of these phrases mean that these things happened at Mount Peor.

Peor

Peor was the name of a mountain. See how you translated this in [Numbers 23:28](#).

who was killed

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: “whom Phinehas killed” (See: [Active or Passive](#))

ULT

18 For they were vexing you by their deceitfulness when they deceived you over the matter of Peor and over the matter of Kosbi the daughter of the leader of Midian, their sister, the one struck down on the plague day over the matter of Peor.”

Numbers 26

Numbers 26 General Notes

Structure and formatting

The ULT sets the lines in 26:12-17, 20-26, 29-32, 35, 38-39, 44-45, 48-49, 57-58 farther to the right on the page than the rest of the text because they are long lists.

The people are counted in preparation for entering into the Promised Land. (See: [Promised Land](#))

Special concepts in this chapter

A new generation

None of the adults who came out of Egypt with Moses were still alive except the two faithful spies, Joshua and Caleb. (See: [faithful](#), [faithfulness](#), [trustworthy](#))

Numbers 26:1

(There are no notes for this verse.)

ULT

¹ And it happened after the plague that Yahweh spoke to Moses and to Eleazar the son of Aaron the priest, saying,

Numbers 26:2

Count all the community

They were only to count the men, not the women. The full meaning of this statement can be made clear. Alternate translation: "Count all the men of the community" (See: [Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information](#))

twenty years old and up

"20 years old and older" (See: [Numbers](#))

ULT

² "Lift up the heads of all the congregation of the sons of Israel from a son of 20 years and upward according to the house of their fathers, all who go out to war in Israel."

Numbers 26:3

spoke to them

“spoke to the Israelite leaders”

plains

A plain is a large flat area of land.

ULT

³ And Moses and Eleazar the priest spoke with them in the plains of Moab beside the Jordan at Jericho, saying,

Numbers 26:4

twenty years old and up

“20 years old and older” (See: [Numbers](#))

ULT

⁴ “From a son of 20 years and upward, just as Yahweh commanded Moses and the sons of Israel, the ones who came out from the land of Egypt.”

Numbers 26:5

General Information:

The leaders of Israel are counting the men, 20 years old and older, according to their tribes and families. (See: [How to Translate Names](#) and [Numbers](#))

was the firstborn of Israel

Here “Israel” refers to the man also known as Jacob.

From his son

The word “his” refers to Rueben.

ULT

⁵ Reuben was the firstborn of Israel. The sons of Reuben: Hanok, the clan of the Hanokite; of Pallu, the clan of the Palluite;

Numbers 26:6

(There are no notes for this verse.)

ULT

⁶ of Hezron, the clan of the Hezronite; of Karmi, the clan of the Karmite.

Numbers 26:7

43,730 men

“forty-three thousand seven hundred and thirty men” (See: [Numbers](#))

ULT

⁷ These were the clans of the Reubenite. And their counted ones were 43,730.

Numbers 26:8

General Information:

The leaders of Israel are counting the men, 20 years old and older, according to their tribes and families. (See: [How to Translate Names](#))

ULT

⁸ And the son of Pallu was Eliab.

Eliab

See how you translated this man's name in [Numbers 16:1](#).

Numbers 26:9

Eliab ... Dathan ... Abiram

See how you translated these men's names in [Numbers 16:1](#).

ULT

⁹ And the sons of Eliab were Nemuel and Dathan and Abiram. This is Dathan and Abiram, the called ones of the congregation, who rebelled against Moses and against Aaron with the congregation of Korah when they rebelled against Yahweh.

Numbers 26:10

The earth opened its mouth and swallowed them up

Here the earth is spoken of as if it were a person opening its mouth and eating something. Alternate translation: “Yahweh caused the earth to split open, and the men fell in the hole” (See: [Personification](#))

ULT

¹⁰ And the earth opened its mouth and swallowed them and Korah when the congregation died, when the fire ate 250 men, and they became a sign.

fire devoured 250 men

Here the fire is spoken of as if it were a large animal devouring something. Alternate translation: “Yahweh caused a fire that killed 250 men” (See: [Personification](#))

250 men

“two hundred and fifty men” (See: [Numbers](#))

Numbers 26:11

Korah's line

"all of Korah's family"

die out

"end"

ULT

11 And the sons of Korah did not die.

Numbers 26:12

General Information:

The leaders of Israel are counting the men, 20 years old and older, according to their tribes and families. (See: [How to Translate Names](#) and [Numbers](#))

ULT

12 The sons of Simeon according to their clans: of Nemuel, the clan of the Nemuelite; of Jamin, the clan of the Jaminite; of Jakin, the clan of the Jakinite;

Numbers 26:13

(There are no notes for this verse.)

ULT

¹³ of Zerah, the clan of the Zerahite; of Shaul, the clan of the Shaulite.

Numbers 26:14

22,200 men

“twenty-two thousand two hundred men” (See: [Numbers](#))

ULT

¹⁴ These were the clans of the Simeonite, 22,200.

Numbers 26:15

General Information:

The leaders of Israel are counting the men, 20 years old and older, according to their tribes and families. (See: [How to Translate Names](#) and [Numbers](#))

ULT

15 The sons of Gad according to their clans: of Zephon, the clan of the Zephonite; of Haggi, the clan of the Haggite; of Shuni, the clan of the Shunite;

Numbers 26:16

(There are no notes for this verse.)

ULT

16 of Ozni, the clan of the Oznite; of Eri,
the clan of the Erite;

Numbers 26:17

(There are no notes for this verse.)

ULT

17 of Arod, the clan of the Arodite; of
Areli, the clan of the Arelite.

Numbers 26:18

40,500 men

“forty thousand five hundred men” (See: [Numbers](#))

ULT

18 These were the clans of the sons of Gad according to their counted ones, 40,500.

Numbers 26:19

General Information:

The leaders of Israel are counting the men, 20 years old and older, according to their tribes and families. (See: [How to Translate Names](#) and [Numbers](#))

ULT

19 The sons of Judah were Er and Onan, and Er and Onan died in the land of Canaan.

Numbers 26:20

(There are no notes for this verse.)

ULT

²⁰ And the sons of Judah according to their clans were: of Shelah, the clan of the Shelanite; of Perez, the clan of the Perezite; of Zerah, the clan of the Zerahite.

Numbers 26:21

(There are no notes for this verse.)

ULT

²¹ And the sons of Perez were: of Hezron, the clan of the Hezronite; of Hamul, the clan of the Hamulite.

Numbers 26:22

76,500 men

“seventy-six thousand five hundred men” (See: [Numbers](#))

ULT

²² These were the clans of Judah according to their counted ones, 76,500.

Numbers 26:23

General Information:

The leaders of Israel are counting the men, 20 years old and older, according to their tribes and families. (See: [How to Translate Names](#) and [Numbers](#))

ULT

23 The sons of Issachar according to their clans: Tola, the clan of the Tolaite; of Puah, the clan of the Puite;

Numbers 26:24

(There are no notes for this verse.)

ULT

²⁴ of Jashub, the clan of the Jashubite; of Shimron, the clan of the Shimronite.

Numbers 26:25

64,300 men

“sixty-four thousand three hundred men” (See: [Numbers](#))

ULT

²⁵ These were the clans of Issachar according to their counted ones, 64,300.

Numbers 26:26

General Information:

The leaders of Israel are counting the men, 20 years old and older, according to their tribes and families. (See: [How to Translate Names](#) and [Numbers](#))

ULT

26 The sons of Zebulun according to their clans: of Sered, the clan of the Seredite; of Elon, the clan of the Elonite; of Jahleel, the clan of the Jahleelite.

Numbers 26:27

60,500 men

“sixty thousand five hundred men” (See: [Numbers](#))

ULT

²⁷ These were the clans of the Zebulunite according to their counted ones, 60,500.

Numbers 26:28

General Information:

The leaders of Israel are counting the men, 20 years old and older, according to their tribes and families. (See: [How to Translate Names](#))

ULT

²⁸ The sons of Joseph according to their clans were Manasseh and Ephraim.

Numbers 26:29

(There are no notes for this verse.)

ULT

²⁹ The sons of Manasseh: of Makir, the clan of the Makirite (and Makir fathered Gilead); of Gilead, the clan of the Gileadite.

Numbers 26:30

General Information:

The leaders of Israel are counting the men, 20 years old and older, according to their tribes and families. (See: [How to Translate Names](#))

ULT

³⁰ These were the sons of Gilead: Iezer, the clan of the Iezerite; of Helek, the clan of the Helekite;

Numbers 26:31

(There are no notes for this verse.)

ULT

³¹ and Asriel, the clan of the Asrielite;
and Shechem, the clan of the
Shechemite;

Numbers 26:32

(There are no notes for this verse.)

ULT

³² and Shemida, the clan of the Shemidaite; and Hepher, the clan of the Hepherite.

Numbers 26:33

General Information:

The leaders of Israel are counting the men, 20 years old and older, according to their tribes and families. (See: [How to Translate Names](#) and [Numbers](#))

ULT

33 And there were no sons for Zelophehad the son of Hepher, but daughters. And the names of the daughters of Zelophehad were Mahlah, and Noah, Hoglah, Milkah, and Tirzah.

Numbers 26:34

52,700 men

“fifty-two thousand seven hundred men” (See: [Numbers](#))

ULT

³⁴ These were the clans of Manasseh and their counted ones, 52,700.

Numbers 26:35

General Information:

The leaders of Israel are counting the men, 20 years old and older, according to their tribes and families. (See: [How to Translate Names](#) and [Numbers](#))

ULT

³⁵ These were the sons of Ephraim according to their clans: of Shuthelah, the clan of the Shuthelahite; of Beker, the clan of the Bekerite; of Tahan, the clan of the Tahanite.

Numbers 26:36

(There are no notes for this verse.)

ULT

³⁶ And these were the sons of
Shuthelah: of Eran, the clan of the
Eranite.

Numbers 26:37

32,500 men

“thirty-two thousand five hundred men” (See: [Numbers](#))

These were Joseph’s descendants, counted

The word “these” refers to all of the men descended from Joseph’s sons, Ephraim and Manasseh. The full meaning of this statement can be made clear. Alternate translation: “These were Joseph’s descendants, descended from his sons Manasseh and Ephraim, counted” (See: [Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information](#))

ULT

³⁷ These were the clans of the sons of Ephraim according to their counted ones, 32,500. These were the sons of Joseph according to their clans.

counted in each of their clans

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: “they counted them in each of their clans” (See: [Active or Passive](#))

Numbers 26:38

General Information:

The leaders of Israel are counting the men, 20 years old and older, according to their tribes and families. (See: [How to Translate Names](#) and [Numbers](#))

ULT

38 The sons of Benjamin according to their clans: of Bela, the clan of the Belaite; of Ashbel, the clan of the Ashbelite; of Ahiram, the clan of the Ahiramite;

Numbers 26:39

(There are no notes for this verse.)

ULT

³⁹ of Shephupham, the clan of the Shuphamite; of Hupham, the clan of the Huphamite.

Numbers 26:40

(There are no notes for this verse.)

ULT

⁴⁰ And the sons of Bela were Ard and Naaman: the clan of the Ardite; of Naaman, the clan of the Naamite.

Numbers 26:41

45,600 men

“forty-five thousand six hundred men” (See: [Numbers](#))

ULT

⁴¹ These were the sons of Benjamin according to their clans. And their counted ones were 45,600.

Numbers 26:42

General Information:

The leaders of Israel are counting the men, 20 years old and older, according to their tribes and families. (See: [How to Translate Names](#) and [Numbers](#))

ULT

⁴² These were the sons of Dan according to their clans: of Shuham, the clan of the Shuhamite. These were the clans of Dan according to their clans.

Numbers 26:43

64,400 men

“sixty-four thousand four hundred men” (See: [Numbers](#))

ULT

⁴³ All the clans of the Shuhamite according to their counted ones were 64,400.

Numbers 26:44

General Information:

The leaders of Israel are counting the men, 20 years old and older, according to their tribes and families. (See: [How to Translate Names](#) and [Numbers](#))

ULT

44 The sons of Asher according to their clans: of Imnah, the clan of the Imnite; of Ishvi, the clan of the Ishvite; of Beriah, the clan of the Beriite.

Numbers 26:45

(There are no notes for this verse.)

ULT

⁴⁵ The sons of Beriah: of Heber, the clan of the Heberite; of Malkiel, the clan of the Malkielite.

Numbers 26:46

(There are no notes for this verse.)

ULT

⁴⁶ And the name of the daughter of Asher was Serah.

Numbers 26:47

53,400 men

“fifty-three thousand four hundred men” (See: [Numbers](#))

ULT

⁴⁷ These were the clans of the sons of Asher according to their counted ones, 53,400.

Numbers 26:48

General Information:

The leaders of Israel are counting the men, 20 years old and older, according to their tribes and families. (See: [How to Translate Names](#) and [Numbers](#))

ULT

48 The sons of Naphtali according to their clans: of Jahzeel, the clan of the Jahzeelite; of Guni, the clan of the Gunite;

Numbers 26:49

(There are no notes for this verse.)

ULT

⁴⁹ of Jezer, the clan of the Jezerite; of
Shillem, the clan of the Shillemite.

Numbers 26:50

45,400 men

“forty-five thousand four hundred men” (See: [Numbers](#))

ULT

⁵⁰ These were the clans of Naphtali according to their clans. And their counted ones were 45,400.

Numbers 26:51

the complete count

“the total number”

601730

“six-hundred and one thousand, seven hundred and thirty” (See: [Numbers](#))

ULT

⁵¹ These were the counted ones of the sons of Israel: 601,730.

Numbers 26:52

(There are no notes for this verse.)

ULT

⁵² And Yahweh spoke to Moses, saying,

Numbers 26:53

The land must be divided

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: “You must divide the land” (See: [Active or Passive](#))

these men

This refers to all of the men that were counted in their clans, beginning in [Numbers 26:5](#).

according to the number of their names

“by the number of people in each clan”

ULT

53 “The land shall be apportioned to these ones as an inheritance by the number of the names.”

Numbers 26:54

General Information:

Yahweh continues speaking to Moses.

give more inheritance

In this passage, the word “inheritance” refers to land inherited. The full meaning of this statement can be made clear. Alternate translation: “give more land as an inheritance” (See: [Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information](#))

who were counted

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: “whom the leaders of Israel counted” (See: [Active or Passive](#))

ULT

⁵⁴ To the numerous you shall increase his inheritance, and to the small you shall lessen his inheritance. His inheritance shall be given, a man according to the mouth of his counted ones.

Numbers 26:55

the land must be divided

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: “you must divide the land” (See: [Active or Passive](#))

by random lots

“by casting lots”

it will be divided

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: “you will divide it” (See: [Active or Passive](#))

ULT

⁵⁵ Surely the land shall be apportioned by lots. They shall inherit according to the names of the tribes of their fathers.

Numbers 26:56

distributed to them

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: “and you must distribute the land to them” (See: [Active or Passive](#))

ULT

56 His inheritance shall be apportioned in accordance with the mouth of the lot, between the numerous and the small.”

Numbers 26:57

General Information:

This is a list of the Levite clans. Moses counts the Levites separately from the other tribes because they did not receive any land. (See: [How to Translate Names](#))

counted clan by clan

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: “that the leaders also counted clan by clan” (See: [Active or Passive](#))

Gershon ... Kohath ... Merari

See how you translated these men’s names in [Numbers 3:17](#).

ULT

57 And these were the counted ones of the Levite according to their clans: of Gershon, the clan of the Gershonite; of Kohath, the clan of the Kohathite; of Merari, the clan of the Merarite.

Numbers 26:58

Amram's

See how you translated this man's name in [Numbers 3:19](#).

ULT

58 These were the clans of the Levite: the clan of the Libnite, the clan of the Hebronite, the clan of the Mahlite, the clan of the Mushite, the clan of the Korahite. And Kohath fathered Amram.

Numbers 26:59

Amram

See how you translated this man's name in [Numbers 3:19](#).

She bore to Amram their children

"She and Amram had children"

ULT

⁵⁹ And the name of the wife of Amram was Jochebed, a daughter of Levi, she who was born to Levi in Egypt. And she bore to Amram Aaron, and Moses, and Miriam their sister.

Numbers 26:60

Nadab ... Abihu ... Ithamar

See how you translated these men's names in [Numbers 3:2](#).

ULT

⁶⁰ And to Aaron were born Nadab and Abihu, Eleazar and Ithamar.

Numbers 26:61

they offered before Yahweh unacceptable fire

Here the word “fire” is used to refer to “burning incense.” See how you translated a similar phrase in [Numbers 3:4](#). Alternate translation: “they burned an incense offering to Yahweh in a way that he did not approve of” (See: [Metonymy](#))

ULT

61 And Nadab and Abihu died when they offered unfamiliar fire before the face of Yahweh.

Numbers 26:62

who were counted

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: “whom the leaders counted” (See: [Active or Passive](#))

twenty-three thousand

“23,000” (See: [Numbers](#))

one month old and up

“one month old and older”

they were not counted

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: “but the leaders did not count them” (See: [Active or Passive](#))

because no inheritance was given to them

This can be stated in active form. Here “inheritance” refers to land inherited. The full meaning of this statement can be made clear. Alternate translation: “because Yahweh said they would not receive any land as an inheritance” (See: [Active or Passive](#) and [Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information](#))

ULT

62 And their counted ones were 23,000, every male from a son of a month and upward. But they were not counted in the midst of the sons of Israel because an inheritance in the midst of the sons of Israel was not given to them.

Numbers 26:63

who were counted by Moses and Eleazar the priest

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: “whom Moses and Eleazar the priest counted” (See: [Active or Passive](#))

ULT

⁶³ These are the counted ones of Moses and Eleazar the priest when they counted the sons of Israel in the plains of Moab beside the Jordan at Jericho.

Numbers 26:64

there was no man

“there were no men”

who had been counted by Moses and Aaron the priest

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: “whom Moses and Aaron the priest had counted” (See: [Active or Passive](#))

when the descendants of Israel were counted

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: “when they counted the descendants of Israel” (See: [Active or Passive](#))

ULT

⁶⁴ And among these there was not a man from the counted ones of Moses and Aaron the priest when they counted the sons of Israel in the wilderness of Sinai.

Numbers 26:65

There was not a man left among them, except

The word “them” refers to all of the people who were counted in the wilderness of Sinai. This can be stated in positive form. Alternate translation: “The only ones who were still alive were” (See: [Double Negatives](#))

son of Jephunneh

Jephunneh was Caleb’s father. See how you translated this in [Numbers 13:6](#).

son of Nun

Nun was Joshua’s father. See how you translated this in [Numbers 11:28](#).

ULT

65 For Yahweh had said to them, “You shall surely die in the wilderness and a man shall not remain from them, except Caleb the son of Jephunneh and Joshua the son of Nun.”

Numbers 27

Numbers 27 General Notes

Special concepts in this chapter

Daughters

The daughters of Korah received no land because their father was punished by Yahweh. Yahweh still graciously gave them their father's portion of land. (See: [grace](#), [gracious](#))

The new leader is Joshua

God told Moses to appoint Joshua as the new leader. Joshua became Yahweh's anointed leader. (See: [appoint](#), [appointed](#) and [anoint](#), [anointed](#), [anointing](#))

Numbers 27:1

Then to Moses came the daughters of Zelophehad ... son of Joseph

“Then the daughters of Zelophehad son of Hepher son of Gilead son of Machir son of Manasseh, of the clans of Manasseh son of Joseph came to Moses.” This tells us the genealogy of Zelophehad.

Zelophehad son of Hepher ... Mahlah, Noah, Hoglah, Milkah, and Tirzah

See how you translated these men’s names in [Numbers 26:33](#).

Gilead ... Machir

See how you translated these men’s names in [Numbers 26:29](#).

ULT

¹ And the daughters of Zelophehad the son of Hepher the son of Gilead the son of Machir the son of Manasseh, of the clans of Manasseh the son of Joseph came near. And these were the names of his daughters: Mahlah, Noah, and Hoglah, and Milkah, and Tirzah.

Numbers 27:2

They stood

“The daughters of Zelophehad stood”

ULT

² And they stood before the face of Moses, and before the face of Eleazar the priest, and before the face of the leaders, and all the congregation at the opening of the tent of meeting, saying,

Numbers 27:3

who conspired against Yahweh in the company of Korah

The people in the company of Korah gathered together and rebelled against Yahweh. Yahweh caused them to die, because of their sin. The full meaning of this statement can be made clear. Alternate translation: "who died because they were among Korah's followers who rebelled against Yahweh" (See: [Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information](#))

for his own sin

"because of his own sin"

ULT

³ "Our father died in the wilderness, and he was not in the midst of the congregation who assembled against Yahweh with the congregation of Korah. But he died in his sin and there were no sons for him."

Numbers 27:4

Why should our father's name be taken away from among his clan members because he had no son?

At that time, only sons received land as an inheritance. The daughters use this question to suggest that they should receive the inheritance and continue the family clan. This can be written as a statement. Alternate translation: "You should not remove our father's name from the clan members just because he did not have a son." (See: [Rhetorical Question](#))

ULT

⁴ Why should the name of our father be withdrawn from the midst of his clan because there is no son for him? Give to us a possession in the midst of the brothers of our father."

Give us land among our father's relatives

This means that they are asking to inherit land near where their father's relatives are inheriting land. The meaning of this can be made clear. Alternate translation: "Give us land where our father's relatives live" (See: [Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information](#))

Numbers 27:5

(There are no notes for this verse.)

ULT

⁵ And Moses brought near their case
before the face of Yahweh.

Numbers 27:6

(There are no notes for this verse.)

ULT

⁶ And Yahweh spoke to Moses, saying,

Numbers 27:7

among their father's relatives

This means that they will be inherit land where their father's relatives are inheriting land. The full meaning of this statement can be made clear. Alternate translation: "where their father's relatives live" (See: [Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information](#))

ULT

⁷ "The daughters of Zelophehad are speaking rightly. You shall certainly give to them the possession of an inheritance in the midst of the brothers of their father. And you shall cause the inheritance of their father to pass over to them.

Numbers 27:8

(There are no notes for this verse.)

ULT

⁸ And you shall speak to the sons of Israel, saying, 'If a man dies and there is no son for him, then you shall cause his inheritance to pass over to his daughter.

Numbers 27:9

General Information:

This continues God's law about who will receive land if a man does not have any sons.

ULT

⁹ And if there is no daughter for him,
then you shall give his inheritance to his
brothers.

Numbers 27:10

(There are no notes for this verse.)

ULT

10 And if there are no brothers for him, then you shall give his inheritance to the brothers of his father.

Numbers 27:11

be a law established by decree for the people of Israel

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: “be a law that all the people of Israel must obey” (See: [Active or Passive](#))

has commanded me

Here “me” refers to Moses.

ULT

11 And if there are no brothers for his father, then you shall give his inheritance to his blood-relative, the nearest to him from his clan, and he shall take possession of it. And it shall be for the sons of Israel as a statute of judgment, just as Yahweh has commanded Moses.”

Numbers 27:12

mountains of Abarim

This is a range of mountains in Moab. (See: [How to Translate Names](#))

that I have given to the people of Israel

Here Yahweh speaks about the land that he is giving to Israel as if he has already given it to them. He speaks this way to emphasize that he is committed to give it to them. Alternate translation: “that I will give to the people of Israel” (See: [Metaphor](#))

ULT

12 And Yahweh said to Moses, “Go up to this mountain of Abarim, and see the land that I have given to the sons of Israel.

Numbers 27:13

you, too, must be gathered to your people

This is a euphemism that means Moses will die and his spirit will go to the place where his ancestors are. Alternate translation: “you must die” (See: [Euphemism](#))

like Aaron your brother

You can make clear the understood information that Aaron died. Alternate translation: “like your older brother Aaron died” (See: [Ellipsis](#))

ULT

13 And you shall see it and be gathered to your people, also you, just as Aaron your brother was gathered.

Numbers 27:14

you two rebelled

This refers to Moses and Aaron.

wilderness of Zin

See how you translated this phrase in [Numbers 13:21](#).

when the water flowed from the rock, in your anger

This refers to an event when Yahweh made water miraculously flow out of a rock. God told Moses to speak to the rock. Instead, Moses hit the rock because he was angry with the people. (See: [Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information](#))

you failed to honor me as holy

“you did not treat me as holy”

before the eyes of the whole community

Here the people of the people are represented by their “eyes” to emphasize what they saw. Alternate translation: “in front of the whole community” (See: [Synecdoche](#))

waters of Meribah

See how you translated this phrase in [Numbers 20:13](#).

ULT

¹⁴ because in the wilderness of Zin, in the quarrel of the congregation, you rebelled against my mouth to regard me as holy at the waters before their eyes” These are the waters of Meribah Kadesh in the wilderness of Zin.

Numbers 27:15

(There are no notes for this verse.)

ULT

15 And Moses spoke to Yahweh, saying,

Numbers 27:16

the God of the spirits of all humanity

This could mean: (1) here “spirits” refers to all people.” Alternate translation: “the God over all of humanity” or (2) the reference to “spirits” refers to God having given life and breath to all people. Alternate translation: “the God who gives breath to all people” or “the God who give life to all humanity” (See: [Synecdoche](#))

ULT

16 “May Yahweh, the God of the spirits of all flesh, appoint a man over the congregation,

a man over the community

To be “over” a group of people means to have authority to lead them. Alternate translation: “a man to lead the community” (See: [Idiom](#))

Numbers 27:17

a man who may go out and come in before them and lead them out and bring them in

This is an idiom that means a person who will lead all the people and also lead the army into battle. (See: [Idiom](#))

so that your community is not like sheep that have no shepherd

This is a simile that means without a leader the people will wander and be helpless. (See: [Simile](#))

ULT

¹⁷ who will go out before the face of them and who will come before the face of them and who will take them out and who will bring them in, and the congregation of Yahweh will not be like sheep that have no shepherd for them."

Numbers 27:18

Take Joshua son of Nun, a man in whom my Spirit lives

Yahweh's Spirit is in Joshua, meaning that Joshua obeys Yahweh and follows his commands.

lay your hand on him

This is a sign of dedicating someone to God's service. Alternate translation: "lay your hand on him to appoint him" (See: [Symbolic Action](#))

ULT

¹⁸ And Yahweh said to Moses, "Take for yourself Joshua the son of Nun, a man in whom is a spirit, and lay your hand on him."

Numbers 27:19

command him before their eyes to lead them

Here the people are represented by their “eyes” to emphasize what they see. Alternate translation: “in front of all of them command Joshua to lead the people of Israel” (See: [Synecdoche](#))

ULT

19 And you shall stand him before the face of Eleazar the priest and before the face of all the congregation. And you shall command him before their eyes.

Numbers 27:20

General Information:

Yahweh continues speaking to Moses about Joshua.

You must put some of your authority on him

Here Yahweh speaks of Moses giving some of his authority to Joshua as if it were an article of clothing that he could put on him. Alternate translation: “You should give him some of your authority” or “Let him decide what the people should do” (See: [Metaphor](#))

ULT

²⁰ And you shall give some of your authority on him, so that all the congregation of the sons of Israel will hear.

Numbers 27:21

Urim

This was a sacred stone that the High Priest wore on his chest plate. He used it to determine God's will. (See: [Translate Unknowns](#))

It will be at his command that the people will go out and come in

This means that Joshua will have authority to command the movements of the community of Israel. "Going out" and "coming in" are two opposite commands used to emphasize that he will have full command over their movements. Alternate translation: "He will command the community's movements" (See: [Merism](#))

both he and all the people of Israel with him, the whole community

Both of these phrases mean the same thing, and they are used together for emphasis. Alternate translation: "both he and the entire nation of Israel" (See: [Parallelism](#))

ULT

21 And he shall stand before the face of Eleazar the priest. And he shall ask for him by the judgment of the Urim before the face of Yahweh. In accordance with his mouth he shall go out and in accordance with his mouth he shall come in, he and all the sons of Israel with him and all the congregation."

Numbers 27:22

placed him before

“told him to stand in front of”

ULT

²² And Moses did just as Yahweh had commanded him. And he took Joshua and stood him before the face of Eleazar the priest and before the face of all the congregation.

Numbers 27:23

He laid his hands on him and commanded him to lead

“He” refers to Moses, and “him” refers to Joshua.

He laid his hands on him

The laying on of hands was a way of setting a person apart to do a special task for God. (See: [Symbolic Action](#))

to lead

You can make clear the understood information to lead the people. Alternate translation: “to lead the people” or “to be the leader of the Israelites” (See: [Ellipsis](#))

as Yahweh had commanded him to do

Here “him” refers to Moses.

ULT

²³ And he laid his hands on him and he commanded him, just as Yahweh had spoken by the hand of Moses.

Numbers 28

Numbers 28 General Notes

Special concepts in this chapter

Offerings for special days

God commanded the Israelites to make special offerings for Sabbaths, new months, Passover and firstfruits. On each of these occasions, specific sacrifices were required. (See: [Sabbath](#) and [Passover](#) and [firstfruits](#))

Numbers 28:1

(There are no notes for this verse.)

ULT

¹ And Yahweh spoke to Moses, saying,

Numbers 28:2

at the appointed times

"at the times that I haven chosen"

the food of my offerings made by fire to produce

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "the food offerings that you will burn on the altar produce" (See: [Active or Passive](#))

a sweet aroma for me

"a smell I enjoy"

ULT

² "Command the sons of Israel and say to them, 'You shall be careful to offer to me at its appointed time my offering, my food for my offerings made by fire, an aroma of my soothing.'

Numbers 28:3

General Information:

Yahweh continues telling Moses what the people must do.

the offering made by fire

This can be stated in active form. “the burnt offering” or “the offering you have burned by fire on the altar” (See: [Active or Passive](#))

ULT

³ And you shall say to them, ‘This is the offering made by fire that you shall offer to Yahweh: unblemished male lambs, sons of a year, two for the day, a burnt up offering continually.

Numbers 28:4

(There are no notes for this verse.)

ULT

⁴ One male lamb you shall do in the morning, and the second male lamb you shall do between the evenings,

Numbers 28:5

mixed with

This can be stated in active form. “which you have mixed with” (See: [Active or Passive](#))

a tenth of an ephah

“A tenth” means one part out of ten equal parts. This can be written in modern measurements. Alternate translation: “2 liters” or “a tenth of an ephah (which is about 2 liters)” (See: [Fractions](#) and [Biblical Volume](#))

one-fourth of a hin

“One-fourth” means one part out of four equal parts. This can be written in modern measurements. Alternate translation: “a liter” or “one-fourth of a hin (which is almost 1 liter)” (See: [Fractions](#) and [Biblical Volume](#))

beaten oil

“pressed oil” or “pure olive oil.” This refers to oil that has been pressed out of olives.

ULT

⁵ and the tenth of an ephah of fine flour for a grain offering, mixed with the fourth of a hin of beaten oil.

Numbers 28:6

that was commanded at Mount Sinai

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: “that Yahweh commanded at Mount Sinai” (See: [Active or Passive](#))

made by fire

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: “that you burned on the altar” (See: [Active or Passive](#))

ULT

⁶ It is a burnt up offering of continuity, the one done at Mount Sinai for an aroma of soothing, an offering made by fire to Yahweh.

Numbers 28:7

one-fourth of a hin

“One-fourth” means one part out of four equal parts. This can be written in modern measurements. Alternate translation: “a liter” or “one-fourth of a hin (which is almost 1 liter)” (See: [Fractions](#) and [Biblical Volume](#))

You must pour out in the holy place a drink offering of strong drink to Yahweh

This sentence describes the drink offering that is to accompany the lamb. The full meaning of this statement can be made clear. Alternate translation: “It must be a drink offering of strong drink and you must pour it out in the holy place to Yahweh” (See: [Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information](#))

ULT

⁷ And its drink offering shall be the fourth of a hin for one male lamb. You shall pour out in the holy place a drink offering of intoxicating drink to Yahweh.

Numbers 28:8

like the one offered

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: “like the one you offered” (See: [Active or Passive](#))

ULT

8 And you shall do the second male lamb between the evenings. You shall do like the grain offering of the morning and its drink offering, an offering made by fire, an aroma of soothing to Yahweh.

Numbers 28:9

General Information:

Yahweh continues telling Moses what the people must do.

two-tenths of an ephah

“Two-tenths” means two parts out of ten equal parts. This can be written in modern measurements. Alternate translation: “four and a half liters” or “two tenths of an ephah (which is about 4.5 liters)” (See: [Fractions](#) and [Biblical Volume](#))

mixed with oil

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: “which you have mixed with oil” (See: [Active or Passive](#))

the drink offering with it

Many offerings had a drink offering that was required to be offered with them. The full meaning of the can be made clear. Alternate translation: “the drink offering that accompanies it” (See: [Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information](#))

ULT

⁹ And on the Sabbath day: two unblemished male lambs, sons of a year, and two-tenths fine flour as a grain offering mixed with the oil, and its drink offering.

Numbers 28:10

(There are no notes for this verse.)

ULT

¹⁰ It is the burnt up offering of the Sabbath by its Sabbath, in addition to the burnt up offering of the continuity and its drink offering.

Numbers 28:11

General Information:

Yahweh continues telling Moses what the people must do.

ULT

11 And at the heads of your months, you shall offer a burnt up offering to Yahweh: two bulls, sons of cattle, and one ram, seven male lambs, sons of a year, unblemished;

Numbers 28:12

three-tenths of an ephah

“Three-tenths” means three parts out of ten equal parts. This can be written in modern measurements. Alternate translation: “six liters” or “three-tenths of an ephah (which is about six liters)” (See: [Fractions](#) and [Biblical Volume](#))

mixed with oil

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: “which you have mixed with oil” (See: [Active or Passive](#))

two-tenths of fine flour

The words “of an ephah” are understood and may be stated clearly. “Two-tenths” means two parts out of ten equal parts. This can be written in modern measurements. Alternate translation: “four and a half liters of fine flour” or “two-tenths of an ephah (which is about 4.5 liters) of fine flour” (See: [Ellipsis](#) and [Fractions](#) and [Biblical Volume](#))

ULT

¹² and three-tenths fine flour as a grain offering mixed with the oil for one bull, and two-tenths fine flour as a grain offering mixed with the oil for the one ram,

Numbers 28:13

a tenth of an ephah

“A tenth” means one part out of ten equal parts. This can be written in modern measurements. Alternate translation: “2 liters” or “a tenth of an ephah (which is about 2 liters)” (See: [Fractions](#) and [Biblical Volume](#))

made by fire

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: “that you burned on the altar” (See: [Active or Passive](#))

ULT

13 and a tenth, a tenth fine flour as a grain offering mixed with the oil for one male lamb. It is a burnt up offering, an aroma of soothing, an offering made by fire to Yahweh.

Numbers 28:14

half a hin

“Half” means one part out of two equal parts. This can be written in modern measurements. Alternate translation: “two liters” or “half a hin (which is two liters)” (See: [Fractions](#) and [Biblical Volume](#))

a third of a hin

“One third of a hin.” “A third” means one part out of three equal parts. This can be written in modern measurements. Alternate translation: “1.2 liters” or “One and one-fifth liters” or “half a hin (which is 1.2 liters)” (See: [Fractions](#) and [Biblical Volume](#))

one-fourth of a hin

“One-fourth” means one part out of four equal parts. This can be written in modern measurements. Alternate translation: “a liter” or “one-fourth of a hin (which is almost 1 liter)” (See: [Fractions](#) and [Biblical Volume](#))

ULT

14 And their drink offerings shall be half of a hin of wine for the bull, and a third of a hin for the ram, and a fourth of a hin for the male lamb. This shall be the burnt up offering of the month by its month for the months of the year.

Numbers 28:15

One male goat as a sin offering to Yahweh must be offered

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: “You must offer one male goat to Yahweh as a sin offering” (See: [Active or Passive](#))

ULT

¹⁵ And one buck of the goats shall be done as a sin offering to Yahweh, in addition to the burnt up offering of the continuity and its drink offering.

Numbers 28:16

General Information:

Yahweh continues telling Moses what the people must do.

the first month, on the fourteenth day of the month

“During the first month, on day 14 of the month.” This refers to the first month of the Hebrew calendar. (See: [Hebrew Months](#) and [Ordinal Numbers](#))

comes Yahweh’s Passover

“you must celebrate Yahweh’s Passover”

ULT

16 And in the first month, on day 14 of the month is the Passover of Yahweh.

Numbers 28:17

On the fifteenth day of this month

“On day 15 day of this month.” This refers to the first month of the Hebrew calendar. (See: [Hebrew Months](#) and [Ordinal Numbers](#))

a feast is to be held

This can be stated in active form. “you must have a feast” (See: [Active or Passive](#))

bread without yeast must be eaten

This can be stated in active form. “you must eat bread without yeast” (See: [Active or Passive](#))

ULT

17 And on day 15 of this month shall be a feast. Seven days you shall eat unleavened bread.

Numbers 28:18

On the first day

This refers to the first day of the feast. This can be stated clearly.
Alternate translation: "On day 1 of the feast" (See: [Ordinal Numbers](#) and [Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information](#))

ULT

18 On the first day shall be a convocation of holiness. You shall not do any work of labor.

there must be a holy assembly to honor Yahweh

"you must gather together to worship and honor Yahweh." The phrase "a holy assembly" means the people gather together to worship Yahweh. Worshiping Yahweh is a holy event.

Numbers 28:19

General Information:

Yahweh continues telling Moses what the people must do.

you must offer a sacrifice made by fire, a burnt offering

The idea of “burnt” can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: “you must burn an offering on the altar” (See: [Active or Passive](#))

ULT

19 And you shall offer an offering made by fire, a burnt up offering to Yahweh: two bulls, sons of cattle, and one ram, and seven male lambs, sons of a year. They shall be unblemished for you.

Numbers 28:20

three-tenths of an ephah

“Three-tenths” means three parts out of ten equal parts. This can be written in modern measurements. Alternate translation: “six liters” or “three-tenths of an ephah (which is about six liters)” (See: [Fractions](#) and [Biblical Volume](#))

ULT

20 And their grain offering: you shall do fine flour mixed with the oil, three-tenths for the bull and two-tenths for the ram.

mixed with oil

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: “which you have mixed with oil” (See: [Active or Passive](#))

two-tenths

The words “of an ephah of fine flour” are understood from the previous phrase. They can be repeated. “Two-tenths” means two parts out of ten equal parts. This can be written in modern measurements. Alternate translation: “four and a half liters of fine flour” or “two-tenths of an ephah of fine flour (which is about 4.5 liters)” (See: [Ellipsis](#) and [Fractions](#) and [Biblical Volume](#))

Numbers 28:21

a tenth of an ephah

“A tenth” means one part out of ten equal parts. This can be written in modern measurements. Alternate translation: “2 liters” or “a tenth of an ephah (which is about 2 liters)” (See: [Fractions](#) and [Biblical Volume](#))

ULT

21 A tenth, a tenth you shall do for one male lamb of the seven male lambs,

Numbers 28:22

to make atonement

The phrase “make atonement” can be expressed with the verb “atone.” Alternate translation: “to atone” (See: [Abstract Nouns](#))

ULT

²² and one male goat as the sin offering to make atonement for yourselves.

Numbers 28:23

required each morning

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: “which Yahweh requires each morning” (See: [Active or Passive](#))

ULT

23 You shall do these apart from the burnt up offering of the morning, which is for the burnt up offering of the continuity.

Numbers 28:24

As described here

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: “As I, Yahweh, have described here” (See: [Active or Passive](#))

the food of the offering made by fire

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: “you must burn the food offering on the altar” (See: [Active or Passive](#))

a sweet aroma for Yahweh

“as a sweet aroma for Yahweh”

It must be offered

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: “You must offer it” (See: [Active or Passive](#))

ULT

24 You shall do like these for the day, seven days, the food of the offering made by fire, an aroma of soothing to Yahweh. It shall be done in addition to the burnt up offering of the continuity and its drink offering.

Numbers 28:25

have a holy assembly to honor Yahweh

“gather together to worship and honor Yahweh.” The phrase “a holy assembly” means the people gather together to worship Yahweh. Worshiping Yahweh is a holy event.

ULT

²⁵ And on the seventh day there shall be a convocation of holiness for you. You shall not do any work of labor.

Numbers 28:26

General Information:

Yahweh continues telling Moses what the people must do.

the day of the firstfruits

“the day of the firstfruits, that is the day.” This refers to the day during the Festival of Weeks when they offer the grain offering to Yahweh.

have a holy assembly to honor Yahweh

“gather together to worship and honor Yahweh.” The phrase “a holy assembly” means the people gather together to worship Yahweh. Worshiping Yahweh is a holy event.

ULT

²⁶ And on the day of the firstfruits, when you offer the new grain offering to Yahweh in your festival of weeks, there shall be a convocation of holiness for you. You shall not do any work of labor.

Numbers 28:27

(There are no notes for this verse.)

ULT

²⁷ And you shall offer a burnt up offering as an aroma of soothing to Yahweh: two bulls, sons of cattle, one ram, seven male lambs, sons of a year,

Numbers 28:28

mixed with oil

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: “which you have mixed with oil” (See: [Active or Passive](#))

three-tenths of an ephah

“Three tenths” means three parts out of ten equal parts. This can be written in modern measurements. Alternate translation: “six liters” or “three-tenths of an ephah (which is about six liters)” (See: [Fractions](#) and [Biblical Volume](#))

three-tenths of an ephah

“Three tenths” means three parts out of ten equal parts. This can be written in modern measurements. Alternate translation: “six liters” or “three-tenths of an ephah (which is about six liters)” (See: [Fractions](#) and [Biblical Volume](#))

two-tenths

The words “of an ephah of fine flour” are understood from the previous phrase and can be repeated. “Two-tenths” means two parts out of ten equal parts. This can be written in modern measurements. Alternate translation: “four and a half liters of fine flour” or “two-tenths of an ephah of fine flour (which is about 4.5 liters)” (See: [Ellipsis](#) and [Fractions](#) and [Biblical Volume](#))

ULT

28 And their grain offering shall be fine flour mixed with the oil, three-tenths for one bull, two-tenths for the one ram,

Numbers 28:29

General Information:

Yahweh continues telling Moses what the people must do.

a tenth of an ephah

“A tenth” means one part out of ten equal parts. This can be written in modern measurements. Alternate translation: “2 liters” or “a tenth of an ephah (which is about 2 liters)” (See: [Fractions](#) and [Biblical Volume](#))

fine flour mixed with oil

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: “fine flour which you mix with oil” (See: [Active or Passive](#))

ULT

²⁹ a tenth, a tenth for one male lamb of the seven of the male lambs,

Numbers 28:30

to make atonement

The word “atonement” can be expressed with the verb “atone.”
Alternate translation: “to atone” (See: [Abstract Nouns](#))

ULT

³⁰ one buck of the goats to make atonement for yourselves.

Numbers 28:31

their drink offerings

This refers to the drink offerings that are required to accompany each of the animals when they are sacrificed. Alternate translation: “the drink offerings that are offered with them” or “the drink offerings that accompany them” (See: [Possession](#))

ULT

31 You shall do apart from the burnt up offering of the continuity and its grain offering. They shall be unblemished for you and their drink offerings.”

Numbers 29

Numbers 29 General Notes

Structure and formatting

This chapter continues the material from the previous chapter about offerings on specific days.

Numbers 29:1

General Information:

Yahweh continues telling Moses what the people must do.

In the seventh month, on the first day of the month

This refers to the seventh month of the Hebrew calendar. Alternate translation: "On day 1 of month 7" (See: [Hebrew Months](#) and [Ordinal Numbers](#))

ULT

¹ "And in the seventh month, on the first of the month, there shall be a convocation of holiness for you. You shall not do any work of labor. It shall be a day of horn blowing for you."

have a holy assembly to honor Yahweh

"gather together to worship and honor Yahweh." The phrase "a holy assembly" means the people gather together to worship Yahweh. Worshiping Yahweh is a holy event.

It will be a day when you blow trumpets

The word "you" refers to the people of Israel who here represent the priests. The priests blew the trumpet to begin a worship service or to gather the community together. Alternate translation: "It will be a day when the priests blow trumpets" (See: [Synecdoche](#))

Numbers 29:2

General Information:

Yahweh continues telling Moses what the people must do.

ULT

² And you shall do a burnt up offering
for an aroma of soothing to Yahweh:
one bull, a son of cattle, one ram, seven
male lambs, sons of a year,
unblemished.

Numbers 29:3

their grain offering

This refers to the grain offerings that are required to accompany each of the animals when they are sacrificed. Alternate translation: “the grain offerings that are offered with them” or “the grain offerings that accompany them” (See: [Possession](#))

ULT

³ And their grain offering shall be fine flour mixed with the oil, three-tenths for the bull, two-tenths for the ram,

mixed with oil

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: “which you have mixed with oil” (See: [Active or Passive](#))

three-tenths of an ephah

The phrase “of fine flour mixed with oil” is understood from the previous phrase and can be repeated. “Three-tenths” means three parts out of ten equal parts. This can be written in modern measurements. Alternate translation: “six liters of fine flour mixed with oil” or “three-tenths of an ephah (which is about six liters)” (See: [Fractions](#) and [Biblical Volume](#))

two-tenths

The phrase “of an ephah of fine flour mixed with oil” is understood from earlier in the sentence. “Two tenths” means two parts out of ten equal parts. This can be written in modern measurements. Alternate translation: “four and a half liters of fine flour mixed with oil” or “two-tenths of an ephah (which is about 4.5 liters)” (See: [Ellipsis](#) and [Fractions](#) and [Biblical Volume](#))

Numbers 29:4

one-tenth

The phrase “of an ephah of fine flour mixed with oil” is understood from earlier in the sentence. “One-tenth” means one part out of ten equal parts. This can be written in modern measurements. Alternate translation: “2 liters of fine flour mixed with oil” or “a tenth of an ephah (which is about 2 liters)” (See: [Fractions](#) and [Biblical Volume](#))

ULT

⁴ and one-tenth for one male lamb of the seven male lambs.

Numbers 29:5

to make atonement

The word “atonement” can be expressed with the verb “atone.”
Alternate translation: “to atone” (See: [Abstract Nouns](#))

ULT

⁵ And one buck of the goats shall be a sin offering to make atonement for yourselves.

Numbers 29:6

in the seventh month ... the first of each month

“in month 7...day 1 of each month.” The word “month” refers to a month of the Hebrew calendar. (See: [Hebrew Months](#) and [Ordinal Numbers](#))

of each month: the special burnt offering ... with it

“of each month--the special burnt offering ... with it.” This is the offering that is made on the first day of each month.

the regular burnt offering, its grain offering, and its drink offerings

This refers to the offerings the priests were to give every day. The grain offering and drink offering were to be offered with the regular burnt offering. Alternate translation: “the regular burnt offering, with the grain offering and drink offerings that accompany it” (See: [Possession](#))

you will obey what has been decreed

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: “you will obey Yahweh’s decree” or “you will obey what Yahweh had decreed” (See: [Active or Passive](#))

an offering made by fire to Yahweh

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: “an offering you burnt on the altar to Yahweh” (See: [Active or Passive](#))

ULT

⁶ It is apart from the burnt up offering of the month and its grain offering, and the burnt up offering of the continuity and its grain offering, and their drink offerings according to their ordinance, for an aroma of soothing, an offering made by fire to Yahweh.

Numbers 29:7

General Information:

Yahweh continues telling Moses what the people must do.

the tenth day of the seventh month

“day 10 of month 7” The word “month” refers to those in the Hebrew calendar. (See: [Hebrew Months](#) and [Ordinal Numbers](#))

have a holy assembly to honor Yahweh

“gather together to worship and honor Yahweh.” The phrase “a holy assembly” means the people gather together to worship Yahweh. Worshiping Yahweh is a holy event.

ULT

⁷ And on the tenth of this seventh month there shall be a convocation of holiness for you. And you shall afflict your lives. You shall not do any work.

Numbers 29:8

(There are no notes for this verse.)

ULT

⁸ And you shall offer a burnt up offering to Yahweh, an aroma of soothing: one bull, a son of cattle, one ram, seven male lambs, sons of a year. They shall be unblemished for you.

Numbers 29:9

fine flour mixed with oil

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: “fine flour which you have mixed with oil” (See: [Active or Passive](#))

three-tenths of an ephah

“Three-tenths” means three parts out of ten equal parts. This can be written in modern measurements. Alternate translation: “six liters” or “three-tenths of an ephah (which is about six liters)” (See: [Fractions](#) and [Biblical Volume](#))

two-tenths

The words “of an ephah” are understood from earlier in the verse. They can be repeated here. “Two-tenths” means two parts out of ten equal parts. This can be written in modern measurements. Alternate translation: “four and a half liters” or “two-tenths of an ephah (which is about 4.5 liters)” (See: [Ellipsis](#) and [Fractions](#) and [Biblical Volume](#))

ULT

⁹ And their grain offering shall be fine flour mixed with the oil, three-tenths for the bull, two-tenths for the one ram,

Numbers 29:10

a tenth of an ephah

"A tenth" means one part out of ten equal parts. This can be written in modern measurements. Alternate translation: "2 liters" or "a tenth of an ephah (which is about 2 liters)" (See: [Fractions](#) and [Biblical Volume](#))

ULT

10 a tenth, a tenth for the one male lamb, for the seven male lambs.

Numbers 29:11

of atonement

The word “atonement” can be expressed with the verb “atone.”
Alternate translation: “that atones for you” (See: [Abstract Nouns](#))

its grain offering, and their drink offerings

The grain offering was to be offered with the burnt offering. The drink offerings were to be offered with both the sin offering and the burnt offering. Alternate translation: “along with the grain offering and the drink offerings that accompany them” (See: [Possession](#))

ULT

11 One buck of the goats shall be a sin offering, apart from the sin offering of the atonement and the burnt up offering of the continuity and its grain offering and their drink offerings.

Numbers 29:12

General Information:

Yahweh continues telling Moses what the people must do.

the fifteenth day of the seventh month

“day 15 of month 7.” The word “month” refer to those in the Hebrew calendar. (See: [Hebrew Months](#) and [Ordinal Numbers](#))

have a holy assembly to honor Yahweh

“gather together to worship and honor Yahweh.” The phrase “a holy assembly” means the people gather together to worship Yahweh. Worshiping Yahweh is a holy event.

you must keep the festival for him

This is an idiom. Here the word “keep” means to observe or celebrate. The word “him” refers to Yahweh. Alternate translation: “you must observe the festival for Yahweh” or “you must celebrate the festival for Yahweh” (See: [Idiom](#))

ULT

¹² And on day 15 of the seventh month there shall be for you a convocation of holiness. You shall not do any work of labor, and you shall feast a feast to Yahweh seven days.

Numbers 29:13

a sacrifice made by fire

This can be stated in active form. "you must burn it on the altar"
(See: [Active or Passive](#))

thirteen young bulls, two rams, and fourteen male lambs

"13 young bulls, 2 rams, and 14 male lambs" (See: [Numbers](#))

ULT

13 And you shall offer a burnt up offering, a sacrifice made by fire, an aroma of soothing to Yahweh, 13 bulls, sons of cattle, two rams, 14 male lambs, sons of a year. They shall be unblemished.

Numbers 29:14

fine flour mixed with oil

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: “fine flour which you have mixed with oil” (See: [Active or Passive](#))

three-tenths of an ephah

The phrase “of fine flour mixed with oil” is understood from earlier in the sentence and can be repeated. “Three-tenths” means three parts out of ten equal parts. This can be written in modern measurements. Alternate translation: “six liters of fine flour mixed with oil” or “three-tenths of an ephah (which is about six liters)” (See: [Fractions](#) and [Biblical Volume](#))

thirteen bulls

“13 bulls” (See: [Numbers](#))

two-tenths

The phrase “of an ephah of fine flour” is understood from earlier in the sentence. “Two-tenths” means two parts out of ten equal parts. This can be written in modern measurements. Alternate translation: “four and a half liters of fine flour” or “two-tenths of an ephah (which is about 4.5 liters)” (See: [Ellipsis](#) and [Fractions](#) and [Biblical Volume](#))

ULT

14 And their grain offering shall be fine flour mixed with the oil, three-tenths for one bull for the 13 bulls, two-tenths for one ram for the two rams,

Numbers 29:15

fourteen lambs

“14 lambs” (See: [Numbers](#))

a tenth of an ephah

The phrase “of fine flour” is understood from earlier in the sentence. “A tenth” means one part out of ten equal parts. This can be written in modern measurements. Alternate translation: “2 liters of fine flour” or “a tenth of an ephah (which is about 2 liters)” (See: [Fractions](#) and [Biblical Volume](#))

ULT

¹⁵ and a tenth, a tenth for one male lamb for the 14 male lambs.

Numbers 29:16

its grain offering, and the drink offering with it

The grain offering and drink offering accompany the regular burnt offering.

ULT

¹⁶ And one buck of the goats shall be a sin offering, apart from the burnt up offering of the continuity, its grain offering, and its drink offering.

Numbers 29:17

On the second day of the assembly

“On day 2 of the festival.” Here the word “assembly” refers to the Festival of Weeks. (See: [Ordinal Numbers](#))

twelve young bulls, two rams, and fourteen male lambs

“12 young bulls, 2 rams, and 14 male lambs” (See: [Numbers](#))

ULT

17 And on the second day: 12 bulls, sons of cattle, two rams, 14 male lambs, sons of a year, unblemished.

Numbers 29:18

as were commanded

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

ULT

18 And their grain offering and their drink offerings for the bulls, for the rams, and for the male lambs shall be by their number according to the ordinance.

Numbers 29:19

its grain offering, and their drink offerings

The grain offering was to be offered with the burnt offering. Drink offerings were to be offered with both the sin offering and the burnt offering. Alternate translation: “along with the grain offering and the drink offerings that accompany them” (See: [Possession](#))

ULT

19 And one buck of the goats shall be a sin offering, apart from the burnt up offering of the continuity, and its grain offering, and their drink offerings.

Numbers 29:20

the third day of the assembly

“day 3 of the festival.” Here the word “assembly” refers to the Festival of Weeks. (See: [Ordinal Numbers](#))

eleven bulls, two rams, and fourteen male lambs

“11 bulls, 2 rams, and 14 male lambs” (See: [Numbers](#))

ULT

²⁰ And on the third day: 11 bulls, two rams, 14 male lambs, sons of a year, unblemished.

Numbers 29:21

as were commanded

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

ULT

21 And their grain offering and their drink offerings for the bulls, for the rams, and for the male lambs shall be by their number according to the ordinance,

Numbers 29:22

its grain offering, and their drink offerings

The grain offering was to be offered with the burnt offering. The drink offerings were to be offered with both the sin offering and the burnt offering. Alternate translation: “along with the grain offering and the drink offerings that accompany them” (See: [Possession](#))

ULT

²² and one male goat of the sin offering, apart from the burnt up offering of the continuity and its grain offering and its drink offering.

Numbers 29:23

General Information:

Yahweh continues telling Moses what the people must do during the festival in the seventh month.

the fourth day of the assembly

“day 4 of the festival.” Here the word “assembly” refers to the Festival of Weeks. (See: [Ordinal Numbers](#))

fourteen male lambs

“14 male lambs” (See: [Numbers](#))

ULT

23 And on the fourth day: 10 bulls, two rams, 14 male lambs, sons of a year, unblemished.

Numbers 29:24

as were commanded

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

ULT

24 And their grain offering and their drink offerings for the bulls, for the rams, and for the lambs, shall be by their number according to the ordinance.

Numbers 29:25

its grain offering, and their drink offerings

The grain offering was to be offered with the burnt offering. The drink offerings were to be offered with both the sin offering and the burnt offering. Alternate translation: “along with the grain offering and the drink offerings that accompany them” (See: [Possession](#))

ULT

²⁵ And one buck of the goats shall be a sin offering, apart from the burnt up offering of the continuity, its grain offering, and its drink offering.

Numbers 29:26

the fifth day of the assembly

“day 5 of the festival.” Here the word “assembly” refers to the Festival of Weeks. (See: [Ordinal Numbers](#))

fourteen male lambs

“14 male lambs” (See: [Numbers](#))

ULT

²⁶ And on the fifth day: nine bulls, two rams, 14 male lambs, sons of a year, unblemished.

Numbers 29:27

as were commanded

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

ULT

27 And their grain offering and their drink offerings for the bulls, for the rams, and for the lambs, shall be by their number according to the ordinance,

Numbers 29:28

its grain offering, and their drink offerings

The grain offering was to be offered with the burnt offering. The drink offerings were to be offered with both the sin offering and the burnt offering. Alternate translation: “along with the grain offering and the drink offerings that accompany them” (See: [Possession](#))

ULT

²⁸ and one male goat of a sin offering, apart from the burnt up offering of the continuity, and its grain offering, and its drink offering.

Numbers 29:29

the sixth day of the assembly

“day 6 of the festival.” Here the word “assembly” refers to the Festival of Weeks. (See: [Ordinal Numbers](#))

fourteen male lambs

“14 male lambs” (See: [Numbers](#))

ULT

²⁹ And on the sixth day: eight bulls, two rams, 14 male lambs, sons of a year, unblemished.

Numbers 29:30

as were commanded

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

ULT

³⁰ And their grain offering and their drink offerings for the bulls, for the rams, and for the lambs, shall be by their number according to the ordinance,

Numbers 29:31

its grain offering, and their drink offerings

The grain offering was to be offered with the burnt offering. The drink offerings were to be offered with both the sin offering and the burnt offering. Alternate translation: “along with the grain offering and the drink offerings that accompany them” (See: [Possession](#))

ULT

³¹ and one male goat of a sin offering, apart from the burnt up offering of the continuity, its grain offering, and its drink offerings.

Numbers 29:32

the seventh day of the assembly

“day 7 of the festival.” Here the word “assembly” refers to the Festival of Weeks. (See: [Ordinal Numbers](#))

fourteen male lambs

“14 male lambs” (See: [Numbers](#))

ULT

³² And on the seventh day: seven bulls, two rams, 14 male lambs, sons of a year, unblemished.

Numbers 29:33

as were commanded

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

ULT

33 And their grain offering and their drink offerings for the bulls, for the rams, and for the male lambs, shall be by their number according to their ordinance,

Numbers 29:34

its grain offering, and their drink offerings

The grain offering was to be offered with the burnt offering. The drink offerings were to be offered with both the sin offering and the burnt offering. Alternate translation: “along with the grain offering and the drink offerings that accompany them” (See: [Possession](#))

ULT

³⁴ and one male goat of the sin offering, apart from the burnt up offering of the continuity, its grain offering, and its drink offering.

Numbers 29:35

General Information:

Yahweh tells Moses what the people must do after the seven-day festival in the seventh month.

eighth day

This “eighth” is the ordinal number for eight. (See: [Ordinal Numbers](#))

have another solemn assembly

“gather together again to worship Yahweh.” This is another assembly similar to the one on the first day of the festival.

ULT

³⁵ On the eighth day an assembly shall be for you. You shall not do any work of labor.

Numbers 29:36

an offering made by fire

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: “you must burn it on the altar” (See: [Active or Passive](#))

ULT

³⁶ And you shall offer a burnt up offering, an offering made by fire, an aroma of soothing to Yahweh: one bull, one ram, seven male lambs, sons of a year, unblemished.

Numbers 29:37

their grain offering and their drink offerings

These offerings were to be offered with the bull, the ram, and the lambs. Alternate translation: “the grain offerings and the drink offerings” (See: [Possession](#))

as were commanded

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

ULT

³⁷ Their grain offering and their drink offerings, for the bull, for the ram, and for the male lambs, shall be by their number according to the ordinance,

Numbers 29:38

its grain offering, and their drink offerings

The grain offering was to be offered with the burnt offering. The drink offerings were to be offered with both the sin offering and the burnt offering. Alternate translation: “along with the grain offering and the drink offerings that accompany them” (See: [Possession](#))

ULT

³⁸ and one male goat of the sin offering apart from the burnt up offering of the continuity and its grain offering and its drink offering.

Numbers 29:39

These are what you must offer

"These offerings are what you must offer"

fixed festivals

"planned festivals." These are festivals that occurred at regularly scheduled times. The word "fixed" means "set" or "predetermined."

ULT

³⁹ You shall do these for Yahweh at your appointed times, apart from your vows and your voluntary offerings, for your burnt up offerings, and for your grain offerings, and for your drink offerings, and for your peace offerings."

Numbers 29:40

(There are no notes for this verse.)

ULT

⁴⁰ And Moses spoke to the sons of Israel according to all that Yahweh had commanded Moses.

Numbers 30

Numbers 30 General Notes

Special concepts in this chapter

Vows

Because a vow is a type of promise, men must do what they have vowed to do. A father or a husband has one day in which to cancel a woman's vow. Otherwise, she must do what she vowed she would do. (See: [vow](#) and [promise, promised](#))

Numbers 30:1

(There are no notes for this verse.)

ULT

¹ And Moses spoke to the heads of the tribes of the sons of Israel, saying, “This is the word that Yahweh has commanded:

Numbers 30:2

a man makes a vow

The words “a man” refer to any man, not one particular man. It refers only to men and does not include women. Alternate translation: “any man”

to bind himself with a binding promise

Here Moses speaks of a person promising to do something as if his promise were a physical object that he ties to himself. Alternate translation: “committing to fulfill a promise” or “promising to do something” (See: [Metaphor](#))

he must not break his word. He must keep his promise to do everything that comes out of his mouth

These two sentences have similar meanings and are combined to emphasize that he must fulfill his promises. Here “word” is a metonym that refers to what he said. (See: [Parallelism](#))

he must not break his word

The phrase “his word” refers to a man’s oaths and vows. Here Moses speaks of not fulfilling these as if they were physical objects that the man could break. Alternate translation: “he must fulfill his promises” (See: [Metaphor](#) and [Metonymy](#))

everything that comes out of his mouth

Here the word “mouth” is a metonym for the things that the man says. Alternate translation: “to do everything that he says he will do” (See: [Metonymy](#))

ULT

² When a man vows a vow to Yahweh, or swears an oath to bind a binding vow on his life, he shall not profane his word. He shall do according to all that came out from his mouth.

Numbers 30:3

binds herself with a promise

Here Moses speaks of a woman promising to do something as if her promise were a physical object that she ties to herself. Alternate translation: “commits herself to fulfilling a promise” or “promises to do something” (See: [Metaphor](#))

ULT

³ And if a woman vows a vow to Yahweh and binds a binding vow in the house of her father, in her youth,

Numbers 30:4

the vow and the promise

These two phrases have very similar meanings. They emphasize what she has promised to do. Alternate translation: “the vow” (See: [Doublet](#))

by which she has bound herself

Here Moses speaks of how a woman has committed herself to fulfilling a promise as if her promise were a physical object that she had bound to her body. Alternate translation: “that she has committed herself to fulfill” (See: [Metaphor](#))

he says nothing to reverse her

“he does not cancel what she has said”

will stand

This is an idiom. It means that her vows will remain in effect and that she will be required to fulfill them. Alternate translation: “she will be obligated to fulfill” (See: [Idiom](#))

ULT

⁴ and her father hears her vow and her binding vow that she bound on her life and her father is silent to her, then all her vows shall stand and every binding vow that she has bound on her life shall stand.

Numbers 30:5

her vows or the pledges

These two phrases have very similar meanings. They emphasize what she has promised to do. Alternate translation: “her vows” (See: [Doublet](#))

will stand

This is an idiom. It means that her vows will remain in effect and she will be required to fulfill them. See how you translated this phrase in [Numbers 30:4](#). Alternate translation: “she will be obligated to fulfill” (See: [Idiom](#))

Yahweh will release her

This refers to Yahweh forgiving her for not fulfilling her vows. The full meaning of this statement can be made clear. Alternate translation: “Yahweh will forgive her for not fulfilling her vows” (See: [Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information](#))

ULT

⁵ And if her father forbids her on the day of his hearing, any of her vows and her binding vows that she bound on her life shall not stand. And Yahweh will forgive her because her father forbade her.

Numbers 30:6

rash

something done without thinking

by which she has bound herself

Here Moses speaks of how a woman has committed herself to fulfilling a promise as if her promise were a physical object that she had bound to her body. Alternate translation: “which she has committed herself to fulfill” (See: [Metaphor](#))

ULT

⁶ And if she ever belongs to a man and her vows are on her, or thoughtless speech of her lips that she has bound is on her life,

Numbers 30:7

says nothing to her

You may need to specify that he says nothing to her about her vow. Alternate translation: "says nothing to her about her vow" or "does not tell her to have Yahweh release her from the vow" (See: [Ellipsis](#))

by which she bound herself

Here Moses speaks of how a woman has committed herself to fulfilling a promise as if her promise were a physical object that she had bound to her body. Alternate translation: "that she has committed herself to fulfill" See how this is translated in [Numbers 30:4](#). (See: [Metaphor](#))

will stand

This is an idiom. It means that her vows will remain in effect and that she will be required to fulfill them. Alternate translation: "she will be obligated to fulfill" See how this is translated in [Numbers 30:4](#). (See: [Idiom](#))

ULT

⁷ and her husband hears on the day of his hearing and is silent to her, then her vows shall stand, and her binding vows that she bound on her life shall stand.

Numbers 30:8

the vow that she has made ... the rash talk of her lips

“the vow that she has made ... that is, the rash talk of her lips.” These two phrases refer to the same thing. The second phrase describes the vow that the woman made. (See: [Parallelism](#))

the rash talk of her lips

The phrase “the rash talk” refers to the rash promise that she made. Here “her lips” means the woman herself. She is referred to as “her lips” because lips are related to what she says. Alternate translation: “the rash things she has said” or “her rash promise” (See: [Synecdoche](#))

with which she has bound herself

Here Moses speaks of how a woman has committed herself to fulfilling a promise as if her promise were a physical object that she had bound to her body. Alternate translation: “that she has committed herself to fulfill” See how this is translated in [Numbers 30:4](#). (See: [Metaphor](#))

Yahweh will release her

Here Moses speaks about Yahweh forgiving the woman for not fulfilling her vow as if he were releasing her from something that bound her. The full meaning of this statement can be made clear. Alternate translation: “Yahweh will forgive her” or “Yahweh will forgive her for not fulfilling her vow” (See: [Metaphor](#) and [Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information](#))

ULT

⁸ And if her husband forbids her on the day of his hearing, then he breaks her vow which is on her and the thoughtless speech of her lips that she bound on her life. And Yahweh will forgive her.

Numbers 30:9

General Information:

Moses continues telling the leaders of the tribes what Yahweh has commanded.

a divorced woman

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: “a woman whom a man has divorced” (See: [Active or Passive](#))

will stand against her

This is an idiom. It means that her vows will remain in effect and she will be required to fulfill them. See how you translated a similar phrase in [Numbers 30:4](#). Alternate translation: “she will be obligated to fulfill” (See: [Idiom](#))

ULT

⁹ And the vow of a widow and a cast out woman, all that she binds on her life shall stand on her.

Numbers 30:10

If a woman made a vow in her husband's house

This refers to a married woman. You can make the meaning of this statement clear. Alternate translation: "If a married woman makes a vow" (See: [Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information](#))

ULT

¹⁰ And if she vowed or bound a binding vow on her life by an oath in the house of her husband,

Numbers 30:11

then all her vows will stand

This is an idiom. The phrase “will stand” means that her vows will remain in effect and she will be required to fulfill them. See how you translated a similar phrase in [Numbers 30:4](#). Alternate translation: “then she must fulfill all her vows” (See: [Idiom](#))

ULT

11 and her husband hears and is silent to her, he does not forbid her, then all her vows shall stand, and every binding vow that she bound on her life shall stand.

Numbers 30:12

then whatever came out of her lips

Here what the woman said is referred to as something that came out of her lips. Alternate translation: “then whatever she said” (See: [Metonymy](#))

will not stand

This is an idiom. It means that her vows will not remain in effect and she will be not required to fulfill them. See how you translated this phrase in [Numbers 30:4](#). Alternate translation: “she will not be obligated to fulfill” (See: [Idiom](#))

Yahweh will release her

Here Moses speaks about Yahweh forgiving the woman for not fulfilling her vow as if he were releasing her from something that bound her. The full meaning of this statement can be made clear. Alternate translation: “Yahweh will forgive her” or “Yahweh will forgive her for not fulfilling her vow” (See: [Metaphor](#) and [Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information](#))

ULT

12 And if her husband ever breaks them on the day of his hearing, all that went out of her lips for her vows and for the binding vow of her life shall not stand. Her husband has broken them and Yahweh will forgive her.

Numbers 30:13

binding oath to afflict her

an oath by which the woman says that unless she fulfills the oath, God or other people have the right to afflict her

ULT

13 Every vow and every oath of a binding vow to afflict her life, her husband may make it stand and her husband may break it.

Numbers 30:14

binding promises

Moses describes a woman's promises as if they were something that she is physically bound by. Alternate translation: "obligations" or "promises" (See: [Metaphor](#))

will stand

This is an idiom. It means that her vows will remain in effect and that she will be required to fulfill them. Alternate translation: "she will be obligated to fulfill" See how this is translated in [Numbers 30:4](#). (See: [Idiom](#))

because he has said nothing to her

You can make clear the understood information. Alternate translation: "because he has said nothing to her about them" (See: [Ellipsis](#))

ULT

14 And if her husband is wholly silent to her from day to day, then he will make all her vows or all her binding vows which are on her stand. He made them stand because he was silent to her on the day of his hearing.

Numbers 30:15

then he will be responsible for her guilt

This means that he will be guilty of her sin instead of her if she does not fulfill her vow. The full meaning of this statement can be made clear. Alternate translation: “if she does not fulfill her vow, she will not be guilty of her sin, and he will be guilty instead of her” (See: [Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information](#))

ULT

15 And if he ever breaks them after his hearing, then he will bear her iniquity.”

Numbers 30:16

(There are no notes for this verse.)

ULT

16 These are the statutes that Yahweh commanded Moses, between a man and his wife, between a father and his daughter in her youth in the house of her father.

Numbers 31

Numbers 31 General Notes

Special concepts in this chapter

Midianites

Israel killed the Midianites, including Balaam, for tempting them to worship Baal. This battle was at Yahweh's command. Yahweh would bring justice. (See: [just](#), [justice](#), [unjust](#), [injustice](#), [justify](#), [justification](#))

Numbers 31:1

(There are no notes for this verse.)

ULT

¹ And Yahweh spoke to Moses, saying,

Numbers 31:2

Take vengeance on the Midianites for what they did to the Israelites

Yahweh was punishing the Midianites for convincing the Israelites to worship idols.

you will die and be gathered to your people

These two phrases mean basically the same thing. This is a polite way to emphasize that it is time for Moses to die and for his spirit to go to the place where his ancestors are. (See: [Parallelism](#) and [Euphemism](#))

ULT

² "Take vengeance, the vengeance of the sons of Israel, from with the Midianites. Afterward you shall be gathered to your people."

Numbers 31:3

Arm some of your men for war

"Give weapons to some of your men"

go against Midian and carry out Yahweh's vengeance on it

"go fight a war against the Midianites and punish them for what they
did to us"

ULT

³ And Moses spoke to the people,
saying, "Equip yourselves, some of the
men with you, for the war. And they will
be against Midian to give the
vengeance of Yahweh on Midian."

Numbers 31:4

a thousand

“1,000” (See: [Numbers](#))

ULT

⁴ You shall send to the war for all the tribes of Israel, a thousand for a tribe, a thousand for a tribe.”

Numbers 31:5

twelve thousand

“12,000” (See: [Numbers](#))

Israel’s thousands of men

“the thousands of Israel’s men”

one thousand was provided from each tribe

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: “every tribe sent 1,000 men to war” (See: [Active or Passive](#))

twelve thousand men armed for war

All 12 tribes sent men, including the tribe of Levi. Each tribe sent 1,000 men into battle. (See: [Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information](#))

ULT

⁵ And a thousand for a tribe were provided from the thousands of Israel, 12,000 equipped for battle.

Numbers 31:6

(There are no notes for this verse.)

ULT

⁶ And Moses sent them to the war, a thousand for a tribe, them and Phinehas the son of Eleazar the priest to the war. And the vessels of holiness and the blasting trumpets were in his hand.

Numbers 31:7

(There are no notes for this verse.)

ULT

⁷ And they waged war against Midian,
just as Yahweh had commanded Moses.
And they slew every male.

Numbers 31:8

Evi, Rekem, Zur, Hur, and Reba

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

Balaam son of Beor

Beor was Balaam's father. See how you translated this in [Numbers 22:5](#).

ULT

⁸ And they slew the kings of Midian with their pierced ones: Evi, and Rekem, and Zur, and Hur, and Reba, the five kings of Midian. And they slew Balaam the son of Beor by the sword.

Numbers 31:9

They took these as plunder

“They took the Midianites’ possessions as their own”

ULT

⁹ And the sons of Israel took captive the women of Midian and their children. And they plundered all their animals, and all their livestock, and all their wealth.

Numbers 31:10

They burned all their cities where they lived and all their camps

“Israel’s army burned all the Midianites’ cities where the Midianites lived and all the Midianites’ camps”

ULT

¹⁰ And they burned with the fire all their cities with their dwellings and all their encampments.

Numbers 31:11

They took

“The army of Israel took”

plunder

This refers to the material goods they recovered from killing the Midianite men.

ULT

11 And they took all the spoil and all the booty of human and of animal.

Numbers 31:12

plains

a large area of flat land

ULT

12 And they brought to Moses and to Eleazar the priest, and to the congregation of the sons of Israel, the captives and the booty and the spoil to the camp at the plains of Moab which are beside the Jordan at Jericho.

Numbers 31:13

(There are no notes for this verse.)

ULT

13 And Moses, and Eleazar the priest,
and all the leaders of the congregation
went out to meet them at the outside of
the camp.

Numbers 31:14

the commanders of thousands and the captains of hundreds

This could mean: (1) these numbers represent the exact amount of soldiers that these commanders and captains led. Alternate translation: “the commanders of 1,000 soldiers and the captains of 100 soldiers” or (2) the words translated as “thousands” and “hundreds” do not represent exact numbers, but are the names of larger and smaller military divisions. Alternate translation: “the commanders of large military divisions and the captains of smaller military divisions” (See: [Numbers](#))

ULT

¹⁴ And Moses was furious with the appointed ones of the army, the leaders of the thousands and the leaders of the hundreds, the ones coming from the battle of the war.

Numbers 31:15

Have you let all the women live?

The law was explicit on who would be permitted to live. The army violated the law by allowing all the women and children to live. This was a rebuke to the army leaders. (See: [Rhetorical Question](#))

ULT

15 And Moses said to them, "Have you let every woman live?"

Numbers 31:16

Look

This word is used here to draw the audience's attention to what is said next. Alternate translation: "Listen" (See: [Idiom](#))

ULT

16 Look, these were by the word of Balaam for the sons of Israel to commit unfaithfulness against Yahweh concerning the matter of Peor, and the plague was among the congregation of Yahweh.

Numbers 31:17

has known a man by lying with him

“has had sexual relations with a man” (See: [Euphemism](#))

ULT

17 And now, slay every male among the children and slay every woman who has known a man by the bed of a male.

Numbers 31:18

General Information:

Moses speaks to the commanders of the Israelite army about becoming clean before God.

who have not known a man by lying with him

“who have not had sexual relations with any man.” This refers to girls who were virgins. (See: [Euphemism](#))

ULT

18 And keep alive for yourselves every child among the women who has not known the bed of a male.

Numbers 31:19

All of you

Moses is referring to anyone who fought in battle, not just the commanders.

you must purify yourselves

They must become spiritually clean again before entering the camp.

ULT

19 And you, camp outside of the camp seven days, all who have slain a person and all who have touched a pierced one. Purify yourselves on the third day and on the seventh day, you and your captives.

Numbers 31:20

everything made of animal hide and goats' hair, and everything made of wood

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "everything that someone has made of animal hide, goats' hair, or wood" (See: [Active or Passive](#))

ULT

²⁰ And you shall purify every garment and every vessel of skin and every work of goats, and every vessel of wood."

Numbers 31:21

General Information:

Eleazar teaches the soldiers the customs of becoming ceremonially clean before Yahweh after going to war.

ULT

21 And Eleazar the priest said to the men of the army who had gone to the battle, "This is a statute of the law that Yahweh has commanded Moses:

Numbers 31:22

gold, silver, bronze, iron, tin, and lead

metals that were used during that time period

ULT

²² Only the gold, and the silver, the bronze, the iron, the tin, and the lead,

Numbers 31:23

that resists fire

“that will not burn”

put it through the fire

“put it into the fire”

water of cleansing

ULT

²³ every thing that can come through the fire you shall pass through the fire, and it will become clean. However, it must be purified with the water of purification. And all that can not come through the fire you shall pass through the water.

This refers to water that someone has mixed with ashes from a sin offering. See: [Numbers 19:17-19](#).

Numbers 31:24

then you will become clean

These are the customs of becoming ceremonially clean before Yahweh.

ULT

²⁴ And you shall wash your garments on the seventh day, and you will be clean. And afterward you may enter into the camp."

Numbers 31:25

(There are no notes for this verse.)

ULT

²⁵ And Yahweh spoke to Moses, saying,

Numbers 31:26

Count all the plundered things that were taken

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "Count all of the possessions that the soldiers took" (See: [Active or Passive](#))

the leaders of the community's ancestor's clans

"the leaders of each clan"

ULT

²⁶ "Lift up the head of the booty of the captives, of human and of animal. You, and Eleazar the priest, and the heads of the fathers of the congregation.

Numbers 31:27

(There are no notes for this verse.)

ULT

²⁷ And you shall divide the booty between the wielders of the war who went out to the battle, and all the congregation.

Numbers 31:28

General Information:

Yahweh continues speaking to Moses. The word “me” refers to Yahweh.

Then levy a tax to be given to me from the soldiers who went out to battle

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: “Collect a tax from the soldiers’ plunder and give it to me” (See: [Active or Passive](#))

every five hundred

“every 500” (See: [Numbers](#))

ULT

28 And you shall raise a tax for Yahweh from with the men of the war who went out to the battle, one life from 500, from human and from cattle, and from the donkeys, and from the flock.

Numbers 31:29

from their half

“from the soldiers’ half”

to be presented to me

ULT

²⁹ You shall take from half of them and give the contribution of Yahweh to Eleazar the priest.

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: “which he will present to me” (See: [Active or Passive](#))

Numbers 31:30

General Information:

Yahweh continues speaking to Moses.

Also from the people of Israel's half

"Also from the people of Israel's half of the plunder"

who take care

those who oversee and maintain the tabernacle and sacrifices to Yahweh

ULT

³⁰ And from the half of the sons of Israel you shall take one taken from the 50, from human, from cattle, from the donkeys, and from the flock, from every animal, and you shall give them to the Levites, the keepers of the keeping of the dwelling of Yahweh."

Numbers 31:31

(There are no notes for this verse.)

ULT

³¹ And Moses and Eleazar the priest did just as Yahweh had commanded Moses.

Numbers 31:32

Now

This word is used here to mark a break in the main teaching. Here Moses begins listing the amount of plunder and how much went to the soldiers, to the people, and to Yahweh.

675,000 sheep

“six hundred and seventy-five thousand sheep” (See: [Numbers](#))

ULT

³² And the booty, the remainder of the plunder that the people of the army plundered, was 675,000 sheep,

Numbers 31:33

seventy-two thousand oxen

“72,000 oxen” (See: [Numbers](#))

ULT

³³ and 72,000 cattle,

Numbers 31:34

sixty-one thousand donkeys

“61,000 donkeys” (See: [Numbers](#))

ULT

³⁴ and 61,000 donkeys,

Numbers 31:35

thirty-two thousand women

“32,000 women” (See: [Numbers](#))

women who had not known a man by lying with him

“women who had no had sexual relations with a man.” This refers to women who are virgins. (See: [Euphemism](#))

ULT

³⁵ and human lives, from the women who had not known the bed of a male, every life, 32,000.

Numbers 31:36

General Information:

Moses is listing the plunder that goes to the soldiers and the tax that goes to Yahweh. (See: [Numbers](#))

The half that was kept for the soldiers

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: “The soldiers’ part of the sheep” (See: [Active or Passive](#))

337,000 sheep

“three hundred and thirty-seven thousand sheep” (See: [Numbers](#))

ULT

³⁶ And the half of the portion of the ones who went out with the army: the number of the sheep was 337,500.

Numbers 31:37

was 675

“was six hundred and seventy-five” (See: [Numbers](#))

ULT

³⁷ And the tax for Yahweh from the flock was 675.

Numbers 31:38

thirty-six thousand

36,000 (See: [Numbers](#))

seventy-two

72 (See: [Numbers](#))

ULT

³⁸ And the cattle were 36,000 and their tax for Yahweh was 72.

Numbers 31:39

General Information:

Moses is listing the plunder that goes to the soldiers and the tax that goes to Yahweh. (See: [Numbers](#))

were 30,500

“were thirty thousand five hundred” (See: [Numbers](#))

sixty-one

61 (See: [Numbers](#))

ULT

³⁹ And the donkeys were 30,500, and their tax for Yahweh was 61.

Numbers 31:40

sixteen thousand

16,000 (See: [Numbers](#))

thirty-two

32 (See: [Numbers](#))

ULT

⁴⁰ And the human lives were 16,000, and their tax for Yahweh was 32 lives.

Numbers 31:41

to be an offering presented to Yahweh

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

ULT

41 And Moses gave the tax of the contribution of Yahweh to Eleazar the priest, just as Yahweh had commanded Moses.

Numbers 31:42

General Information:

Moses is listing the plunder that goes to the people and the tax that goes to Yahweh. (See: [Numbers](#))

ULT

⁴² And from the half of the sons of Israel whom Moses had divided from the men who waged war,

Numbers 31:43

337,500 sheep

“three hundred and thirty-seven thousand five hundred sheep” (See: [Numbers](#))

ULT

⁴³ and the half of the congregation from the flock was 337,500,

Numbers 31:44

thirty-six thousand oxen

36,000 oxen (See: [Numbers](#))

ULT

⁴⁴ and 36,000 cattle,

Numbers 31:45

(There are no notes for this verse.)

ULT

⁴⁵ and 30,500 donkeys,

Numbers 31:46

sixteen thousand women

“16,000 women.” It has been stated earlier that all the males and the married women captives were put to death (See: [Numbers](#) and [Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information](#))

ULT

46 and 16,000 human lives.

Numbers 31:47

General Information:

Moses is listing the plunder that goes to the people and the tax that goes to Yahweh. (See: [Numbers](#))

General Information:

The tax on the people's portion was higher than the tax on the soldiers' portion.

ULT

47 And Moses took from the half of the sons of Israel the taken, one from the 50, from human and from animal. And he gave them to the Levites, the keepers of the keeping of the dwelling of Yahweh, just as Yahweh had commanded Moses.

Numbers 31:48

the commanders over thousands and the captains over hundreds

This could mean: (1) these numbers represent the exact amount of soldiers that these commanders and captains led. Alternate translation: “the commanders over 1,000 soldiers and the captains over 100 soldiers” or (2) the words translated as “thousands” and “hundreds” do not represent exact numbers, but are the names of larger and smaller military divisions. Alternate translation: “the commanders over large military divisions and the captains over smaller military divisions” See how you translated a similar phrase in [Numbers 31:14](#). (See: [Numbers](#))

ULT

⁴⁸ And the appointed ones who were for the thousands of the army, the leaders of the thousands and the leaders of the hundreds, came near to Moses.

Numbers 31:49

Your servants have counted

The commanders refer to themselves as “your servants.” This is a polite way to speak to someone with greater authority.

not one man is missing

This can be stated in a positive statement. “we know for certain that every man is here” (See: [Litotes](#))

ULT

49 And they said to Moses, “Your servants have lifted up the heads of the men of the war who were in our hand, and not a man from us is missing.”

Numbers 31:50

General Information:

The officers of the army continue speaking to Moses.

armlets and bracelets, signet rings, earrings, and necklaces

These are all types of jewelry that people wore.

to make atonement for ourselves before Yahweh

“to thank God for saving our lives”

ULT

50 And we have offered the offering of Yahweh, a man what he found of the objects of gold, armlet, and bracelet, signet ring, earring, and ornament, to make atonement for our lives before the face of Yahweh.”

Numbers 31:51

the gold and all the articles of craftsmanship

“all the articles of gold” or “all the golden jewelry”

ULT

⁵¹ And Moses and Eleazar the priest took the gold from with them, every object of craft.

Numbers 31:52

All the gold of the offering that they gave to Yahweh—the offerings from the commanders of thousands and from the captains of hundreds—weighed

“All the gold of the offering that the commanders of thousands and the captains of hundreds gave to Yahweh weighed”

ULT

⁵² And all the gold of the contribution which they raised to Yahweh from with the leaders of the thousands and from with the leaders of the hundreds was 16,750 shekels.

from the commanders of thousands and from the captains of hundreds

This could mean: (1) these numbers represent the exact amount of soldiers that these commanders and captains led. Alternate translation: “from the commanders of 1,000 soldiers and from the captains of 100 soldiers” or (2) the words translated as “thousands” and “hundreds” do not represent exact numbers, but are the names of larger and smaller military divisions. Alternate translation: “from the commanders of large military divisions and from the captains of smaller military divisions” See how you translated a similar phrase in [Numbers 31:14](#). (See: [Numbers](#))

16750

“sixteen thousand, seven hundred and fifty” (See: [Numbers](#))

shekels

A shekel is 11 grams. (See: [Biblical Money](#))

Numbers 31:53

(There are no notes for this verse.)

ULT

⁵³ The men of the army had plundered,
a man for himself.

Numbers 31:54

as a reminder of the people of Israel for Yahweh

The gold will remind the people that Yahweh gave them victory. It will also remind Yahweh that the people fulfilled his revenge on the Midianites.

ULT

⁵⁴ And Moses and Eleazar the priest took the gold from with the leaders of the thousands and the hundreds. And they brought it to the tent of meeting, a memorial for the sons of Israel before the face of Yahweh.

Numbers 32

Numbers 32 General Notes

Structure and formatting

Reuben and Gad's inheritance

Reuben and Gad were given the land conquered east of the Jordan River. This land had good pastures, and suited these tribes because they had many sheep, goats and cattle. They had not yet entered into the Promised Land, and it would have been sinful to not fight with the rest of Israel. So they promised to enter the land to fight with the other tribes, and then return to their own land. (See: [sin](#), [sinful](#), [sinner](#), [sinning](#) and [Promised Land](#) and [promise](#), [promised](#))

Numbers 32:1

Now

This word is used here to mark a break in the main story line. Here Moses tells background information about the tribes of Reuben and Gad. (See: [Background Information](#))

ULT

¹ And the livestock of the sons of Reuben and of the sons of Gad was great, very numerous. And they saw the land of Jazer and the land of Gilead, and behold, the place was a place of livestock.

Numbers 32:2

(There are no notes for this verse.)

ULT

² And the sons of Gad and the sons of Reuben came and said to Moses, and to Eleazar the priest, and to the leaders of the congregation, saying,

Numbers 32:3

Ataroth, Dibon, Jazer, Nimrah, Heshbon, Elealeh, Sebam, Nebo, and Beon

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

ULT

³ “Ataroth, and Dibon, and Jazer, and
Nimrah, and Heshbon, and Elealeh, and
Sebam, and Nebo, and Beon

Numbers 32:4

General Information:

The people from Reuben and Gad continue speaking to Moses, Eleazar, and the other leaders.

the lands that Yahweh attacked before the community of Israel

Yahweh enabling the Israelites to conquer the people who lived in the land is spoken of as if Yahweh went before the Israelites and attacked the people. Alternate translation: “the lands where Yahweh enabled us to defeat the people living there” (See: [Metaphor](#))

We, your servants

The people of the tribes of Reuben and Gad refer to themselves in this way to show respect to a person of higher authority.

ULT

⁴ are the land that Yahweh struck before the face of the congregation of Israel. It is a land of livestock and livestock belongs to your servants.”

Numbers 32:5

If we have found favor in your eyes

Here “found favor” is an idiom that means be approved of or that the leaders are pleased with them. Here “eyes” are a metonym for sight, and sight is a metaphor representing his evaluation. Alternate translation: “If we have found favor with you” or “If you are pleased with us” (See: [Idiom](#) and [Metonymy](#) and [Metaphor](#))

ULT

⁵ And they said, “If we have found favor in your eyes, let this land be given to your servants as a possession. Do not make us cross over the Jordan.”

let this land be given to us

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: “give this land to us” (See: [Active or Passive](#))

Do not make us cross over the Jordan

They wanted the land on the east side of the Jordan River instead of crossing over to the west side and claiming land there. Alternate translation: “Do not make us cross over the Jordan to take possession of land on that side” (See: [Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information](#))

Numbers 32:6

Should your brothers go to war while you settle down here?

Moses asks this question to rebuke the people from the tribes of Gad and Reuben. Alternate translation: "It is wrong for you to settle down in this land while your brothers go to war." (See: [Rhetorical Question](#))

ULT

⁶ And Moses said to the sons of Gad and to the sons of Reuben, "Will your brothers go to the war and you yourselves will dwell here?"

Numbers 32:7

Why discourage the hearts ... the land that Yahweh has given them?

Moses asks this question to correct the people from the tribes of Gad and Reuben. Alternate translation: “Do not discourage the hearts ... the land that Yahweh has given them.” or “Your actions would discourage the hearts ... the land that Yahweh has given them.” (See: [Rhetorical Question](#))

ULT

⁷ And why do you discourage the heart of the sons of Israel from crossing over into the land that Yahweh has given to them?

discourage the hearts of the people of Israel from going

Here the word “hearts” represents the people themselves and refers to the seat of their emotions. Alternate translation: “discourage the people of Israel from going” or “cause the people of Israel to not want to go” (See: [Synecdoche](#))

Numbers 32:8

General Information:

Moses continues speaking to the people of Reuben and Gad.

ULT

⁸ Thus your fathers did when I sent them from Kadesh Barnea to see the land.

Numbers 32:9

Valley of Eshkol

This is the name of a place. See how you translated this in [Numbers 13:23](#). (See: [How to Translate Names](#))

They saw the land

This refers to seeing what was in the land. Alternate translation:

“They saw the strong people and cities in the land” (See: [Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information](#))

discouraged the hearts of the people of Israel

Here the word “hearts” represents the people themselves and refers to the seat of their emotions. See how you translated this in [Numbers 32:7](#). Alternate translation: “discouraged the people of Israel” (See: [Synecdoche](#))

ULT

⁹ And they went up as far as the wadi of Eshkol. And they saw the land and discouraged the heart of the sons of Israel to not enter into the land that Yahweh had given to them.

Numbers 32:10

Yahweh's anger was kindled

Yahweh becoming angry is spoken of as if his anger was a fire that begins to burn. This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "Yahweh became very angry" (See: [Metaphor](#) and [Active or Passive](#))

ULT

10 And the nose of Yahweh burned on that day. And he swore, saying,

Numbers 32:11

none of the men

“none of the people.” This phrase refers to both men and women.

twenty years old and up

“20 years old or older” (See: [Numbers](#))

completely followed me

Being devoted to Yahweh and obeying him are spoken of as if they were following Yahweh. Alternate translation: “completely obeyed me” or “been completely devoted to me” (See: [Metaphor](#))

ULT

11 ‘If the men who went up from Egypt, from a son of 20 years and upward, will see the ground which I swore to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob! For they are not fully after me,

Numbers 32:12

Jephunneh ... Nun

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

Kenizzite

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

ULT

¹² except Caleb the son of Jephunneh the Kenizzite and Joshua the son of Nun because they are fully after Yahweh.'

Numbers 32:13

Yahweh's anger was kindled against Israel

Yahweh becoming angry is spoken of as if his anger was a fire that begins to burn. This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "Yahweh became very angry with Israel" (See: [Metaphor](#) and [Active or Passive](#))

forty years

"40 years" (See: [Numbers](#))

all the generation ... sight was destroyed

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "he destroyed all the generation ... sight" or "all the generation ... sight had died" (See: [Active or Passive](#))

who had done evil in his sight

Being in someone's sight means to be in front of that person where he can see. Alternate translation: "who had done evil before Yahweh" or "who had done evil in Yahweh's presence" (See: [Idiom](#))

ULT

13 And the nose of Yahweh burned against Israel. And he made them wander in the wilderness 40 years until the finishing of all the generation who had done evil in the eyes of Yahweh.

Numbers 32:14

you have risen up in your fathers' place

The people of Reuben and Gad acting like their ancestors did is spoken of as if they were standing in the place where their ancestors did. Alternate translation: "you have begun to act just like your ancestors" (See: [Metaphor](#))

to add to Yahweh's burning anger toward Israel

The people causing Yahweh to become angrier is spoken of as if his anger was a fire and the people are adding more fuel to that fire. Alternate translation: "to cause Yahweh to be even more angry with Israel" (See: [Metaphor](#))

ULT

14 And behold, you have risen up in place of your fathers, a brood of sinful men, to add more to the burning of the nose of Yahweh toward Israel.

Numbers 32:15

all this people

“this entire people” or “all this generation of people”

ULT

15 If you turn from after him, then he will yet again leave him in the wilderness and you will have destroyed all this people.”

Numbers 32:16

(There are no notes for this verse.)

ULT

¹⁶ And they came near to him and said,
“Here we will build walls of the flock for
our livestock and cities for our children.

Numbers 32:17

will be ready and armed

“will be ready with weapons” or “will be ready to fight a war”

in the fortified cities

“in the secured cities”

ULT

17 And we ourselves will be equipped for war, hurrying before the face of the sons of Israel until when we have brought them into their place. And our children will dwell in the cities of the fortification because of the face of those who dwell in the land.

Numbers 32:18

General Information:

The leaders of Gad and Reuben continue speaking.

has obtained his inheritance

The land that the people were to receive as a permanent possession is spoken of as if it were an inheritance that they were to obtain. Alternate translation: “has taken possession of his portion of the land” (See: [Metaphor](#))

ULT

18 We will not return to our houses until the sons of Israel get an inheritance for themselves, a man his inheritance.

Numbers 32:19

(There are no notes for this verse.)

ULT

19 For we will not inherit with them from across of the Jordan and beyond, because our inheritance came to us from beyond the Jordan toward the sunrise."

Numbers 32:20

if you arm yourselves

“if you take your weapons”

before Yahweh

This means Yahweh will go with them to battle and enable them to defeat their enemy and take their land.
Alternate translation: “in the presence of Yahweh” (See: [Idiom](#))

ULT

²⁰ And Moses said to them, “If you do this thing, if you equip yourselves before the face of Yahweh for the war,

Numbers 32:21

until he has driven out his enemies from before him

“until Yahweh has driven out his enemies from his presence.” The pronouns here all refer to Yahweh. Yahweh enabling the Israelites to defeat their enemies is spoken of as if Yahweh were fighting their battles. Alternate translation: “until Yahweh has enabled your soldiers to defeat the enemy and force them away from his presence” (See: [Metaphor](#))

ULT

²¹ then every man equipped for war shall cross over the Jordan for you before the face of Yahweh, until he has dispossessed his enemy from his face

Numbers 32:22

the land is subdued before him

Here the word “land” refers to the people who live there. This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: “in his presence the Israelites have subdued the people who live in the land” (See: [Metonymy](#) and [Active or Passive](#))

you may return

It is implied that they will return to the east side of the Jordan. Alternate translation: “you may return to this land on the east side of the Jordan” (See: [Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information](#))

You will be guiltless toward Yahweh and toward Israel

This could mean: (1) “You will have fulfilled your obligation to Yahweh and to Israel” or (2) “There will be nothing for which Yahweh or the people of Israel can blame you.”

ULT

²² and the land is subdued before the face of Yahweh, then afterward you may return. And you will be free of obligation from Yahweh and from Israel. And this land will be for you for a possession before the face of Yahweh.

Numbers 32:23

Be sure that your sin will find you out

Moses speaks of sin as if it were a person who will condemn the guilty person. This means that the people cannot escape the punishment that their sin deserves. Alternate translation: “Know for sure that Yahweh will punish you for your sin” (See: [Personification](#))

ULT

²³ And if you do not do so, behold, you will have sinned against Yahweh. And know that your sin will find you.

Numbers 32:24

(There are no notes for this verse.)

ULT

²⁴ Build for yourselves cities for your children and walls for your livestock. And you shall do what has gone out from your mouth."

Numbers 32:25

Your servants

The people of Gad and Reuben refer to themselves as “your servants.” This is a polite way of speaking to someone with greater authority.

ULT

²⁵ And the sons of Gad and the sons of Reuben spoke to Moses, saying, “Your servants will do just as my master is commanding.”

Numbers 32:26

(There are no notes for this verse.)

ULT

²⁶ Our children, our wives, our livestock,
and all our animals will be there in the
cities of the Gilead.

Numbers 32:27

will cross over

You can make it clear that they will cross over the Jordan. Alternate translation: "will cross over the Jordan River" (See: [Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information](#))

every man who is armed for war

"every man prepared for war"

ULT

27 And your servants will cross over, every man equipped for war of the army, before the face of Yahweh for the war, just as my master has spoken."

Numbers 32:28

(There are no notes for this verse.)

ULT

²⁸ And Moses commanded Eleazar the priest, and Joshua the son of Nun, and the heads of the fathers of the tribes of the sons of Israel concerning them.

Numbers 32:29

every man who is armed

“every man who is ready with his weapon”

if the land is subdued before you

Here the word “land” refers to the people who live there. This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: “if Yahweh subdues before you the people living in the land” or “if they help you subdue the people living in the land” (See: [Active or Passive](#))

ULT

²⁹ And Moses said to them, “If the sons of Gad and the sons of Reuben cross over the Jordan with you, every equipped man for the war before the face of Yahweh, and the land is subdued before your faces, then you will give to them the land of the Gilead as a possession.

Numbers 32:30

**then they will acquire their possessions
among you in the land of Canaan**

“then the descendants of Gad and Reuben will receive land with you
in Canaan”

ULT

³⁰ And if the men equipped for war do
not cross over with you, then they will
take possession in your midst in the
land of Canaan.”

Numbers 32:31

(There are no notes for this verse.)

ULT

³¹ And the sons of Gad and the sons of Reuben answered, saying, "What Yahweh has spoken to your servants, so we will do."

Numbers 32:32

We will cross over armed

You can make it clear that they will cross the Jordan. Alternate translation: "We will cross over the Jordan ready to fight" (See: [Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information](#))

our possessed inheritance

The land that the people were to receive as a permanent possession is spoken of as if it were an inheritance that they were to obtain. Alternate translation: "the portion of land that we will possess" (See: [Metaphor](#))

will remain with us

This idiom refers to ownership. Alternate translation: "will be ours" (See: [Idiom](#))

ULT

³² We will cross over, the men equipped for war, before the face of Yahweh into the land of Canaan. And with us will be the possession of our inheritance from beyond the Jordan."

Numbers 32:33

the kingdom of Sihon ... and of Og

These are names of kings who ruled two separate kingdoms.

Alternate translation: "the kingdom of Sihon ... and the kingdom of Og" (See: [Ellipsis](#) and [How to Translate Names](#))

ULT

33 And Moses gave to them, to the sons of Gad and to the sons of Reuben, and to the half of the tribe of Manasseh the son of Joseph, the kingdom of Sihon the king of the Amorites, and the kingdom of Og the king of the Bashan, the land of its cities with the borders of the cities of the surrounding land.

Numbers 32:34

Dibon, Ataroth, Aroer

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

ULT

³⁴ And the sons of Gad built Dibon, and Ataroth, and Aroer,

Numbers 32:35

Atroth Shophan, Jazer, Jogbehah

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

ULT

³⁵ and Atroth Shophan, and Jazer, and Jogbehah,

Numbers 32:36

Beth Nimrah, and Beth Haran

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

ULT

³⁶ and Beth Nimrah, and Beth Haran,
the cities of fortification and the walls of
the flock.

Numbers 32:37

Heshbon, Elealeh, Kiriathaim

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

ULT

³⁷ And the sons of Reuben built
Heshbon, and Elealeh, and Kiriathaim,

Numbers 32:38

Nebo, Baal Meon ... Sibmah

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

their names were later changed

This can be translated in active form. Alternate translation: “people later changed the names of these cities” (See: [Active or Passive](#))

ULT

³⁸ and Nebo, and Baal Meon (names were changed) and Sibmah. And they called the names of the cities that they built by names.

Numbers 32:39

Machir

This is the name of a man. See how you translated this name in [Numbers 26:29](#).

ULT

³⁹ And the sons of Machir the son of Manasseh went to Gilead and captured it and dispossessed the Amorites who were in it.

Numbers 32:40

(There are no notes for this verse.)

ULT

⁴⁰ And Moses gave the Gilead to Machir the son of Manasseh, and he dwelled in it.

Numbers 32:41

Jair

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

Havvoth Jair

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

ULT

41 And Jair the son of Manasseh went and captured their tent villages. And he called them Havvoth Jair.

Numbers 32:42

Nobah

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

Kenath

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

ULT

⁴² And Nobah went and captured Kenath and its daughters. And he called it Nobah, by his name.

Numbers 33

Numbers 33 General Notes

Structure and formatting

This chapter is a summary of Israel's exodus from Egypt to the Promised Land, including their wandering through the desert. The phrase "they set out" means "they left."

Numbers 33:1

by their armed groups

“by their military divisions.” This means that each tribe had their own men, who were armed, to protect them. See how you translated “armed groups” in [Numbers 1:3](#).

ULT

¹ These are the journeys of the sons of Israel who went out from the land of Egypt according to their tribes by the hand of Moses and Aaron.

Numbers 33:2

as commanded by Yahweh

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

departure after departure

“from one place to another place”

ULT

² And Moses wrote down their departure points according to their tribes in accordance with the mouth of Yahweh And these are their journeys according to their departure points.

Numbers 33:3

General Information:

Moses lists the places the Israelites went after they left Egypt. (See: [How to Translate Names](#))

during the first month, leaving on the fifteenth day of the first month

Here “first” is the ordinal number one and “fifteenth” is the ordinal number fifteen. This is the first month of the Hebrew calendar. The fifteenth day is near the beginning of April on Western calendars. (See: [Hebrew Months](#) and [Ordinal Numbers](#))

the people of Israel left openly, in the sight of all the Egyptians

“the Israelites left in plain view of the Egyptians”

ULT

³ And they set out from Rameses on the first month, on day 15 of the first month, from the day after the Passover the sons of Israel went out with a raised hand before the eyes of all the Egyptians.

Numbers 33:4

their firstborn

This refers to the firstborn sons. Alternate translation: “their firstborn sons” (See: [Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information](#))

he also inflicted punishment on their gods

Yahweh proving that he is more powerful than all of the false gods that the Egyptians worshiped is spoken of as if Yahweh punished those false gods. Alternate translation: “he also proved that he is greater than their gods” (See: [Metaphor](#))

ULT

⁴ And the Egyptians were burying those whom Yahweh had struck down, all the firstborn. And Yahweh enacted judgment against their gods.

Numbers 33:5

General Information:

Moses lists the places the Israelites went after they left Egypt. (See: [How to Translate Names](#))

set out from

“departed from”

ULT

⁵ And the sons of Israel set out from Rameses and camped at Succoth.

Numbers 33:6

on the edge of the wilderness

“on the border of the wilderness”

ULT

⁶ And they set out from Succoth and camped at Etham, which is at the edge of the wilderness.

Numbers 33:7

(There are no notes for this verse.)

ULT

⁷ And they set out from Etham and turned back to Pi Hahiroth, which is on the face of Baal Zephon. And they camped before the face of Migdol.

Numbers 33:8

General Information:

Moses lists the places the Israelites went after they left Egypt. (See: [How to Translate Names](#))

passed through the middle of the sea

This refers to when Yahweh divided the Red Sea so that the Israelites could escape from the Egyptian army.

ULT

8 And they set out from the face of Hahiroth and passed through the midst of the sea to the wilderness. And they went a distance of three days in the wilderness of Etham and camped at Marah.

Numbers 33:9

twelve springs ... seventy palm trees

“12 springs...70 palm trees” (See: [Numbers](#))

ULT

⁹ And they set out from Marah and camped at Elim. And at Elim were 12 springs of water and 70 palm trees. And they camped there.

Numbers 33:10

(There are no notes for this verse.)

ULT

10 And they set out from Elim and camped beside the Sea of Reeds.

Numbers 33:11

General Information:

Moses lists the places the Israelites went after they left Egypt. (See: [How to Translate Names](#))

ULT

11 And they set out from the Sea of Reeds and camped in the wilderness of Sin.

Numbers 33:12

(There are no notes for this verse.)

ULT

¹² And they set out from the wilderness of Sin and camped at Dophkah.

Numbers 33:13

(There are no notes for this verse.)

ULT

13 And they set out from Dophkah and camped at Alush.

Numbers 33:14

where no water was found for the people to drink

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: “where the people could not find water to drink” (See: [Active or Passive](#))

ULT

¹⁴ And they set out from Alush and camped at Rephidim, and there was no water there for the people to drink.

Numbers 33:15

General Information:

Moses lists the places the Israelites went after they left Egypt. (See: [How to Translate Names](#))

ULT

15 And they set out from Rephidim and camped in the wilderness of Sinai.

Numbers 33:16

(There are no notes for this verse.)

ULT

16 And they set out from the wilderness of Sinai and camped at Kibroth Hattaavah.

Numbers 33:17

(There are no notes for this verse.)

ULT

17 And they set out from Kibroth
Hattaavah and camped at Hazeroth.

Numbers 33:18

(There are no notes for this verse.)

ULT

18 And they set out from Hazeroth and camped at Rithmah.

Numbers 33:19

General Information:

Moses lists the places the Israelites went after they left Egypt. (See: [How to Translate Names](#))

ULT

19 And they set out from Rithmah and camped at Rimmon Perez.

Numbers 33:20

(There are no notes for this verse.)

ULT

²⁰ And they set out from Rimmon Perez and camped at Libnah.

Numbers 33:21

(There are no notes for this verse.)

ULT

²¹ And they set out from Libnah and camped at Rissah.

Numbers 33:22

(There are no notes for this verse.)

ULT

²² And they set out from Rissah and camped at Kehelathah.

Numbers 33:23

General Information:

Moses lists the places the Israelites went after they left Egypt. (See: [How to Translate Names](#))

ULT

23 And they set out from Kehelathah and camped at Mount Shepher.

Numbers 33:24

(There are no notes for this verse.)

ULT

²⁴ And they set out from Mount
Shepher and camped at Haradah.

Numbers 33:25

(There are no notes for this verse.)

ULT

²⁵ And they set out from Haradah and camped at Makheloth.

Numbers 33:26

(There are no notes for this verse.)

ULT

²⁶ And they set out from Makheloth and camped at Tahath.

Numbers 33:27

General Information:

Moses lists the places the Israelites went after they left Egypt. (See: [How to Translate Names](#))

ULT

27 And they set out from Tahath and camped at Terah.

Numbers 33:28

(There are no notes for this verse.)

ULT

²⁸ And they set out from Terah and camped at Mithkah.

Numbers 33:29

(There are no notes for this verse.)

ULT

²⁹ And they set out from Mithkah and camped at Hashmonah.

Numbers 33:30

(There are no notes for this verse.)

ULT

³⁰ And they set out from Hashmonah
and camped at Moseroth.

Numbers 33:31

General Information:

Moses lists the places the Israelites went after they left Egypt. (See: [How to Translate Names](#))

ULT

31 And they set out from Moseroth and camped at Bene Jaakan.

Numbers 33:32

(There are no notes for this verse.)

ULT

³² And they set out from Bene Jaakan
and camped at Hor Haggidgad.

Numbers 33:33

(There are no notes for this verse.)

ULT

³³ And they set out from Hor Haggidgad and camped at Jotbathah.

Numbers 33:34

(There are no notes for this verse.)

ULT

³⁴ And they set out from Jotbathah and camped at Abronah.

Numbers 33:35

General Information:

Moses lists the places the Israelites went after they left Egypt. (See: [How to Translate Names](#))

ULT

³⁵ And they set out from Abronah and camped at Ezion Geber.

Numbers 33:36

(There are no notes for this verse.)

ULT

³⁶ And they set out from Ezion Geber and camped in the wilderness of Zin (it is Kadesh).

Numbers 33:37

(There are no notes for this verse.)

ULT

³⁷ And they set out from Kadesh and camped at Mount Hor, at the edge of the land of Edom.

Numbers 33:38

in the fortieth year after

Here “fortieth” is the ordinal number for forty. Alternate translation: “40 years after” (See: [Ordinal Numbers](#))

in the fifth month, on the first day of the month

This “fifth” is the ordinal number for five. This “first” is the ordinal number for one. This is the fifth month of the Hebrew calendar. The first day is near the middle of July on Western calendars. (See: [Hebrew Months](#) and [Ordinal Numbers](#))

ULT

38 And Aaron the priest went up to Mount Hor in accordance with the mouth of Yahweh and died there in the fortieth year of the going out of the sons of Israel from the land of Egypt, in the fifth month, on 1 of the month.

Numbers 33:39

123 years old

“one hundred and twenty-three years old” (See: [Numbers](#))

ULT

³⁹ And Aaron was a son of 123 years when he died at Mount Hor.

Numbers 33:40

The Canaanite, the king of Arad

“The Canaanite king of Arad”

Arad

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

heard of the coming of the people of Israel

“heard that the people of Israel were coming”

ULT

40 And the Canaanite, the king of Arad (and he was dwelling in the Negev in the land of Canaan), heard when the sons of Israel came.

Numbers 33:41

General Information:

Moses lists the places the Israelites went after they left Egypt. (See: [How to Translate Names](#))

ULT

41 And they set out from Mount Hor and camped at Zalmonah.

Numbers 33:42

(There are no notes for this verse.)

ULT

⁴² And they set out from Zalmonah and camped at Punon.

Numbers 33:43

(There are no notes for this verse.)

ULT

⁴³ And they set out from Punon and camped at Oboth.

Numbers 33:44

General Information:

Moses lists the places the Israelites went after they left Egypt. (See: [How to Translate Names](#))

ULT

44 And they set out from Oboth and camped at Iye Abarim, on the border of Moab.

Numbers 33:45

(There are no notes for this verse.)

ULT

⁴⁵ And they set out from Iye and camped at Dibon Gad.

Numbers 33:46

(There are no notes for this verse.)

ULT

⁴⁶ And they set out from Dibon Gad and camped at Almon Diblathaim.

Numbers 33:47

General Information:

Moses lists the places the Israelites went after they left Egypt. (See: [How to Translate Names](#))

ULT

47 And they set out from Almon
Diblathaim and camped in the
mountains of Abarim, before the face of
Nebo.

Numbers 33:48

plains

a large area of flat land

ULT

48 And they set out from the mountains of Abarim and camped in the plains of Moab beside the Jordan at Jericho.

Numbers 33:49

(There are no notes for this verse.)

ULT

⁴⁹ And they camped beside the Jordan,
from Beth Jeshimoth to Abel Shittim in
the plains of Moab.

Numbers 33:50

(There are no notes for this verse.)

ULT

⁵⁰ And Yahweh spoke to Moses in the plains of Moab beside the Jordan at Jericho, saying,

Numbers 33:51

(There are no notes for this verse.)

ULT

⁵¹ “Speak to the sons of Israel and say to them, ‘When you cross over the Jordan into the land of Canaan,

Numbers 33:52

demolish all their high places

“destroy all of their high places”

ULT

⁵² then you shall dispossess all those who dwell in the land from your face. And you shall destroy all their carved figures, and you shall destroy all the figures of their molten metal, and you shall destroy all their high places.

Numbers 33:53

General Information:

Yahweh continues telling Moses what the people must do.

ULT

⁵³ And you shall take possession of the land and dwell in it, because I have given the land to you to possess it.

Numbers 33:54

inherit the land

The Israelites claiming the land as their permanent possession is spoken of as if they were inheriting the land. (See: [Metaphor](#))

Wherever the lot falls to each clan, that land will belong to it

“Each clan will receive the land according to how the lot falls”

ULT

54 And you shall inherit for yourselves the land by lot, according to your clans. You shall increase his inheritance for the numerous, and you shall decrease his inheritance for the few. To there where the lot goes out for him, to him it will belong. According to the tribes of your fathers you shall inherit for yourselves.

Numbers 33:55

General Information:

Yahweh continues telling Moses what the people must do.

like objects in your eyes and thorns in your sides

Just like a small object in a person's eye or a small thorn that sticks into a person skin can cause great irritation, so even a small portion of the Canaanites, if left in the land, would cause great trouble for the Israelites. (See: [Simile](#))

ULT

⁵⁵ And if you do not disposses those who dwell in the land from your face, then whom you leave from them will be as thorns in your eyes and as pricks in your sides. And they shall vex you on the land that you are about to dwell in.

Numbers 33:56

(There are no notes for this verse.)

ULT

⁵⁶ And it will happen that I will do to you just as I had intended to do to them.'"

Numbers 34

Numbers 34 General Notes

Structure and formatting

The ULT sets the lines in 34:19-28 farther to the right on the page than the rest of the text because they are long lists.

Special concepts in this chapter

The boundaries

Moses told them all of the land they would inherit and live in and said that they should divide it up by casting lots.
(See: [inherit](#), [inheritance](#), [heir](#))

Numbers 34:1

(There are no notes for this verse.)

ULT

¹ And Yahweh spoke to Moses, saying,

Numbers 34:2

(There are no notes for this verse.)

ULT

² “Command the sons of Israel and say to them, ‘When you enter into the land of Canaan, this is the land that has fallen to you as an inheritance, the land of Canaan and its borders,

Numbers 34:3

wilderness of Zin

See how you translated this phrase in [Numbers 33:12](#).

ULT

³ and the corner of the south will be for you from the wilderness of Zin beside the hands of Edom. And the border of the south will be for you from the end of the Sea of Salt eastward.

Numbers 34:4

General Information:

Yahweh continues telling Moses where the borders are for the land that he is giving to the Israelites. (See: [How to Translate Names](#))

ULT

⁴ And the border will turn for you from the south to the ascent of Akrabbim and cross over to Zin. And its outer limits will be from the south to Kadesh Barnea. And it will go out to Hazar Addar and cross over to Azmon.

Numbers 34:5

(There are no notes for this verse.)

ULT

⁵ And the border will turn from Azmon toward the wadi of Egypt and its outer limits will be to the sea.

Numbers 34:6

General Information:

Yahweh continues telling Moses where the borders are for the land that he is giving to the Israelites.

ULT

⁶ And the border of the west, it will be for you the Great Sea and the border. This will be for you the border of the west.

Numbers 34:7

General Information:

Yahweh continues telling Moses where the borders are for the land that he is giving to the Israelites. (See: [How to Translate Names](#))

Mount Hor

See how you translated this name in [Numbers 20:22](#).

ULT

⁷ And this will be for you the border of the north, from the Great Sea you shall mark out for you to Mount Hor.

Numbers 34:8

(There are no notes for this verse.)

ULT

⁸ From Mount Hor you shall mark out to Lebo Hamath, and the outer limits of the border will be to Zedad.

Numbers 34:9

(There are no notes for this verse.)

ULT

⁹ And the border will go out to Ziphron and its outer limits will be at Hazar Enan. This will be for you the border of the north.

Numbers 34:10

General Information:

Yahweh continues telling Moses where the borders are for the land that he is giving to the Israelites. (See: [How to Translate Names](#))

ULT

10 And you shall mark out for you the border to the east from Hazar Enan to Shepham.

Numbers 34:11

(There are no notes for this verse.)

ULT

11 And the border will go down from Shepham to Riblah, from east of Ain. And the border will go down and strike on the shoulder of the Sea of Kinnereth eastward.

Numbers 34:12

(There are no notes for this verse.)

ULT

¹² And the border will go down to the Jordan and its outer limits will be the Sea of Salt. This will be for you the land according to its borders all around.'"

Numbers 34:13

to the nine tribes and to the half tribe

This means the remaining tribes of Israel who will live on the west side of the Jordan River in the land of Canaan. The tribes of Reuben and Gad and the half tribe of Manasseh had already received their land on the east side of the Jordan River.

ULT

13 And Moses commanded the sons of Israel, saying, "This is the land, it which you will inherit for yourselves by lot, which Yahweh has commanded to give to the nine tribes and to the half of the tribe.

Numbers 34:14

following the assignment of property to their ancestor's tribe

"according to how Yahweh assigned the property to their ancestor's tribe"

ULT

¹⁴ For the tribe of the sons of the Reubenites according to the house of their fathers and the tribe of the sons of the Gadites according to the house of their fathers have taken, and the half of the tribe of Manasseh has taken their inheritance.

Numbers 34:15

The two tribes and the half tribe

“The tribes of Reuben and Gad, and half of the tribe of Manasseh”

ULT

15 The two tribes and the half of the tribe have taken their inheritance from beyond the Jordan at Jericho eastward, toward the sunrise.”

Numbers 34:16

(There are no notes for this verse.)

ULT

16 And Yahweh spoke to Moses, saying,

Numbers 34:17

divide the land for your inheritance

Here “your” is plural and refers to the people of Israel. These men will cast lots to divide the land. Then they will distribute it to the tribes. (See: [Forms of You](#))

ULT

17 “These are the names of the men who will divide the land for you as an inheritance: Eleazar the priest and Joshua the son of Nun.

Numbers 34:18

(There are no notes for this verse.)

ULT

18 And you shall take one leader, one leader from a tribe to divide the land as an inheritance.

Numbers 34:19

General Information:

This is the list of men who will help divide the land among the tribes.
(See: [How to Translate Names](#))

ULT

19 And these are the names of the men:
of the tribe of Judah, Caleb the son of
Jephunneh;

Numbers 34:20

(There are no notes for this verse.)

ULT

²⁰ and of the tribe of the sons of
Simeon, Shemuel the son of Ammihud;

Numbers 34:21

General Information:

This continues the list of men who will help divide the land among the tribes. (See: [How to Translate Names](#))

ULT

21 of the tribe of Benjamin, Elidad the son of Kislou;

Numbers 34:22

(There are no notes for this verse.)

ULT

²² and of the tribe of the sons of Dan a leader, Bukki the son of Jogli;

Numbers 34:23

(There are no notes for this verse.)

ULT

²³ of the sons of Joseph, of the tribe of
the sons of Manasseh a leader, Hanniel
the son of Ephod;

Numbers 34:24

General Information:

This continues the list of men who will help divide the land among the tribes. (See: [How to Translate Names](#))

ULT

²⁴ and of the tribe of the sons of Ephraim a leader, Kemuel the son of Shiptan;

Numbers 34:25

(There are no notes for this verse.)

ULT

²⁵ and of the tribe of the sons of
Zebulun a leader, Elizaphan the son of
Parnak;

Numbers 34:26

(There are no notes for this verse.)

ULT

²⁶ and of the tribe of the sons of
Issachar a leader, Paltiel the son of
Azzan;

Numbers 34:27

General Information:

This concludes the list of men who will help divide the land among the tribes. (See: [How to Translate Names](#))

ULT

²⁷ and of the tribe of the sons of Asher a leader, Ahihud the son of Shelomi;

Numbers 34:28

(There are no notes for this verse.)

ULT

²⁸ and of the tribe of the sons of
Naphtali a leader, Pedahel the son of
Ammihud.”

Numbers 34:29

(There are no notes for this verse.)

ULT

²⁹ These are whom Yahweh commanded to divide an inheritance for the sons of Israel in the land of Canaan.

Numbers 35

Numbers 35 General Notes

Structure and formatting

This chapter continues the material from the previous chapter.

Special concepts in this chapter

Revenge

Yahweh told Moses to establish safe places for people who accidentally killed other people. This prevented revenge killings. Justice is an important concept in this chapter. (See: [avenge](#), [avenger](#), [revenge](#), [vengeance](#) and [just](#), [justice](#), [unjust](#), [injustice](#), [justify](#), [justification](#))

Numbers 35:1

plains

a large area of flat land

ULT

¹ And Yahweh spoke to Moses in the plains of Moab beside the Jordan at Jericho, saying,

Numbers 35:2

give some of their own shares of land to the Levites

Yahweh did not give the Levites their own land, so they had to live in cities that belonged to other tribes.

pastureland

an area of land where animals feed on grass

ULT

² "Command the sons of Israel and they shall give to the Levites cities for dwelling from the inheritance of their possession. And you shall give to the Levites pastureland for the cities, all around them.

Numbers 35:3

(There are no notes for this verse.)

ULT

³ And the cities will be for them for dwelling, and their pastureland will be for their livestock and for their property and for all their living things.

Numbers 35:4

one thousand cubits

“1,000 cubits.” If it is necessary to use modern distance units, here is a way of doing it. Alternate translation: “457 meters” (See: [Numbers](#) and [Biblical Distance](#))

ULT

⁴ And the pasturelands of the cities that you shall give to the Levites shall be from the wall of the city and outward 1,000 cubits all around.

Numbers 35:5

General Information:

Yahweh continues telling Moses what the people must do.

two thousand cubits

"2,000 cubits." A cubit is 46 centimeters. (See: [Biblical Distance](#) and [Numbers](#))

ULT

⁵ And you shall measure 2,000 by the cubit from outside of the city toward the corner of the east, and 2,000 by the cubit to the corner of the south, and 2,000 by the cubit to the corner of the west, and 2,000 by the cubit to the corner of the north, and the city will be in the middle. This will be the pastureland of the cities for them.

Numbers 35:6

a person who has killed someone

This refers to people who have killed someone, but it had not yet been determined whether they killed the person intentionally or accidentally.

forty-two

"42" (See: [Numbers](#))

ULT

⁶ And along with the cities which you shall give to the Levites you shall give six cities of refuge to which the one who kills may flee. And in addition to them you shall give 42 cities.

Numbers 35:7

forty-eight

“48” (See: [Numbers](#))

ULT

⁷ All the cities that you shall give to the Levites shall be 48 cities, them and their pasturelands.

Numbers 35:8

General Information:

Yahweh continues telling Moses what the people must do.

ULT

⁸ And the cities that you shall give from the possession of the sons of Israel, you shall increase from with the numerous, and you shall decrease from with the few. A man shall give from his cities to the Levites according to the mouth of his inheritance that he has inherited."

Numbers 35:9

(There are no notes for this verse.)

ULT

⁹ And Yahweh spoke to Moses, saying,

Numbers 35:10

(There are no notes for this verse.)

ULT

¹⁰ “Speak to the sons of Israel and say to them, ‘When you cross over the Jordan into the land of Canaan,

Numbers 35:11

unintentionally

accidentally or without wanting to or trying to

ULT

11 then you shall choose for yourselves cities, they will be cities of refuge for you. And the one who kills, the one who struck down a person by mistake, shall flee to there.

Numbers 35:12

the avenger

This refers to a close relative that seeks vengeance by killing the accused man.

so that the accused man will not be killed without first standing trial before the community

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: “so that no one will kill the accused man before the community is able to judge him in court” (See: [Active or Passive](#))

ULT

12 And the cities will be for you for refuge from the avenger. And the one who kills will not die until he stands before the face of the congregation for the judgment.

Numbers 35:13

(There are no notes for this verse.)

ULT

¹³ And the cities that you shall give shall be six cities of refuge for you.

Numbers 35:14

General Information:

Yahweh continues telling Moses what the people must do.

ULT

14 You shall give three cities from beyond the Jordan. And you shall give three cities in the land of Canaan. They shall be cities of refuge.

Numbers 35:15

(There are no notes for this verse.)

ULT

15 For the sons of Israel, and for the sojourner, and for the temporary dweller in your midst, these six cities shall be for refuge to flee to, every one who has struck down a person by mistake.

Numbers 35:16

General Information:

Yahweh continues telling Moses what the people must do.

He must certainly be put to death

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: “You must certainly execute him” (See: [Active or Passive](#) and [Idiom](#))

ULT

16 And if he struck him down with an object of iron and he died, he is one who murders. The one who murders shall certainly be put to death.

Numbers 35:17

(There are no notes for this verse.)

ULT

17 And if he struck him down with a stone in hand by which one could die and he died, he is one who murders. The one who murders shall certainly be put to death.

Numbers 35:18

(There are no notes for this verse.)

ULT

18 Or if he struck him down with an object of wood in hand by which one could die and he died, he is one who murders. The one who murders shall certainly be put to death.

Numbers 35:19

The avenger of blood

Here the word “blood” is a metonym for the murder. Alternate translation: “The one who avenges the murder” or “The relative seeking vengeance” (See: [Metonymy](#))

ULT

19 The avenger of blood, he shall put the one who murders to death. When he meets him, he shall put him to death.

Numbers 35:20

(There are no notes for this verse.)

ULT

²⁰ And if with hatred he pushes him or
throws something at him by lying in
wait and he dies,

Numbers 35:21

the accused who struck him must surely be put to death

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: “the relative must certainly execute the accused man” or “the accused man must die” (See: [Active or Passive](#) and [Idiom](#))

ULT

²¹ or if with hostility he strikes him down with his hand and he dies, you shall certainly put to death the one who strikes down; he is one who murders. The avenger of blood shall put to death the one who murders when he meets him.

Numbers 35:22

without premeditated hate

“without planning it out of hate ahead of time”

without lying in wait

Someone intentionally seeking a way to harm another person is spoken of as if someone were hiding in order to ambush that other person. Alternate translation: “without intentionally having tried to harm the victim” (See: [Metaphor](#))

ULT

²² And if with suddenness without hostility he pushes him or throws any object at him without lying in wait,

Numbers 35:23

(There are no notes for this verse.)

ULT

²³ or if with any stone by which one could die without seeing he drops it on him and he dies, and he was not an enemy to him and was not seeking his harm,

Numbers 35:24

the avenger of blood

Here the word “blood” is a metonym for the murder. See how you translated this phrase in [Numbers 35:19](#). Alternate translation: “the one who avenges the murder” or “the relative seeking vengeance” (See: [Metonymy](#))

ULT

²⁴ then the congregation shall judge between the one who struck down and the avenger of blood in accordance with these judgments.

Numbers 35:25

The community must rescue the accused

This means if the community judges that the death was accidental then they must save the accused man from the relative who wants to kill him. If the community judges that the death was not accidental, then the relative must execute the accused man. (See: [Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information](#))

the one who was anointed with the holy oil

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: “the one you anointed with holy oil” (See: [Active or Passive](#))

ULT

25 And the congregation shall rescue the one who kills from the hand of the avenger of blood. And the congregation shall bring him back into the city of his refuge to which he had fled. And he shall dwell in it until the death of the great priest, him whom he anointed with the oil of holiness.

Numbers 35:26

(There are no notes for this verse.)

ULT

²⁶ And if the one who kills ever goes out of the border of the city of his refuge to which he has fled,

Numbers 35:27

the avenger of blood

Here the word “blood” is a metonym for the murder. See how you translated these words in [Numbers 35:19](#). Alternate translation: “the one who avenges the murder” or “the relative seeking vengeance” (See: [Metonymy](#))

ULT

27 and the avenger of blood finds him outside the border of the city of his refuge, and the avenger of blood kills the one who kills, there will be no blood against him.

Numbers 35:28

(There are no notes for this verse.)

ULT

²⁸ For in the city of his refuge he must dwell until the death of the great priest, and after the death of the great priest the one who kills may return to the land of his possession.

Numbers 35:29

General Information:

Yahweh continues telling Moses what the people must do.

through all your people's generations

“and all of your descendants who will live after you”

ULT

²⁹ And these shall be for you as a statute of judgment for your generations, in all your dwellings.

Numbers 35:30

the murderer must be killed

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: “someone must execute the murderer” (See: [Active or Passive](#))

as testified to by the words of witnesses

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: “according to the testimony of witnesses” or “as witnesses testify to the murder” (See: [Active or Passive](#))

ULT

³⁰ Every one who strikes down a person, according to the mouth of witnesses he must kill the one who kills. And one witness shall not testify against a person to put to death.

But one witness' word alone may not cause any person to be put to death

The testimony of one witness is not enough to execute a person for murder. This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: “But the word of only one witness is not enough for you to execute a person” (See: [Active or Passive](#))

Numbers 35:31

He must certainly be put to death

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: “You must execute him” (See: [Active or Passive](#) and [Idiom](#))

ULT

31 And you shall not take a ransom for the life of one who kills, he who is guilty to die, because he shall certainly be put to death.

Numbers 35:32

You must not ... allow him to reside on his own property

This implied that the man would have left the city of refuge and returned home. Alternate translation: "You must not ... allow him to leave the city of refuge and return home to live on his own property" (See: [Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information](#))

in this way

"by accepting a ransom"

ULT

³² And you shall not take a ransom for the one who flees into the city of his refuge, to return to dwell in the land until the death of the priest.

Numbers 35:33

Do not pollute in this way the land where you live, because blood from murder pollutes the land

Making the land unacceptable to Yahweh is spoken of as if it were physically polluting the land. Alternate translation: "Do not make the land where you live unacceptable to me in this way, because blood from murder makes the land unacceptable to me" (See: [Metaphor](#))

ULT

³³ And you shall not pollute the land which you are in because the blood itself pollutes the land. And atonement cannot be made for the land for the blood that is poured out on it except by the blood of the one who poured it out.

in this way

This means by disobeying the laws concerning a person who kills someone.

No atonement can be made for the land when blood has been shed on it, except by the blood of the one who shed it

This refers to when a person intentionally kills another person. This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "When someone has shed blood in the land, only the execution of the murderer can make atonement for the land" (See: [Active or Passive](#))

Numbers 35:34

(There are no notes for this verse.)

ULT

³⁴ And you shall not defile the land which you are dwelling in, which I am dwelling in the midst of, because I, Yahweh, am dwelling in the midst of the sons of Israel.'"

Numbers 36

Numbers 36 General Notes

Structure and formatting

Female heirs

Women who inherited land from their father must marry men from their tribe so the inheritance does not leave the tribe. (See: [inherit](#), [inheritance](#), [heir](#))

Numbers 36:1

Machir

This is the name of a man. See how you translated this man's name in [Numbers 26:29](#). (See: [How to Translate Names](#))

ULT

¹ And the heads of the fathers of the clans of the sons of Gilead the son of Machir the son of Manasseh from the clans of the sons of Joseph came near and spoke before the face of Moses and before the face of the leaders, the heads of the fathers of the sons of Israel.

Numbers 36:2

You were commanded by Yahweh

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

Zelophehad

This is the name of a man. See how you translated this man’s name in [Numbers 26:33](#). (See: [How to Translate Names](#))

ULT

² And they said, “Yahweh commanded my master to give the land as an inheritance by lot to the sons of Israel. And my master was commanded by Yahweh to give the inheritance of Zelophehad our brother to his daughters.

Numbers 36:3

will be removed from our ancestor's share

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "will no longer belong to our ancestor's share" (See: [Active or Passive](#))

It will be added

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "It will belong to" (See: [Active or Passive](#))

it will be removed from the assigned share of our inheritance

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "it will no longer be a part of our inheritance" (See: [Active or Passive](#))

ULT

³ And they will become wives for one from the sons of the tribes of the sons of Israel. And their inheritance will be withdrawn from the inheritance of our fathers, and it will be added onto the inheritance of the tribe that they belong to. And it will be withdrawn from the lot of our inheritance.

Numbers 36:4

the year of Jubilee of the people

This refers to a celebration which happens once every fifty years. In this celebration, all land that someone sold or traded must return to the original owner. (See: [Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information](#))

their share will be joined

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: “their share will belong” (See: [Active or Passive](#))

their share will be taken away from the share of our ancestors’ tribe

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: “they will take our tribe’s share of the land” (See: [Active or Passive](#))

ULT

⁴ And when it will be the Jubilee for the sons of Israel, then their inheritance will be added onto the inheritance of the tribe which they belong to. And their inheritance will be withdrawn from the inheritance of the tribe of our fathers.”

Numbers 36:5

at Yahweh's word

"according to what Yahweh said"

ULT

⁵ And Moses commanded the sons of Israel in accordance with the mouth of Yahweh, saying, "What the tribe of the sons of Joseph is speaking is right.

Numbers 36:6

Let them be married to whom they think best

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: “Let them marry whom they want” (See: [Active or Passive](#))

they must marry only within the family of their father’s tribe

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: “but they may only marry someone from their father’s tribe” (See: [Active or Passive](#))

ULT

⁶ This is the word that Yahweh commands to the daughters of Zelophehad, saying, ‘They may become wives of the good one in their eyes, only they must become wives of the clan of the tribe of their father.’

Numbers 36:7

No share

The word “share” represents the portion of land that each tribe received as an inheritance. Alternate translation: “No portion of the land” (See: [Metonymy](#))

ULT

⁷ And an inheritance of the sons of Israel shall not go around from tribe to tribe, but a man of the sons of Israel shall cling to the inheritance of the tribe of his father.

Numbers 36:8

who owns a share in her tribe

“who owns a share of land in her tribe”

may own an inheritance

The land that each clan possesses is spoken of as if it were an inheritance that they received. (See: [Metaphor](#))

ULT

⁸ And every daughter who possesses an inheritance from the tribes of the sons of Israel shall become a wife for one from the clan of the tribe of her father, so that the sons of Israel will have a possession, a man the inheritance of his fathers.

Numbers 36:9

No share may change hands from one tribe to another

Transferring ownership from one tribe to another is spoken of as if the property passed from one person's hands to another person's hands. Alternate translation: "No one may transfer the ownership of any share of land from one tribe to another" (See: [Metaphor](#))

ULT

⁹ And an inheritance shall not go around from a tribe to another tribe, but each tribe of the sons of Israel shall cling to his inheritance."

Numbers 36:10

(There are no notes for this verse.)

ULT

¹⁰ Just as Yahweh commanded Moses,
so did the daughters of Zelophehad.

Numbers 36:11

Mahlah, Tirzah, Hoglah, Milkah, and Noah

See how you translated these women's names in [Numbers 26:33](#).
(See: [How to Translate Names](#))

ULT

11 And Mahlah, Tirzah, and Hoglah, and Milkah, and Noah, the daughters of Zelophehad, became wives for the sons of their uncles.

Numbers 36:12

their inheritances

The land that each of Zelophehad's daughters possessed is spoken of as if it were an inheritance that they received. Alternate translation: "the lands that they received as an inheritance" (See: [Metaphor](#))

ULT

¹² They became wives from the clans of the sons of Manasseh the son of Joseph. And their inheritance was with the tribe of the clan of their father.

Numbers 36:13

plains

a large area of flat land

ULT

¹³ These are the commands and the judgments that Yahweh commanded by the hand of Moses to the sons of Israel in the plains of Moab beside the Jordan at Jericho.



unfoldingWord® Translation Academy

Version 25

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: [Numbers 3:38](#); [3:46](#); [3:49](#); [4:12](#); [4:14](#); [4:16](#); [4:28](#); [4:33](#); [6:5](#); [6:13](#); [6:18](#); [6:19](#); [6:21](#); [7:2](#); [8:22](#); [9:18](#); [9:23](#); [10:10](#); [14:9](#); [14:18](#); [14:27](#); [17:5](#); [17:10](#); [22:7](#); [24:16](#); [24:24](#); [25:18](#); [28:22](#); [28:30](#); [29:5](#); [29:11](#))

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: Numbers 1:16; 1:17; 1:20; 1:22; 1:24; 1:26; 1:28; 1:30; 1:32; 1:34; 1:36; 1:38; 1:40; 1:42; 1:45; 1:47; 1:51; 2:32; 3:3; 3:9; 3:10; 3:22; 3:28; 3:31; 3:34; 3:38; 3:51; 4:4; 4:18; 4:26; 4:38; 4:40; 4:42; 4:44; 4:49; 5:8; 5:9; 5:14; 5:21; 5:23; 5:27; 5:28; 5:29; 6:3; 6:4; 6:5; 6:7; 6:8; 6:12; 6:13; 6:15; 6:19; 6:20; 6:21; 7:13; 7:19; 7:25; 7:31; 7:37; 7:43; 7:49; 7:55; 7:61; 7:67; 7:73; 7:79; 7:88; 8:4; 8:8; 9:13; 9:15; 9:17; 9:22; 9:23; 10:11; 10:13; 11:3; 11:26; 11:34; 12:15; 13:22; 13:24; 14:6; 14:9; 14:14; 14:21; 14:29; 14:42; 15:10; 15:11; 15:12; 15:13; 15:14; 15:19; 15:24; 15:25; 15:26; 15:28; 15:30; 15:34; 15:35; 16:5; 16:7; 16:26; 16:38; 16:39; 16:48; 17:6; 18:1; 18:6; 18:7; 18:8; 18:9; 18:16; 18:17; 18:18; 18:27; 18:29; 19:9; 19:13; 19:16; 19:20; 20:1; 20:13; 21:3; 21:8; 21:27; 21:30; 21:35; 22:6; 22:12; 22:22; 22:27; 23:20; 23:23; 24:3; 24:6; 24:7; 24:9; 24:10; 24:18; 24:22; 25:3; 25:14; 25:18; 26:37; 26:53; 26:54; 26:55; 26:56; 26:57; 26:62; 26:63; 26:64; 27:11; 28:2; 28:3; 28:5; 28:6; 28:8; 28:9; 28:12; 28:13; 28:15; 28:17; 28:19; 28:20; 28:23; 28:24; 28:28; 28:29; 29:3; 29:6; 29:9; 29:13; 29:14; 29:18; 29:21; 29:24; 29:27; 29:30; 29:33; 29:36; 29:37; 30:9; 31:5; 31:20; 31:26; 31:28; 31:29; 31:36; 31:41; 32:5; 32:10; 32:13; 32:22; 32:29; 32:38; 33:2; 33:14; 35:12; 35:16; 35:21; 35:25; 35:30; 35:31; 35:33; 36:2; 36:3; 36:4; 36:6)

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: [Numbers 1:2; 1:50; 1:54; 2:9; 2:16; 2:24; 2:25; 2:31; 2:34; 3:10; 3:15; 3:38; 3:41; 3:47; 4:6; 4:7; 4:8; 4:11; 4:14; 4:18; 4:22; 4:25; 4:29; 4:34; 4:35; 4:38; 4:39; 4:43; 4:47; 5:4; 5:6; 5:8; 5:12; 5:13; 5:16; 5:27; 5:28; 6:12; 6:14; 6:15; 6:20; 6:21; 7:3; 7:9; 8:15; 9:2; 9:3; 9:6; 9:7; 9:10; 9:16; 9:21; 10:33; 10:36; 11:29; 13:11; 14:24; 14:35; 14:37; 15:15; 15:39; 18:7; 18:16; 18:17; 20:12; 21:8; 21:18; 22:23; 22:31; 23:4; 23:10; 23:28; 24:19; 25:4; 25:6; 26:2; 26:37; 26:54; 26:62; 27:3; 27:4; 27:7; 27:14; 28:7; 28:9; 28:18; 30:5; 30:8; 30:10; 30:12; 30:15; 31:5; 31:46; 32:5; 32:9; 32:22; 32:27; 32:32; 33:4; 35:25; 35:32; 36:4](#))

Background Information

Description

When people tell a story, they normally tell the events in the order that they happened. This sequence of events makes up the storyline. The storyline is full of action verbs that move the story along in time. But sometimes a writer may take a break from the storyline and give some information to help his listeners understand the story better. This type of information is called background information. The background information might be about things that happened before the events he has already told about, or it might explain something in the story, or it might be about something that would happen much later in the story.

This page answers the question: *What is background information, and how can I show that some information is background information?*

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

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

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

Example — The bolded phrases in the story below are all background information.

Peter and John went on a hunting trip because **their village was going to have a feast the next day. Peter was the best hunter in the village. He once killed three wild pigs in one day!** They walked for hours through low bushes until they heard a wild pig. The pig ran, but they managed to shoot the pig and kill it. Then they tied up its legs with some rope **they had brought with them** and carried it home on a pole. When they brought it to the village, Peter's cousin saw the pig and realized that it was his own pig. Peter had mistakenly killed his cousin's pig.

Background information often tells about something that had happened earlier or something that would happen much later. Examples of these are: "their village was going to have a feast the next day," "He once killed three wild pigs in one day," and "that they had brought with them."

Often background information uses "be" verbs like "was" and "were," rather than action verbs. Examples of these are "their village was going to have a feast the next day," and "Peter **was** the best hunter in the village."

Background information can also be marked with words that tell the reader that this information is not part of the event line of the story. In this story, some of these words are "because," "once," and "had."

A writer may use background information:

- to help their listeners be interested in the story
- to help their listeners understand something in the story
- to help the listeners understand why something is important in the story
- to tell the setting of a story
 - > * Setting includes:
 - > * where the story takes place
 - > * when the story takes place
 - > * who is present when the story begins
 - > * what is happening when the story begins

Reasons This Is a Translation Issue

- Languages have different ways of marking background information and storyline information.
- You (the translator) need to know the order of the events in the Bible, which information is background information, and which is storyline information.
- You will need to translate the story in a way that marks the background information in a way that your own readers will understand the order of events, which information is background information, and which is storyline information.

Examples From the Bible

Hagar gave birth to Abram's son, and Abram named his son, whom Hagar bore, Ishmael. Abram **was 86 years old** when Hagar bore Ishmael to Abram. (Genesis 16:15-16 ULT)

The first sentence tells about two events. Hagar gave birth and Abraham named his son. The second sentence is background information about how old Abram was when those things happened.

And Jesus himself **was beginning about 30 years old**. He **was the son** (as it was assumed) of Joseph, of Heli, (Luke 3:23 ULT)

The verses before this tell about when Jesus was baptized. This sentence introduces background information about Jesus' age and ancestors. The story resumes in chapter 4 where it tells about Jesus going to the wilderness.

Then **it happened on a Sabbath** that he **was going through the grain fields**, and his disciples **were picking and eating the heads of grain, rubbing them in their hands**. But some of the Pharisees said ... (Luke 6:1-2a ULT)

These verses give the setting of the story. The events took place in a grain field on the Sabbath day. Jesus, his disciples, and some Pharisees were there, and Jesus' disciples were picking heads of grain and eating them. The main action in the story starts with the phrase, "But some of the Pharisees said"

Translation Strategies

To keep translations clear and natural you will need to study how people tell stories in your language. Observe how your language marks background information. You may need to write down some stories in order to study this. Observe what kinds of verbs your language uses for background information and what kinds of words or other markers signal that something is background information. Do these same things when you translate, so that your translation is clear and natural and people can understand it easily.

- (1) Use your language's way of showing that certain information is background information.
- (2) Reorder the information so that earlier events are mentioned first. (This is not always possible when the background information is very long.)

Examples of Translation Strategies Applied

- (1) Use your language's way of showing that certain information is background information. The examples below explain how this was done in the ULT English translations.

And Jesus himself **was** beginning about 30 years old. He **was** the son (as it was assumed) of Joseph, of Heli. (Luke 3:23 ULT)

As here, English sometimes uses the word "and" to show that there is some kind of change in the story. The verb "was" shows that it is background information.

Therefore, also exhorting many other things, he preached the good news to the people. But Herod the tetrarch, having been rebuked by him concerning Herodias, the wife of his brother, and **concerning all the evil things that Herod had done**, added even this to them all: He locked John up in prison. (Luke 3:18-20 ULT)

The bolded phrase happened before John rebuked Herod. In English, the helping verb "had" in "had done" shows that Herod did those things before John rebuked him.

- (2) Reorder the information so that earlier events are mentioned first.

Hagar gave birth to Abram's son, and Abram named his son, whom Hagar bore, Ishmael.
Abram was 86 years old when Hagar bore Ishmael to Abram. (Genesis 16:16 ULT)

"When Abram was 86 years old, Hagar gave birth to his son, and Abram named his son Ishmael."

Therefore, also exhorting many other things, he preached the good news to the people. But Herod the tetrarch, having been rebuked by him concerning Herodias, the wife of his brother, and **concerning all the evil things that Herod had done,** added even this to them all: He locked John up in prison. (Luke 3:18-20 ULT)

The translation below reorders John's rebuke and Herod's actions.

"Now Herod the tetrarch married his brother's wife, Herodias, and **he did many other evil things,** so John rebuked him. But then Herod did another very evil thing. He had John locked up in prison."

Next we recommend you learn about:

[[rc://en/ta/man/translate/grammar-connect-words-phrases]]
 [[rc://en/ta/man/translate/writing-newevent]]

(Go back to: [Numbers 12:3](#); [22:4](#); [25:14](#); [32:1](#))

Biblical Distance

Description

The following terms are the most common measures for distance or length that were originally used in the Bible. Most of these are based on the sizes of the hand and forearm.

- The **handbreadth** was the width of the palm of a man’s hand.
- The **span** or handspan was the width of a man’s hand with the fingers spread out.
- The **cubit** was the length of a man’s forearm, from the elbow to the tip of the longest finger.
- The **“long” cubit** is used only in Ezekiel 40-48. It is the length of a normal cubit plus a span.
- The **stadium** (plural, **stadia**) referred to a certain footrace that was about 185 meters in length. Some older English versions translated this word as “furlong,” which referred to the average length of a plowed field.

This page answers the question: *How can I translate the lengths and distances that are in the Bible?*

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

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

The metric values in the table below are close but not exactly equal to the biblical measures. The biblical measures probably differed in exact length from time to time and place to place. The equivalents below are an attempt to give an average measurement.

Original Measure	Metric Measure
handbreadth	8 centimeters
span	23 centimeters
cubit	46 centimeters
“long” cubit	54 centimeters
stadia	185 meters

Translation Principles

The people in the Bible did not use modern measures such as meters, liters, and kilograms. Using the original measures can help readers know that the Bible really was written long ago in a time when people used those measures.

Using modern measures can help readers understand the text more easily.

Whatever measure you use, it would be good, if possible, to tell about the other kind of measure in the text or a footnote.

If you do not use the Biblical measures, try not to give the readers the idea that the measurements are exact. For example, if you translate one cubit as “.46 meters” or even as “46 centimeters,” readers might think that the measurement is exact. It would be better to say “half a meter,” “45 centimeters,” or “50 centimeters.”

Sometimes it can be helpful to use the word “about” to show that a measurement is not exact. For example, Luke 24:13 says that Emmaus was 60 stadia from Jerusalem. This can be translated as “about ten kilometers” from Jerusalem.

When God tells people how long something should be, and when people make things according to those lengths, do not use “about” in the translation. Otherwise it will give the impression that God did not care exactly how long something should be.

Translation Strategies

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

Translation Strategies Applied

The strategies are all applied to Exodus 25:10 below.

They are to make an ark of acacia wood. Its length must be two and a half cubits; its width will be one cubit and a half; and its height will be one cubit and a half. (Exodus 25:10 ULT)

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

“They are to make an ark of acacia wood. Its length must be **two and a half kubits**; its width will be **one kubit and a half**; and its height will be **one kubit and a half**.”

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

“They are to make an ark of acacia wood. Its length must be **one meter**; its width will be **two thirds of a meter**; and its height will be **two thirds of a meter**.”

- (3) Use measurements that are already used in your language. In order to do this you would need to know how your measurements relate to the metric system and figure out each measurement. For example, if you measure things using the standard meter length, you could translate it as below.

“They are to make an ark of acacia wood. Its length must be **one meter**; its width will be **two thirds of a meter**; and its height will be **two thirds of a meter**.”

- (4) Use the measurements from the ULT and include measurements that your people know in the text or a note. The following shows both measurements in the text.

“They are to make an ark of acacia wood. Its length must be **two and a half cubits (one meter)**; its width will be **one cubit and a half (two thirds of a meter)**; and its height will be **one cubit and a half (two thirds of a meter)**.”

- (5) Use measurements that your people know, and include the measurements from the ULT in the text or in a note. The following shows the ULT measurements in notes.

“They are to make an ark of acacia wood. Its length must be **one meter**; ¹ its width will be **two thirds of a meter**; ² and its height will be **two thirds of a meter**.”

The footnotes would look like:

“They are to make an ark of acacia wood. Its length must be **one meter**; ¹ its width will be **two thirds of a meter**; ² and its height will be **two thirds of a meter**.”

The footnotes would look like:

[¹] two and a half cubits
[²] one cubit and a half

(Go back to: [Numbers 11:31](#); [35:4](#); [35:5](#))

Biblical Money

Description

This page answers the question: *How can I translate the values of money in the Bible?*

In early Old Testament times, people weighed their metals, such as silver and gold, and would pay a certain weight of that metal in order to buy things. Later, people started to make coins that each contained a standard amount of a certain metal. The daric is one such coin. In New Testament times, people used silver and copper coins.

The two tables below show some of the most well-known units of money found in the Old Testament (OT) and New Testament (NT). The table for Old Testament units shows what kind of metal was used and how much it weighed. The table for New Testament units shows what kind of metal was used and how much it was worth in terms of a day's wage.

Unit in OT	Metal	Weight
daric	gold coin	8.4 grams
shekel	various metals	11 grams
talent	various metals	33 kilograms

Unit in NT	Metal	Day's Wage
denarius/denarii	silver coin	1 day
drachma	silver coin	1 day
mite	copper coin	1/64 day
shekel	silver coin	4 days
talent	silver	6,000 days

Translation Principle

Do not use modern money values since these change from year to year. Using them will cause the Bible translation to become outdated and inaccurate.

Translation Strategies

The value of most money in the Old Testament was based on its weight. So when translating these weights in the Old Testament, see [Biblical Weight](#). The strategies below are for translating the value of money in the New Testament.

- (1) Use the Bible term and spell it in a way that is similar to the way it sounds. (See [Copy or Borrow Words](#).)
- (2) Describe the value of the money in terms of what kind of metal it was made of and how many coins were used.
- (3) Describe the value of the money in terms of what people in Bible times could earn in one day of work.
- (4) Use the biblical term and give the equivalent amount in the text or a footnote.

(5) Use the biblical term and explain it in a footnote.

Translation Strategies Applied

The translations strategies are all applied to Luke 7:41 below.

█ The one owed 500 denarii, and the other, 50. (Luke 7:41b ULT)

Use the Bible term and spell it in a way that is similar to the way it sounds. (See [Copy or Borrow Words](#).)

█ "The one owed **500 denali**, and the other, **50**."

Describe the value of the money in terms of what kind of metal it was made of and how many pieces or coins were used.

█ "The one owed **500 silver coins**, and the other, **50**."

(3) Describe the value of the money in terms of what people in Bible times could earn in one day of work.

█ "The one owed **500 days' wages**, and the other, **50**."

(4) Use the Bible term and give the equivalent amount in the text or a footnote.

█ "The one owed **500 denarii** 1, and the other owed **50 denarii**. 2"

The footnotes would look like:

█ [1] 500 days' wages [2] 50 days' wages

(5) Use the Bible term and explain it in a footnote.

█ "The one owed **500 denarii**,¹ and the other, **50**." (Luke 7:41 ULT)

█ ^[1] A denarius was the amount of silver that people could earn in one day of work.

Next we recommend you learn about:

[Copy or Borrow Words](#)

[Translate Unknowns](#)

(Go back to: [Numbers 3:46](#); [3:50](#); [31:52](#))

Biblical Volume

Description

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

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

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

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

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

Translation Principles

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

When the unit of measure is stated

Translation Strategies

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

Translation Strategies Applied

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

“For a ten-yoke vineyard will yield only **six gallons**, and **six and a half bushels** of seed will yield only **20 quarts**.”

- (4) Use the measurements from the ULT and include measurements that your people know in the text or a note. The following shows both measurements in the text.

“For a ten-yoke vineyard will yield only **one bath (six gallons)**, and **one homer (six and a half bushels)** of seed will yield only **an ephah (20 quarts)**.”

- (5) Use measurements that your people know, and include the measurements from the ULT in the text or in a note. The following shows the ULT measurements in footnotes.

"For a ten-yoke vineyard will yield only 22 liters¹, and 220 liters² of seed will yield only 22 liters³."

The footnotes would look like:

- [1] one bath
- [2] one homer
- [3] one ephah

When the unit of measure is implied

Sometimes the Hebrew does not specify a particular unit of volume but only uses a number. In these cases, many English versions, including the ULT and UST, add the word "measure."

When you came to a heap of **20 measures** of grain, there were only **ten**, and when you came to the wine vat to draw out **50 measures** of wine, there were only 20. (Haggai 2:16 ULT)

Translation Strategies

- (1) Translate literally by using the number without a unit.
- (2) Use a generic word like "measure" or "quantity" or "amount."
- (3) Use the name of an appropriate container, such as "basket" for grain or "jar" for wine.
- (4) Use a unit of measure that you are already using in your translation.

Translation Strategies Applied

The strategies are all applied to Haggai 2:16 below.

When you came to a heap of **20 measures** of grain, there were only **ten**, and when you came to the wine vat to draw out **fifty measures** of wine, there were only **20**. (Haggai 2:16 ULT)

- (1) Translate literally by using the number without a unit.

When you came to a heap of **20** of grain, there were only **ten**, and when you came to the wine vat to draw out **50** of wine, there were only **20**.

- (2) Use a generic word like "measure" or "quantity" or "amount."

When you came to a heap of **20 amounts** of grain, there were only **ten**, and when you came to the wine vat to draw out **fifty amounts** of wine, there were only **20**.

- (3) Use the name of an appropriate container, such as "basket" for grain or "jar" for wine.

When you came to a heap of **20 baskets** of grain, there were only **ten**, and when you came to the wine vat to draw out **50 jars** of wine, there were only **20**.

- (4) Use a unit of measure that you are already using in your translation.

When you came to a heap for **20 liters** of grain, there were only **ten liters**, and when you came to the wine vat to draw out **50 liters** of wine, there were only **20 liters**.

Next we recommend you learn about:

[Fractions](#)

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

(Go back to: [Numbers 5:15](#); [11:32](#); [15:4](#); [15:6](#); [15:9](#); [28:5](#); [28:7](#); [28:9](#); [28:12](#); [28:13](#); [28:14](#); [28:20](#); [28:21](#); [28:28](#); [28:29](#); [29:3](#); [29:4](#); [29:9](#); [29:10](#); [29:14](#); [29:15](#))

Biblical Weight

Description

This page answers the question: *How can I translate the values of weight in the Bible?*

The following terms are the most common units of weight in the Bible. The term “shekel” means “weight,” and many other weights are described in terms of the shekel. Some of these weights were used for money. The metric values in the table below are not exactly equal to the biblical measures. The biblical measures differed in exact amount from time to time and place to place. The equivalents below are only an attempt to give an average measurement.

Original Measure	Shekels	Grams	Kilograms
shekel	1 shekel	11 grams	-
bekah	1/2 shekel	5.7 grams	-
pim	2/3 shekel	7.6 grams	-
gerah	1/20 shekel	0.57 grams	-
mina	50 shekels	550 grams	1/2 kilogram
talent	3,000 shekels	-	34 kilograms

Translation Principles

The people in the Bible did not use modern measures such as meters, liters, and kilograms. Using the original measures can help readers know that the Bible really was written long ago in a time when people used those measures.

Using modern measures can help readers understand the text more easily.

Whatever measure you use, it would be good, if possible, to tell about the other kind of measure in the text or a footnote.

If you do not use the biblical measures, try not to give the readers the idea that the measurements are exact. For example, if you translate one gerah as “.57 grams,” readers might think that the measurement is exact. It would be better to say “half a gram.”

Sometimes it can be helpful to use the word “about” to show that a measurement is not exact. For example, 2 Samuel 21:16 says that Goliath’s spear weighed 300 shekels. Instead of translating this as “3300 grams” or “3.3 kilograms,” it can be translated as “about three and one half kilograms.”

When God tells people how much something should weigh, and when people use those weights, do not say “about” in the translation. Otherwise, it will give the impression that God did not care exactly how much the thing should weigh.

Translation Strategies

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

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

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

(4) Use the measurements from the ULT and include measurements that your people know in the text or a note.

(5) Use measurements that your people know, and include the measurements from the ULT in the text or in a note.

Translation Strategies Applied

The strategies are all applied to Exodus 38:29 below.

█ The bronze from the wave offering weighed **70 talents and 2,400 shekels**. (Exodus 38:29 ULT)

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

█ "The bronze from the wave offering weighed **70 talentes and 2,400 sekeles**."

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

█ "The bronze from the wave offering weighed **2,400 kilograms**."

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

█ "The bronze from the wave offering weighed **5,300 pounds**."

(4) Use the measurements from the ULT and include measurements that your people know in the text or a footnote. The following shows both measurements in the text.

█ "The bronze from the wave offering weighed **70 talents (2,380 kilograms) and 2,400 shekels (26.4 kilograms)**."

(5) Use measurements that your people know, and include the measurements from the ULT in the text or in a footnote. The following shows the ULT measurements in notes.

█ "The bronze from the offering weighed **70 talents and 2,400 shekels**. 1"

The footnote would look like:

█ [1] This was a total of about 2,400 kilograms.

Next we recommend you learn about:

[Fractions](#)

(Go back to: [Numbers 3:46; 3:47; 7:13; 7:14; 7:19; 7:20; 7:25; 7:26; 7:31; 7:32; 7:37; 7:38; 7:43; 7:44; 7:49; 7:50; 7:55; 7:56; 7:61; 7:62; 7:67; 7:68; 7:73; 7:74; 7:79; 7:80; 7:85; 7:86; 18:16](#))

Copy or Borrow Words

Description

Sometimes the Bible includes things that are not part of your culture and for which your language may not have a word. The Bible also includes people and places for which you may not have names.

When that happens you can “borrow” the word from the Bible in a familiar language and use it in your translation in your own language. This means that you basically copy it from the other language. This page tells how to “borrow” words. (There are also other ways to translate words for things that are not in your language. See [Translate Unknowns](#).)

This page answers the question: *What does it mean to borrow words from another language and how can I do it?*

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

[Translate Unknowns](#)

Examples From the Bible

Seeing one fig tree along the roadside, he went to it. (Matthew 21:19a ULT)

If there are no fig trees where your language is spoken, there might not be a name for this kind of tree in your language.

Above him were the **seraphim**; each one had six wings; with two each covered his face, and with two he covered his feet, and with two he flew. (Isaiah 6:2 ULT)

Your language might not have a name for this kind of creature.

The declaration of the word of Yahweh to Israel by the hand of **Malachi**. (Malachi 1:1 ULT)

Malachi might not be a name that people who speak your language use.

Translation Strategies

There are several things to be aware of when borrowing words from another language.

- Different languages use different scripts, such as the Hebrew, Greek, Latin, Cyrillic, Devanagari, and Korean scripts. These scripts use different shapes to represent the letters in their alphabets.
- Languages that use the same script might pronounce the letters in that script differently. For example, when speaking German, people pronounce the letter “j” the same way that people pronounce the letter “y” when speaking English.
- Languages do not all have the same sounds or combinations of sounds. For example, many languages do not have the soft “th” sound in the English word “think,” and some languages cannot start a word with a combination of sounds like “st” as in “stop.”

There are several ways to borrow a word.

- (1) If your language uses a different script from the language you are translating from, you can simply substitute each letter shape with the corresponding letter shape of the script of your language.
- (2) You can spell the word as the Other Language spells it, and pronounce it the way your language normally pronounces those letters.
- (3) You can pronounce the word similarly to the way the Other Language does, and adjust the spelling to fit the rules of your language.

Examples of Translation Strategies Applied

(1) If your language uses a different script from the language you are translating from, you can simply substitute each letter shape with the corresponding letter shape of the script of your language.

.A man's name in Hebrew letters — זְפַנְיָה
"Zephaniah" — The same name in Roman letters

(2) You can spell the word as the Other Language spells it, and pronounce it the way your language normally pronounces those letters.

Zephaniah — This is a man's name.
"Zephaniah" — The name as it is spelled in English, but you can pronounce it according to the rules of your language.

(3) You can pronounce the word similarly to the way the Other Language does, and adjust the spelling to fit the rules of your language.

Zephaniah — If your language does not have the "z," you could use "s." If your writing system does not use "ph" you could use "f." Depending on how you pronounce the "i" you could spell it with "i" or "ai" or "ay."
"Sefania"
"Sefanaia"
"Sefanaya"

(Go back to: [Numbers 13:21; 20:1](#))

Direct and Indirect Quotations

Description

There are two kinds of quotations: direct quotations and indirect quotations.

A direct quotation occurs when someone reports what another person said from the viewpoint of that original speaker. People usually expect that this kind of quotation will represent the original speaker's exact words. In the example below, John would have said "I" when referring to himself, so the narrator, who is reporting John's words, uses the word "I" in the quotation to refer to John. To show that these are John's exact words, many languages put the words between quotation marks: "".

- John said, "I do not know at what time I will arrive."

An indirect quotation occurs when a speaker reports what someone else said, but in this case, the speaker is reporting it from his own point of view instead and not from the original person's point of view. This kind of quotation usually contains changes in pronouns, and it often includes changes in time, in word choices, and in length. In the example below, the narrator refers to John as "he" in the quotation and uses the word "would" to replace the future tense, indicated by "will."

- John said that **he** did not know at what time **he** would arrive.

Reason This Is a Translation Issue

In some languages, reported speech can be expressed by either direct or indirect quotations. In other languages, it is more natural to use one than the other. There may be a certain meaning implied by using one rather than the other. So for each quotation, translators need to decide whether it is best to translate it as a direct quotation or as an indirect quotation.

Examples From the Bible

The verses in the examples below contain both direct and indirect quotations. In the explanation below the verse, we have marked in bold the words that are quoted.

And he commanded him to tell no one, but, "Go, show yourself to the priest and offer a sacrifice for your cleansing, according to what Moses commanded, for a testimony to them."
(Luke 5:14 ULT)

- Indirect quote: He commanded him **to tell no one**,
- Direct quote: but told him, "**Go, show yourself to the priest ...**"

And being asked by the Pharisees when the kingdom of God was coming, he answered them and said, "The kingdom of God is not coming with careful observation. Neither will they say, 'Look, here it is!' or 'There it is!' For indeed, the kingdom of God is among you." (Luke 17:20-21 ULT)

- Indirect quote: Being asked by the Pharisees **when the kingdom of God was coming**,
- Direct quote: he answered them and said, "**The kingdom of God is not coming with careful observation. Neither will they say, 'Look, here it is!' or 'There it is!' For indeed, the kingdom of God is among you.**"
- Direct quotes: Neither will they say, '**Look, here it is!**' or, '**There it is!**'

This page answers the question: *What are direct and indirect quotations?*

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

[Pronouns](#)

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

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

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:

[Quotes within Quotes](#)

(Go back to: [Numbers 21:16](#); [25:13](#))

Double Negatives

A double negative occurs when a clause has two words that each express the meaning of “not.” Double negatives mean very different things in different languages. To translate sentences that have double negatives accurately and clearly, you need to know what a double negative means in the Bible and how to express this idea in your language.

This page answers the question: *What are double negatives?*

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

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

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

Description

Negative words are words that have in them the meaning “not.” Examples in English are “no,” “not,” “none,” “no one,” “nothing,” “nowhere,” “never,” “nor,” “neither,” and “without.” Also, some words have prefixes or suffixes that mean “not,” such as the bolded parts of these words: “**un**happy,” “**im**possible,” and “**useless**.” Some other kinds of words also have a negative meaning, such as “lack” or “reject,” or even “fight” or “evil.”

A double negative occurs when a clause has two words that each have a negative meaning.

We did this **not** because we have **no** authority ... (2 Thessalonians 3:9a ULT)

And this was **not** done **without** an oath! (Hebrews 7:20a ULT)

Be sure of this—the wicked person will **not** go **un**punished. (Proverbs 11:21a ULT)

Reason This Is a Translation Issue

Double negatives mean very different things in different languages.

- In some languages, such as Spanish, a double negative emphasizes the negative. The Spanish sentence, “No vi a nadie,” literally says “I did not see no one.” It has both the word ‘no’ next to the verb and ‘nadie,’ which means “no one.” The two negatives are seen as in agreement with each other, and the sentence means, “I did not see anyone.”
- In some languages, a second negative cancels the first one, creating a positive sentence. So, “He is not unintelligent” means “He is intelligent.”
- In some languages the double negative creates a positive sentence, but it is a weak statement. So, “He is not unintelligent” means, “He is somewhat intelligent.”
- In some languages, such as the languages of the Bible, the double negative can create a positive sentence, and often strengthens the statement. So, “He is not unintelligent” can mean “He is intelligent” or “He is very intelligent.”

To translate sentences with double negatives accurately and clearly in your language, you need to know what a double negative means in the Bible and how to express the same idea in your language.

Examples From the Bible

... in order **not** to be **un**fruitful. (Titus 3:14b ULT)

This means “so that they will be fruitful.”

All things were made through him and **without** him there was **not** one thing made that has been made. (John 1:3 ULT)

By using a double negative, John emphasized that the Son of God created absolutely everything. The double negative makes a stronger statement than the simple positive.

Translation Strategies

If double negatives are natural and are used to express the positive in your language, consider using them. Otherwise, you could consider these strategies:

- (1) If the purpose of a double negative in the Bible is simply to make a positive statement, and if it would not do that in your language, remove the two negatives so that it is positive.
- (2) If the purpose of a double negative in the Bible is to make a strong positive statement, and if it would not do that in your language, remove the two negatives and put in a strengthening word or phrase such as “very” or “surely” or “absolutely.”

Examples of Translation Strategies Applied

- (1) If the purpose of a double negative in the Bible is simply to make a positive statement, and if it would not do that in your language, remove the two negatives so that it is positive.

For we do **not** have a high priest who **cannot** feel sympathy for our weaknesses. (Hebrews 4:15a ULT)

“For we have a high priest who can feel sympathy for our weaknesses.”

... in order **not** to be **unfruitful**. (Titus 3:14b ULT)

“... so that they may be fruitful.”

- (2) If the purpose of a double negative in the Bible is to make a strong positive statement, and if it would not do that in your language, remove the two negatives and put in a strengthening word or phrase such as “very” or “surely” or “absolutely.”

Be sure of this—the wicked person will **not** go **unpunished**. (Proverbs 11:21a ULT)

“Be sure of this—wicked people will **certainly** be punished.”

All things were made through him and **without** him there was **not** one thing made that has been made. (John 1:3 ULT)

“All things were made through him. He made **absolutely** everything that has been made.”

Next we recommend you learn about:

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

(Go back to: [Numbers 11:32](#); [19:12](#); [19:15](#); [26:65](#))

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:

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

A very similar issue is the repetition of the same word or phrase for emphasis, usually with no other words between them. Because these figures of speech are so similar and have the same effect, we will treat them here together.

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.

Then they approached {and} woke him up, saying, “**Master! Master!** We are perishing!” (Luke 8:24 ULT)

The repetition of “Master” means that the disciples called to Jesus urgently and continually.

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**."

Then they approached {and} woke him up, saying, "**Master! Master!** We are perishing!" (Luke 8:24 ULT)

Then they approached {and} woke him up, **urgently shouting, "Master!**
We are perishing!"

(Go back to: [Numbers 11:22](#); [19:2](#); [20:22](#); [21:27](#); [30:4](#); [30:5](#))

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: [Numbers 2:8; 2:11; 2:13; 2:15; 2:19; 2:21; 2:23; 2:26; 2:28; 2:30; 4:40; 6:3; 6:17; 8:7; 8:18; 27:13; 27:23; 28:12; 28:20; 28:28; 29:3; 29:9; 29:14; 30:7; 30:14; 32:33](#))

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.

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]]

... they found Saul and his sons **fallen** on Mount Gilboa.
(1 Chronicles 10:8b ULT)

This means that Saul and his sons “were dead.” It is a euphemism because the important thing was not that Saul and his sons had fallen but that they were dead. Sometimes people do not like to speak directly about death because it is unpleasant.

Reason This Is a Translation Issue

Different languages use different euphemisms. If the target language does not use the same euphemism as in the source language, readers may not understand what it means and they may think that the writer means only what the words literally say.

Examples From the Bible

... where there was a cave. Saul went inside to **cover his feet**. (1 Samuel 24:3b ULT)

The original hearers would have understood that Saul went into the cave to use it as a toilet, but the writer wanted to avoid offending or distracting them, so **he did not say specifically** what Saul did or what he left in the cave.

But Mary said to the angel, “How will this be, since I have not **known a man**?” (Luke 1:34 ULT)

In order **to be polite**, Mary uses a euphemism to say that she has never had sexual intercourse with a man.

Translation Strategies

If euphemism would be natural and give the right meaning in your language, consider using it. If not, here are other options:

- (1) Use a euphemism from your own culture.
- (2) State the information plainly without a euphemism if it would not be offensive.

Examples of Translation Strategies Applied

- (1) Use a euphemism from your own culture.

... where there was a cave. Saul went inside to **cover his feet**. (1 Samuel 24:3b ULT) — Some languages might use euphemisms like these:

“... where there was a cave. Saul went into the cave to **dig a hole**”

“... where there was a cave. Saul went into the cave to **have some time alone**”

But Mary said to the angel, “How will this be, since I have not **known a man**?” (Luke 1:34 ULT)

But Mary said to the angel, “How will this be, since I have not **slept with a man?**”

(2) State the information plainly without a euphemism if it would not be offensive.

They found Saul and his sons **fallen** on Mount Gilboa. (1 Chronicles 10:8b ULT)

“They found Saul and his sons **dead** on Mount Gilboa.”

(Go back to: [Numbers 5:13](#); [5:19](#); [5:21](#); [5:27](#); [8:17](#); [Notes](#); [20:24](#); [20:26](#); [27:13](#); [31:2](#); [31:17](#); [31:18](#); [31:35](#))

Exclusive and Inclusive 'We'

Description

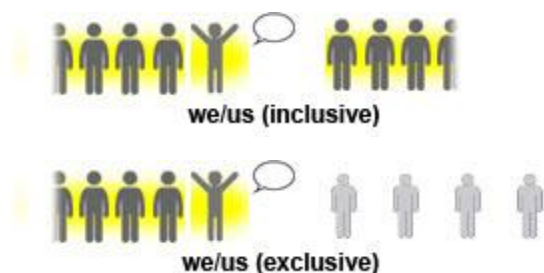
Some languages have more than one form of "we": an inclusive form that means "I and you" and an exclusive form that means "I and someone else but not you." The exclusive form excludes the person being spoken to. The inclusive form includes the person being spoken to and possibly others. This is also true for "us," "our," "ours," and "ourselves." Some languages have inclusive forms and exclusive forms for each of these. Translators whose language has separate exclusive and inclusive forms for these words will need to understand what the speaker meant so that they can decide which form to use.

This page answers the question: *What are the exclusive and inclusive forms of "we"?*

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

[Pronouns](#)

See the pictures. The people on the right are the people that the speaker is talking to. The yellow highlight shows who the inclusive "we" and the exclusive "we" refer to.



Reason This Is a Translation Issue

The Bible was first written in the Hebrew, Aramaic, and Greek languages. Like English, these languages do not have separate exclusive and inclusive forms for "we." If your language has separate exclusive and inclusive forms of "we," then you will need to understand what the speaker meant so that you can decide which form of "we" to use.

Examples From the Bible

Exclusive

They said, "There are not more than five loaves of bread and two fish with us—unless **we** go and buy food for all these people." (Luke 9:13 ULT)

In the second clause, the disciples are talking about some of them going to buy food. They were speaking to Jesus, but Jesus was not going to buy food. So languages that have inclusive and exclusive forms of "we" would use the **exclusive** form there.

We have seen it, and **we** bear witness to it. **We** are announcing to you the eternal life, which was with the Father, and which has been made known to **us**. (1 John 1:2 ULT)

John is telling people who have not seen Jesus what he and the other apostles have seen. So languages that have inclusive and exclusive forms of "we" and "us" would use the **exclusive** forms in this verse.

Inclusive

The shepherds said one to each other, "Let **us** now go to Bethlehem, and see this thing that has happened, which the Lord has made known to **us**." (Luke 2:15b ULT)

The shepherds were speaking to one another. When they said "us," they were including the people they were speaking to, so languages that have inclusive and exclusive forms of "we" and "us" would use the **inclusive** form in this verse.

Now it happened that on one of those days, he indeed got into a boat with his disciples, and he said to them, "Let **us** go over to the other side of the lake." So they set sail. (Luke 8:22 ULT)

When Jesus said "us," he was referring to himself and to the disciples he was speaking to, so languages that have inclusive and exclusive forms of "we" and "us" would use the **inclusive** form in this verse.

Next we recommend you learn about:

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

(Go back to: [Numbers 20:10; 21:7](#))

First, Second or Third Person

Normally a speaker refers to himself as “I” and the person he is speaking to as “you.” Sometimes in the Bible a speaker refers to himself or to the person he is speaking to with terms other than “I” or “you.”

Description

- First person — This is how a speaker normally refers to himself. English uses the pronouns “I” and “we.” (Also: me, my, mine; us, our, ours)
- Second person — This is how a speaker normally refers to the person or people he is speaking to. English uses the pronoun “you.” (Also: your, yours)
- Third person — This is how a speaker refers to someone else. English uses the pronouns “he,” “she,” “it,” and “they.” (Also: him, his, her, hers, its; them, their, theirs) Noun phrases like “the man” or “the woman” are also third person.

This page answers the question: *What are first, second, and third person, and how do I translate when a third person form does not refer to the third person?*

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

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

[Pronouns](#)

Reason This Is a Translation Issue

Sometimes in the Bible a speaker uses the third person to refer to himself or to the people he is speaking to. Readers might think that the speaker was referring to someone else. They might not understand that he meant “I” or “you.”

Examples From the Bible

Sometimes people used the third person instead of “I” or “me” to refer to themselves.

But David said to Saul, “**Your servant** used to keep **his** father’s sheep.” (1 Samuel 17:34 ULT)

David referred to himself in the third person as “your servant” and used “his.” He was calling himself Saul’s servant in order to show his humility before Saul.

Then Yahweh answered Job out of a fierce storm and said,
“... Do you have an arm like **God’s**? Can you thunder with a voice like **his**?” (Job 40:6, 9 ULT)

God referred to himself in the third person with the words “God’s” and “his.” He did this to emphasize that he is God, and he is powerful.

Sometimes people use the third person instead of “you” or “your” to refer to the person or people they are speaking to.

Abraham answered and said, “Look, I have undertaken to speak to my Lord, even though I am only dust and ashes!” (Genesis 18:27 ULT)

Abraham was speaking to the Lord, and referred to the Lord as “My Lord” rather than as “you.” He did this to show his humility before God.

So also my heavenly Father will do to you, if **each of you** does not forgive **his** brother from your heart. (Matthew 18:35 ULT)

After saying “each of you,” Jesus used the third person “his” instead of “your.”

Translation Strategies

If using the third person to mean “I” or “you” would be natural and give the right meaning in your language, consider using it. If not, here are some other options.

- (1) Use the third person phrase along with the pronoun “I” or “you.”
- (2) Simply use the first person (“I”) or second person (“you”) instead of the third person.

Examples of Translation Strategies Applied

- (1) Use the third person phrase along with the pronoun “I” or “you.”

But David said to Saul, “**Your servant** used to keep **his** father’s sheep.” (1 Samuel 17:34)

But David said to Saul, “**I, your servant**, used to keep **my** father’s sheep.”

- (2) Simply use the first person (“I”) or second person (“you”) instead of the third person.

Then Yahweh answered Job out of a fierce storm and said, “... Do you have an arm like **God’s**? Can you thunder with a voice like **his**?” (Job 40:6, 9 ULT)

Then Yahweh answered Job out of a fierce storm and said, “... Do you have an arm like **mine**? Can you thunder with a voice like **mine**?”

So also my heavenly Father will do to you if **each of you** does not forgive **his** brother from your heart. (Matthew 18:35 ULT)

So also my heavenly Father will do to you if **each of you** does not forgive **your** brother from your heart.

Next we recommend you learn about:

[Forms of You](#)

(Go back to: [Numbers 11:11](#); [24:4](#); [24:20](#))

Forms of You

Singular, Dual, and Plural

Some languages have more than one word for “you” based on how many people the word “you” refers to. The **singular** form refers to one person, and the **plural** form refers to more than one person. Some languages also have a **dual** form which refers to two people, and some languages have other forms that refer to three or four people.

This page answers the question: *What are the different forms of you?*

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

[[rc://en/ta/man/translate/figs-yousingular]]
[[rc://en/ta/man/translate/figs-youdual]]

You may also want to watch the video at https://ufw.io/figs_younum.

Sometimes in the Bible a speaker uses a singular form of “you” even though he is speaking to a crowd.

- Singular Pronouns that Refer to Groups

Formal and Informal

Some languages have more than one form of “you” based on the relationship between the speaker and the person he is talking to. People use the **formal** form of “you” when speaking to someone who is older, or has higher authority, or is someone they do not know very well. People use the **informal** form when speaking to someone who is not older, or does not have higher authority, or is a family member or close friend.

You may also want to watch the video at https://ufw.io/figs_youform.

For help with translating these, we suggest you read:

- Forms of “You” — Formal or Informal

(Go back to: [Numbers 5:3](#); [6:23](#); [6:24](#); [6:25](#); [6:26](#); [9:14](#); [10:5](#); [10:6](#); [10:8](#); [10:10](#); [14:12](#); [18:3](#); [18:4](#); [18:5](#); [18:7](#); [20:18](#); [34:17](#))

Fractions

Description

A fraction is a number that represents part of a whole. When an item is divided into several equal parts, a fraction refers to one or more of those parts.

For the drink offering, you must offer **a third** of a hin of wine. (Numbers 15:7a ULT)

A hin is a container of a set size which is used for measuring wine and other liquids. The people were to think about dividing a hin container into three equal parts, filling up only one of those parts and offering that amount.

... **a third** of the ships were destroyed. (Revelation 8:9b ULT)

There were many ships. If all those ships were divided into three equal groups of ships, one group of ships was destroyed.

Most fractions in English simply have the letters “th” added to the end of the number, such as fourth, sixth, ninth, tenth.

| Number of parts the whole is divided into | Fraction | | ----- | ----- | | four | fourth | | ten | tenth | | one hundred | one hundredth | | one thousand | one thousandth |

Some fractions in English do not follow that pattern.

| Number of parts the whole is divided into | Fraction | | ----- | ----- | | two | half | | three | third | | five | fifth |

Reason This is a Translation Issue

Some languages do not use fractions. They may simply talk about parts or groups, but they do not use fractions to tell how big a part is or how many parts are included in a group.

Examples From the Bible

Now to the **half-tribe** of Manasseh, Moses had given a possession in Bashan, but to the other **half**, Joshua gave a possession among their brothers across the Jordan on the west. (Joshua 22:7 ULT)

The tribe of Manasseh divided into two groups. The phrase “the half-tribe of Manasseh” refers one of those groups. The phrase “the other half” refers to the other group.

So the four angels who had been prepared for that hour, that day, that month, and that year, were released so that they would kill **a third** of mankind. (Revelation 9:15 ULT)

If all the people in the world were to be divided into three equal groups, then the number of people in one group would be killed.

You must also prepare **a fourth** of a hin of wine as the drink offering. (Numbers 15:5 ULT)

They were to imagine dividing a hin of wine into four equal parts and prepare the amount equal to one of them.

This page answers the question: *What are fractions and how can I translate them?*

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

[Numbers](#)

Translation Strategies

If a fraction in your language would give the right meaning, consider using it. If not, you could consider these strategies.

- (1) Tell the number of parts or groups that the item would be divided into, and then tell the number of parts or groups that is being referred to.
- (2) For measurements such as for weight and length, use a unit that your people might know or the unit in the UST.
- (3) For measurements, use ones that are used in your language. In order to do that you would need to know how your measurements relates to the metric system and figure out each measurement.

Examples of These Translation Strategies Applied

- (1) Tell the number of parts or groups that the item would be divided into, and then tell the number of parts or groups that is being referred to.

A third of the ocean became red like blood (Revelation 8:8 ULT)

It was like they **divided** the ocean **into three parts**, and **one part** of the ocean became blood.

Then you must offer with the bull a grain offering of **three-tenths** of an ephah of fine flour mixed with **half a hin** of oil. (Numbers 15:9 ULT)

... then you must **divide** an ephah of fine flour **into ten parts** and **divide** a hin of oil **into two parts**. Then mix **three of those parts** of the flour with **one of the parts** of oil. Then you must offer that grain offering along with the bull.

- (2) For measurements, use the measurements that are given in the UST. The translators of the UST have already figured how to represent the amounts in the metric system.

... **two-thirds of a shekel** ... (1 Samuel 13:21b ULT)

... **eight grams** of silver ... (1 Samuel 13:21b UST)

... **three-tenths of an ephah** of fine flour mixed with **half a hin** of oil. (Numbers 15:9b ULT)

... **six and one-half liters** of finely ground flour mixed with **two liters** of olive oil. (Numbers 15:9b UST)

- (3) For measurements, use ones that are used in your language. In order to do that you would need to know how your measurements relates to the metric system and figure out each measurement.

... **three-tenths of an ephah** of fine flour mixed with **half a hin** of oil. (Numbers 15:9b ULT)

six quarts of fine flour mixed with **two quarts** of oil.

Next we recommend you learn about:

[Ordinal Numbers](#)

[Biblical Money](#)

(Go back to: [Numbers 5:7](#); [5:15](#); [28:5](#); [28:7](#); [28:9](#); [28:12](#); [28:13](#); [28:14](#); [28:20](#); [28:21](#); [28:28](#); [28:29](#); [29:3](#); [29:4](#); [29:9](#); [29:10](#); [29:14](#); [29:15](#))

Go and Come

Description

This page answers the question: *What do I do if the word "go" or "come" is confusing in a certain sentence?*

Different languages have different ways of determining whether to use the words "go" or "come" and whether to use the words "take" or "bring" when talking about motion. For example, when saying that they are approaching a person who has called them, English speakers say "I'm coming," while Spanish speakers say "I'm going." You will need to study the context in order to understand what is meant by the words "go" and "come" (and also "take" and "bring"), and then translate those words in a way that your readers will understand which direction people are moving in.

Reason This Is a Translation Issue

Different languages have different ways of talking about motion. The biblical languages or your source language may use the words "go" and "come" or "take" and "bring" differently than your language uses them. If these words are not translated in the way that is natural in your language, your readers may be confused about which direction people are moving.

Examples From the Bible

Yahweh said to Noah, "**Come**, you and all your household, into the ark." (Genesis 7:1 ULT)

In some languages, this would lead people to think that Yahweh was in the ark.

But you will be free from my oath if you **come** to my relatives and they will not give her to you.
Then you will be free from my oath. (Genesis 24:41 ULT)

Abraham was speaking to his servant. Abraham's relatives lived far away from where he and his servant were standing and he wanted his servant to **go** to them, not **come** toward Abraham.

When you have **come** to the land that Yahweh your God gives you, and when you take possession of it and begin to live in it ... (Deuteronomy 17:14a ULT)

Moses is speaking to the people in the wilderness. They had not yet gone into the land that God was giving them. In some languages, it would make more sense to say, "When you have **gone** into the land ..."

They **brought** him up to the temple in Jerusalem to present him to the Lord. (Luke 2:22b ULT)

In some languages, it might make more sense to say that they **took** or **carried** Jesus to the temple.

Then see, there was a man whose name was Jairus, and he was a leader of the synagogue. And falling at the feet of Jesus, he begged him to come to his house. (Luke 8:41 ULT)

The man was not at his house when he spoke to Jesus. He wanted Jesus to **go** with him to his house.

What did you go out into the desert to see? A reed shaken by the wind? (Luke 7:24b ULT)

In some languages, it might make more sense to ask what did you come out to see.

Translation Strategies

If the word used in the ULT would be natural and give the right meaning in your language, consider using it. If not, here are other strategies.

- (1) Use the word “go,” “come,” “take,” or “bring” that would be natural in your language.
- (2) Use another word that expresses the right meaning.

Examples of Translation Strategies Applied

- (1) Use the word “go,” “come,” “take,” or “bring” that would be natural in your language.

But you will be free from my oath if you **come** to my relatives and they will not give her to you. (Genesis 24:41 ULT)

But you will be free from my oath if you **go** to my relatives and they will not give her to you.

What did you go out into the desert to see? A reed shaken by the wind? (Luke 7:24b ULT)

What did you come out into the desert to see? A reed shaken by the wind?

- (2) Use another word that expresses the right meaning.

When you have **come** to the land that Yahweh your God gives you, and when you take possession of it and begin to live in it ... (Deuteronomy 17:14 ULT)

“When you have **arrived** in the land that Yahweh your God gives you, and when you take possession of it and begin to live in it ...”

Yahweh said to Noah, “**Come**, you and all your household, into the ark ...” (Genesis 7:1 ULT)

Yahweh said to Noah, “**Enter**, you and all your household, into the ark ...”

What did you go out into the desert to see? A reed shaken by the wind? (Luke 7:24b ULT)

What did you travel out into the desert to see? A reed shaken by the wind?

(Go back to: [Numbers 22:7](#); [22:16](#))

Hebrew Months

Description

This page answers the question: *What are the Hebrew months?*

The Hebrew calendar used in the Bible has twelve months. Unlike the western calendar, its first month begins in the spring of the northern hemisphere. Sometimes a month is called by its name (Aviv, Ziv, Sivan), and sometimes it is called by its order in the Hebrew calendar year (first month, second month, third month).

Reasons This Is a Translation Issue

- Readers may be surprised to read of months that they have never heard of, and they may wonder how those months correspond to the months that they use.
- Readers may not realize that phrases such as “the first month” or “the second month” refer to the first or second month of the Hebrew calendar, not some other calendar.
- Readers may not know when the first month of the Hebrew calendar begins.
- The Bible may tell about something happening in a certain month, but readers will not be able to fully understand what is said about it if they do not know what season of the year that was.

List of Hebrew Months

This is a list of the Hebrew months with information about them that may be helpful in the translation.

Aviv — (This month was called **Nisan** after the Babylonian exile.) This is the first month of the Hebrew calendar. It marks when God brought the people of Israel out of Egypt. It is at the beginning of the spring season when the late rains come and people begin to harvest their crops. It is during the last part of March and the first part of April on western calendars. The Passover celebration started on Aviv 10; the Festival of Unleavened Bread was right after that, and the Festival of Harvest was a few weeks after that.

Ziv — This is the second month of the Hebrew calendar. This is during the harvest season. It is during the last part of April and the first part of May on Western calendars.

Sivan — This is the third month of the Hebrew calendar. It is at the end of the harvest season and the beginning of the dry season. It is during the last part of May and the first part of June on Western calendars. The Feast of Weeks is celebrated on Sivan 6.

Tammuz — This is the fourth month of the Hebrew calendar. It is during the dry season. It is during the last part of June and the first part of July on Western calendars.

Ab — This is the fifth month of the Hebrew calendar. It is during the dry season. It is during the last part of July and the first part of August on Western calendars.

Elul — This is the sixth month of the Hebrew calendar. It is at the end of the dry season and the beginning of the rainy season. It is during the last part of August and the first part of September on Western calendars.

Ethanim — This is the seventh month of the Hebrew calendar. This is during the early rain season which would soften the land for sowing. It is during the last part of September and the first part of October on Western calendars. The Feast of Ingathering and the Day of Atonement are celebrated in this month.

Bul — This is the eighth month of the Hebrew calendar. It is during the rainy season when people plough their fields and sow seed. It is during the last part of October and the first part of November on Western calendars.

Kislev — This is the ninth month of the Hebrew calendar. This is at the end of the sowing season and the beginning of the cold season. It is during the last part of November and the first part of December on Western calendars.

Tebeth — This is the tenth month of the Hebrew calendar. It is during the cold season when there may be rain and snow. It is during the last part of December and the first part of January on Western calendars.

Shebat — This is the eleventh month of the Hebrew calendar. This is the coldest month of the year, and it has heavy rainfall. It is during the last part of January and the first part of February on Western calendars.

Adar — This is the twelfth and last month of the Hebrew calendar. This is during the cold season. It is during the last part of February and the first part of March on western calendars. The feast called Purim is celebrated in Adar.

Examples From the Bible

Today you are going out, in **the month of Aviv**. (Exodus 13:4 ULT)

You must eat unleavened bread from evening of the fourteenth day **in the first month of the year**, until evening of the twenty-first day of the month. (Exodus 12:18 ULT)

Translation Strategies

You may need to make some information about the months explicit. (See [Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information](#).)

(1) Tell the number of the Hebrew month.

(2) Use the names for months that people know.

(3) State clearly what season the month occurred in.

(4) Refer to the time in terms of the season rather than in terms of the Hebrew name of the month. (If possible, use a footnote to show the Hebrew month and day.)

Examples of Translation Strategies Applied

The examples below use these two verses.

At that time, you will appear before me in **the month of Aviv**, which is fixed for this purpose. It was in this month that you came out from Egypt. (Exodus 23:15b ULT)

It will always be a statute for you that in **the seventh month, on the tenth day of the month**, you must humble yourselves and do no work. (Leviticus 16:29a ULT)

(1) Tell the number of the Hebrew month.

At that time, you will appear before me in **the first month of the year**, which is fixed for this purpose. It was in this month that you came out from Egypt.

(2) Use the months that people know.

At that time, you will appear before me in **the month of March**, which is fixed for this purpose. It was in this month that you came out from Egypt.

It will always be a statute for you that **on the day I choose in late September** you must humble yourselves and do no work.

(3) State clearly what season the month occurs in.

It will always be a statute for you that **in the autumn, on the tenth day of the seventh month**, you must humble yourselves and do no work.

(4) Refer to the time in terms of the season rather than in terms of the month.

It will always be a statute for you that in **the day I choose in early autumn**¹ you must humble yourselves and do no work.

The footnote would look like:

^[1] The Hebrew says, "the seventh month, on the tenth day of the month."

Next we recommend you learn about:

[Ordinal Numbers](#)

(Go back to: [Numbers 1:1](#); [1:18](#); [9:1](#); [9:5](#); [9:11](#); [10:10](#); [10:11](#); [20:1](#); [28:16](#); [28:17](#); [29:1](#); [29:6](#); [29:7](#); [29:12](#); [33:3](#); [33:38](#))

How to Translate Names

Description

The Bible contains the names of many people, groups of people, and places. Some of these names may sound strange and be hard to say. Sometimes readers may not know what a name refers to, and sometimes they may need to understand what a name means. This page will help you see how you can translate these names and how you can help people understand what they need to know about them.

This page answers the question: *How can I translate names that are new to my culture?*

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

[Translate Unknowns](#)

Meaning of names

Most names in the Bible have meaning. Most of the time, names in the Bible are used simply to identify the people and places they refer to, but sometimes the meaning of a name is especially important.

For this **Melchizedek**, king of Salem, priest of God Most High, was the one who met Abraham returning from the slaughter of the kings and blessed him. (Hebrews 7:1 ULT)

Here the writer uses the name “Melchizedek” primarily to refer to a man who had that name, and the title “king of Salem” tells us that he ruled over a certain city.

His name first indeed means “king of righteousness,” and then also “king of Salem,” that is, “king of peace.” (Hebrews 7:2b ULT)

Here the writer explains the meanings of Melchizedek’s name and title because those things tell us more about the person. Other times, the writer does not explain the meaning of a name because he expects the reader to already know the meaning. If the meaning of the name is important to understand the passage, you can include the meaning in the text or in a footnote.

Reasons This Is a Translation Issue

- Readers may not know some of the names in the Bible. They may not know whether a name refers to a person or place or something else.
- Readers may need to understand the meaning of a name in order to understand the passage.
- Some names may have different sounds or combinations of sounds that are not used in your language or are unpleasant to say in your language. For strategies to address this problem, see [Borrow Words](#).
- Some people and places in the Bible have two names. Readers may not realize that two names refer to the same person or place.

Examples From the Bible

Then you crossed over the **Jordan** and came to **Jericho**, and the men of Jericho, and the **Amorites** ... fought against you, but I gave them into your hand. (Joshua 24:11 ULT)

Readers might not know that “Jordan” is the name of a river, “Jericho” is the name of a city, and “Amorites” is the name of a group of people.

She said, “Do I really continue to see, even after he has seen me?” Therefore, the well was called **Beer Lahai Roi**. (Genesis 16:13b-14a ULT)

Readers may not understand the second sentence if they do not know that “Beer Lahai Roi” means “Well of the Living One who sees me.”

And she called his name **Moses** and she said, “For out of the water I drew him.” (Exodus 2:10b ULT)

Readers may not understand why she said this if they do not know that the name Moses sounds like the Hebrew words “pull out.”

Saul was in agreement with his execution. (Acts 8:1a ULT)

But when the apostles, Barnabas and **Paul**, heard of it, they tore their clothing. (Acts 14:14a ULT)

Readers may not know that the names Saul and Paul refer to the same person.

Translation Strategies

- (1) If readers cannot easily understand from the context what kind of a thing a name refers to, you can add a word to clarify it.
- (2) If readers need to understand the meaning of a name in order to understand what is said about it, copy the name and tell about its meaning either in the text or in a footnote.
- (3) Or if readers need to understand the meaning of a name in order to understand what is said about it, and that name is used only once, translate the meaning of the name instead of copying the name.
- (4) If a person or place has two different names, use one name most of the time and the other name only when the text tells about the person or place having more than one name or when it says something about why the person or place was given that name. Write a footnote when the source text uses the name that is used less frequently.
- (5) Or if a person or place has two different names, then use whatever name is given in the source text, and add a footnote that gives the other name.

Examples of Translation Strategies Applied

- (1) If readers cannot easily understand from the context what kind of a thing a name refers to, you can add a word to clarify it.

Then you crossed over the **Jordan** and came to **Jericho**, and the men of Jericho, and the **Amorites** ... fought against you, but I gave them into your hand. (Joshua 24:11 ULT)

You went over the **Jordan River** and came to the **city of Jericho**. The men of Jericho fought against you, along with **the tribe of the Amorites**.

At that hour, certain Pharisees approached, saying to him, “Leave and go away from here, because **Herod** wants to kill you.” (Luke 13:31 ULT)

At that hour, certain Pharisees approached, saying to him, “Go and leave here, because **King Herod** wants to kill you.”

- (2) If readers need to understand the meaning of a name in order to understand what is said about it, copy the name and tell about its meaning either in the text or in a footnote.

And she called his name **Moses** and she said, "For out of the water I drew him." (Exodus 2:10b ULT)

She called his name **Moses (which sounds like 'drawn out')**, and she said, "For out of the water I drew him."

(3) Or if readers need to understand the meaning of a name in order to understand what is said about it, and that name is used only once, translate the meaning of the name instead of copying the name.

She said, "Do I really continue to see, even after he has seen me?" Therefore, the well was called **Beer Lahai Roi**. (Genesis 16:13b-14a ULT)

She said, "Do I really continue to see, even after he has seen me?"
Therefore, the well was called **Well of the Living One who sees me**.

(4) If a person or place has two different names, use one name most of the time and the other name only when the text tells about the person or place having more than one name or when it says something about why the person or place was given that name. Write a footnote when the source text uses the name that is used less frequently. For example, Paul is called "Saul" before Acts 13 and "Paul" after Acts 13. You could translate his name as "Paul" all of the time, except in Acts 13:9 where it talks about him having both names.

... a young man named **Saul**. (Acts 7:58b ULT)

... a young man named **Paul** ¹

The footnote would look like:

^[1] Most versions say "Saul" here, but most of the time in the Bible he is called "Paul."

Then later in the story, you could translate this way:

But **Saul**, who is also called **Paul**, was filled with the Holy Spirit; (Acts 13:9)

But **Saul**, who is also called **Paul**, was filled with the Holy Spirit;

(5) Or if a person or place has two names, use whatever name is given in the source text, and add a footnote that gives the other name. For example, you could write "Saul" where the source text has "Saul" and "Paul" where the source text has "Paul."

a young man named **Saul** (Acts 7:58 ULT)

a young man named **Saul**

The footnote would look like:

^[1] This is the same man who is called Paul beginning in Acts 13.

Then later in the story, you could translate this way:

But **Saul**, who is also called **Paul**, was filled with the Holy Spirit; (Acts 13:9)

But **Saul**, who is also called **Paul**, was filled with the Holy Spirit;

Then after the story has explained the name change, you could translate this way.

It came about in Iconium that **Paul** and Barnabas entered together into the synagogue (Acts 14:1 ULT)

It came about in Iconium that **Paul**¹ and Barnabas entered together into the synagogue

The footnote would look like:

^[1] This is the same man who was called Saul before Acts 13.

Next we recommend you learn about:

[Copy or Borrow Words](#)

(**Go back to:** [Numbers 1:5; 1:6; 1:7; 1:10; 1:12; 2:18; 2:20; 2:24; 2:25; 2:29; 2:31; 3:2; 3:17; 3:21; 3:24; 3:27; 3:30; 3:33; 7:41; 7:77; 10:29; 11:34; 11:35; 13:4; 13:5; 13:6; 13:7; 13:8; 13:9; 13:10; 13:11; 13:12; 13:13; 13:14; 13:15; 13:21; 13:22; 13:23; 13:33; 14:6; 21:14; 21:19; 21:20; 21:23; 21:30; 22:2; 22:5; 22:39; 23:14; 24:7; 24:21; 24:24; 25:1; 25:14; 25:15; 26:5; 26:8; 26:12; 26:15; 26:19; 26:23; 26:26; 26:28; 26:30; 26:33; 26:35; 26:38; 26:42; 26:44; 26:48; 26:57; 27:12; 31:8; 32:3; 32:9; 32:12; 32:33; 32:34; 32:35; 32:36; 32:37; 32:38; 32:41; 32:42; 33:3; 33:5; 33:8; 33:11; 33:15; 33:19; 33:23; 33:27; 33:31; 33:35; 33:40; 33:41; 33:44; 33:47; 34:4; 34:7; 34:10; 34:19; 34:21; 34:24; 34:27; 36:1; 36:2; 36:11](#))

Hyperbole

Description

A speaker or writer can use exactly the same words to say something that he means as completely true, or as generally true, or as a hyperbole. This is why it can be hard to decide how to understand a statement. For example, the sentence below could mean three different things.

It rains here every night.

The speaker means this as literally true if he means that it really does rain here every night.

The speaker means this as a **generalization** if he means that it rains here most nights.

The speaker means this as a **hyperbole** if he wants to say that it rains more than it actually does, usually in order to express a strong attitude toward the amount or frequency of rain, such as being annoyed or being happy about it.

This page answers the question: *What are hyperboles? What are generalizations? How can I translate them?*

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

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

Hyperbole

In hyperbole, a figure of speech that uses exaggeration, a speaker deliberately describes something with an extreme or even unreal statement, usually to show his strong feeling or opinion about it. He expects people to understand that he is exaggerating.

They will not leave **stone upon stone in you**. (Luke 19:44b ULT)

This is an exaggeration. It means that the enemies will completely destroy Jerusalem.

Moses was educated in **all the wisdom of the Egyptians**. (Acts 7:22a ULT)

This hyperbole means that he had learned everything an Egyptian education could offer.

Generalization

This is a statement that is true most of the time or in most situations that it could apply to.

The one who ignores instruction **will have poverty and shame**, but **honor will come** to him who learns from correction. (Proverbs 13:18)

These generalizations tell about what normally happens to people who ignore instruction and what normally happens to people who learn from correction. There may be some exceptions to these statements, but they are generally true.

And when you pray, do not make useless repetitions as **the Gentiles do, for they think that they will be heard because of their many words**. (Matthew 6:7)

This generalization tells about what Gentiles were known for doing. Many Gentiles did this. It does not matter if a few did not. The point was that the hearers should not join in this well-known practice.

Even though a hyperbole or a generalization may have a strong-sounding word like “all,” “always,” “none,” or “never,” it does not necessarily mean **exactly** “all,” “always,” “none,” or “never.” It simply means “most,” “most of the time,” “hardly any,” or “rarely.”

Reason This Is a Translation Issue

Readers need to be able to understand whether or not a statement is literally true.

If readers realize that a statement is not literally true, they need to be able to understand whether it is a hyperbole, a generalization, or a lie. (Though the Bible is completely true, it tells about people who did not always tell the truth.)

Examples From the Bible

Examples of Hyperbole

If your hand causes you to stumble, **cut it off**. It is better for you to enter into life maimed ... (Mark 9:43a ULT)

When Jesus said to cut off your hand, he meant that we should **do whatever extreme things** we need to do in order not to sin. He used this hyperbole to show how extremely important it is to try to stop sinning.

The Philistines gathered together to fight against Israel with 3,000 chariots, 6,000 men to drive the chariots, and troops **as numerous as the sand on the seashore**. (1 Samuel 13:5a ULT)

The bolded phrase is an exaggeration for the purpose of expressing the emotion that the Philistine army was overwhelming in number. It means that there were **many, many** soldiers in the Philistine army.

But as his anointing teaches you **everything** and is true and is not a lie, and just as it has taught you, remain in him. (1 John 2:27b ULT)

This is a hyperbole. It expresses the assurance that God's Spirit teaches us about **all things that we need to know**. God's Spirit does not teach us about everything that it is possible to know.

When they found him, they also said to him, "**Everyone** is looking for you." (Mark 1:37 ULT)

The disciples probably did not mean that everyone in the city was looking for Jesus, but that **many people** were looking for him, or that all of Jesus' closest friends there were looking for him. This is an exaggeration for the purpose of expressing the emotion that they and many others were worried about him.

Examples of Generalization

Can **any good thing** come out of Nazareth? (John 1:46b ULT)

This rhetorical question is meant to express the generalization that there is nothing good in Nazareth. The people there had a reputation for being uneducated and not strictly religious. Of course, there were exceptions.

One of them, of their own prophets, has said, "**Cretans are always liars, evil beasts, lazy bellies**." (Titus 1:12 ULT)

This is a generalization that means that Cretans had a reputation to be like this because, in general, this is how Cretans behaved. It is possible that there were exceptions.

A lazy hand causes a person to be poor, but the hand of the diligent person gains riches. (Proverbs 10:4 ULT)

This is generally true, and it reflects the experience of most people. It is possible that there are exceptions in some circumstances.

Caution

- Do not assume that something is an exaggeration just because it seems to be impossible. God does miraculous things.

They saw Jesus **walking on the sea** and coming near the boat. (John 6:19b ULT)

This is not hyperbole. Jesus really walked on the water. It is a literal statement.

- Do not assume that the word “all” is always a generalization that means “most.”
 - > Yahweh is righteous in **all** his ways
 - > and gracious in **all** he does. (Psalms 145:17 ULT)

Yahweh is always righteous. This is a completely true statement.

Translation Strategies

If the hyperbole or generalization would be natural and people would understand it and not think that it is a lie, consider using it. If not, here are other options.

- (1) Express the meaning without the exaggeration.
- (2) For a generalization, show that it is a generalization by using a phrase like “in general” or “in most cases.”
- (3) For a hyperbole or a generalization, add a word like “many” or “almost” to show that the hyperbole or generalization is not meant to be exact.
- (4) For a hyperbole or a generalization that has a word like “all,” “always,” “none,” or “never,” consider deleting that word.

Examples of Translation Strategies Applied

- (1) Express the meaning without the exaggeration.

The Philistines gathered together to fight against Israel: 3,000 chariots, 6,000 men to drive the chariots, and troops **as numerous as the sand on the seashore**. (1 Samuel 13:5a ULT)

The Philistines gathered together to fight against Israel: 3,000 chariots, 6,000 men to drive the chariots, and **a great number of troops**.

- (2) For a generalization, show that it is a generalization by using a phrase like “in general” or “in most cases.”

The one who ignores instruction will have poverty and shame. (Proverbs 13:18a ULT)

In general, the one who ignores instruction will have poverty and shame

When you pray, do not make useless repetitions as the **Gentiles do**, for they think that they will be heard because of their many words. (Matthew 6:7 ULT)

And when you pray, do not make useless repetitions as the Gentiles **generally** do, for they think that they will be heard because of their many words.

- (3) For a hyperbole or a generalization, add a word like “many” or “almost” to show that the hyperbole or generalization is not meant to be exact.

The **whole** country of Judea and **all** the people of Jerusalem went out to him. (Mark 1:5a ULT)

Almost all the country of Judea and **almost all** the people of Jerusalem went out to him.
or:

Many of the country of Judea and **many** of the people of Jerusalem went out to him.

(4) For a hyperbole or a generalization that has a word like “all,” “always,” “none,” or “never,” consider deleting that word.

The **whole** country of Judea and **all** the people of Jerusalem went out to him. (Mark 1:5a ULT)

The country of Judea and the people of Jerusalem went out to him.

(Go back to: [Numbers 11:22](#); [16:13](#); [Notes](#); [22:5](#))

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: [Numbers 5:11](#); [12:14](#); [22:18](#); [22:33](#); [24:13](#))

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: [Numbers 1:18; 1:50; 3:4; 3:8; 4:5; 5:12; 5:14; 5:19; 5:20; 5:21; 5:29; 5:30; 6:2; 6:3; 6:4; 6:5; 6:6; 6:7; 6:8; 6:13; 6:18; 6:19; 6:21; 6:24; 6:25; 6:26; 7:84; 8:16; 9:1; 9:3; 9:4; 9:6; 9:10; 9:11; 9:13; 9:20; 10:9; 10:31; 11:14; Notes; 14:22; 15:20; 15:40; 16:3; 16:7; 18:8; 18:15; 20:19; 21:11; 21:20; 22:5; 22:22; 22:27; 24:2; 24:3; 24:4; 24:10; 24:15; 25:3; 25:6; 27:16; 27:17; 29:12; 30:4; 30:5; 30:7; 30:9; 30:11; 30:12; 30:14; 31:16; 32:5; 32:13; 32:20; 32:32; 35:16; 35:21; 35:31](#))

Litotes

Description

Litotes is a figure of speech in which the speaker expresses a strong positive meaning by using two negative words or a negative word with a word that means the opposite of the meaning he intends. A few examples of negative words are “no,” “not,” “none,” and “never.” The opposite of “good” is “bad.” Someone could say that something is “not bad” to mean that it is extremely good.

This page answers the question: *What is litotes?*

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

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

Reason This Is a Translation Issue

Some languages do not use litotes. People who speak those languages might not understand that a statement using litotes actually strengthens the positive meaning. Instead, they might think that it weakens or even cancels the positive meaning.

Examples From the Bible

For you yourselves know, brothers, that our coming to you was **not useless**, (1 Thessalonians 2:1 ULT)

By using litotes, Paul emphasized that his visit with them was **very** useful.

Now when it became day, there was **no small disturbance** among the soldiers over what therefore had happened to Peter. (Acts 12:18 ULT)

By using litotes, Luke emphasized that there was a **lot** of excitement or anxiety among the soldiers about what happened to Peter. (Peter had been in prison, and even though there were soldiers guarding him, he escaped when an angel let him out. So they were very agitated.)

But you, Bethlehem, in the land of Judah,
are **not the least** among the leaders of Judah,
for from you will come a ruler
who will shepherd my people Israel. (Matthew 2:6 ULT)

By using litotes, the prophet emphasized that Bethlehem would be a **very important city**.

Translation Strategies

If the litotes would be understood correctly, consider using it.

(1) If the meaning with the negative would not be clear, give the **positive** meaning in a strong way.

Examples of Translation Strategies Applied

(1) If the meaning with the negative would not be clear, give the **positive** meaning in a strong way.

For you yourselves know, brothers, that our coming to you was **not useless**. (1 Thessalonians 2:1 ULT)

“For you yourselves know, brothers, our visit to you **did much good**.”

Now when it became day, there was **no small disturbance** among the soldiers over what therefore had happened to Peter. (Acts 12:18 ULT)

“Now when it became day, there was **great excitement** among the soldiers, regarding what had happened to Peter.”

or:

“Now when it became day, the soldiers were **very concerned** because of what had happened to Peter.”

(Go back to: [Numbers 23:9](#); [31:49](#))

Merism

Definition

Merism is a figure of speech in which a person refers to something by speaking of two extreme parts of it. By referring to the extreme parts, the speaker intends to include also everything in between those parts.

This page answers the question: *What does the word merism mean and how can I translate phrases that have it?*

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

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

"I am **the alpha and the omega**," says the Lord God, "the one who is, and who was, and who is to come, the Almighty." (Revelation 1:8 ULT)

I am **the alpha and the omega, the first and the last, the beginning and the end**. (Revelation 22:13, ULT)

Alpha and omega are the first and last letters of the Greek alphabet. This is a merism that includes everything from the beginning to the end. It means eternal.

... I praise you, Father, Lord of **heaven and earth** ..., (Matthew 11:25b ULT)

Heaven and earth is a merism that includes everything that exists.

Reason This is a Translation Issue

Some languages do not use merism. The readers of those languages may think that the phrase only applies to the items mentioned. They may not realize that it refers to those two things and everything in between.

Examples From the Bible

From the rising of the sun to its setting, Yahweh's name should be praised. (Psalm 113:3 ULT)

This bolded phrase is a merism because it speaks of the east and the west and everywhere in between. It means "everywhere."

He will bless those who honor him, both **young and old**. (Psalm 115:13)

The bolded phrase is merism because it speaks of old people and young people and everyone in between. It means "everyone."

Translation Strategies

If the merism would be natural and give the right meaning in your language, consider using it. If not, here are other options:

- (1) Identify what the merism refers to without mentioning the parts.
- (2) Identify what the merism refers to and include the parts.

Examples of Translation Strategies Applied

- (1) Identify what the merism refers to without mentioning the parts.

I praise you, Father, Lord of **heaven and earth**. (Matthew 11:25b ULT)

I praise you, Father, Lord of **everything**.

From the rising of the sun to its setting, Yahweh's name should be praised. (Psalm 113:3 ULT)

In all places, people should praise Yahweh's name.

(2) Identify what the merism refers to and include the parts.

I praise you, Father, Lord of **heaven and earth**. (Matthew 11:25b ULT)

I praise you, Father, Lord of **everything, including both what is in heaven and what is on earth**.

He will bless those who honor him, both **young and old**. (Psalm 115:13 ULT)

He will bless **all those** who honor him, regardless of whether they are **young or old**.

(Go back to: [Numbers 6:4](#); [21:30](#); [27:21](#))

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: [Numbers 1:53; 3:18; 3:21; 5:2; 5:21; 5:28; 6:7; 6:27; 8:19; 9:6; 9:10; 9:13; 10:35; 11:10; 11:11; 11:12; 11:14; 11:17; 11:20; 11:25; 11:26; 11:29; 12:5; 12:9; 12:12; 12:15; 13:27; 13:32; 13:33; 14:8; 14:9; 14:14; 14:15; 14:18; 14:42; 14:43; 15:3; 15:7; 15:10; 15:13; 15:14; 15:24; 15:30; 15:31; 15:39; 16:2; 16:3; 16:10; 16:13; 16:14; 16:21; 16:26; 16:32; 16:34; 16:35; 16:45; 18:6; 18:13; 18:17; 18:20; 18:21; 18:23; 18:24; 18:26; 19:7; 19:9; 19:10; 19:11; 19:13; 19:14; 19:17; 19:20; 21:28; 22:8; 22:38; 23:5; 23:10; 23:12; 23:16; 23:24; 24:8; 24:21; 25:11; 27:12; 27:20; 30:2; 30:3; 30:4; 30:6; 30:7; 30:8; 30:12; 30:14; 32:4; 32:5; 32:10; 32:11; 32:13; 32:14; 32:18; 32:21; 32:32; 33:4; 33:54; 35:22; 35:33; 36:8; 36:9; 36:12](#))

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: [Numbers 3:4; 3:6; 3:8; 3:48; 3:51; 4:5; 4:15; 4:16; 5:7; 5:8; 5:14; 5:30; 6:9; 7:2; 10:2; 10:5; 10:6; 10:9; 10:10; 11:17; 11:23; 11:25; 12:7; 12:11; 13:26; 13:27; 14:3; 14:22; 14:24; 14:29; 14:32; 14:33; 14:43; 15:20; 15:31; 15:39; 16:13; 16:22; 16:38; 16:46; 16:47; 18:5; 18:6; 18:7; 19:12; 20:3; 20:9; 20:16; 20:17; 20:18; 20:20; 21:1; 21:2; 21:3; 21:17; 21:21; 21:24; 22:3; 22:28; 22:31; 23:9; 23:10; 23:23; 24:7; 24:17; 24:18; 24:19; 24:20; 26:61; 30:2; 30:12; 32:5; 32:22; 35:19; 35:24; 35:27; 36:7](#))

Numbers

Description

There are many numbers in the Bible. They can be written as words (“five”) or as numerals (“5”). Some numbers are very large, such as “two hundred” (200), “twenty-two thousand” (22,000), or “one hundred million” (100,000,000). Some languages do not have words for all of these numbers. Translators need to decide how to translate numbers and whether to write them as words or numerals.

This page answers the question: *How do I translate numbers?*

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

[Translate Unknowns](#)

Some numbers are exact and others are rounded.

■ Abram was **86** years old when Hagar bore Ishmael to Abram. (Genesis 16:16 ULT)

Eighty-six (86) is an exact number.

■ That day about **3,000** of the people died. (Exodus 32:28b ULT)

Here the number three thousand (3,000) is a round number. It may have been a little more than that or a little less than that. The word “about” shows that it is not an exact number.

Reason This Is a Translation Issue

Some languages do not have words for some of these numbers.

Translation Principles

- Exact numbers should be translated as closely and specifically as they can be.
- Rounded numbers can be translated more generally.

Examples From the Bible

■ When Jared had lived **162** years, he became the father of Enoch. After he became the father of Enoch, Jared lived **800** years. He became the father of more sons and daughters. Jared lived **962** years, and then he died. (Genesis 5:18-20 ULT)

The numbers 162, 800, and 962 are exact numbers and should be translated with something as close to those numbers as possible.

■ Our sister, may you be the mother of **thousands of ten thousands**. (Genesis 24:60b ULT)

This is a rounded number. It does not say exactly how many descendants she should have, but it was a huge number of them.

Translation Strategies

- (1) Write numbers using numerals.
- (2) Write numbers using your language’s words or the Gateway Language words for those numbers.
- (3) Write numbers using words, and put the numerals in parentheses after them.

(4) Combine words for large numbers.

(5) Use a very general expression for very large rounded numbers and write the numeral in parentheses afterward.

Examples of Translation Strategies Applied

We will use the following verse in our examples:

Now, see, at great effort I have prepared for Yahweh's house **100,000** talents of gold, **1,000,000** talents of silver, and bronze and iron in large quantities. (1 Chronicles 22:14a ULT)

(1) Write numbers using numerals.

I have prepared for Yahweh's house **100,000** talents of gold, **1,000,000** talents of silver, and bronze and iron in large quantities.

(2) Write numbers using your language's words or the Gateway Language words for those numbers.

I have prepared for Yahweh's house **one hundred thousand** talents of gold, **one million** talents of silver, and bronze and iron in large quantities.

(3) Write numbers using words, and put the numerals in parenthesis after them.

I have prepared for Yahweh's house one **hundred thousand (100,000)** talents of gold, **one million (1,000,000)** talents of silver, and bronze and iron in large quantities.

(4) Combine words for large numbers.

I have prepared for Yahweh's house **one hundred thousand** talents of gold, **a thousand thousand** talents of silver, and bronze and iron in large quantities.

(5) Use a very general expression for very large rounded numbers and write the numeral in parentheses afterward.

I have prepared for Yahweh's house **a great amount of gold (100,000 talents), ten times that amount of silver (1,000,000 talents)**, and bronze and iron in large quantities.

Consistency

Be consistent in your translations. Decide how the numbers will be translated, using numbers or numerals. There are different ways of being consistent.

- Use words to represent numbers all of the time. (You might have very long words.)
- Use numerals to represent numbers all of the time.
- Use words to represent the numbers that your language has words for and use numerals for the numbers that your language does not have words for.
- Use words for low numbers and numerals for high numbers.
- Use words for numbers that require few words and numerals for numbers that require more than a few words.
- Use words to represent numbers, and write the numerals in parentheses after them.

Consistency in the ULT and UST

The *unfoldingWord® Literal Text* (ULT) and the *unfoldingWord® Simplified Text* (UST) use words for the numbers one through ten and use numerals for all numbers above ten.

When Adam had lived **130** years, he became the father of a son in his own likeness, after his image, and he called his name Seth. After Adam became the father of Seth, he lived **800** years. He became the father of more sons and daughters. Adam lived **930** years, and then he died.
(Genesis 5:3-5 ULT)

Next we recommend you learn about:

[Ordinal Numbers](#)

[Fractions](#)

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Ordinal Numbers

Description

Ordinal numbers are used in the Bible mainly to tell the position of something in a list.

And God has indeed appointed some in the church, **first** apostles, **second** prophets, **third** teachers, then miracles. (1 Corinthians 12:28a ULT)

This page answers the question: *What are ordinal numbers and how can I translate them?*

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

[Numbers](#)

This is a list of workers that God gave to the church in their order.

Ordinal Numbers in English

Most ordinal numbers in English simply have “-th” added to the end.

Numeral	Number	Ordinal Number
4	four	fourth
10	ten	tenth
100	one hundred	one hundredth
1,000	one thousand	one thousandth

Some ordinal numbers in English do not follow that pattern.

Numeral	Number	Ordinal Number
1	one	first
2	two	second
3	three	third
5	five	fifth
12	twelve	twelfth

Reason This Is a Translation Issue

Some languages do not have special numbers for showing the order of items in a list. There are different ways to deal with this.

Examples From the Bible

The **first** lot went to Jehoiarib, the **second** to Jedaiah, the **third** to Harim, the **fourth** to Seorim ... the **twenty-third** to Delaiah, and the **twenty-fourth** to Maaziah. (1 Chronicles 24:7-18 ULT)

The people cast lots and one went to each of these people in the order given.

You must place in it four rows of precious stones. The **first** row must have a ruby, a topaz, and a garnet. The **second** row must have an emerald, a sapphire, and a diamond. The **third** row must have a jacinth, an agate, and an amethyst. The **fourth** row must have a beryl, and an onyx, and a jasper. They must be mounted in gold settings. (Exodus 28:17-20 ULT)

This describes four rows of stones. The first row is probably the top row, and the fourth row is probably the bottom row.

Translation Strategies

If your language has ordinal numbers and using them would give the right meaning, consider using them. If not, here are some strategies to consider:

- (1) Use “one” with the first item and “another” or “the next” with the rest.
- (2) Tell the total number of items and then list them or the things associated with them.

Examples of Translation Strategies Applied

- (1) Tell the total number of items, and use “one” with the first item and “another” or “the next” with the rest.

The first lot went to Jehoiarib, the second to Jedaiah, the third to Harim, the fourth to Seorim ... the twenty-third to Delaiah, and the twenty-fourth to Maaziah. (1 Chronicles 24:7-18 ULT)

There were **24** lots. **One lot** went to Jehoiarib, **another** to Jedaiah, **another** to Harim ... **another** to Delaiah, **and the last** went to Maaziah.

There were **24** lots. **One lot** went to Jehoiarib, **the next** to Jedaiah, **the next** to Harim ... **the next** to Delaiah, **and the last** went to Maaziah.

A river went out of Eden to water the garden. From there it divided and became **four** rivers. The name of **the first** is Pishon. It is the one which flows throughout the whole land of Havilah, where there is gold. The gold of that land is good. There is also bdellium and the onyx stone there. The name of **the second** river is Gihon. This one flows throughout the whole land of Cush. The name of **the third** river is Tigris, which flows east of Asshur. **The fourth** river is the Euphrates. (Genesis 2:10-14 ULT)

A river went out of Eden to water the garden. From there it divided and became **four** rivers. The name of **one** is Pishon. It is the one which flows throughout the whole land of Havilah, where there is gold. The gold of that land is good. There is also bdellium and the onyx stone there. The name of **the next** river is Gihon. This one flows throughout the whole land of Cush. The name of **the next** river is Tigris, which flows east of Asshur. The **last** river is the Euphrates.

- (2) Tell the total number of items and then list them or the things associated with them.

The **first** lot went to Jehoiarib, the **second** to Jedaiah, the **third** to Harim, the **fourth** to Seorim ... the **twenty-third** to Delaiah, and the **twenty-fourth** to Maaziah. (1 Chronicles 24:7-18 ULT)

They cast **24** lots. The lots went to Jerhoiarib, Jedaiah, Harim, Seorim ... Delaiah, and Maaziah.

Next we recommend you learn about:

[Fractions](#)

(Go back to: [Numbers 1:1; 1:18; 2:9; 2:16; 2:24; 6:9; 6:10; 7:12; 7:18; 7:24; 7:30; 7:36; 7:42; 7:48; 7:54; 7:60; 7:66; 7:72; 7:78; 9:1; 9:3; 9:5; 9:11; 10:6; 10:11; 10:14; 28:16; 28:17; 28:18; 29:1; 29:6; 29:7; 29:12; 29:17; 29:20; 29:23; 29:26; 29:29; 29:32; 29:35; 33:3; 33:38](#))

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: [Numbers 1:18; 3:16; 3:51; 4:20; 5:10; 6:21; 7:2; 7:89; 8:16; 8:20; 9:3; 9:14; 10:4; 11:33; 12:8; 17:12; 18:15; 18:19; 19:13; 20:26; 21:18; 21:27; 21:28; 21:29; 22:3; 23:7; 23:9; 23:18; 23:19; 23:21; 23:23; 24:5; 24:7; 24:17; 27:21; 30:2; 30:8; 31:2](#))

Personification

Description

Personification is a figure of speech in which someone speaks of something as if it could do things that animals or people can do. People often do this because it makes it easier to talk about things that we cannot see:

Such as wisdom:

Does not Wisdom call out? (Proverbs 8:1a ULT)

Or sin:

Sin crouches at the door. (Genesis 4:7b ULT)

People also use personification because it is sometimes easier to talk about people's relationships with non-human things such as wealth as if they were relationships between people.

You cannot serve God and wealth. (Matthew 6:24b ULT)

In each case, the purpose of the personification is to highlight a certain characteristic of the non-human thing. As in metaphor, the reader needs to think of the way that the thing is like a certain kind of person.

Reasons This Is a Translation Issue

- Some languages do not use personification.
- Some languages use personification only in certain situations.

Examples From the Bible

You cannot **serve** God and wealth. (Matthew 6:24b ULT)

Jesus speaks of wealth as if it were a master whom people might serve. Loving money and basing one's decisions on it is like serving it as a slave would serve his master.

Does not Wisdom **call** out? Does not Understanding **raise her voice**? (Proverbs 8:1 ULT)

The author speaks of wisdom and understanding as if they were woman who calls out to teach people. This means that they are not something hidden, but something obvious that people should pay attention to.

Translation Strategies

If the personification would be understood clearly, consider using it. If it would not be understood, here are some other ways for translating it.

- (1) Add words or phrases to make the human (or animal) characteristic clear.
- (2) In addition to Strategy (1), use words such as "like" or "as" to show that the sentence is not to be understood literally.
- (3) Find a way to translate it without the personification.

This page answers the question: *What is personification?*

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

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

Examples of Translation Strategies Applied

(1) Add words or phrases to make the human (or animal) characteristic clear.

Sin crouches at the door. (Genesis 4:7b ULT) — God speaks of sin as if it were a wild animal that is waiting for the chance to attack. This shows how dangerous sin is. An additional phrase can be added to make this danger clear.

Sin is at your door, **waiting to attack you**.

(2) In addition to Strategy (1), use words such as “like” or “as” to show that the sentence is not to be understood literally.

Sin crouches at the door. (Genesis 4:7b ULT) — This can be translated with the word “as.”

Sin is crouching at the door, **just as a wild animal does as it waits to attack a person..**

(3) Find a way to translate it without the personification.

Even the **winds and the sea obey him**. (Matthew 8:27b ULT) — The men speak of the “wind and the sea” as if they are able to hear and obey Jesus, just as people can. This could also be translated without the idea of obedience by speaking of Jesus controlling them.

He even **controls the winds and the sea**.

NOTE: We have broadened our definition of “personification” to include “zoomorphism” (speaking of other things as if they had animal characteristics) and “anthropomorphism” (speaking of non-human things as if they had human characteristics) because the translation strategies for them are the same.

Next we recommend you learn about:

[\[\[rc://en/ta/man/translate/figs-apostrophe\]\]](#)
[\[\[rc://en/ta/man/translate/bita-part1\]\]](#)

(Go back to: [Numbers 5:14](#); [5:19](#); [10:33](#); [10:35](#); [10:36](#); [21:17](#); [21:20](#); [26:10](#); [32:23](#))

Possession

Description

In English, the grammatical form that commonly indicates possession is also used to indicate a variety of relationships between people and objects or people and other people. In English, that grammatical relationship is shown by using the word “**of**,” by using **an apostrophe and the letter “s”**, or by using a **possessive pronoun**. The following examples are different ways to indicate that my grandfather owns a house.

- the house **of** my grandfather
- my grandfather’s house
- **his** house

Possession is used in Hebrew, Greek, and English for a variety of situations. Here are a few common situations that it is used for.

- Ownership — Someone owns something.
 - My clothes — The clothes that I own
- Social Relationship — Someone has some kind of social relationship with another.
 - my mother — the woman who gave birth to me, or the woman who cared for me
 - my teacher — the person who teaches me
- Association — A particular thing is associated with a particular person, place, or thing.
 - David’s sickness — the sickness that David is experiencing
 - the fear of the Lord — the fear that is appropriate for a human being to have when relating to the Lord
- Contents — Something has something in it.
 - a bag of clothes — a bag that has clothes in it, or a bag that is full of clothes
- Part and whole: One thing is part of another.
 - my head — the head that is part of my body
 - the roof of a house — the roof that is part of a house

In some languages there is a special form of possession, termed **inalienable possession**. This form of possession is used for things that cannot be removed from you, as opposed to things you could lose. In the examples above, *my head* and *my mother* are examples of inalienable possession (at least in some languages), while *my clothes* or *my teacher* would be alienably possessed. What may be considered alienable vs. inalienable may differ by language.

This page answers the question: *What is possession and how can I translate phrases that show it?*

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

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

Reasons This Is a Translation Issue

- You (the translator) need to understand the relationship between two ideas represented by the two nouns when one is in the grammatical relationship of possessing the other.
- Some languages do not use grammatical possession for all of the situations that your source text Bible might use it for.

Examples From the Bible

Ownership — In the example below, the son owned the money.

█ The younger son ... wasted his wealth by living recklessly. (Luke 15:13b)

Social Relationship — In the example below, the disciples were people who learned from John.

█ Then **the disciples of John** came to him. (Matthew 9:14a ULT)

Association — In the example below, the gospel is the message associated with Paul because he preaches it.

█ Remember Jesus Christ, raised from the dead, from the seed of David, according to **my gospel**, (2 Timothy 2:8 ULT)

Material — In the example below, the material used for making the crowns was gold.

█ On their heads were something like **crowns of gold**. (Revelation 9:7b)

Contents — In the example below, the cup has water in it.

█ For whoever gives you **a cup of water** to drink ... will not lose his reward. (Mark 9:41 ULT)

Part of a whole — In the example below, the door was a part of the palace.

█ But Uriah slept at **the door of the king's palace**. (2 Samuel 11:9a ULT)

Part of a group — In the example below, “us” refers to the whole group and “each one” refers to the individual members.

█ Now to **each one of us** grace has been given according to the measure of the gift of Christ. (Ephesians 4:7 ULT)

Events and Possession

Sometimes one or both of the nouns is an abstract noun that refers to an event or action. In the examples below, the abstract nouns are in **bold** print. These are just some of the relationships that are possible between two nouns when one of them refers to an event.

Subject — Sometimes the word after “of” tells who would do the action named by the first noun. In the example below, **John baptized people**.

█ The **baptism of John**, was it from heaven or from men? Answer me. (Mark 11:30)

In the example below, **Christ loves us**.

█ Who will separate us from the **love of Christ**? (Romans 8:35)

Object — Sometimes the word after “of” tells who or what something would happen to. In the example below, **people love money**.

For the **love of money** is a root of all kinds of evil. (1 Timothy 6:10a ULT)

Instrument — Sometimes the word after “of” tells how something would happen. In the example below, God would **punish people by sending enemies to attack them with swords**.

Then be afraid of the sword, because wrath brings **the punishment of the sword**. (Job 19:29a ULT)

Representation — In the example below, John was baptizing people who were repenting of their sins. They were being baptized to show that they were repenting. Their **baptism represented their repentance**.

John came, baptizing in the wilderness and preaching **a baptism of repentance** for the forgiveness of sins. (Mark 1:4 ULT)

Strategies for learning what the relationship is between the two nouns

- (1) Read the surrounding verses to see if they help you to understand the relationship between the two nouns.
- (2) Read the verse in the UST. Sometimes it shows the relationship clearly.
- (3) See what the notes say about it.

Translation Strategies

If possession would be a natural way to show a particular relationship between two nouns, consider using it. If it would be strange or hard to understand, consider these.

- (1) Use an adjective to show that one noun describes the other.
- (2) Use a verb to show how the two are related.
- (3) If one of the nouns refers to an event, translate it as a verb.

Examples of Translation Strategies Applied

- (1) Use an adjective to show that one noun describes the other.

On their heads were something like **crowns of gold**. (Revelation 9:7b)

“On their heads were **gold crowns**”

- (2) Use a verb to show how the two are related.

Whoever gives you **a cup of water** to drink ... will not lose his reward. (Mark 9:41 ULT)

Whoever gives you a **cup that has water in it** to drink ... will not lose his reward.

Wealth is worthless on **the day of wrath**. (Proverbs 11:4a ULT)

Wealth is worthless on **the day when God shows his wrath**.
or:

Wealth is worthless on the **day when God punishes people because of his wrath**.

(3) If one of the nouns refers to an event, translate it as a verb. (In the example below, there are two possession relationships, “punishment of Yahweh” and “your God.”)

Notice that I am not speaking to your children, who have not known or seen **the punishment of Yahweh your God**. (Deuteronomy 11:2a ULT)

Notice that I am not speaking to your children who have not known or seen **how Yahweh, the God whom you worship, punished the people of Egypt**.

You will only observe and see the **punishment of the wicked**. (Psalms 91:8 ULT)

You will only observe and see **how Yahweh punishes the wicked**.

You will receive **the gift of the Holy Spirit**. (Acts 2:38b ULT)

You will receive the **Holy Spirit, whom God will give to you**.

(Go back to: [Numbers 28:31](#); [29:3](#); [29:6](#); [29:11](#); [29:19](#); [29:22](#); [29:25](#); [29:28](#); [29:31](#); [29:34](#); [29:37](#); [29:38](#))

Predictive Past

Description

The predictive past is a figure of speech that uses the past tense to refer to things that will happen in the future. This is sometimes done in prophecy to show that the event will certainly happen. It is also called the prophetic perfect.

Therefore my people have gone into captivity for lack of understanding;
their honored leaders go hungry, and their common people have nothing to drink. (Isaiah 5:13 ULT)

This page answers the question: *What is the predictive past?*

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

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

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

In the example above, the people of Israel had not yet gone into captivity, but God spoke of their going into captivity as if it had already happened because he had decided that they certainly would go into captivity.

Reason This Is a Translation Issue:

Readers who are not aware of the past tense being used in prophecy to refer to future events may find it confusing.

Examples From the Bible

Now Jericho was tightly closed because of the sons of Israel. No one went out and no one came in. Yahweh said to Joshua, "See, I have delivered Jericho, and its king, and its powerful soldiers into your hand." (Joshua 6:1-2 ULT)

For to us a child has been born, to us a son has been given;
and the rule will be on his shoulder. (Isaiah 9:6a ULT)

In the examples above, God spoke of things that would happen in the future as if they had already happened.

But even Enoch, the seventh from Adam, prophesied about them, saying, "Look! The Lord came with thousands and thousands of his holy ones." (Jude 1:14 ULT)

Enoch was speaking of something that would happen in the future, but he used the past tense when he said "the Lord came."

Translation Strategies

If the past tense would be natural and give the right meaning in your language, consider using it. If not, here are some other options.

- (1) Use the future tense to refer to future events.
- (2) If it refers to something in the immediate future, use a form that would show that.
- (3) Some languages may use the present tense to show that something will happen very soon.

Examples of Translation Strategies Applied

- (1) Use the future tense to refer to future events.

For to us a child **has been born**, to us a son **has been given**. (Isaiah 9:6a ULT)

For to us a child **will be born**, to us a son **will be given**.

(2) If it refers to something that would happen very soon, use a form that shows that.

Yahweh said to Joshua, "See, I have delivered Jericho, and its king, and its powerful soldiers into your hand." (Joshua 6:2 ULT)

Yahweh said to Joshua, "See, I **am about to deliver** over to you Jericho, its king, and its powerful soldiers."

(3) Some languages may use the present tense to show that something will happen very soon.

Yahweh said to Joshua, "See, I have delivered Jericho, and its king, and its powerful soldiers into your hand." (Joshua 6:2 ULT)

Yahweh said to Joshua, "See, I **am delivering** over to you Jericho, its king, and its powerful soldiers."

(Go back to: [Numbers 13:2](#))

Pronouns

Description

Pronouns are words that people might use instead of using a noun when referring to someone or something. Some examples are "I," "you," "he," "it," "this," "that," "himself," "someone," and others. The personal pronoun is the most common type of pronoun.

This page answers the question: *What are pronouns, and what kinds of pronouns are in some languages?*

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

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

Personal Pronouns

Personal pronouns refer to people or things and show whether the speaker is referring to himself, the person he is speaking to, or someone or something else. The following are kinds of information that personal pronouns may provide. Other types of pronouns may give some of this information, as well.

Person

- First Person — The speaker and possibly others (I, me, we, us)
 - [Exclusive and Inclusive "We"](#)
- Second Person — The person or people that the speaker is talking to and possibly others (you)
 - [Forms of You](#)
- Third Person — Someone or something other than the speaker and those he is talking to (he, she, it, they)

Number

- Singular — one (I, you, he, she, it)
- Plural — more than one (we, you, they)
 - Singular Pronouns that Refer to Groups
- Dual — two (Some languages have pronouns specifically for two people or two things.)

Gender

- Masculine — he
- Feminine — she
- Neuter — it

Relationship to other words in the sentence

- Subject of the verb: I, you, he, she, it, we, they
- Object of the verb or preposition: me, you, him, her, it, us, them
- Possessor with a noun: my, your, his, her, its, our, their
- Possessor without a noun: mine, yours, his, hers, its, ours, theirs

Other Types of pronouns

Reflexive Pronouns refer to another noun or pronoun in the same sentence: myself, yourself, himself, herself, itself, ourselves, yourselves, themselves.

- John saw **himself** in the mirror. The word “himself” refers to John.

Interrogative Pronouns are used to make a question that needs more than just a yes or no for an answer: what, which, who, whom, whose.

- **Who** built the house?

Relative Pronouns mark a relative clause. The relative pronouns, who, whom, whose, which and that give more information about a noun in the main part of the sentence. Sometimes, the relative adverbs when and where can also be used as relative pronouns.

- I saw the house **that John built**. The clause “that John built” tells which house I saw.
- I saw the man **who built the house**. The clause “who built the house” tells which man I saw.

Demonstrative Pronouns are used to draw attention to someone or something and to show distance from the speaker or something else. The demonstrative pronouns are: this, these, that, and those.

- Have you seen **this** here?
- Who is **that** over there?

Indefinite pronouns are used when no particular noun is being referred to. The indefinite pronouns are: any, anyone, someone, anything, something, and some. Sometimes a personal pronoun is used in a generic way to do this: you, they, he or it.

- He does not want to talk to **anyone**.
- **Someone** fixed it, but I do not know who.
- **They** say that **you** should not wake a sleeping dog.

In the last example, “they” and “you” just refer to people in general.

(Go back to: [Numbers 18:3](#))

Quotes within Quotes

Description

A quotation may have a quote within it, and quotes that are inside of other quotes can also have quotes within them. When a quote has quotes within it, we say there are “layers” of quotation, and each of the quotes is a layer. When there are many layers of quotes inside of quotes, it can be hard for listeners and readers to know who is saying what. Some languages use a combination of direct quotes and indirect quotes to make it easier.

This page answers the question: *What is a quote within a quote, and how can I help the readers understand who is saying what?*

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

[Direct and Indirect Quotations](#)

Reasons This Is a Translation Issue

When there is a quote within a quote, the listener needs to know who the pronouns refer to. For example: if a quote that is inside a quote has the word “I,” the listener needs to know whether “I” refers to the speaker of the inner quote or the outer quote.

Some languages make this clear by using different kinds of quotes when there are quotes within quotes.

They may use direct quotes for some and indirect quotes for others.

Some languages do not use indirect quotes.

Examples From the Bible

A quotation with only one layer

But Paul said, “I, however, was indeed born a citizen.” (Acts 22:28b ULT)

Quotations with two layers

Jesus answered and said to them, “Be careful that no one leads you astray. For many will come in my name. They will say, ‘I am the Christ,’ and will lead many astray.” (Matthew 24:4-5 ULT)

The outermost layer is what Jesus said to his disciples. The second layer is what other people will say.

Jesus answered, “You say that I am a king.” (John 18:37b ULT)

The outermost layer is what Jesus said to Pilate. The second layer is what Pilate said about Jesus.

A quotation with three layers

Abraham said, “... I said to her, ‘You must show me this faithfulness as my wife: At every place where we go, say about me, **“He is my brother.”**’” (Genesis 20:11a, 13 ULT)

The outermost layer is what Abraham responded to Abimelech. The second layer is what Abraham had told his wife. The third layer is what he wanted his wife to say. (We have bolded the third layer.)

A quotation with four layers

They said to him, "A man came to meet us who said to us, 'Go back to the king who sent you, and say to him, "Yahweh says this: **'Is it because there is no God in Israel that you sent men to consult with Baal- Zebub, the god of Ekron? Therefore you will not come down from the bed to which you have gone up; instead, you will certainly die.'**"'" (2 Kings 1:6 ULT)

The outermost layer is what the messengers said to the king. The second layer is what the man who had met the messengers told them. The third is what that man wanted the messengers to say to the king. The fourth is what Yahweh said. (We have bolded the fourth layer.)

Translation Strategies

Some languages use only direct quotes. Other languages use a combination of direct quotes and indirect quotes. In those languages it might sound strange and perhaps even be confusing if there are many layers of direct quotes.

- (1) Translate all of the quotes as direct quotes.
- (2) Translate one or some of the quotes as indirect quotes. (See [Direct and Indirect Quotations.](#))

Examples of Translation Strategies Applied

- (1) Translate all of the quotes as direct quotes. In the example below we have bolded the indirect quotes in the ULT and the quotes that we have changed to direct quotes below it.

Festus presented to the king the things concerning Paul, saying, "There is a certain man was left here as a prisoner by Felix. So I am uncertain about the things concerning this matter. I asked **if he was willing to go to Jerusalem and there to be judged concerning these things**. But when Paul appealed **to keep him in custody for the decision of the emperor**, I ordered him **to be held in custody until when I could send him to Caesar**." (Acts 25:14b, 20-21 ULT)

Festus presented Paul's case to the king. He said, "A certain man was left behind here by Felix as a prisoner. I was uncertain about the things concerning this matter. I asked him, **'Will you go to Jerusalem to be judged there concerning these things?'** But when Paul said, **'I want to be kept in custody for the emperor's decision,'** I told the guard, **'Keep him in custody until when I can send him to Caesar.'**"

- (2) Translate one or some of the quotes as indirect quotes. In English the word "that" can come before indirect quotes. It is bolded in the examples below. The pronouns that changed because of the indirect quote are also bolded.

And Yahweh spoke to Moses, saying, "I have heard the complaints of the sons of Israel. Speak to them and say, 'During the evenings you will eat meat, and in the morning you will be satisfied with bread. And you will know that I am Yahweh your God.'" (Exodus 16:11-12 ULT)

And Yahweh spoke to Moses, saying, "I have heard the complaints of the sons of Israel. Tell them **that** during the evenings **they** will eat meat, and in the morning **they** will be satisfied with bread. And **they** will know that I am Yahweh **their** God."

They said to him, "A man came to meet us who said to us, 'Go back to the king who sent you, and say to him, "Yahweh says this: 'Is it because there is no God in Israel that you sent men to consult with Baal-Zebub, the god of Ekron? Therefore you will not come down from the bed to which you have gone up; instead, you will certainly die.'""'" (2 Kings 1:6 ULT)

They told him **that** a man had come to meet **them** who said to **them**, "Go back to the king who sent you, and tell him **that** Yahweh says this: 'Is it because there is no God in Israel that you sent men to consult with Baal Zebub, the god of Ekron? Therefore you will not come down from the bed to which you have gone up; instead, you will certainly die.'"

Next we recommend you learn about:

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

(Go back to: [Numbers 25:13](#))

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: [Numbers 9:7](#); [11:4](#); [11:11](#); [11:12](#); [11:13](#); [11:18](#); [11:20](#); [11:22](#); [11:23](#); [11:29](#); [12:2](#); [12:8](#); [13:19](#); [Notes](#); [14:3](#); [14:11](#); [14:27](#); [14:41](#); [16:3](#); [16:9](#); [16:11](#); [16:13](#); [16:14](#); [16:22](#); [20:4](#); [20:5](#); [20:10](#); [21:5](#); [22:9](#); [22:30](#); [22:32](#); [22:37](#); [22:38](#); [23:8](#); [23:10](#); [23:11](#); [23:12](#); [23:19](#); [23:26](#); [24:9](#); [24:13](#); [24:23](#); [27:4](#); [31:15](#); [32:6](#); [32:7](#))

Simile

Description

A simile is a comparison of two things that are not normally thought to be similar. The simile focuses on a particular trait the two items have in common, and it includes the words “like,” “as,” or “than.”

This page answers the question: *What is a simile?*

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

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

When he saw the crowds, he had compassion for them, because they were troubled and discouraged, **like sheep not having a shepherd**. (Matthew 9:36)

Jesus compared the crowds of people to sheep without a shepherd. Sheep grow frightened when they do not have a good shepherd to lead them in safe places. The crowds were like that because they did not have good religious leaders.

See, I send you out **as sheep in the midst of wolves**, so be as wise **as the serpents** and harmless **as the doves**. (Matthew 10:16 ULT)

Jesus compared his disciples to sheep and their enemies to wolves. Wolves attack sheep; Jesus' enemies would attack his disciples.

For the word of God is living and active and sharper **than any two-edged sword**. (Hebrews 4:12a ULT)

God's word is compared to a two-edged sword. A two-edged sword is a weapon that can easily cut through a person's flesh. God's word is very effective in showing what is in a person's heart and thoughts.

Purposes of Simile

- A simile can teach about something that is unknown by showing how it is similar to something that is known.
- A simile can emphasize a particular trait, sometimes in a way that gets people's attention.
- Similes help form a picture in the mind or help the reader experience what he is reading about more fully.

Reasons This Is a Translation Issue

- People may not know how the two items are similar.
- People may not be familiar with both of the items being compared.

Examples From the Bible

Suffer hardship with me, **as a good soldier** of Christ Jesus. (2 Timothy 2:3 ULT)

In this simile, Paul compares suffering with what soldiers endure, and he encourages Timothy to follow their example.

Just as the lightning flashing from a place under the sky shines to another place under the sky, so will the Son of Man be. (Luke 17:24b ULT)

This verse does not tell how the Son of Man will be like the lightning. But in context we can understand from the verses before it that just as lighting flashes suddenly and everyone can see it, the Son of Man will come suddenly and everyone will be able to see him. No one will have to be told about it.

Translation Strategies

If people would understand the correct meaning of a simile, consider using it. If they would not, here are some strategies you can use:

- (1) If people do not know how the two items are alike, tell how they are alike. However, do not do this if the meaning was not clear to the original audience.
- (2) If people are not familiar with the item that something is compared to, use an item from your own culture. Be sure that it is one that could have been used in the cultures of the Bible. If you use this strategy, you may want to put the original item in a footnote.
- (3) Simply describe the item without comparing it to another.

Examples of Translation Strategies Applied

- (1) If people do not know how the two items are alike, tell how they are alike. However, do not do this if the meaning was not clear to the original audience.

See, I send you out **as sheep in the midst of wolves**. (Matthew 10:16a ULT) — This compares the danger that Jesus' disciples would be in with the danger that sheep are in when they are surrounded by wolves.

See, I send **you out among wicked people** and you will be in danger from them **as sheep are in danger when they are among wolves**.

For the word of God is living and active and sharper **than any two-edged sword**. (Hebrews 4:12a ULT)

For the word of God is living and active and **more powerful than a very sharp two-edged sword**.

- (2) If people are not familiar with the item that something is compared to, use an item from your own culture. Be sure that it is one that could have been used in the cultures of the Bible. If you use this strategy, you may want to put the original item in a footnote.

See, I send you out **as sheep in the midst of wolves**. (Matthew 10:16a ULT) — If people do not know what sheep and wolves are, or that wolves kill and eat sheep, you could use some other animal that kills another.

See, I send you out **as chickens in the midst of wild dogs**.

How often did I long to gather your children together, just **as a hen gathers her chickens under her wings**, but you were not willing! (Matthew 23:37b ULT)

How often I wanted to gather your children together, **as a mother closely watches over her infants**, but you refused!

If you have faith **as a grain of mustard** ... (Matthew 17:20)

If you have faith even as small **as a tiny seed**,

- (3) Simply describe the item without comparing it to another.

See, I send you out **as sheep in the midst of wolves**. (Matthew 10:16a ULT)

See, I send you out among **people who will want to harm you**.

How often did I long to gather your children together, just **as a hen gathers her chickens under her wings**, but you were not willing! (Matthew 23:37b ULT)

How often I wanted to **protect you**, but you refused!

Next we recommend you learn about:

[Metaphor](#)

[[rc://en/ta/man/translate/bita-part1]]

(Go back to: [Numbers 8:4; 8:11; 8:13; 8:15; 9:15; 9:16; 12:10; 12:12; 13:33; 14:9; 16:30; 22:4; 23:22; 24:6; 24:8; 24:9; 27:17; 33:55](#))

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:

[Translate Unknowns](#)

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: [Numbers 8:7](#); [8:10](#); [8:12](#); [12:14](#); [14:5](#); [14:6](#); [16:4](#); [16:22](#); [16:45](#); [18:19](#); [20:6](#); [22:31](#); [24:4](#); [24:10](#); [24:16](#); [25:2](#); [27:18](#); [27:23](#))

Symbolic Language

Description

Symbolic language in speech and writing is the use of symbols to represent other things, other events, etc. In the Bible it occurs most in prophecy and poetry, especially in visions and dreams about things that will happen in the future. Though people may not immediately know the meaning of a symbol, it is important to keep the symbol in the translation.

This page answers the question: *What is symbolic language and how do I translate it?*

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

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

■ Eat this scroll; then go speak to the house of Israel. (Ezekiel 3:1 ULT)

This was in a dream. Eating the scroll is a symbol of Ezekiel reading and understanding well what was written on the scroll, and accepting these words from God into himself.

Purposes of Symbolism

- One purpose of symbolism is to help people understand the importance or severity of an event by putting it in other, very dramatic terms.
- Another purpose of symbolism is to tell some people about something while hiding the true meaning from others who do not understand the symbolism.

Reason This Is a Translation Issue

People who read the Bible today may find it hard to recognize that the language is symbolic, and they may not know what the symbol stands for.

Translation Principles

- When symbolic language is used, it is important to keep the symbol in the translation.
- It is also important not to explain the symbol more than the original speaker or writer did, since he may not have wanted everyone living then to be able to understand it easily.

Examples From the Bible

■ After this I saw in my visions of the night **a fourth animal**, terrifying, frightening, and very strong. It had **large iron teeth**; it devoured, broke in pieces, and trampled underfoot what was left. It was different from the other animals, and it had **ten horns**. (Daniel 7:7 ULT)

The meaning of the bolded symbols is explained in Daniel 7:23-24 as shown below. The animals represent kingdoms, iron teeth represent a powerful army, and the horns represent powerful leaders.

■ This is what that person said, 'As for the fourth animal, it will be **a fourth kingdom** on earth that will be different from all the other kingdoms. It will devour the whole earth, and it will trample it down and break it into pieces. As for the ten horns, out of this kingdom **ten kings** will arise, and another will arise after them. He will be different from the previous ones, and he will conquer the three kings.' (Daniel 7:23-24 ULT)

■ I turned around to see the voice that was speaking to me, and as I turned I saw **seven golden lampstands**. In the middle of the lampstands there was one like a son of man ... He had **seven**

stars in his right hand and **a sword with two sharp edges** was coming out of his mouth. As for the hidden meaning about the seven stars that you saw in my right hand, and the seven golden lampstands: **The seven stars are the angels of the seven churches**, and **the seven lampstands are the seven churches**. (Revelation 1:12-13a, 16a, 20 ULT)

This passage explains the meaning of the seven lampstands and the seven stars. The two-edged sword represents God's word and judgment.

Translation Strategies

- (1) Translate the text with the symbols. Often the speaker or author explains the meaning later in the passage.
- (2) Translate the text with the symbols. Then explain the symbols in footnotes.

Examples of Translation Strategies Applied

- (1) Translate the text with the symbols. Often the speaker or author explains the meaning later in the passage.

This is what that person said, 'As for the fourth animal, it will be **a fourth kingdom** on earth that will be different from all the other kingdoms. It will devour the whole earth, and it will trample it down and break it into pieces. As for the ten horns, out of this kingdom **ten kings** will arise, and another will arise after them. He will be different from the previous ones, and he will conquer the three kings.' (Daniel 7:23-24 ULT)

- (2) Translate the text with the symbols. Then explain the symbols in footnotes.

After this I saw in my visions of the night **a fourth animal**, terrifying, frightening, and very strong. It had **large iron teeth**; it devoured, broke in pieces, and trampled underfoot what was left. It was different from the other animals, and it had **ten horns**. (Daniel 7:7 ULT)

After this I saw in my dream at night a fourth animal, ¹ terrifying, frightening, and very strong. It had large iron teeth; ² it devoured, broke in pieces, and trampled underfoot what was left. It was different from the other animals, and it had ten horns. ³

The footnotes would look like:

[1] The animal is a symbol for a kingdom.

[2] The iron teeth is a symbol for the kingdom's powerful army.

[3] The horns are a symbol of powerful kings.

(Go back to: [Numbers 24:17](#))

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/bita-part2]]

(Go back to: [Numbers 1:49; 2:17; 4:15; 7:89; 10:9; 16:15; 17:4; 17:7; 17:10; 20:8; 20:12; 20:18; 21:23; 27:14; 27:16; 27:19; 29:1; 30:8; 32:7; 32:9](#))

Translate Unknowns

While working to translate the Bible, you (the translator) might find yourself asking: “How do I translate words like lion, fig tree, mountain, priest, or temple when people in my culture have never seen these things and we do not have a word for them?”

This page answers the question: *How can I translate ideas that my readers are not familiar with?*

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

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

Description

Unknowns are things that occur in the source text that are not known to the people of your culture. The unfoldingWord® Translation Words pages and the unfoldingWord® Translation Notes will help you understand what they are. After you understand them, you will need to find ways to refer to those things so that people who read your translation will understand what they are.

They said to him, “We have nothing here except five loaves of **bread** and two fish.” (Matthew 14:17 ULT)

Bread is a particular food made by mixing finely crushed grains with oil, and then cooking the mixture so that it is dry. (Grains are the seeds of a kind of grass.) In some cultures people do not have bread and do not know what it is.

Reason This Is a Translation Issue

- Readers may not know some of the things that are in the Bible because those things are not part of their own culture.
- Readers may have difficulty understanding a text if they do not know some of the things that are mentioned in it.

Translation Principles

- Use words that are already part of your language if possible.
- Keep expressions short if possible.
- Represent God’s commands and historical facts accurately.

Examples From the Bible

So I will turn Jerusalem into piles of ruins, a hideout for **jackals**. (Jeremiah 9:11a ULT)

Jackals are wild animals like dogs that live in only a few parts of the world. So they are not known in many places.

Beware of false prophets, who come to you in sheep’s clothing, but inwardly they are ravenous **wolves**. (Matthew 7:15 ULT)

If wolves do not live where the translation will be read, the readers may not understand that they are fierce, wild animals like dogs that attack and eat sheep.

They offered him wine mixed with **myrrh**, but he did not drink it. (Mark 15:23 ULT)

People may not know what myrrh is and that it was used as a medicine.

... to him who made **great lights** ... (Psalm 136:7a ULT)

Some languages have terms for things that give light, like the sun and fire, but they have no general term for lights.

■ Your sins ... will be white like **snow**. (Isaiah 1:18b ULT)

People in many parts of the world have not seen snow, but they may have seen it in pictures.

Translation Strategies

Here are ways you might translate a term that is not known in your language:

- (1) Use a phrase that describes what the unknown item is, or what is important about the unknown item for the verse being translated.
- (2) Substitute something similar from your language if doing so does not falsely represent a historical fact.
- (3) Copy the word from another language, and add a general word or descriptive phrase to help people understand it.
- (4) Use a word that is more general in meaning.
- (5) Use a word or phrase that is more specific in meaning.

Examples of Translation Strategies Applied

- (1) Use a phrase that describes what the unknown item is, or what is important about the unknown item for the verse being translated.

■ Beware of false prophets, who come to you in sheep's clothing, but are inwardly they are **ravenous wolves**. (Matthew 7:15 ULT)

■ Beware of false prophets, who come to you in sheep's clothing, but **inwardly they are very hungry and dangerous animals**.

"Ravenous wolves" is part of a metaphor here, so the reader needs to know that they are very dangerous to sheep in order to understand this metaphor. (If sheep are also unknown, then you will need to also use one of the translation strategies to translate sheep, or change the metaphor to something else, using a translation strategy for metaphors. See [Translating Metaphors](#).)

■ "We have nothing here except five **loaves of bread** and two fish." (Matthew 14:17 ULT)

■ We have nothing here except five **loaves of baked grain seeds** and two fish.

- (2) Substitute something similar from your language if doing so does not falsely represent a historical fact.

■ Your sins ... will be white like **snow**. (Isaiah 1:18b ULT) This verse is not about snow. It uses snow in a figure of speech to help people understand how white something will be.

■ Your sins ... will be white like **milk**.

■ Your sins ... will be white like **the moon**.

- (3) Copy the word from another language, and add a general word or descriptive phrase to help people understand it.

Then they tried to give Jesus wine that was mixed with **myrrh**. But he refused to drink it. (Mark 15:23 ULT) — People may understand better what myrrh is if it is used with the general word “medicine.”

Then they tried to give Jesus wine that was mixed with **a medicine called myrrh**. But he refused to drink it.

“We have nothing here except five **loaves of bread** and two fish.” (Matthew 14:17 ULT) — People may understand better what bread is if it is used with a phrase that tells what it is made of (seeds) and how it is prepared (crushed and baked).

We have nothing here except five loaves of **baked crushed seed bread** and two fish.

(4) Use a word that is more general in meaning.

I will turn Jerusalem into piles of ruins, a hideout for **jackals** (Jeremiah 9:11a ULT)

I will turn Jerusalem into piles of ruins, a hideout for **wild dogs**

“We have nothing here except five **loaves of bread** and two fish.” (Matthew 14:17 ULT)

We have nothing here except five **loaves of baked food** and two fish.

(5) Use a word or phrase that is more specific in meaning.

... to him who made **great lights** ... (Psalm 136:7a ULT)

to him who made **the sun and the moon**

Next we recommend you learn about:

[Copy or Borrow Words](#)

[How to Translate Names](#)

(Go back to: [Numbers 11:31](#); [24:6](#); [27:21](#))



unfoldingWord® Translation Words

Version 28

anoint, anointed, anointing

Definition:

The term “anoint” means to rub or pour oil on a person or object. Sometimes the oil was mixed with spices, giving it a sweet, perfumed smell. In biblical times, there were several reasons for anointing someone with oil.

- In the Old Testament, priests, kings, and prophets were anointed with oil to set them apart for special service to God. (This and the other uses are symbolic actions, see [Symbolic Action](#).)
- Objects such as altars or the tabernacle were also anointed with oil to show that they were to be used to worship and glorify God.
- In the New Testament, sick people were anointed with oil for their healing.
- The New Testament records two times that Jesus was anointed with perfumed oil by a woman, as an act of worship. One time Jesus commented that in doing this she was preparing him for his future burial.
- After Jesus died, his friends prepared his body for burial by anointing it with oils and spices.
- The titles “Messiah” (Hebrew) and “Christ” (Greek) mean “the Anointed (One).”
- Jesus the Messiah is the one who was chosen and anointed as a Prophet, High Priest, and King.
- In biblical times, a woman might anoint herself with perfume to make herself more sexually attractive.

Translation Suggestions:

- Depending on the context, the term “anoint” could be translated as “pour oil on” or “put oil on” or “consecrate by pouring perfumed oil on.”
- To “be anointed” could be translated as “be consecrated with oil.” or “be appointed” or “be consecrated.”
- In some contexts the term “anoint” could be translated as “appoint.”
- A phrase like “the anointed priest,” could be translated as “the priest who was consecrated with oil” or “the priest who was set apart by the pouring on of oil.”

(See also: Christ, [consecrate](#), high priest, King of the Jews, [priest](#), [prophet](#))

Bible References:

- 1 John 2:20
- 1 John 2:27
- 1 Samuel 16:2-3
- Acts 4:27-28
- Amos 6:5-6
- Exodus 29:5-7
- James 5:13-15

Word Data:

- Strong’s: H0047, H0430, H1101, H1878, H3323, H4397, H4398, H4473, H4886, H4888, H4899, H5480, H8136, G00320, G02180, G07430, G14720, G20250, G34620, G55450, G55480

(Go back to: [Numbers 16 General Notes](#); [Notes](#))

appoint, appointed

Definition:

The terms “appoint” and “appointed” refer to choosing someone to fulfill a specific task or role.

- To “be appointed” can also refer to being “chosen” to receive something, as in “appointed to eternal life.” That people were “appointed to eternal life” means they were chosen to receive eternal life.
- The phrase “appointed time” refers to God’s “chosen time” or “planned time” for something to happen.
- The word “appoint” may also mean to “command” or “assign” someone to do something.

Translation Suggestions:

- Depending on the context, ways to translate “appoint” could include “choose” or “assign” or “formally choose” or “designate.”
- The term “appointed” could be translated as “assigned” or “planned” or “specifically chose.”
- The phrase “be appointed” could also be translated as “be chosen.”

Bible References:

- 1 Samuel 8:11
- Acts 3:20
- Acts 6:2
- Acts 13:48
- Genesis 41:33-34
- Numbers 3:9-10

Word Data:

- Strong’s: H0561, H0977, H2163, H2296, H2706, H2708, H2710, H3198, H3245, H3259, H3677, H3983, H4150, H4151, H4152, H4483, H4487, H4662, H5324, H5344, H5414, H5567, H5975, H6310, H6485, H6565, H6635, H6680, H6923, H6942, H6966, H7760, H7896, G03220, G06060, G12990, G13030, G19350, G25250, G27490, G42870, G42960, G43840, G49290, G50210, G50870

(Go back to: [Numbers 16 General Notes](#); [Notes](#))

avenge, avenger, revenge, vengeance

Definition:

To “avenge” or “take revenge” or “execute vengeance” is to punish someone in order to pay him back for the harm he did. The act of avenging or taking revenge is “vengeance.”

- Usually “avenge” implies an intent to see justice done or to right a wrong,
- When referring to people, the expression “take revenge” or “get revenge” usually involves wanting to get back at the person who did the harm.
- When God “takes vengeance” or “executes vengeance,” he is acting in righteousness because he is punishing sin and rebellion.

Translation Suggestions:

- The expression to “avenge” could also be translated as to “right a wrong” or to “get justice for.”
- When referring to human beings, to “take revenge” could be translated as “pay back” or “hurt in order to punish” or “get back at.”
- Depending on the context, “vengeance” could be translated as “punishment” or “punishment of sin” or “payment for wrongs done.” If a word meaning “retaliation” is used, this would apply to human beings only.
- When God says, “take my vengeance,” this could be translated by “punish them for wrongs done against me” or “cause bad things to happen because they have sinned against me.”
- When referring to God’s vengeance, make sure it is clear that God is right in his punishment of sin.

(See also: punish, [just](#), righteous)

Bible References:

- 1 Samuel 24:12-13
- Ezekiel 25:15
- Isaiah 47:3-5
- Leviticus 19:17-18
- Psalms 18:47
- Romans 12:19

Word Data:

- Strong’s: H1350, H3467, H5358, H5359, H5360, H8199, G15560, G15570, G15580, G37090

(Go back to: [Numbers 5 General Notes](#); [Notes](#))

census

Definition:

The term “census” refers to a formal counting of the number of people in a nation or empire.

- The Old Testament records different times when God ordered that the men of Israel be counted, such as when the Israelites first left Egypt and then again just before they entered Canaan.
- Often the purpose of a census was in order to know how many people should be paying taxes.
- For example, one time in Exodus the Israelite men were counted so that each one would pay a half shekel for taking care of the temple.
- When Jesus was a baby, the Roman government did a census to count all the people who lived throughout their empire, to require them to pay taxes.

Translation Suggestions

- Possible ways to translate this term could include, “name counting” or “list of names” or “enrollment.”
- The phrase “take a census” could be translated as “register people’s names” or “enroll people” or “write down people’s names.”

(See also: nation, Rome)

Bible References:

- Acts 5:37
- Exodus 30:12
- Exodus 38:26
- Luke 2:3
- Numbers 4:1-4

Word Data:

- Strong’s: H3789, H5674, H5921, H6485, H7218, G05820, G05830

(Go back to: [Introduction to Numbers](#))

chosen, choose, chosen people, Chosen One, elect

Definition:

The term “the elect” literally means “chosen ones” or “chosen people” and refers to those whom God has appointed or selected to be his people. “Chosen One” or “Chosen One of God” is a title that refers to Jesus, who is the chosen Messiah.

- The term “choose” means to select something or someone or to decide something. It is often used to refer to God appointing people to belong to him and to serve him.
- To be “chosen” means to be “selected” or “appointed” to be or do something.
- God chose people to be holy, to be set apart by him for the purpose of bearing good spiritual fruit. That is why they are called “the chosen (ones)” or “the elect.”
- The term “chosen one” is sometimes used in the Bible to refer to certain people such as Moses and King David whom God had appointed as leaders over his people. It is also used to refer to the nation of Israel as God’s chosen people.
- The phrase “the elect” is an older term that literally means “the chosen ones” or “the chosen people.” This phrase in the original language is plural when referring to believers in Christ.
- In older English Bible versions, the term “elect” is used in both the Old and New Testaments to translate the word for “chosen one(s).” More modern versions use “elect” only in the New Testament, to refer to people who have been saved by God through faith in Jesus. Elsewhere in the Bible text, they translate this word more literally as “chosen ones.”

Translation Suggestions:

- It is best to translate “elect” with a word or phrase that means “chosen ones” or “chosen people.” This could also be translated as “people whom God chose” or “the ones God appointed to be his people.”
- The phrase “who were chosen” could also be translated as “who were appointed” or “who were selected” or “whom God chose.”
- “I chose you” could be translated as “I appointed you” or “I selected you.”
- In reference to Jesus, “Chosen One” could also be translated as “God’s chosen One” or “God’s specially appointed Messiah” or “the One God appointed (to save people).”

(See also: [appoint](#), Christ)

Bible References:

- 2 John 1:1
- Colossians 3:12
- Ephesians 1:3-4
- Isaiah 65:22-23
- Luke 18:7
- Matthew 24:19-22
- Romans 8:33

Word Data:

- Strong’s: H0970, H0972, H0977, H1262, H1305, H4005, H6901, G01380, G01400, G15860, G15880, G15890, G19510, G37240, G44000, G44010, G47580, G48990, G55000

(Go back to: [Numbers 17 General Notes](#))

clean, wash

Definition:

The term “clean” generally refers either to removing dirt or stains from someone/something or to not having any dirt or stain in the first place. The term “wash” refers specifically to action of removing dirt or stains from someone/something.

- “Cleanse” is the process of making something “clean.” It could also be translated as “wash” or “purify.”
- In the Old Testament, God told the Israelites which animals he had specified as ritually “clean” and which ones were “unclean.” Only the clean animals were permitted to be used for eating or for sacrifice. In this context, the term “clean” means that the animal was acceptable to God for use as a sacrifice.
- A person who had certain skin diseases would be unclean until the skin was healed enough to no longer be contagious. Instructions for cleansing the skin had to be obeyed in order for that person to be declared “clean” again.
- Sometimes “clean” is used figuratively to refer to moral purity, meaning to be “clean” from sin.

In the Bible, the term “unclean” is used figuratively to refer to things that God declared to be unfit for his people to touch, eat, or sacrifice.

- God gave the Israelites instructions about which animals were “clean” and which ones were “unclean.” The unclean animals were not permitted to be used for eating or for sacrifice.
- People with certain skin diseases were said to be “unclean” until they were healed.
- If the Israelites touched something “unclean,” they themselves would be considered unclean for a certain period of time.
- Obeying God’s commands about not touching or eating unclean things kept the Israelites set apart for God’s service.
- This physical and ritual uncleanness was also symbolic of moral uncleanness.
- In another figurative sense, an “unclean spirit” refers to an evil spirit.

Translation Suggestions:

- This term could be translated with the common word for “clean” or “pure” (in the sense of being not dirty).
- Other ways to translate this could include, “ritually clean” or “acceptable to God.”
- “Cleanse” could be translated by “wash” or “purify.”
- Make sure that the words used for “clean” and “cleanse” can also be understood in a figurative sense.
- The term “unclean” could also be translated as “not clean” or “unfit in God’s eyes” or “physically unclean” or “defiled.”
- When referring to a demon as an unclean spirit, “unclean” could be translated as “evil” or “defiled.”
- The translation of this term should allow for spiritual uncleanness. It should be able to refer to anything that God declared as unfit for touching, eating, or sacrifice.

(See also: defile, demon, holy, sacrifice)

Bible References:

- Genesis 7:2
- Genesis 7:8
- Deuteronomy 12:15
- Psalms 51:7
- Proverbs 20:30
- Ezekiel 24:13
- Matthew 23:27

- Luke 5:13
- Acts 8:7
- Acts 10:27-29
- Colossians 3:5
- 1 Thessalonians 4:7
- James 4:8

Word Data:

- Strong's: H1249, H1252, H1305, H2134, H2135, H2141, H2398, H2548, H2834, H2889, H2890, H2891, H2893, H2930, H2931, H2932, H3001, H3722, H5079, H5352, H5355, H5356, H6172, H6565, H6663, H6945, H7137, H8552, H8562, G01670, G01690, G25110, G25120, G25130, G28390, G28400, G33940, G36890

(Go back to: [Numbers 5 General Notes](#); [Notes](#))

consecrate, consecrated, consecration

Definition:

To consecrate means to dedicate something or someone to serve God. The person or object that is consecrated is considered holy and set apart for God.

- The meaning of this term is similar to “sanctify” or to “make holy,” but with the added meaning of formally setting apart someone for service to God.
- Things that were consecrated to God included animals to be sacrificed, the altar of burnt offering, and the tabernacle.
- People who were consecrated to God included the priests, the people of Israel, and the oldest male child.
- Sometimes the word “consecrate” has a meaning that is similar to “purify,” especially when it pertains to preparing people or things for God’s service so that they will be cleansed and acceptable to him.

Translation Suggestions:

- Ways to translate “consecrate” could include, “set apart for God’s service” or “purify for service to God.”
- Also consider how the terms “holy” and “sanctify” are translated.

(See also: holy, [pure](#), sanctify)

Bible References:

- 1 Timothy 4:3-5
- 2 Chronicles 13:8-9
- Ezekiel 44:19

Word Data:

- Strong’s: H2763, H3027, H4390, H4394, H5144, H5145, H6942, H6944, G14570, G50480

(Go back to: [Numbers 6 General Notes](#); [Notes](#); [Notes](#))

curse, cursed, cursing

Definition:

The term “curse” means to cause negative things to happen to the person or thing that is being cursed.

- A curse can be a statement that harm will happen to someone or something.
- To curse someone can also be an expression of desire that bad things will happen to them.
- It can also refer to the punishment or other negative things that someone causes to happen to someone.

Translation Suggestions:

- This term could be translated as “cause bad things to happen to” or “declare that something bad will happen to” or “swear to cause evil things to happen to.”
- In the context of God sending curses on his disobedient people, it could be translated as “punish by allowing bad things to happen.”
- The term “cursed” when used to describe people could be translated as “(this person) will experience much trouble.”
- The phrase “cursed be” could be translated as “May (this person) experience great difficulties.”
- The phrase, “Cursed is the ground” could be translated as “The soil will not be very fertile.”
- However, if the target language has the phrase “cursed be” and it has the same meaning, then it is good to keep the same phrase.

(See also: bless)

Bible References:

- 1 Samuel 14:24-26
- 2 Peter 2:12-14
- Galatians 3:10
- Galatians 3:14
- Genesis 3:14
- Genesis 3:17
- James 3:10
- Numbers 22:6
- Psalms 109:28

Examples from the Bible stories:

- **2:9** God said to the snake, “You are **cursed!**”
- **2:11** “Now the ground is **cursed**, and you will need to work hard to grow food.”
- **4:4** “I will bless those who bless you and **curse** those who **curse** you.”
- **39:7** Then Peter vowed, saying, “May God **curse** me if I know this man!”
- **50:16** Because Adam and Eve disobeyed God and brought sin into this world, God **cursed** it and decided to destroy it.

Word Data:

- Strong’s: H0422, H0423, H0779, H1288, H2763, H2764, H3994, H5344, H6895, H7043, H7045, H7621, H8381, G03310, G03320, G06850, G19440, G25510, G26520, G26530, G26710, G26720, G60350

(Go back to: [Numbers 22 General Notes](#); [Notes](#); [Notes](#))

faith

Definition:

In general, the term “faith” refers to a belief, trust or confidence in someone or something.

- To “have faith” in someone is to believe that what he says and does is true and trustworthy.
- To “have faith in Jesus” means to believe all of God’s teachings about Jesus. It especially means that people trust in Jesus and his sacrifice to cleanse them from their sin and to rescue them from the punishment they deserve because of their sin.
- True faith or belief in Jesus will cause a person to produce good spiritual fruits or behaviors because the Holy Spirit is living in him.
- Sometimes “faith” refers generally to all the teachings about Jesus, as in the expression “the truths of the faith.”
- In contexts such as “keep the faith” or “abandon the faith,” the term “faith” refers to the state or condition of believing all the teachings about Jesus.

Translation Suggestions:

- In some contexts, “faith” can be translated as “belief” or “conviction” or “confidence” or “trust.”
- For some languages these terms will be translated using forms of the verb “believe.” (See: [abstractnouns](#))
- The expression “keep the faith” could be translated by “keep believing in Jesus” or “continue to believe in Jesus.”
- The sentence “they must keep hold of the deep truths of the faith” could be translated by “they must keep believing all the true things about Jesus that they have been taught.”
- The expression “my true son in the faith” could be translated by something like “who is like a son to me because I taught him to believe in Jesus” or “my true spiritual son, who believes in Jesus.”

(See also: believe, [faithful](#))

Bible References:

- 2 Timothy 4:7
- Acts 6:7
- Galatians 2:20-21
- James 2:20

Examples from the Bible stories:

- **5:6** When Isaac was a young man, God tested Abraham’s **faith** by saying, “Take Isaac, your only son, and kill him as a sacrifice to me.”
- **31:7** Then he (Jesus) said to Peter, “You man of little **faith**, why did you doubt?”
- **32:16** Jesus said to her, “Your **faith** has healed you. Go in peace.”
- **38:9** Then Jesus said to Peter, “Satan wants to have all of you, but I have prayed for you, Peter, that your **faith** will not fail.”

Word Data:

- Strong’s: H0529, H0530, G16800, G36400, G41020, G60660

(Go back to: [Numbers 13 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: [Numbers 26 General Notes](#))

firstfruits

Definition:

The term “firstfruits” refers to a portion of the first crop of fruits and vegetables that was reaped during each harvest season.

- The Israelites offered these first fruits to God as a sacrificial offering.
- This term is also used figuratively in the Bible to refer to a firstborn son as being the first fruits of the family. That is, because he was the first son to be born into that family, he was the one who carried on the family name and honor.
- Because Jesus rose from the dead, he is called the “firstfruits” of all believers in him, believers who have died but who will some day come back to life.
- Believers in Jesus are also called the “firstfruits” of all creation, indicating the special privilege and position of those whom Jesus redeemed and called to be his people.

Translation Suggestions:

- The literal use of this term could be translated as “first portion (of crops)” or “first part of the harvest.”
- If possible, the figurative uses should be translated literally, to allow for different meanings in different contexts. This will also show the correlation between the literal meaning and the figurative uses.

(See also: firstborn)

Bible References:

- 2 Chronicles 31:4-5
- 2 Thessalonians 2:13
- Exodus 23:16-17
- James 1:18
- Jeremiah 2:3
- Psalms 105:36

Word Data:

- Strong's: H1061, H6529, H7225, G05360

(Go back to: [Numbers 28 General 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: [Numbers 15 General Notes](#); [Notes](#))

grace, gracious

Definition:

The word “grace” refers to help or blessing that is given to someone who has not earned it. The term “gracious” describes someone who shows grace to others.

- God’s grace toward sinful human beings is a gift that is freely given.
- The concept of grace also refers to being kind and forgiving to someone who has done wrong or hurtful things.
- The expression to “find grace” is an expression that means to receive help and mercy from God. Often it includes the meaning that God is pleased with someone and helps him.

Translation Suggestions:

- Other ways that “grace” could be translated include “divine kindness” or “God’s favor” or “God’s kindness and forgiveness for sinners” or “merciful kindness.”
- The term “gracious” could be translated as “full of grace” or “kind” or “merciful” or “mercifully kind.”
- The expression “he found grace in the eyes of God” could be translated as “he received mercy from God” or “God mercifully helped him” or “God showed his favor to him” or “God was pleased with him and helped him.”

Bible References:

- Acts 4:33
- Acts 6:8
- Acts 14:4
- Colossians 4:6
- Colossians 4:18
- Genesis 43:28-29
- James 4:7
- John 1:16
- Philippians 4:21-23
- Revelation 22:20-21

Word Data:

- Strong’s: H2580, H2587, H2589, H2603, H8467, G21430, G54850, G55430

(Go back to: [Numbers 27 General Notes](#))

inherit, inheritance, heir

Definition:

The term “inherit” refers to receiving something valuable from a parent after a parent dies. The term can also refer to receiving something valuable from some other person because of a special relationship with that person. An “inheritance” is the things that are received, and an “heir” is a person who receives an inheritance.

- A physical inheritance that is received may be money, land, or other kinds of property.
- God promised Abraham and his descendants that they would inherit the land of Canaan, that it would belong to them forever.

Translation Suggestions:

- As always, consider first whether there are already terms in the target language for the concept of an heir or an inheritance, and use those terms.
- Depending on the context, other ways that the term “inherit” could be translated might include “receive” or “possess” or “come into possession of.”
- Ways to translate “inheritance” could include “promised gift” or “secure possession.”
- The term “heir” could be translated with a word or phrase that means “privileged child who receives the father’s possessions.”
- The term “heritage” could be translated as “inherited blessings.”

(See also: heir, Canaan, [Promised Land](#), possess)

Bible References:

- 1 Corinthians 6:9
- 1 Peter 1:4
- 2 Samuel 21:3
- Acts 7:4-5
- Deuteronomy 20:16
- Galatians 5:21
- Genesis 15:7
- Hebrews 9:15
- Jeremiah 2:7
- Luke 15:11
- Matthew 19:29
- Psalm 79:1

Examples from the Bible stories:

- **4:6** When Abram arrived in Canaan God said, “Look all around you. I will give to you and your descendants all the land that you can see as an **inheritance**.”
- **27:1** One day, an expert in the Jewish law came to Jesus to test him, saying, “Teacher, what must I do to **inherit** eternal life?”
- **35:3** “There was a man who had two sons. The younger son told his father, ‘Father, I want my **inheritance** now!’ So the father divided his property between the two sons.”

Word Data:

- Strong’s: H2490, H2506, H3423, H3425, H4181, H5157, H5159, G28160, G28170, G28190, G28200

(Go back to: [Numbers 34 General Notes; Notes](#))

jealous, jealousy

Definition:

The terms “jealous” and “jealousy” refer to a strong desire to protect the purity of a relationship. They can also refer to a strong desire to keep possession of something or someone.

- These terms are often used to describe the angry feeling that a person has toward a spouse who has been unfaithful in their marriage.
- When used in the Bible, these terms often refer to God’s strong desire for his people to remain pure and unstained by sin.
- God is also “jealous” for his name, desiring that it be treated with honor and reverence.
- Another meaning of jealous involves being angry that someone else is successful or more popular. This is close in meaning to the word “envious.”

Translation Suggestions:

- Ways to translate “jealous” could include “strong protective desire” or “possessive desire.”
- The term “jealousy” could be translated as “strong protective feeling” or “possessive feeling.”
- When talking about God, make sure the translation of these terms does not give a negative meaning of being resentful of someone else.
- In the context of people’s wrong feelings of anger toward other people who are more successful, the terms “envious” and “envy” could be used. But these terms should not be used for God.

(See also: [envy](#))

Bible References:

- 2 Corinthians 12:20
- Deuteronomy 5:9
- Exodus 20:5
- Ezekiel 36:5
- Joshua 24:19
- Nahum 1:2-3
- Romans 13:13

Word Data:

- Strong’s: H7065, H7067, H7068, H7072, G22050, G38630

(Go back to: [Numbers 5 General Notes](#))

just, justice, unjust, injustice, justify, justification

Definition:

“Just” and “justice” refer to treating people fairly according to God’s laws. Human laws that reflect God’s standard of right behavior toward others are also just.

- To be “just” is to act in a fair and right way toward others. It also implies honesty and integrity to do what is morally right in God’s eyes.
- To act “justly” means to treat people in a way that is right, good, and proper according to God’s laws.
- To receive “justice” means to be treated fairly under the law, either being protected by the law or being punished for breaking the law.
- Sometimes the term “just” has the broader meaning of “righteous” or “following God’s laws.”

The terms “unjust” and “unjustly” refer to treating people in an unfair and often harmful manner.

- An “injustice” is something bad that is done to someone that the person did not deserve. It refers to treating people unfairly.
- Injustice also means that some people are treated badly while others are treated well.
- Someone who is acting in an unjust way is being “partial” or “prejudiced” because he is not treating people equally.

The terms “justify” and “justification” refer to causing a guilty person to be righteous. Only God can truly justify people.

- When God justifies people, he forgives their sins and makes it as though they have no sin. He justifies sinners who repent and trust in Jesus to save them from their sins.
- “Justification” refers to what God does when he forgives a person’s sins and declares that person to be righteous in his sight.

Translation Suggestions:

- Depending on the context, other ways to translate “just” could include “morally right” or “fair.”
- The term “justice” could be translated as “fair treatment” or “deserved consequences.”
- To “act justly” could be translated as “treat fairly” or “behave in a just way.”
- In some contexts, “just” could be translated as “righteous” or “upright.”
- Depending on the context, “unjust” could also be translated as “unfair” or “partial” or “unrighteous.”
- The phrase “the unjust” could be translated as “the unjust ones” or “unjust people” or “people who treat others unfairly” or “unrighteous people” or “people who disobey God.”
- The term “unjustly” could be translated as “in an unfair manner” or “wrongly” or “unfairly.”
- Ways to translate “injustice” could include, “wrong treatment” or “unfair treatment” or “acting unfairly.” (See: [abstractnouns](#))
- Other ways to translate “justify” could include “declare (someone) to be righteous” or “cause (someone) to be righteous.”
- The term “justification” could be translated as “being declared righteous” or “becoming righteous” or “causing people to be righteous.”
- The phrase “resulting in justification” could be translated as “so that God justified many people” or “which resulted in God causing people to be righteous.”
- The phrase “for our justification” could be translated as “in order that we could be made righteous by God.”

(See also: forgive, guilt, judge, righteous, righteous)

Bible References:

- Genesis 44:16
- 1 Chronicles 18:14
- Isaiah 4:3-4
- Jeremiah 22:3
- Ezekiel 18:16-17
- Micah 3:8
- Matthew 5:43-45
- Matthew 11:19
- Matthew 23:23-24
- Luke 18:3
- Luke 18:8
- Luke 18:13-14
- Luke 21:20-22
- Luke 23:41
- Acts 13:38-39
- Acts 28:4
- Romans 4:1-3
- Galatians 3:6-9
- Galatians 3:11
- Galatians 5:3-4
- Titus 3:6-7
- Hebrews 6:10
- James 2:24
- Revelation 15:3-4

Examples from the Bible stories:

- **17:9** David ruled with **justice** and faithfulness for many years, and God blessed him.
- **18:13** Some of these kings (of Judah) were good men who ruled **justly** and worshiped God.
- **19:16** They (the prophets) all told the people to stop worshiping idols and to start showing **justice** and mercy to others.
- **50:17** Jesus will rule his kingdom with peace and **justice**, and he will be with his people forever.

Word Data:

- Strong's: H0205, H2555, H3477, H4941, H5765, H5766, H5767, H6662, H6663, H6664, H6666, H8003, H8264, H8636, G00910, G00930, G00940, G13420, G13440, G13450, G13460, G13470, G17380

(Go back to: [Numbers 31 General Notes](#); [Notes](#))

Passover

Facts:

The “Passover” is the name of a religious festival that the Jews celebrate every year, to remember how God rescued their ancestors, the Israelites, from slavery in Egypt.

- The name of this festival comes from the fact that God “passed over” the houses of the Israelites and did not kill their sons when he killed the firstborn sons of the Egyptians.
- The Passover celebration includes a special meal of a perfect lamb that they have killed and roasted, as well as bread made without yeast. These foods remind them of the meal that the Israelites ate the night before they escaped from Egypt.
- God told the Israelites to eat this meal every year in order to remember and celebrate how God “passed over” their houses and how he set them free from slavery in Egypt.

Translation Suggestions:

- The term “Passover” could be translated by combining the words “pass” and “over” or another combination of words that has this meaning.
- It is helpful if the name of this festival has a clear connection to the words used to explain what the angel of the Lord did in passing by the houses of the Israelites and sparing their sons.

Bible References:

- 1 Corinthians 5:7
- 2 Chronicles 30:13-15
- 2 Kings 23:23
- Deuteronomy 16:2
- Exodus 12:26-28
- Ezra 6:21-22
- John 13:1
- Joshua 5:10-11
- Leviticus 23:4-6
- Numbers 9:3

Examples from the Bible stories:

- **12:14** God commanded the Israelites to remember his victory over the Egyptians and their deliverance from slavery by celebrating the **Passover** every year.
- **38:1** Every year, the Jews celebrated the **Passover**. This was a celebration of how God had saved their ancestors from slavery in Egypt many centuries earlier.
- **38:4** Jesus celebrated the **Passover** with his disciples.
- **48:9** When God saw the blood, he passed over their houses and did not kill their firstborn sons. This event is called the **Passover**.
- **48:10** Jesus is our **Passover** Lamb. He was perfect and sinless and was killed at the time of the **Passover** celebration.

Word Data:

- Strong's: H6453, G39570

(Go back to: [Numbers 9 General Notes](#); [Notes](#))

people of God

Definition:

The concept of the “people of God” in the Bible refers to people with whom God has established a covenant relationship.

- In the Old Testament, the phrase “people of God” refers to the nation of Israel. The nation of Israel was chosen by God and set apart from the other nations of the world in order to serve and obey him.
- In the New Testament, the phrase “people of God” refers to the “Church,” meaning everyone who believes in Jesus. This includes both Jews and Gentiles. In the New Testament, sometimes this group of people is called the “sons of God” or “children of God.”
- When God uses the phrase “my people,” he is referring to people who have a covenant relationship with him. God’s people are chosen by him, and he wants them to live in a way that is pleasing to him.

Translation Suggestions:

- The term “people of God” could be translated as “God’s people” or “the people who worship God” or “people who serve God” or “people who belong to God.”
- When God says “my people” other ways to translate it could include “the people I have chosen” or “the people who worship me” or “the people who belong to me.”
- Similarly, “your people” could be translated as “the people who belong to you” or “the people you chose to belong to you.”
- Also “his people” could be translated as “the people who belong to him” or “the people God chose to belong to himself.”

(See also: Israel, people group)

Bible References:

- 1 Chronicles 11:2
- Acts 7:34
- Acts 7:51-53
- Acts 10:36-38
- Daniel 9:24-25
- Isaiah 2:5-6
- Jeremiah 6:20-22
- Joel 3:16-17
- Micah 6:3-5
- Revelation 13:7-8

Word Data:

- Strong’s: H0430, H5971, G23160, G29920

(Go back to: [Numbers 23 General 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: [Numbers 3 General Notes](#); [Notes](#); [Notes](#); [Notes](#))

promise, promised

Definition:

When used as a verb, the term “promise” refers to the action of a person saying that he will do something in such way that he obligates himself to fulfill what he has said. When used as a noun, the term “promise” refers to the thing that a person obligates himself to do.

- The Bible records many promises that God has made for his people.
- Promises are an important part of formal agreements such as covenants.

Translation Suggestions:

- The term “promise” could be translated as “commitment” or “assurance” or “guarantee.”
- To “promise to do something” could be translated as “assure someone that you will do something” or “commit to doing something.”

(See also: covenant, oath, [vow](#))

Bible References:

- Galatians 3:15-16
- Genesis 25:31-34
- Hebrews 11:9
- James 1:12
- Numbers 30:2

Examples from the Bible stories:

- **3:15** God said, “I **promise** I will never again curse the ground because of the evil things people do, or destroy the world by causing a flood, even though people are sinful from the time they are children.”
- **3:16** God then made the first rainbow as a sign of his **promise**. Every time the rainbow appeared in the sky, God would remember what he **promised** and so would his people.
- **4:8** God spoke to Abram and **promised** again that he would have a son and as many descendants as the stars in the sky. Abram believed God’s **promise**.
- **5:4** “Your wife, Sarai, will have a son—he will be the son of **promise**.”
- **8:15** The covenant **promises** that God gave to Abraham were passed on to Isaac, then to Jacob, and then to Jacob’s twelve sons and their families.
- **17:14** Though David had been unfaithful to God, God was still faithful to his **promises**.
- **50:1** Jesus **promised** he would return at the end of the world. Though he has not yet come back, he will keep his **promise**.

Word Data:

- Strong’s: H0559, H0562, H1696, H8569, G18430, G18600, G18610, G18620, G36700, G42790

(Go back to: [Numbers 30 General Notes](#); [Notes](#))

Promised Land

Facts:

The term “Promised Land” only occurs in the Bible stories, not the Bible text. It is an alternate way of referring to the land of Canaan which God had promised to give to Abraham and his descendants.

- When Abram was living in the city of Ur, God commanded him to go live in the land of Canaan. He and his descendants, the Israelites, lived there for many years.
- When a severe famine caused there to be no food in Canaan, the Israelites moved to Egypt.
- Four hundred years later, God rescued the Israelites from slavery in Egypt and brought them back to Canaan again, the land God had promised to give them.

Translation Suggestions:

- The term “Promised Land” can be translated as the “land that God said he would give to Abraham” or “land that God promised to Abraham” or “land God promised to his people” or “land of Canaan.”
- In the Bible text, this term occurs as some form of “the land God promised.”

(See also: Canaan, [promise](#))

Bible References:

- Deuteronomy 8:1-2
- Ezekiel 7:26-27

Examples from the Bible stories:

- **12:1** They (Israelites) were no longer slaves, and they were going to the **Promised Land!**
- **14:1** After God had told the Israelites the laws he wanted them to obey as part of his covenant with them, God began leading them from Mount Sinai toward the **Promised Land**, which was also called Canaan.
- **14:2** God had promised Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob that he would give the **Promised Land** to their descendants, but now there were many people groups living there.
- **14:14** Then God led the people to the edge of the **Promised Land** again.
- **15:2** The Israelites had to cross the Jordan River to enter into the **Promised Land**.
- **15:12** After this battle, God gave each tribe of Israel its own section of the **Promised Land**.
- **20:9** This period of time when God’s people were forced to leave the **Promised Land** is called the Exile.

Word Data:

- Strong’s: H0776, H3068, H3423, H5159, H5414, H7650

(Go back to: [Introduction to Numbers](#); [Numbers 13 General Notes](#); [Notes](#); [Notes](#); [Notes](#))

prophet, prophecy, prophesy, seer, prophetess

Definition:

A “prophet” is a man who speaks God’s messages to people. A woman who does this is called a “prophetess.”

- Often prophets warned people to turn away from their sins and obey God.
- A “prophecy” is the message that the prophet speaks. To “prophesy” means to speak God’s messages.
- Often the message of a prophecy was about something that would happen in the future.
- Many prophecies in the Old Testament have already been fulfilled.
- In the Bible the collection of books written by prophets are sometimes referred to as “the prophets.”
- For example the phrase, “the law and the prophets” is a way of referring to all the Hebrew scriptures, which are also known as the “Old Testament.”
- An older term for a prophet was “seer” or “someone who sees.”
- Sometimes the term “seer” refers to a false prophet or to someone who practices divination.

Translation Suggestions:

- The term “prophet” could be translated as “God’s spokesman” or “man who speaks for God” or “man who speaks God’s messages.”
- A “seer” could be translated as “person who sees visions” or “man who sees the future from God.”
- The term “prophetess” could be translated as “spokeswoman for God” or “woman who speaks for God” or “woman who speaks God’s messages.”
- Ways to translate “prophecy” could include, “message from God” or “prophet message.”
- The term “prophesy” could be translated as “speak words from God” or “tell God’s message.”
- The figurative expression, “law and the prophets” could also be translated as “the books of the law and of the prophets” or “everything written about God and his people, including God’s laws and what his prophets preached.” (See: [synecdoche](#))
- When referring to a prophet (or seer) of a false god, it may be necessary to translate this as “false prophet (seer)” or “prophet (seer) of a false god” or “prophet of Baal,” for example.

(See also: Baal, divination, [false god](#), false prophet, fulfill, law, vision)

Bible References:

- 1 Thessalonians 2:14-16
- Acts 3:25
- John 1:43-45
- Malachi 4:4-6
- Matthew 1:23
- Matthew 2:18
- Matthew 5:17
- Psalm 51:1

Examples from the Bible stories:

- **12:12** When the Israelites saw that the Egyptians were dead, they trusted in God and believed that Moses was a **prophet** of God.
- **17:13** God was very angry about what David had done, so he sent the **prophet** Nathan to tell David how evil his sin was.
- **19:1** Throughout the history of the Israelites, God sent them **prophets**. The **prophets** heard messages from God and then told the people God’s messages.

- **19:6** All the people of the entire kingdom of Israel, including the 450 **prophets** of Baal, came to Mount Carmel.
- **19:17** Most of the time, the people did not obey God. They often mistreated the **prophets** and sometimes even killed them.
- **21:9** The **prophet** Isaiah **prophesied** that the Messiah would be born from a virgin.
- **43:5** "This fulfills the **prophecy** made by the **prophet** Joel in which God said, 'In the last days, I will pour out my Spirit.'"
- **43:7** "This fulfills the **prophecy** which says, 'You will not let your Holy One rot in the grave.'"
- **48:12** Moses was a great **prophet** who proclaimed the word of God. But Jesus is the greatest **prophet** of all. He is the Word of God.

Word Data:

- Strong's: H2372, H2374, H4853, H5012, H5013, H5016, H5017, H5029, H5030, H5031, H5197, G24950, G43940, G43950, G43960, G43970, G43980, G55780

(Go back to: [Numbers 11 General Notes](#); [Notes](#); [Notes](#))

pure, purify, purification

Definition:

To be “pure” means to have no flaw or to have nothing mixed in that is not supposed to be there. To purify something is to cleanse it and remove anything that contaminates or pollutes it.

- In regard to Old Testament laws, “purify” and “purification” refer mainly to the cleansing from things that make an object or a person ritually unclean, such as disease, body fluids, or childbirth.
- The Old Testament also had laws telling people how to be purified from sin, usually by the sacrifice of an animal. This was only temporary and the sacrifices had to be repeated over and over again.
- In the New Testament, to be purified often refers to being cleansed from sin.
- The only way that people can be completely and permanently purified from sin is through repenting and receiving God’s forgiveness, through trusting in Jesus and his sacrifice.

Translation Suggestions:

- The term “purify” could be translated as “make pure” or “cleanse” or “cleanse from all contamination” or “get rid of all sin.”
- A phrase such as “when the time for their purification was over” could be translated as “when they had purified themselves by waiting the required number of days.”
- The phrase “provided purification for sins” could be translated as “provided a way for people to be completely cleansed from their sin.”
- Other ways to translate “purification” could include “cleansing” or “spiritual washing” or “becoming ritually clean.”

(See also: atonement, [clean](#), [spirit](#))

Bible References:

- 1 Timothy 1:5
- Exodus 31:6-9
- Hebrews 9:13-15
- James 4:8
- Luke 2:22
- Revelation 14:4

Word Data:

- Strong’s: H1249, H1252, H1253, H1305, H1865, H2134, H2135, H2141, H2212, H2398, H2403, H2561, H2889, H2890, H2891, H2892, H2893, H3795, H3800, H4795, H5343, H5462, H6337, H6884, H6942, H8562, G00480, G00490, G00530, G00540, G15060, G25110, G25120, G25130, G25140

(Go back to: [Numbers 15 General Notes](#))

Sabbath

Definition:

The term “Sabbath” refers to the seventh day of the week, which God commanded the Israelites to set apart as a day of rest and doing no work.

- After God finished creating the world in six days, he rested on the seventh day. In the same way, God commanded the Israelites to set aside the seventh day as a special day to rest and worship him.
- The command to “keep the Sabbath holy” is one of the ten commandments that God wrote on the stone tablets that he gave Moses for the Israelites.
- Following the Jewish system of counting days, the Sabbath begins on Friday at sundown and lasts until Saturday at sundown.
- Sometimes in the Bible the Sabbath is called “Sabbath day” rather than only the Sabbath.

Translation Suggestions:

- This could also be translated as “resting day” or “day for resting” or “day of not working” or “God’s day of rest.”
- Some translations capitalize this term to show that it is a special day, as in “Sabbath Day” or “Resting Day.”
- Consider how this term is translated in a local or national language.

(See also: [How to Translate Unknowns](#))

(See also: rest)

Bible References:

- 2 Chronicles 31:2-3
- Acts 13:26-27
- Exodus 31:14
- Isaiah 56:6-7
- Lamentations 2:6
- Leviticus 19:3
- Luke 13:14
- Mark 2:27
- Matthew 12:2
- Nehemiah 10:32-33

Examples from the Bible stories:

- **13:5** “Always be sure to keep the **Sabbath day** holy. That is, do all your work in six days, for the seventh day is a day for you to rest and to honor me.”
- **26:2** Jesus went to the town of Nazareth where he had lived during his childhood. On the **Sabbath**, he went to the place of worship.
- **41:3** The day after Jesus was buried was a **Sabbath** day, and the Jews were not permitted to go to the tomb on that day.

Word Data:

- Strong’s: H4868, H7676, H7677, G43150, G45210

(Go back to: [Numbers 28 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 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: [Numbers 20 General Notes](#); [Notes](#))

spirit, wind, breath

Definition:

The term “spirit” refers to the non-physical part of a person which cannot be seen. In biblical times, the concept of a person’s spirit was closely related to the concept of a person’s breath. The term can also refer to wind, that is, the movement of air in the natural world.

- The term “spirit” can refer to a being that does not have a physical body, such as an evil spirit.
- In general, the term “spiritual” describes things in the non-physical world.
- The term “spirit of” can also mean “having the characteristics of,” such as in “spirit of wisdom” or “in the spirit of Elijah.” Sometimes the Bible applies this term in the context of a person’s attitude or emotional state, such as “spirit of fear” and “spirit of jealousy.”
- Jesus said that God is a spirit.

Translation Suggestions:

- Depending on the context, some ways to translate “spirit” might include “non-physical being” or “inside part” or “inner being.”
- In some contexts, the term “spirit” could be translated as “evil spirit” or “evil spirit being.”
- Sometimes the term “spirit” is used to express the feelings of a person, as in “my spirit was grieved in my inmost being.” This could also be translated as “I felt grieved in my spirit” or “I felt deeply grieved.”
- The phrase “spirit of” could be translated as “character of” or “influence of” or “attitude of” or “thinking (that is) characterized by.”
- Depending on the context, “spiritual” could be translated as “non-physical” or “from the Holy Spirit” or “God’s” or “part of the non-physical world.”
- The phrase “spiritual maturity” could be translated as “godly behavior that shows obedience to the Holy Spirit.”
- The term “spiritual gift” could be translated as “special ability that the Holy Spirit gives.”
- Sometimes this term can be translated as “wind” when referring to the simple movement of air or “breath” when referring to air movement caused by living beings.

(See also: soul, Holy Spirit, demon, breath)

Bible References:

- 1 Corinthians 5:5
- 1 John 4:3
- 1 Thessalonians 5:23
- Acts 5:9
- Colossians 1:9
- Ephesians 4:23
- Genesis 7:21-22
- Genesis 8:1
- Isaiah 4:4
- Mark 1:23-26
- Matthew 26:41
- Philippians 1:27

Examples from the Bible stories:

- **13:3** Three days later, after the people had prepared themselves **spiritually**, God came down on top of Mount Sinai with thunder, lightning, smoke, and a loud trumpet blast.
- **40:7** Then Jesus cried out, "It is finished! Father, I give my **spirit** into your hands." Then he bowed his head and gave up his **spirit**.
- **45:5** As Stephen was dying, he cried out, "Jesus, receive my **spirit**."
- **48:7** All the people groups are blessed through him, because everyone who believes in Jesus is saved from sin, and becomes a **spiritual** descendant of Abraham.

Word Data:

- Strong's: H0178, H1172, H5397, H7307, H7308, G41510, G41520, G41530, G53260, G54270

(Go back to: [Numbers 11 General Notes](#))

tabernacle

Definition:

The tabernacle was a special tent-like structure where the Israelites worshiped God during the 40 years they traveled around in the desert.

- God had given the Israelites detailed instructions for building this large tent, which had two rooms and was surrounded by an enclosed courtyard.
- Each time the Israelites moved to a different place in the desert to live, the priests would take the tabernacle apart and carry it to their next campsite. Then they would set it up again in the center of their new camp.
- The tabernacle was constructed of wood frames hung with curtains made of cloth, goat hair, and animal skins. The courtyard surrounding it was enclosed with more curtains.
- The two sections of the tabernacle were the Holy Place (where the altar for burning incense was located) and the Most Holy Place (where the ark of the covenant was kept).
- The courtyard of the tabernacle had an altar for burning animal sacrifices and a special washbasin for ritual cleansing.
- The Israelites stopped using the tabernacle when the temple was built in Jerusalem by Solomon.

Translation Suggestions:

- The word “tabernacle” means “dwelling place.” Other ways to translate it could include, “sacred tent” or “tent where God was” or “God’s tent.”
- Make sure that the translation of this term is different from the translation of “temple.”

(See also: altar, altar of incense, ark of the covenant, temple, tent of meeting)

Bible References:

- 1 Chronicles 21:30
- 2 Chronicles 1:2-5
- Acts 7:43
- Acts 7:45
- Exodus 38:21
- Joshua 22:19-20
- Leviticus 10:16-18

Word Data:

- Strong’s: H0168, H4908, H5520, H5521, H5522, H7900, G46330, G46340, G46360, G46380

(Go back to: [Numbers 4 General Notes](#); [Notes](#); [Notes](#); [Notes](#))

test, tested, testing, testing in the fire

Definition:

The term “test” refers to a difficult or painful experience that reveals a person’s strengths and weaknesses.

- God tests people, but he does not tempt them to sin. Satan, however, tempts people to sin.
- God sometimes uses tests to expose people’s sin. A test helps a person to turn away from sin and to draw closer to God.
- Gold and other metals are tested with fire to find out how pure and strong they are. This is a picture of how God uses painful circumstances to test his people.
- To “put to the test” can mean, “challenge something or someone to prove its value.”
- In the context of putting God to the test, it means to try to make him do a miracle for us, taking advantage of his mercy.
- Jesus told Satan that it is wrong to put God to the test. He is the almighty, holy God who is above everything and everyone.

Translation Suggestions:

- The term to “test” could also be translated as, to “challenge” or to “cause to experience difficulties” or to “prove.”
- Ways to translate “a test” could be, “a challenge” or “a difficult experience.”
- To “put to the test” could be translated as to “test” or to “set up a challenge” or to “force to prove oneself.”
- In the context of testing God, this could be translated as “trying to force God to prove his love.”
- In some contexts, when God is not the subject, the term “test” can mean “tempt.”

(See also: tempt)

Bible References:

- 1 John 4:1
- 1 Thessalonians 5:21
- Acts 15:10
- Genesis 22:1
- Isaiah 7:13
- James 1:12
- Lamentations 3:40-43
- Malachi 3:10
- Philippians 1:10
- Psalm 26:2

Word Data:

- Strong’s: H5254, H5713, H5715, H5749, H6030, H8584, G12420, G12630, G13030, G13820, G19570, G31400, G31410, G31420, G31430, G39840, G43030, G44510, G48280, G60200

(Go back to: [Numbers 13 General Notes](#))

trust, trusted, trustworthy, trustworthiness

Definition:

To “trust” something or someone is to believe that the thing or person is true or dependable. That belief is also called “trust.” A “trustworthy” person is one you can trust to do and say what is right and true, and therefore one who has the quality of “trustworthiness.”

- Trust is closely related to faith. If we trust someone, we have faith in that person to do what they promised to do.
- Having trust in someone also means depending on that person.
- To “trust in” Jesus means to believe that he is God, to believe that he died on the cross to pay for our sins, and to rely on him to save us.
- A “trustworthy saying” refers to something that is said that can be counted on to be true.

Translation Suggestions:

- Ways to translate “trust” could include “believe” or “have faith” or “have confidence” or “depend on.”
- The phrase “put your trust in” is very similar in meaning to “trust in.”
- The term “trustworthy” could be translated as “dependable” or “reliable” or “can always be trusted.”

(See also: believe, confidence, [faith](#), [faithful](#), true)

Bible References:

- 1 Chronicles 9:22-24
- 1 Timothy 4:9
- Hosea 10:12-13
- Isaiah 31:1-2
- Nehemiah 13:13
- Psalm 31:5
- Titus 3:8

Examples from the Bible stories:

- **12:12** When the Israelites saw that the Egyptians were dead, they **trusted** in God and believed that Moses was a prophet of God.
- **14:15** Joshua was a good leader because he **trusted** and obeyed God.
- **17:2** David was a humble and righteous man who **trusted** and obeyed God.
- **34:6** Then Jesus told a story about people who **trusted** in their own good deeds and despised other people.

Word Data:

- Strong's: H0539, H0982, H1556, H2620, H2622, H3176, H4009, H4268, H7365, G16790, G38720, G39820, G40060, G41000, G42760

(Go back to: [Numbers 21 General Notes](#))

VOW

Definition:

A “vow” is a solemn promise or oath that a person makes to God.

- If a person in ancient Israel made a vow to God, that person was obligated to fulfill the vow. The ancient Israelites believed that God might punish a person who did not fulfill a vow that he made.
- In ancient Israel, sometimes a person would ask God to protect him or provide for him in exchange for making the vow. However, the ancient Israelites did not believe that God was obligated to fulfill these requests.
- Depending on the context, the term “vow” can be translated as “solemn promise” or “solemn oath” or “promise made to God.”

(See also: [promise](#), oath)

Bible References:

- 1 Corinthians 7:27-28
- Acts 21:23
- Genesis 28:21
- Genesis 31:12-13
- Jonah 1:14-16
- Jonah 2:9-10
- Proverbs 7:14

Word Data:

- Strong's: H5087, H5088, G21710

(Go back to: [Numbers 6 General Notes](#); [Notes](#))

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