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Deuteronomy

Introduction to Deuteronomy

Part 1: General Introduction

Outline of Deuteronomy

Moses reminds Israel of how Yahweh guided them through the wilderness (1:1–3:29)

Moses appeals for Israel to obey the law of Yahweh (4:1–43)

The Ten Commandments (5:1–10:22)

Rules and warnings from the Law (11:1–26:19)

Instructions for entering Canaan (27:1–26)

Blessings for obeying and curses for disobeying (28:1–68)

The covenant renewed (29:1–30:20)

Last words of Moses, the Song of Moses, and his death (31:1–34:12)

What is the Book of Deuteronomy about?

In the book of Deuteronomy, Moses repeats the laws of the covenant that God made with the people of Israel. The people of Israel were about to go into the Promised Land. Before they entered the land, Moses reminded them of what Yahweh did for them and what he expected from them. Moses warned the people about worshipping idols and no longer trusting Yahweh once they settled in the Promised Land. Yahweh promised to judge those who disobey him and to bless those who obey his Law. (See: [covenant](#))

How should the title of this book be translated?

The name “Deuteronomy” means “Second Law” or “the retelling of the Law.” Translators may decide on a title such as, “A Repeat of the Law” or “Moses Explains the Law Again.” (See: [How to Translate Names](#))

Who wrote the Book of Deuteronomy?

The writers of both the Old and New Testament present Moses as being very involved with writing the Book of Deuteronomy. However, many scholars think that Joshua wrote chapter 34. This chapter tells how Moses died.

What are the important features of the Book of Deuteronomy?

The book contains a series of speeches that Moses gave to Israel before he died. He spoke these things just before the people entered the Promised Land. (See: [Promised Land](#))

Part 2: Important Religious and Cultural Concepts

Why did Yahweh command the Israelites to completely destroy the people who lived in the Promised Land?

As God prepared the Israelites to enter the Promised Land, he commanded them to completely destroy the Canaanite people who lived there. The Israelites would then not be tempted to join them and worship their false gods.

Part 3: Important Translation Issues

What is the role of God's name in Deuteronomy?

God's name is mentioned over thirty times in the book of Deuteronomy. The use of God's name in this book usually represents God's honor or fame. At other times in Deuteronomy, God's name represents his presence. God said he would choose a place and make his name dwell there. This means God's presence would be there. The people were to go to that place to worship him.

Can this book be translated before the rest of the Pentateuch?

The Books of Genesis and Exodus help to explain what happens in Deuteronomy. For this reason, those books should be translated before the Book of Deuteronomy.

Deuteronomy 1

Deuteronomy 1 General Notes

Structure and formatting

This chapter forms a continuation with the last chapter of the book of Numbers.

Special concepts in this chapter

Yahweh's victory

The chapter explains that Israel's conquering of the Promised Land will be done by Yahweh. They are not to fear the people of Canaan but be obedient to Yahweh. Yahweh is bringing about his judgement upon the people of Canaan. (See: [Promised Land](#) and [judge, judgment](#))

Possessing the land

While the Promised Land belongs to Israel, they do not possess the land. Possessing the land is an important theme. Possessing the land depended on Israel's faithfulness. (See: [faithful](#), [faithfulness](#), [trustworthy](#))

Deuteronomy 1:1

beyond the Jordan

This refers to the land across the Jordan River, to the east of Israel. Moses was east of the Jordan when he spoke to the Israelites.
Alternate translation: "east of the Jordan"

Suph ... Paran ... Tophel ... Laban ... Hazeroth ... Dizahab

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

ULT

¹ These are the words that Moses spoke to all Israel beyond the Jordan in the wilderness, in the plain of the Jordan River valley over against Suph, between Paran, Tophel, Laban, Hazeroth, and Dizahab.

Deuteronomy 1:2

It is eleven days' journey from Horeb ... to Kadesh Barnea

"It takes eleven days to walk from Horeb ... to Kadesh Barnea"

Mount Seir

This is a mountainous area south of the Dead Sea. The area is also called "Edom." (See: [How to Translate Names](#))

eleven

"11" (See: [Numbers](#))

ULT

² It is eleven days' journey from Horeb by the way of Mount Seir to Kadesh Barnea.

Deuteronomy 1:3

It happened in the fortieth year, in the eleventh month, on the first day of the month, that Moses spoke

The ordinal numbers can be translated as cardinal numbers.
Alternate translation: "They had lived in the wilderness for 40 years, 11 months, and 1 day, when Moses spoke" (See: [Ordinal Numbers](#))

ULT

³ It happened in the fortieth year, in the eleventh month, on the first day of the month, that Moses spoke to the people of Israel all that Yahweh commanded him concerning them.

fortieth

40th (See: [Numbers](#))

in the eleventh month, on the first day of the month

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

eleventh

11th (See: [Numbers](#))

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.

Deuteronomy 1:4

Yahweh had attacked

“Yahweh had enabled the Israelites to defeat”

Sihon ... Og

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

Heshbon ... Ashtaroth at Edrei

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

ULT

⁴ This was after they attacked Sihon the king of the Amorites, who lived in Heshbon, and Og the king of Bashan, who lived in Ashtaroth at Edrei.

Deuteronomy 1:5

Beyond the Jordan

This refers to the land across the Jordan River, to the east of Israel. Moses was east of the Jordan when he said this. See how you translated these words in [Deuteronomy 1:1](#). Alternate translation: “East of the Jordan River”

ULT

⁵ Beyond the Jordan, in the land of Moab, Moses began to announce these instructions, saying,

Deuteronomy 1:6

spoke to us

The word “us” refers to Moses and the other people of Israel.

You have lived long enough in this hill country

This is an idiom. Alternate translation: “You do not need to stay near this mountain any longer” (See: [Idiom](#))

ULT

6 “Yahweh our God spoke to us at Horeb, saying, ‘You have lived long enough in this hill country.’

Deuteronomy 1:7

General Information:

Moses continues to remind the people of Israel what Yahweh said to them.

Turn and take your journey

The word “turn” is an idiom for beginning action. Alternate translation: “Start again on your journey” (See: [Idiom](#))

hill country ... Euphrates

Yahweh is describing places in the land that he has promised to give to the Israelites.

hill country

This is an area in the hills near the place where the Amorites lived.

lowland

an area of land that is low and flat

ULT

⁷ Turn and take your journey, and go to the hill country of the Amorites and to all their dwellings in the plain of the Jordan River valley, in the hill country, in the lowland, in the Negev, and by the seashore—the land of the Canaanites, and in Lebanon as far as the great river, the Euphrates.

Deuteronomy 1:8

Look

“Pay attention to what I am about to say”

I have set the land before you

“I am now giving this land to you”

that Yahweh swore

Yahweh is speaking as if he were another person. Alternate translation: “that I, Yahweh, swore” (See: [Pronouns](#))

fathers

The word “fathers” is a synecdoche for all ancestors. Alternate translation: “ancestors” (See: [Synecdoche](#))

ULT

⁸ Look, I have given the land before you; go in and possess the land that Yahweh swore to your fathers—to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob—to give to them and to their descendants after them.’

Deuteronomy 1:9

General Information:

Moses continues to remind the people of Israel what Yahweh said to them.

ULT

⁹ I spoke to you at that time, saying, 'I am not able to carry you myself alone.'

I spoke to you at that time

Here "I" refers to Moses. The phrase "at that time" refers to when the Israelites were at Horeb, which is the same as Mount Sinai. Alternate translation: "When we were at Horeb, I spoke to you" (See: [Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information](#))

I am not able to carry you myself alone

Here "to carry you" means "to lead you" or "to govern you." Alternate translation: "It is too much for me to lead you by myself" (See: [Idiom](#))

Deuteronomy 1:10

as the multitude of the stars of heaven

This is an exaggeration that means God has greatly increased the number of Israelites. Alternate translation: "a great crowd of many people" (See: [Hyperbole](#) and [Simile](#))

ULT

10 Yahweh your God has multiplied you, and, look, you are today as the multitude of the stars of heaven.

Deuteronomy 1:11

a thousand times

The phrase “a thousand” is a metaphor for “very many.” Alternate translation: “very many times” (See: [Metaphor](#))

a thousand

1000 (See: [Numbers](#))

ULT

11 May Yahweh, the God of your fathers, make you a thousand times as many as you are, and bless you, just as he told you!

Deuteronomy 1:12

General Information:

Moses continues speaking to the people of Israel.

But how can I myself alone carry your loads, your burdens, and your disputes?

Moses uses a question to emphasize that he cannot solve all of their problems by himself. This rhetorical question can be translated as a statement. Alternate translation: "I cannot carry your loads, your burdens, and your disputes by myself." (See: [Rhetorical Question](#))

ULT

¹² But how can I myself alone carry your loads, your burdens, and your disputes?

carry your loads, your burdens

Moses speaks as if the people's problems and complaints that he needed to take care of were heavy physical objects that he had been carrying. Alternate translation: "take care of your problems, your complaints" (See: [Metaphor](#))

your disputes

"your arguments" or "your disagreements"

Deuteronomy 1:13

men of good repute from each tribe

“men from each tribe whom the people of Israel respect”

ULT

13 Nominate for yourselves men who are wise, understanding, and of good repute from each of your tribes, and I will make them heads over you.’

Deuteronomy 1:14

(There are no notes for this verse.)

ULT

14 You answered me and said, 'The thing that you have spoken is good for us to do.'

Deuteronomy 1:15

General Information:

Moses continues to speak to the people of Israel.

men of good repute

“men whom your people respected.” See how this is translated in [Deuteronomy 1:13](#).

of thousands ... of hundreds ... of fifties ... of tens

“of groups of 1,000...of groups of 100...of groups of 50...and groups of 10” (See: [Numbers](#))

captains ... officers

These are titles for different leaders in Israel’s government.

tribe by tribe

“from each of your tribes”

ULT

15 So I took the heads of your tribes—men who are wise and of good repute—and gave them as heads over you, captains of thousands, captains of hundreds, captains of fifties, captains of tens, and officers, for each of your tribes

Deuteronomy 1:16

judge righteously between a man and his brother

“make right and fair decisions about the disputes Israelites have with each other”

ULT

¹⁶ And, I commanded your judges at that time, saying, ‘Listen to your brothers, and judge righteously between a man and his brother, and the foreigner who is with him.

Deuteronomy 1:17

General Information:

Moses continues speaking to the judges, so the commands are plural. (See: [Pronouns](#))

You will not show partiality

“Do not show partiality”

you will hear the small and the great alike

These two extremes “small” and “great” represent all people. Alternate translation: “you will treat all people alike” (See: [Merism](#))

You will not be afraid of the face of man

The word “face” is a metonym for the whole person. “You will not” is a command. “Do not be afraid of anyone” (See: [Synecdoche](#))

ULT

17 You will not show partiality to anyone in the judgment; you will hear the small and the great alike. You will not turn aside from the face of a man, for the judgment belongs to God himself. And the word which is too heavy for you, you will bring to me, and I will hear it.’

Deuteronomy 1:18

at that time

This means the time when they were at Horeb, at Mount Sinai. (See: [Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information](#))

ULT

18 So I commanded you at that time all the things that you should do.

Deuteronomy 1:19

General Information:

Moses continues reminding the people of Israel what the previous generation of Israelites did.

terrible wilderness that you saw

“large and dangerous desert that you crossed through”

ULT

19 Then we journeyed away from Horeb and went through all that great and terrible wilderness that you saw on the way to the hill country of the Amorites, as Yahweh our God had commanded us; and we came to Kadesh Barnea.

Deuteronomy 1:20

General Information:

Moses continues reminding the people of Israel what the previous generation of Israelites did.

ULT

20 And I said to you, 'You have come to the hill country of the Amorites, which Yahweh our God is giving to us.'

Deuteronomy 1:21

Look ... your God ... before you; go up, take possession ... your fathers ... to you; do not be afraid, neither be discouraged

Moses is speaking to the Israelites as if he were speaking to one man, so these forms should be singular, not plural. (See: [Pronouns](#))

has set the land before you

“is now giving this land to you.” See how this is translated in [Deuteronomy 1:8](#).

ULT

²¹ Look, Yahweh your God has set the land before you; go up, take possession, as Yahweh, the God of your fathers, has spoken to you; do not be afraid, neither be discouraged.’

Deuteronomy 1:22

General Information:

Moses continues reminding the people of Israel what the previous generation of Israelites did.

ULT

22 Every one of you came to me and said, 'Let us send men ahead of us, so that they may search out the land for us, and bring us word about the way by which we go up into it, and about the cities to which we will come.'

Deuteronomy 1:23

twelve men

“12 men” (See: [Numbers](#))

ULT

²³ This word was good in my eyes, so I took from among you twelve men, one man for {each} tribe.

Deuteronomy 1:24

They turned and went

Turning is an idiom for beginning to obey a command. Alternate translation: "They left that place and went" (See: [Idiom](#))

Valley of Eshkol

This is a valley in the Hebron region, which is south of Jerusalem. (See: [How to Translate Names](#))

scouted it

"looked for places they could attack"

ULT

²⁴ They turned and went up into the hill country, and came to the Valley of Eshkol, and scouted it.

Deuteronomy 1:25

General Information:

Moses continues reminding the people of Israel what the previous generation of Israelites did.

They took

“The 12 men took”

took some of the produce of the land in their hands

“picked some of the produce of the land”

brought us word and said

The speaker speaks as if a “word” were a physical object that someone could bring. Alternate translation: “told us” (See: [Metaphor](#))

said, ‘It is a good land that Yahweh our God is giving to us.’

The direct quotation can be translated as an indirect quotation. Alternate translation: “said that the land that Yahweh our God was giving to us was good”

ULT

²⁵ They took with their hands {some} of the fruit of the land and brought {it} down to us. They also returned to us with a word and said, ‘{It is} a good land that Yahweh our God is giving to us.’

Deuteronomy 1:26

General Information:

Moses continues reminding the people of Israel what the previous generation of Israelites did.

Yet you refused to attack

God commanded the Israelites to attack and destroy the Amorites, but the Israelites were afraid and refused to fight them. (See: [Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information](#))

ULT

²⁶ But your fathers did not go up, and you provoked the mouth of Yahweh your God.

Deuteronomy 1:27

into the hand of the Amorites

Here “into the hand” means to give the Amorites power over them.
Alternate translation: “into the power of the Amorites” (See: [Metonymy](#))

ULT

27 And you grumbled in your tents and said, “In Yahweh’s hatred against us he brought us out of the land of Egypt, in order to give us into the hand of the Amorites to destroy us.”

Deuteronomy 1:28

Where can we go now?

Here this question emphasizes how afraid they were. This rhetorical question can be translated as a statement. Alternate translation: “We have nowhere to go.” (See: [Rhetorical Question](#))

made our heart to melt

This means that they became afraid. Alternate translation: “made us very afraid” (See: [Idiom](#))

are fortified up to the heavens

This is an exaggeration that emphasizes how frightened the people were because the cities were so large and strong. Alternate translation: “have walls so high it is like they reach up to the heavens” (See: [Hyperbole](#))

sons of the Anakim

These are descendants of the Anak people who were very large and fierce. (See: [Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information](#) and [How to Translate Names](#))

ULT

28 Where {can} we go? Our brothers have made our heart to melt, saying, ‘Those people {are} greater and taller than we are; their cities are great and {are} fortified up to the sky; moreover, we have seen the sons of the Anakim there.’”

Deuteronomy 1:29

General Information:

Moses continues reminding the people of Israel what the previous generation of Israelites did.

I said to you

“I said to your ancestors”

ULT

²⁹ Then I said to you, ‘Do not be terrified, neither be afraid of them.

Deuteronomy 1:30

before your eyes

Here the people are represented by their “eyes” to emphasize what they saw. Alternate translation: “which you yourselves saw” (See: [Synecdoche](#))

ULT

30 Yahweh your God, who walks before you, he himself will fight for you, like everything that he did for you in Egypt before your eyes,

Deuteronomy 1:31

**you have seen ... Yahweh your God carried you
... you went ... you came**

Moses speaks to the Israelites as if they were one man, so all instances of “you” and “your” are singular. (See: [Forms of You](#))

**Yahweh your God carried you, as a man
carries his son**

Here Yahweh’s care for his people is compared to that of a father. Alternate translation: “Yahweh your God has taken care of you, like a father takes care of his son” (See: [Simile](#))

until you came to this place

“until you came to this land that God promised to give you”

ULT

³¹ and also in the wilderness, where you have seen how Yahweh your God carried you, as a man carries his son, all along the way which you went until you came to this place.’

Deuteronomy 1:32

General Information:

Moses continues reminding the people of Israel what the previous generation of Israelites did.

ULT

32 Yet in spite of this word you did not believe Yahweh your God,

Deuteronomy 1:33

make camp

“put up your tents”

ULT

³³ who went before you on the way to find a place for you to make camp, in fire by night and in a cloud by day.

Deuteronomy 1:34

General Information:

Moses continues to remind the people of Israel what Yahweh said to them.

heard the sound of your words

“heard what you were saying”

he swore and said

God made a vow not to allow those who rebelled against him to enter the land he promised to give them.

ULT

³⁴ Yahweh heard the sound of your words and was angry; he swore and said,

Deuteronomy 1:35

will see

“will enter”

ULT

³⁵ ‘Surely not one of these men of this evil generation will see the good land that I swore to give to your ancestors,

Deuteronomy 1:36

save Caleb

“except Caleb”

Jephunneh

This is the name of Caleb’s father. (See: [How to Translate Names](#))

he has wholly followed Yahweh

Yahweh speaks as if he were someone else. Alternate translation: “he has completely obeyed me” (See: [Pronouns](#))

ULT

³⁶ save Caleb son of Jephunneh; he will see it. To him I will give the land that he has stepped on, and to his children, because he has wholly followed Yahweh.’

Deuteronomy 1:37

General Information:

Moses continues reminding the people of Israel what the previous generation of Israelites did.

Yahweh was angry with me because of you

This refers to when Moses disobeyed what Yahweh told him to do because Moses was angry with the people of Israel. (See: [Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information](#))

ULT

37 Also Yahweh was angry with me because of you, saying, 'You also will not go in there;

Deuteronomy 1:38

Nun

This is the name of Joshua's father. (See: [How to Translate Names](#))

who stands before you

Why Joshua stands before Moses can be stated clearly. Alternate translation: "who stands before you as your servant" or "who helps you" (See: [Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information](#))

ULT

³⁸ Joshua son of Nun, who stands before you, he will go in there; encourage him, for he will lead Israel to inherit it.

Deuteronomy 1:39

General Information:

Moses continues reminding the people of Israel what the previous generation of Israelites did.

ULT

³⁹ Moreover, your little children, the ones you said would be victims, who today have no knowledge of good or evil—they will go in there. To them I will give it, and they will possess it.

Deuteronomy 1:40

turn and take your journey

“turn around and go back on the road you have come on”

ULT

⁴⁰ But {as for} you, turn and take your journey into the wilderness along the way to the Sea of Reeds.’

Deuteronomy 1:41

General Information:

Moses continues reminding the people of Israel what the previous generation of Israelites did.

sinned against Yahweh

“we have rebelled against Yahweh by disobeying him”

we will follow

“we will obey”

to attack the hill country

Here the metonym “hill country” represents the people that live there. Alternate translation: “to attack the people who live in the hill country” (See: [Metonymy](#))

ULT

41 Then you answered and said to me, ‘We have sinned against Yahweh; we will go up and fight, and we will follow all that Yahweh our God has commanded us to do.’ Every man among you put on his weapons of war, and you were ready to attack the hill country.

Deuteronomy 1:42

for I will not be with you, and you will be defeated by your enemies

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: “your enemies will defeat you because I will not be with you” (See: [Active or Passive](#))

ULT

⁴² Yahweh said to me, ‘Say to them, “Do not attack and do not fight, for I will not be with you, and you will be defeated by your enemies.’

Deuteronomy 1:43

General Information:

Moses continues to speak to the people of Israel.

attacked the hill country

The metonym “hill country” stands for the people who live there.

Alternate translation: “attacked the people who live in the hill country” (See: [Metonymy](#))

ULT

⁴³ I spoke to you in this way, but you did not listen. You rebelled against the commandment of Yahweh; you were arrogant and attacked the hill country.

Deuteronomy 1:44

chased you like bees

A “bee” is a small, flying insect that flies in large groups and stings people who threaten them. This means that so many Amorites attacked the Israelite soldiers that they had to leave the battle. (See: [Simile](#) and [Translate Unknowns](#))

Seir

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

Hormah

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

struck you down

“killed many of your soldiers”

ULT

44 But the Amorites, who lived in that hill country, came out against you and chased you like bees, and struck you down in Seir, as far as Hormah.

Deuteronomy 1:45

General Information:

Moses continues reminding the people of Israel what the previous generation of Israelites did.

returned and wept

“returned to Kadesh and wept”

ULT

45 You returned and wept before Yahweh; but Yahweh did not listen to your voice, nor did he pay attention to you.

Deuteronomy 1:46

(There are no notes for this verse.)

ULT

⁴⁶ So you stayed in Kadesh many days,
all the days that you stayed {there}.

Deuteronomy 2

Deuteronomy 2 General Notes

Special concepts in this chapter

Covenant faithfulness

Yahweh is faithful to the covenant he made with Abraham. He is also faithful to the promises he made with Esau and Lot. Because of this, Israel was given specific land it was able to conquer in Canaan. (See: [covenant faithfulness](#), [covenant loyalty](#), [covenant love](#), [faithful](#), [faithfulness](#), [trustworthy](#) and [covenant](#) and [promise](#), [promised](#))

Deuteronomy 2:1

General Information:

Moses continues reminding the people of Israel what the previous generation of Israelites did.

Then we turned and took our journey

“Then we turned around and went”

we went around Mount Seir for many days

This could mean: (1) the Israelites traveled around the mountain called Seir for a very long time or (2) the Israelites wandered in a region called Mount Seir for a very long time.

Mount Seir

This is a mountainous area south of the Dead Sea. The area is also called “Edom.” See how you translated this in [Deuteronomy 1:2](#) (See: [How to Translate Names](#))

many days

Some languages translate this as “many nights.”

ULT

¹ Then we turned and took our journey into the wilderness by the way to the Sea of Reeds, as Yahweh had spoken to me; we went around Mount Seir for many days.

Deuteronomy 2:2

(There are no notes for this verse.)

ULT

² Yahweh spoke to me, saying,

Deuteronomy 2:3

(There are no notes for this verse.)

ULT

³ 'You have gone around this mountain long enough; turn northward.

Deuteronomy 2:4

General Information:

Yahweh continues speaking to Moses.

of your brothers, the descendants of Esau

“of your relatives, the descendants of Esau”

ULT

⁴ Command the people, saying, “You {are to} pass through the border of your brothers, the descendants of Esau, who live in Seir; they will be afraid of you. Therefore be careful

Deuteronomy 2:5

I have given Mount Seir to Esau as a possession

Yahweh is reminding the Israelites that he has given this territory to the descendants of Esau.

ULT

⁵ not to fight with them, for I will not give you {any} of their land, no, not even enough for the sole of a foot to step on; for I have given Mount Seir to Esau {as} a possession.

Deuteronomy 2:6

General Information:

Moses continues to instruct Israel in how they are to treat the descendants of Esau.

You will purchase food from them

Yahweh is giving them permission or instruction, not a command, and he is telling them not to steal. "I permit you to purchase food from them" or "If you need food, you are to purchase it from them"

from them

"from Esau's descendants"

for money

If these words are not needed or make the translation unclear, you may omit them.

ULT

⁶ You will purchase food from them for money, so that you may eat; you will also buy water from them for money, so that you may drink.

Deuteronomy 2:7

your God has blessed you ... your hand ... your walking ... your God ... with you, and you have lacked

Moses speaks to the Israelites as if they were one man, so all instances of “you” and “your” are singular. (See: [Forms of You](#))

you in all the work of your hand

The “work of your hand” refers to all the work they had done. Alternate translation: “all of your work” (See: [Synecdoche](#))

he has known your walking

Here what happened to the people while they were walking is spoken of as their “walking.” (See: [Metonymy](#))

forty years

“40 years” (See: [Numbers](#))

you have lacked nothing

This is a litotes for “you have had everything you needed.” (See: [Litotes](#))

ULT

⁷ For Yahweh your God has blessed you in all the work of your hand; he has known your walking through this great wilderness. For these forty years Yahweh your God {has been} with you, and you have lacked nothing.”

Deuteronomy 2:8

General Information:

Moses continues to speak to the people of Israel.

by our brothers

“by our relatives”

Elath ... Ezion Geber

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

we turned

This is an idiom. Alternate translation: “we kept going” (See: [Idiom](#))

ULT

⁸ So we passed by our brothers, the descendants of Esau who live in Seir, away from the Arabah road, from Elath and from Ezion Geber. Then we turned and passed by the way of the wilderness of Moab.

Deuteronomy 2:9

General Information:

This is the end of a part of Moses' speech reminding the Israelites of how Yahweh guided them in the wilderness. (See: [Background Information](#))

Do not trouble Moab

The word "Moab" represents the people of Moab. Alternate translation: "Do not trouble the people of Moab" (See: [Metonymy](#))

Ar

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

the descendants of Lot

The people of Israel were related to the descendants of Moab. Moab was the son of Lot. Lot was the nephew of Abraham. (See: [Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information](#))

ULT

⁹ Yahweh said to me, 'Do not trouble Moab, and do not fight with them in battle. For I will not give you his land for your own possession, because I have given Ar to the descendants of Lot, for their possession.'

Deuteronomy 2:10

General Information:

The writer begins to give background information about the people of the land. These words are not part of Moses' speech to the Israelites. (See: [Background Information](#))

ULT

10 (The Emites lived there previously, a people as great, as many, and as tall as the Anakim;

The Emites lived

These words give background information about the Emite people, who had lived in the land before the Moabites. Your language may have a special way to mark background information. (See: [Background Information](#))

Emites

This is the name of a people group that were considered giants. (See: [How to Translate Names](#))

Anakim

These are descendants of the Anak people who were very large and fierce. See how you translated this in [Deuteronomy 1:28](#).

Deuteronomy 2:11

General Information:

This continues the background information about the different people groups that had lived in the land. (See: [Deuteronomy 2:10](#) and [Background Information](#)).

Rephaim

This is the name of a people group that were considered giants. (See: [How to Translate Names](#))

ULT

11 these also are considered to be the Rephaim, like the Anakim; but the Moabites call them the Emites.

Deuteronomy 2:12

General Information:

This continues the background information about the different people groups that had lived in the land. (See: [Deuteronomy 2:10](#) and [Background Information](#)).

Horites

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

destroyed them from before them

“killed all of them so none of them were left living with them” or “removed them from their presence by killing all of them”

ULT

¹² The Horites also lived in Seir previously, but the descendants of Esau succeeded them. They destroyed them from before them and lived in their place, like Israel did to the land of his possession that Yahweh gave to them.)

Deuteronomy 2:13

General Information:

Moses continues reminding the Israelites of what had happened to them in the wilderness.

‘Now rise up ... Zered.’ So

“‘Then Yahweh said, “Now rise up ... Zered.’ So.” This can be translated as an indirect quote. Alternate translation: “Then Yahweh told us to rise up ... Zered. So” (See: [Direct and Indirect Quotations](#))

rise up

begin to do something (See: [Idiom](#))

the brook Zered

This stream flows into the Dead Sea from the southeast and creates the border between Edom and Moab. (See: [How to Translate Names](#))

ULT

13 ““Now rise up and go over the brook Zered.’ So we went over the brook Zered.

Deuteronomy 2:14

Now the days

The word “now” marks a change from the story to background information about how long the people of Israel traveled and about God’s anger towards that generation. If your language has a way of showing that what follows is background information, you should use it here. (See: [Background Information](#))

thirty-eight years

“38 years” (See: [Numbers](#))

were gone from the people

This is a polite way of saying “had died.” (See: [Euphemism](#))

ULT

14 Now the days from when we came from Kadesh Barnea until we crossed the brook Zered, were thirty-eight years. It {was} by that time that all that generation of the men fit for fighting were gone from the people, as Yahweh had sworn to them.

Deuteronomy 2:15

the hand of Yahweh was against

Here “the hand of Yahweh” refers to Yahweh’s power. Alternate translation: “Yahweh used his power against” or “Yahweh punished” (See: [Synecdoche](#))

ULT

15 Moreover, the hand of Yahweh was against that generation in order to destroy them from the people until they were gone.

Deuteronomy 2:16

General Information:

Moses continues reminding the people of Israel of what happened in the past.

ULT

16 So it happened, when all the men fit for fighting were dead and gone from among the people,

Deuteronomy 2:17

(There are no notes for this verse.)

ULT

17 that Yahweh spoke to me, saying,

Deuteronomy 2:18

You are

Moses speaks to the Israelites as if they were one man, so the word “you” is singular. (See: [Forms of You](#))

Ar

This is the name of a city in Moab. See how you translated it in [Deuteronomy 2:9](#). (See: [How to Translate Names](#))

ULT

18 ‘You are today to pass over Ar, the border of Moab.

Deuteronomy 2:19

do not trouble ... will not give you

Moses speaks to the Israelites as if they were one man, so the command and the word “you” are singular. (See: [Forms of You](#))

to the descendants of Lot

The people of Israel were related to the descendants of Ammon. Ammon was the son of Lot. Lot was the nephew of Abraham. (See: [Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information](#))

ULT

19 {When] you come near opposite the people of Ammon, do not trouble them or fight them; for I will not give you {any} of the land of the people of Ammon {as] a possession; because I have given it to the descendants of Lot {as} a possession.”

Deuteronomy 2:20

General Information:

These verses begin to give background information about the people groups who lived in the land. If your language has a way of showing that what follows is background information, you should use it here. (See: [Background Information](#))

ULT

20 (That also is considered to be a land of the Rephaim. The Rephaim lived there previously—but the Ammonites call them Zamzummim—

That also is considered

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: “People also consider that” (See: [Active or Passive](#))

Rephaim

This is the name of a people group. See how you translated this in [Deuteronomy 2:11](#). (See: [How to Translate Names](#))

Deuteronomy 2:21

Anakim

This is the name of a people group. See how you translated this in [Deuteronomy 1:28](#). (See: [How to Translate Names](#))

destroyed them before the Ammonites

“allowed the Ammonites to defeat them” or “allowed the Ammonites to kill them all”

they succeeded them and lived in their place

“the Ammonites took over everything the Rephaim had owned and have lived where the Rephaim had lived”

ULT

²¹ a people as great, as many, and as tall as the Anakim. But Yahweh destroyed them before the Ammonites, and they succeeded them and lived in their place.

Deuteronomy 2:22

Horites

This is the name of a people group. See how you translated this in [Deuteronomy 2:12](#). (See: [How to Translate Names](#))

succeeded them and have lived in their place

“took over everything the Horites had owned and have lived where the Horites had lived”

ULT

22 This Yahweh also did for the people of Esau, who live in Seir, when he destroyed the Horites from before them, and the descendants of Esau succeeded them and have lived in their place even until today.

Deuteronomy 2:23

General Information:

The writer finishes describing how God enabled Esau to conquer the land Esau is now inhabiting.

Avvites ... Caphtorim

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

Caphtor

This is the name of a place. It may be another name for the island of Crete located in the Mediterranean Sea. (See: [How to Translate Names](#))

destroyed them

“destroyed the Avvim”

settled in their place

“lived where the Avvim had lived”

ULT

23 As for the Avvites who lived in villages as far as Gaza, the Caphtorim, who came from Caphtor, destroyed them and settled in their place.)

Deuteronomy 2:24

General Information:

The writer has finished giving background information and is now again telling what Moses said to the Israelites.

Now rise up

Yahweh is telling Moses what the people should do. “Now get up” or “Now go.”

go on your journey

“continue your journey”

Valley of the Arnon

This is the name of the valley of the Arnon River. It creates the border between Moab and the Amorites. (See: [How to Translate Names](#))

I have given into your hand

The metonym “into your hand” means “into your control or power.” Alternate translation: “I have given you the power to defeat” (See: [Metonymy](#))

your hand ... Begin to possess it ... fight

Moses speaks to the Israelites as if they were one man, so the word “your” and the commands “begin to possess” and “fight” are singular. (See: [Forms of You](#))

Sihon

This is the name of a king. See how you translated this in [Deuteronomy 1:4](#). (See: [How to Translate Names](#))

Heshbon

This is the name of a city. See how you translated this in [Deuteronomy 1:4](#). (See: [How to Translate Names](#))

fight with him

“fight against him and his army”

ULT

24 ““Now rise up, go on your journey, and pass over the Valley of the Arnon; look, I have given into your hand Sihon the Amorite, king of Heshbon, and his land. Begin to possess {it}, and fight with him in battle.”

Deuteronomy 2:25

terror of you ... news about you ... because of you

Moses speaks to the Israelites as if they were one man, so all instances of “you” are singular. (See: [Forms of You](#))

put the fear and terror

The words “fear” and “terror” mean basically the same thing and emphasize that the fear is intense. Alternate translation: “put a terrible fear” (See: [Doublet](#))

peoples that are under the whole sky

This is an idiom. Alternate translation: “peoples in every land” (See: [Idiom](#))

tremble and be in anguish

This is hendiadys and emphasizes that the people will “tremble in anguish.” (See: [Hendiadys](#))

ULT

²⁵ Today I will begin to put the fear and terror of you on the peoples that are under the whole sky; they will hear news about you and will tremble and be in anguish because of you.'

Deuteronomy 2:26

General Information:

Moses continues to speak to the people of Israel.

I sent

Here “I” refers to Moses.

wilderness of Kedemoth

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

Sihon ... Heshbon

These are the names of a man and a place. See how you translated them in [Deuteronomy 1:4](#). (See: [How to Translate Names](#))

with words of peace

“with my offer of peace” or “with a message from me asking for peace”

ULT

²⁶ I sent messengers from the wilderness of Kedemoth to Sihon, king of Heshbon, with words of peace, saying,

Deuteronomy 2:27

I will turn neither to the right hand nor to the left

This phrase emphasizes that they will always go in the same direction. It can be stated in positive form. "I will not change direction" or "I will always stay on the path" (See: [Litotes](#))

ULT

²⁷ 'Let me pass through your land; I will go along the highway; I will turn neither to the right hand nor to the left.

Deuteronomy 2:28

General Information:

This continues Moses' message to King Sihon.

You will sell me food for money, so that I may eat; give me water for money, so that I may drink

Moses tells Sihon that the Israelites will not steal from the Amorites and requests that Sihon and his people sell food and water to the Israelites; he is not giving a command. Alternate translation: "I expect to have to pay for food so I can eat and to pay for water so I can drink"

sell me ... I may eat ... give me ... I may drink

Moses is referring to the people of Israel as if they were Moses himself. Alternate translation: "sell to me and my people ... we may eat ... give us ... we may drink" (See: [Synecdoche](#))

only let me pass through on my feet

"only let us walk through your land"

ULT

28 You will sell me food for money, so that I may eat; give me water for money, so that I may drink; only let me pass through on my feet;

Deuteronomy 2:29

Ar

This is the name of a place. See how you translated this in [Deuteronomy 2:9](#). (See: [How to Translate Names](#))

ULT

²⁹ as the descendants of Esau who live in Seir, and as the Moabites who live in Ar, did for me; until I pass over the Jordan into the land that Yahweh our God is giving us.'

Deuteronomy 2:30

General Information:

Moses continues to remind the people of what happened in the past.

Sihon ... Heshbon

These are the names of a man and a place. See how you translated them in [Deuteronomy 1:4](#). (See: [How to Translate Names](#))

ULT

30 But Sihon, king of Heshbon, would not let us pass by him; for Yahweh your God had hardened his mind and made his heart obstinate, that he might defeat him by your might, which he has now done today.

your God ... your might

Moses speaks to the Israelites as if they were one man, so all instances of “your” are singular. (See: [Forms of You](#))

hardened his mind and made his heart obstinate

Both of these phrases mean the same thing and emphasize that Yahweh “caused him to become very stubborn.” (See: [Parallelism](#))

Deuteronomy 2:31

to deliver up Sihon and his land before you

“to give Sihon and his land over to you”

begin to possess it, in order that you may inherit his land

“take possession of his land, so that you may inherit it”

ULT

³¹ Yahweh said to me, ‘Look, I have begun to deliver up Sihon and his land before you; begin to possess {it}, in order that you may inherit his land.’

Deuteronomy 2:32

General Information:

Moses continues reminding the people of Israel about what happened in the past.

ULT

³² Then Sihon came out against us, he and all his people, to fight at Jahaz.

Sihon

This is the name of a man. See how you translated this in [Deuteronomy 1:4](#). (See: [How to Translate Names](#))

Jahaz

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

Deuteronomy 2:33

(There are no notes for this verse.)

ULT

³³ Yahweh our God gave him over to us
and we defeated him and his sons and
all his people.

Deuteronomy 2:34

General Information:

Moses continues reminding the people about what happened in the past.

We took all his cities

“We captured all of King Sihon’s cities”

ULT

³⁴ We took all his cities at that time and completely destroyed every city—men and the women and the little ones; we left no survivor.

Deuteronomy 2:35

(There are no notes for this verse.)

ULT

³⁵ Only the cattle we took as spoils for ourselves, along with the spoil of the cities that we had taken.

Deuteronomy 2:36

Aroer

This is the name of a city on the north bank of the Arnon River. (See: [How to Translate Names](#))

Valley of the Arnon

“Arnon” is the name of a river. See how you translated this in [Deuteronomy 2:24](#). (See: [How to Translate Names](#))

there was not a city too high for us

This negative statement is used to emphasize their success in battle. This can be stated in a positive form. Alternate translation: “we were able to defeat the people of every city even if the city had high walls around it” (See: [Litotes](#))

ULT

³⁶ From Aroer, which {is} on the edge of the Valley of the Arnon, and {from} the city that {is} in the valley, all the way to Gilead, there was not a city too high for us. Yahweh our God gave them into our hands.

Deuteronomy 2:37

you did not go

Moses speaks to the Israelites as if they were one man, so “you” is singular. (See: [Forms of You](#))

Jabbok River

This is the name of a river that created the border between Sihon’s land and the land of the Ammonites. (See: [How to Translate Names](#))

ULT

37 It was only to the land of the descendants of Ammon that you did not go, as well as all the side of the Jabbok River, and the cities of the hill country—wherever Yahweh our God had forbidden us to go.

Deuteronomy 3

Deuteronomy 3 General Notes

Special concepts in this chapter

Victories

The victories recorded in this chapter occurred on the east side of the Jordan River. This was not part of the Promised Land, which was on the west side of the Jordan River. (See: [Promised Land](#))

Deuteronomy 3:1

General Information:

Moses continues reminding the people of Israel of what happened in the past.

Og

This is the name of a king. See how you translated it in [Deuteronomy 1:4](#). (See: [How to Translate Names](#))

Edrei

This is the name of a city. See how you translated it in [Deuteronomy 1:4](#). (See: [How to Translate Names](#))

ULT

¹ Then we turned and went up the way to Bashan. Og, the king of Bashan, came and attacked us, he and all his people, to fight at Edrei.

Deuteronomy 3:2

Sihon

This is the name of a king. See how you translated it in [Deuteronomy 1:4](#). (See: [How to Translate Names](#))

Heshbon

This is the name of a city. See how you translated it in [Deuteronomy 1:4](#). (See: [How to Translate Names](#))

ULT

² Yahweh said to me, 'Do not fear him; for I have given you victory over him and have put all his people and his land under your control. You will do to him as you did to Sihon, king of the Amorites, who lived at Heshbon.'

Yahweh said to me, 'Do not fear him;...given you ... under your control ... You will do ... as you did ... at Heshbon.'

Yahweh is speaking to Moses as if Moses were the Israelites, so the command "do not fear" and all instances of "you" and "your" are plural. (See: [Forms of You](#))

fear him ... over him ... his people and his land

Here the words "him" and "his" refer to Og.

I have given you victory

Yahweh speaks of what he will do as if he had already done it. (See: [Predictive Past](#))

You will do to him as you did to Sihon

The word "him" is a metonym for "his people." Alternate translation: "You will destroy Og and his people as you did Sihon" (See: [Synecdoche](#))

Deuteronomy 3:3

all his people were put under our control

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "Yahweh put all of Og's people under our control" (See: [Active or Passive](#))

not one of his people remained

This is a litotes that is used to emphasize that the Israelites did not let anyone live. Alternate translation: "all of his people were dead" (See: [Litotes](#))

ULT

³ So Yahweh our God also gave us victory over Og the king of Bashan, and all his people were put under our control. We struck them down until not one of his people remained.

Deuteronomy 3:4

There was not one of the sixty cities that we did not take

This is a double negative that emphasizes that they took all of the 60 cities. Alternate translation: “We took every one of the sixty cities” (See: [Double Negatives](#))

sixty cities

“60 cities” (See: [Numbers](#))

the region of Argob

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

ULT

⁴ We took all his cities at that time.

There was not one of the sixty cities that we did not take from them—all the region of Argob, the kingdom of Og in Bashan.

Deuteronomy 3:5

General Information:

Moses continues reminding the people of Israel of what happened in the past.

These were all cities fortified with

“These were all cities protected by”

besides very many

“in addition to very many” or “not including very many”

ULT

⁵ These were all cities fortified with high walls, gates, and bars; this was besides very many unwalled villages.

Deuteronomy 3:6

Sihon

This is the name of a king. See how you translated this in [Deuteronomy 1:4](#). (See: [How to Translate Names](#))

Heshbon

This is the name of a city. See how you translated this in [Deuteronomy 1:4](#). (See: [How to Translate Names](#))

ULT

⁶ We completely destroyed them, as we did to Sihon king of Heshbon, completely destroying every city—men and the women and the little ones.

Deuteronomy 3:7

(There are no notes for this verse.)

ULT

⁷ But all the cattle and the spoil of the cities, we took as spoils for ourselves.

Deuteronomy 3:8

General Information:

Moses continues to speak to the people of Israel.

out of the hand of the two kings

Here the metonym “out of the hand of” means “from the control of.”

Alternate translation: “from the control of the two kings” or “from the two kings” (See: [Metonymy](#))

ULT

⁸ At that time we took the land out of the hand of the two kings of the Amorites, who were beyond the Jordan, from the Valley of the Arnon to Mount Hermon

Amorites

“Amorite people.” See how you translated the name of this people group in [Deuteronomy 1:4](#).

beyond the Jordan

This refers to the land across the Jordan River, to the east of Israel. Moses was east of the Jordan when he said this. See how you translated this in [Deuteronomy 1:1](#). Alternate translation: “east of the Jordan River”

the Valley of the Arnon

See how you translated these words in [Deuteronomy 2:24](#).

Mount Hermon

This is the name of a mountain at the northern border of Bashan. (See: [How to Translate Names](#))

Deuteronomy 3:9

Mount Hermon ... Sirion ... Senir

These are all names of the same mountain which is at the northern border of Bashan. (See: [How to Translate Names](#))

ULT

⁹ (Mount Hermon is called Sirion by the Sidonians, and the Amorites call it Senir)

Deuteronomy 3:10

Bashan ... Edrei ... Og

See how you translated these in [Deuteronomy 1:4](#).

of the plain

This is high, flat land between the Arnon River and Mount Gilead.

Salekah

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

ULT

10 and all the cities of the plain, all Gilead, and all Bashan, all the way to Salekah and Edrei, cities of the kingdom of Og in Bashan."

Deuteronomy 3:11

General Information:

Moses continues to speak to the people of Israel.

For of the remnant ... the way people measure

This is background information about King Og. (See: [Background Information](#))

Rephaim

See how you translated this in [Deuteronomy 2:11](#).

Look!

“Pay attention to the important thing I am going to tell you.”

Was it not in Rabbah,...live?

The writer uses a question to remind the people of Israel that they could go to Rabbah and see how large Og must have been. This rhetorical question can be translated as a statement. This could mean: (1) “It was in Rabbah,...live.” or (2) “It is in Rabbah ... live.” (See: [Rhetorical Question](#))

cubits

A cubit is 46 centimeters. (See: [Biblical Distance](#))

the way people measure

“according to the cubit most people use”

ULT

11 (For of the remnant of the Rephaim, only Og king of Bashan had remained. Look! His bed {was} a bed of iron. Was it not in Rabbah, where the descendants of Ammon live? It was nine cubits long and four cubits wide, the way people measure.)

Deuteronomy 3:12

General Information:

Moses continues reminding the people of what happened in the past.

Aroer

See how you translated the name of this town in [Deuteronomy 2:36](#).

the Valley of the Arnon

See how you translated these words in [Deuteronomy 2:24](#).

ULT

12 “This land that we took in possession at that time—from Aroer, that {is} by the Valley of the Arnon, and half the hill country of Gilead, and its cities—I gave to the Reubenites and to the Gadites.

Deuteronomy 3:13

the region of Argob

See how you translated these words in [Deuteronomy 3:4](#).

The same territory is called the land of Rephaim

The writer begins to present background information about the land that the people of Israel captured. If your language has a way of showing that what follows is background information, you should use it here. (See: [Background Information](#))

Rephaim

See how you translated the name of this land in [Deuteronomy 2:11](#).

ULT

13 The rest of Gilead and all Bashan, the kingdom of Og, I gave to the half tribe of Manasseh. (All the region of Argob, and all Bashan. The same territory is called the land of Rephaim.

Deuteronomy 3:14

General Information:

This continues the background information about the land the people of Israel captured ([Deuteronomy 3:13](#)).

Jair

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

the Geshurites and the Maakathites

These are people groups who lived west of Bashan. (See: [How to Translate Names](#))

Havvoth Jair

Translators may make a footnote that says: "The name 'Havvoth Jair' means 'tent villages of Jair' or 'realm of Jair.'"

ULT

14 Jair, a descendant of Manasseh, took all the region of Argob to the border of the Geshurites and the Maakathites. He called the region, even Bashan, by his own name, Havvoth Jair, to this day.)

Deuteronomy 3:15

General Information:

Moses continues to speak to the people of Israel.

I gave

Here “I” refers to Moses.

to Machir

Machir was the son of Manasseh. He had died before Moses gave this land. The name is a metonym for the descendants of the person. Alternate translation: “to the descendants of Machir” (See: [How to Translate Names](#))

ULT

¹⁵ I gave Gilead to Machir.

Deuteronomy 3:16

Jabbok River

This is the name of a river that created the border between Sihon's land and the land of the Ammonites. See how you translated this in [Deuteronomy 2:37](#). (See: [How to Translate Names](#))

ULT

16 To the Reubenites and to the Gadites I gave territory from Gilead to the Valley of the Arnon—the middle of the valley is the territory's border—and to the Jabbok River, which is the border with the descendants of Ammon.

Deuteronomy 3:17

General Information:

Moses continues to speak to the people of Israel.

Another of its borders is also

“The western border of the Reubenite and Gadite territory is”

ULT

17 Another of its borders is also the plain of the Jordan River valley, from Kinnereth to the Sea of the Arabah (that is, the Salt Sea) to the slopes of Mount Pisgah eastward.

Kinnereth

the Sea of Kinnereth, also called “the Sea of Galilee” or “the Lake of Gennesaret” (See: [How to Translate Names](#))

Mount Pisgah

This is the name of a mountain in the northern part of the Abarim mountain range. (See: [How to Translate Names](#))

Deuteronomy 3:18

General Information:

Moses continues to speak to the people of Israel.

I commanded you at that time

Moses reminds the tribe of Reuben, the tribe of Gad, and the half tribe of Manasseh that they must help the other Israelites conquer the rest of the land God promised them. (See: [Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information](#))

will pass over armed before

“will take your weapons and cross the Jordan River ahead of”

your brothers, the people of Israel

“your fellow Israelites”

ULT

18 I commanded you at that time, saying, ‘Yahweh your God has given you this land to possess it; you, all the men of war, will pass over armed before your brothers, the people of Israel.’

Deuteronomy 3:19

General Information:

Moses continues speaking to the tribes of Reuben and Gad and half of the tribe of Manasseh.

ULT

19 But your wives, your little ones, and your cattle (I know that you have much cattle), will stay in your cities that I have given you,

Deuteronomy 3:20

Yahweh gives rest to your brothers

The writer speaks as if the ability to rest were a physical object that could be given as a gift. The word “rest” is also a metaphor for peaceful life in which there is no war. Alternate translation: “Yahweh allows your brothers to rest” or “Yahweh allows your brothers to stop fighting wars and live peacefully” (See: [Metaphor](#))

beyond the Jordan

This refers to the land across the Jordan River, to the east of Israel. Moses was east of the Jordan when he said this. See how you translated these words in [Deuteronomy 1:1](#). Alternate translation: “east of the Jordan River”

then will you return

Moses is emphasizing that the other tribes must possess their land before Yahweh will permit these three tribes to possess their land. “only then are you to return.”

ULT

²⁰ until Yahweh gives rest to your brothers, as he has to you, until they also possess the land that Yahweh your God is giving them beyond the Jordan; then will you return, every man of you, to your own property that I have given you.'

Deuteronomy 3:21

General Information:

Moses continues reminding the people of Israel about what happened in the past.

Your eyes have seen

Here “eyes” refers to Joshua. Alternate translation: “You have seen” (See: [Synecdoche](#))

ULT

21 I commanded Joshua at that time, saying, ‘Your eyes have seen all that Yahweh your God has done to these two kings; Yahweh will do the same to all the kingdoms where you go over.’

Deuteronomy 3:22

(There are no notes for this verse.)

ULT

²² You will not fear them, for Yahweh your God is the one who will fight for you.'

Deuteronomy 3:23

General Information:

Moses continues reminding the people about what happened in the past.

ULT

²³ I implored Yahweh at that time, saying,

I implored

Here “I” refers to Moses. This means he asked God in a very earnest, emotional way.

Deuteronomy 3:24

to show your servant

Here “your servant” is a polite way of speaking to someone with greater authority. Alternate translation: “to show me, your servant”

your strong hand

Here the metonym “hand” means control or power. Alternate translation: “your power” (See: [Metonymy](#))

for what god is there ... acts?

Moses uses a question to emphasize that Yahweh is the only God with the power to do the works he has done. This rhetorical question can be translated as a statement. Alternate translation: “for there is no god ... acts.” (See: [Rhetorical Question](#))

in heaven or in earth

These two extremes together mean “anywhere.” (See: [Merism](#))

ULT

24 ‘O Lord Yahweh, you have begun to show your servant your greatness and your strong hand; for what god is there in heaven or in earth that can do the same works as you have done, and the same mighty acts?

Deuteronomy 3:25

beyond the Jordan

“west of the Jordan River.” When Moses spoke these words to Yahweh, he was east of the Jordan River in Moab.

ULT

²⁵ Let me go over, I beg you, and see the good land that is beyond the Jordan, that good hill country, and also Lebanon.’

Deuteronomy 3:26

General Information:

Moses continues telling the people of Israel what happened in the past.

Yahweh was angry with me because of you

This refers to when Moses disobeyed what Yahweh told him to do because Moses was angry with the people of Israel. See how you translated this in [Deuteronomy 1:37](#). (See: [Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information](#))

ULT

26 But Yahweh was angry with me because of you; he did not listen to me. Yahweh said to me, 'Let this be enough for you—speak no more to me about this matter:

Deuteronomy 3:27

Pisgah

See how you translated this in [Deuteronomy 3:17](#).

lift up your eyes

The words “lift up your eyes” are an idiom that means look.
Alternate translation: “look” (See: [Idiom](#))

ULT

27 go up to the top of Pisgah and lift up your eyes westward, northward, southward, and eastward; look with your eyes, for you will not go over the Jordan.

Deuteronomy 3:28

General Information:

Yahweh continues speaking to Moses.

ULT

²⁸ Instead, instruct Joshua and encourage and strengthen him, for he will go over before this people, and he will cause them to inherit the land that you will see.'

Deuteronomy 3:29

Beth Peor

This is the name of a town in Moab near Mount Pisgah. (See: [How to Translate Names](#))

ULT

²⁹ So we stayed in the valley opposite Beth Peor.

Deuteronomy 4

Deuteronomy 4 General Notes

Special concepts in this chapter

Law of Moses

In order to possess the land, the people needed to obey the law of Moses. This will be the most important thing in the religious life of Israel. (See: [law](#), [law of Moses](#), [law of Yahweh](#), [law of God](#))

Moses' instructions

Moses is not allowed to enter into the Promised Land. Since they are getting ready to possess the Promised Land, Moses gives them some last instructions before his death. (See: [Promised Land](#))

Important figures of speech in this chapter

Rhetorical Questions

Moses uses several rhetorical questions in this chapter. The purpose of these questions is to convince his readers to obey his instructions. (See: [Rhetorical Question](#))

Deuteronomy 4:1

I am about to teach you

Moses is telling the people of Israel what God wants them to do.

to do them

“and obey them”

ULT

¹ Now therefore, Israel, listen to the statutes and the judgments that I am about to teach you, to do them so that you may live and go in and possess the land that Yahweh, the God of your fathers, is giving you.

Deuteronomy 4:2

You will not add to the words ... neither will you diminish them

Yahweh does not want his people to create new laws, or to ignore those he has already given them.

ULT

² You will not add to the words that I command you, neither will you diminish them, so that you may keep the commandments of Yahweh your God that I am commanding you.

Deuteronomy 4:3

General Information:

Moses continues speaking to the people of Israel.

Your eyes have seen

Here “eyes” refers to the people of Israel. Alternate translation: “You saw” (See: [Synecdoche](#))

because of Baal Peor

The full meaning of this statement can be made clear. Alternate translation: “because of the sins you committed at Baal Peor” (See: [Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information](#))

Peor

See how you translated this in [Deuteronomy 3:29](#).

Yahweh your God has destroyed them from among you

Moses speaks to the people of Israel as though they were one person, so “your” and “you” are singular. (See: [Pronouns](#))

ULT

³ Your eyes have seen what Yahweh did because of Baal Peor; for all the men who walked after the Baal of Peor, Yahweh your God has destroyed them from among you.

Deuteronomy 4:4

you who clung to Yahweh

The writer speaks as if trusting in Yahweh and obeying him were like physically holding on to a person. Alternate translation: “you who were careful to obey Yahweh” (See: [Metaphor](#))

ULT

⁴ But you who clung to Yahweh your God {are} alive today, every one of you.

Deuteronomy 4:5

General Information:

Moses continues speaking to the people of Israel.

Look

“Pay attention”

that you should do so in the midst of the land

“that you should obey them when you live in the land”

ULT

⁵ Look, I have taught you statutes and judgments, as Yahweh my God had commanded me, that you should do so in the midst of the land which you are going into in order to possess it.

Deuteronomy 4:6

keep them and do them

These two phrases mean basically the same thing and emphasize that they are to obey them. Alternate translation: “obey them carefully” (See: [Doublet](#))

this is your wisdom and your understanding in the sight of the peoples

The abstract nouns “wisdom” and “understanding” can be translated as adjective phrases, and the abstract noun “sight” refers to how the peoples judge or decide on the value of something. Alternate translation: “this is what will show the peoples that you are wise and that you understand what is important” (See: [Abstract Nouns](#) and [Metaphor](#))

this great nation is a wise and understanding people

The word “nation” is a metonym for the people of that nation. Alternate translation: “the people of this great nation are wise and understanding” (See: [Metonymy](#))

ULT

⁶ So, keep them and do {them}; for this is your wisdom and your understanding in the sight of the peoples who may hear about all these statutes and may say, ‘Surely this great nation is a wise and understanding people.’

Deuteronomy 4:7

General Information:

Moses continues to speak to the people of Israel.

For what other great nation is there ... him?

This rhetorical question can be translated as a statement. Alternate translation: "For there is no other great nation ... him." (See: [Rhetorical Question](#))

ULT

⁷ For what other great nation {is} there that has a god {so} near to them, as Yahweh our God is whenever we call upon him?

Deuteronomy 4:8

What other great nation is there ... today?

This rhetorical question can be translated as a statement. Alternate translation: "There is no other great nation ... today." (See: [Rhetorical Question](#))

ULT

⁸ And, what other great nation {is} there that has statutes and judgments so righteous as all this law that I am giving before you today?

Deuteronomy 4:9

General Information:

Moses continues to speak to the people of Israel.

Only pay attention ... guard yourself ... you do not forget ... your eyes ... your heart ... your life ... make them known to your children and your children's children

ULT

⁹ Only carefully guard yourself and vigilantly guard your inner being, lest you forget the words which your eyes have seen, lest they leave your mind all the days of your life. Rather, make them known to your children and your children's children.

Moses speaks to the Israelites as if they are one person, so all instances of "you," "your," and "yourself," as well as the commands "pay attention," "guard," and "make known" are singular. (See: [Pronouns](#) and [Forms of You](#))

Only pay attention and carefully guard yourself

"Pay careful attention and be sure to remember these things always"

you do not forget ... they do not leave your heart

These phrases means the same thing and emphasize that the people of Israel must remember what they have seen. (See: [Parallelism](#))

your eyes have seen

Here "eyes" are a synecdoche for the person. Alternate translation: "you have seen" (See: [Synecdoche](#))

Deuteronomy 4:10

you stood before Yahweh your God

Moses speaks to the Israelites as if they are one person, so all instances of “you” and “your” are singular. (See: [Pronouns](#) and [Forms of You](#))

Assemble me the people

“Bring the people together and bring them to me”

ULT

10 On the day that you stood before Yahweh your God at Horeb, when Yahweh said to me, ‘Assemble for me the people, and I will make them hear my words, that they may learn to fear me all the days that they live on the earth, and that they may teach their children.’

Deuteronomy 4:11

General Information:

Moses continues to remind the Israelites of their history.

with fire to the heart of heaven

This is an idiom. “The heart of” means “the middle of” or “the innermost part of,” and “heaven” here refers to the sky. Alternate translation: “with a fire that went up to the sky” (See: [Idiom](#))

with darkness, cloud, and thick darkness

Here “thick darkness” describes the cloud. Alternate translation: “with a thick, dark cloud” (See: [Hendiadys](#))

thick darkness

Another possible meaning is “heavy cloud.”

ULT

11 You came near and stood at the foot of the mountain. The mountain burned with fire to the heart of heaven, with darkness, cloud, and thick darkness.

Deuteronomy 4:12

(There are no notes for this verse.)

ULT

¹² Yahweh spoke to you out of the middle of the fire; you heard the voice with its words, but you saw no form; you {only} heard a voice.

Deuteronomy 4:13

General Information:

Moses continues to speak to the people of Israel.

He declared

“Yahweh declared”

to you

Here “you” refers to the Israelites who were at Mount Horeb.

ULT

¹³ He declared to you his covenant that he commanded you to perform, the Ten Commandments. He wrote them on two tablets of stone.

Deuteronomy 4:14

in the land that you are crossing over to take possession of

“after you have crossed over the Jordan River and taken possession of the land”

ULT

¹⁴ Yahweh commanded me at that time to teach you statutes and rules, so that you might do them in the land that you are crossing over to take possession of it.

Deuteronomy 4:15

General Information:

Moses continues speaking to the people of Israel.

ULT

¹⁵ So take great heed to yourselves—for you saw no kind of form on the day that Yahweh spoke to you at Horeb out of the middle of the fire—

Deuteronomy 4:16

do not corrupt yourselves

“do not do what is wrong”

ULT

16 that you do not corrupt yourselves and by making a carved image in the form of any figure, in the likeness of male or female,

Deuteronomy 4:17

(There are no notes for this verse.)

ULT

¹⁷ the likeness of any animal on the earth, the likeness of any winged bird that flies in the heavens,

Deuteronomy 4:18

creeps on the ground

“crawls on the ground”

ULT

¹⁸ the likeness of anything that creeps on the ground, or the likeness of any fish that {is} in the water under the earth.

Deuteronomy 4:19

You shall not lift your eyes ... and look ... and be drawn ... Yahweh your God

Moses speaks to the Israelites as if they were one man, so all instances of “you” and “your” and the words “lift,” “look,” and “be drawn” are singular. (See: [Forms of You](#))

You shall not ... and be drawn away to worship

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: “Do not ... and do not let anyone make you want to worship” or “Do not ... and do not allow yourself worship” (See: [Active or Passive](#))

all the host of the heavens

“everything you can see in the sky.” This is another way of referring to the sun, moon, and stars.

of which Yahweh your God has given a share all the peoples

This is an idiom. Moses speaks of the stars as if they were small objects like food that Yahweh was dividing and giving out to the people groups. Alternate translation: “that Yahweh your God has put there to help all people groups” (See: [Idiom](#))

ULT

¹⁹ You shall not lift your eyes up to the heavens and look at the sun, the moon, or the stars—all the host of the heavens—and be drawn away to worship them and adore them—those things of which Yahweh your God has given a share all the peoples under the whole sky.

Deuteronomy 4:20

brought you out of the iron furnace

Moses speaks of Egypt and the hard work the Israelites did there as if it were an oven in which iron is heated and the Israelites were the iron. Alternate translation: “brought you out of the land where people made you do hard work” (See: [Metaphor](#))

a people of his own inheritance

This is an idiom that can be translated “people who belong only to him.” (See: [Idiom](#))

ULT

20 But Yahweh has taken you and brought you out of the iron furnace, out of Egypt, to be to him a people of his own inheritance, as you are today.

Deuteronomy 4:21

General Information:

Moses continues speaking to the people of Israel.

Yahweh was angry with me because of you

This refers to when Moses disobeyed what Yahweh told him to do because Moses was angry with the people of Israel. The full meaning of this statement can be made clear. See how you translated this in [Deuteronomy 1:37](#). (See: [Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information](#))

ULT

²¹ Yahweh was angry with me because of you; he swore that I should not go over the Jordan, and that I should not go into that good land, the land that Yahweh your God is giving to you as an inheritance.

Yahweh your God is giving to you

Moses speaks to the Israelites as if they were one man, so “you” and “your” are singular. (See: [Forms of You](#))

Deuteronomy 4:22

(There are no notes for this verse.)

ULT

²² Instead, I must die in this land; I must not go over the Jordan; but you will go over and possess that good land.

Deuteronomy 4:23

Pay attention to yourselves

“Pay careful attention”

Yahweh your God has forbidden you

Moses speaks to the Israelites as if they were one person, so the words “you” and “your” are singular. (See: [Forms of You](#))

ULT

²³ Pay attention to yourselves, so that you do not forget the covenant of Yahweh your God, which he made with you, and make for yourselves a carved image in the form of anything that Yahweh your God has forbidden you to make.

Deuteronomy 4:24

Yahweh your God is a devouring fire, a jealous God

Moses compares how Yahweh acts when he is angry to the way a fire destroys things. Alternate translation: “Yahweh your God will severely punish and destroy you like a fire does because he does not want you to worship other gods” (See: [Metaphor](#))

ULT

²⁴ For Yahweh your God is a devouring fire, a jealous God.

Yahweh your God

Moses speaks to the Israelites as if they were one person, so the word “your” is singular. (See: [Forms of You](#))

Deuteronomy 4:25

General Information:

Moses continues to speak to the people of Israel.

you beget ... Yahweh your God

The words “you” and “your” are singular here.

beget

become the father of, or become the ancestor of

if you corrupt yourselves

“if you do what is wrong.” See how you translated these words in [Deuteronomy 4:16](#).

do what is evil in the sight of Yahweh your God, to provoke him to anger

This is an idiom. Alternate translation: “you make Yahweh your God angry by doing what he says is evil” (See: [Idiom](#))

ULT

²⁵ When you beget children and children’s children, and when you will have been in the land for a long time, and if you corrupt yourselves and make a carved figure in the form of anything, and do what is evil in the sight of Yahweh your God, to provoke him to anger—

Deuteronomy 4:26

I call heaven and earth to witness

This could mean: (1) Moses is calling on all those who live in heaven and earth to be witnesses to what he says or (2) Moses is speaking to heaven and earth as if they are people, and he is calling them to be witnesses to what he says. (See: [Metonymy](#) and [Personification](#))

you will not prolong your days

Long days are a metaphor for a long life. Alternate translation: “you will not be able to live a long time” (See: [Metaphor](#))

but you will be completely destroyed

As indicated in 4:27, not every Israelite will be killed. Here “completely destroy” is a generalization and emphasizes that many of the Israelites will die. This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: “but Yahweh will destroy many of you” (See: [Hyperbole](#) and [Active or Passive](#))

ULT

26 I call heaven and earth to witness against you today that you will soon utterly perish from off the land that you are going over the Jordan to possess; you will not prolong {your} days in it, but you will be completely destroyed.

Deuteronomy 4:27

General Information:

Moses continues speaking to the people of Israel.

Yahweh will scatter you among the peoples

Moses speaks as if the people were seeds that Yahweh would scatter around a field. Alternate translation: “Yahweh will send you to many different places and force you to live there” (See: [Metaphor](#))

will lead you away

“will send you” or “will cause your enemies to take you away”

ULT

²⁷ Yahweh will scatter you among the peoples, and you will be left few in number among the nations, where Yahweh will lead you away.

Deuteronomy 4:28

the work of men's hands, wood and stone

Here "men's hands" refers the men themselves, and "the work ... wood and stone" to the idols that they have created. Alternate translation: "the wood and stone idols that men have made" (See: [Synecdoche](#))

ULT

28 There you will serve other gods, the work of men's hands, wood and stone, which neither see, hear, eat, nor smell.

Deuteronomy 4:29

General Information:

Moses continues to speak to the people of Israel. He speaks as though they were one man, so all instances of “you” and “your” are singular. (See: [Forms of You](#))

But from there

“But when you are in those other nations”

you will seek

The word “you” here is plural. (See: [Forms of You](#))

when you search after him

“when you really try to find him” or “when you really try to know him”

with all your heart and with all your soul

Here “heart” and “soul” are metonyms for a person’s inner being. These two phrases are used together to mean “completely” or “earnestly.” (See: [Metonymy](#) and [Doublet](#))

ULT

29 But from there you will seek Yahweh your God, and you will find {him}, when you search after him with all your heart and with all your soul.

Deuteronomy 4:30

will have come on

“have happened to”

in those later days

“afterwards” or “then”

listen to his voice

Here “listen” is an idiom that means to hear and obey. Also, “his voice” refers to Yahweh and emphasizes what he says. Alternate translation: “obey what he says” (See: [Idiom](#) and [Synecdoche](#))

ULT

³⁰ When you are in distress, and when all these things will have come on you, in those later days you will return to Yahweh your God and listen to his voice.

Deuteronomy 4:31

(There are no notes for this verse.)

ULT

³¹ For Yahweh your God {is} a merciful God; he will not fail you nor destroy you, nor forget the covenant of your fathers that he swore to them.

Deuteronomy 4:32

General Information:

Moses continues to speak to the people of Israel as if they were one man, so all instances of “you” and the command “ask now” are singular. (See: [Forms of You](#))

ULT

32 Ask now about the days that are past, which were before your time, since the day that God created man on the earth, {ask} from one end of heaven to the other, whether there has been {anything} so great as this, or has anything like it {ever} been heard?

Deuteronomy 4:33

Did ever a people hear the voice of God speaking out of the midst of the fire, as you have heard, and live?

Here the people of Israel are reminded of how Yahweh has spoken to them in an amazing way in the past. This rhetorical question can be translated as a statement. Alternate translation: “No other people besides you has heard God speak from the middle of the fire and lived.” (See: [Rhetorical Question](#))

ULT

³³ Did ever a people hear the voice of God speaking out of the midst of the fire, as you have heard, and live?

hear the voice of God speaking

Here God is represented by his voice. Alternate translation: “hear God’s voice as he spoke” (See: [Synecdoche](#))

Deuteronomy 4:34

General Information:

Moses continues to speak to the people of Israel.

by a mighty hand, and by an outstretched arm

Here “a mighty hand” and “an outstretched arm” are metaphors for Yahweh’s power. Alternate translation: “by showing his mighty power” (See: [Metaphor](#))

before your eyes

Here “eyes” refer to the whole person. Alternate translation: “in front of you” (See: [Synecdoche](#))

ULT

³⁴ Or has God ever attempted to go and take for himself a nation from the midst of {another} nation, by trials, by signs, and by wonders, and by war, and by a mighty hand, and by an outstretched arm, and by great terrors, as everything that Yahweh your God did for you in Egypt before your eyes?

Deuteronomy 4:35

General Information:

Moses continues to speak to the people of Israel if they were one man, so all instances of “you” and “your” are singular. (See: [Forms of You](#))

To you these things were shown

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: “Yahweh showed you these things” (See: [Active or Passive](#))

ULT

³⁵ To you these things were shown, so that you might know that Yahweh is God, and that there is no one else besides him.

Deuteronomy 4:36

he made you to hear ... made you see

"he made sure you heard ... made sure you saw"

made you ... you heard

Moses speaks as if the people to whom he was speaking were the people he had spoken to at Mount Sinai many years earlier. The people at Mount Sinai were actually the fathers of the people to whom he was speaking these words. Alternate translation: "made your fathers ... your fathers heard" (See: [Metonymy](#))

ULT

³⁶ Out of heaven he made you to hear his voice, so that he might instruct you; on earth he made you see his great fire; you heard his words out of the midst of the fire.

Deuteronomy 4:37

General Information:

Moses continues to speak to the people of Israel if they were one man, so all instances of “you” and “your” are singular. (See: [Forms of You](#))

your fathers

This refers to Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, and Jacob’s sons.

with his presence, with his great power

“with the great power that comes from his presence” or “with his great power”

ULT

37 Because he loved your fathers, he chose their descendants after them, and brought you out of Egypt with his presence, with his great power;

Deuteronomy 4:38

(There are no notes for this verse.)

ULT

³⁸ in order to drive out from before you nations greater and mightier than you, to bring you in, to give you their land as an inheritance, as today.

Deuteronomy 4:39

General Information:

Moses continues to speak to the people of Israel if they were one man, so all instances of “you” and “your” are singular. (See: [Forms of You](#))

lay it on your heart

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

in heaven above and on the earth beneath

The two phrases “in heaven” and “on the earth” show two extremes and mean “everywhere.” Alternate translation: “over everything” (See: [Merism](#))

ULT

³⁹ Know therefore today, and lay it on your heart, that Yahweh is God in heaven above and on the earth beneath; {there is} no one else.

Deuteronomy 4:40

prolong your days

Long days are a metaphor for a long life. See how you translated these words in [Deuteronomy 4:26](#). Alternate translation: “be able to live a long time” (See: [Metaphor](#))

ULT

40 You will keep his statutes and his commandments that I command you today, that it may go well with you and with your children after you, and that you may prolong {your} days in the land that Yahweh your God is giving you forever.”

Deuteronomy 4:41

General Information:

Moses's speech, which began in [Deuteronomy 1:6](#), has finished, and the writer continues the narrative that ended in [Deuteronomy 1:5](#).

ULT

41 Then Moses selected three cities on the east side of the Jordan,

Deuteronomy 4:42

(There are no notes for this verse.)

ULT

⁴² so that anyone might flee to one of them if he killed another person accidentally, without being his enemy previously. By fleeing to one of these cities, he might survive.

Deuteronomy 4:43

Bezer ... Ramoth ... Golan

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

ULT

⁴³ They were: Bezer in the wilderness, the plain country, for the Reubenites; Ramoth in Gilead, for the Gadites; and Golan in Bashan, for the Manassites.

Deuteronomy 4:44

This is the law

This refers to the laws Moses will give in the following chapters.

ULT

44 This is the law that Moses placed before the people of Israel;

Deuteronomy 4:45

(There are no notes for this verse.)

ULT

⁴⁵ these {are} the covenant decrees, laws, and other decrees that he spoke to the people of Israel when they came out of Egypt,

Deuteronomy 4:46

Beth Peor

This is the name of a town in Moab near Mount Pisgah. See how you translated this in [Deuteronomy 3:29](#). (See: [How to Translate Names](#))

Sihon ... Amorites ... Heshbon

“King Sihon ... Amorite people ... town of Heshbon.” See how you translated these names in [Deuteronomy 1:4](#).

ULT

⁴⁶ when they were east of the Jordan, in the valley opposite Beth Peor, in the land of Sihon, king of the Amorites, who had lived at Heshbon, whom Moses and the people of Israel had defeated when they came out of Egypt.

Deuteronomy 4:47

his land

King Sihon's land

beyond the Jordan toward the east

This refers to the land across the Jordan River, to the east of Israel. Moses was east of the Jordan when he said this. Alternate translation: "from the side of the Jordan River toward the east"

ULT

⁴⁷ They took his land as a possession, and the land of Og king of Bashan—these, the two kings of the Amorites, who {were} beyond the Jordan toward the east.

Deuteronomy 4:48

Aroer

This is the name of a city. See how you translated this in [Deuteronomy 2:36](#).

the Valley of the Arnon

This is the name of a place. See how you translated this in [Deuteronomy 2:24](#).

Mount Siyon ... Mount Hermon

These are different names for the same mountain. The word “Sion” is another spelling of “Sirion” ([Deuteronomy 3:9](#)). See how you translated “Mount Hermon” in [Deuteronomy 3:8](#).

ULT

48 This territory went from Aroer, on the edge of the Valley of the Arnon, to Mount Siyon (or Mount Hermon),

Deuteronomy 4:49

eastward beyond the Jordan

This refers to the land across the Jordan River, to the east of Israel. Moses was east of the Jordan when he said this. Alternate translation: "eastward from the side of the Jordan River"

Sea of the Arabah ... Mount Pisgah

See how you translated these names in [Deuteronomy 3:17](#).

ULT

⁴⁹ and included all of the plain of the Jordan River valley, eastward beyond the Jordan, to the Sea of the Arabah, to the slopes of Mount Pisgah.

Deuteronomy 5

Deuteronomy 5 General Notes

Structure and formatting

Some translations set each of the commandments in the list of Ten Commandments in 5:7-21 farther to the right on the page than the rest of the text. The ULT uses a separate paragraph for each commandment.

Special concepts in this chapter

Ten commandments

This chapter repeats the material of Exodus 20. It is known as the Ten Commandments.

Important figures of speech in this chapter

Metaphors and idioms

Moses uses metaphors and idioms to instruct the people to follow the law of Moses. This is because it is very important to follow these laws. (See: [law](#), [law of Moses](#), [law of Yahweh](#), [law of God](#) and [Metaphor](#) and [Idiom](#))

Deuteronomy 5:1

General Information:

Moses continues to speak to the people of Israel.

called to all Israel

Here “all” is a generalization. Moses wanted everyone in Israel to hear and obey his words, but his voice was probably not so loud that everyone actually heard him. (See: [Hyperbole](#))

that I will speak in your ears today

Here “ears” refers to the whole person. This metaphor emphasizes that the people know what Moses has said to them, so they cannot sin and then say they did not know they were sinning. Alternate translation: “that I will speak to you today” (See: [Synecdoche](#) and [Metaphor](#))

ULT

¹ Moses called to all Israel and said to them, “Listen, Israel, to the statutes and the decrees that I will speak in your ears today, that you may learn them and keep them.”

Deuteronomy 5:2

(There are no notes for this verse.)

ULT

² Yahweh our God made a covenant
with us at Horeb.

Deuteronomy 5:3

Yahweh did not make this covenant with our ancestors

This could mean: (1) Yahweh did not only make a covenant with those who were at Horeb; the covenant was also with the later generations of Israelites or (2) Yahweh did not make this covenant with their distant ancestors, such as, Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob; instead, this covenant began with the Israelites at Horeb.

ULT

³ Yahweh did not make this covenant with our ancestors, but with us, all of us alive here today.

Deuteronomy 5:4

General Information:

Moses continues speaking to the people of Israel.

face to face

Use your language's idiom for two people who are close to each other and looking at each other when they are speaking to each other. (See: [Idiom](#))

on the mount

"on the mountain"

ULT

⁴ Yahweh spoke with you face to face on the mount out of the middle of the fire

Deuteronomy 5:5

at that time

Moses is referring to an event that happened about 40 years earlier.

ULT

⁵ (I stood between Yahweh and you at that time, to reveal to you his word; for you were afraid because of the fire, and you did not go up the mountain).
Yahweh said,

Deuteronomy 5:6

out of the house of slavery

Here the metonym “house of slavery” refers to Egypt where the people of Israel had been slaves. Alternate translation: “out of the place where you were slaves” (See: [Metonymy](#))

ULT

⁶ ‘I {am} Yahweh your God, who brought you out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of slavery.

Deuteronomy 5:7

General Information:

Moses continues reminding the people what Yahweh has commanded them. The phrases “you will” and “you will not” are commands. He speaks to the Israelites as if they were one person. (See: [Forms of You](#))

ULT

⁷ You will have no other gods before me.

You will have no other gods before me

“You must not worship any other gods but me”

Deuteronomy 5:8

that is in the earth beneath, or that is in the water below

This can be made more explicit. Alternate translation: “that is in the earth beneath your feet, or that is in the water below the earth”
(See: [Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information](#))

ULT

⁸ You will not make for yourself a carved figure nor any likeness {of anything} that is in heaven above, or that is in the earth beneath, or that {is} in the water below.

Deuteronomy 5:9

General Information:

Moses continues to speak to the people of Israel as if they were one man, so all instances of “you” and “your” are singular. (See: [Forms of You](#))

You will not bow down to them or serve them

“You will not worship the carved figures or do as they command”

You will not

“Never”

I ... am a jealous God

“I ... want you to worship only me”

ULT

⁹ You will not bow down to them or serve them, for I, Yahweh your God, {am} a jealous God. I punish the ancestors' wickedness by bringing punishment on the children, to the third and fourth {generation} of those who hate me,

Deuteronomy 5:10

showing covenant faithfulness to thousands, to those who love me

The abstract noun “faithfulness” can be stated as “faithfully” or “faithful.” Alternate translation: “faithfully loving thousands, those who love me” or “being faithful to the covenant with thousands, with those who love me” (See: [Abstract Nouns](#))

ULT

¹⁰ and showing covenant faithfulness to thousands, to those who love me and keep my commandments.

to thousands, to those who love me

Some translations read “to a thousand generations of those who love me.” The word “thousands” is a metonym for a number too many to count. Alternate translation: “forever, to those who love me” (See: [Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information](#) and [Metonymy](#) and [Numbers](#))

Deuteronomy 5:11

General Information:

Moses continues to speak to the people of Israel as if they were one man, so all instances of “you” and “your” are singular. (See: [Forms of You](#))

You will not take the name of Yahweh

“You will not use the name of Yahweh”

You will not

See how you translated this in [Deuteronomy 5:9](#).

in vain

“carelessly” or “without proper respect” or “for wrong purposes”

Yahweh will not hold him guiltless

This can be stated in a positive form. Alternate translation: “Yahweh will consider him guilty” or “Yahweh will punish him” (See: [Double Negatives](#))

ULT

11 You will not take the name of Yahweh your God in vain, for Yahweh will not hold {him} guiltless that takes his name in vain.

Deuteronomy 5:12

General Information:

Moses continues to speak to the people of Israel as if they were one man, so all instances of “you” and “your” are singular. (See: [Forms of You](#))

to keep it holy

“to dedicate it to God”

ULT

12 Observe the Sabbath day to keep it holy, as Yahweh your God commanded you.

Deuteronomy 5:13

do all your work

“do all your usual duties”

ULT

¹³ For six days you will labor and do all your work;

Deuteronomy 5:14

seventh day

“day 7.” Here “seventh” is the ordinal number for seven. (See: [Ordinal Numbers](#))

On it you will not do

“On that day never do”

within your gates

Here “gates” is a reference to the city itself. Alternate translation: “within your community” or “inside your city” or “living with you” (See: [Synecdoche](#))

ULT

14 but the seventh day {is} a Sabbath to Yahweh your God. On it you will not do any work—not you, nor your son, nor your daughter, nor your male servant, nor your female servant, nor your ox, nor your donkey, nor any of your cattle, nor any foreigner who is within your gates. This is so that your male servant and your female servant may rest as well as you.

Deuteronomy 5:15

General Information:

Moses continues to speak to the people of Israel as if they were one man, so all instances of “you” and “your” are singular. (See: [Forms of You](#))

You will call to mind

This is an idiom. Alternate translation: “You must remember” (See: [Idiom](#))

by a mighty hand and by an outstretched arm

Here “a mighty hand” and “an outstretched arm” are metaphors for Yahweh’s power. See how you translated these words in [Deuteronomy 4:34](#). Alternate translation: “by showing his mighty power” (See: [Metaphor](#))

ULT

15 You will call to mind that you were a servant in the land of Egypt, and Yahweh your God brought you out from there by a mighty hand and by an outstretched arm. Therefore Yahweh your God has commanded you to keep the Sabbath day.

Deuteronomy 5:16

General Information:

Moses continues to speak to the people of Israel as if they were one man, so all instances of “you” and “your” are singular. (See: [Forms of You](#))

ULT

16 Honor your father and your mother, as Yahweh your God has commanded you to do, that you may live a long time in the land that Yahweh your God gives you, and so that it may go well with you.

Deuteronomy 5:17

General Information:

Moses continues to speak to the people of Israel as if they were one man, so all instances of “you” and “your” are singular. (See: [Forms of You](#))

ULT

17 You will not murder.

You will not

See how you translated this in [Deuteronomy 5:9](#).

Deuteronomy 5:18

You will not commit adultery

“You will not sleep with anyone other than your spouse”

ULT

18 You will not commit adultery.

Deuteronomy 5:19

(There are no notes for this verse.)

ULT

19 You will not steal.

Deuteronomy 5:20

You will not give false witness against your neighbor

“You will not tell lies about someone”

ULT

²⁰ You will not give false witness against your neighbor.

Deuteronomy 5:21

General Information:

Moses continues to speak to the people of Israel as if they were one man, so all instances of “you” and “your” are singular. (See: [Forms of You](#))

You will not

See how you translated this in [Deuteronomy 5:9](#).

ULT

21 You will not covet your neighbor's wife, you will not covet your neighbor's house, his field, or his male servant, or his female servant, his ox, or his donkey, or anything that belongs to your neighbor.'

Deuteronomy 5:22

General Information:

Moses continues to remind the people of Israel what Yahweh said.

ULT

22 These words Yahweh spoke in a loud voice to all your assembly on the mountain out of the middle of the fire, of the cloud, and of the thick darkness; he did not add any more words. He wrote them down on two tablets of stone and gave them to me.

Deuteronomy 5:23

General Information:

Moses continues to remind the people of Israel what happened in the past.

heard the voice

The word “voice” is a metonym for the sound of the voice or for the person who was speaking. Alternate translation: “heard the sound of the voice” or “heard Yahweh speaking” (See: [Synecdoche](#))

ULT

23 It came about, when you heard the voice out of the middle of the darkness, while the mountain was burning, that you came near to me—all your elders and the heads of your tribes.

Deuteronomy 5:24

(There are no notes for this verse.)

ULT

²⁴ You said, 'Look, Yahweh our God has shown us his glory and his greatness, and we have heard his voice out of the middle of the fire; we have seen today that when God speaks with people, they can live.

Deuteronomy 5:25

General Information:

Moses continues to remind the Israelites what the Israelites had said to Moses.

But why should we die?

They were afraid that they would die if Yahweh spoke to them. This question can be translated as a statement.
Alternate translation: "We are afraid that we will die." (See: [Rhetorical Question](#))

ULT

25 But why should we die? For this great fire will consume us; if we hear the voice of Yahweh our God any longer, we will die.

Deuteronomy 5:26

For who besides us is there ... have done?

This question can be translated as a statement. Alternate translation: "There are no other people besides us ... have done." (See:

[Rhetorical Question](#))

all flesh

This represents all people or living things. Alternate translation: "all people" or "all living beings" (See: [Synecdoche](#))

ULT

26 For who besides us is there among all flesh who has heard the voice of the living God speak out of the middle of the fire and lived, as we have done?

Deuteronomy 5:27

(There are no notes for this verse.)

ULT

²⁷ As for you, you should go and listen to everything that Yahweh our God says; repeat to us everything that Yahweh our God says to you; we will listen to it and obey it.'

Deuteronomy 5:28

when you spoke to me

Here “me” refers to Moses.

ULT

²⁸ Yahweh heard your words when you spoke to me. He said to me, ‘I have heard the words of this people, what they said to you. What they said was good.

Deuteronomy 5:29

Oh, that there were

If your language has an idiom that expresses a strong desire for something, you might want to use it here. Alternate translation: “I would be very happy if there were” (See: [Idiom](#))

ULT

29 Oh, that there were such a heart in them, that they would honor me and always keep all my commandments, that it might go well with them and with their children forever!

Deuteronomy 5:30

(There are no notes for this verse.)

ULT

³⁰ Go say to them, "Return to your tents."

Deuteronomy 5:31

General Information:

Yahweh continues speaking to Moses.

you will teach them

“you will teach the people of Israel”

ULT

³¹ But as for you, stand here by me, and I will tell you all the commandments, the statutes, and the decrees that you will teach them, so that they may keep them in the land that I will give them to possess.’

Deuteronomy 5:32

General Information:

Moses continues to speak to the people of Israel.

You will keep

Moses is giving a command to the people of Israel.

ULT

³² You will keep, therefore, what Yahweh your God has commanded you; you will not turn aside to the right hand or to the left.

you will not turn aside to the right hand or to the left

This compares a person disobeying God to a person turning off of the correct path. Alternate translation: “you will not disobey him in any way” or “you will do everything he says” (See: [Metaphor](#))

Deuteronomy 5:33

prolong your days

Long days are a metaphor for a long life. See how you translated this in [Deuteronomy 4:40](#). Alternate translation: “be able to live a long time” (See: [Metaphor](#))

ULT

33 You will walk in all the ways that Yahweh your God has commanded you, so that you may live, and so {that it may} go well with you, and {that} you may prolong {your} days in the land that you will possess.

Deuteronomy 6

Deuteronomy 6 General Notes

Special concepts in this chapter

Yahweh's blessings

Yahweh's continued blessing of the people of Israel is dependent upon the people's obedience to the law of Moses. (See: [bless](#), [blessed](#), [blessing](#) and [law](#), [law of Moses](#), [law of Yahweh](#), [law of God](#))

Important figures of speech in this chapter

Metaphors

There are many metaphors in this chapter. These metaphors describe the greatness of the Promised Land the wholehearted worship that is completely dedicated to Yahweh. (See: [Metaphor](#) and [Promised Land](#))

Deuteronomy 6:1

General Information:

Moses continues the speech to the people of Israel he began in [Deuteronomy 5:1](#). Beginning in verse 2, he speaks to the people of Israel as if they were one person. (See: [Forms of You](#))

might keep

“might obey”

going over the Jordan

“going to the other side of the Jordan River”

ULT

¹ Now, {these are} the commandments, statutes, and decrees that Yahweh your God has commanded to teach you, so that you might keep {them} in the land that you are going over there to possess;

Deuteronomy 6:2

to keep

“to obey”

that your days may be prolonged

Long days are a metaphor for a long life. This can be stated in active form. This can be translated similarly to “prolong your days” in [Deuteronomy 4:26](#). Alternate translation: “that I may prolong your days” or “that I may cause you to live a long time” (See: [Metaphor](#) and [Active or Passive](#))

ULT

² so that you might fear Yahweh your God, so as to keep all his statutes and his commandments that I am commanding you—you, your sons, and your sons' sons, all the days of your lives, so that your days may be prolonged.

Deuteronomy 6:3

General Information:

Moses continues to tell the people of Israel Yahweh's words as if the Israelites are one person. (See: [Forms of You](#))

listen to them

Here "listen" means to obey, and "them" refers to Yahweh's commandments. The full meaning of this statement can be made explicit. Alternate translation: "listen to Yahweh's commandments, statutes, and decrees" (See: [Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information](#))

keep them

"obey them"

a land flowing with milk and honey

This is an idiom. Alternate translation: "a land where plenty of milk and honey flow" or "a land that is excellent for cattle and farming" (See: [Idiom](#))

ULT

³ Therefore listen, Israel, and keep so as to do, so that it may go well for you, so that you may greatly multiply —just as Yahweh, the God of your fathers said to you—in a land flowing with milk and honey,.

Deuteronomy 6:4

General Information:

Moses continues to tell the people of Israel Yahweh's words as if the Israelites are one person. (See: [Forms of You](#))

Yahweh our God is one

"Our God Yahweh is the one and only God"

ULT

⁴ Listen, Israel: Yahweh, and Yahweh alone, is our God.

Deuteronomy 6:5

with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your might

Here “heart” and “soul” are metonyms for a person’s inner being. These three phrases are used together to mean “completely” or “earnestly.” See how you translated “with all your heart, with all your soul” in [Deuteronomy 4:29](#). (See: [Metonymy](#) and [Doublet](#))

ULT

⁵ Therefore you must love Yahweh your God with all your mind, and with all your life, and with all that is in you.

Deuteronomy 6:6

General Information:

Moses continues to tell the people of Israel Yahweh's words as if the Israelites are one person. (See: [Forms of You](#))

I am commanding you

Moses is speaking God's commandments to the people of Israel.

will be in your heart

This is an idiom. Alternate translation: "you must always remember" (See: [Idiom](#))

ULT

⁶ and these words that I am commanding you today must be in your mind;

Deuteronomy 6:7

you will diligently teach ... you will talk

“I command you to diligently teach ... I command you to talk.” The reader should understand these as commands.

ULT

⁷ and you must diligently teach them to your children; and you must speak about them when you sit in your house, when you walk on the road, when you lie down, and when you get up.

Deuteronomy 6:8

General Information:

Moses continues to tell the people of Israel Yahweh's words as if the Israelites are one person. (See: [Forms of You](#))

tie them

This is a metonym for "write these words on parchment, put the parchment in a pouch, and tie the pouch." This metonym in turn may be a metaphor for "obey these words so that it is as if they were physically there." Alternate translation: "tie these words" (See: [Metonymy](#) and [Metaphor](#))

as a sign upon your hand

"as something to make you remember my laws"

they will serve as frontlets

This is a metonym for "write these words on parchment, put the parchment in a pouch, and tie the pouch to your head so it sits." This metonym in turn may be a metaphor for "obey these words so that it is as if they were physically there." Alternate translation: "my words will serve as frontlets"(See: [Metonymy](#) and [Metaphor](#))

frontlets

ornaments a person wears on the forehead

ULT

⁸ And you must tie them as a sign upon your hand, and they must be as frontlets between your eyes.

Deuteronomy 6:9

You will write

This is a command.

ULT

⁹ and you must write them on the doorposts of your house and on your gates.

Deuteronomy 6:10

General Information:

Moses continues to tell the people of Israel Yahweh's words as if the Israelites are one person. (See: [Forms of You](#))

large and very good cities that you did not build

All these cities will belong to the people of Israel when they conquer the people in Canaan.

ULT

10 Then, it will come to pass, when Yahweh your God brings you into the land that he swore to your fathers, to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob, to give to you, with large and good cities that you did not build,

Deuteronomy 6:11

(There are no notes for this verse.)

ULT

11 and houses full of every good thing that you did not gather, and hewn cisterns that you did not dig, and vineyards and olive trees that you did not plant, you will eat and be satisfied—

Deuteronomy 6:12

out of the house of bondage

Here the metonym “house of bondage” refers to Egypt, the place where the people of Israel had been slaves. Alternate translation: “out of the place where you were slaves” (See: [Metonymy](#))

ULT

12 Guard yourselves, lest you forget Yahweh, who brought you out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage.

Deuteronomy 6:13

General Information:

Moses continues to tell the people of Israel Yahweh's words as if the Israelites are one person. (See: [Forms of You](#))

You will honor Yahweh your God; him you will worship, and you will swear by his name

"It is Yahweh your God and no one else whom you will honor; it is he alone whom you will worship, and it is by his name and only his name that you will swear." Your language may have another way of emphasizing that Yahweh is telling the Israelites not to worship or serve any other god.

you will swear by his name

To swear by the name of Yahweh means to make Yahweh the basis or the power on which the oath is made. The metonym "his name" refers to Yahweh himself. Alternate translation: "you will swear and ask Yahweh to confirm it" or "when you swear you will speak his name" (See: [Metonymy](#))

ULT

13 Yahweh your God you must fear, and him you must serve, and by his name you must swear.

Deuteronomy 6:14

(There are no notes for this verse.)

ULT

14 You must not go after other gods, the gods of the peoples who are all around you—

Deuteronomy 6:15

in the midst of you

“who lives among you”

the anger of Yahweh your God will be kindled against you

Moses compares Yahweh’s anger to someone starting a fire to destroy things. This can be stated in active form. To kindle anger is a metaphor for becoming very angry. Alternate translation: “Yahweh your God will kindle his anger” or “Yahweh your God will become very angry” (See: [Active or Passive](#) and [Metaphor](#))

destroy you from

“destroy you so that there is nothing left of you anywhere on”

ULT

¹⁵ for Yahweh your God in the midst of you is a jealous God—if you do, the anger of Yahweh your God will be kindled against you and he will destroy you from the surface of the earth.

Deuteronomy 6:16

General Information:

Moses continues to tell the people of Israel Yahweh's words as if the Israelites are one person. (See: [Forms of You](#))

ULT

16 You will not test Yahweh your God as you tested {him} at Massah.

You will not test Yahweh

Here "test" means to challenge Yahweh and force him to prove himself.

Massah

This is the name of a place in the desert. The translator may add a footnote that says: "The name 'Massah' means 'testing.'" (See: [How to Translate Names](#))

Deuteronomy 6:17

(There are no notes for this verse.)

ULT

17 You will diligently keep the commandments of Yahweh your God, his solemn commands, and his statutes, that he has commanded you.

Deuteronomy 6:18

General Information:

Moses continues to tell the people of Israel Yahweh's words as if the Israelites are one person. (See: [Forms of You](#))

You will do what is right and good in the sight of Yahweh

This idiom is a command and a blessing. If the Israelites obey Yahweh, they will receive blessings from Yahweh. Alternate translation: "Do what Yahweh says is right and good" (See: [Idiom](#))

ULT

18 You will do what is right and good in the sight of Yahweh, that it may go well with you, and that you may go in and possess the good land that Yahweh swore to your fathers,

Deuteronomy 6:19

(There are no notes for this verse.)

ULT

¹⁹ to drive out all your enemies from before you, as Yahweh has said.

Deuteronomy 6:20

General Information:

Moses continues to tell the people of Israel Yahweh's words as if the Israelites are one person. (See: [Forms of You](#))

What are the covenant decrees ... commanded you

In this question the "covenant decrees" represent their meaning and purpose. Alternate translation: "What do the covenant decrees ... commanded mean to you" or "Why should you obey the covenant decrees ... commanded you" (See: [Metonymy](#))

your son

This refers to the children of the adult people of Israel to whom Moses was speaking Yahweh's words.

ULT

20 When your son asks you in time to come, saying, 'What are the covenant decrees, the statutes, and the other decrees that Yahweh our God commanded you?'

Deuteronomy 6:21

with a mighty hand

Here “a mighty hand” refers to Yahweh’s power. See how you translated this in [Deuteronomy 4:34](#). Alternate translation: “with his mighty power” (See: [Metaphor](#))

ULT

21 then you will say to your son, ‘We were Pharaoh’s slaves in Egypt; Yahweh brought us out of Egypt with a mighty hand,

Deuteronomy 6:22

on all his house

Here the metonym “his house” refers to the people of Yahweh.
Alternate translation: “on all of his people” (See: [Metonymy](#))

before our eyes

Here the word “eyes” refers to the whole person. Alternate translation: “where we could see them” (See: [Synecdoche](#))

ULT

²² and he displayed signs and wonders,
great and severe, on Egypt, on Pharaoh,
and on all his house, before our eyes;

Deuteronomy 6:23

might bring us in

The full meaning of this statement can be made explicit. Alternate translation: “might bring us into Canaan” (See: [Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information](#))

ULT

²³ and he brought us out from there, so that he might bring us in, to give us the land that he swore to our fathers.

Deuteronomy 6:24

General Information:

Moses continues to tell the people of Israel Yahweh's words as if the Israelites are one person. He tells them what they should tell their children about Yahweh's commandments. (See: [Forms of You](#))

keep

obey at all times and for a long time

ULT

24 Yahweh commanded us to always keep all these statutes, to fear Yahweh our God for our good, so that he might keep us alive, as we are today.

Deuteronomy 6:25

before Yahweh

“in the presence of Yahweh” or “where Yahweh can see us”

this will be our righteousness

The word “this” refers to keeping Yahweh’s commands. This is a metonym for Yahweh considering them righteous. Alternate translation: “he will consider us righteous” (See: [Metonymy](#))

ULT

²⁵ If we keep all these commands before Yahweh our God, as he has commanded us, this will be our righteousness.’

Deuteronomy 7

Deuteronomy 7 General Notes

Special concepts in this chapter

“You must completely destroy them”

The people of Canaan were to be punished by Yahweh. Yahweh used Israel to punish these nations. If they were not completely destroyed, they would lead Israel into sin. Therefore, they were to be completely destroyed and be shown no mercy. (See: [sin](#), [sinful](#), [sinner](#), [sinning](#) and [mercy](#), [merciful](#))

Abrahamic Covenant

This chapter references parts of the covenant Yahweh made with Abraham. It also emphasizes Yahweh's faithfulness to this covenant. (See: [covenant](#) and [faithful](#), [faithfulness](#), [trustworthy](#))

Deuteronomy 7:1

General Information:

Moses continues to tell the people of Israel Yahweh's words as if the Israelites are one person. (See: [Forms of You](#))

ULT

¹ When Yahweh your God brings you into the land that you go to possess, he will drive out many nations before you—the Hittites, the Girgashites, the Amorites, the Canaanites, the Perizzites, the Hivites, and the Jebusites—seven nations greater and mightier than you.

Deuteronomy 7:2

General Information:

Moses continues to tell the people of Israel Yahweh's words as if the Israelites are one person. (See: [Forms of You](#))

gives them over to you

Moses speaks of victory as if it were a physical object one person could give to another. Alternate translation: "enables you to defeat them" (See: [Metaphor](#))

you defeat them

Here "them" refers to the seven nations from [Deuteronomy 7:1](#).

ULT

² It is Yahweh your God who gives them over to you when you defeat them, and then you must completely destroy them. You will make no covenant with them, and show them no mercy.

Deuteronomy 7:3

(There are no notes for this verse.)

ULT

³ Neither will you arrange any marriages with them. You will not give your daughters to their sons, and you will not take their daughters for your sons.

Deuteronomy 7:4

General Information:

Moses continues to tell the people of Israel Yahweh's words as if the Israelites are one person. (See: [Forms of You](#))

For they will

"If you allow your children to marry the people from the other nations, the people from the other nations will"

ULT

⁴ For they will turn away your sons from following me, so that they may worship other gods. So the anger of Yahweh will be kindled against you, and he will destroy you quickly.

So the anger of Yahweh will be kindled against you

Moses compares Yahweh's anger to someone starting a fire. This emphasizes Yahweh's power to destroy what makes him angry. This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "Yahweh will kindle his anger against you" or "Then Yahweh will become very angry with you" (See: [Metaphor](#) and [Active or Passive](#))

against you

The word "you" refers to all the Israelites and so is plural. (See: [Forms of You](#))

Deuteronomy 7:5

you will deal ... You will break ... dash ... cut ... burn

Moses is speaking to all the Israelites here, so these words are all plural. (See: [Forms of You](#))

ULT

⁵ This is how you will deal with them:
You will break down their altars, dash their stone pillars in pieces, cut down their Asherah poles, and burn their cast idols.

Deuteronomy 7:6

General Information:

Moses tells the people of Israel Yahweh's words as if the Israelites are one person. (See: [Forms of You](#))

you are a nation that is set apart

Yahweh choosing the people of Israel to belong to him in a special way is spoken of as if Yahweh set them apart from all other nations. (See: [Metaphor](#))

that are on the face of the earth

This is an idiom. Alternate translation: "that live on the earth" (See: [Idiom](#))

ULT

⁶ For you are a nation that is set apart to Yahweh your God. He has chosen you to be a people for him to possess, more than all the other peoples that are on the face of the earth.

Deuteronomy 7:7

General Information:

Moses continues to tell the people of Israel Yahweh's words. All instances of "you" and "your" are plural. (See: [Forms of You](#))

did not set his love upon you

This is an idiom. Alternate translation: "did not love you more than he loved others" (See: [Idiom](#))

ULT

⁷ Yahweh did not set his love upon you or choose you because you were more in number than any people—for you {were} the fewest of all peoples—

Deuteronomy 7:8

with a mighty hand

Here “a mighty hand” refers to Yahweh’s power. These words also appear in [Deuteronomy 4:34](#). Alternate translation: “with his mighty power” (See: [Metaphor](#))

redeemed you out of the house of bondage

Moses speaks of Yahweh rescuing the people of Israel from being slaves as if Yahweh had paid money to a slave owner. Alternate translation: “rescued you from being slaves” (See: [Metaphor](#))

house of bondage

Here the metonym “house of bondage” refers to Egypt, the place where the people of Israel had been slaves. See how you translated these words in [Deuteronomy 6:12](#). Alternate translation: “out of the place where you were slaves”

hand of Pharaoh

Here “hand” means “the control of.” Alternate translation: “control of Pharaoh” (See: [Metonymy](#))

ULT

⁸ but because he loves you, and he wished to keep the oath that he had sworn to your fathers. This is why Yahweh has brought you out with a mighty hand and redeemed you out of the house of bondage, from the hand of Pharaoh, king of Egypt.

Deuteronomy 7:9

General Information:

Moses continues to tell the people of Israel Yahweh's words as if the Israelites are one person. (See: [Forms of You](#))

for a thousand generations

"for 1,000 generations" (See: [Numbers](#))

ULT

⁹ Therefore know that Yahweh your God —he {is} God, the faithful God, who keeps covenants and faithfulness for a thousand generations with those who love him and keep his commandments,

Deuteronomy 7:10

repays those who hate him to their face

This idiom means “repays them quickly and openly so that they know God has punished them.” (See: [Idiom](#))

he will not be lenient on whoever hates him

The words “not be lenient” are an understatement to emphasize that Yahweh will severely punish. Alternate translation: “Yahweh will severely punish everyone who hates him” (See: [Litotes](#))

ULT

¹⁰ but repays those who hate him to their face, to destroy them; he will not be lenient on whoever hates him; he will repay him to his face.

Deuteronomy 7:11

(There are no notes for this verse.)

ULT

11 You will therefore keep the commandments, the statutes, and the decrees that I command you today, so that you will do them.

Deuteronomy 7:12

General Information:

Moses continues to tell the people of Israel Yahweh's words. He speaks as if the Israelites are one person in verse 12 and to all of them as a group in verse 13. (See: [Forms of You](#))

ULT

12 If you listen to these decrees, and keep and do them, it will happen that Yahweh your God will keep with you the covenant and the faithfulness that he swore to your fathers.

Deuteronomy 7:13

multiply you

“increase the number of your people”

the fruit of your body

This is an idiom for “your children.” (See: [Idiom](#))

the fruit of your ground

This is an idiom for “your crops.” (See: [Idiom](#))

the multiplication of your cattle

“your cattle so they will become many”

ULT

13 He will love you, bless you, and multiply you; he will also bless the fruit of your body and the fruit of your ground, your grain, your new wine, and your oil, the multiplication of your cattle and the young of your flocks, in the land that he swore to your fathers to give you.

Deuteronomy 7:14

General Information:

Moses continues to tell the people of Israel Yahweh's words as if the Israelites are one person. (See: [Forms of You](#))

You will be blessed more than all other peoples

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "I will bless you more than I bless any other people" (See: [Active or Passive](#))

there will not be a childless male or a barren female among you or among your cattle

Moses uses a negative statement to emphasize that they all will be able to have children. This may be stated in a positive form. Alternate translation: "All of you will be able to have children and your cattle will be able to reproduce" (See: [Litotes](#))

among you ... your cattle

The words "you" and "your" are plural here. (See: [Forms of You](#))

ULT

14 You will be blessed more than all other peoples; there will not be a childless {male} or a barren {female} among you or among your cattle.

Deuteronomy 7:15

take away from you all sickness

“make sure that you do not become ill” or “keep you completely healthy”

**none of the evil diseases ... will he put on you,
but he will put them on all those who hate
you**

ULT

15 Yahweh will take away from you all sickness; none of the evil diseases of Egypt that you have known will he put on you, but he will put them on all those who hate you.

Moses speaks as if disease were a heavy object that Yahweh would put on top of people. Alternate translation: “he will not make you sick with any of the evil diseases ... but he will make your enemies sick with them” (See: [Metaphor](#))

Deuteronomy 7:16

General Information:

Moses continues to tell the people of Israel Yahweh's words as if the Israelites are one person. (See: [Forms of You](#))

You will consume all the peoples

"I command you to completely destroy all the people groups"

your eye will not pity them

This is a command. Moses speaks as if what the eye sees were the eye itself. Alternate translation: "do not allow what you see to cause you to pity them" or "do not pity them because you see that what you are doing is hurting them" (See: [Metonymy](#))

You will not worship

"never worship"

that will be a trap for you

If the people worship other gods, they will be like an animal caught in a hunter's trap, and they will be unable to escape. (See: [Metaphor](#))

ULT

16 You will consume all the peoples whom Yahweh your God will give over to you, and your eye will not pity them. You will not worship their gods, for that {will be} a trap for you.

Deuteronomy 7:17

General Information:

Moses continues to tell the people of Israel Yahweh's words as if the Israelites are one person. (See: [Forms of You](#))

If you say in your heart

The people should not be afraid even if they notice that the nations are stronger than they are. Alternate translation: "Even if you say in your heart" (See: [Idiom](#))

say in your heart

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

how can I dispossess them?

Moses uses a question to emphasize that the people may feel afraid of the other nations. This question can be translated as a statement. Alternate translation: "I do not know how I will be able to dispossess them" (See: [Rhetorical Question](#))

dispossess them

"take their land away from them"

ULT

17 If you say in your heart, 'These nations are more numerous than I; how can I dispossess them?'—

Deuteronomy 7:18

do not be afraid

The people should not be afraid even if they notice that the nations are stronger than they are. Alternate translation: “even then do not be afraid” (See: [Idiom](#))

you will call to mind

This is an idiom. Alternate translation: “you must remember” (See: [Idiom](#))

ULT

18 do not be afraid of them; you will call to mind what Yahweh your God did to Pharaoh and to all Egypt;

Deuteronomy 7:19

that your eyes saw

Here “eyes” represent the whole person. Alternate translation: “that you saw” (See: [Synecdoche](#))

the mighty hand, and the outstretched arm

Here “a mighty hand” and “an outstretched arm” are metaphors for Yahweh’s power. See how you translated this in [Deuteronomy 4:34](#). Alternate translation: “and the mighty power” (See: [Metaphor](#))

ULT

19 the great sufferings that your eyes saw, the signs, the wonders, the mighty hand, and the outstretched arm by which Yahweh your God brought you out. Yahweh your God will do the same to all the peoples whom you fear.

Deuteronomy 7:20

General Information:

Moses continues to tell the people of Israel Yahweh's words as if the Israelites are one person. (See: [Forms of You](#))

Moreover, Yahweh

"And also, Yahweh"

send the hornet

This could mean: (1) God will send actual flying insects that sting people and cause pain, or (2) God will cause the people to become terrified and want to run away.

perish from your presence

This is an idiom. Alternate translation: "die so you do not see them anymore" (See: [Idiom](#))

ULT

²⁰ Moreover, Yahweh your God will send the hornet among them, until those who are left and who hide themselves from you perish from your presence.

Deuteronomy 7:21

You will not

“Never”

a great and fearsome God

“a great and awesome God” or “a great God who causes the people to fear”

ULT

²¹ You will not be frightened at them,
for Yahweh your God {is} among you, a
great and fearsome God.

Deuteronomy 7:22

little by little

“slowly”

ULT

²² Yahweh your God will drive out those nations before you little by little. You will not defeat them all at once, or the wild animals would become very many around you.

Deuteronomy 7:23

General Information:

Moses continues to tell the people of Israel Yahweh's words as if the Israelites are one person. (See: [Forms of You](#))

give you victory over

This is an idiom. Alternate translation: "enable you to defeat" (See: [Idiom](#))

victory over them

"victory over the armies from the other nations"

he will greatly confuse them

"he will make them so they cannot think clearly"

until they are destroyed

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "until you have destroyed them" (See: [Active or Passive](#))

ULT

23 But Yahweh your God will give you victory over them when you meet them in battle; he will greatly confuse them until they are destroyed.

Deuteronomy 7:24

you will make their name perish from under heaven

The Israelites will completely destroy all the people from those nations, and in the future no one will remember them. (See: [Idiom](#))

stand before you

“stand against you” or “defend themselves against you”

ULT

²⁴ He will put their kings under your power, and you will make their name perish from under heaven. No one will be able to stand before you, until you have destroyed them.

Deuteronomy 7:25

General Information:

Moses continues to tell the people of Israel Yahweh's words. In verse 25 he speaks to the group as a group, so the forms of "you" are plural, but in verse 26 he speaks as if the Israelites are one person, so the forms are singular. (See: [Forms of You](#))

You will burn

This is a command.

do not covet ... trapped by it

These words add to the instruction to burn the idols.

you will become trapped by it

Even taking the gold or silver on the idols could cause the people to start worshiping them. By doing this they would become like an animal caught by a trap. This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "it will become a trap to you" (See: [Metaphor](#) and [Active or Passive](#))

for it is an abomination to Yahweh your God

These words tell why Yahweh wants the people to burn the idols. "do this because Yahweh your God hates it very much"

ULT

25 You will burn the carved figures of their gods—do not covet the silver or the gold {that} covers them and take {it} for yourself, because if you do, you will become trapped by it—for it is an abomination to Yahweh your God.

Deuteronomy 7:26

You will utterly detest and abhor

The words “detest” and “abhor” mean basically the same thing and emphasize the intensity of hatred. Alternate translation: “You will completely hate” (See: [Doublet](#))

for it is set apart for destruction

Yahweh cursing something and promising to destroy it is spoken of as if Yahweh were setting the object apart from everything else. This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: “for Yahweh has set it apart for destruction” (See: [Metaphor](#) and [Active or Passive](#))

ULT

26 You will not bring any abomination into your house and start to worship it. You will utterly detest and abhor it, for it {is} set apart for destruction.

Deuteronomy 8

Deuteronomy 8 General Notes

Special concepts in this chapter

Forgetting

This chapter recalls the great things that Yahweh has done for Israel and is about to do for them. This is so they do not forget him and they will continue to worship him. They must remember that Yahweh is the source of their blessings. (See: [bless](#), [blessed](#), [blessing](#))

Deuteronomy 8:1

General Information:

Moses continues to speak to the Israelites as if they are one person.
(See: [Forms of You](#))

**You must keep ... you may live and multiply,
and go in and possess ... your fathers**

All instances of “you” and “your” and the verbs are plural. (See: [Forms of You](#))

ULT

¹ You must keep all the commands that I am giving you today, so that you may live and multiply, and go in and possess the land that Yahweh swore to your fathers.

Deuteronomy 8:2

You will call to mind

This is an idiom. Alternate translation: “You must remember” (See: [Idiom](#))

forty years

“40 years” (See: [Numbers](#))

he might humble you

“he might show you how weak and sinful you are”

to know

“to reveal” or “to show”

what was in your heart

The heart is a symbol of a person’s character. Alternate translation: “what kind of people you are” or “how you would behave” (See: [Metonymy](#))

ULT

² You will call to mind all the ways that Yahweh your God has led you these forty years in the wilderness, in order that he might humble you, that he might test you to know what {was} in your heart, as to whether you would keep his commandments or not.

Deuteronomy 8:3

General Information:

Moses continues to speak to the Israelites as if they are one person. He continues to remind them of what they should “call to mind” ([Deuteronomy 8:2](#)). (See: [Forms of You](#))

He humbled you

“Yahweh showed you how weak and sinful you are.” See how “he might humble you” is translated in [Deuteronomy 8:2](#).

fed you with manna

“gave you manna to eat”

it is not by bread alone that people live

Here “bread” represents all food. Alternate translation: “food is not the only thing people need so they can live” (See: [Synecdoche](#))

it is by everything that proceeds out of the mouth of Yahweh that people live

Here “the mouth of Yahweh” is a metonym for the words that Yahweh says. Alternate translation: “people must obey the commands of Yahweh so they can live” or “people must do what Yahweh tells them to do so they can live” (See: [Metonymy](#))

ULT

³ He humbled you, and made you hunger, and fed you with manna, which you had not known and which your fathers had not known. He did that to make you know that it is not by bread alone that people live; rather, it is by everything that proceeds out of the mouth of Yahweh that people live.

Deuteronomy 8:4

General Information:

Moses continues to speak to the Israelites as if they are one person.
(See: [Forms of You](#))

Your clothing ... forty years

This is the last item that they should “call to mind” ([Deuteronomy 8:2](#)).

forty years

“40 years” (See: [Numbers](#))

ULT

⁴ Your clothing did not wear out and fall off you, and your feet did not swell up during those forty years.

Deuteronomy 8:5

You will think ... God disciplines you

This continues the list of commands that begins in [Deuteronomy 8:1](#).

You will think about in your heart

Here the metonym “heart” represents the thoughts and understanding of a person. Alternate translation: “You will understand” (See: [Metonymy](#))

ULT

⁵ You will think about in your heart,
how, as a man disciplines his son, {so}
Yahweh your God disciplines you.

Deuteronomy 8:6

You will keep ... honor him

This continues the list of commands that begins in [Deuteronomy 8:1](#).

ULT

⁶ You will keep the commandments of Yahweh your God, so that you might walk in his ways and honor him.

Deuteronomy 8:7

General Information:

Moses continues to speak to the Israelites as if they are one person.
(See: [Forms of You](#))

a land of

“a land with” or “a land that has”

ULT

⁷ For Yahweh your God is bringing you into a good land, a land of brooks of water, of fountains and springs, flowing out into valleys and among hills;

Deuteronomy 8:8

(There are no notes for this verse.)

ULT

⁸ a land of wheat and barley, of vines, fig trees, and pomegranates; a land of olive trees and honey.

Deuteronomy 8:9

General Information:

Moses continues to speak to the Israelites as if they are one person.
(See: [Forms of You](#))

a land in which you will eat bread without lack

This litotes can be translated positively. Alternate translation: “a land where there will be plenty of food for you”
(See: [Litotes](#))

where you will not go without anything

This can be stated in positive form. Alternate translation: “where you will have everything you need” (See: [Double Negatives](#))

stones are made of iron

The stones are full of iron ore. Iron is a very hard metal useful for swords and plows.

dig copper

“mine copper.” Copper is a soft metal useful for making household utensils.

ULT

⁹ It is a land in which you will eat bread without lack, and where you will not go without anything; a land whose stones {are} made of iron, and out of whose hills you may dig copper.

Deuteronomy 8:10

You will eat and be full

“You will have enough food to eat until you are full”

you will bless

“you will praise” or “you will give thanks to”

ULT

10 You will eat and be full, and you will bless Yahweh your God for the good land that he has given you.

Deuteronomy 8:11

General Information:

Moses continues to speak to the Israelites as if they are one person.
(See: [Forms of You](#))

ULT

11 Be careful that you do not forget Yahweh your God, by failing to keep his commandments and his rules and statutes that I am commanding you today.

Deuteronomy 8:12

Connecting Statement:

This verse describes the first two items of a list of five things that might make the Israelites forget about Yahweh (verse 11): “when you eat and are full” and “when you build good houses.”

when you eat and are full

“when you have enough food to eat”

your heart will be lifted up

Here “heart” represents the inner person. To become prideful and no longer obey Yahweh is spoken of as if the person’s heart is lifted up. Alternate translation: “you will become prideful and no longer obey Yahweh” (See: [Metonymy](#) and [Metaphor](#))

ULT

¹² Otherwise, {when} you eat and are full, and when you build good houses and live in them, your heart will be lifted up.

Deuteronomy 8:13

Connecting Statement:

This verse describes the last three of the five things that might cause them to forget Yahweh. The first two are “you eat and are full” and “you build good houses and live in them” ([Deuteronomy 8:12](#)). The last three are “when your herds and flocks multiply,” “when your silver and gold increase,” and “all that you have is multiplied.”

ULT

13 Be careful {when} your herds and flocks multiply and when your silver and gold increase, and all that you have is multiplied,

General Information:

Moses continues to speak to the Israelites as if they are one person. (See: [Forms of You](#))

your herds and flocks

“your herds of cattle and flocks of sheep and goats”

multiply

increase greatly in number

all that you have is multiplied

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: “you have many more things” or “you have many more possessions” (See: [Active or Passive](#))

Deuteronomy 8:14

Connecting Statement:

This verse contains the first two of three items Moses warns the people to be careful of ([Deuteronomy 8:11](#)): that “your heart becomes lifted up” and “you forget Yahweh your God.” It then lists the first of four characteristics of Yahweh that they need to remember, that Yahweh “brought you out of the land of Egypt.”

ULT

14 then your heart becomes lifted up and you forget Yahweh your God, who brought you out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage.

your heart becomes lifted up

Here “heart” represents the inner person. To become prideful and no longer obey Yahweh is spoken of as if the person’s heart is lifted up. See how you translated a similar phrase in [Deuteronomy 8:12](#). Alternate translation: “you become prideful and no longer obey Yahweh” (See: [Metonymy](#) and [Metaphor](#))

who brought you out

Moses begins to remind the Israelites of what they know about Yahweh. (See: [Distinguishing Versus Informing or Reminding](#))

out of the house of bondage

This is a metaphor for the time they were slaves in Egypt. Alternate translation: “out from the place where you were slaves” (See: [Metaphor](#))

Deuteronomy 8:15

Connecting Statement:

This verse gives the second and third items in the list of characteristics that Moses reminds the Israelites that they must remember about “Yahweh your God” ([Deuteronomy 8:14](#)) the first being that he “brought you out of Egypt” ([Deuteronomy 8:14](#)), the second that he led them “through the ... wilderness,” and the third that he “brought ... water out of the rock.”

ULT

15 Do not forget him who led you through the great and terrifying wilderness, with its fiery serpents and scorpions and thirsty ground where there was no water, who brought you water out of the rock of flint.

General Information:

Moses continues to speak to the Israelites as if they are one person. (See: [Forms of You](#))

Moses continues to remind the Israelites of what they know about Yahweh ([Deuteronomy 8:14](#)). (See: [Distinguishing Versus Informing or Reminding](#))

who led ... who brought

“Yahweh, who led ... Yahweh, who brought”

fiery serpents

“poisonous snakes”

thirsty ground

This phrase describes the ground as being thirsty just like a person is thirsty when he needs water. Alternate translation: “dry ground” (See: [Personification](#))

Deuteronomy 8:16

Connecting Statement:

This is the fourth item in the list of characteristics that Moses reminds the Israelites that they must remember about “Yahweh your God” ([Deuteronomy 8:14](#)) the first being that he “brought you out of Egypt” ([Deuteronomy 8:14](#)), the second that he led them “through the ... wilderness” ([Deuteronomy 8:15](#)), and the third that he “brought ... water out of the rock” ([Deuteronomy 8:15](#)).

ULT

16 He fed you in the wilderness with manna that your ancestors had never known, so that he might humble you and test you, to do you good in the end,

He fed

Moses continues to remind the Israelites of what they know about Yahweh ([Deuteronomy 8:14](#)). “Yahweh fed”

to do you good

“to help you” or “because it would be good for you”

Deuteronomy 8:17

Connecting Statement:

This is the third item in the list of things that Yahweh warns the Israelites that they might do ([Deuteronomy 8:11](#)), the first being “your heart becomes lifted up” and the second being “you forget Yahweh your God” ([Deuteronomy 8:14](#)).

ULT

17 but you may say in your heart, ‘My power and the might of my hand acquired all this wealth.’

but you may say in your heart

This is the third thing the people might do when their hearts “become lifted up” and they “forget Yahweh” ([Deuteronomy 8:14](#)). Here “heart” is a metonym for a person’s innermost thoughts. Alternate translation: “but you may think to yourself” (See: [Metonymy](#))

My power and the might of my hand acquired all this wealth

Here “hand” refers to a man’s power or ability. Alternate translation: “I got this wealth because I am so strong and powerful” or “I have acquired all these things by my own power and ability” (See: [Metonymy](#))

Deuteronomy 8:18

General Information:

Moses continues to speak to the Israelites as if they are one person.
(See: [Forms of You](#))

But you will call to mind

This idiom is a command. Alternate translation: “But remember”
(See: [Idiom](#))

that he may establish

This could mean: (1) “in this way he establishes” or (2) “in this way he is faithful to establish.”

that he may

“so he can”

establish

cause to stand or to remain

as it is today

“as he is doing now” or “as he is establishing his covenant now”

ULT

18 But you will call to mind Yahweh your God, for it is he who gives you the power to get wealth; that he may establish his covenant that he swore to your fathers, as it is today.

Deuteronomy 8:19

walk after other gods

Walking is a metaphor for obeying. Alternate translation: “serve other gods” (See: [Metaphor](#))

against you ... you will

These instances of “you” are plural. (See: [Forms of You](#))

I testify against you

“I warn you” or “I tell you in front of witnesses”

you will surely perish

“you will certainly die”

ULT

19 It will happen that, if you will forget Yahweh your God and walk after other gods, worship them, and reverence them, I testify against you today that you will surely perish.

Deuteronomy 8:20

before you ... you perish ... you would not ... your God

All these instances of “you” and “your” are plural. (See: [Forms of You](#))

before you

“in front of you”

would not listen to the voice of Yahweh

Here “the voice of Yahweh” means what Yahweh tells his people to do. Alternate translation: “would not obey Yahweh’s commandments” (See: [Metonymy](#))

ULT

²⁰ Like the nations that Yahweh is making to perish before you, so will you perish, because you would not listen to the voice of Yahweh your God.

Deuteronomy 9

Deuteronomy 9 General Notes

Special concepts in this chapter

Yahweh's victory

This chapter assures the Israelites that it is Yahweh who will empower them to conquer the Promised Land. The Israelites will not be strong enough on their own to conquer these other nations. This victory will be Yahweh's. The people did not earn this victory, but it is Yahweh's punishment of these sinful nations. (See: [Promised Land](#) and [sin, sinful, sinner, sinning](#))

Israel's sin

Yahweh is about to punish the Canaanites for their sin. He also reminds Israel of their sin. This serves as a warning to the people of Israel. If they sin again, Yahweh will punish them too.

Deuteronomy 9:1

General Information:

Moses continues to speak to the Israelites as if they are one person. (See: [Forms of You](#))

Hear, Israel

The word “Israel” is a metonym for the people of Israel. Alternate translation: “Listen, people of Israel” (See: [Metonymy](#))

to dispossess

“to take the land from”

fortified up to heaven

This is an exaggeration that emphasizes how frightened the people were because the cities were so large and strong. See how you translated similar words in [Deuteronomy 1:28](#). Alternate translation: “have walls so high it is like they reach up to the heavens” (See: [Hyperbole](#))

ULT

¹ Hear, Israel; you {are} about to cross over the Jordan today, to go in to dispossess nations greater and mightier than yourself, and cities that are great and fortified up to heaven,

Deuteronomy 9:2

sons of the Anakim

Descendants of the Anak people who were very large and fierce. See how you translated similar words in [Deuteronomy 1:28](#). (See: [Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information](#) and [How to Translate Names](#))

Who can stand before the sons of Anak?

This means that the sons of Anak were powerful and people were afraid of them. This rhetorical question can be translated as a statement. Alternate translation: "There is no one who can defend himself against the sons of Anak." (See: [Rhetorical Question](#))

ULT

² a people great and tall, the sons of the Anakim, whom you know, and {of whom} you have heard {people say}, 'Who can stand before the sons of Anak?'

Deuteronomy 9:3

General Information:

Moses continues to speak to the Israelites as if they are one person.
(See: [Forms of You](#))

today

Moses is speaking of the days and weeks beginning on that day, not of the time since the sun had last set.

like a devouring fire

Yahweh is powerful and able to destroy the armies of the other nations. (See: [Simile](#))

subdue them before you

“make them weak so you can control them”

ULT

³ Know therefore today that Yahweh your God {is} he who goes over before you {like} a devouring fire; he will destroy them, and he will subdue them before you; so will you drive them out and make them to perish quickly, as Yahweh has said to you.

Deuteronomy 9:4

General Information:

Moses continues to speak to the Israelites as if they are one person.
(See: [Forms of You](#))

Do not say in your heart

Here “in your heart” means “in your thoughts.” Alternate translation: “Do not think to yourselves” (See: [Metonymy](#))

has thrust them out

“has driven the other peoples out”

ULT

⁴ Do not say in your heart, after Yahweh your God has thrust them out from before you, ‘{It was} because of my righteousness that Yahweh has brought me in to possess this land,’ for {it was} because of the wickedness of these nations {that} Yahweh is driving them out from before you.

Deuteronomy 9:5

General Information:

Moses continues to speak to the Israelites as if they are one person.
(See: [Forms of You](#))

the uprightness of your heart

This is an idiom. “because you always thought and desired the right things” (See: [Idiom](#))

so that he may make come true the word

Here the metonym “the word” refers to what God has promised.
Alternate translation: “so that he may fulfill the promise” (See: [Metonymy](#))

your ancestors, to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob

Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob are the “ancestors” of whom Moses is speaking.

ULT

⁵ {It is} not because of your righteousness or the uprightness of your heart {that} you are going in to possess their land, but it is because of the wickedness of these nations {that} your God is driving them out from before you, and so that he may make come true the word that he swore to your ancestors, to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob.

Deuteronomy 9:6

General Information:

Moses continues to speak to the Israelites as if they are one person.
(See: [Forms of You](#))

ULT

⁶ Know therefore, that Yahweh your God is not giving you this good land to possess because of your righteousness, for you {are} a stubborn people.

Deuteronomy 9:7

General Information:

Moses continues to speak to the Israelites as if they are one person.
(See: [Forms of You](#))

Remember and do not forget

Moses repeats the same command both positively and negatively to emphasize the importance of remembering. The command is plural.
Alternate translation: "Be careful to remember" (See: [Doublet](#) and [Forms of You](#))

ULT

⁷ Remember and do not forget how you provoked Yahweh your God to anger in the wilderness; from the day that you left the land of Egypt until you came to this place, you have been rebellious against Yahweh.

how you provoked Yahweh

Here "you" refers to the Israelites that are present with Moses and also the Israelites of the previous generation.
(See: [Forms of You](#))

you came to this place, you have been rebellious

These instances of "you" are plural. (See: [Forms of You](#))

to this place

This refers to the Jordan River Valley.

Deuteronomy 9:8

you provoked ... with you to destroy you

These instances of “you” are plural. (See: [Forms of You](#))

ULT

⁸ Also at Horeb you provoked Yahweh to anger, and Yahweh was angry {enough} with you to destroy you.

Deuteronomy 9:9

General Information:

Moses is reminding the people of Israel what happened in the past.

the tablets of stone, the tablets of the covenant that Yahweh made with you

Here the second phrase clarifies that “the tablets of stone” are the ones on which God wrote the Ten Commandments. (See: [Parallelism](#))

forty days and forty nights

“40 days and 40 nights” (See: [Numbers](#))

ULT

⁹ When I went up the mountain to receive the tablets of stone, the tablets of the covenant that Yahweh made with you, I stayed on the mountain for forty days and forty nights; I neither ate bread nor drank water.

Deuteronomy 9:10

on them was written everything just like all the words that Yahweh announced to you

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: “Yahweh wrote on them the same words he had said to you” (See: [Active or Passive](#))

Yahweh announced ... out of the middle of the fire

It was as if Yahweh were a person standing in the middle of a fire and speaking with a loud voice.

on the day of the assembly

The abstract noun “assembly” can be expressed as the verb “gather together.” Alternate translation: “on the day when you Israelites all came and met together in one place” (See: [Abstract Nouns](#))

ULT

¹⁰ Yahweh gave to me the two tablets of stone written with his finger; on them was written everything just like all the words that Yahweh announced to you on the mountain out of the middle of the fire on the day of the assembly.

Deuteronomy 9:11

forty days and forty nights

“40 days and 40 nights” (See: [Numbers](#))

the two tablets of stone, the tablets of the covenant

The second phrase clarifies that “the two tablets of stone” are the ones on which God wrote the Ten Commandments. (See: [Parallelism](#))

ULT

11 It happened at the end of those forty days and forty nights that Yahweh gave me the two tablets of stone, the tablets of the covenant.

Deuteronomy 9:12

your people ... have corrupted themselves

“your people ... are doing what is wrong.” See how you translated these words in [Deuteronomy 4:16](#).

They have quickly turned aside out of the path that I commanded them

Moses speaks as if obeying God’s commands were walking along a path. Alternate translation: “They have already disobeyed my commands” (See: [Metaphor](#))

ULT

12 Yahweh said to me, ‘Arise, go down quickly from here, for your people, whom you brought out of Egypt, have corrupted themselves. They have quickly turned aside out of the path that I commanded them. They have made for themselves a cast figure.’

Deuteronomy 9:13

(There are no notes for this verse.)

ULT

13 Furthermore, Yahweh spoke to me and said, 'I have seen this people; {they} are a stubborn people.'

Deuteronomy 9:14

blot out their name from under heaven

“make their name disappear completely” or “kill them all so no one will ever remember them.” See how you translated a similar phrase in [Deuteronomy 7:24](#).

ULT

14 Let me alone, so that I may destroy them and blot out their name from under heaven, and I will make of you a nation mightier and greater than they.'

Deuteronomy 9:15

General Information:

Moses continues reminding the people of Israel what happened in the past.

ULT

15 So I turned around and came down the mountain, and the mountain was burning. The two tablets of the covenant {were} in my hands.

Deuteronomy 9:16

behold

The word “behold” here shows that Moses was surprised by what he saw.

molded for yourselves a calf

The Israelites of the earlier generation had asked Aaron to make a metal calf so they could worship it. The full meaning of this statement can be made explicit. (See: [Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information](#))

You had quickly turned aside out of the path that Yahweh had commanded you

Moses speaks as if obeying God’s commands were walking along a path. See how you translated these words in [Deuteronomy 9:12](#). Alternate translation: “You had quickly disobeyed what Yahweh had commanded you”

ULT

16 I looked, and behold, you had sinned against Yahweh your God. You had molded for yourselves a calf. You had quickly turned aside out of the path that Yahweh had commanded you.

Deuteronomy 9:17

General Information:

Moses continues reminding the people of Israel about what happened in the past.

I broke them before your eyes

Here “your eyes” is a synecdoche for the people of Israel. Alternate translation: “I broke them right in front of you” or “I broke them where you could see them” (See: [Synecdoche](#))

ULT

17 I took the two tablets and threw them out of my hands. I broke them before your eyes.

Deuteronomy 9:18

lay facedown

“lay with my face on the ground.” This is a way of showing that Yahweh was great and Moses was not.

forty days and forty nights

“40 days and 40 nights” (See: [Numbers](#))

ULT

18 Again I lay facedown before Yahweh for forty days and forty nights; I neither ate bread nor drank water, because of all your sin that you had committed, in doing that which was evil in the sight of Yahweh, so as to provoke him to anger.

Deuteronomy 9:19

General Information:

Moses continues reminding the people of Israel what happened in the past.

I was afraid of the anger and hot displeasure with which Yahweh was angry enough against you to destroy you

The words “anger and hot displeasure” are a metonym for what Yahweh would do because he was angry and displeased. Alternate translation: “Yahweh was angry at you—he was extremely displeased with you—he was angry enough to destroy you, and so I was afraid of what he would do”

ULT

19 For I was afraid of the anger and hot displeasure with which Yahweh was angry enough against you to destroy you. But Yahweh listened to me that time also.

Deuteronomy 9:20

(There are no notes for this verse.)

ULT

²⁰ Yahweh was very angry with Aaron so as to destroy him; I prayed for Aaron also at the same time.

Deuteronomy 9:21

General Information:

Moses continues reminding the people of Israel about what happened in the past.

I took ... burned ... beat ... ground ... threw

Moses probably commanded other men to do the actual work.

Alternate translation: "I had people take ... burn ... beat ... grind ... throw"

your sin, the calf that you had made

Here the gold calf itself referred to as their "sin." Alternate translation: "the calf, which you sinfully made" (See: [Metonymy](#))

ULT

²¹ I took your sin, the calf that you had made, and burned it, beat it, and ground it very small, until it was as fine as dust. I threw its dust into the stream that came down from the mountain.

Deuteronomy 9:22

General Information:

Moses continues to remind the people of Israel about what happened in the past.

Taberah ... Massah ... Kibroth Hattaavah

These are names of places that the people of Israel went through while they were in the wilderness. (See: [How to Translate Names](#))

ULT

²² At Taberah, at Massah, and at Kibroth Hattaavah, you provoked Yahweh to wrath.

Deuteronomy 9:23

Go up

They were on low land, and the land Yahweh had told them to take was in the hills, so they had to go uphill to get to it.

rebelled against the commandment

The word “commandment” is a metonym for Yahweh himself.
Alternate translation: “rebelled against Yahweh; you did not obey the commandment” (See: [Metonymy](#))

listen to his voice

Here “his voice” means what God had said. Alternate translation: “obey what he said” (See: [Metonymy](#))

ULT

23 When Yahweh sent you from Kadesh Barnea and said, ‘Go up and take possession of the land that I have given you,’ then you rebelled against the commandment of Yahweh your God, and you did not believe or listen to his voice.

Deuteronomy 9:24

from the day that I knew you

“from the time I began to lead you.” Some translations read “from the day that he knew you,” the day that Yahweh first knew them.

ULT

24 You have been rebellious against Yahweh from the day that I knew you.

Deuteronomy 9:25

General Information:

Moses continues reminding the people of Israel about what happened in the past.

lay facedown before Yahweh

“lay with my face on the ground.” See how you translated this in [Deuteronomy 9:18](#).

forty days and forty nights

“40 days and 40 nights” (See: [Numbers](#))

ULT

²⁵ So I lay facedown before Yahweh those forty days and forty nights, because he had said that he would destroy you.

Deuteronomy 9:26

you have redeemed

Moses speaks as if Yahweh had rescued the Israelites by paying money to free them from slavery. Alternate translation: “you have rescued” (See: [Metaphor](#))

through your greatness

The word “greatness” is a metonym for Yahweh’s great power. Alternate translation: “through your great power” (See: [Metonymy](#))

with a mighty hand

Here “a mighty hand” refers to Yahweh’s power. See how you translated similar words in [Deuteronomy 4:34](#). Alternate translation: “with your mighty power” (See: [Metaphor](#))

ULT

²⁶ I prayed to Yahweh and said, ‘O Lord Yahweh, do not destroy your people or your inheritance whom you have redeemed through your greatness, which you have brought out of Egypt with a mighty hand.

Deuteronomy 9:27

General Information:

Moses continues praying to Yahweh so that he may not destroy the people of Israel.

Call to mind

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

ULT

²⁷ Call to mind your servants Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob; do not look at the stubbornness of this people, nor at their wickedness, nor at their sin,

Deuteronomy 9:28

so that the land from where you brought us

The words “the land” are a metonym for the people of Egypt.
Alternate translation: “so that the people of Egypt” (See: [Metonymy](#))

should say

“can say”

ULT

²⁸ so that the land from where you brought us should say, “Because Yahweh was not able to bring them into the land that he promised to them, and because he hated them, he has brought them out to kill them in the wilderness.”

Deuteronomy 9:29

by your great strength and by the display of your power

These phrases mean basically the same thing and emphasize the greatness of Yahweh's power that he used to rescue his people. (See: [Doublet](#))

ULT

²⁹ Yet they {are} your people and your inheritance, whom you brought out by your great strength and by the display of your power.'

Deuteronomy 10

Deuteronomy 10 General Notes

Structure and formatting

This chapter is a continuation of the previous chapter.

This chapter focuses on retelling the great things Yahweh has done. It is a continuation of the material from the previous chapter. It is possible that this is a type of sermon or homily, where Moses is giving the people instructions.

Deuteronomy 10:1

General Information:

Moses continues to remind the people of Israel about what happened in the past.

At that time

“After I finished praying”

the first

This refers to the first set of tablets that Moses had broken. Alternate translation: “the tablets you had before” (See: [Ellipsis](#) and [Ordinal Numbers](#))

the mountain

This refers to Mount Sinai.

ULT

¹ At that time Yahweh said to me, ‘Carve two tablets of stone like the first, and come up to me on the mountain, and make an ark of wood.’

Deuteronomy 10:2

(There are no notes for this verse.)

ULT

² I will write on the tablets the words that were on the first tablets that you broke, and you will put them in the ark.'

Deuteronomy 10:3

General Information:

Moses continues to remind the people of Israel about what happened in the past.

the first

This refers to the first set of tablets that Moses had broken. Alternate translation: “the tablets I had before” (See: [Ellipsis](#) and [Ordinal Numbers](#))

went up the mountain

“went up Mount Sinai”

ULT

³ So I made an ark of acacia wood, and I carved two tablets of stone like the first, and I went up the mountain, having the two tablets in my hand.

Deuteronomy 10:4

out of the middle of the fire

It was as if Yahweh were a person standing in the middle of a fire and speaking with a loud voice. See how you translated this in [Deuteronomy 9:10](#).

on the day of the assembly

The abstract noun “assembly” can be expressed as the verb “gather together.” See how you translated this in [Deuteronomy 9:10](#). Alternate translation: “on the day when you Israelites all came and met together in one place”

ULT

⁴ He wrote on the tablets, like the first writing, the Ten Commandments which Yahweh had spoken to you on the mountain out of the middle of the fire on the day of the assembly; then Yahweh gave them to me.

Deuteronomy 10:5

General Information:

Moses continues to remind the people of Israel about what happened in the past.

I turned

Here “I” refers to Moses.

came down from the mountain

“came down from Mount Sinai”

in the ark

“in the box” or “in the chest”

ULT

⁵ I turned and came down from the mountain, and put the tablets in the ark that I had made; there they are, as Yahweh commanded me.”

Deuteronomy 10:6

General Information:

The writer continues the short account of where the Israelites had traveled. (See: [Background Information](#))

Beeroth Bene Jaakan ... Moserah

These are names of different places the people of Israel went through while in the wilderness. (See: [How to Translate Names](#))

Beeroth Bene Jaakan

Translator may add a footnote: "The name 'Beeroth Bene Jaakan' means 'the wells that belonged to the sons of Jaakan' or 'the wells that belonged to the people of Jaakan.'"

there he was buried

This can be translated in active form. Alternate translation: "that is where they buried him" or "the Israelites buried him there" (See: [Active or Passive](#))

Eleazar

This is the name of Aaron's son. (See: [How to Translate Names](#))

ULT

⁶ (The people of Israel journeyed from Beeroth Bene Jaakan to Moserah. There Aaron died, and there he was buried; Eleazar, his son, served in the priest's office in his place.)

Deuteronomy 10:7

From there they journeyed ... a land of streams of water

This continues the background information about where the people of Israel traveled. (See: [Background Information](#))

ULT

⁷ From there they journeyed to Gudgodah, and from Gudgodah to Jotbathah, a land of streams of water.

Gudgodah ... Jotbathah

These are names of different places the people of Israel went through while in the wilderness. (See: [How to Translate Names](#))

Deuteronomy 10:8

General Information:

The writer begins to explain why the tribe of Levi has no inheritance in the land. (See: [Background Information](#))

to stand before Yahweh to serve him

This is an idiom. “to offer the sacrifices that Yahweh requires” (See: [Idiom](#))

in his name

Here “name” refers to authority. Alternate translation: “as representatives of Yahweh” (See: [Metonymy](#))

as today

“as they are doing today”

ULT

⁸ At that time Yahweh chose the tribe of Levi to carry the ark of the covenant of Yahweh, to stand before Yahweh to serve him, and to bless people in his name, as today.

Deuteronomy 10:9

The writer finishes explaining why the tribe of Levi has no inheritance in the land. (See: [Background Information](#))

no portion nor inheritance of land

The tribe of Levi did not receive a portion of the promised land when they arrived there. The full meaning of this statement may be made explicit. (See: [Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information](#))

ULT

⁹ Therefore Levi has no portion nor inheritance of land with his brothers; Yahweh is his inheritance, as Yahweh your God spoke to him.)

Yahweh is his inheritance

Yahweh speaks of the special relationship that Aaron and his descendants will have with him as if Yahweh were something that they will inherit. Alternate translation: “Yahweh is what they will have” or “Yahweh will allow them to serve him and he will provide for them through that service”

Yahweh your God

Moses speaks to the Israelites as if they were one man, so the word “your” here is singular. (See: [Forms of You](#))

spoke to him

“spoke to the tribe of Levi”

Deuteronomy 10:10

General Information:

Moses resumes reminding the people of Israel about what happened in the past.

as at the first time

“first” is the ordinal number for one. Here it refers to the first time Moses went up Mount Sinai to receive the stone tablets from Yahweh. “as I did the first time” (See: [Ordinal Numbers](#))

forty days and forty nights

“40 days and 40 nights” (See: [Numbers](#))

destroy you

Moses speaks to the Israelites as if they were one man, so the word “you” here is singular. (See: [Forms of You](#))

ULT

10 “I stayed on the mountain as at the first time, forty days and forty nights. Yahweh listened to me that time also; Yahweh did not wish to destroy you.”

Deuteronomy 10:11

possess the land

“take the land” or “take possession of the land”

their ancestors

This refers to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob.

to give to them

“that I would give to you, their descendants”

ULT

11 Yahweh said to me, ‘Arise, go before the people to lead them on their journey; they will go in and possess the land that I swore to their ancestors to give to them.’

Deuteronomy 10:12

General Information:

Moses speaks to the Israelites as if they are one person. (See: [Forms of You](#))

Now, Israel

Here the metonym “Israel” refers to the people of Israel. Alternate translation: “Now, people of Israel” (See: [Metonymy](#))

ULT

12 Now, Israel, what does Yahweh your God require of you, except to fear Yahweh your God, to walk in all his ways, to love him, and to worship Yahweh your God with all your heart and with all your soul,

what does Yahweh your God require of you, except to fear ... with all your soul

Moses uses a question to teach the people of Israel. This rhetorical question can be translated as a statement. Alternate translation: “Yahweh your God requires you to do no more than this: to fear ... with all your soul.” (See: [Rhetorical Question](#))

to walk in all his ways

Moses speaks as if obeying Yahweh were walking on a path. Alternate translation: “to obey all his commands” (See: [Metaphor](#))

with all your heart and with all your soul

Here “heart” and “soul” are metonyms for a person’s inner being. These two phrases are used together to mean “completely” or “earnestly.” See how you translated these two phrases in [Deuteronomy 4:29](#). (See: [Metonymy](#) and [Doublet](#))

Deuteronomy 10:13

to keep the commandments ... for your own good?

Moses uses a question to teach the people of Israel. This rhetorical question begins with the words “what does Yahweh your God require of you, except to fear ... with all your soul” in verse 12. It can be translated as a statement. “Yahweh your God requires you to do no more than this: to fear ... with all your soul, to keep the commandments ... for your own good.” (See: [Rhetorical Question](#))

ULT

¹³ to keep the commandments of Yahweh, and his statutes, which I am commanding you today for your own good?

Deuteronomy 10:14

General Information:

Moses continues to speak to the Israelites as if they are one person.
(See: [Forms of You](#))

Behold, to

“Pay attention, because what I am about to say is both true and important: to”

heaven ... earth

These words show two extremes, and are combined to mean that all things everywhere belong to Yahweh. (See: [Merism](#))

the heaven of heavens

This refers to the highest places in the heavens. Everything in the heavens belong to God.

ULT

14 Behold, to Yahweh your God belongs heaven and the heaven of heavens, the earth, with all that is in them.

Deuteronomy 10:15

chose you

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

ULT

15 Only Yahweh took pleasure in your fathers so as to love them, and he chose you, their descendants, after them, more than any of the other peoples, as he does today.

Deuteronomy 10:16

Therefore

“Because of this”

circumcise the foreskin of your heart

The word “foreskin” refers to the fold of skin on a man’s private parts that is removed during circumcision. Here Moses is referring to a spiritual circumcision. This means the people must remove the sin from their lives. (See: [Metaphor](#))

ULT

16 Therefore circumcise the foreskin of your heart, and be stubborn no longer.

Deuteronomy 10:17

God of gods

“the supreme God” or “the only true God”

Lord of masters

“the supreme Lord” or “the greatest Lord”

the fearsome one

“the one who causes people to fear”

ULT

17 For Yahweh your God, he is God of gods and Lord of masters, the great God, the mighty one and the fearsome one, who favors no one and takes no bribes.

Deuteronomy 10:18

General Information:

Moses continues speaking to the people of Israel.

He executes justice for the fatherless

“Yahweh makes sure that people treat the fatherless justly”

fatherless

These are children whose parents have both died and do not have relatives to care for them.

widow

A true widow is a woman whose husband has died and has no children to care for her in her old age.

ULT

18 He executes justice for the fatherless and widow, and he shows love for the foreigner by giving him food and clothing.

Deuteronomy 10:19

Therefore

“Because of this”

ULT

¹⁹ Therefore love the foreigner; for you were foreigners in the land of Egypt.

Deuteronomy 10:20

General Information:

Moses speaks to the Israelites as if they were one man, so all instances of “you” and “your” are singular. (See: [Forms of You](#))

him will you worship

“he is the one you must worship”

To him you must cling

To have a good relationship with Yahweh and to completely rely on him is spoken of as if the person were clinging to Yahweh. Alternate translation: “You must rely on him” or “He is the one you must rely on” (See: [Metaphor](#))

by his name will you swear

To swear by the name of Yahweh means to make Yahweh the basis or the power on which the oath is made. Here “name” represents Yahweh himself. See how you translated a similar phrase in [Deuteronomy 6:13](#). Alternate translation: “you will swear and ask Yahweh to confirm it” or “when you swear you will speak his name” (See: [Metonymy](#))

ULT

20 You will fear Yahweh your God; him will you worship. To him you must cling, and by his name will you swear.

Deuteronomy 10:21

which your eyes have seen

Here “eyes” refers to the whole person. Alternate translation: “which you yourselves have seen” (See: [Synecdoche](#))

He is your praise

This could mean: (1) “He is the one you must praise” or (2) “It is because you worship him that other peoples will praise you”

ULT

21 He {is} your praise, and he {is} your God, who has done for you these great and fearsome things, which your eyes have seen.

Deuteronomy 10:22

General Information:

Moses continues to speak to the people of Israel as if they are one man, so “you” and “your” are singular. (See: [Forms of You](#))

went down into Egypt

“traveled south to Egypt” or “went to Egypt”

seventy persons

“70 persons” (See: [Numbers](#))

as many as the stars of the heavens

This emphasizes the large number of Israelites that were with Moses. Alternate translation: “more than you can count” (See: [Simile](#))

ULT

22 Your fathers went down into Egypt as seventy persons; now Yahweh your God has made you as many as the stars of the heavens.

Deuteronomy 11

Deuteronomy 11 General Notes

Structure and formatting

Therefore

This chapter begins with the word “therefore,” which looks back to the instructions Moses gave in the previous two chapters.

Special concepts in this chapter

Eyewitnesses

The instruction that Moses gives and the retelling of the great things Yahweh has done for Israel are very important. This is because the generation entering into the Promised Land did not witness many of these events. (See: [testimony](#), [testify](#), [witness](#), [eyewitness](#), [evidence](#))

Covenant

This chapter is included in the covenant God made with Moses, even though it is not explicitly said. (See: [covenant](#) and [Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information](#))

Deuteronomy 11:1

General Information:

Moses continues speaking to the people of Israel.

always keep

“always obey”

ULT

¹ Therefore you will love Yahweh your God and always keep his instructions, his statutes, his decrees, and his commandments.

Deuteronomy 11:2

who have not known nor have they seen

“who have not experienced”

his mighty hand, or his outstretched arm

Here “mighty hand” and “outstretched arm” are metaphors for Yahweh’s power. See how you translated these words in

[Deuteronomy 4:34](#). Alternate translation: “or his mighty power” (See: [Metaphor](#))

ULT

² Notice that {I am} not {speaking} to your children, who have not known nor have they seen the punishment of Yahweh your God, his greatness, his mighty hand, or his outstretched arm,

Deuteronomy 11:3

in the midst of Egypt

“in Egypt”

to all his land

Here “land” represents the people. Alternate translation: “to all his people” (See: [Metonymy](#))

ULT

³ the signs and deeds that he did in the midst of Egypt to Pharaoh, king of Egypt, and to all his land.

Deuteronomy 11:4

General Information:

Moses continues speaking to the adult Israelites who were old enough to see what God did in Egypt.

Neither did they see what he did

“Neither did your children see what Yahweh did”

the army of Egypt

“the Egyptian soldiers”

they pursued after you

Here “you” means the Israelites who were alive about 40 years earlier.

ULT

⁴ Neither did they see what he did to the army of Egypt, to their horses, or to their chariots, how he made the water of the Sea of Reeds overwhelm them as they pursued after you, and {how} Yahweh has destroyed them until today,

Deuteronomy 11:5

to this place

This means the plain of the Jordan River Valley where Moses is speaking to them before they cross over into Canaan.

ULT

⁵ or what he did for you in the wilderness until you came to this place.

Deuteronomy 11:6

General Information:

Moses continues to remind the adults to teach their children God's mighty deeds.

Dathan and Abiram, the sons of Eliab

Moses is referring to an event in the past when Dathan and Abiram rebelled against Moses and Aaron. The full meaning of this statement can be made explicit. (See: [Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information](#))

Dathan ... Abiram ... Eliab

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

son of Reuben

"descendant of Reuben"

earth opened its mouth and swallowed them up

Yahweh causing the land to split open so that the people fell in is spoken of as if the land had a mouth and the ability to swallow people. (See: [Personification](#))

every living thing that followed them

This refers to their servants and animals.

in the middle of all Israel

This means all the people of Israel witnessed what happened to Dathan, Abiram, their families, and their possessions.

ULT

6 They had not seen what Yahweh had done to Dathan and Abiram, the sons of Eliab son of Reuben, how the earth opened its mouth and swallowed them up, their households, their tents, and every living thing that followed them, in the middle of all Israel.

Deuteronomy 11:7

But your eyes have seen

Here “eyes” represents the whole person. Alternate translation: “But you have seen” (See: [Synecdoche](#))

ULT

⁷ But your eyes have seen all the great works of Yahweh that he did.

Deuteronomy 11:8

General Information:

Moses continues speaking to the people of Israel.

possess the land

“take the land”

where you are going over to possess it

The phrase “are going over” is used because the people of Israel will have to cross the Jordan River to enter into Canaan.

ULT

⁸ Therefore keep all the commandments that I am commanding you today, that you may be strong, and go in and possess the land where you are going over to possess it,

Deuteronomy 11:9

prolong your days

Long days are a metaphor for a long life. See how you translated these words in [Deuteronomy 4:26](#). Alternate translation: “be able to live a long time” (See: [Metaphor](#))

a land flowing with milk and honey

This is an idiom. See how you translated this in [Deuteronomy 6:3](#). Alternate translation: “a land where plenty of milk and honey flow” or “a land that is excellent for cattle and farming” (See: [Idiom](#))

ULT

⁹ and that you may prolong {your} days in the land that Yahweh swore to your fathers to give to them and to their descendants, a land flowing with milk and honey.

Deuteronomy 11:10

watered it with your foot

This could mean: (1) “foot” is a metonym that represents the hard work of walking to carry water to the fields. Alternate translation: “worked hard to water it” or (2) they would use their feet to turn a water wheel that supplied water to the fields. (See: [Metonymy](#))

garden of herbs

“vegetable garden” or “garden of vegetables”

ULT

10 For the land, where you go in to possess it, is not like the land of Egypt, from where you came, where you sowed your seed and watered {it} with your foot, like a garden of herbs;

Deuteronomy 11:11

drinks water of the rain of the heavens

The land receiving and absorbing a lot of rain is spoken of as if the land were drinking the water. Alternate translation: “the rain from the sky gives it plenty of water” (See: [Personification](#))

ULT

11 but the land, where you go over to possess it, {is} a land of hills and valleys, and drinks water of the rain of the heavens,

Deuteronomy 11:12

the eyes of Yahweh your God are always upon it

Here “eyes” represents attention and care. Alternate translation: “Yahweh your God is always watching over it” (See: [Metonymy](#))

from the beginning of the year to the end of the year

Here the two extremes “beginning” and “end” are used together to mean the entire year. Alternate translation: “continuously throughout the entire year” (See: [Merism](#))

ULT

¹² a land that Yahweh your God cares for; the eyes of Yahweh your God {are} always upon it, from the beginning of the year to the end of the year.

Deuteronomy 11:13

It will happen, if

This means that what Yahweh promises will happen if the Israelites obey his commands.

that I command

Here “I” refers to Moses.

with all your heart and with all your soul

The idiom “with all your heart” means “completely” and “with ... soul” means “with all your being.” These two phrases have similar meanings. See how you translated this in [Deuteronomy 4:29](#). Alternate translation: “with all your being” or “with all your energy” (See: [Idiom](#) and [Doublet](#))

ULT

13 It will happen, if you will listen diligently to my commandments that I command you today, to love Yahweh your God and to serve him with all your heart and with all your soul,

Deuteronomy 11:14

I will give the rain of your land in its season

“I will cause it to rain on your land in the proper season”

I will give

Here “I” refers to Yahweh. This can be stated in the third person.
Alternate translation: “Yahweh will give” or “He will give”

the former rain and the latter rain

This refers to rain at the beginning of the sowing season and rain for maturing the crops for harvest. Alternate translation: “the autumn rain and spring rain” or “the rain in the right seasons”

ULT

14 that I will give the rain of your land in its season, the former rain and the latter rain, that you may gather in your grain, your new wine, and your oil.

Deuteronomy 11:15

(There are no notes for this verse.)

ULT

¹⁵ I will give grass in your fields for your cattle, and you will eat and be full.

Deuteronomy 11:16

General Information:

Moses continues speaking to the people of Israel.

Pay attention to yourselves

“Be careful” or “Beware”

so that your heart is not deceived

Here “heart” represents a person’s desires or thoughts. This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: “so that your desires do not deceive you” or “so that you do not deceive yourself” (See: [Metonymy](#) and [Active or Passive](#))

you turn aside and worship other gods

Rejecting Yahweh and worshiping other gods is spoken of as if the person would physically turn and go in a different direction away from Yahweh. Alternate translation: “you start worshiping other gods” (See: [Metaphor](#))

ULT

16 Pay attention to yourselves so that your heart is not deceived, and you turn aside and worship other gods and bow down to them;

Deuteronomy 11:17

so that the anger of Yahweh is not kindled against you

God becoming angry is spoken of as if it were a fire that were starting. This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: “so that Yahweh does not become angry with you” (See: [Metaphor](#) and [Active or Passive](#))

so that he does not shut up the heavens so that there will be no rain, and the land will not yield its fruit

God causing no rain to fall from the sky is spoken of as if he were closing the sky. Alternate translation: “so that he does not cause the rain to stop falling from the sky so that crops will not grow in the land” (See: [Metaphor](#))

ULT

¹⁷ so that the anger of Yahweh is not kindled against you; and so that he does not shut up the heavens so that there will be no rain, and the land will not yield its fruit, and so that you perish quickly from off the good land that Yahweh is giving you.

Deuteronomy 11:18

lay up these words of mine in your heart and soul

A person always thinking about and considering what Moses commands is spoken of as if the heart and soul were a container and Moses's words were the content to fill the container. Alternate translation: "be very careful to remember these words that I am saying to you" (See: [Metaphor](#))

ULT

¹⁸ Therefore lay up these words of mine in your heart and soul, bind them as a sign on your hand, and let them be as frontlets between your eyes.

these words of mine

"these commands that I have given you"

your heart and soul

Here "heart" and "soul" represent a person's mind or thoughts. (See: [Metonymy](#))

bind them

"tie these words." This is a metonymy that represents a person writing the words on a parchment, putting the parchment in a pouch, and tying the pouch. This metonymy in turn may be a metaphor meaning the people must be careful to obey Moses's commands. See how you translated similar phrases in [Deuteronomy 6:8](#). (See: [Metonymy](#) and [Metaphor](#))

as a sign on your hand

"as something to make you remember my laws"

let them be as frontlets between your eyes

"let my words be as frontlets between your eyes." This is a metonymy that represents a person writing Moses' words on parchment, putting the parchment in a pouch, and tying the pouch so it sits between his eyes. This metonymy in turn may be a metaphor that means the person must be careful to obey all of Moses' commands. See how you translated similar phrases in [Deuteronomy 6:8](#). (See: [Metonymy](#) and [Metaphor](#))

frontlets

ornaments a person wears on the forehead

Deuteronomy 11:19

when you sit in your house, when you walk on the road, when you lie down, and when you get up

Using the different places “in your house” and “on the road,” and the opposites “when you lie down” and “get up,” represent anywhere, anytime. The people of Israel were to discuss God’s commandments and teach them to their children anytime and anywhere. (See: [Merism](#))

ULT

¹⁹ You will teach them to your children and talk about them when you sit in your house, when you walk on the road, when you lie down, and when you get up.

Deuteronomy 11:20

General Information:

Moses continues speaking to the people of Israel.

You will write them on the doorposts of your house and on your city gates

See how you translated these words in [Deuteronomy 6:9](#).

ULT

20 You will write them on the doorposts of your house and on your city gates,

Deuteronomy 11:21

**that your days and the days of your children
may be multiplied**

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: “that Yahweh may cause you and your children to live a long time” (See: [Active or Passive](#))

to your ancestors

This refers to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob.

to give them for as long as the heavens are above the earth

This compares how long the people could stay in the land to how long the sky will exist above the earth. This is a way of saying “forever.” Alternate translation: “to give them as a possession forever” or “to allow them to live there forever” (See: [Simile](#))

ULT

²¹ that your days and the days of your children may be multiplied in the land that Yahweh swore to your ancestors to give them for as long as the heavens are above the earth.

Deuteronomy 11:22

General Information:

Moses continues speaking to the people of Israel.

For if you diligently keep all these commandments that I am commanding you, so as to do them

“For if you are careful to do everything that I have commanded you”

walk in all his ways

How Yahweh wants a person to live and behave is spoken of as if they are Yahweh’s ways or roads. A person obeying Yahweh is spoken of as if he were walking on Yahweh’s ways or roads. (See: [Metaphor](#))

to cling to him

To have a good relationship with Yahweh and to completely rely on him is spoken of as if the person were clinging to Yahweh. Alternate translation: “to rely on him” or “to have a good relationship with him” Look at how similar words are translated in [Deuteronomy 10:20](#). (See: [Metaphor](#))

ULT

²² For if you diligently keep all these commandments that I am commanding you, so as to do them, to love Yahweh your God, to walk in all his ways, and to cling to him,

Deuteronomy 11:23

all these nations from before you, and you will dispossess nations

Here “nations” represent the people groups already living in Canaan.
Alternate translation: “all of these people groups from before you, and you will take the land from people groups” (See: [Metonymy](#))

ULT

²³ then Yahweh will drive out all these nations from before you, and you will dispossess nations larger and mightier than yourselves.

larger and mightier than yourselves

Although Israel’s army is smaller and weaker than the people groups living in Canaan, Yahweh will enable the people of Israel to defeat them.

Deuteronomy 11:24

General Information:

Moses continues speaking to the people of Israel.

Every place where the sole of your foot will tread

Here “the sole of your foot” represents the whole person. Alternate translation: “Every place you go” (See: [Synecdoche](#))

from the river, the Euphrates River

“from the Euphrates River”

ULT

²⁴ Every place where the sole of your foot will tread will be yours; from the wilderness to Lebanon, from the river, the Euphrates River, to the western sea will be your border.

Deuteronomy 11:25

No man will be able to stand before you

The phrase “stand before you” is an idiom. Alternate translation: “No one will be able to stop you” or “No one will be able to oppose you”

Yahweh your God will lay the fear of you and the terror of you upon all the land that you tread on

Yahweh causing the people to be very afraid is spoken of as if fear and terror were an object that he will place on the people. Alternate translation: “Yahweh your God will cause the people in every place you go to be very afraid of you” (See: [Metaphor](#))

the fear of you and the terror of you

The words “fear” and “terror” mean the same thing and emphasize the intensity of fear. Alternate translation: “a terrible fear of you” (See: [Doublet](#))

upon all the land that you tread on

Here “the land” is a metonym for all the people in the land. Alternate translation: “upon all the people in every place you go” (See: [Metonymy](#) and [Idiom](#))

ULT

²⁵ No man will be able to stand before you. Yahweh your God will lay the fear of you and the terror of you upon all the land that you tread on, as he has said to you.

Deuteronomy 11:26

General Information:

Here Moses summarizes the two options the people of Israel could choose. They could choose to obey and receive God's blessing or they could choose to disobey and receive God's punishment.

ULT

²⁶ Look, I set before you today a blessing and a curse:

Look

"Pay attention"

I set before you today a blessing and a curse

Allowing the people to choose whether they want God to bless them or curse them is spoken of as if a blessing and a curse were objects that Moses is setting in front of them. Alternate translation: "Today you must choose whether God will bless you or curse you" (See: [Metaphor](#))

Deuteronomy 11:27

the blessing, if you obey

The abstract noun “blessing” can be translated with a verb. Alternate translation: “God will bless you if you obey” (See: [Abstract Nouns](#))

ULT

27 the blessing, if you obey the
commandments of Yahweh your God
that I command you today,

Deuteronomy 11:28

but turn aside from the way that I command you today, to go after other gods

The commands of Yahweh that Moses is telling the people are spoken of as if they were God's way or road. To not obey God's commands is spoken of as if people physically were to turn in another direction away from Yahweh to follow other gods. Alternate translation: "but stop obeying what I command you today, in order to worship other gods" (See: [Metaphor](#))

other gods that you have not known

This refers to the gods that other people groups worship. The Israelites know Yahweh because he has revealed himself to them and they have experienced his power.

ULT

²⁸ and the curse, if you do not obey the commandments of Yahweh your God, but turn aside from the way that I command you today, to go after other gods that you have not known.

Deuteronomy 11:29

General Information:

Moses continues speaking to the people of Israel.

you will set the blessing on Mount Gerizim, and the curse on Mount Ebal

The blessing and the curse are spoken of as if they were objects that someone will set on the mountains. Alternate translation: “some of you must stand on top of Mount Gerazim and proclaim what will cause Yahweh to bless you, and the others must stand on top of Mount Ebal and proclaim what will cause Yahweh to curse you” (See: [Metaphor](#))

Mount Gerizim ... Mount Ebal

These are names of mountains on the west side of the Jordan River. (See: [How to Translate Names](#))

ULT

²⁹ It will happen, when Yahweh your God brings you into the land which you go to possess, that you will set the blessing on Mount Gerizim, and the curse on Mount Ebal.

Deuteronomy 11:30

Are they not beyond the Jordan ... Moreh?

The Israelites are on the eastern side of the Jordan River. Moses uses a question to remind the people where these mountains are located. This question can be translated as a statement. Alternate translation: "As you know, they are beyond the Jordan ... Moreh." (See: [Rhetorical Question](#))

ULT

³⁰ {Are} they not beyond the Jordan, west of the western road, in the land of the Canaanites who live in the Arabah, over against Gilgal, beside the oaks of Moreh?

beyond the Jordan

"on the west side of the Jordan River"

west of the western road

"in the west"

over against Gilgal

"near Gilgal" This may not be the same place as the city near Jericho. Moses may be referring to a place that is near Shechem. (See: [How to Translate Names](#))

oaks of Moreh

These are sacred trees near Gilgal. (See: [How to Translate Names](#))

Deuteronomy 11:31

General Information:

Moses continues speaking to the people of Israel.

ULT

³¹ For you are to cross over the Jordan to go in to possess the land that Yahweh your God is giving you, and you will possess it and live in it.

Deuteronomy 11:32

all the statutes and the decrees

These are the statutes and decrees Moses will give in Deuteronomy 12-26.

ULT

³² You will keep all the statutes and the decrees that I set before you today.

I set before you today

This does not mean these are new. Moses is reviewing the same statutes and decrees that he gave 40 years earlier.

I set before you

God's statutes and decrees, which Moses is telling the people, are spoken of as if they were objects that Moses is setting before the people. Alternate translation: "I am giving to you" (See: [Metaphor](#))

Deuteronomy 12

Deuteronomy 12 General Notes

Special concepts in this chapter

Covenant with Moses

This chapter is a continuation of the covenant Yahweh made with Moses. The reasons for these food restrictions are not always known.(See: [covenant](#) and [Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information](#))

Israel and Yahweh

In the ancient Near East, when nations conquered other nations, they often added the gods of the conquered nation into their collection of gods they worshiped. It was rare to worship only one God. Israel was to be known for worshiping Yahweh and Yahweh alone. (See: [god](#), [false god](#), [goddess](#), [idol](#), [idolater](#), [idolatrous](#), [idolatry](#))

Deuteronomy 12:1

General Information:

Moses is still talking to the people of Israel.

you will keep

“you must obey”

all the days that you live on the earth

The phrase “live on the earth” is an idiom that means as long as a person lives. Alternate translation: “for as long as you live” (See:[Idiom](#))

ULT

¹ These {are} the statutes and the decrees that you will keep in the land that Yahweh, the God of your fathers, has given you to possess, all the days that you live on the earth.

Deuteronomy 12:2

You will surely destroy

“You must destroy”

the nations that you will dispossess

Here “nations” represents the people groups that live in Canaan.
Alternate translation: “the people groups whose land you will take”
(See: [Metonymy](#))

ULT

² You will surely destroy all the places where the nations that you will dispossess worshiped their gods, on the high mountains, on the hills, and under every green tree.

Deuteronomy 12:3

General Information:

Moses is still talking to the people of Israel.

You must break down their altars

“you must pull apart the altars of those nations” or “you must destroy the altars of those nations”

dash in pieces

“break into pieces” or “shatter”

destroy their name

Here “their name” represents “the memory of them.” Alternate translation: “destroy them so completely that no one will remember them” or “destroy anything that represents these false gods” (See: [Metonymy](#))

that place

This refers to each place where the nations worshiped their gods.

ULT

³ You must break down their altars, dash in pieces their stone pillars, and burn their Asherah poles. You must cut down the carved figures of their gods and destroy their name out of that place.

Deuteronomy 12:4

You will not worship Yahweh your God like that

“You should not worship Yahweh your God like those nations worshiped their gods”

ULT

⁴ You will not worship Yahweh your God like that.

Deuteronomy 12:5

the place that Yahweh your God will choose out of all your tribes to put his name

Here “his name” refers to God himself. Yahweh will choose one location where he will live and people will come to worship him there. (See: [Metonymy](#))

it is there that you will go

They will go to worship where God decides.

ULT

⁵ But to the place that Yahweh your God will choose out of all your tribes to put his name, that will be the place where he lives, and it is there that you will go.

Deuteronomy 12:6

the offerings presented by your hand

Here “hand” represents the whole person. Alternate translation: “the offerings that you present” (See: [Synecdoche](#))

your offerings for vows, your freewill offerings

“your offerings to fulfill a vow, your voluntary offerings.” These are types of offerings.

the firstborn of your herds and flocks

God requires that the people give him every firstborn male of their livestock.

ULT

⁶ It is there that you will bring your burnt offerings, your sacrifices, your tithes, and the offerings presented by your hand, your offerings for vows, your freewill offerings, and the firstborn of your herds and flocks.

Deuteronomy 12:7

It is there

This refers to the place that Yahweh will choose for the children of Israel to worship.

rejoice about everything that you have put your hand to

Here “put your hand to” represents the whole person and work that he has done. Alternate translation: “rejoice about all the work you have done” (See: [Synecdoche](#))

ULT

⁷ It is there that you will eat before Yahweh your God and rejoice about everything that you have put your hand to, you and your households, where Yahweh your God has blessed you.

Deuteronomy 12:8

You will not do all the things that we are doing here today

“You will not do as we are doing here today.” This means that they would worship in the promised land differently than the way they were worshiping at that moment.

ULT

⁸ You will not do all the things that we are doing here today; now everyone is doing whatever {is} right in his own eyes;

now everyone is doing whatever is right in his own eyes

The eyes represent seeing, and seeing represents thoughts or judgment. Alternate translation: “everyone is doing what he considers to be right” or “now everyone is doing what he judges to be right” (See: [Metaphor](#))

Deuteronomy 12:9

to the rest

The abstract noun “the rest” can be stated as a verb. Alternate translation: “to the land where you will rest” (See: [Abstract Nouns](#))

to the inheritance that Yahweh your God is giving you

The land that God is giving to the people of Israel is spoken of as if it were a possession that a father leaves as an inheritance for his children. Alternate translation: “to the land that Yahweh your God is giving to you as a permanent possession” (See: [Metaphor](#))

ULT

⁹ for you have not yet come to the rest,
to the inheritance that Yahweh your
God is giving you.

Deuteronomy 12:10

live in the land

This refers to the land of Canaan.

in the land that Yahweh your God is causing you to inherit

God giving the land of Canaan to the people of Israel is spoken of as if he were a father giving an inheritance to his children. (See: [Metaphor](#))

he will give you rest from all your enemies round about

“he will give you peace from all your enemies around you”

ULT

¹⁰ But {when} you go over the Jordan and live in the land that Yahweh your God is causing you to inherit, and he will give you rest from all your enemies round about, so that you live in safety.

Deuteronomy 12:11

the offerings presented by your hand

Here “hand” represents the whole person. Alternate translation: “the offerings that you present” (See: [Synecdoche](#))

all your choice offerings for vows

“all your voluntary offerings to fulfill vows”

ULT

11 Then to the place where Yahweh your God will choose to cause his name to live there—there you will bring everything I command you: your burnt offerings, your sacrifices, your tithes, and the offerings presented by your hand, and all your choice offerings for vows that you will vow to Yahweh.

Deuteronomy 12:12

General Information:

Moses continues speaking to the people of Israel.

rejoice before Yahweh

“rejoice in the presence of Yahweh”

the Levites who are within your gate

Here “gates” is a reference to the city itself. Alternate translation: “the Levites who live inside your city” or “the Levites living with you” (See: [Synecdoche](#))

because he has no portion or inheritance among you

The fact that Yahweh would not give any of the land to the Levites is spoken of as if a father were not giving them an inheritance. (See: [Metaphor](#))

he has no portion

Here “he” refers to Levi. Levi represents all of his descendants. Alternate translation: “they have no portion” (See: [Metonymy](#))

ULT

12 You will rejoice before Yahweh your God—you, your sons, your daughters, your male servants, your female servants, and the Levites who {are} within your gate, because he has no portion or inheritance among you.

Deuteronomy 12:13

General Information:

Moses continues speaking to the people of Israel.

Pay attention to yourself

“Be careful”

every place that you see

“any place that pleases you” or “wherever you want”

ULT

13 Pay attention to yourself that you do not offer your burnt offerings at every place that you see;

Deuteronomy 12:14

but it is at the place that Yahweh will choose

The burnt offerings are to be made at the tabernacle. Yahweh himself would choose where the tabernacle would be located.

ULT

14 but it is at the place that Yahweh will choose among one of your tribes that you will offer your burnt offerings, and there you will do everything that I command you.

Deuteronomy 12:15

However, you may kill and eat animals within all your gates

The people could only kill animals as sacrifices in the place that Yahweh would choose. They could kill animals for food anywhere they wanted. The full meaning of this statement can be made explicit. (See: [Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information](#))

within all your gates

Here “gates” represents the whole city. Alternate translation: “inside your city” or “at your homes” (See: [Synecdoche](#))

the unclean ... persons

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

the clean persons

A person who is acceptable for God’s purposes is spoken of as if the person were physically clean. (See: [Metaphor](#))

the gazelle and the deer

These are wild animals with long thin legs that can run quickly. Alternate translation: “the antelope and the deer” (See: [Translate Unknowns](#))

ULT

¹⁵ However, you may kill and eat animals within all your gates, as you wish, receiving the blessing of Yahweh your God for all that he has given you; the unclean and the clean persons both may eat of it, animals such as the gazelle and the deer.

Deuteronomy 12:16

But you will not eat the blood

The blood represents life and God did not allow the people to eat the blood along with the meat. The full meaning of this statement can be made explicit. (See: [Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information](#))

ULT

16 But you will not eat the blood; you will pour it out on the earth like water.

Deuteronomy 12:17

General Information:

Moses describes to the people all the special offerings and sacrifices that are to be made at the tabernacle.

within your gates

Here “gates” represents the whole city. Alternate translation: “inside your city” or “at your homes” (See: [Synecdoche](#))

nor that of the offering you present with your hand

Here “hand” represents the whole person. Alternate translation: “nor that of any offering which you bring to Yahweh” (See: [Synecdoche](#))

ULT

17 You may not eat within your gates from the tithe of your grain, your new wine, your oil, or the firstborn of your herd or flock; and you may not eat any of the meat you sacrifice along with any of your vows that you make, nor that of your freewill offerings, nor that of the offering you present with your hand.

Deuteronomy 12:18

General Information:

Yahweh continues speaking to the people of Israel.

you will eat them

“you will eat your offerings”

before Yahweh

“in the presence of Yahweh

the Levite who is within your gates

Here “gate” represents the whole city Alternate translation: “any Levite who lives inside your city” (See: [Synecdoche](#))

everything to which you put your hand

Here “put your hand to” represents the whole person and work that he has done. Alternate translation: “rejoice about all the work you have done” (See: [Synecdoche](#))

ULT

18 Instead, you will eat them before Yahweh your God in the place that Yahweh your God will choose—you, your son, your daughter, your male servant, your female servant, and the Levite who {is} within your gates; you will rejoice before Yahweh your God about everything to which you put your hand.

Deuteronomy 12:19

Pay attention to yourself

“Be careful”

that you do not forsake

ULT

¹⁹ Pay attention to yourself so that you do not forsake the Levite as long as you live on your land.

This can be stated in positive form. Alternate translation: “that you take good care of” (See: [Double Negatives](#))

Deuteronomy 12:20

enlarges your borders

“enlarges your territory” or “gives you even more land”

you say, ‘I will eat flesh,’ because of your desire to eat meat

This is a quotation within a quotation. This direct quotation can be stated as an indirect quotation. Alternate translation: “and you decide that you want to eat meat” (See: [Quotes within Quotes](#) and [Direct and Indirect Quotations](#))

as your soul desires

Here “soul” refers to the whole person. Alternate translation: “as you want” or “as you crave” (See: [Synecdoche](#))

ULT

²⁰ When Yahweh your God enlarges your borders, as he has promised you, and you say, ‘I will eat flesh,’ because of your desire to eat meat, you may eat meat, as your soul desires.

Deuteronomy 12:21

General Information:

Moses continues speaking to the people of Israel.

chooses to put his name

Here “name” refers to God himself. Yahweh would choose a place where he will live and the people will come to worship him. Alternate translation: “chooses to dwell” (See: [Metonymy](#))

within your gates

Here “gates” represents the whole city.” Alternate translation: “inside your city” or “within your community” (See: [Synecdoche](#))

as your soul desires

Here “soul” refers to the whole person. Alternate translation: “as you desire” (See: [Synecdoche](#))

ULT

²¹ If the place that Yahweh your God chooses to put his name is too far from you, then you will kill some of your herd and your flock that Yahweh has given you, as I have commanded you; you may eat within your gates, as your soul desires.

Deuteronomy 12:22

Like the gazelle and the deer are eaten

This can be translated in active form. Alternate translation: “Just like you eat the gazelle and the deer” (See: [Active or Passive](#))

gazelle and the deer

These are wild animals with long thin legs that can run quickly. See how you translated these in [Deuteronomy 12:15](#).

the unclean ... persons

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

the clean persons

A person who is acceptable for God’s purposes is spoken of as if the person were physically clean. (See: [Metaphor](#))

ULT

22 Like the gazelle and the deer are eaten, so you will eat of it; the unclean and the clean persons may eat of it alike.

Deuteronomy 12:23

the blood is the life

Here the way that blood sustains life is spoken of as if the blood were life itself. Alternate translation: “the blood sustains life” or “the blood causes animals and people to live” (See: [Metaphor](#))

you will not eat the life with the meat

The word “life” here represents the blood that sustains life. Alternate translation: “You will not eat what sustains life with the meat” or “you will not eat the blood, which sustains life, with the meat” (See: [Metonymy](#))

ULT

23 Only be sure that you do not consume the blood, for the blood is the life; you will not eat the life with the meat.

Deuteronomy 12:24

(There are no notes for this verse.)

ULT

²⁴ You will not eat it; you will pour it out on the earth like water.

Deuteronomy 12:25

what is right in the eyes of Yahweh

The eyes represent seeing, and seeing represents thoughts or judgment. Alternate translation: “what is right in Yahweh’s judgment” or “what Yahweh considers to be right” (See: [Metaphor](#))

ULT

25 You will not eat it, so that it may go well with you, and with your children after you, when you will do {what is} right in the eyes of Yahweh.

Deuteronomy 12:26

(There are no notes for this verse.)

ULT

²⁶ But the things that belong to Yahweh that you have and the offerings for your vows—you will take these and go to the place that Yahweh chooses.

Deuteronomy 12:27

the blood of your sacrifices will be poured out

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: “the priest will pour out the blood of the sacrifice” (See: [Active or Passive](#))

you will eat the flesh

God’s law specifies which parts of the animal are for the burnt offering, which parts are for the priest and which parts are for the offerer to eat. The full meaning of this statement can be made explicit. Alternate translation: “you will eat some of the meat” (See: [Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information](#))

ULT

27 There you will offer your burnt offerings, the meat and the blood, on the altar of Yahweh your God; the blood of your sacrifices will be poured out on the altar of Yahweh your God, and you will eat the flesh.

Deuteronomy 12:28

General Information:

Moses continues speaking to the people of Israel.

Observe and listen to all these words that I command you

“Carefully listen to and obey everything that I am commanding you”

ULT

²⁸ Observe and listen to all these words that I command you, that it may go well with you and with your children after you forever, when you do what is good and right in the eyes of Yahweh your God.

that it may go well with you and with your children after you

Here “children” means all of their descendants. Alternate translation: “that you and your descendants may prosper” (See: [Synecdoche](#))

when you do what is good and right

The words “good” and “right” have similar meanings and emphasize the importance of right behavior. Alternate translation: “when you do what is right” (See: [Doublet](#))

what is good and right in the eyes of Yahweh

The eyes represent seeing, and seeing represents thoughts or judgment. Alternate translation: “what is good and right in Yahweh’s judgment” or “what Yahweh considers to be good and right” (See: [Metaphor](#))

Deuteronomy 12:29

cuts off the nations

Yahweh destroying the people groups in Canaan is spoken of as if he were cutting them off, as one would cut a piece of cloth or cut a branch from a tree. (See: [Metaphor](#))

the nations

Here “nations” represents the people living in Canaan. (See: [Metonymy](#))

when you go in to dispossess them, and you dispossess them

“when you take everything from them”

ULT

29 When Yahweh your God cuts off the nations from before you, when you go in to dispossess them, and you dispossess them, and live in their land,

Deuteronomy 12:30

pay attention to yourself

“be careful”

that you are not trapped into following them ... trapped into investigating their gods, into asking

A person learning about and worshiping other gods is spoken of as if they are caught in a hunter’s trap. This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: “that you do not act like them ... that you do try to learn about their gods, asking” (See: [Metaphor](#) and [Active or Passive](#))

not trapped into following them

The Israelites worshiping idols as the people groups of Canaan worship idols is spoken of as if the Israelites were following behind the other people groups. (See: [Metaphor](#))

after they are destroyed from before you

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: “after Yahweh destroys them before you” (See: [Active or Passive](#))

into asking, ‘How do these nations worship their gods? I will do the same.’

This is a quotation within a quotation. A direct quotation can be stated as an indirect quotation. Alternate translation: “into asking about how those people groups worship their gods so that you can do the same.” (See: [Quotes within Quotes](#) and [Direct and Indirect Quotations](#))

ULT

³⁰ pay attention to yourself that you are not trapped into following them, after they are destroyed from before you—trapped into investigating their gods, into asking, ‘How do these nations worship their gods? I will do the same.’

Deuteronomy 12:31

(There are no notes for this verse.)

ULT

³¹ You must not worship Yahweh your God in that way, for everything that is an abomination to Yahweh, things that he hates—they have done these with their gods; they even burn their sons and their daughters in fire for their gods.

Deuteronomy 12:32

Do not add to it or take away from it

They are not to create more laws nor are they to ignore laws that God has given them.

ULT

³² Whatever I command you, observe it.
Do not add to it or take away from it.

Deuteronomy 13

Deuteronomy 13 General Notes

Special concepts in this chapter

Worshiping other gods

The people were required to listen to Yahweh's prophets unless they were encouraging the people to worship other gods. The punishment for anyone leading the people to worship other gods was death. These instructions were to keep Israel's worship of Yahweh pure. (See: [prophet](#), [prophecy](#), [prophesy](#), [seer](#), [prophetess](#) and [god](#), [false god](#), [goddess](#), [idol](#), [idolater](#), [idolatrous](#), [idolatry](#) and [pure](#), [purify](#), [purification](#))

Deuteronomy 13:1

General Information:

Moses continues speaking to the people of Israel.

If there arises among you

“If there appears among you” or “If someone among you claims to be”

a dreamer of dreams

This is someone who receives messages from God through dreams.

a sign or a wonder

These two words have similar meanings and refer to various miracles. (See: [Doublet](#))

ULT

¹ If there arises among you a prophet or a dreamer of dreams, and if he gives you a sign or a wonder,

Deuteronomy 13:2

comes about

“takes place” or “happens”

of which he spoke to you and said, ‘Let us go after other gods, that you have not known, and let us worship them,’

ULT

² and if the sign or the wonder comes about, of which he spoke to you and said, ‘Let us go after other gods, that you have not known, and let us worship them,’

This can be translated as an indirect quotation. Alternate translation: “and he tells you to serve and worship other gods which you have not known,” (See: [Direct and Indirect Quotations](#))

Let us go after other gods

Worshiping other gods is spoken of as if they were going after or following other gods. Alternate translation: “Let us follow other gods” (See: [Metaphor](#))

go after other gods, that you have not known

The phrase “gods, that you have not known” refers to the gods that other people groups worship. The Israelites know Yahweh because he has revealed himself to them and they have experienced his power.

Deuteronomy 13:3

do not listen to the words of that prophet, or to that dreamer of dreams

“do not listen to what that prophet say nor to what the dreamer of dreams says”

with all your heart and with all your soul

Here “heart” and “soul” are metonyms for a person’s inner being. These two phrases are used together to mean “completely” or “earnestly.” See how you translated this in [Deuteronomy 4:29](#). (See: [Metonymy](#) and [Doublet](#))

ULT

³ do not listen to the words of that prophet, or to that dreamer of dreams; for Yahweh your God is testing you to know whether you love Yahweh your God with all your heart and with all your soul.

Deuteronomy 13:4

You will walk after Yahweh your God

Obedying and worshiping Yahweh is spoken of as if the people were walking after or following Yahweh. Alternate translation: “You will obey Yahweh” (See: [Metaphor](#))

obey his voice

Here “voice” represents what Yahweh says. Alternate translation: “obey what he says” (See: [Metonymy](#))

cling to him

To have a good relationship with Yahweh and to completely rely on him is spoken of as if the person were clinging to Yahweh. Alternate translation: “rely on him” (See: [Metaphor](#))

ULT

⁴ You will walk after Yahweh your God, honor him, keep his commandments, and obey his voice, and you will worship him and cling to him.

Deuteronomy 13:5

will be put to death

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

he has spoken rebellion

The abstract noun “rebellion” can be stated as a verb. Alternate translation: “he has tried to make you rebel” (See: [Abstract Nouns](#))

who redeemed you out of the house of bondage

Yahweh rescuing the people of Israel from being slaves in Egypt is spoken of as if Yahweh paid money to redeem his people out of slavery. Alternate translation: “who rescued you out of the place where you were slaves” (See: [Metaphor](#))

the house of bondage

Here “house of bondage” represents Egypt where the people of Yahweh had been slaves. Alternate translation: “Egypt where you were slaves” (See: [Metonymy](#))

draw you out of the way in which Yahweh your God commanded you to walk

How God wants a person to live or behave is spoken of as if it were a way or road on which God wants his people to walk. A person trying to cause someone else to stop obeying God is spoken of as if the person were trying to get the other person to stop walking on God’s way or road. Alternate translation: “make you disobey what Yahweh your God commanded” (See: [Metaphor](#))

So put away the evil from among you

Here “the evil” refers to the evil person or the evil behavior. This nominal adjective can be stated as an adjective. Alternate translation: “So you must remove from among the people of Israel the person who does this evil thing” or “So you must kill this evil person” (See: [Nominal Adjectives](#))

ULT

⁵ That prophet or that dreamer of dreams will be put to death, because he has spoken rebellion against Yahweh your God, who brought you out of the land of Egypt, and who redeemed you out of the house of bondage. That prophet wants to draw you out of the way in which Yahweh your God commanded you to walk. So put away the evil from among you.

Deuteronomy 13:6

General Information:

Moses continues speaking to the people of Israel.

wife of your bosom

A bosom is a person's chest. This is an idiom that he holds close to his chest, which means he loves and cherishes her. Alternate translation: "wife you love" or "wife you dearly embrace" (See: [Idiom](#))

friend who is to you like your own soul

Here "soul" represents the person's life. This means the person cares for his friend as much as he cares for his own life. Alternate translation: "your dearest friend" or "a friend you love as much as you love yourself" (See: [Metonymy](#) and [Idiom](#))

ULT

⁶ Suppose that your brother, the son of your mother, or your son, or your daughter, or the wife of your bosom, or your friend who is to you like your own soul, secretly entices you and says, 'Let us go and worship other gods that you have not known, {neither} you nor your ancestors—

Deuteronomy 13:7

any of the gods of the peoples ... other end of the earth.'

This is the end of a quotation within a quotation that begins with the words “secretly entices you and says, ‘Let us go and worship ... neither you nor your ancestors—” in verse 6. It can be translated as an indirect quotation. “secretly entices you and says that you should go and worship ... neither you nor your ancestors—any of the gods of the peoples ... other end of the earth.” (See: [Direct and Indirect Quotations](#))

ULT

⁷ any of the gods of the peoples that {are} round about you, near to you, or far off from you, from the {one} end of the earth to the {other} end of the earth.'

that are round about you

“that are around you”

from the one end of the earth to the other end of the earth

Here the reference to the two extremes of the earth means “everywhere on earth.” Alternate translation: “throughout the entire earth” (See: [Merism](#))

Deuteronomy 13:8

You must not give in to him

“Do not agree to what he wants”

you must not permit your eye to pity him

Here “your eye” refers to the whole person. Alternate translation:

“you must not look at him with pity” or “you must not show him mercy” (See: [Synecdoche](#))

you must not spare him or conceal him

“you must not show him mercy or hide from others what he has done”

ULT

⁸ You must not give in to him or listen to him, and you must not permit your eye to pity him, and you must not spare him or conceal him.

Deuteronomy 13:9

your hand will be the first on him to put him to death

This means that he was to throw the first stone at the guilty person. The word “hand” represents the whole person. Alternate translation: “you must be the first to strike him to kill him” (See: [Synecdoche](#))

ULT

⁹ Instead, you will surely kill him; your hand will be the first on him to put him to death, and afterwards the hand of all the people.

the hand of all the people

Here “hand” represents the whole person. Alternate translation: “the other people will join you” (See: [Synecdoche](#))

Deuteronomy 13:10

he has tried to draw you away from Yahweh

“to turn you away from Yahweh.” A person trying to cause someone else to stop obeying Yahweh is spoken of as if the person were trying to cause someone to physically turn around and leave Yahweh. Alternate translation: “he has tried to make you disobey Yahweh” (See: [Metaphor](#))

ULT

10 You will stone him to death with stones, because he has tried to draw you away from Yahweh your God, who brought you out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage.

out of the house of bondage

Here “house of bondage” represents Egypt where the people of Yahweh had been slaves. Alternate translation: “out from the place where you were slaves” (See: [Metonymy](#))

Deuteronomy 13:11

All Israel will hear and fear

It is implied that when the people hear about the person who was executed, they will be afraid to act like he did. (See: [Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information](#))

ULT

11 All Israel will hear and fear, and will not continue to do this kind of wickedness among you.

Deuteronomy 13:12

General Information:

Moses continues speaking to the people of Israel.

ULT

¹² If you hear anyone say about one of your cities, that Yahweh your God gives you to live in:

Deuteronomy 13:13

Some wicked fellows have gone out from among you

The phrase “from among you” means that these wicked men were Israelites who lived in their communities.

have drawn away the inhabitants of their city and said, ‘Let us go and worship other gods that you have not known.’

This can be translated as an indirect quotation. Alternate translation: “have persuaded those who live in their city to go and worship other gods that they have not known.” (See: [Direct and Indirect Quotations](#))

have drawn away the inhabitants of their city

A person causing someone else to stop obeying Yahweh is spoken of as if the person has caused the other person to physically turn and leave Yahweh. (See: [Metaphor](#))

ULT

¹³ Some wicked fellows have gone out from among you and have drawn away the inhabitants of their city and said, ‘Let us go and worship other gods that you have not known.’

Deuteronomy 13:14

examine the evidence, make search, and investigate it thoroughly

All of these phrases mean basically the same thing. Moses is emphasizing that they must carefully find out what truly happened at the city. (See: [Doublet](#))

that such an abominable thing has been done among you

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: “that the people of the city have done such a terrible thing” (See: [Active or Passive](#))

ULT

14 Then you will examine the evidence, make search, and investigate it thoroughly. When you discover that it is true {and} certain {that} such an abominable thing has been done among you, then you will take action.

Deuteronomy 13:15

with the edge of the sword

Here “edge” represents the whole sword. Alternate translation: “with your swords” (See: [Synecdoche](#))

ULT

15 You will surely attack the inhabitants of that city with the edge of the sword, completely destroy it and all the people who are in it, along with its livestock, with the edge of the sword.

Deuteronomy 13:16

all the spoil

“all the plunder.” This refers to the possessions and treasures that an army collects after winning a battle.

heap of ruins

“pile of ruins”

it must never be built again

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: “no one must ever rebuild the city” (See: [Active or Passive](#))

ULT

16 You will gather all the spoil from it into the middle of its street and will burn the city, as well as all its spoil—for Yahweh your God. The city will be a heap of ruins forever; it must never be built again.

Deuteronomy 13:17

None of those things set apart for destruction must stick in your hand

Yahweh cursing something and promising to destroy it is spoken of as if Yahweh were setting the object apart from other things. This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "You must not keep any of the things God has commanded you to destroy" (See: [Metaphor](#) and [Active or Passive](#))

must stick in your hand

This is a way of saying a person keeps something. Alternate translation: "must you keep" (See: [Idiom](#))

Yahweh will turn from the fierceness of his anger

Yahweh no longer being angry is spoken of as his anger were an object and Yahweh physically turns away from it. Alternate translation: "Yahweh will stop being angry" (See: [Metaphor](#))

to your fathers

Here "fathers" means ancestors or forefathers.

ULT

¹⁷ None of those things set apart for destruction must stick in your hand. This must be the case, so that Yahweh will turn from the fierceness of his anger, show you mercy, have compassion on you, and make you increase in numbers, as he has sworn to your fathers.

Deuteronomy 13:18

you are listening to the voice of Yahweh

Here “voice” represents what Yahweh says. Alternate translation: “you are obeying what Yahweh says” (See: [Metonymy](#))

that which is right in the eyes of Yahweh your God

The eyes represent seeing, and seeing represents thoughts or judgment. Alternate translation: “that which is right in Yahweh’s judgment” or “that which Yahweh your God considers to be right” (See: [Metaphor](#))

ULT

18 He will do this because you are listening to the voice of Yahweh your God, to keep all his commandments that I am commanding you today, to do that which is right in the eyes of Yahweh your God.

Deuteronomy 14

Deuteronomy 14 General Notes

Special concepts in this chapter

Law of Moses

This chapter is part of the law of Moses, which is part of the covenant Yahweh made with Moses. (See: [law](#), [law of Moses](#), [law of Yahweh](#), [law of God](#))

Clean animals

There are animals which the law considered to be clean and unclean. The people were not allowed to eat the unclean animals. Scholars are uncertain about the reasons for the animals to be considered to be clean or unclean. The result of these food restrictions was a nation that was different than the nations surrounding it. (See: [clean](#), [wash](#))

Deuteronomy 14:1

General Information:

Moses continues speaking to the people of Israel.

You are the people

All occurrences of “you” refer to the people of Israel. Moses was included as a part of the people. Alternate translation: “We are the people”

ULT

¹ You {are} the people of Yahweh your God. Do not cut yourselves, nor shave any part of your face for the dead.

Do not cut yourselves, nor shave any part of your face for the dead

These were ways the people groups living in Canaan showed that they were grieving over people who had died. Moses is telling the people of Israel not to act like them. The full meaning of this statement can be made explicit. (See: [Symbolic Action](#) and [Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information](#))

nor shave any part of your face

“nor shave the front of your head”

Deuteronomy 14:2

you are a nation ... has chosen you

All occurrences of “you” refer to the people of Israel. Moses was included as a part of the people. Alternate translation: “we are a nation ... has chosen us”

For you are a nation ... surface of the earth

See how you translated these words in [Deuteronomy 7:6](#).

you are a nation that is set apart to Yahweh your God

Yahweh choosing the people of Israel to belong to him in a special way is spoken of as if Yahweh set them apart from all other nations. This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: “Yahweh your God has set you apart from other nations” (See: [Metaphor](#) and [Active or Passive](#))

Yahweh has chosen you to be a people for his own possession

This means basically the same thing as the first part of the sentence. They both mean that the people of Israel belong to Yahweh in a special way. (See: [Parallelism](#))

a people for his own possession

“a people for his treasured possession” or “his people”

more than all peoples that are on the surface of the earth

“out of all the people groups in the world”

ULT

² For you {are} a nation that is set apart to Yahweh your God, and Yahweh has chosen you to be a people for his own possession, more than all peoples that are on the surface of the earth.

Deuteronomy 14:3

You must not eat any abominable thing

The people of Israel were not supposed to eat anything that God said was unfit for eating.

ULT

³ You must not eat any abominable thing.

Deuteronomy 14:4

(There are no notes for this verse.)

ULT

⁴ These are the animals that you may eat: the ox, the sheep, and the goat,

Deuteronomy 14:5

the deer, the gazelle, the roebuck

These are all types of deer. If your language does not have a word for each animal it can be translated as “all kinds of deer.”

the gazelle

This is wild animal with long thin legs that can run quickly. See how you translated this in [Deuteronomy 12:15](#).

the roebuck

a type of deer (See: [Translate Unknowns](#))

ibex, and the antelope

Both of these are types of antelope. If your language does not have a word for each animal it can be translated as “all kinds of antelope.”

ibex

a type of antelope (See: [Translate Unknowns](#))

ULT

⁵ the deer, the gazelle, the roebuck, the wild goat, and ibex, and the antelope, and the mountain sheep.

Deuteronomy 14:6

that parts the hoof

“that have split hooves.” This is a hoof that is split into two parts instead of being one whole.

chews the cud

This means the animal brings its food up from its stomach and chews it again.

ULT

6 You may eat any animals that parts the hoof, that is, that has the hoof divided in two, {and that} chews the cud.

Deuteronomy 14:7

rabbit

This is a small animal with long ears that usually lives in holes in the ground. (See: [Translate Unknowns](#))

rock badger

This is a small animal that lives in rocky places. (See: [Translate Unknowns](#))

they are unclean to you

Something Yahweh says is unfit for his people to eat is spoken of as if it were physically unclean. (See: [Metaphor](#))

ULT

⁷ Nevertheless, you must not eat some animals that chew the cud or that have the hoof divided in two: the camel, the rabbit, and the rock badger; because they chew the cud but do not part the hoof, {they are} unclean to you.

Deuteronomy 14:8

The pig is unclean to you

Something Yahweh says is unfit for his people to eat is spoken of as if it were physically unclean. (See: [Metaphor](#))

ULT

⁸ The pig is unclean to you as well because he parts the hoof but does not chew the cud; he is unclean to you. Do not eat pig meat, and do not touch their carcasses.

Deuteronomy 14:9

General Information:

Moses continues speaking to the people of Israel.

Of these things that are in water you may eat

“You may eat these kinds of animals that live in the water”

fins

the thin, flat part which the fish uses to move through the water

scales

the small plates that cover the body of the fish

ULT

⁹ Of these things that {are} in water you may eat: whatever has fins and scales;

Deuteronomy 14:10

they are unclean to you

Something Yahweh says is unfit for his people to eat is spoken of as if it were physically unclean. (See: [Metaphor](#))

ULT

10 but whatever has no fins and scales
you must not eat; they {are} unclean to
you.

Deuteronomy 14:11

All clean birds

An animal that God says is fit for his people to eat is spoken of as if the animal were physically clean. (See: [Metaphor](#))

ULT

11 All clean birds you may eat.

Deuteronomy 14:12

eagle ... vulture ... osprey

These are birds that are either awake at night or feed on small animals and dead animals. (See: [Translate Unknowns](#))

ULT

12 But these are the birds that you must not eat: the eagle, the vulture, the osprey,

Deuteronomy 14:13

red kite ... black kite ... falcon

These are birds that are either awake at night or feed on small animals and dead animals. (See: [Translate Unknowns](#))

ULT

¹³ the red kite and black kite, any kind of falcon.

Deuteronomy 14:14

raven

A bird that either is awake at night or feeds on small animals and dead animals. (See: [Translate Unknowns](#))

ULT

14 You must not eat any kind of raven,

Deuteronomy 14:15

(There are no notes for this verse.)

ULT

¹⁵ and the ostrich, and the night hawk,
the sea gull, any kind of hawk,

Deuteronomy 14:16

(There are no notes for this verse.)

ULT

¹⁶ the little owl, the great owl, the white owl,

Deuteronomy 14:17

cormorant

A bird that is either awake at night or feeds on small animals and dead animals. (See: [Translate Unknowns](#))

ULT

17 the pelican, the osprey, the cormorant.

Deuteronomy 14:18

stork ... heron, the hoopoe

These are types of birds that eat small animals and lizards. (See: [Translate Unknowns](#))

the bat

animal with wings and furry body which is awake mainly at night and eats insects and rodents

ULT

18 You must not eat the stork, any kind of heron, the hoopoe, and the bat.

Deuteronomy 14:19

All winged, swarming things

This means all flying insects that move in large groups.

are unclean to you

Animals that God says are unfit for his people to eat are spoken of as if the animals are physically unclean. (See: [Metaphor](#))

they must not be eaten

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: “you must not eat them” (See: [Active or Passive](#))

ULT

¹⁹ All winged, swarming things are unclean to you; they must not be eaten.

Deuteronomy 14:20

all clean flying things

Animals that God says are fit for his people to eat are spoken of as if the animals are physically clean. (See: [Metaphor](#))

ULT

20 You may eat all clean flying things.

Deuteronomy 14:21

General Information:

Moses continues speaking to the people of Israel.

anything that dies of itself

This means an animal that dies a natural death.

For you are a nation that is set apart to Yahweh your God

Yahweh choosing the people of Israel to belong to him in a special way is spoken of as if Yahweh set them apart from all other nations. This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "For Yahweh your God has set you apart from other nations" (See: [Metaphor](#) and [Active or Passive](#))

ULT

21 You must not eat of anything that dies {of itself}; you may give it to the foreigner who {is} within your towns, that he may eat it; or you may sell it to a foreigner. For you {are} a nation that is set apart to Yahweh your God. You must not boil a young goat in its mother's milk.

Deuteronomy 14:22

tithe all the yield of your seed

This means they are to give one part out of every ten equal parts from their crops.

year after year

“every year”

ULT

22 You must surely tithe all the yield of your seed, that which comes out from the field year after year.

Deuteronomy 14:23

before Yahweh

“in the presence of Yahweh”

ULT

²³ You must eat before Yahweh your God, in the place that he will choose as his sanctuary, the tithe of your grain, of your new wine, and of your oil, and the firstborn of your herd and your flock; that you may learn to always honor Yahweh your God.

Deuteronomy 14:24

carry it

Here “it” refers to the tithe of crops and livestock.

ULT

²⁴ If the journey is too long for you so that you are not able to carry it, because the place that Yahweh your God will choose as his sanctuary is too far from you, then, when Yahweh God blesses you,

Deuteronomy 14:25

you will convert the offering into money

“you will sell your offering for money”

tie up the money in your hand, and go

“put the money in a bag and take it with you”

ULT

²⁵ you will convert the offering into money, tie up the money in your hand, and go to the place that Yahweh your God will choose.

Deuteronomy 14:26

for whatever you desire

“for whatever you want”

before Yahweh

“in the presence of Yahweh”

ULT

²⁶ There you will spend the money for whatever you desire: for oxen, or for sheep, or for wine, or for strong drink, or for whatever you desire; you will eat there before Yahweh your God, and you will rejoice, you and your household.

Deuteronomy 14:27

do not forsake him

This can be stated in positive form. Alternate translation: “make sure to give some of your tithe to the Levite” (See: [Double Negatives](#))

for he has no portion nor inheritance with you

The tribe of Levi did not receive a portion of land as their inheritance. Their share of the inheritance was the honor of serving Yahweh as his priests. The full meaning of this statement can be made explicit. (See: [Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information](#))

no portion nor inheritance with you

God not giving land to the Levites is spoken of as if he were not giving them an inheritance. (See: [Metaphor](#))

ULT

²⁷ The Levite who {is} within your gates
—do not forsake him, for he has no
portion nor inheritance with you.

Deuteronomy 14:28

every three years you will present all the tithe of your produce

Once every 3 years the Israelites were to store their tithes within their own towns so that it would be used to provide for the Levites, orphans, widows and foreigners. (See: [Numbers](#))

within your gates

Here “gates” represents the entire city or town. Alternate translation: “inside your city” (See: [Synecdoche](#))

ULT

²⁸ At the end of every three years you will present all the tithe of your produce in the same year, and you will store {it} up within your gates;

Deuteronomy 14:29

because he has no portion nor inheritance with you

God not giving any land to the Levites is spoken of as if he were not giving them an inheritance. (See: [Metaphor](#))

fatherless

These are children whose parents have both died and do not have relatives to care for them.

widow

This is a woman whose husband has died and has no children to care for her in her old age.

in all the work of your hand that you do

Here “hand” represents the whole person. This refers to the work that someone does. Alternate translation: “in all the work you do” (See: [Synecdoche](#))

ULT

²⁹ and the Levite, because he has no portion nor inheritance with you, and the foreigner, and the fatherless, and the widow who {are} within your gates, will come and eat and be satisfied. Do this so that Yahweh your God may bless you in all the work of your hand that you do.

Deuteronomy 15

Deuteronomy 15 General Notes

Special concepts in this chapter

Forgiveness of Debt

This chapter gives instructions about the necessity to regularly forgive debt among their fellow countryman. This prevented people from being trapped by their poverty.

Justice

As Yahweh's chosen nation, there must be justice in Israel. This chapter gives commands that encouraged justice by protecting the poor, servants and slaves. (See: [chosen](#), [choose](#), [chosen people](#), [Chosen One](#), [elect](#) and [just](#), [justice](#), [unjust](#), [injustice](#), [justify](#), [justification](#))

Deuteronomy 15:1

General Information:

Moses continues speaking to the people of Israel.

seven years

"7 years" (See: [Numbers](#))

you must cancel debts

"forgive every thing which people still owe you"

ULT

¹ At the end of {every} seven years, you must cancel debts.

Deuteronomy 15:2

This is the manner of the release

“This is how to cancel the debts”

creditor

a person who lends money to other people

his neighbor or his brother

The words “neighbor” and “brother” share similar meanings and emphasize the close relationship that they have with their fellow Israelites. Alternate translation: “his fellow Israelite” (See: [Doublet](#))

because Yahweh’s cancellation of debts has been proclaimed

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: “because Yahweh has required that you cancel debts” (See: [Active or Passive](#))

ULT

² This is the manner of the release:
Every creditor will cancel that which he
has lent to his neighbor; he will not
demand {it} from his neighbor or his
brother because Yahweh’s cancellation
of debts has been proclaimed.

Deuteronomy 15:3

your hand must release

This is an idiom. Alternate translation: “you must not demand it back” or “you must not require repayment” (See: [Idiom](#))

ULT

³ From a foreigner you may demand it; but whatever of yours is with your brother your hand must release.

Deuteronomy 15:4

no poor

The nominal adjective “poor” can be stated as an adjective. Alternate translation: “no poor people” or “no one who is poor” (See: [Nominal Adjectives](#))

the land that he gives

This refers to the land of Canaan.

he gives you as an inheritance to possess

The land that Yahweh is giving to his people is spoken of as if it were an inheritance that Yahweh is giving them. (See: [Metaphor](#))

ULT

⁴ However, there should be no poor among you (for Yahweh will surely bless you in the land that he gives you {as} an inheritance to possess),

Deuteronomy 15:5

if only you diligently listen to the voice of Yahweh your God

Here the metonym “voice of Yahweh” refers to what Yahweh himself says. Alternate translation: “if only you are careful to obey what Yahweh your God says” (See: [Metonymy](#))

ULT

⁵ if only you diligently listen to the voice of Yahweh your God, to keep all these commandments that I am commanding you today.

Deuteronomy 15:6

you will lend ... you will not borrow

The word “money” is understood. You can make the full meaning of this statement clear. Alternate translation: “you will lend money ... you will not borrow money” (See: [Ellipsis](#))

to many nations ... over many nations

Here “nations” represents the people. Alternate translation: “to the people of many nations ... over the people of many nations” (See: [Metonymy](#))

you will rule over many nations, but they will not rule over you

Here “rule over” means to be financially superior. This means basically the same thing as the previous part of the sentence. (See: [Parallelism](#))

ULT

6 For Yahweh your God will bless you, as he promised you; you will lend to many nations, but you will not borrow; you will rule over many nations, but they will not rule over you.

Deuteronomy 15:7

If there is a poor man

Here “man” means a person in general. Alternate translation: “If there is a poor person”

one of your brothers

“one of your fellow Israelites”

within any of your gates

Here “gates” represents the entire city or town. Alternate translation: “within any of your towns” (See: [Synecdoche](#))

you must not harden your heart

Being stubborn is spoken of as if the person hardened their heart. Alternate translation: “you must not be stubborn” (See: [Metaphor](#))

nor shut your hand from your poor brother

A person who refuses to provide for a poor person is spoken of as if he were shutting his hand so that the poor person cannot get anything from him. Alternate translation: “nor refuse to help your fellow Israelite who is poor” (See: [Metaphor](#))

ULT

⁷ If there is a poor man among you, one of your brothers, within any of your gates in your land that Yahweh your God is giving you, you must not harden your heart nor shut your hand from your poor brother;

Deuteronomy 15:8

but you must surely open your hand to him

A person who helps a poor person is spoken of as if he were opening his hand to him. Alternate translation: "but you must surely help him" (See: [Metaphor](#))

ULT

⁸ but you must surely open your hand to him and surely lend him sufficient for his need.

Deuteronomy 15:9

not to have a wicked thought in your heart, saying

Here “heart” represents a person’s mind. Alternate translation: “not to think a wicked thought” (See: [Metonymy](#))

The seventh year, the year of release, is near

It is implied that because the year of release will happen soon, the person thinking this will be reluctant to help a poor person since it is likely that the poor person will not have to pay him back. The full meaning of this statement can be made clear. (See: [Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information](#))

ULT

⁹ Be careful not to have a wicked thought in your heart, saying, ‘The seventh year, the year of release, is near,’ so that you will not be stingy in regard to your poor brother and give him nothing; he might cry out to Yahweh about you, and it would be sin for you.

The seventh year

The word “seventh” is the ordinal number for seven. (See: [Ordinal Numbers](#))

the year of release

“the year to cancel debts”

is near

Something that will happen soon is spoken of as if it were physically near. Alternate translation: “will happen soon” (See: [Metaphor](#))

so that you will not be stingy in regard to your poor brother and give him nothing

“so that you are not stubborn and refuse to give anything to your fellow Israelite”

cry out to Yahweh

“shout to Yahweh for help”

it would be sin for you

“Yahweh will consider what you have done to be sinful”

Deuteronomy 15:10

your heart must not be sorry

Here “heart” represents the whole person. Alternate translation: “you should not regret it” or “you should be happy” (See: [Synecdoche](#) and [Litotes](#))

in all that you put your hand to

Here “put your hand to” represents the whole person and work that he has done. Alternate translation: “in all that you do” (See: [Synecdoche](#))

ULT

10 You must surely give to him, and your heart must not be sorry when you give to him, because in return for this Yahweh your God will bless you in all your work and in all that you put your hand to.

Deuteronomy 15:11

For the poor will never cease to exist in the land

This can be stated in positive form. Alternate translation: “For there will always be poor people in the land” (See: [Double Negatives](#))

For the poor

The nominal adjective “the poor” can be stated as an adjective. Alternate translation: “For poor people” (See: [Nominal Adjectives](#))

I command you and say, ‘You must surely open your hand ... in your land.’

This has a quotation within a quotation. A direct quotation can be stated as an indirect quotation. Alternate translation: “I command you to open your hand ... in your land” (See: [Quotes within Quotes](#) and [Direct and Indirect Quotations](#))

open your hand to your brother, to your needy, and to your poor

A person who is willing to help someone else is spoken of as if his hand were open. Alternate translation: “help your fellow Israelite, those who are needy, and those who are poor” (See: [Metaphor](#))

your brother, to your needy, and to your poor

The words “needy” and “poor” mean basically the same thing and emphasize that these are people who cannot help themselves. Alternate translation: “help your fellow Israelites who cannot help themselves” (See: [Doublet](#))

ULT

¹¹ For the poor will never cease to exist in the land; therefore I command you and say, ‘You must surely open your hand to your brother, to your needy, and to your poor in your land.’

Deuteronomy 15:12

General Information:

Moses continues speaking to the people of Israel.

If your brother

Here “brother” means an Israelite in general, whether a male or female. Alternate translation: “If a fellow Israelite” or “If a fellow Hebrew” (See: [When Masculine Words Include Women](#))

is sold to you

If a person could not repay their debts, they sometimes sold themselves into slavery to pay what they owed. This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: “sell themselves to you” (See: [Active or Passive](#))

six years

“6 years” (See: [Numbers](#))

seventh year

“year 7.” This “seventh” is the ordinal number for seven. (See: [Ordinal Numbers](#))

ULT

¹² If your brother, a Hebrew man, or a Hebrew woman, is sold to you and serves you for six years, then in the seventh year you must let him go free from you.

Deuteronomy 15:13

you must not let him go empty-handed

A person who has no possessions to provide for himself or his family is spoken of as if his hands were empty. Alternate translation: “you must not let him leave without having anything to provide for himself and his family” (See: [Metaphor](#))

ULT

13 When you let him go free from you, you must not let him go empty-handed.

Deuteronomy 15:14

liberally provide for him

“generously give to him”

ULT

14 You must liberally provide for him out of your flock, out of your threshing floor, and out of your winepress. As Yahweh your God has blessed you, you must give to him.

Deuteronomy 15:15

remember that you were a slave

Here “you” includes their ancestors that were slaves for many years.
Alternate translation: “remember that your people were once slaves” (See: [Forms of You](#))

that Yahweh your God redeemed you

Yahweh rescuing the people of Israel from being slaves in Egypt is spoken of as if Yahweh paid money to redeem his people from slavery. (See: [Metaphor](#))

ULT

15 You must remember that you were a slave in the land of Egypt, and that Yahweh your God redeemed you; therefore I am commanding you today to do this.

Deuteronomy 15:16

if he says to you, 'I will not go away from you,'

This has a quotation within a quotation. A direct quotation can be stated as an indirect quotation. Alternate translation: "if he says to you that he will not go away from you," (See: [Quotes within Quotes](#) and [Direct and Indirect Quotations](#))

your house

Here "house" represents the person's family. (See: [Metonymy](#))

ULT

16 It will happen that if he says to you, 'I will not go away from you,' because he loves you and your house, and because he is well off with you,

Deuteronomy 15:17

then you must take an awl and thrust it through his ear to a door

“then you will place his head near a wooden door frame in your house, and then put the point of the awl through his earlobe into the wood”

awl

a sharp, pointed tool used to make a hole (See: [Translate Unknowns](#))

for life

“until the end of his life” or “until he dies”

ULT

17 then you must take an awl and thrust {it} through his ear to a door, and he will be your servant for life. You must do the same with your female servant.

Deuteronomy 15:18

It must not seem difficult for you to let him go free from you

This means that they are not resent it when they let someone go free. This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "Be pleased when you let him go free" (See: [Litotes](#))

given twice the value of a hired person

This means the owner only had to pay have the amount for this slave to work than he would for a person he hired to do a job.

a hired person

This is a person who works for pay.

ULT

¹⁸ It must not seem difficult for you to let him go free from you, because he has served you for six years and given twice the value of a hired person. Yahweh your God will bless you in all that you do.

Deuteronomy 15:19

General Information:

Moses continues speaking to the people of Israel.

shear

to cut off wool or hair

ULT

19 All the firstborn males in your herd and your flock you must set apart to Yahweh your God. You will do no work with the firstborn of your herd, nor shear the firstborn of your flock.

Deuteronomy 15:20

before Yahweh

“in the presence of Yahweh”

year by year

“each year” or “every year”

ULT

20 You must eat the firstborn before Yahweh your God year by year in the place that Yahweh will choose, you and your household.

Deuteronomy 15:21

lame

crippled or physically disabled

ULT

²¹ If it has any blemish—for example, {if it is} lame or blind, {or has} any blemish whatever—you must not sacrifice it to Yahweh your God.

Deuteronomy 15:22

within your gates

Here “gates” represents the city or town. Alternate translation: “within your community” or “inside your city” (See: [Synecdoche](#))

the unclean ... persons

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

the clean persons

A person who is acceptable for God’s purposes is spoken of as if the person were physically clean. (See: [Metaphor](#))

a gazelle or a deer

These are wild animals with long thin legs that can run quickly. See how you translated these in [Deuteronomy 12:15](#).

ULT

22 You will eat {it} within your gates; the unclean and the clean persons alike must eat it, as you would eat a gazelle or a deer.

Deuteronomy 15:23

you must not eat its blood

“you must not consume its blood.” Yahweh did not allow Israelites to consume blood because the blood represented life ([Deuteronomy 12:23](#)).

ULT

²³ Only you must not eat its blood; you must pour its blood out on the ground like water.

Deuteronomy 16

Deuteronomy 16 General Notes

Special concepts in this chapter

Festivals

This chapter retells the specific commands about how to celebrate the Passover. This recalled the Passover in Egypt, which was an important event in the formation of the nation of Israel. There are several other important festivals described in this chapter. (See: [Passover](#))

Life in Israel

As Yahweh's chosen nation, there must be justice in Israel. Also, Yahweh must be the only God in Israel. He alone is to be worshiped. (See: [chosen](#), [choose](#), [chosen people](#), [Chosen One](#), [elect](#) and [just](#), [justice](#), [unjust](#), [injustice](#), [justify](#), [justification](#))

Deuteronomy 16:1

General Information:

Moses continues speaking to the people of Israel.

month of Aviv

This is the first month of the Hebrew calendar. It marks when God brought the people of Israel out of Egypt. It is during the last part of March and the first part April on Western calendars. (See: [Hebrew Months](#) and [How to Translate Names](#))

keep the Passover

It is implied by “keep the Passover” that they would celebrate and eat the Passover meal. Alternate translation: “celebrate the Passover meal” or “eat the Passover meal” (See: [Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information](#))

ULT

¹ Observe the month of Abib, and keep the Passover to Yahweh your God, for in the month of Aviv Yahweh your God brought you out of Egypt by night.

Deuteronomy 16:2

You will sacrifice the Passover

Here “Passover” represents the animal that is sacrificed for the Passover celebration. Alternate translation: For the Passover you will offer a sacrifice” (See: [Metonymy](#))

ULT

² You will sacrifice the Passover to Yahweh your God with some of the flock and the herd in the place that Yahweh will choose as his sanctuary.

Deuteronomy 16:3

with it

Here “it” refers to the animal they will sacrifice and eat.

seven days

“7 days” (See: [Numbers](#))

the bread of affliction

This was the name of the unleavened bread. The full meaning can be stated explicitly. Alternate translation: “this bread will remind you of how much you suffered while in Egypt” (See: [Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information](#))

out of the land of Egypt in haste

The people had to leave Egypt so quickly that they did not have enough time to make bread with yeast in it. The full meaning of this statement can be made explicit. Alternate translation: “out of the land of Egypt in such hurry you did not have time to make bread with yeast in it” (See: [Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information](#))

Do this all the days of your life

“Do this as long as you live”

call to mind

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

ULT

³ You will eat no leavened bread with it; seven days will you eat unleavened bread with it, the bread of affliction; for you came out of the land of Egypt in haste. Do this all the days of your life so that you may call to mind the day when you came out of the land of Egypt.

Deuteronomy 16:4

No yeast must be seen among you

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: “You must not have any yeast among you” (See: [Active or Passive](#))

within all your borders

“inside all your territory” or “in all your land”

first day

This “first” is the ordinal number for one. (See: [Ordinal Numbers](#))

ULT

⁴ No yeast must be seen among you within all your borders during seven days; nor must {any} of the meat that you sacrifice in the evening on the first day remain until the morning.

Deuteronomy 16:5

You may not sacrifice the Passover

Here “Passover” represents the animal that will be sacrificed.
Alternate translation: “For the Passover you may not sacrifice the animal” (See: [Metonymy](#))

within any of your city gates

Here “gates” represents the cities or towns. Alternate translation: “within any of your towns” (See: [Synecdoche](#))

ULT

⁵ You may not sacrifice the Passover within any of your city gates that Yahweh your God is giving you.

Deuteronomy 16:6

at the going down of the sun

“at sunset”

ULT

⁶ Instead, sacrifice at the place that Yahweh your God will choose as his sanctuary. There you will perform the sacrifice of the Passover in the evening at the going down of the sun, at the time of year that you came out of Egypt.

Deuteronomy 16:7

You must roast it

“You must cook it”

ULT

⁷ You must roast it and eat {it} at the place that Yahweh your God will choose; in the morning you will turn and go to your tents.

Deuteronomy 16:8

six days

“6 days” (See: [Numbers](#))

seventh day

“seventh” is the ordinal number for seven. (See: [Ordinal Numbers](#))

solemn assembly

“special gathering”

ULT

⁸ For six days you will eat unleavened bread; on the seventh day there {will be} a solemn assembly for Yahweh your God; on that day you must do no work.

Deuteronomy 16:9

General Information:

Moses continues speaking to the people of Israel.

count seven weeks

“count 7 weeks” (See: [Numbers](#))

ULT

⁹ You will count seven weeks for yourselves; from {the time} you begin {to put} the sickle to the standing grain you must start counting seven weeks.

from the time you begin to put the sickle to the standing grain

The phrase “put the sickle to the standing grain” is a way of referring to the beginning of harvest time. Alternate translation: “from the time that you begin harvesting the grain” (See: [Idiom](#))

sickle

a tool with a curved blade used for cutting grass, grain, and vines (See: [Translate Unknowns](#))

Deuteronomy 16:10

**with the contribution of a freewill offering
from your hand that you will give**

Here “hand” represents the whole person. Alternate translation:
“and you will give your free will offering” (See: [Synecdoche](#))

**according as Yahweh your God has blessed
you**

“according to the harvest which Yahweh your God has given you” This means that the people will base how much they offer on how much they harvested that year.

ULT

¹⁰ You must keep the Festival of Weeks for Yahweh your God with the contribution of a freewill offering from your hand that you will give, according as Yahweh your God has blessed you.

Deuteronomy 16:11

your son, your daughter, your male servant, your female servant, the Levite

These do not refer to a specific person. It means these types of people in general. Alternate translation: “your sons, your daughters, your male servants, your females servants, any Levite” (See: [Generic Noun Phrases](#))

within your city gates

Here “gates” represents cities or towns. Alternate translation: “within your towns” (See: [Synecdoche](#))

the foreigner, the fatherless, and the widow

This refers to these types of people in general. Alternate translation: “all foreigners, orphans, and widows” (See: [Generic Noun Phrases](#))

fatherless

These are children whose parents have both died and do not have relatives to care for them.

widow

This means a woman whose husband has died and has no children to care for her in her old age.

ULT

11 You will rejoice before Yahweh your God—you, your son, your daughter, your male servant, your female servant, the Levite who {is} within your city gates, and the foreigner, the fatherless, and the widow who {are} among you, at the place that Yahweh your God will choose for his sanctuary.

Deuteronomy 16:12

call to mind

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

ULT

12 You will call to mind that you were a slave in Egypt; you must observe and do these statutes.

Deuteronomy 16:13

Festival of Shelters

Other names for this festival are “Feast of Tabernacles,” “Festival of Booths,” and “Feast of the Ingathering.” During harvest time, farmers would set up temporary shelters in the field. This festival took place after the last harvest of the year.

seven days

“7 days” (See: [Numbers](#))

ULT

13 You must keep the Festival of Shelters for seven days after you have gathered in the harvest from your threshing floor and from your winepress.

Deuteronomy 16:14

within your gates

Here the word “gates” represents cities or towns. Alternate translation: “within your towns” (See: [Synecdoche](#))

ULT

14 You will rejoice during your festival—you, your son, your daughter, your male servant, your female servant, the Levite, and the foreigner, and the fatherless and the widow who {are} within your gates.

Deuteronomy 16:15

the festival

“the Festival of Shelters”

all the work of your hands

Here “hands” represents the whole person. Alternate translation: “all the work you do” (See: [Synecdoche](#))

ULT

15 For seven days you must observe the festival for Yahweh your God at the place that Yahweh will choose, because Yahweh your God will bless you in all your harvest and all the work of your hands, and you must be completely joyful.

Deuteronomy 16:16

all your males must appear before Yahweh

Females were allowed, but Yahweh did not require that they come. The men could represent their whole families.

must appear before Yahweh

“must come and stand in the presence of Yahweh”

No one will appear before Yahweh empty-handed

“They will not come before Yahweh without an offering” These two negative phrases together have a positive meaning. Alternate translation: “Every person who comes before Yahweh must bring an offering” (See: [Litotes](#))

ULT

16 Three times in a year all your males must appear before Yahweh your God at the place that he will choose: at the Festival of Unleavened Bread, at the Festival of Weeks, and at the Festival of Shelters. No one will appear before Yahweh empty-handed;

Deuteronomy 16:17

(There are no notes for this verse.)

ULT

17 instead, every man {will give} as he is able, that you might know the blessing that Yahweh your God has given to you.

Deuteronomy 16:18

General Information:

Moses continues speaking to the people of Israel.

You must make judges

“You must appoint judges” or “You must choose judges”

within all your city gates

Here “gates” represents a city or town. Alternate translation: “within all your towns” (See: [Synecdoche](#))

they will be taken

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

judge the people with righteous judgment

“judge the people fairly”

ULT

18 You must make judges and officers within all your city gates that Yahweh your God is giving you; they will be taken from each of your tribes, and they must judge the people with righteous judgment.

Deuteronomy 16:19

You must not take justice away by force

Moses speaks of justice as if it were a physical object that a strong person can violently pull away from a weak person. This can be stated in positive form. Your language might have one word that means “use force to take away.” Alternate translation: “You must not be unfair when you judge” or “You must make just decisions” (See: [Metaphor](#) and [Double Negatives](#))

ULT

19 You must not take justice away by force; you must not show partiality nor take a bribe, for a bribe blinds the eyes of the wise and perverts the words of the righteous.

You must not

Here “You” refers to those who will be appointed as judges and officers. (See: [Forms of You](#))

for a bribe blinds the eyes of the wise and perverts the words of the righteous

Taking a bribe is spoken of as if the bribe were corrupting the people. Alternate translation: “for even a wise man who accepts a bribe will become blind, and even a righteous man who accepts a bribe will tell lies” (See: [Metaphor](#))

a bribe blinds the eyes of the wise

A wise person who accepts a bribe so that he does not speak against something evil is spoken of as if he becomes blind. (See: [Metaphor](#))

the wise

The nominal adjective “the wise” can be translated as an adjective. Alternate translation: “a wise person” or “wise people” (See: [Nominal Adjectives](#))

perverts the words of the righteous

The nominal adjective “righteous” can be translated as an adjective. Alternate translation: “causes a righteous person to lie” (See: [Nominal Adjectives](#))

Deuteronomy 16:20

follow after justice, after justice alone

justice is spoken of as a person who is walking. A person who is doing what is fair and just is spoken of as if he was following close behind justice. Alternate translation: "do only what is fair" (See: [Metaphor](#))

inherit the land that Yahweh your God is giving you

Receiving the land that God is giving to the people is spoken of as if the people are inheriting the land from God. (See: [Metaphor](#))

ULT

20 You must follow after justice, after justice alone, so that you may live and inherit the land that Yahweh your God is giving you.

Deuteronomy 16:21

You must not

Here “You” refers to all the people of Israel. (See: [Forms of You](#))

ULT

21 You must not set up for yourselves an Asherah, any sort of pole, beside the altar of Yahweh your God that you will make for yourself.

Deuteronomy 16:22

any sacred stone pillar, which Yahweh your God hates

The phrase “which Yahweh your God hates” is giving more information about the sacred stone pillar. Alternate translation: “any sacred stone pillar because Yahweh your God hates them” (See: [Distinguishing Versus Informing or Reminding](#))

sacred stone pillar

This refers to pillars that are idols used to worship false gods.

ULT

²² Neither must you set up for yourself any sacred stone pillar, which Yahweh your God hates.

Deuteronomy 17

Deuteronomy 17 General Notes

Special concepts in this chapter

Witnesses

In the ancient Near East, it was common for a person to be punished by the testimony of a single person, especially if this was an important person. The rules in this chapter give protection to people, especially the poor by requiring multiple witnesses. This allowed justice to be done. (See: [testimony](#), [testify](#), [witness](#), [eyewitness](#), [evidence](#) and [just](#), [justice](#), [unjust](#), [injustice](#), [justify](#), [justification](#))

King

Israel was not to have a king because Yahweh was their king. Knowing the sinfulness of the people, Yahweh anticipated that one day Israel would have a king. Therefore, this passage gives commands about their king prophetically. They were not allowed to collect chariots because they were a sign of earthly power and the king was to trust in Yahweh. (See: [prophet](#), [prophecy](#), [prophesy](#), [seer](#), [prophetess](#), [sign](#), [proof](#), [reminder](#) and [trust](#), [trusted](#), [trustworthy](#), [trustworthiness](#) and [Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information](#))

Deuteronomy 17:1

General Information:

Moses is still speaking to the people of Israel.

in which is any blemish

“that has a blemish” or “that has something wrong with it.” The animal is to appear healthy without any deformity.

that would be an abomination to Yahweh

“that would be disgusting to Yahweh”

ULT

¹ You must not sacrifice to Yahweh your God an ox or a sheep in which is any blemish or anything bad, for that would be an abomination to Yahweh your God.

Deuteronomy 17:2

If there is found

This may be stated in active form. Alternate translation: “If you find someone” or “If there is anyone” (See: [Active or Passive](#))

within any of your city gates

Here “city gates” represents cities or towns. Alternate translation: “living in one of your cities” (See: [Synecdoche](#))

what is evil in the sight of Yahweh your God

The sight of Yahweh represents Yahweh’s judgment or evaluation. Alternate translation: “something that Yahweh your God thinks is evil” (See: [Metonymy](#))

transgresses his covenant

“disobeys his covenant”

ULT

² If there is found among you, within any of your city gates that Yahweh your God is giving you, any man or woman who does what is evil in the sight of Yahweh your God and transgresses his covenant,

Deuteronomy 17:3

(There are no notes for this verse.)

ULT

³ anyone who has gone and worshiped other gods and bowed down to them, either the sun, the moon, or any of the host of heaven—nothing that I have commanded—

Deuteronomy 17:4

if you are told about this

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: “if someone tells you about this disobedient act” (See: [Active or Passive](#))

you must make a careful investigation

The abstract noun “investigation” can be stated as a verb. Alternate translation: “you must carefully investigate what happened” (See: [Abstract Nouns](#))

such an abomination has been done in Israel

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: “someone has done such a horrible thing in Israel” (See: [Active or Passive](#))

ULT

⁴ and if you are told about this, or if you have heard {of it}, then you must make a careful investigation. If {it is} true {and} certain that such an abomination has been done in Israel, this is what you should do.

Deuteronomy 17:5

(There are no notes for this verse.)

ULT

⁵ You must bring that man or woman, who has done this evil thing, to your city gates, that very man or woman, and you must stone that person to death.

Deuteronomy 17:6

At the mouth of two witnesses, or three witnesses, will he who must die be put to death

Here “the mouth” represents the testimony of a witness. This can be translated in active form. Alternate translation: “If two or three witnesses speak against the person, then you must execute him” (See: [Metonymy](#) and [Active or Passive](#) and [Numbers](#))

ULT

⁶ At the mouth of two witnesses, or three witnesses, will he who must die be put to death; but at the mouth of only one witness he must not be put to death.

but at the mouth of only one witness he must not be put to death

Here “the mouth” represents the testimony of a witness. This can be translated in active form. Alternate translation: “but if only one person speaks against him, then you must not execute him” (See: [Metonymy](#) and [Active or Passive](#))

Deuteronomy 17:7

The hand of the witnesses must be the first to put him to death, and afterward the hand of all the people

Here “hand” represents the entire group of witnesses. Alternate translation: “The witnesses themselves must be the first ones to throw stones. Then all the people will execute the person by throwing stones at him” (See: [Synecdoche](#))

ULT

⁷ The hand of the witnesses must be the first to put him to death, and afterward the hand of all the people; and you will remove the evil from among you.

you will remove the evil from among you

The nominal adjective “the evil” can be stated as an adjective. Alternate translation: “you must remove from among the Israelites this person who does this evil thing” or “you must execute this evil person” (See: [Nominal Adjectives](#))

Deuteronomy 17:8

General Information:

Moses continues speaking to the people of Israel.

If a matter arises

“If there is a matter” or “If there is a situation”

one person’s right and another person’s right

A “right” is a person’s legal authority to do something or to possess something.

ULT

⁸ If a matter arises that is too hard for you to judge—perhaps a question of murder or accidental death, of one person’s right and another person’s right, or a question of one kind of harm done, or another kind of matter, matters of controversy within your city gates—then you must go up to the place that Yahweh your God will choose as his sanctuary.

Deuteronomy 17:9

you will seek their advice

The abstract noun “advice” can be stated as a verb. Alternate translation: “you will ask them to advise you” (See: [Abstract Nouns](#))

they will give you the verdict

The abstract noun “verdict” can be stated as a verb. Alternate translation: “they will decide on the matter” (See: [Abstract Nouns](#))

ULT

⁹ You must go to the priests, the descendants of Levi, and to the judge who will be serving at that time; you will seek their advice, and they will give you the verdict.

Deuteronomy 17:10

(There are no notes for this verse.)

ULT

10 Then you must do according to what they order you to do, at the place Yahweh will choose. Be careful to do all that they teach you.

Deuteronomy 17:11

Follow the law they teach you

A person obeying what the priests and judge decide is spoken of as if the person were physically following behind the law. This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "You must obey what the judge and priests decide about the matter" (See: [Metaphor](#) and [Active or Passive](#))

ULT

11 Follow the law they teach you, and do according to the decisions they give you. Do not turn aside from what they tell you, {to} the right hand or {to} the left.

Do not turn aside from what they tell you, to the right hand or to the left

A person not doing exactly what the judge and priests say is spoken of as if he were turning off the correct path. This can be stated in positive form. Alternate translation: "Do not disobey anything they tell you" or "Do everything they say" (See: [Metaphor](#))

Deuteronomy 17:12

in not listening to the priest ... or in not listening to the judge

“and does not obey the priest ... or does not obey the judge”

you will put away the evil from Israel

The nominal adjective “the evil” can be translated as an adjective.

Alternate translation: “you must remove from among the Israelites

the person who does this evil thing” or “you must execute this evil person” (See: [Nominal Adjectives](#))

ULT

¹² Anyone who acts arrogantly, in not listening to the priest who is standing to serve before Yahweh your God, or in not listening to the judge—that man will die; you will put away the evil from Israel.

Deuteronomy 17:13

All the people must hear and fear, and act arrogantly no more

It is implied that when the people hear about the person who was executed for acting arrogantly, they will be afraid and not act arrogantly themselves. (See: [Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information](#))

ULT

¹³ All the people must hear and fear,
and act arrogantly no more.

Deuteronomy 17:14

General Information:

Moses continues speaking to the people of Israel.

When you have come to the land

The word “come to” can be translated as “gone to” or “entered.”
(See: [Go and Come](#))

ULT

14 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, and then you say, ‘I will set a king over myself, like all the nations that {are} round about me,’

then you say, ‘I will set a king over myself, like all the nations that are round about me,’

This has a quotation within a quotation. A direct quotation can be stated as an indirect quotation. Alternate translation: “then you decide that you want a king just like the peoples of the nations that surround you have kings,” (See: [Quotes within Quotes](#) and [Direct and Indirect Quotations](#))

I will set a king over myself ... round about me

Moses has the people speaking as if they were one person. It may be more natural to translate this with plural pronouns. Alternate translation: “We will set over ourselves ... round about us” (See: [Pronouns](#))

set a king over myself

Giving someone the authority to rule as king in Israel is spoken of as if the people were setting the person in a place above them. (See: [Metaphor](#))

all the nations that are round about me

“all the surrounding nations”

all the nations

Here “nations” represent the people who live in the nations. (See: [Metonymy](#))

Deuteronomy 17:15

someone from among your brothers

“one of your fellow Israelites”

a foreigner, who is not your brother, over yourself

Both of these phrases mean the same thing. They both refer to a person who is not an Israelite. Yahweh is emphasizing that the people of Israel should not let a foreigner rule over them. Alternate translation: “a foreigner over yourself” or “a non-Israelite over yourself” (See: [Doublet](#))

ULT

¹⁵ then you must surely set as king over yourself someone whom Yahweh your God will choose. You must set as king over yourself someone from among your brothers. You may not put a foreigner, who is not your brother, over yourself.

Deuteronomy 17:16

for Yahweh had said to you, 'You will never return that way again.'

This has a quotation within a quotation. A direct quotation can be stated as an indirect quotation. Alternate translation: "for Yahweh had said that you must never return to Egypt again." (See: [Quotes within Quotes](#) and [Direct and Indirect Quotations](#))

ULT

¹⁶ But he must not multiply horses for himself, nor cause the people to return to Egypt so that he may multiply horses, for Yahweh had said to you, 'You will never return that way again.'

Deuteronomy 17:17

so that his heart does not turn away

Here “heart” refers to the whole person. An Israelite king who marries foreign wives and starts to worship their false gods is spoken of as if his heart were to turn away from Yahweh. Alternate translation: “so that they do not cause him to stop honoring Yahweh and start worshiping false gods” (See: [Synecdoche](#) and [Metaphor](#))

ULT

17 He must not take many wives for himself, so that his heart does not turn away. He must not accumulate large amounts of silver and gold.

Deuteronomy 17:18

When he sits on the throne of his kingdom

Here “throne” represents the person’s power and authority as king. To sit on the throne means to become king. Alternate translation: “When he becomes king” (See: [Metonymy](#))

he must write for himself in a scroll a copy of this law

This could mean: (1) “he must personally write in a scroll a copy of this law for himself” or (2) “he must appoint someone to write in a scroll a copy of this law for him”

from the law that is before the priests, who are Levites

“from the copy of the law that the Levitical priests keep”

ULT

18 When he sits on the throne of his kingdom, he must write for himself in a scroll a copy of this law, from the law that is before the priests, who are Levites.

Deuteronomy 17:19

so as to keep all the words of this law and these statutes, to observe them

These two phrases mean basically the same thing and emphasize that the king must obey all of God's law. (See: [Parallelism](#))

ULT

¹⁹ The scroll must be with him, and he must read in it all the days of his life, so that he may learn to honor Yahweh his God, so as to keep all the words of this law and these statutes, to observe them.

Deuteronomy 17:20

so that his heart is not lifted up above his brothers

Here “his heart” refers to the whole person. A king becoming arrogant is spoken of as if his heart were lifted up. Alternate translation: “so that he does not become arrogant” or “so that he does not think he is better than his fellow Israelites” (See: [Synecdoche](#) and [Metaphor](#))

so that he does not turn away from the commandments, to the right hand or to the left

A king disobeying God’s commands is spoken of as if a person were to turn off the correct path. This can be stated in positive form. Alternate translation: “so that he does not disobey any of the commandments” or “so that he obeys all of the commandments” (See: [Metaphor](#) and [Litotes](#))

prolong his days

Long days is a metaphor for a long life. See how you translated a similar phrase “prolong your days” in [Deuteronomy 4:26](#). Alternate translation: “be able to live a long time” (See: [Metaphor](#))

ULT

²⁰ He must do this so that his heart is not lifted up above his brothers, and so that he does not turn away from the commandments, {to} the right hand or {to} the left; for the purpose that he may prolong {his} days in his kingdom, he and his children, among Israel.

Deuteronomy 18

Deuteronomy 18 General Notes

Special concepts in this chapter

Levites

As Yahweh's chosen priests, the priest were to trust in Yahweh to provide for them. He provided for them through the rest of the Israelites. Yahweh was their inheritance. (See: [chosen](#), [choose](#), [chosen people](#), [Chosen One](#), [elect](#), [priest](#), [priesthood](#) and [trust](#), [trusted](#), [trustworthy](#), [trustworthiness](#) and [inherit](#), [inheritance](#), [heir](#))

Messiah

This chapter is one of the first prophecies about the promised, coming Messiah. (See: [prophet](#), [prophecy](#), [prophecy](#), [seer](#), [prophetess](#) and [promise](#), [promised](#) and [Christ](#), [Messiah](#))

Deuteronomy 18:1

General Information:

Moses continues telling the people what Yahweh wants them to do.

will have no portion nor inheritance with Israel

The Levites not receiving any land from Yahweh is spoken of as if they would not receive an inheritance. Alternate translation: “will not possess any of the people’s land” or “will not receive any of the land that the Israelites will possess” (See: [Metaphor](#))

no portion

“no part” or “no share”

ULT

¹ The priests, who are Levites, and all the tribe of Levi, will have no portion nor inheritance with Israel; they must eat the offerings of Yahweh made by fire as their inheritance.

Deuteronomy 18:2

among their brothers

“among the other tribes of Israel” or “among the other Israelites”

Yahweh is their inheritance

Moses speaks of the great honor that Aaron and his descendants will have by serving Yahweh as priests as if Yahweh were something that they will inherit. See how you translated a similar phrase in [Deuteronomy 10:9](#). Alternate translation: “instead, they will have Yahweh” or “instead, Yahweh will allow them to serve him and he will provide for them through that service” (See: [Metaphor](#))

ULT

² They must have no inheritance among their brothers; Yahweh is their inheritance, as he said to them.

Deuteronomy 18:3

the inner parts

This is the stomach and intestines.

ULT

³ This is the share given to the priests, given to them from the people who offer a sacrifice, whether {it be} an oxen or a sheep: the shoulder, the two cheeks, and the inner parts.

Deuteronomy 18:4

you must give him

“you must give to the priest”

ULT

⁴ The firstfruits of your grain, of your new wine, and of your oil, and the first of the fleece of your sheep, you must give him.

Deuteronomy 18:5

has chosen him

Here “him” represents all the Levites. (See: [Metonymy](#))

to stand to serve in the name of Yahweh

Here “the name of Yahweh” stands for Yahweh himself and his authority. Alternate translation: “to be his special servants” or “to serve as a representative of Yahweh” (See: [Metonymy](#))

him and his sons forever

Here “him” represents all the Levites. Alternate translation: “the Levites and their descendants forever” (See: [Synecdoche](#))

ULT

⁵ For Yahweh your God has chosen him out of all your tribes to stand to serve in the name of Yahweh, him and his sons forever.

Deuteronomy 18:6

desires with all his soul

This is an idiom. Alternate translation: “strongly desires” or “really wants” (See: [Idiom](#))

ULT

⁶ If a Levite comes from any of your towns out of all Israel from where he is living, and desires with all his soul to come to the place Yahweh will choose,

Deuteronomy 18:7

then he must serve in the name of Yahweh his God

Here “name” represents Yahweh and his authority. Alternate translation: “then he must serve Yahweh his God as a priest” (See: [Metonymy](#))

who stand there before Yahweh

“who serve in the sanctuary in the presence of Yahweh”

ULT

⁷ then he must serve in the name of Yahweh his God as all his brothers the Levites {do}, who stand there before Yahweh.

Deuteronomy 18:8

his family's inheritance

This is what the priest would inherit from his father.

ULT

⁸ They must have similar portions to eat, besides of what comes of the sale of his family's inheritance.

Deuteronomy 18:9

When you have come

Here “come” can be translated as “gone” or “entered.” (See: [Go and Come](#))

you must not learn to observe the abominations of those nations

God hates the religious activities of the people in the surrounding nations. He considers them to be terribly evil. Here “nations” represents the people. Alternate translation: “you must not do the terrible things that the people of the other nations do” (See: [Metonymy](#))

ULT

⁹ When you have come into the land that Yahweh your God is giving you, you must not learn to observe the abominations of those nations.

Deuteronomy 18:10

There must not be found among you anyone

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "There must not be anyone among you" (See: [Active or Passive](#))

anyone who uses divination ... tells fortunes ... reads signs found in a cup ... engages in witchcraft

These are different ways of practicing magic. God has forbidden every kind of magic. If you do not have a word for all of these activities, it can be stated more generally. Alternate translation: "anyone who uses magic to try to find out what will happen in the future, to cast spells"

reads signs found in a cup

One who reads the shapes and figures in a cup and who predicts future events from what they can see

ULT

10 There must not be found among you {anyone} who sacrifices his son or his daughter in the fire, anyone who uses divination or tells fortunes, or reads signs found in a cup, or engages in witchcraft,

Deuteronomy 18:11

**any charmer ... anyone who conjurs up spirits
... one who casts spells ... who talks with
spirits of the dead**

These are phrases for people who practice different kinds of magic. God has forbidden every kind of magic. If you do not have a word for all of these types of people, you can translate more generally. Alternate translation: “anyone who uses magic to cast spells, or to talk to the spirits of dead people”

ULT

¹¹ any charmer, anyone who conjurs up spirits, {or} one who casts spells, or who talks with spirits of the dead.

Deuteronomy 18:12

driving them out

Here “them” refers to the people already living in Canaan.

ULT

¹² For whoever does these things is an abomination to Yahweh; it is because of these abominations that Yahweh your God is driving them out from before you.

Deuteronomy 18:13

(There are no notes for this verse.)

ULT

13 You must be blameless before
Yahweh your God.

Deuteronomy 18:14

For these nations

Here “nations” stands for the people groups that live in Canaan.
Alternate translation: “For these people groups” (See: [Metonymy](#))

these nations that you will dispossess

“these nations whose land you will take”

ULT

14 For these nations that you will dispossess listen to those who practice sorcery and divination; but as for you, Yahweh your God has not allowed you to do so.

Deuteronomy 18:15

General Information:

Moses continues speaking to the people of Israel.

Yahweh your God will raise up for you a prophet

Yahweh appointing a person to be a prophet is spoken of as if Yahweh would raise or lift the person up. (See: [Metaphor](#))

one of your brothers

“one of your fellow Israelites”

ULT

15 Yahweh your God will raise up for you a prophet from among you, one of your brothers, like me. You must listen to him.

Deuteronomy 18:16

This is what you asked

Here “you” refers to the Israelites at Mount Horeb about 40 years earlier.

at Horeb on the day of the assembly

“on the day you gathered together at Horeb”

on the day of the assembly, saying, ‘Let us not hear again the voice of Yahweh our God, nor see this great fire anymore, or we will die.’

This has a quotation within a quotation. A direct quotation can be stated as an indirect quotation. Alternate translation: “on the day of the assembly when you said that you did not want to hear the voice of Yahweh our God, nor see his great fire anymore, because you were afraid that you would die.” (See: [Quotes within Quotes](#) and [Direct and Indirect Quotations](#))

Let us not hear again the voice of Yahweh our God

Here Yahweh is represented by his “voice” to emphasize what he says. Alternate translation: “Let us not hear Yahweh our God speak again” (See: [Synecdoche](#))

ULT

16 This is what you asked from Yahweh your God at Horeb on the day of the assembly, saying, ‘Let us not hear again the voice of Yahweh our God, nor see this great fire anymore, or we will die.’

Deuteronomy 18:17

(There are no notes for this verse.)

ULT

17 Yahweh said to me, 'What they have said is good.'

Deuteronomy 18:18

I will raise up a prophet for them

Yahweh appointing a person to be a prophet is spoken of as if Yahweh would raise or lift the person up. (See: [Metaphor](#))

from among their brothers

“from among their fellow Israelites”

I will put my words in his mouth

Yahweh telling the prophet what to say is spoken of as if Yahweh would put words in the prophet’s mouth. (See: [Metaphor](#))

speak to them

“speak to the people of Israel”

ULT

18 I will raise up a prophet for them from among their brothers, just like you. I will put my words in his mouth, and he will speak to them all that I command him.

Deuteronomy 18:19

does not listen to the words of mine that he speaks in my name

Here “my name” represents Yahweh and his authority. Alternate translation: “does not listen to him when he speaks my message” (See: [Metonymy](#))

require it of him

“I will hold him responsible” or “I will punish him.” Here “him” refers to the person who does not listen to the prophet.

ULT

¹⁹ It will happen that if anyone does not listen to the words of mine that he speaks in my name, I will require {it} of him.

Deuteronomy 18:20

General Information:

Yahweh continues speaking.

who speaks a word arrogantly

“who dares to speak a message” or “who is arrogant enough to speak a message”

in my name

Here “my name” refers to Yahweh himself and his authority. Alternate translation: “for me” or “with my authority” (See: [Metonymy](#))

a word

“a message”

who speaks in the name of other gods

Here “name” represents the gods themselves or their authority. This means the prophet claims that false gods told him to speak a certain message. (See: [Metonymy](#))

ULT

²⁰ But the prophet who speaks a word arrogantly in my name, a word that I have not commanded him to speak, or who speaks in the name of other gods, that very prophet must die.’

Deuteronomy 18:21

This is what you must say in your heart

Here “heart” represents the thoughts of a person. Alternate translation: “You ask yourself” or “You must say to yourself” (See: [Metonymy](#))

How will we recognize a message that Yahweh has not spoken?

“How will we know if the message that the prophet speaks is from Yahweh?” Here “we” refers to the people of Israel.

ULT

²¹ This is what you must say in your heart: ‘How will we recognize a message that Yahweh has not spoken?’

Deuteronomy 18:22

General Information:

Yahweh continues speaking.

a prophet speaks in the name of Yahweh

Here “name of Yahweh” refers to Yahweh himself and his authority.
Alternate translation: “a prophet claims to speak for me” or “a prophet claims to speak with my authority” (See: [Metonymy](#))

the prophet has spoken it arrogantly

“the prophet has spoken this message without my authority”

ULT

²² You will recognize a message that Yahweh has spoken when a prophet speaks in the name of Yahweh. If that thing does not occur nor happen, then that is something that Yahweh has not spoken and the prophet has spoken it arrogantly, and you must not be afraid of him.

Deuteronomy 19

Deuteronomy 19 General Notes

Special concepts in this chapter

Justice

Another way justice would be maintained in Israel was by avoiding revenge killings. This chapter describes the establishment of special cities to protect those fleeing from revenge killings. (See: [just](#), [justice](#), [unjust](#), [injustice](#), [justify](#), [justification](#) and [avenge](#), [avenger](#), [revenge](#), [vengeance](#))

Witnesses

In the ancient Near East, it was common for a person to be punished by the testimony of a single person, especially if this was an important person. The rules in this chapter give protection to people, especially the poor by requiring multiple witnesses. This allowed justice to be done. (See: [testimony](#), [testify](#), [witness](#), [eyewitness](#), [evidence](#))

Other possible translation difficulties in this chapter

Law of retaliation

The chapter describes a famous law, often called the “law of retaliation.” It is said, an “eye for eye, tooth for tooth, hand for hand, foot for foot.” This does not mean a person who causes another person to lose their eye must have their own eye removed as punishment. This law is not about making all things equal. Instead, it is about limiting the punishment or the ability of a person to retaliate. (See: [Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information](#))

Deuteronomy 19:1

General Information:

Moses is still speaking to the people of Israel.

When Yahweh your God cuts off the nations

Yahweh destroying the people who live in Canaan is spoken of as if he were cutting them off, as one would cut a piece of cloth or cut a branch from a tree. (See: [Metaphor](#))

the nations

This represents the people groups that live in Canaan. (See: [Metonymy](#))

those whose land Yahweh your God is giving you

“those nations who were living in the land that Yahweh your God is giving you”

come after them

“take the land from those nations” or “possess the land after those nations are gone”

ULT

¹ When Yahweh your God cuts off the nations, those whose land Yahweh your God is giving you, and when you come after them and live in their cities and houses,

Deuteronomy 19:2

select three cities

“choose 3 cities” (See: [Numbers](#))

ULT

² you must select three cities for yourself in the middle of your land that Yahweh your God is giving you to possess.

Deuteronomy 19:3

You must build a road

They were to build roads so that it would be easy for people to travel to these cities. (See: [Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information](#))

divide the borders of your land into three parts

It is implied that one of the cities they choose must be in each part of the land. (See: [Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information](#))

the land that Yahweh your God is causing you to inherit

Yahweh giving the land to the people of Israel is spoken of as if the people are inheriting the land. (See: [Metaphor](#))

ULT

³ You must build a road and divide the borders of your land into three parts, the land that Yahweh your God is causing you to inherit, so that everyone who kills another person may flee there.

Deuteronomy 19:4

This is the instruction

“These are the instructions” or “These are the directions”

concerning the one who kills another

The word “person” is understood. Alternate translation: “for a person who kills another person” (See: [Ellipsis](#))

and flees from there

“and who escapes to one of these cities” or “who runs to one of these cities”

the one who unintentionally kills his neighbor

Here “neighbor” means any person in general. Alternate translation: “any person who kills another person by accident”

without hating him at the time of the accident

“but did not hate his neighbor before he killed him.” This implies there was no cause for him to kill his neighbor purposely. (See: [Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information](#))

ULT

⁴ This is the instruction concerning the one who kills another and flees from there in order to save his own life—the one who unintentionally kills his neighbor without hating him at the time of the accident.

Deuteronomy 19:5

For example, if a man goes into the forest ... to cut wood

The author gives a hypothetical situation where a person accidentally kills another person. (See: [Hypothetical Situations](#))

the ax head slips off of the handle

The iron part of the ax comes off the wooden handle.

strikes his neighbor and kills him

This means the head of the ax hits and kills the neighbor.

to one of these cities and save his life

It is implied that the family of the dead man may try to get revenge. The man who killed him can flee to one of these cities, and the people there would protect him. (See: [Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information](#))

ULT

⁵ For example, if a man goes into the forest with his neighbor to cut wood and the ax head slips off of the handle and strikes his neighbor and kills him—then that man must flee to one of these cities and save his life.

Deuteronomy 19:6

General Information:

Moses is still speaking to the people of Israel.

the avenger of blood

Here “blood” represents the person who was killed. An “avenger of blood” is a close relative of the person who was killed. This relative is responsible for punishing the murderer. (See: [Metonymy](#))

ULT

⁶ Otherwise the avenger of blood might go after the one who took a life, and in the heat of his anger overtake him, if the distance is too great, strike him and kill him, even though that man did not deserve to die, since he had not hated his neighbor in the past.

the one who took a life

This is an idiom. Alternate translation: “the one who killed the other person” (See: [Idiom](#))

in the heat of his anger

Someone being very angry is spoken of as if anger were something that could become hot. Alternate translation: “and being very angry” (See: [Metaphor](#))

strike him and kill him

“And the blood avenger strikes and kills the one who had killed the other person”

though that man did not deserve to die, since he had not hated his neighbor in the past

“though that man did not deserve to die since he accidentally killed the other person and was not his enemy, and he had not planned to hurt the man”

Deuteronomy 19:7

(There are no notes for this verse.)

ULT

⁷ Therefore I command you to select three cities for yourself.

Deuteronomy 19:8

General Information:

Moses is still speaking to the people of Israel.

enlarges your borders

“gives you more land to possess”

as he has sworn to your ancestors to do

“like he promised your ancestors that he would do”

ULT

⁸ If Yahweh your God enlarges your borders, as he has sworn to your ancestors to do, and gives you all the land that he promised to give to your ancestors;

Deuteronomy 19:9

if you keep all these commandments to do them

“if you obey all these commandments”

to always walk in his ways

How God wants a person to live or behave is spoken of as if it were Yahweh’s way or road. A person who obeys Yahweh is spoken of as if he were walking on Yahweh’s way or road. Alternate translation: “to always obey him” (See: [Metaphor](#))

then you must add three more cities for yourself

The full meaning of this statement can be made explicit. Alternate translation: “then you must choose three more cities for a person to escape to if he accidentally kills someone” (See: [Numbers](#) and [Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information](#))

besides these three

“in addition to the three cities you already established” (See: [Numbers](#))

ULT

⁹ if you keep all these commandments to do them, which I am commanding you today—commandments to love Yahweh your God and to always walk in his ways, then you must add three more cities for yourself, besides these three.

Deuteronomy 19:10

Do this so that innocent blood is not shed

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: “Do this so that family members do not kill an innocent person” (See: [Active or Passive](#))

innocent blood is not shed

Here “blood” represents a person’s life. To shed blood means to kill a person. This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: “no one kills an innocent person” (See: [Metonymy](#) and [Active or Passive](#))

in the midst of the land

“in the land” or “in the territory”

Yahweh your God is giving you for as an inheritance

The land that Yahweh is giving the people of Israel is spoken of as if it were an inheritance. (See: [Metaphor](#))

so that no bloodguilt may be on you

The people of Israel being guilty for a person dying because they did not build a city where he would be safe from the “blood avenger” is spoken of as if the guilt of his death is on them. (See: [Metaphor](#))

bloodguilt

Here “blood” represents a life and “bloodguilt” refers to the guilt someone has for killing an innocent person. (See: [Metonymy](#))

may be on you

This means that if a family member kills an innocent person, then all the people of Israel will be guilty for letting that happen.

ULT

10 Do this so that innocent blood is not shed in the midst of the land that Yahweh your God is giving you {as} an inheritance, so that no bloodguilt may be on you.

Deuteronomy 19:11

his neighbor

Here “neighbor” means any person in general.

lies in wait for him

The full meaning of this statement can be made explicit. Alternate translation: “hides and waits in order to kill him” or “plans to kill him” (See: [Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information](#))

rises up against him

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

mortally wounds him so that he dies

“hurts him so that he dies” or “and kills him”

ULT

11 But if anyone hates his neighbor, lies in wait for him, rises up against him, and mortally wounds him so that he dies, and if he then flees into one of these cities—

Deuteronomy 19:12

must send and bring him back from there

“must send someone to get him and bring him back from the city that he escaped to”

turn him over

This is an idiom. Alternate translation: “give him over” (See: [Idiom](#))

into the hand of the responsible relative

Here “the hand” represents the authority of someone. Alternate translation: “to the authority of the responsible relative” or “to the responsible relative” (See: [Metonymy](#))

the responsible relative

This is the relative of the person who was killed. This relative is responsible for punishing the murderer.

he may die

“the murderer may die” or “the responsible relative may execute the murderer”

ULT

12 then the elders of his city must send and bring him back from there, and turn him over into the hand of the responsible relative, so that he may die.

Deuteronomy 19:13

Your eye must not pity him

Here “your eye” represents the whole person. Alternate translation: “Do not show him mercy” or “Do not feel sorry for him” (See: [Synecdoche](#))

ULT

13 Your eye must not pity him; instead, you must eradicate {the bloodguilt} from Israel, that it may go well with you.

you must eradicate the bloodguilt from Israel

Here “bloodguilt” represents the guilt for murdering an innocent person. Alternate translation: “you must execute the murderer so that the people of Israel will not be guilty for the death of an innocent person” (See: [Metonymy](#))

from Israel

Here “Israel” refers to the people of Israel. (See: [Metonymy](#))

Deuteronomy 19:14

General Information:

Moses is still speaking to the people of Israel.

You must not remove your neighbor's landmark

The full meaning of this statement can be made explicit. Alternate translation: "You must not take land away from your neighbor by moving the markers on the borders of his land" (See: [Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information](#))

ULT

14 You must not remove your neighbor's landmark that they set in place a long time ago, in your inheritance that you will inherit, in the land that Yahweh your God is giving you to possess.

they set in place

"that your ancestors placed"

a long time ago

Moses means that when the people have lived in the land for a long time, they should not move the borders that their ancestors made when they first took the land.

in your inheritance that you will inherit, in the land that Yahweh your God is giving you to possess

Yahweh giving the land to the people of Israel is spoken of as if they were inheriting the land. Alternate translation: "in the land that Yahweh your God is giving to you to possess" (See: [Metaphor](#))

Deuteronomy 19:15

General Information:

Moses is still speaking to the people of Israel.

One sole witness

“A single witness” or “Only one witness”

must not rise up against a man

Here “rise up” means to stand up in court and speak against someone to a judge. Alternate translation: “must not speak to the judges about something bad that a man did” (See: [Idiom](#))

in any matter that he sins

“anytime that a man does something bad”

at the mouth of two witnesses, or at the mouth of three witnesses

Here “mouth” represents what the witnesses say. It is implied that there must be at least two or three witnesses. Alternate translation: “at the testimony of at least two or three people” or “based on what at least two or three people say happened” (See: [Metonymy](#) and [Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information](#))

must any matter be confirmed

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: “will you confirm that the man is guilty” (See: [Active or Passive](#))

ULT

¹⁵ One sole witness must not rise up against a man for any iniquity, or for any sin, in any matter that he sins; at the mouth of two witnesses, or at the mouth of three witnesses, must any matter be confirmed.

Deuteronomy 19:16

Suppose that

“When” or “If”

an unrighteous witness

“a witness who intends to harm someone else”

rises up against any man to testify against him of wrongdoing

Here “rise up” means to stand up in court and speak against someone to a judge. Alternate translation: “tells the judge that a man sinned in order to get the man in trouble” or “tells the judge that a man sinned, so the judge will punish him” (See: [Idiom](#))

ULT

16 Suppose that an unrighteous witness rises up against any man to testify against him of wrongdoing.

Deuteronomy 19:17

General Information:

Moses continues to speak to the people of Israel.

the ones between whom the controversy exists

“the ones who disagree with one another”

must stand before Yahweh, before the priests and the judges

This means the two persons must go to the sanctuary where Yahweh’s presence dwells. At the sanctuary are priests and judges who have the authority to make legal decisions for Yahweh. (See: [Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information](#))

stand before Yahweh, before the priests and the judges

The phrase “stand before” is an idiom. It means to go to someone with authority and let him make a legal decision about a matter. (See: [Idiom](#))

ULT

17 Then both men, the ones between whom the controversy exists, must stand before Yahweh, before the priests and the judges who serve in those days.

Deuteronomy 19:18

The judges must make diligent inquiries

“The judges must work very hard to determine what happened”

ULT

18 The judges must make diligent inquiries; see, {if} the witness is a false witness and has testified falsely against his brother,

Deuteronomy 19:19

then must you do to him, as he had wished to do to his brother

“then you must punish the false witness in the same way as he wanted you to punish the other man”

ULT

¹⁹ then must you do to him, as he had wished to do to his brother; and you will remove the evil from among you.

you will remove the evil from among you

The nominal adjective “the evil” can be stated as an adjective. Alternate translation: “you will remove the evil practice from among you” (See: [Nominal Adjectives](#))

Deuteronomy 19:20

Then those who remain

“When you punish the false witness, the rest of the people”

will hear and fear

The full meaning of this statement can be made explicit. Alternate translation: “will hear about the punishment and be afraid of getting punished” (See: [Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information](#))

commit no longer any such evil

“never again do something evil like that”

ULT

²⁰ Then those who remain will hear and fear, and will from then on commit no longer any such evil among you.

Deuteronomy 19:21

Your eyes must not pity

Here “eyes” refer to the whole person. Alternate translation: “You must not pity him” or “You must not show him mercy” (See: [Synecdoche](#))

life will pay for life ... foot for foot

Here the phrases are shortened because the meaning is understood. It means the people must punish a person in the same way that he harmed another person. (See: [Ellipsis](#))

ULT

21 Your eyes must not pity; life will pay for life, eye for eye, tooth for tooth, hand for hand, foot for foot.

Deuteronomy 20

Deuteronomy 20 General Notes

Special concepts in this chapter

Yahweh's protection

Israel was not to worry about the power and strength of other nations. Instead, they were to trust in the power of Yahweh. He is the source of their military strength and protection. This is why a priest leads them into battle, rather than a military commander. (See: [trust](#), [trusted](#), [trustworthy](#), [trustworthiness](#) and [priest](#), [priesthood](#))

Holy war

Israel's conquering of the Promised Land was unique in history. It was a type of holy war and had special rules. This war was really Yahweh's punishment against the sin of the Canaanite people. If the people were not completely destroyed, they would cause Israel to sin. (See: [Promised Land](#) and [holy](#), [holiness](#), [unholy](#), [sacred](#) and [sin](#), [sinful](#), [sinner](#), [sinning](#))

Important figures of speech in this chapter

"What man is there"

This phrase is used several times to introduce a rhetorical question. The questions are intended to tell the readers that Yahweh only wants soldiers who are completely dedicated to fighting for him. (See: [Rhetorical Question](#))

Other possible translation difficulties in this chapter

Excused from fighting

In ancient Israel, men were excused from fighting in battle for several different reasons. Some of these reasons are mentioned in this chapter. Apparently, needing to establish a new house, the need to harvest a field and cowardice were possible excuses. (See: [Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information](#))

Deuteronomy 20:1

General Information:

Moses continues speaking to the people of Israel.

When you march out to battle against your enemies

“When you go out to fight in a war against your enemies”

see horses, chariots

People considered an army with many horses and chariots to be very strong. The full meaning of this statement can be made explicit. (See: [Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information](#))

he who brought you up out of the land of Egypt

Yahweh brought the people from Egypt to Canaan. It was common to use the word “up” to refer to traveling from Egypt to Canaan. Alternate translation: “Yahweh who led you out from the land of Egypt”

ULT

¹ When you march out to battle against your enemies, and see horses, chariots, {and} a people more numerous than you, you must not be afraid of them; for Yahweh your God {is} with you, he who brought you up out of the land of Egypt.

Deuteronomy 20:2

General Information:

Moses continues speaking to the people of Israel.

Speak to the people

“speak to the soldiers of Israel”

ULT

² When you are about to enter into battle, the priest must approach and speak to the people.

Deuteronomy 20:3

Do not let your hearts faint. Do not fear or tremble. Do not be afraid of them

These four expressions all mean the same thing and strongly emphasize that they are not to be afraid. If your language does not have four ways to express this concept, you may use less than four. (See: [Parallelism](#))

ULT

³ He must say to them, 'Listen, Israel, you are going to battle against your enemies. Do not let your hearts faint. Do not fear or tremble. Do not be afraid of them.'

Do not let your hearts faint

Here "hearts" represents people's courage. For a heart to faint is an idiom that means "Do not be afraid." (See: [Metonymy](#) and [Idiom](#))

Deuteronomy 20:4

Yahweh your God is the one who is going with you to fight for you against your enemies

Yahweh defeating the enemies of the people of Israel is spoken of as if Yahweh were a warrior who would fight along with the people of Israel. (See: [Metaphor](#))

to save you

“to give you victory”

ULT

⁴ For Yahweh your God {is} the one who is going with you to fight for you against your enemies and to save you.’

Deuteronomy 20:5

General Information:

Moses says what the army officers must say to the people of Israel before a battle.

The officers must speak

One of the officers' jobs was to decide who could leave the army. The full meaning of this statement can be made explicit. (See: [Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information](#))

ULT

⁵ The officers must speak to the people and say, 'What man {is} there who has built a new house and has not dedicated it? Let him go and return to his house, so that he does not die in battle and another man dedicates it.'

What man is there ... Let him go and return to his house

"If any soldier here has built a new house and has not dedicated it, he should go back to his house"

so that he does not die in battle and another man dedicates it

The officer is describing a situation that could possibly happen to a soldier. Alternate translation: "so that, if he dies in battle, another man will not dedicate his house instead of him" (See: [Hypothetical Situations](#))

Deuteronomy 20:6

General Information:

Moses continues describing situations that allow a man to leave the military.

Is there anyone who has planted ... Let him go home

ULT

⁶ Is there anyone who has planted a vineyard and has not enjoyed its fruit? Let him go home, so he will not die in battle and another man enjoy its fruit.

“If any soldier here has a new vineyard, but has not yet harvested its grapes, he should go back to his house”

so he will not die in battle and another man enjoy its fruit

The officer is describing a situation that could possibly happen to a soldier. Alternate translation: “so that, if he dies in battle, another man will not harvest its fruit instead of him” (See: [Hypothetical Situations](#))

Deuteronomy 20:7

What man is there who is engaged to marry a woman ... Let him go home

“If any soldier here has promised to marry a woman, but has not yet married her, he should go back to his house”

so that he does not die in battle and another man marries her

The officer is describing a situation that could possibly happen to a soldier. Alternate translation: “so that, if he dies in battle, another man does not marry her instead of him” (See: [Hypothetical Situations](#))

ULT

⁷ What man {is} there who is engaged to marry a woman but has not yet married her? Let him go home so that he does not die in battle and another man marries her.'

Deuteronomy 20:8

General Information:

Moses continues describing situations that allow a man to leave the military.

What man is there who is fearful or fainthearted? Let him go and return to his house

“If any soldier here is afraid and not brave, he should go back to his house”

fearful or fainthearted

Both of these words mean basically the same thing. Alternate translation: “afraid to fight in battle” (See: [Doublet](#))

his brother’s heart does not melt like his own heart

This is an idiom. Alternate translation: “another Israelite does not become afraid like he is afraid” (See: [Idiom](#))

brother’s heart ... his own heart

Here “heart” represents a person’s courage. (See: [Metonymy](#))

ULT

8 The officers must speak further to the people and say, ‘What man is there {who is} fearful or fainthearted? Let him go and return to his house, so that his brother’s heart does not melt like his own heart.’

Deuteronomy 20:9

they must appoint commanders over them

“the officers must appoint people to be commanders and to lead the people of Israel”

ULT

⁹ When the officers have finished speaking to the people, they must appoint commanders over them.

Deuteronomy 20:10

General Information:

Moses continues speaking to the people of Israel.

When you march up to attack a city

Here “city” represents the people. Alternate translation: “When you go to attack the people of a city” (See: [Metonymy](#))

make those people an offer of peace

“give the people in the city a chance to surrender”

ULT

¹⁰ When you march up to attack a city, make those people {an offer of} peace.

Deuteronomy 20:11

open their gates to you

Here “gates” refers to the city gates. The phrase “open their gates to you” represents the people surrendering and allowing the Israelites to enter their city. Alternate translation: “let you enter their city peacefully” (See: [Metonymy](#))

ULT

11 If they accept your offer and open their gates to you, all the people {who are} found in it must become forced labor for you and must serve you.

all the people who are found in it

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

must become forced labor for you

“must become your slaves”

Deuteronomy 20:12

But if it makes no offer of peace

Here “it” refers to the city which represents the people. Alternate translation: “But if the people of the city do not surrender” or “But if the people of the city do not accept your offer of peace” (See: [Metonymy](#))

ULT

12 But if it makes no offer of peace to you, but instead makes war against you, then you must besiege it,

Deuteronomy 20:13

(There are no notes for this verse.)

ULT

¹³ and when Yahweh your God gives you victory and puts them under your control, you must kill every man in the town.

Deuteronomy 20:14

the little ones

“the children”

all its spoil

“all the valuable things”

booty

These are the valuable things which people who win a battle take from the people they attacked.

ULT

14 But the women, the little ones, the cattle, and everything that is in the city, and all its spoil, you will take as booty for yourself. You will consume the booty of your enemies, whom Yahweh your God has given to you.

Deuteronomy 20:15

all the cities

Here “cities” represents the people. Alternate translation: “all the people who live in cities” (See: [Metonymy](#))

ULT

15 You must act in this way toward all the cities {that are} very far from you, cities that are not of the cities of these following nations.

Deuteronomy 20:16

General Information:

Moses continues speaking to the people of Israel.

**In the cities of these peoples that Yahweh
your God is giving you as an inheritance**

The cities in Canaan that Yahweh is giving to the people is spoken of as if the cities were the people's inheritance.
(See: [Metaphor](#))

you must save alive nothing that breathes

"you must not let any living thing stay alive." This can be stated in positive form. Alternate translation: "you must kill every living thing" (See: [Litotes](#))

ULT

16 In the cities of these peoples that Yahweh your God is giving you {as} an inheritance, you must save alive nothing that breathes.

Deuteronomy 20:17

you must completely destroy them

“you must completely destroy these people groups”

ULT

17 Instead, you must completely destroy them: the Hittite, and the Amorite, the Canaanite, the Perizzite, the Hivite, and the Jebusite, as Yahweh your God has commanded you.

Deuteronomy 20:18

Do this so that they

“Destroy these nations so that they”

to act in any of their abominable ways ... their gods

“to act in abominable ways like the people in these nations have done with their gods”

If you do, you will sin against Yahweh your God

“If you act like these people, you will sin against Yahweh your God”

ULT

18 Do this so that they do not teach you to act in any of their abominable ways, as they have done with their gods. If you do, you will sin against Yahweh your God.

Deuteronomy 20:19

General Information:

Moses continues speaking to the people of Israel.

wage war

“fight in a war”

by wielding an ax against them

“by cutting down the trees with an ax”

For is the tree of the field a man whom you should besiege?

This rhetorical question is to remind the people of what they should already know. This question can be translated as a statement. Alternate translation: “For fruit trees are not people, so they are not your enemy.” (See: [Rhetorical Question](#))

ULT

19 When you will besiege a city for a long time, as you wage war against it to capture it, you must not destroy its trees by wielding an ax against them. For you may eat from them, so you must not cut them down. For is the tree of the field a man whom you should besiege?

Deuteronomy 20:20

you know are not trees for food

“you know are not trees that grow fruit to eat”

siege works

These are tools and structures, such as ladders and towers, that are needed to lay siege to a city.

until it falls

This is an idiom. Alternate translation: “until the people of the city lose the war” (See: [Idiom](#))

it falls

Here “it” refers to the city which represents the people of the city. (See: [Metonymy](#))

ULT

²⁰ Only the trees that you know are not trees for food, you may destroy and cut down; you will build siege works against the city that makes war with you, until it falls.

Deuteronomy 21

Deuteronomy 21 General Notes

Special concepts in this chapter

Elders

Older men were required to lead the people of Israel and help to administer justice. These men would function as judges, which would later become a more official position. (See: [just](#), [justice](#), [unjust](#), [injustice](#), [justify](#), [justification](#))

Peace in Israel

The rules and instructions in this chapter help to ensure peace in Israel. This is not a military peace. Instead, it is about establishing peace within Israel and among the people.

Deuteronomy 21:1

General Information:

Moses continues to speak to the people of Israel.

If someone is found killed

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: “If someone finds a person whom someone else has killed” (See: [Active or Passive](#))

lying in the field

The dead person is lying in the field.

it is not known who has attacked him

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: “nobody knows who attacked him” (See: [Active or Passive](#))

ULT

¹ If someone is found killed in the land that Yahweh your God is giving you to possess, lying in the field, {and} it is not known who has attacked him;

Deuteronomy 21:2

they must measure to the cities

“they must measure the distance to the cities”

him who has been killed

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: “him whom someone has killed” or “the dead body” (See: [Active or Passive](#))

ULT

² then your elders and your judges must go out, and they must measure to the cities that are around him who has been killed.

Deuteronomy 21:3

has not borne the yoke

“has not worn a yoke”

ULT

³ Then the elders of the town nearest to the dead man's body must take a heifer from the herd, one that has never been put to work, {and} that has not borne the yoke.

Deuteronomy 21:4

running water

This is an idiom for water that is moving. Alternate translation: “a stream” (See: [Idiom](#))

a valley that has been neither plowed nor sown

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: “a valley where nobody has plowed the ground or planted seeds” (See: [Active or Passive](#))

ULT

⁴ Then they must lead the heifer down to a valley with running water, a valley that has been neither plowed nor sown, and there in the valley they must break the heifer’s neck.

Deuteronomy 21:5

General Information:

Moses continues speaking to the people of Israel.

must come forward

“must come to the valley”

for Yahweh your God has chosen them to serve him

“because the priests are the ones whom Yahweh your God has chosen to serve him”

Yahweh your God

Moses speaks to the Israelites as if he were speaking to one man, so the word “your” is singular. (See: [Forms of You](#))

give blessing

“bless the people of Israel”

in the name of Yahweh

Here the metonym “in the name of” refers to Yahweh and his authority. Alternate translation: “as one who says and does what Yahweh himself would say and do” (See: [Metonymy](#))

Yahweh and to decide every case of dispute and assault by their word

“Yahweh, and they will be the ones who settle all disagreements and cases of violence”

ULT

⁵ The priests, descendants of Levi, must come forward, for Yahweh your God has chosen them to serve him and give blessing in the name of Yahweh and to decide every case of dispute and assault by their word.

Deuteronomy 21:6

General Information:

Moses continues speaking to the people of Israel.

the heifer whose neck was broken

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: “the heifer whose neck the priests broke” (See: [Active or Passive](#))

ULT

⁶ All the elders of the city that is the nearest to the killed {man} must wash their hands over the heifer whose neck was broken in the valley;

Deuteronomy 21:7

they must answer to the case

“they must testify to Yahweh about this case”

Our hands have not shed this blood

Here “hands” are a synecdoche for the whole person and “shed this blood” is a metonym for killing an innocent person. Alternate translation: “We did not kill this innocent person” (See: [Synecdoche](#) and [Metonymy](#))

neither have our eyes seen it

Here “eyes” refers to the whole person. Alternate translation: “and we did not see anyone kill this person” (See: [Synecdoche](#))

ULT

⁷ and they must answer to the case and say, ‘Our hands have not shed this blood, neither have our eyes seen {it}.

Deuteronomy 21:8

General Information:

Moses continues to tell the elders what they should say when they wash their hands over the heifer. He speaks to them as if he were speaking to one man, so the words “you” and “your” are singular. (See: [Forms of You](#))

whom you have redeemed

Yahweh rescuing the people of Israel from being slaves in Egypt is spoken of as if Yahweh paid money to redeem his people from slavery. (See: [Metaphor](#))

do not put guilt for innocent bloodshed in the midst of your people Israel

This is an idiom. Alternate translation: “do not treat your people Israel as if they are guilty of killing an innocent person” (See: [Idiom](#))

Then the bloodshed will be forgiven them

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: “Then Yahweh will forgive his people Israel for the death of an innocent person” (See: [Active or Passive](#))

ULT

⁸ Forgive, Yahweh, your people Israel, whom you have redeemed, and do not put {guilt} for innocent bloodshed in the midst of your people Israel.’ Then the bloodshed will be forgiven them.

Deuteronomy 21:9

**you will put away the innocent blood from
your midst**

“you will not be guilty any more of killing an innocent person”

what is right in the eyes of Yahweh

The eyes represent seeing, and seeing represents thoughts or judgment. Alternate translation: “what is right in Yahweh’s judgment” or “what Yahweh considers to be right” (See: [Metaphor](#))

ULT

⁹ In this way you will put away the innocent blood from your midst, when you do {what is} right in the eyes of Yahweh.

Deuteronomy 21:10

General Information:

Moses continues speaking to the people of Israel as if he were speaking to one man, so the words “you” and “your” are singular. (See: [Forms of You](#))

you go out

“you who are soldiers go out”

ULT

10 When you go out to do battle against your enemies and Yahweh your God gives you victory and puts them under your control, and you take them away as captives,

Deuteronomy 21:11

you have a desire for her

Use a polite phrase for “you want to sleep with her.”

wish to take her for yourself as a wife

“want to marry her”

ULT

11 if you see among the captives a beautiful woman, and you have a desire for her and wish to take her for yourself as a wife,

Deuteronomy 21:12

she will shave her head

“she will shave the hair off of her head”

cut her nails

“cut her fingernails”

ULT

¹² then you will bring her home to your house; she will shave her head and cut her nails.

Deuteronomy 21:13

General Information:

Moses continues speaking to the people of Israel as if he were speaking to one man, so the words “you” and “your” are singular. (See: [Forms of You](#))

she will take off the clothes she was wearing

She will do this after the man brings her to his house and when she shaves her head and cuts her fingernails and toenails as mentioned in [Deuteronomy 21:12](#). The full meaning of this statement can be made explicit. Alternate translation: “she will take off the clothes of her people and put on Israelite clothes” (See: [Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information](#))

ULT

13 Then she will take off the clothes she was wearing when she was taken captive and she will remain in your house and mourn for her father and her mother a full month. After that you may lie with her and be her husband, and she will be your wife.

when she was taken captive

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: “when you took her captive” (See: [Active or Passive](#))

a full month

“an entire month” or “a whole month”

After that you may lie with her

This is a euphemism. Alternate translation: “After that you may have sexual relations with her” (See: [Euphemism](#))

Deuteronomy 21:14

But if you take no delight in her

You may need to make explicit that the man sleeps with the woman. Alternate translation: "But if you sleep with her and then decide that you do not want her as your wife" (See: [Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information](#))

let her go where she wishes

"let her go wherever she wants to go"

because you have humiliated her

"because you shamed her by sleeping with her and then sending her away"

ULT

14 But if you take no delight in her, then you may let her go where she wishes. But you must not sell her at all for money, and you must not treat her like a slave, because you have humiliated her.

Deuteronomy 21:15

General Information:

Moses continues speaking to the people of Israel.

one is loved and the other is hated

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: This could mean: (1) “the man loves one of his wives and he hates the other wife” or (2) “the man loves one wife more than he loves the other wife” (See: [Active or Passive](#))

if the firstborn son is of her that is hated

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: “if the firstborn son belongs to the wife whom the man hates” (See: [Active or Passive](#))

ULT

15 If a man has two wives and one is loved and the other is hated, and they have both borne him children—both the beloved wife and the hated wife—if the firstborn son is of her that is hated,

Deuteronomy 21:16

then on the day that the man

“when the man”

the man causes his sons to inherit what he possesses

“the man gives his possessions to his sons as an inheritance”

he may not make the son of the beloved wife the firstborn before the son of the hated wife

“he may not treat the son of the beloved wife as if he were the firstborn instead of the son of the hated wife”

ULT

16 then on the day that the man causes his sons to inherit what he possesses, he may not make the son of the beloved wife the firstborn before the son of the hated wife, the son who {is} actually the firstborn.

Deuteronomy 21:17

a double portion

“twice as much”

that son is the beginning of his strength

This is an idiom. Alternate translation: “that son is the one who shows that the man can become the father of sons” (See: [Idiom](#))

ULT

17 Instead, he must acknowledge the firstborn, the son of the hated wife, by giving him a double portion of all that he possesses; for that son {is} the beginning of his strength; the right of the firstborn belongs to him.

Deuteronomy 21:18

General Information:

Moses continues speaking to the people of Israel.

who will not obey the voice of his father or the voice of his mother

Here “voice” is a metonym for what a person says. Alternate translation: “who will not obey what his father or mother say” (See: [Metonymy](#))

they correct him

“they punish him for his wrongdoing” or “they train and instruct him”

ULT

18 If a man has a stubborn and rebellious son who will not obey the voice of his father or the voice of his mother, and {who}, even though they correct him, will not listen to them;

Deuteronomy 21:19

must lay hold on him and bring him out

“must force him to come out”

ULT

19 then his father and his mother must lay hold on him and bring him out to the elders of his city and to the gate of his city.

Deuteronomy 21:20

General Information:

Moses continues speaking to the people of Israel as if they were one man, so all instances of “you” are singular. (See: [Forms of You](#))

This son of ours

“Our son”

he will not obey our voice

Here “voice” is a metonym for what a person says or a synecdoche for the whole person. Alternate translation: “he will not do what we tell him to do” or “he will not obey us” (See: [Metonymy](#) and [Synecdoche](#))

a glutton

a person who eats and drinks too much

a drunkard

a person who drinks too much alcohol and gets drunk often

ULT

²⁰ They must say to the elders of his city, ‘This son of ours is stubborn and rebellious; he will not obey our voice; he is a glutton and a drunkard.’

Deuteronomy 21:21

stone him to death with stones

“throw stones at him until he dies”

you will remove the evil from among you

The adjective “evil” can be translated as a noun phrase. Alternate translation: “you must remove from among the Israelites the person who does this evil thing” or “you must execute this evil person” (See: [Nominal Adjectives](#))

All Israel

The word “Israel” is a metonym for the people of Israel. Alternate translation: “All the people of Israel” (See: [Metonymy](#))

will hear of it and fear

The full meaning of this statement can be made explicit. Alternate translation: “will hear about what happened to the son and be afraid that the people will punish them also” (See: [Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information](#))

ULT

²¹ Then all the men of his city must stone him to death with stones; and you will remove the evil from among you. All Israel will hear of it and fear.

Deuteronomy 21:22

General Information:

Moses continues speaking to the people of Israel as if he were speaking to one man, so the words “you” and “your” are singular. (See: [Forms of You](#))

ULT

22 If a man has committed a sin worthy of death and he is put to death, and you hang him on a tree,

If a man has committed a sin worthy of death

“If a man has done something so bad that you need to punish him by killing him”

he is put to death

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: “you execute him” or “you kill him” (See: [Active or Passive](#))

you hang him on a tree

This could mean: (1) “after he has died you hang him on a tree” or (2) “you kill him by hanging him on a wooden post”

Deuteronomy 21:23

bury him the same day

“bury him on the same day as when you execute him”

for whoever is hanged is cursed by God

This can be stated in active form. This could mean: (1) “because God curses everyone whom people hang on trees” and (2) “people hang on trees those whom God has cursed.” (See: [Active or Passive](#))

do not defile the land

by leaving something God has cursed hanging in the tree

ULT

²³ then his body must not remain all night on the tree. Instead, you must surely bury him the same day; for whoever is hanged {is} cursed by God. Obey this commandment so that you do not defile the land that Yahweh your God is giving you {as} an inheritance.

Deuteronomy 22

Deuteronomy 22 General Notes

Special concepts in this chapter

Order in Israel

The instructions in this chapter help to maintain order in this chapter. The people are to have integrity. The people's sin will result in serious punishment. (See: [sin](#), [sinful](#), [sinner](#), [sinning](#))

Virgin woman

If a woman was not a virgin, she was not considered to be worth marrying. The man who slept with her was responsible for providing for her since she will not be able to find a husband to provide for her. (See: [Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information](#))

Deuteronomy 22:1

General Information:

Moses speaks to the Israelites as if they were one man, so the words “you” and “your” here are singular. (See: [Forms of You](#))

go astray

“walk away from its owner”

hide yourself from them

This is an idiom. Alternate translation: “act as if you do not see them” or “go away without doing anything” (See: [Idiom](#))

ULT

¹ You must not watch your fellow Israelite's ox or his sheep go astray and hide yourself from them; you must surely bring them back to him.

Deuteronomy 22:2

If your fellow Israelite is not near to you

“If your fellow Israelite lives far away from you”

or if you do not know him

“or if you do not know who the owner of the animal is”

it must be with you until he looks for it

“you must keep the animal with you until its owner comes looking for it”

ULT

² If your fellow Israelite is not near to you, or if you do not know him, then you must bring the animal home to your house, and it must be with you until he looks for it, and then you must restore it to him.

Deuteronomy 22:3

General Information:

Moses speaks to the Israelites as if they were one man, so the words “you” and “your” here are singular. (See: [Forms of You](#))

You must do the same with his donkey

“You must return his donkey in the same way”

you must do the same with his garment

“you must return his clothing in the same way”

you must not hide yourself

This is an idiom. Alternate translation: “you must not act as if you do not see that he has lost something” or “you must not go away without doing anything” (See: [Idiom](#))

ULT

³ You must do the same with his donkey; you must do the same with his garment; you must do the same with every lost thing of your fellow Israelite's, anything that he has lost and you have found; you must not hide yourself.

Deuteronomy 22:4

you must surely help him to lift it up again

“you must help your fellow Israelite lift the animal back up onto its feet”

ULT

⁴ You must not see your fellow Israelite's donkey or his ox fallen down in the road and hide yourself from them; you must surely help him to lift it up again.

Deuteronomy 22:5

General Information:

Moses is still speaking to the people of Israel.

what pertains to a man

“men’s clothing”

ULT

⁵ A woman must not wear what pertains to a man, and neither must a man put on women’s clothing; for whoever does these things is an abomination to Yahweh your God.

Deuteronomy 22:6

General Information:

Moses speaks to the Israelites as if they were one man, so the words “you” and “your” here are singular. (See: [Forms of You](#))

bird’s nest

a home that birds make for themselves out of sticks, grass, plants, and mud

with young ones or eggs in it

“with baby birds or eggs in the nest”

the mother sitting on the young

“the mother bird is sitting on the baby birds”

ULT

6 If a bird’s nest happens to be in front of you on the road, in any tree or on the ground, with young ones or eggs in it, and the mother sitting on the young or on the eggs, you must not take the mother along with the young.

Deuteronomy 22:7

prolong your days

Long days are a metaphor for a long life. See how you translated these words in [Deuteronomy 4:26](#). Alternate translation: “be able to live a long time” (See: [Metaphor](#))

ULT

⁷ You must surely let the mother go, but the young you may take for yourself. Obey this command so that it may go well with you, and {that} you may prolong {your} days.

Deuteronomy 22:8

General Information:

Moses speaks to the Israelites as if they were one man, so the words “you” and “your” here are singular. (See: [Forms of You](#))

a railing for your roof

a low fence around the edge of the roof so people will not fall off the roof

so that you do not bring blood on your house

Blood is a symbol for death. Alternate translation: “so that it will not be the fault of your household if someone dies” (See: [Metonymy](#))

if anyone falls from there

“if anyone falls from the roof because you did not make a railing”

ULT

⁸ When you build a new house, then you must make a railing for your roof so that you do not bring blood on your house if anyone falls from there.

Deuteronomy 22:9

General Information:

Moses speaks to the Israelites as if they were one man, so the words “you” and “your” here are singular. (See: [Forms of You](#))

so that the whole harvest is not confiscated by the holy place

The words “holy place” is a metonym for the priests who work in the holy place. This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: “so that the priests in Yahweh’s holy place do not take away the whole harvest” or “so that you do not defile the whole harvest and the priests do not allow you to use it” (See: [Metonymy](#) and [Active or Passive](#))

the yield of the vineyard

“the fruit that grows in the vineyard”

ULT

⁹ You must not plant your vineyard with two kinds of seed, so that the whole harvest is not confiscated by the holy place, the seed that you have sown and the yield of the vineyard.

Deuteronomy 22:10

(There are no notes for this verse.)

ULT

10 You must not plow with an ox and a donkey together.

Deuteronomy 22:11

wool

soft, curly hair that grows on a sheep

linen

thread made from the flax plant (See: [Translate Unknowns](#))

ULT

11 You must not wear fabric made of wool and linen together.

Deuteronomy 22:12

General Information:

Moses speaks to the Israelites as if they were one man, so the word “you” here is singular. (See: [Forms of You](#))

fringes

threads that are bound together and hang from the end of each corner of the cloak

the cloak

a long garment that a person wears over his other clothes

ULT

12 You must make yourself fringes on the four corners of the cloak with which you clothe {yourself}.

Deuteronomy 22:13

General Information:

Moses continues speaking to the people of Israel.

he goes in to her

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

ULT

¹³ Suppose a man takes a wife, and he goes in to her, and then hates her,

Deuteronomy 22:14

then accuses her of shameful things

“then accuses her of having slept with someone before she was married”

puts a bad reputation on her

The abstract noun “reputation” can be translated as a verbal phrase.
Alternate translation: “makes other people think she is a bad person” (See: [Abstract Nouns](#))

but when I came near to her

This is a polite way of saying “to have sexual relations with someone.” Alternate translation: “but when I slept with her” (See: [Euphemism](#))

I found no proof of virginity in her

The abstract noun “proof” can be translated as a verbal phrase. Alternate translation: “she could not prove to me that she was a virgin”

ULT

14 and then accuses her of shameful things and puts a bad reputation on her, and says, ‘I took this woman, but when I came near to her, I {found} no proof of virginity in her.’

Deuteronomy 22:15

General Information:

Moses is still speaking to the people of Israel.

must take proof of her virginity

The abstract nouns “proof” and “virginity” can be translated with verbal phrases. Alternate translation: “must take something that proves that she has never had sexual relations” (See: [Abstract Nouns](#))

ULT

15 Then the father and mother of the girl must take proof of her virginity to the elders at the city gate.

Deuteronomy 22:16

General Information:

Moses is still speaking to the people of Israel.

ULT

16 The girl's father must say to the elders, 'I gave my daughter to this man as a wife, and he hates her.'

Deuteronomy 22:17

he has accused her of shameful things

The full meaning of this statement can be made explicit. Alternate translation: “he has accused her of having slept with someone before he married her” (See: [Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information](#))

I did not find in your daughter the proof of virginity

The abstract nouns “proof” and “virginity” can be translated as verbal phrases. Alternate translation: “Your daughter could not prove that she has never had sexual relations” (See: [Abstract Nouns](#))

But here is the proof of my daughter’s virginity

The abstract nouns “proof” and “virginity” can be translated as verbal phrases. Alternate translation: “But this proves that my daughter has never had sexual relations” (See: [Abstract Nouns](#))

Then they will spread the garment out before the elders of the city

The full meaning of this statement can be made explicit. Alternate translation: “And then the mother and father will show the clothing with the bloodstain to the elders as proof that she was a virgin” (See: [Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information](#))

ULT

17 See, he has accused her of shameful things and said, “I did not find in your daughter the proof of virginity.” But here is the proof of my daughter’s virginity.’ Then they will spread the garment out before the elders of the city.

Deuteronomy 22:18

General Information:

Moses continues speaking to the people of Israel.

ULT

18 The elders of that city must take that man and punish him;

Deuteronomy 22:19

they must fine him

“they must make him pay as a punishment”

one hundred shekels

“100 shekels” (See: [Biblical Money](#) and [Numbers](#))

give them to the father of the girl

“give the money to the father of the girl”

has caused a bad reputation for a virgin of Israel

The abstract noun “reputation” can be translated as a verbal phrase. Alternate translation: “has caused people to think that a virgin of Israel is a bad person” (See: [Abstract Nouns](#))

he may not send her away

“never allow him to divorce her”

during all his days

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

ULT

19 and they must fine him one hundred {shekels} of silver, and give them to the father of the girl, because the man has caused a bad reputation for a virgin of Israel. She must be his wife; he may not send her away during all his days.

Deuteronomy 22:20

General Information:

Moses continues speaking to the people of Israel.

But if this thing is true

“But if it is true” or “But if what the man said is true”

that the proof of virginity was not found in the girl

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: “that the man did not find proof that the girl was a virgin” (See: [Active or Passive](#))

the proof of virginity

The abstract nouns “proof” and “virginity” can be translated as verbal phrases. Alternate translation: “something that proves that the girl has never had sexual relations” (See: [Abstract Nouns](#))

ULT

²⁰ But if this thing is true, that the proof of virginity was not found in the girl,

Deuteronomy 22:21

then they must bring out the girl

“then the elders must bring out the girl”

stone her to death with stones

“throw stones at her until she dies”

because she has committed a disgraceful action in Israel

“because she has done a disgraceful thing in Israel”

to act as a harlot in her father’s house

“acting like a harlot while living in her father’s house”

you will remove the evil

The adjective “evil” can be translated as a noun phrase. Alternate translation: “you must remove from among the Israelites the person who does this evil thing” or “you must execute this evil person” (See: [Nominal Adjectives](#))

ULT

²¹ then they must bring out the girl to the door of her father’s house, and the men of her city must stone her to death with stones, because she has committed a disgraceful action in Israel, to act as a harlot in her father’s house; and you will remove the evil from among you.

Deuteronomy 22:22

General Information:

Moses speaks to the Israelites as if they were one man, so the word “you” is singular. (See: [Forms of You](#))

If a man is found

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: “If someone finds a man” (See: [Active or Passive](#))

lying with

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

and you will remove

“in this way you will remove”

ULT

22 If a man is found lying with a woman {who is} married to another man, then they must both die, the man who was lying with the woman and the woman herself; and you will remove the evil from among you.

Deuteronomy 22:23

General Information:

Moses speaks to the Israelites as if they were one man, so the word “you” is singular. (See: [Forms of You](#))

engaged to a man

“who is promised to marry a man”

lies with her

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

ULT

23 If there is a girl who is a virgin, engaged to a man, and another man finds her in the city and lies with her,

Deuteronomy 22:24

take ... and stone

These commands are addressed to Israel as a group and so are plural. (See: [Forms of You](#))

take both of them

“then you must bring both the girl and the man who slept with her”

because she did not cry out

“because she did not call for help”

because he violated his neighbor’s wife

The Israelites at that time thought of a man and woman who had engaged each other for marriage as husband and wife. The full meaning of this statement can be made explicit. Alternate translation: “because he slept with a girl who belongs to a fellow Israelite” (See: [Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information](#))

you will remove the evil from among you

The adjective “evil” can be translated as a noun phrase. Alternate translation: “you must remove from among the Israelites the person who does this evil thing” or “you must execute this evil person” (See: [Nominal Adjectives](#))

ULT

²⁴ take both of them to the city gate, and stone them to death. You must stone the girl, because she did not cry out, even though she was in the city. You must stone the man, because he violated his neighbor’s wife; and you will remove the evil from among you.

Deuteronomy 22:25

the engaged girl

a girl whose parents have agreed to let her marry a certain man, but she has not married him yet

lies with her

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

then only the man who lies with her must die

“then you must only kill the man who lay with her”

ULT

²⁵ But if the man finds the engaged girl in the field, and if he seizes her and lies with her, then only the man who lies with her must die.

Deuteronomy 22:26

there is no sin worthy of death in the girl

“you are not to punish her by killing her for what she did”

For this case is like when a man attacks his neighbor and kills him

“Because this situation is like the situation when somebody attacks another person and kills him”

ULT

²⁶ But to the girl you must do nothing; {there is} no sin {worthy} of death in the girl. For this case is like when a man attacks his neighbor and kills him.

Deuteronomy 22:27

For he found her in the field

“Because the man found the girl working in the field”

ULT

²⁷ For he found her in the field; the engaged girl cried out, {but there} was no one to save her.

Deuteronomy 22:28

but who is not engaged

“but whose parents have not promised another man that she will marry him”

lies with her

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

if they are discovered

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: “if somebody finds out what happened” (See: [Active or Passive](#))

ULT

28 If a man finds a girl {who is} a virgin but who is not engaged, and if he seizes her and lies with her, and if they are discovered,

Deuteronomy 22:29

fifty shekels of silver

A shekel weighs eleven grams. Alternate translation: “fifty pieces of silver” or “550 grams of silver” (See: [Biblical Money](#) and [Numbers](#))

He may not send her away during all his days

This is an idiom. Alternate translation: “He must never divorce her during his entire life” (See: [Idiom](#))

ULT

29 then the man who lay with her must give fifty {shekels} of silver to the girl's father, and she must become his wife, because he has violated her. He may not send her away during all his days.

Deuteronomy 22:30

must not take his father's wife as his own

The full meaning of this statement can be made explicit. Alternate translation: "must not marry his father's former wife, even if she is not his mother" (See: [Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information](#))

ULT

³⁰ A man must not take his father's wife as his own; he must not take away his father's marriage rights.

Deuteronomy 23

Deuteronomy 23 General Notes

Special concepts in this chapter

The assembly of Yahweh

This was probably the corporate worship of Yahweh, when the people would come together to worship him.

Racial superiority

Yahweh viewed Israel as superior to the other nations of Canaan. In many cultures, this may be seen as immoral. It must be remembered that the instructions of this chapter are very remote from the modern world. These people groups were always sinful and idolatrous. (See: [sin](#), [sinful](#), [sinner](#), [sinning](#))

Deuteronomy 23:1

man injured by crushing or cutting off

“man whose private body parts someone has crushed or cut off”

may enter the assembly of Yahweh

This is an idiom. Alternate translation: “may be a full member of the Israelite community” (See: [Idiom](#))

ULT

¹ No man injured by crushing or cutting off may enter the assembly of Yahweh.

Deuteronomy 23:2

illegitimate child

This could mean: (1) a child born to parents who committed incest or adultery or (2) a child born to a prostitute.

as far as to the tenth generation of his descendants

This “tenth” is the ordinal number for ten. Alternate translation: “even after ten generations of the illegitimate child’s descendants” (See: [Ordinal Numbers](#))

none of them

“none of these descendants”

ULT

² No illegitimate child may belong to the assembly of Yahweh; as far as to the tenth generation of his {descendants}, none of them may belong to the assembly of Yahweh.

Deuteronomy 23:3

may not belong to the assembly of Yahweh

This is an idiom. Alternate translation: “may not be a full member of the Israelite community” (See: [Idiom](#))

as far as to the tenth generation of his descendants

This “tenth” is the ordinal number for ten. Alternate translation: “even after ten generations of his descendants” (See: [Ordinal Numbers](#))

ULT

³ An Ammonite or a Moabite may not belong to the assembly of Yahweh; as far as to the tenth generation of his {descendants}, none of them may belong to the assembly of Yahweh.

Deuteronomy 23:4

they did not meet you with bread and with water

The full meaning of this statement can be made explicit. Alternate translation: “they did not welcome you by bringing you food and drink” (See: [Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information](#))

against you ... curse you

Moses speaks to the Israelites as if they were one man, so the word “you” here is singular. (See: [Forms of You](#))

ULT

⁴ This is because they did not meet you with bread and with water on the road when you had come out of Egypt, and because they hired against you Balaam son of Beor from Pethor in Aram Naharaim, to curse you.

Deuteronomy 23:5

General Information:

Moses speaks to the Israelites as if they were one man, so the words “you” and “your” here are singular. (See: [Forms of You](#))

would not listen

This is an idiom. Alternate translation: “did not pay attention” (See: [Idiom](#))

turned the curse into a blessing for you

“had him bless you and not curse you”

ULT

⁵ But Yahweh your God would not listen to Balaam; instead, Yahweh your God turned the curse into a blessing for you, because Yahweh your God loved you.

Deuteronomy 23:6

You must never seek their peace or prosperity

This could mean: (1) “You should never make a peace treaty with the Ammonites and the Moabites” or (2) “You must not do anything to cause things to go well for those 2 people groups to enable them to prosper” .

ULT

⁶ You must never seek their peace or prosperity, during all your days.

during all your days

This is an idiom. Alternate translation: “as long as you are a nation” (See: [Idiom](#))

Deuteronomy 23:7

General Information:

Moses speaks to the Israelites as if they were one man, so the words “you” and “your” here are singular. (See: [Forms of You](#))

You must not detest an Edomite

“Do not hate an Edomite”

for he is your brother

“because he is your relative”

you must not abhor an Egyptian

“do not hate an Egyptian”

ULT

⁷ You must not detest an Edomite, for he {is} your brother; you must not abhor an Egyptian, because you were a foreigner in his land.

Deuteronomy 23:8

The descendants of the third generation that are born to them may belong to the assembly of Yahweh

This “third” is the ordinal number for three. The full meaning of this statement can be made explicit. Alternate translation: “If an Edomite or an Egyptian comes to live in the Israelite community, his grandchildren may become full members of that community” (See: [Ordinal Numbers](#) and [Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information](#))

ULT

⁸ The descendants of the third generation that are born to them may belong to the assembly of Yahweh.

Deuteronomy 23:9

When you march out as an army against your enemies, then you must keep yourselves

Moses speaks here to the Israelites as if they were one man, so the words “you” and “your” are singular. (See: [Forms of You](#))

against your enemies

“to fight against your enemies”

keep yourselves from every evil thing

“keep yourselves away from all bad things”

ULT

⁹ When you march out as an army against your enemies, then you must keep yourselves from every evil thing.

Deuteronomy 23:10

any man who is unclean because of what happened to him at night

This is a polite way of saying that he had an emission of semen.
Alternate translation: "any man who is unclean because he had an emission of semen while he was asleep" (See: [Euphemism](#))

ULT

¹⁰ If there is among you any man who is unclean because of what happened to him at night, then he must go out of the army's camp; he must not come back into the camp.

Deuteronomy 23:11

(There are no notes for this verse.)

ULT

11 When evening comes, he must bathe himself in water; when the sun goes down, he will come back inside the camp.

Deuteronomy 23:12

General Information:

Moses speaks to the Israelites as if they were one man, so the words “you” and “your” here are singular. (See: [Forms of You](#))

ULT

12 You must have a place also outside the camp to which you will go;

Deuteronomy 23:13

you will have something among your tools to dig with

“you should have a tool that you can use to dig with”

when you squat down to relieve yourself

This is a polite way of saying to defecate. Alternate translation: “when you squat down to defecate” (See: [Euphemism](#))

you must dig with it

“you must dig a hole with the tool”

cover up what has come out from you

“cover up your excrement”

ULT

¹³ and you will have something among your tools to dig with; when you squat down to relieve yourself, you must dig with it and then put back the earth and cover up what has come out from you.

Deuteronomy 23:14

**so that he may not see any unclean thing
among you**

“so that Yahweh may not see any unclean thing among you”

ULT

¹⁴ For Yahweh your God walks in the midst of your camp to give you victory and to give your enemies into your hand. Therefore your camp must be holy, so that he may not see any unclean thing among you and turn away from you.

Deuteronomy 23:15

General Information:

Moses speaks to the Israelites as if they were one man, so the words “you” and “your” here are singular. (See: [Forms of You](#))

a slave who has escaped from his master

The full meaning of this statement can be made explicit. Alternate translation: “a slave from another country who escaped from his master and came to Israel” (See: [Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information](#))

ULT

15 You must not give back to his master a slave who has escaped from his master.

Deuteronomy 23:16

Let him live with you

“Let the slave live among your people”

ULT

¹⁶ Let him live with you, in whatever town he chooses. Do not oppress him.

Deuteronomy 23:17

General Information:

Moses speaks to the Israelites as if they were one man, so the words “you” and “your” here are singular. (See: [Forms of You](#))

cultic prostitute ... among any of the daughters ... among the sons

This could mean: (1) Moses openly forbids women and men to perform sexual acts as part of temple service or (2) Moses uses a euphemism to forbid women and men to perform sexual acts to receive money. (See: [Euphemism](#))

ULT

17 There must be no cultic prostitute among any of the daughters of Israel, neither must there be a cultic prostitute among the sons of Israel.

Deuteronomy 23:18

You must not bring the wages of a prostitute ... into the house

“A woman who earns money as a prostitute must not bring that money ... into the house”

a dog

a man who allows men to have sex with him for money

into the house of Yahweh your God

“into the temple”

for any vow

“to fulfill a vow”

both these

the wages of a female prostitute and of a male prostitute.

ULT

18 You must not bring the wages of a prostitute or the wages of a dog into the house of Yahweh your God for any vow; for both {these are} abominations to Yahweh your God.

Deuteronomy 23:19

General Information:

Moses speaks to the Israelites as if they were one man, so the words “you” and “your” here are singular. (See: [Forms of You](#))

lend on interest

to lend to somebody and force that person to pay back more than was lent

interest of money ... anything that is lent on interest

“you must not charge interest when you lend somebody money, food, or anything else”

ULT

19 You must not lend on interest to your fellow Israelite—interest of money, interest of food, or the interest of anything that is lent on interest.

Deuteronomy 23:20

all that you put your hand to

This is an idiom. Alternate translation: “all that you do” (See: [Idiom](#))

ULT

20 To a foreigner you may lend on interest; but to your fellow Israelite you must not lend on interest, so that Yahweh your God may bless you in all that you put your hand to, in the land which you are going in to possess.

Deuteronomy 23:21

General Information:

Moses speaks to the Israelites as if they were one man, so the words “you” and “your” here are singular. (See: [Forms of You](#))

you must not be slow in fulfilling it

“you must not take a long time to fulfill the vow”

for Yahweh your God will surely require it of you

“because Yahweh your God will blame you and punish you if you do not fulfill your vow”

ULT

21 When you make a vow to Yahweh your God, you must not be slow in fulfilling it, for Yahweh your God will surely require it of you; it would be sin for you not to fulfill it.

Deuteronomy 23:22

But if you will refrain from making a vow, it will be no sin for you

The full meaning of this statement can be made explicit. Alternate translation: "But, if you do not make a vow, you will not sin because you will not have a vow to fulfill" (See: [Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information](#))

ULT

²² But if you will refrain from making a vow, it will be no sin for you.

Deuteronomy 23:23

That which has gone out from your lips

This is an idiom. Alternate translation: “The words you have spoken”
(See: [Idiom](#))

according as you have vowed to Yahweh your God

“whatever you have vowed to Yahweh your God that you will do”

anything that you have freely promised with your mouth

“anything that people have heard you promise to do because you wanted to do it”

with your mouth

“so that people heard you say it”

ULT

23 That which has gone out from your lips you must observe and do; according as you have vowed to Yahweh your God, anything that you have freely promised with your mouth.

Deuteronomy 23:24

General Information:

Moses speaks to the Israelites as if they were one man, so the words “you” and “your” here are singular. (See: [Forms of You](#))

you may eat as many grapes as you desire

“then you may enjoy eating grapes until you are full”

but do not put any in your basket

The full meaning of this statement can be made explicit. Alternate translation: “but you may not put any grapes in your bag to take them away with you” (See: [Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information](#))

ULT

24 When you go into your neighbor's vineyard, you may eat as many grapes as you desire, but do not put {any} in your basket.

Deuteronomy 23:25

When you go into your neighbor's ripe grain

"When you walk through your neighbor's field where there is grain growing"

you may pluck the heads of grain with your hand

"then you may eat the kernels of grain with your hand"

but do not put a sickle to your neighbor's ripe grain

"but do not cut down your neighbor's ripe grain and take it with you"

sickle

a sharp tool that farmers use to harvest wheat

ULT

²⁵ When you go into your neighbor's ripe grain, you may pluck the heads of grain with your hand, but do not put a sickle to your neighbor's ripe grain.

Deuteronomy 24

Deuteronomy 24 General Notes

Structure and formatting

This chapter continues the teaching about how to maintain justice in Israel. (See: [just, justice, unjust, injustice, justify, justification](#))

Special concepts in this chapter

“No man may take a mill or an upper millstone as a pledge”

A millstone was the way a person made a living. To take a person’s millstone was to take away the way they earned money and produced food. (See: [Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information](#))

Lending money

Lending money to fellow Israelites was a way to help them out. It was not intended to be a way to make money off their brothers. This chapter gives limitations regarding the lending of money.

Deuteronomy 24:1

General Information:

Moses continues speaking to the people of Israel.

When a man takes a wife and marries her

The phrases “takes a wife” and “marries her” mean the same thing.
Alternate translation: “When a man marries a woman” (See: [Doublet](#))

ULT

¹ When a man takes a wife and marries her, if she finds no favor in his eyes because he has found some unsuitable thing in her, then he must write her a certificate of divorce, put {it} into her hand, and send her out of his house.

if she finds no favor in his eyes

Here the “eyes” represent the whole person. Alternate translation: “if he decides that he does not like her” (See: [Synecdoche](#))

because he has found some unsuitable thing in her

“because for some reason he has decided that he does not want to keep her”

he must write her a certificate of divorce

“he must give his wife an official paper saying that they are not married anymore”

Deuteronomy 24:2

she may go and be another man's wife

"she may go and marry another man"

ULT

² When she has gone out of his house,
she may go and be another man's
{wife}.

Deuteronomy 24:3

General Information:

Moses continues speaking to the people of Israel about a woman who gets a divorce and marries another man. Moses speaks to the Israelites as if they were one man, so the words “you” and “your” here are singular. (See: [Forms of You](#))

If the second husband hates her

“If the second husband decides that he hates the woman”

certificate of divorce

This is an official paper saying that the man and woman are not married anymore. See how you translated this in [Deuteronomy 24:1](#).

puts it into her hand

“gives it to the woman”

ULT

³ {If} the second husband hates her and writes her a certificate of divorce, puts {it} into her hand, and sends her out of his house; or if the second husband dies, the man who took her to be his wife—

Deuteronomy 24:4

after she has become impure

The full meaning of this statement can be made explicit. Alternate translation: “after she has become unclean by the divorce and remarriage to another man” (See: [Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information](#))

You must not cause the land to become guilty

The land is spoken of as if it could sin. Alternate translation: “You must not spread guilt around in the land” (See: [Personification](#))

ULT

⁴ {then} her former husband, the one who had first sent her away, may not take her again to be his wife, after she has become impure; for that would be an abomination to Yahweh. You must not cause the land to become guilty, the land that Yahweh your God is giving you {as} an inheritance.

Deuteronomy 24:5

General Information:

Moses is still speaking to the people of Israel.

When a man takes a new wife

“When a man is newly married to a woman”

neither may he be commanded to go on any forced duty

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: “and no one is to force him to live away from his home and do any kind of work” (See: [Active or Passive](#))

he will be free to be at home

“he will be free to live at home”

ULT

⁵ When a man takes a new wife, he will not go to war with the army, neither may he be commanded to go on any forced duty; he will be free to be at home for one year and will cheer his wife whom he has taken.

Deuteronomy 24:6

mill

a tool for making flour by grinding grain in between two heavy discs of stone

upper millstone

the top disc of stone in a mill

ULT

6 No man may take a mill or an upper millstone as a pledge, for that would be taking a person's life as a pledge.

for that would be taking a person's life as a pledge

The word "life" is a metonym for what a person needs to keep himself alive. Alternate translation: "because he would be taking from the man what the man needs to make food for his family" (See: [Metonymy](#))

Deuteronomy 24:7

General Information:

Moses speaks to the Israelites as if they were one man, so the words “you” and “your” here are singular. (See: [Forms of You](#))

If a man is found kidnapping

This is an idiom for “If a man kidnaps.” It can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: “If you find a man kidnapping” (See: [Idiom](#) and [Active or Passive](#))

kidnapping

using physical force to take an innocent person away from his home and imprison him

any of his brothers from among the people of Israel

“any of his fellow Israelites”

that thief must die

“then other Israelites should kill that thief as a punishment for what he did”

you will remove the evil from among you

The adjective “evil” can be translated as a noun phrase. Alternate translation: “you must remove from among the Israelites the person who does this evil thing” or “you must execute this evil person” (See: [Nominal Adjectives](#))

ULT

⁷ If a man is found kidnapping any of his brothers from among the people of Israel, and treats him as a slave and sells him, that thief must die; and you will remove the evil from among you.

Deuteronomy 24:8

General Information:

Moses continues speaking to the people of Israel.

Take heed ... you carefully observe

Moses speaks to the Israelites here as if they were one man, so the word “you” and the command “take heed” are singular. (See: [Forms of You](#))

ULT

⁸ Take heed regarding any plague of leprosy, so that you carefully observe and follow every instruction given to you which the priests, the Levites, teach you; as I commanded them, so you will act.

Take heed regarding any plague of leprosy

“Pay attention if you suffer from leprosy” or “Pay attention if you have leprosy”

every instruction given to you which the priests, the Levites, teach you

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: “all of the instructions that I have given you and that the priests, who are Levites, teach you to do” (See: [Active or Passive](#))

teach you ... you will act

Moses here speaks to the Israelites as a group, so these instances of the word “you” are plural. (See: [Forms of You](#))

as I commanded them, so you will act

“you must make sure that you do exactly what I have commanded them”

commanded them

The word “them” refers to the priests, who are Levites.

Deuteronomy 24:9

Call to mind what Yahweh your God

Moses speaks to the Israelites here as if they were one man, so the word “your” and the command “call to mind” are singular. (See: [Forms of You](#))

ULT

⁹ Call to mind what Yahweh your God did to Miriam as you were coming out of Egypt.

you were coming out

Moses here speaks to the Israelites as a group, so the word “you” is plural. (See: [Forms of You](#))

Call to mind

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

as you were coming out of Egypt

“during the time when you were leaving Egypt”

Deuteronomy 24:10

General Information:

Moses speaks to the Israelites as if they were one man, so the words “you” and “your” here are singular. (See: [Forms of You](#))

When you make your neighbor any kind of loan

“When you loan something to your neighbor”

to fetch his pledge

“to take his pledge”

his pledge

This refers to what he has promised that he would give you if he did not pay back the loan.

ULT

10 When you make your neighbor any kind of loan, you must not go into his house to fetch his pledge.

Deuteronomy 24:11

You will stand outside

“You should wait outside his house”

ULT

11 You will stand outside, and the man to whom you have lent will bring the pledge outside to you.

Deuteronomy 24:12

General Information:

Moses speaks to the Israelites as if they were one man, so the words “you” and “your” here are singular. (See: [Forms of You](#))

you must not lie down to sleep with his pledge in your possession

“you must not keep his coat overnight” or “you must return his pledge before you lie down to sleep”

his pledge

This refers to what he has promised that he would give you if he did not pay back the loan. See how you translated this in [Deuteronomy 24:10](#).

ULT

12 If he is a poor man, you must not lie down to sleep with his pledge in your possession.

Deuteronomy 24:13

restore to him the pledge

“give him back what he has given you to show that he will pay back the loan”

so that he may sleep in his cloak and bless you

The full meaning of this statement can be made explicit. Alternate translation: “so that he will have his coat to keep himself warm when he sleeps, and he will be grateful to you” (See: [Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information](#))

cloak

This is a coat or other clothing that keeps a person warm at night. This was probably the “pledge” Moses was speaking of in [Deuteronomy 24:10-12](#).

it will be righteousness for you before Yahweh your God

“Yahweh your God will approve of the way you handled this matter”

ULT

13 You must surely restore to him the pledge by the time the sun goes down, so that he may sleep in his cloak and bless you; it will be righteousness for you before Yahweh your God.

Deuteronomy 24:14

General Information:

Moses speaks to the Israelites as if they were one man, so the words “you” and “your” here are singular. (See: [Forms of You](#))

You must not oppress a hired servant

“You must not treat a hired servant poorly”

hired servant

a person who gets paid daily for his work

poor and needy

These two words have similar meanings and emphasize that this is a person who cannot help himself. (See: [Doublet](#))

within your city gates

Here “city gates” mean towns or cities. Alternate translation: “in one of your cities” (See: [Synecdoche](#))

ULT

14 You must not oppress a hired servant who is poor and needy, whether he is of your fellow Israelites, or of the foreigners who are in your land within your city gates;

Deuteronomy 24:15

Each day you must give him his wage

“You should give the man the money he earns every single day”

the sun must not go down on this unsettled matter

This is an idiom. The Israelites considered the new day as starting when the sun went down. Alternate translation: “you should pay the man on the same day he does the work” (See: [Idiom](#))

for he is poor and is counting on it

The full meaning of this statement can be made explicit. Alternate translation: “because he is poor and depends on his wages to buy his food for the next day” (See: [Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information](#))

he does not cry out against you to Yahweh

“he does not call out to Yahweh and ask him to punish you”

ULT

15 Each day you must give him his wage; the sun must not go down on this unsettled matter, for he is poor and is counting on it. Do this so that he does not cry out against you to Yahweh, and so that it not be a sin that you have committed.

Deuteronomy 24:16

The parents must not be put to death for their children

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: “You must not execute the parents because of something bad that one of their children did” (See: [Active or Passive](#))

neither must the children be put to death for their parents

This can be stated in active form, Alternate translation: “and you must not execute the children because of something bad that their parents did” (See: [Active or Passive](#))

everyone must be put to death for his own sin

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: “you should only execute a person because of something bad that he did himself” (See: [Active or Passive](#))

ULT

¹⁶ The parents must not be put to death for {their} children, neither must the children be put to death for {their} parents. Instead, everyone must be put to death for his own sin.

Deuteronomy 24:17

General Information:

Moses speaks to the Israelites as if they were one man, so the words “you” and “your” here are singular. (See: [Forms of You](#))

You must not use force to take away the justice that is due the foreigner or the fatherless

Moses speaks of justice as if it were a physical object that a stronger person can violently pull away from a weaker person. Alternate translation: “You must not treat a foreigner or the fatherless unfairly” (See: [Metaphor](#))

fatherless

This refers to children whose parents have both died and do not have relatives to care for them.

nor take the widow’s cloak as a pledge

A lender would take something from the borrower to ensure that she would pay him back. He was not allowed to take her coat because she needed it to stay warm. The full meaning of this statement can be made explicit.

Alternate translation: “and do not take a widow’s cloak as a pledge because she needs it to stay warm” (See: [Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information](#))

ULT

17 You must not use force to take away the justice that is due the foreigner or the fatherless, nor take the widow’s cloak as a pledge.

Deuteronomy 24:18

call to mind

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

ULT

18 Instead, you must call to mind that you were a slave in Egypt, and that Yahweh your God rescued you from there. Therefore I instruct you to obey this command.

Deuteronomy 24:19

General Information:

Moses speaks to the Israelites as if they were one man, so the words “you” and “your” here are singular. (See: [Forms of You](#))

When you reap your harvest in your field

“When you cut down the grain in your field”

an omer of grain

Some versions translate this as “a sheaf.” Either translation refers to stalks of grain, enough to be easily carried, possibly tied in a bundle.

it must be for the foreigner, for the fatherless, or for the widow

You can make clear the understood information. Alternate translation: “you must leave the sheaf so a foreigner, an orphan, or a widow can take it” (See: [Ellipsis](#))

in all the work of your hands

Here “hands” refers to the whole person. Alternate translation: “in all the work that you do” (See: [Synecdoche](#))

ULT

19 When you reap your harvest in your field, and if you have forgotten an omer of grain in the field, you must not go back to get it; it must be for the foreigner, for the fatherless, or for the widow, so that Yahweh your God may bless you in all the work of your hands.

Deuteronomy 24:20

When you shake your olive tree

You can make clear the understood information. Alternate translation: "When you shake the branches of your olive tree, causing the olives to fall to the ground so you can pick them up" (See: [Ellipsis](#))

ULT

²⁰ When you shake your olive tree, you must not go over the branches again; it will be for the foreigner, for the fatherless, or for the widow.

you must not go over the branches again

"do not pick every single olive from the tree"

it will be for the foreigner, for the fatherless, or for the widow

You can make clear the understood information. Alternate translation: "the olives that stay on the branches are for foreigners, orphans, and widows to pick and take with them" (See: [Ellipsis](#))

Deuteronomy 24:21

General Information:

Moses speaks to the Israelites as if they were one man, so the words “you” and “your” here are singular. (See: [Forms of You](#))

What is left over will be for the foreigner, for the fatherless, and for the widow

“The grapes that you do not pick will be for the foreigner, the fatherless, and the widow to pick”

for the foreigner, for the fatherless, and for the widow

These refer to groups of people. Alternate translation: “for foreigners, for those who are fatherless, and for the widows” (See: [Generic Noun Phrases](#))

ULT

21 When you gather the grapes of your vineyard, you must not glean {it} again. What is left over will be for the foreigner, for the fatherless, and for the widow.

Deuteronomy 24:22

call to mind

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

ULT

22 You must call to mind that you were a slave in the land of Egypt; therefore I instruct you to obey this command.

Deuteronomy 25

Deuteronomy 25 General Notes

Structure and formatting

This chapter continues to teach about justice in Israel. (See: [just](#), [justice](#), [unjust](#), [injustice](#), [justify](#), [justification](#))

Other possible translation difficulties in this chapter

“A perfect and just weight you must have”

In the ancient Near East, money was weighted on a scale. If a persons weight was off, they were robbing people.
(See: [Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information](#))

Deuteronomy 25:1

General Information:

Moses continues speaking to the people of Israel.

ULT

¹ If there is a dispute between men and they go to court, and {the judges} judge them, then they will acquit the righteous and condemn the wicked.

Deuteronomy 25:2

If the guilty man deserves to be beaten

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: “If the judge orders them to beat the guilty man” (See: [Active or Passive](#))

be beaten in his presence

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: “he will watch them beat him” (See: [Active or Passive](#))

with the ordered number of blows, as was his crime

“the number of times he has ordered because of the bad deed he did”

ULT

² If the guilty man deserves to be beaten, then the judge will make him lie down and be beaten in his presence with the ordered number of blows, as was his crime.

Deuteronomy 25:3

General Information:

Moses continues speaking to the people of Israel.

The judge may give him forty blows

“The judge may say that they should beat the guilty person 40 times”
(See: [Numbers](#))

ULT

³ The judge may give him forty blows, but he may not exceed that number; for if he should exceed that number and beat him with many more blows, then your fellow Israelite would be humiliated before your eyes.

but he may not exceed that number

“but the judge may not order them to beat him more than 40 times”

for if he should exceed that number and beat him with many more blows

“because if the judge orders them to beat him many more than 40 times”

then your fellow Israelite would be humiliated before your eyes

This may be stated in active form. Alternate translation: “then the judge would humiliate your fellow Israelite in front of all of the people of Israel” (See: [Active or Passive](#))

humiliated before your eyes

Here the people are represented by their “eyes” to emphasize what they see. Alternate translation: “humiliated, and you would all see it” (See: [Synecdoche](#))

Deuteronomy 25:4

You must not muzzle the ox

“You must not put something over the mouth of an ox”

when he treads out the grain

while he separates the grain from the chaff by walking on it or dragging heavy wood over it

ULT

⁴ You must not muzzle the ox when he treads out “the grain”.

Deuteronomy 25:5

General Information:

Moses is still speaking to the people of Israel.

If brothers live together

This could mean: (1) "If brothers live on the same property" or (2) "If brothers live near each other."

then the wife of the dead man must not be married off to someone

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "then the family of the dead man must not let the widow marry someone" (See: [Active or Passive](#))

shall go in to her

This is a euphemism. Alternate translation: "shall have sexual relations with her" (See: [Euphemism](#))

do the duty of a husband's brother to her

"do what the brother of a dead husband is supposed to do"

ULT

⁵ If brothers live together and one of them dies, not having any son, then the wife of the dead man must not be {married} off to someone else outside {the family}. Instead, her husband's brother shall go in to her and take her to himself as a wife, and do the duty of a husband's brother to her.

Deuteronomy 25:6

will succeed in the name of that man's dead brother

The word "name" is a metonym for the person's family line.
Alternate translation: "will continue the family line of that man's dead brother" (See: [Metonymy](#))

ULT

⁶ This is so that the firstborn that she bears will succeed in the name of that man's dead brother, so that his name will not perish from Israel.

so that his name will not perish from Israel

The word "name" is a metonym for the person's family line. Alternate translation: "so that his family line will not disappear from Israel" (See: [Metonymy](#))

Deuteronomy 25:7

General Information:

Moses continues speaking to the people of Israel.

must go up to the gate to the elders

The full meaning of this statement can be made explicit. Alternate translation: “must go up to the city gate where the elders judge cases” (See: [Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information](#))

refuses to raise up for his brother a name

Here “name” refers to the memory of someone through his descendants. Alternate translation: “refuses to give his brother a son” (See: [Metonymy](#))

he will not perform the duty of a husband’s brother to me

“he will not do what a husband’s brother is supposed to do and marry me”

ULT

⁷ But if the man does not wish to take his brother’s wife for himself, then his brother’s wife must go up to the gate to the elders and say, ‘My husband’s brother refuses to raise up for his brother a name in Israel; he will not perform the duty of a husband’s brother to me.’

Deuteronomy 25:8

I do not wish to take her

“I do not wish to marry her”

ULT

⁸ Then the elders of his city must call him and speak to him. But suppose that he insists and says, ‘I do not wish to take her.’

Deuteronomy 25:9

General Information:

Moses continues speaking to the people of Israel.

must come up to him in the presence of the elders

“must walk up close to him with the elders there watching”

who does not build up his brother's house

Here “house” is a metonym for the family. Alternate translation: “who does not give his brother a son and continue his brother's family line” (See: [Metonymy](#))

ULT

⁹ Then his brother's wife must come up to him in the presence of the elders, take off his sandal from his foot, and spit in his face. She must answer him and say, ‘This is what is done to the man who does not build up his brother's house.’

Deuteronomy 25:10

His name will be called in Israel

“People in Israel will know his family as”

The house of him whose sandal has been taken off

ULT

¹⁰ His name will be called in Israel, ‘The house of him whose sandal has been taken off.’

Here removing the sandal symbolizes that the brother would not receive any of the property of his dead brother. The full meaning of this statement can be made explicit. This can also be stated in active form. Alternate translation: “The house of him whose sandal his brother’s widow took off his foot” or “The family of a man who did not marry the wife of his dead brother” or “The family whom everyone despises” or “The family who is shameful” (See: [Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information](#) and [Active or Passive](#))

Deuteronomy 25:11

General Information:

Moses speaks to the Israelites as if they were one man, so the words “you” and “your” here are singular. (See: [Forms of You](#))

out of the hand of him who struck him

Here “hand” refers to power or control. Alternate translation: “so the one who struck him will not strike him again” or “from the man who hit him” (See: [Metonymy](#))

ULT

11 If men fight with each other, and the wife of one comes to rescue her husband out of the hand of him who struck him, and if she stretches out her hand and takes him by the private parts,

Deuteronomy 25:12

your eye must have no pity

Here “eye” means the whole person. Alternate translation: “you should not feel sorry for her” or “you must not show her mercy” (See: [Synecdoche](#))

ULT

12 then you must cut off her hand; your eye must have no pity.

Deuteronomy 25:13

General Information:

Moses speaks to the Israelites as if they were one man, so the words “you” and “your” here are singular. (See: [Forms of You](#))

ULT

13 You must not have in your bag different weights, a large and a small.

You must not have in your bag different weights, a large and a small

The full meaning of this statement can be made explicit. You can also make clear the understood information. Alternate translation: “You must not cheat people by using a weight that is larger than you say it is when you buy things and by using a weight that is smaller than you say it is when you sell things” (See: [Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information](#) and [Ellipsis](#))

weights

Weights were stones used on a balance to determine how much something weighs

Deuteronomy 25:14

You must not have in your house different measures, a large and a small

The full meaning of this statement can be made explicit. You can also make clear the understood information. Alternate translation: “You must not cheat people by using a measure that is larger than you say it is when you buy things and by using a measure that is smaller than you say it is when you sell things” (See: [Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information](#) and [Ellipsis](#))

ULT

¹⁴ You must not have in your house different measures, a large and a small.

measures

A measure was a basket or other container for measuring how much there is of something.

Deuteronomy 25:15

General Information:

Moses continues speaking to the people of Israel about using fair weights and measures when buying and selling. He speaks to the Israelites as if they were one man, so the words “you” and “your” here are singular. (See: [Forms of You](#))

A perfect and just

“A correct and fair”

weight ... measure

See how you translated these words in [Deuteronomy 25:13](#).

your days may be long

This is an idiom. Alternate translation: “you may live for a long time” (See: [Idiom](#))

ULT

15 A perfect and just weight you must have; a perfect and just measure you must have, so that your days may be long in the land that Yahweh your God is giving you.

Deuteronomy 25:16

For all who do such things, all that act unrighteously

“because everyone who cheats people by using different sized weights and measures”

ULT

¹⁶ For all who do such {things}, all that act unrighteously, {are} an abomination to Yahweh your God.

Deuteronomy 25:17

General Information:

Moses speaks to the Israelites as if they were one man, so except where noted the words “you” and “your” here are singular. (See: [Forms of You](#))

ULT

17 Call to mind what Amalek did to you on the road as you came out of Egypt,

Call to mind what Amalek did to you

This is an idiom, and “Amalek” is a metonym for the Amelikite people. Alternate translation: “Remember what the Amalekites did to you” (See: [Idiom](#) and [How to Translate Names](#) and [Metonymy](#))

as you came out

The word “you” here is plural. (See: [Forms of You](#))

Deuteronomy 25:18

how he met you on the road

“how they met you along the way”

attacked those of you at the rear

“attacked those of your people who were in the back of the line”

all who were feeble in your rear

“all the people who were weak in the back of the line”

faint and weary

These words have similar meanings and emphasize how tired the people were. Alternate translation: “tired and exhausted” (See: [Doublet](#))

he did not honor God

The full meaning of this statement can be made explicit. Alternate translation: “he was not afraid of God’s punishment” or “he did not respect God” (See: [Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information](#))

ULT

18 how he met you on the road and attacked those of you at the rear, all who {were} feeble in your rear, when you were faint and weary; he did not honor God.

Deuteronomy 25:19

you must blot out the remembrance of Amalek from under heaven

“you must kill all of the Amalekites so that nobody will remember them anymore”

ULT

¹⁹ Therefore, when Yahweh your God has given you rest from all your enemies round about, in the land that Yahweh your God is giving you to possess {as} an inheritance, you must not forget {that} you must blot out the remembrance of Amalek from under heaven.

Deuteronomy 26

Deuteronomy 26 General Notes

Structure and formatting

This chapter recalls the great events of Israel's history when Yahweh brought them out of Egypt.

Deuteronomy 26:1

General Information:

Moses speaks to the Israelites as if they were one man, so the words “you” and “your” here are singular. (See: [Forms of You](#))

ULT

¹ When you have come into the land that Yahweh your God is giving you {as} an inheritance, and when you possess it and live in it,

Deuteronomy 26:2

some of the first of all the harvest

“some of the first fruits of the harvest” or “some of the first crops of the harvest.” This “first” is the ordinal number for one. (See: [Ordinal Numbers](#))

ULT

² then you must take some of the first of all the harvest of the land that you have brought in from the land that Yahweh your God is giving you. You must put {it} in a basket and go to the place that Yahweh your God will choose as his sanctuary.

Deuteronomy 26:3

General Information:

Moses speaks to the Israelites as if they were one man, so the words “you” and “your” here are singular. (See: [Forms of You](#))

ULT

³ You must go to the priest who will be serving in those days and say to him, ‘I acknowledge today to Yahweh your God that I have come to the land that Yahweh swore to our ancestors to give us.’

Deuteronomy 26:4

(There are no notes for this verse.)

ULT

⁴ The priest must take the basket out of your hand and set it down before the altar of Yahweh your God.

Deuteronomy 26:5

General Information:

Moses speaks to the Israelites as if they were one man, so the words “you” and “your” here are singular. (See: [Forms of You](#))

My ancestor was a wandering Aramean

This is the beginning of the statement that the Israelite male should make when bringing his basket.

a wandering Aramean

This refers to Jacob, who was the ancestor of all the Israelites. He lived for many years in Aram-Nahairam, a region located in Syria.

stayed there

“lived the rest of his life there”

There he became

The word “he” is a metonym for “Jacob’s descendants.” (See: [Metonymy](#))

a great, mighty

These words mean basically the same thing. They emphasize that Israel became a large and powerful nation. Alternate translation: “very great” (See: [Doublet](#))

ULT

⁵ You must say before Yahweh your God, ‘My ancestor {was} a wandering Aramean. He went down into Egypt and stayed there, and his people were few in number. There he became a great, mighty, and populous nation.’

Deuteronomy 26:6

General Information:

This continues what the Israelite must say when he brings his first crops to Yahweh.

treated us badly and afflicted us

These two phrases say basically the same thing. They emphasize that the Egyptians acted very harshly. (See: [Doublet](#))

treated us

Here “us” refers to the people of Israel that were living in Egypt. The speaker includes himself as one of the people whether he lived in Egypt or not. (See: [Exclusive and Inclusive ‘We’](#))

ULT

⁶ The Egyptians treated us badly and afflicted us. They made us do the work of slaves.

Deuteronomy 26:7

he heard our voice

Here “voice” refers to the whole person and his cries or prayers.
Alternate translation: “he heard our cries” or “he heard our prayers”
(See: [Metonymy](#))

our affliction, our labor, and our oppression

“that the Egyptians were afflicting us, that we were doing very hard work, and that the Egyptians were oppressing us”

ULT

⁷ We cried out to Yahweh, the God of our fathers, and he heard our voice and saw our affliction, our labor, and our oppression.

Deuteronomy 26:8

General Information:

This continues what the Israelite must say when he brings his first crops to Yahweh.

Yahweh brought us

Here “us” refers to the people of Israel that were living in Egypt. The speaker includes himself as one of the people whether he lived in Egypt or not. (See: [Exclusive and Inclusive ‘We’](#))

with a mighty hand, with an outstretched arm

Here “a mighty hand” and “an outstretched arm” are metaphors for Yahweh’s power. See how you translated these words in [Deuteronomy 4:34](#). Alternate translation: “by showing his mighty power” (See: [Metaphor](#))

with great fearsomeness

“with acts that terrified the people who saw them”

ULT

⁸ Yahweh brought us out of Egypt with a mighty hand, with an outstretched arm, with great fearsomeness, with signs, and with wonders;

Deuteronomy 26:9

a land that flows with milk and honey

This is an idiom. See how you translated this in [Deuteronomy 6:3](#).
Alternate translation: “a land where plenty of milk and honey flow”
or “a land that is excellent for cattle and farming”

ULT

⁹ and he has brought us to this place
and has given us this land, a land that
flows with milk and honey.

Deuteronomy 26:10

General Information:

Moses continues telling the Israelites what they must say when they bring their first crops to Yahweh. He speaks to them as if they were one man, so the words “you” and “your” here are singular. (See: [Forms of You](#))

first of the harvest

“first fruits of the harvest” or “first crops of the harvest”

You must set it down

“You must set the basket down.”

ULT

10 Now look, I have brought the first of the harvest of the land that you, Yahweh, have given me.' You must set it down before Yahweh your God and worship before him;

Deuteronomy 26:11

**you must rejoice in all the good that Yahweh
your God has done for you**

“you must rejoice and be grateful for all the good things that
Yahweh your God has done for you”

ULT

¹¹ and you must rejoice in all the good
that Yahweh your God has done for you,
for your house—you, and the Levite,
and the foreigner who {is} among you.

Deuteronomy 26:12

General Information:

Moses speaks to the Israelites as if they were one man, so the words “you” and “your” here are singular. (See: [Forms of You](#))

in the third year

This “third” is the ordinal number for three. Every three years the people of Israel gave a tenth of the harvest to the poor. (See: [Ordinal Numbers](#))

fatherless

These are children whose parents have both died and do not have relatives to care for them.

widow

This means a woman whose husband has died and has no children to care for her now that she is old.

eat within your city gates and be filled

Here “gates” means towns or cities. Alternate translation: “so that those within your towns may have enough food to eat” (See: [Synecdoche](#))

ULT

12 When you have finished giving all the tithe of your harvest in the third year, that is, the year of tithing, then you must give it to the Levite, to the foreigner, to the fatherless, and to the widow, so that they may eat within your city gates and be filled.

Deuteronomy 26:13

I have brought out of

These are the first words of another statement that the Israelite was supposed to say.

neither have I forgotten them

This means that he has obeyed all of God's commandments.

ULT

13 You must say before Yahweh your God, 'I have brought out of {my} house the things that belong to Yahweh, and have given them to the Levite, to the foreigner, to the fatherless, and to the widow, according to all your commandments that you have given me. I have not transgressed any of your commandments, neither have I forgotten them.'

Deuteronomy 26:14

General Information:

This continues what the Israelite must say to Yahweh when he gives his tithe to the poor.

I have not eaten any of it in my mourning

“I have not eaten any of the tithe while I was mourning”

when I was impure

Here “impure” means the person is unclean according to the Law. God does not allow an unclean person to touch the tithe he is giving to God. The full meaning of this statement can be made explicit. Alternate translation: “when I was unclean according to the Law” or “when the law says I cannot touch it” (See: [Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information](#))

I have listened to the voice of Yahweh my God; I have obeyed everything you have commanded me to do

Here “voice of Yahweh” is a metonym for what Yahweh says. Both statements share similar meanings. They emphasize that the person has obeyed all of God’s commands. (See: [Metonymy](#) and [Parallelism](#))

ULT

14 I have not eaten {any} of it in my mourning, nor have I put it somewhere else when I was impure, nor have I given {any} of it in honor of the dead. I have listened to the voice of Yahweh my God; I have obeyed everything you have commanded me to do.

Deuteronomy 26:15

from the holy place where you live, from heaven

These two phrases mean the same thing. Alternate translation: “from heaven, your holy dwelling place” (See: [Doublet](#))

a land flowing with milk and honey

This is an idiom. See how you translated this in [Deuteronomy 6:3](#).

Alternate translation: “a land where plenty of milk and honey flow” or “a land that is excellent for cattle and farming”

ULT

¹⁵ Look down from the holy place where you live, from heaven, and bless your people Israel, and the land that you have given us, as you had sworn to our fathers, a land flowing with milk and honey.'

Deuteronomy 26:16

General Information:

Moses speaks to the Israelites as if they were one man, so the words “you” and “your” here are singular. (See: [Forms of You](#))

with all your heart and with all your soul

Here “heart” and “soul” are metonyms for a person’s inner being. These two phrases are used together to mean “completely” or “earnestly.” See how you translated this in [Deuteronomy 4:29](#). (See: [Metonymy](#) and [Doublet](#))

ULT

16 Today Yahweh your God is commanding you to obey these statutes and decrees; you will therefore keep them and do them with all your heart and with all your soul.

Deuteronomy 26:17

that you will walk in his ways and keep his statutes, his commandments, and his decrees, and that you will listen to his voice

The words “walk,” “keep,” and “listen” have similar meanings here. Here “voice” refers to what God has said. Alternate translation: “that you will completely obey everything Yahweh commands” (See: [Parallelism](#) and [Metonymy](#))

ULT

¹⁷ You have declared today that Yahweh is your God, and that you will walk in his ways and keep his statutes, his commandments, and his decrees, and that you will listen to his voice.

Deuteronomy 26:18

General Information:

Moses speaks to the Israelites as if they were one man, so the words “you” and “your” here are singular. (See: [Forms of You](#))

a people who are his own possession

“a people who belong to him”

ULT

18 Today Yahweh has declared that you are a people who are his own possession, as he had promised you, and that {you} are to keep all his commandments,

Deuteronomy 26:19

he will set you high above

This is an idiom. Alternate translation: “he will make you more important than” or “he will make you greater than” (See: [Idiom](#))

he will set you high above all the other nations that he has made, and you will receive praise, fame, and honor

This could mean: (1) “he will cause you to become greater than any other nation that he has established, and he will enable you to praise him and honor him” or (2) “he will have people praise you more than they praise every other nation that he has made; people will say that you are better than any other nation, and they will honor you.”

You will be a people that is set apart to Yahweh your God

Yahweh choosing the people of Israel to belong to him in a special way is spoken of as if Yahweh set them apart from all other nations. This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: “Yahweh your God will set you apart from other nations” (See: [Metaphor](#) and [Active or Passive](#))

ULT

19 and he will set you high above all the other nations that he has made, and you will receive praise, fame, and honor. You will be a people that is set apart to Yahweh your God, just as he said.”

Deuteronomy 27

Deuteronomy 27 General Notes

Important figures of speech in this chapter

“May the man be cursed”

This phrase is repeated several times in this chapter. This parallelism serves as a warning to the Israelites when they will live in the Promised Land. This is part of the covenant Yahweh made with Moses. (See: [Promised Land](#) and [law](#), [law of Moses](#), [law of Yahweh](#), [law of God](#))

Deuteronomy 27:1

General Information:

Moses speaks to the Israelites as if they were one man, so except where noted, the words “you” and “your” here are singular. (See: [Forms of You](#))

command you today

Moses is speaking to the Israelites as a group, so the word “you” is plural. (See: [Forms of You](#))

I command

Here “I” refers to Moses. The elders are there in agreement with Moses, but he is the only one speaking.

ULT

¹ Moses and the elders of Israel commanded the people and said, “Keep all the commandments that I command you today.”

Deuteronomy 27:2

you will pass

Moses is speaking to the Israelites as a group, so the word “you” is plural. (See: [Forms of You](#))

plaster them with plaster

Plaster is usually a mixture of lime, sand, and water that is spread on something. It dries to form a hard, smooth surface on which a person can write. Alternate translation: “spread plaster on them” or “make them so you can write on them” (See: [Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information](#))

ULT

² On the day when you will pass over the Jordan to the land that Yahweh your God is giving you, you must set up some large stones and plaster them with plaster.

Deuteronomy 27:3

a land flowing with milk and honey

This is an idiom. See how you translated this in [Deuteronomy 6:3](#).
Alternate translation: “a land where plenty of milk and honey flow”
or “a land that is excellent for cattle and farming” (See: [Idiom](#))

ULT

³ You must write on them all the words of this law when you have passed over; that you may go into the land that Yahweh your God is giving you, a land flowing with milk and honey, as Yahweh, the God of your ancestors, has promised you.

Deuteronomy 27:4

General Information:

Moses speaks to the Israelites as if they were one man, so the words “you” and “your” here are singular. (See: [Forms of You](#))

you have passed ... set up ... I am commanding you

Moses is addressing the Israelites as a group, so the instances of “you” and the command “set up” are plural. (See: [Forms of You](#))

plaster them with plaster

“spread plaster on them” or “make them so you can write on them.” See how you translated this in [Deuteronomy 27:2](#).

Mount Ebal

This is a mountain near Shechem. See how you translated it in [Deuteronomy 11:29](#).

ULT

⁴ When you have passed over the Jordan, set up these stones that I am commanding you about today, on Mount Ebal, and plaster them with plaster.

Deuteronomy 27:5

you must raise no iron tool to work the stones

This refers to the chisels that would make the stones smoother, in order that they might fit together better. The full meaning of this statement can be made explicit. Alternate translation: “you will not shape the altar stones with iron tools” (See: [Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information](#))

ULT

⁵ There you must build an altar to Yahweh your God, an altar of stones; but you must raise no iron {tool} to work the stones.

Deuteronomy 27:6

General Information:

Moses speaks to the Israelites as if they were one man, so the words “you” and “your” here are singular. (See: [Forms of You](#))

unworked stones

stones in their natural shape that no one has shaped with metal tools

ULT

6 You must build the altar of Yahweh your God of unworked stones; you must offer burnt offerings on it to Yahweh your God,

Deuteronomy 27:7

(There are no notes for this verse.)

ULT

⁷ and you will sacrifice fellowship offerings and will eat there; you will rejoice before Yahweh your God.

Deuteronomy 27:8

write on the stones

This refers to the stones they were to set up on Mount Ebal and cover with plaster. See how you translated this in [Deuteronomy 27:2](#) and [Deuteronomy 27:4](#).

ULT

⁸ You will write on the stones all the words of this law very plainly.”

Deuteronomy 27:9

General Information:

Moses speaks to the Israelites as if they were one man, so the words “you” and “your” here are singular. (See: [Forms of You](#))

ULT

⁹ Moses and the priests, the Levites, spoke to all Israel and said, “Be silent and listen, Israel: Today you have become the people of Yahweh your God.

Deuteronomy 27:10

obey the voice of Yahweh your God

Here the metonym “voice of Yahweh” refers to what he says.
Alternate translation: “obey what Yahweh your God says” (See: [Metonymy](#))

I am commanding

Moses is commanding. The Levites are there in agreement with Moses, but he is the only one speaking.

ULT

10 You must therefore obey the voice of Yahweh your God and obey his commandments and statutes that I am commanding you today.”

Deuteronomy 27:11

(There are no notes for this verse.)

ULT

¹¹ Moses commanded the people the same day and said,

Deuteronomy 27:12

These tribes

Here the metonym “tribes” refers to the people from the tribes of Simeon, Levi, Judah, Issachar, Joseph, and Benjamin. Alternate translation: “The people from these tribes” (See: [Metonymy](#))

Mount Gerizim

A small mountain north of Mount Ebal. See how you translated this in [Deuteronomy 11:29](#).

Joseph

This combines the tribes of Ephraim and Manasseh, who were descendants of Joseph.

ULT

12 “These tribes must stand on Mount Gerizim to bless the people after you have passed over the Jordan: Simeon, Levi, Judah, Issachar, Joseph, and Benjamin.

Deuteronomy 27:13

Mount Ebal

See how you translated this in [Deuteronomy 11:29](#).

pronounce curses

“say in a loud voice how Yahweh will curse Israel”

ULT

13 These are the tribes that must stand on Mount Ebal to pronounce curses: Reuben, Gad, Asher, Zebulun, Dan, and Naphtali.

Deuteronomy 27:14

(There are no notes for this verse.)

ULT

14 The Levites will answer and say to all the men of Israel in a loud voice:

Deuteronomy 27:15

May the man be cursed ... sets it up in secret

This is the statement the Levites must shout to all the people of Israel. It may be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "May Yahweh curse the person ... sets it up in secret" (See: [Active or Passive](#))

the work of the hands of a craftsman

This is an idiom. Alternate translation: "something a man has made" (See: [Idiom](#))

craftsman

a man who knows how to make things well

ULT

15 'May the man be cursed who makes a carved or cast figure, an abomination to Yahweh, the work of the hands of a craftsman, and who sets it up in secret.' Then all the people must answer and say, 'Amen.'

Deuteronomy 27:16

General Information:

Moses continues telling the Levites and the people what they must say.

May the man be cursed

This may be stated in active form. Alternate translation: “May Yahweh curse the man” (See: [Active or Passive](#))

ULT

16 ‘May the man be cursed who dishonors his father or his mother.’
Then all the people must say, ‘Amen.’

Deuteronomy 27:17

who removes his neighbor's landmark

The full meaning of the statement can be made explicit. Alternate translation: "who takes land away from his neighbor by moving the markers on the borders of his land" (See: [Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information](#))

ULT

17 'May the man be cursed who removes his neighbor's landmark.'
Then all the people must say, 'Amen.'

Deuteronomy 27:18

General Information:

Moses continues telling the Levites and the people what they must say.

May the man be cursed

This may be stated in active form. See how you translated this in [Deuteronomy 27:16](#). Alternate translation: “May Yahweh curse the man” (See: [Active or Passive](#))

ULT

18 ‘May the man be cursed who makes the blind to wander away from the road.’ Then all the people must say, ‘Amen.’

Deuteronomy 27:19

uses force to take away the justice due to a foreigner ... widow

Moses speaks of justice as if it were a physical object that a stronger person can violently pull away from a weaker person. Your language might have one word that means “use force to take away.” See how you translated these words in [Deuteronomy 24:17](#). Alternate translation: “treats a foreigner ... widow unfairly” (See: [Metaphor](#))

ULT

¹⁹ ‘May the man be cursed who uses force to take away the justice due to a foreigner, fatherless, or widow.’ Then all the people must say, ‘Amen.’

fatherless

These are children whose parents have both died and do not have relatives to care for them.

widow

This means a woman whose husband has died and has no children to care for her in her old age.

Deuteronomy 27:20

General Information:

Moses continues telling the Levites and the people what they must say.

May the man be cursed

This can be stated in active form. See how you translated this in [Deuteronomy 27:16](#). Alternate translation: “May Yahweh curse the man” (See: [Active or Passive](#))

his father’s wife

This does not refer to the man’s mother, but another wife of his father.

he has taken away his father’s rights

When a man marries a woman, only he has the legal right to sleep with her. The full meaning of this statement may be made explicit. Alternate translation: “he has taken away his father’s legal rights” (See: [Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information](#))

ULT

20 ‘May the man be cursed who lies with his father’s wife, because he has taken away his father’s rights.’ Then all the people must say, ‘Amen.’

Deuteronomy 27:21

(There are no notes for this verse.)

ULT

²¹ 'May the man be cursed who lies with any kind of beast.' Then all the people must say, 'Amen.'

Deuteronomy 27:22

General Information:

Moses continues telling the Levites and the people what they must say.

May the man be cursed

This may be stated in active form. See how you translated this in [Deuteronomy 27:16](#). Alternate translation: “May Yahweh curse the man” (See: [Active or Passive](#))

the daughter of his father, or with the daughter of his mother

This means a man cannot sleep with his sister, even if she has a different mother or father.

ULT

²² ‘May the man be cursed who lies with his sister, the daughter of his father, or with the daughter of his mother.’ Then all the people must say, ‘Amen.’

Deuteronomy 27:23

(There are no notes for this verse.)

ULT

²³ 'May the man be cursed who lies with his mother-in-law.' Then all the people must say, 'Amen.'

Deuteronomy 27:24

General Information:

Moses continues telling the Levites and the people what they must say.

May the man be cursed

This may be stated in active form. See how you translated this in [Deuteronomy 27:16](#). Alternate translation: “May Yahweh curse the man” (See: [Active or Passive](#))

ULT

²⁴ ‘May the man be cursed who kills his neighbor secretly.’ Then all the people must say, ‘Amen.’

Deuteronomy 27:25

(There are no notes for this verse.)

ULT

²⁵ 'May the man be cursed who takes a bribe to kill an innocent person.' Then all the people must say, 'Amen.'

Deuteronomy 27:26

General Information:

Moses continues telling the Levites and the people what they must say.

May the man be cursed

This may be stated in active form. See how you translated this in [Deuteronomy 27:16](#). Alternate translation: “May Yahweh curse the man” (See: [Active or Passive](#))

ULT

²⁶ ‘May the man be cursed who does not confirm the words of this law, that he will obey them.’ Then all the people must say, ‘Amen.’

Deuteronomy 28

Deuteronomy 28 General Notes

Special concepts in this chapter

Blessings and warnings

This chapter explains some of the blessings and warnings associated with Israel's obedience to the law of Moses.
(See: [bless](#), [blessed](#), [blessing](#) and [law](#), [law of Moses](#), [law of Yahweh](#), [law of God](#))

Deuteronomy 28:1

General Information:

Moses speaks to the Israelites as if they were one man, so the words “you” and “your” here are singular. (See: [Forms of You](#))

to the voice of Yahweh your God

Here the metonym “voice of Yahweh” refers to what he says. Alternate translation: “to what Yahweh your God says” (See: [Metonymy](#))

so as to keep

“and obey”

set you above

Moses speaks of being important or being great as if it were being physically higher, as on a higher hill. Alternate translation: “make you more important than” or “make you greater than” (See: [Metaphor](#))

ULT

¹ If you listen carefully to the voice of Yahweh your God so as to keep all his commandments that I am commanding you today, Yahweh your God will set you above all the other nations of the earth.

Deuteronomy 28:2

All these blessings will come on you and overtake you

Moses describes the blessings as a person who would attack them by surprise or chase and catch them. Alternate translation: “Yahweh will bless you like this in ways that will completely surprise you, and it will be as if you cannot escape having him bless you” (See: [Metaphor](#) and [Personification](#))

ULT

² All these blessings will come on you and overtake you, if you listen to the voice of Yahweh your God.

Deuteronomy 28:3

General Information:

Moses speaks to the Israelites as if they were one man, so the words “you” and “your” here are singular. (See: [Forms of You](#))

ULT

³ Blessed will you be in the city, and
blessed will you be in the field.

Blessed will you be

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

in the city ... in the field

This merism means that Yahweh will bless them everywhere. (See: [Merism](#))

Deuteronomy 28:4

the fruit of your body, and the fruit of your ground, and the fruit of your beasts

These idioms for “your children, and your crops, and all your animals” form a merism for everything the Israelites valued. (See: [Idiom](#) and [Merism](#))

ULT

⁴ Blessed {will be} the fruit of your body, and the fruit of your ground, and the fruit of your beasts, the increase of your cattle, and the young of your flock.

the fruit of your beasts, the increase of your cattle, and the young of your flock

This doublet is three ways of saying that Yahweh will make the Israelites’ animals many and strong. Alternate translation: “all of your animals along with the calves of the cattle and the lambs of the flocks” (See: [Doublet](#))

Deuteronomy 28:5

General Information:

Moses speaks to the Israelites as if they were one man, so the words “you” and “your” here are singular. (See: [Forms of You](#))

ULT

⁵ Blessed {will be} your basket and your kneading trough.

Blessed will be

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

your basket and your kneading trough

Israelites used a basket to carry grain. A “kneading trough” was a bowl they used to mix the grain and make bread. Alternate translation: “all the food you grow and all the food you eat” (See: [Metonymy](#))

Deuteronomy 28:6

when you come in ... when you go out

This merism refers to all of life's activities everywhere they go. (See: [Merism](#))

ULT

⁶ Blessed {will you be} when you come in, and blessed {will you be} when you go out.

Deuteronomy 28:7

General Information:

Moses speaks to the Israelites as if they were one man, so the words “you” and “your” here are singular. (See: [Forms of You](#))

**cause your enemies who rise up against you
to be struck down before you**

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: “cause you to defeat the armies that attack you” (See: [Active or Passive](#))

but will flee before you seven ways

“but they will run away from you in seven directions”

seven ways

This is an idiom. The actual number could be more or less than seven. Alternate translation: “in many different directions” (See: [Idiom](#))

ULT

⁷ Yahweh will cause your enemies who rise up against you to be struck down before you; they will come out against you one way but will flee before you seven ways.

Deuteronomy 28:8

Yahweh will command the blessing to come on you in your barns

Moses describes Yahweh blessing the Israelites as if Yahweh were commanding a person to attack them by surprise. Alternate translation: "When Yahweh blesses you, you will be surprised by how much grain you have in your barns" (See: [Metaphor](#) and [Personification](#))

ULT

⁸ Yahweh will command the blessing to come on you in your barns and in all that you put your hand to; he will bless you in the land that he is giving you.

in all that you put your hand to

This is an idiom. Alternate translation: "in everything you do" (See: [Idiom](#))

Deuteronomy 28:9

General Information:

Moses speaks to the Israelites as if they were one man, so the words “you” and “your” here are singular. (See: [Forms of You](#))

Yahweh will establish you as a people that is set apart for himself

Yahweh choosing the people of Israel to belong to him in a special way is spoken of as if Yahweh put them in a place different from the place all other nations live in. Alternate translation: “Yahweh will make you a holy people that belongs to him” (See: [Metaphor](#))

ULT

⁹ Yahweh will establish you as a people that is set apart for himself, as he has sworn to you, if you keep the commandments of Yahweh your God, and walk in his ways.

Deuteronomy 28:10

you are called by the name of Yahweh

Here the metonym “called by the name of Yahweh” means belonging to him. This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: “Yahweh has called you his own” (See: [Metonymy](#) and [Active or Passive](#))

ULT

10 All the peoples of the earth will see that you are called by the name of Yahweh, and they will be afraid of you.

Deuteronomy 28:11

General Information:

Moses speaks to the Israelites as if they were one man, so the words “you” and “your” here are singular. (See: [Forms of You](#))

in the fruit of your body, in the fruit of your cattle, in the fruit of your ground

This is an idiom. See how you translated these words in [Deuteronomy 28:4](#). Alternate translation: “with children, animals, and crops” (See: [Idiom](#))

ULT

11 Yahweh will make you very prosperous in the fruit of your body, in the fruit of your cattle, in the fruit of your ground, in the land that he swore to your fathers to give you.

Deuteronomy 28:12

his storehouse of the heavens

Moses speaks of the clouds from which the rain falls as if they were a building where he stores the rain. Alternate translation: “the clouds” (See: [Metaphor](#))

at the right time

“when the crops need it”

all the work of your hand

The word “hand” is a synecdoche for the whole person. Alternate translation: “all the work that you do” (See: [Synecdoche](#))

ULT

12 Yahweh will open to you his storehouse of the heavens to give the rain for your land at the right time, and to bless all the work of your hand; you will lend to many nations, but you will not borrow.

Deuteronomy 28:13

General Information:

Moses speaks to the Israelites as if they were one man, so the words “you” and “your” here are singular. (See: [Forms of You](#))

the head, and not the tail

This metaphor describes the nation of Israel as an animal and means the Israelites will always be the leaders over other nations and never the servants following behind them. The Israelites will be superior in power, money, and honor. (See: [Metaphor](#))

ULT

13 Yahweh will make you the head, and not the tail; you will be only above, and you will never be beneath, if you listen to the commandments of Yahweh your God that I am commanding you today, so as to observe and to do {them},

will be only above ... will never be beneath

The Israelites will rule over others but never have others rule them.

I am commanding you

Moses is speaking to all the Israelites, so the word “you” is plural. (See: [Forms of You](#))

Deuteronomy 28:14

if you do not turn away from any of the words that I am commanding you today, to the right hand or to the left, so as to go after other gods to serve them

Disobeying Yahweh and worshiping other gods is spoken of as if a person physically turned and went in a different direction from Yahweh's words. Alternate translation: "if you do not disobey what I am commanding you today by serving other gods" (See: [Metaphor](#))

ULT

¹⁴ and if you do not turn away from any of the words that I am commanding you today, {to} the right hand or {to} the left, so as to go after other gods to serve them.

Deuteronomy 28:15

General Information:

Moses speaks to the Israelites as if they were one man, so the words “you” and “your” here are singular. (See: [Forms of You](#))

But if

Here Moses starts describing the curses the people will receive if they disobey.

the voice of Yahweh your God

Here the metonym “voice of Yahweh” means what Yahweh says. Alternate translation: “what Yahweh your God is saying” (See: [Metonymy](#))

then all these curses will come on you and overtake you

Moses describes the curses as a person who would attack them by surprise or chase and catch them. Alternate translation: “Yahweh will curse you like this in ways that will completely surprise you, and it will be as if you cannot escape having him curse you” (See: [Metaphor](#) and [Personification](#))

come on you and overtake you

See how you translated this in [Deuteronomy 28:2](#).

ULT

15 But if you do not listen to the voice of Yahweh your God, so as to keep all his commandments and his statutes that I am commanding you today, then all these curses will come on you and overtake you.

Deuteronomy 28:16

General Information:

Moses speaks to the Israelites as if they were one man, so the words “you” and “your” here are singular. (See: [Forms of You](#))

ULT

16 Cursed {will you be} in the city, and
cursed {will you be} in the field.

Cursed will you be

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

in the city ... in the field

This merism means that Yahweh will bless them everywhere. See how you translated this in [Deuteronomy 28:3](#). (See: [Merism](#))

Deuteronomy 28:17

your basket and your kneading trough

The Israelites used a basket to carry grain. A “kneading trough” was a bowl they used to mix the grain and make bread. See how you translated this in [Deuteronomy 28:5](#). Alternate translation: “all the food you grow and all the food you eat” (See: [Metonymy](#))

ULT

17 Cursed {will be} your basket and your kneading trough.

Deuteronomy 28:18

General Information:

Moses speaks to the Israelites as if they were one man, so the words “you” and “your” here are singular. (See: [Forms of You](#))

Cursed will be

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

the fruit of your body, the fruit of your ground

This is an idiom for “your children, your crops.” See how you translated this in [Deuteronomy 28:4](#). (See: [Idiom](#))

the increase of your cattle, and the young of your flock

This doublet is two ways of saying that Yahweh will make the Israelites’ animals many and strong. Alternate translation: “the calves of the cattle and the lambs of the flocks” (See: [Doublet](#))

ULT

18 Cursed {will be} the fruit of your body, the fruit of your ground, the increase of your cattle, and the young of your flock.

Deuteronomy 28:19

when you come in ... when you go out

This merism refers to all of life's activities everywhere they go. See how you translated this in [Deuteronomy 28:6](#) (See: [Merism](#))

ULT

19 Cursed {will you be} when you come in, and cursed {will you be} when you go out.

Deuteronomy 28:20

General Information:

Moses speaks to the Israelites as if they were one man, so the words “you” and “your” here are singular. (See: [Forms of You](#))

curses, confusion, and rebukes

“disasters, fear, and frustration”

in all that you put your hand to

This is an idiom. Alternate translation: “in everything you do” (See: [Idiom](#))

until you are destroyed

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: “until your enemies destroy you” (See: [Active or Passive](#))

forsaken me

Here “me” refers to Yahweh.

ULT

20 Yahweh will send on you curses, confusion, and rebukes in all that you put your hand to, until you are destroyed, and until you perish quickly because of your wicked actions by which you will have forsaken me.

Deuteronomy 28:21

cling to you

“remain on you”

ULT

²¹ Yahweh will make the plague cling to you until he destroys you from off the land that you are going in to possess.

Deuteronomy 28:22

General Information:

Moses speaks to the Israelites as if they were one man, so the words “you” and “your” here are singular. (See: [Forms of You](#))

infectious diseases, with fever, with inflammation

“diseases and burning fevers that will make you weak.” These all refer to diseases that cause people to grow weak and die.

with drought

“with lack of rain”

mildew

mold that grows on crops and causes them to rot

These will pursue you

Moses speaks of the bad things that would happen to the Israelites as if they were people or animals who would chase after the Israelites. Alternate translation: “You will suffer from them” (See: [Personification](#))

ULT

22 Yahweh will attack you with infectious diseases, with fever, with inflammation, and with drought and blistering heat, and with scorching winds and mildew. These will pursue you until you perish.

Deuteronomy 28:23

General Information:

Moses speaks to the Israelites as if they were one man, so the words “you” and “your” here are singular. (See: [Forms of You](#))

skies ... will be bronze

Moses speaks of the skies being like bronze because there will be no rain. Alternate translation: “skies ... will give no rain” (See: [Metaphor](#))

the earth ... will be iron

Moses speaks of the earth being like iron because no crops will grow. Alternate translation: “nothing will grow from the ground” (See: [Metaphor](#))

ULT

23 Your skies that are over your head {will be} bronze, and the earth that is under you will be iron.

Deuteronomy 28:24

Yahweh will make the rain of your land into powder and dust

“instead of rain, Yahweh will send sandstorms”

until you are destroyed

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: “until it destroys you” (See: [Active or Passive](#))

ULT

²⁴ Yahweh will make the rain of your land into powder and dust; from the heavens it will come down on you, until you are destroyed.

Deuteronomy 28:25

General Information:

Moses speaks to the Israelites as if they were one man, so the words “you” and “your” here are singular. (See: [Forms of You](#))

Yahweh will cause you to be struck down before your enemies

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: “Yahweh will cause your enemies to strike you down” (See: [Active or Passive](#))

to be struck down before

See how you translated this in [Deuteronomy 28:7](#).

will flee before them seven ways

This means the Israelites will be afraid and panic and run away from their enemies. See similar wording in [Deuteronomy 28:7](#). Alternate translation: “you will flee in seven directions” (See: [Numbers](#))

seven ways

This is an idiom. Alternate translation: “in many different directions” (See: [Idiom](#))

You will be tossed to and fro among all the kingdoms

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: “The peoples of the other nations will drive you from one nation to another” (See: [Active or Passive](#))

ULT

²⁵ Yahweh will cause you to be struck down before your enemies; you will go out one way against them but will flee before them seven ways. You will be tossed to and fro among all the kingdoms of the earth.

Deuteronomy 28:26

(There are no notes for this verse.)

ULT

²⁶ Your dead body will be food to all the birds of the heavens and to the beasts of the earth; there will be no one to frighten {them} away.

Deuteronomy 28:27

General Information:

Moses speaks to the Israelites as if they were one man, so the words “you” and “your” here are singular. (See: [Forms of You](#))

the boils of Egypt

“the same skin disease with which I cursed the Egyptians”

boils ... ulcers, scurvy, and itch

These are different types of skin diseases.

from which you cannot be healed

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: “from which no one will be able to heal you” (See: [Active or Passive](#))

ULT

27 Yahweh will attack you with the boils of Egypt and with ulcers, scurvy, and itch, from which you cannot be healed.

Deuteronomy 28:28

(There are no notes for this verse.)

ULT

²⁸ Yahweh will attack you with madness, with blindness, and with mental confusion.

Deuteronomy 28:29

You will grope about at noonday like the blind grope in the darkness

“You will be like blind people who grope in darkness even at noonday.” The Israelites will have a difficult life even when everyone else is enjoying life. (See: [Simile](#))

you will be always oppressed and robbed

“stronger people will always oppress and rob you”

ULT

²⁹ You will grope about at noonday like the blind grope in the darkness, and you will not prosper in your ways; you will be always oppressed and robbed, and there will be no one to {save} you.

Deuteronomy 28:30

General Information:

Moses speaks to the Israelites as if they were one man, so the words “you” and “your” here are singular. (See: [Forms of You](#))

ULT

30 You will become engaged to a woman, but another man will seize her and rape her. You will build a house but not live in it; you will plant a vineyard but not enjoy its fruit.

Deuteronomy 28:31

Your ox will be slain before your eyes

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: “You will watch as someone kills your ox” (See: [Active or Passive](#))

your donkey will be forcibly taken away from before you and will not be restored to you

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: “someone will take your donkey by force and will not give it back” (See: [Active or Passive](#))

Your sheep will be given to your enemies

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: “I will give your sheep to your enemies” or “I will allow your enemies to take your sheep” (See: [Active or Passive](#))

ULT

31 Your ox {will be} slain before your eyes, but you will not eat its meat; your donkey will be forcibly taken away from before you and will not be restored to you. Your sheep {will be} given to your enemies, and you will have no one to aid you.

Deuteronomy 28:32

General Information:

Moses speaks to the Israelites as if they were one man, so the words “you” and “your” here are singular. (See: [Forms of You](#))

Your sons and your daughters will be given to other peoples

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: “I will give your sons and your daughters to other peoples” or “Your enemies will take your sons and daughters” (See: [Active or Passive](#))

your eyes will look for them the entire day, but will fail with longing for them

Here “your eyes” refers to the whole person. Alternate translation: “you will grow tired as you constantly watch for them and long to see them again” (See: [Synecdoche](#))

There will be no strength in your hand

Here the metonym “strength in your hand” refers to power. “Alternate translation: “You will be powerless to do anything about it” (See: [Metonymy](#))

ULT

32 Your sons and your daughters {will be} given to other peoples; your eyes will look for them the entire day, but will fail with longing for them. There will be no strength in your hand.

Deuteronomy 28:33

General Information:

Moses speaks to the Israelites as if they were one man, so the words “you” and “your” here are singular. (See: [Forms of You](#))

a nation

Here the metonym “a nation” means the people from a nation. Alternate translation: “people from a nation” (See: [Metonymy](#))

you will always be oppressed and crushed

The words “oppressed” and “crushed” mean basically the same thing. This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: “they will always oppress and crush you” or “they will oppress you continually” (See: [Doublet](#) and [Active or Passive](#))

ULT

³³ The harvest of your land and of all your labors—a nation that you do not know will eat it up; you will always be oppressed and crushed,

Deuteronomy 28:34

you will become insane by what you have to see happen

“what you see will make you go crazy”

ULT

³⁴ so that you will become insane by what you have to see happen.

Deuteronomy 28:35

from which you cannot be cured

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: “that no one will be able to cure” (See: [Active or Passive](#))

ULT

³⁵ Yahweh will attack you in the knees and legs with severe boils from which you cannot be cured, from the bottom of your feet to the top of your head.

Deuteronomy 28:36

General Information:

Moses speaks to the Israelites as if they were one man, so the words “you” and “your” here are singular. (See: [Forms of You](#))

ULT

36 Yahweh will take you and the king whom you will place over yourself to a nation that you have not known, neither you nor your ancestors; there you will worship other gods of wood and stone.

Deuteronomy 28:37

of horror, a proverb, and a byword, among all the peoples where Yahweh will lead you away

Here the words “proverb” and “byword” mean basically the same thing. This can be translated as a new sentence. Alternate translation: “of horror. The people, in the places where Yahweh will send you, will make up proverbs and bywords about you” or “of horror. Yahweh will send you to peoples who will laugh at you and ridicule you” (See: [Doublet](#))

ULT

³⁷ You will become a source of horror, a proverb, and a byword, among all the peoples where Yahweh will lead you away.

byword

a word or phrase that people use to shame others

Deuteronomy 28:38

General Information:

Moses speaks to the Israelites as if they were one man, so the words “you” and “your” here are singular. (See: [Forms of You](#))

but will gather little seed in

“but will harvest very little food”

ULT

38 You will take much seed out into the field, but will gather little seed in, for the locusts will consume it.

Deuteronomy 28:39

(There are no notes for this verse.)

ULT

³⁹ You will plant vineyards and cultivate {them}, but you will neither drink any {of} the wine, nor even gather in the {grapes}, for worms will eat them.

Deuteronomy 28:40

General Information:

Moses continues describing God's curses if the people disobey him. He speaks to the Israelites as if they were one man, so the words "you" and "your" here are singular. (See: [Forms of You](#))

but you will not rub any of the oil on yourself

People would rub olive oil on themselves to make their skin healthy.

your olive trees will drop their fruit

You may need to make explicit that the fruit drops before it is ripe. Alternate translation: "your olive trees will drop their fruit before the fruit is ripe" or "the olives will fall off your olive trees before they are ripe" (See: [Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information](#))

ULT

40 You will have olive trees within all your territory, but you will not rub any of the oil on {yourself}, for your olive trees will drop their fruit.

Deuteronomy 28:41

(There are no notes for this verse.)

ULT

⁴¹ You will have sons and daughters,
but they will not remain yours, for they
will go into captivity.

Deuteronomy 28:42

General Information:

Moses speaks to the Israelites as if they were one man, so the words “you” and “your” here are singular. (See: [Forms of You](#))

ULT

42 All your trees and the fruit of your ground—the locusts will take them over.

Deuteronomy 28:43

The foreigner who is

This does not mean a specific foreigner but refers to foreigners in general. Alternate translation: “The foreigners who are” (See: [Generic Noun Phrases](#))

rise up above you higher and higher; you yourself will come down lower and lower

This idiom means foreigners will have more power, money, and honor than the Israelites. (See: [Idiom](#))

ULT

43 The foreigner who {is} among you will rise up above you higher and higher; you yourself will come down lower and lower.

Deuteronomy 28:44

He will ... to him

This does not mean a specific foreigner (verse 43) but refers to foreigners in general. Alternate translation: "They will ... to them" (See: [Generic Noun Phrases](#))

he will be the head, and you will be the tail

This means foreigners will have more power and authority than the Israelites. See how you translated a similar phrase in [Deuteronomy 28:13](#). (See: [Metaphor](#))

ULT

44 He will lend to you, but you will not lend to him; he will be the head, and you will be the tail.

Deuteronomy 28:45

General Information:

Moses speaks to the Israelites as if they were one man, so the words “you” and “your” here are singular. (See: [Forms of You](#))

All these curses will come on you and will pursue and overtake you until you are destroyed

Moses describes the curses as a person who would attack them by surprise or chase and catch them. See how you translated something similar in [Deuteronomy 28:2](#). Alternate translation: “Yahweh will curse you like this in ways that will completely surprise you, and it will be as if he is chasing you and you cannot escape having him curse you” (See: [Metaphor](#) and [Personification](#))

to the voice of Yahweh your God

Here the words “voice of Yahweh” are a metonym for what Yahweh said. Alternate translation: “to what Yahweh your God said” (See: [Metonymy](#))

his commandments and his regulations

The words “commandments” and “regulations” are a doublet for “all that Yahweh has commanded you to do.” (See: [Doublet](#))

ULT

45 All these curses will come on you and will pursue and overtake you until you are destroyed. This will happen because you did not listen to the voice of Yahweh your God, so as to keep his commandments and his regulations that he commanded you.

Deuteronomy 28:46

(There are no notes for this verse.)

ULT

⁴⁶ These curses will be on you as signs and wonders, and on your descendants forever.

Deuteronomy 28:47

General Information:

Moses speaks to the Israelites as if they were one man, so the words “you” and “your” here are singular. (See: [Forms of You](#))

joyfulness and gladness of heart

Here “joyfulness” and “gladness of heart” mean the same thing. They emphasize that the people should have been very glad to worship Yahweh. (See: [Doublet](#))

ULT

47 Because you did not worship Yahweh your God with joyfulness and gladness of heart when you were in prosperity,

Deuteronomy 28:48

He will put a yoke of iron on your neck

This is a metaphor for Yahweh allowing the enemy to treat the Israelites cruelly and make them slaves. (See: [Metaphor](#))

ULT

48 therefore will you serve the enemies that Yahweh will send against you; you will serve them in hunger, in thirst, in nakedness, and in poverty. He will put a yoke of iron on your neck until he destroys you.

Deuteronomy 28:49

General Information:

Moses speaks to the Israelites as if they were one man, so the words “you” and “your” here are singular. (See: [Forms of You](#))

from far away, from the ends of the earth

These two phrases mean the same thing and emphasize that the enemy will come from a nation that is very far away from Israel. (See: [Doublet](#))

from the ends of the earth

This is an idiom. Alternate translation: “from places that you know nothing about” (See: [Idiom](#))

like an eagle flies to its victim

This means the enemy will come suddenly and the Israelites will not be able to stop them. (See: [Simile](#))

ULT

49 Yahweh will bring a nation against you from far away, from the ends of the earth, like an eagle flies to its victim, a nation whose language you do not understand;

Deuteronomy 28:50

a nation with a fierce face that does not respect the aged and does not show favor

The word “nation” is a metonym for the people of that nation.
 Alternate translation: “a nation whose people have fierce expressions, who do not respect the aged and do not show favor”
 (See: [Metonymy](#))

ULT

⁵⁰ a nation with a fierce face that does not respect the aged and does not show favor to the young.

Deuteronomy 28:51

until you are destroyed

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: “until they destroy you” or “until they leave you with nothing” (See: [Active or Passive](#))

ULT

51 They will eat the young of your cattle and the fruit of your land until you are destroyed. They will leave for you no grain, new wine, or oil, no young of your cattle or of your flock, until they have caused you to perish.

Deuteronomy 28:52

General Information:

Moses continues describing the army that will attack the Israelites if they do not obey Yahweh. He speaks to the Israelites as if they were one man, so the words “you” and “your” here are singular. (See: [Forms of You](#))

you in all your city gates

Here the phrase “city gates” represents a city. Alternate translation: “your cities” (See: [Synecdoche](#))

ULT

52 They will besiege you in all your city gates, until your high and fortified walls come down everywhere in your land, walls in which you had trusted. They will besiege you within all your city gates throughout all the land that Yahweh your God had given you.

Deuteronomy 28:53

the fruit of your own body, the flesh of your sons and of your daughters

Here “the flesh of your sons and of your daughters” explains the metaphor “the fruit of your own body.” The people will be so hungry after the enemy army surrounds their city that they will eat their own children. (See: [Metaphor](#) and [Parallelism](#))

the fruit of your own body

This speaks of children as if they were fruit that was produced by the bodies of their parents. Alternate translation: “your own children” (See: [Metaphor](#))

ULT

⁵³ You will eat the fruit of your own body, the flesh of your sons and of your daughters, whom Yahweh your God gave you, in the siege and in the distress with which your enemies will put upon you.

Deuteronomy 28:54

General Information:

Moses speaks to the Israelites as if they were one man, so the words “you” and “your” here are singular. (See: [Forms of You](#))

who is tender and very delicate among you—he

ULT

54 The man who is tender and very delicate among you—he will be envious of his brother and his own dear wife, and of whatever children he has left.

“who is tender and very delicate among you—even he.” Moses is saying that not only those one would expect to eat their children, but even the last person one would expect to eat his own children will eat his children.

Deuteronomy 28:55

all your city gates

Here “city gates” represents the cities themselves. Alternate translation: “all your cities” (See: [Synecdoche](#))

ULT

55 So he will not give to any of them the flesh of his own children that he is going to eat, because he will have nothing left for himself in the siege and in the distress which your enemy will put upon you within all your city gates.

Deuteronomy 28:56

General Information:

Moses speaks to the Israelites as if they were one man, so the words “you” and “your” here are singular. (See: [Forms of You](#))

The tender and delicate woman among you ... tenderness—she

“The tender and delicate woman among you ... tenderness—even she.” Moses is saying that not only those one would expect to eat their children, but even women of noble birth and normally very gentle, whom one would never expect to eat their children, will eat their children. The word “you” here is singular. (See: [Forms of You](#))

ULT

56 The tender and delicate woman among you, who would not venture to put the bottom of her foot on the ground for delicateness and tenderness —she will be envious of her own dear husband, of her son, and of her daughter,

who would not venture to put the bottom of her foot on the ground for delicateness and tenderness

Moses is exaggerating. He is emphasizing that this noble woman is so rich and lives in such luxury that she would not allow herself to get dirty. (See: [Hyperbole](#))

for delicateness and tenderness

The abstract nouns “delicateness” and “tenderness” can be stated as adjectives. Alternate translation: “because she is so delicate and tender” (See: [Abstract Nouns](#))

Deuteronomy 28:57

within your city gates

Here “city gates” represents the cities themselves. Alternate translation: “within your cities” (See: [Synecdoche](#))

ULT

⁵⁷ and of her own newborn that comes out from between her legs, and of the children whom she will bear. She will eat them in private for lack of anything else, during the siege and in the distress which your enemy will put upon you within your city gates.

Deuteronomy 28:58

General Information:

Moses speaks to the Israelites as if they were one man, so the words “you” and “your” here are singular. (See: [Forms of You](#))

that are written

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

this glorious and fearful name, Yahweh your God

Here the metonym “name” refers to Yahweh himself. Alternate translation: “Yahweh your God who is glorious and awesome” (See: [Metonymy](#))

ULT

58 If you do not keep all the words of this law that are written in this book, so as to honor this glorious and fearful name, Yahweh your God,

Deuteronomy 28:59

Yahweh will make your plagues terrible, and those of your descendants

“Yahweh will send terrible plagues on you and your descendants” or
“Yahweh will make sure that you and your descendants suffer from terrible plagues”

ULT

⁵⁹ then Yahweh will make your plagues terrible, and those of your descendants; they will be great plagues, of long duration, and severe diseases, of long duration.

Deuteronomy 28:60

General Information:

Moses speaks to the Israelites as if they were one man, so the words “you” and “your” here are singular. (See: [Forms of You](#))

He will bring on you again all the diseases of Egypt

This is an idiom. Alternate translation: “He will make sure that you again suffer from the diseases of Egypt” (See: [Idiom](#))

they will cling to you

This is an idiom. Alternate translation: “the diseases will not stop, and no one will be able to heal you of them” (See: [Idiom](#))

ULT

60 He will bring on you again all the diseases of Egypt that you were afraid of; they will cling to you.

Deuteronomy 28:61

every sickness and plague that is not written

Here “every” is a generalization that means “many.” This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: “even other sicknesses and plagues that I have not written” (See: [Hyperbole](#) and [Active or Passive](#))

until you are destroyed

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

ULT

61 Also every sickness and plague that {is} not written in the book of this law, those also Yahweh will bring on you until you are destroyed.

Deuteronomy 28:62

You will be left ... you were like ... you did not listen

Moses is speaking to the Israelites as a group, so all instances of “you” are plural. (See: [Forms of You](#))

you were like the stars of the heavens in number

This means that in the past there were many Israelites. (See: [Simile](#))

to the voice of Yahweh

Here the metonym “voice of Yahweh” refers to what Yahweh says. Alternate translation: “to what Yahweh says” (See: [Metonymy](#))

ULT

⁶² You will be left few in number, although you were like the stars of the heavens in number, because you did not listen to the voice of Yahweh your God.

Deuteronomy 28:63

Yahweh once rejoiced over you ... multiplying you ... rejoice over you in making you perish and in destroying you. You will be plucked

Moses is speaking to the Israelites as a group, so all instances of “you” are plural. (See: [Forms of You](#))

Yahweh once rejoiced over you in doing you good, and in multiplying you

“Yahweh once enjoyed doing you good and causing you to become many”

he will rejoice over you in making you perish

“he will enjoy making you die”

You will be plucked off the land that you are going into to possess

Moses uses a metaphor to speak of the people as though they were fruit that Yahweh would take off a bush. This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: “He will remove you from the land which you are entering to possess” (See: [Metaphor](#) and [Active or Passive](#))

you are going

Moses speaks to the Israelites as if they were one man, so the word “you” is singular. (See: [Forms of You](#))

ULT

⁶³ As Yahweh once rejoiced over you in doing you good, and in multiplying you, so he will rejoice over you in making you perish and in destroying you. You will be plucked off the land that you are going into to possess.

Deuteronomy 28:64

scatter you ... you will worship ... you have not known ... you nor your ancestors

Moses speaks to the Israelites as if they were one man, so the words “you” and “your” here are singular. (See: [Forms of You](#))

from the one end of the earth to the other end of the earth

These two extremes together mean everywhere on earth. Alternate translation: “throughout the earth” or “all over the earth” (See: [Merism](#))

ULT

⁶⁴ Yahweh will scatter you among all peoples from the one end of the earth to the other end of the earth; there you will worship other gods that you have not known, neither you nor your ancestors, gods of wood and stone.

Deuteronomy 28:65

General Information:

Moses speaks to the Israelites as if they were one man, so the words “you” and “your” here are singular. (See: [Forms of You](#))

there will be no rest for the bottoms of your feet

Here the phrase “the bottoms of your feet” refer to the whole person. Alternate translation: “you will have to continually wander because you have no permanent home where you can rest” (See: [Synecdoche](#))

Yahweh will give you there a trembling heart, failing eyes, and a soul that mourns

This is an idiom. Alternate translation: “Yahweh will cause you to be afraid, without hope, and sad” (See: [Idiom](#))

ULT

65 Among these nations will you find no ease, and there will be no rest for the bottoms of your feet; instead, Yahweh will give you there a trembling heart, failing eyes, and a soul that mourns.

Deuteronomy 28:66

Your life will hang in doubt before you

This is an idiom. Alternate translation: “You will not know whether you will live or die” (See: [Idiom](#))

ULT

66 Your life will hang in doubt before you; you will fear every night and day and will have no certainty at all in your life.

Deuteronomy 28:67

General Information:

Moses speaks to the Israelites as if they were one man, so the words “you” and “your” here are singular. (See: [Forms of You](#))

because of the fear in your hearts

This is an idiom. Alternate translation: “because of the fear you are feeling” (See: [Idiom](#))

the things your eyes will have to see

Here “eyes” refers to the whole person. Alternate translation: “the terrifying things I will force you to see” (See: [Synecdoche](#) and [Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information](#))

ULT

67 In the morning you will say, ‘I wish {it were} evening!’ and in the evening you will say, ‘I wish it were morning!’ because of the fear in your hearts and the things your eyes will have to see.

Deuteronomy 28:68

I had said

Here “I” refers to Yahweh.

ULT

68 Yahweh will bring you into Egypt again by ships, by the route about which I had said to you, ‘You will not see Egypt again.’ There you will offer yourselves for sale to your enemies as male and female slaves, but no one will purchase {you}.”

Deuteronomy 29

Deuteronomy 29 General Notes

Structure and formatting

This chapter is a retelling of the covenant Yahweh made with Moses, along with its blessings and cursing. (See: [covenant](#) and [bless](#), [blessed](#), [blessing](#) and [curse](#), [cursed](#), [cursing](#))

Deuteronomy 29:1

These are the words that Yahweh commanded Moses to tell

This refers to words that Moses is about to speak.

in the land of Moab

This is on the east side of the Jordan where the Israelites were staying before they entered the land of Canaan. "while they were in the land of Moab"

words that were added to the covenant ... at Horeb

These additional commands were given to make Yahweh's covenant apply better to the people once they were settled in their new land. These new commands did not belong to a different covenant, but rather were additions to the original covenant.

ULT

¹ These {are} the words that Yahweh commanded Moses to tell the people of Israel in the land of Moab, words that were added to the covenant that he had made with them at Horeb.

Deuteronomy 29:2

You have seen everything that Yahweh did before your eyes

Yahweh expected them to remember what Yahweh had done and they had seen it. Here the “eyes” represent the whole person and emphasize what the person has seen. Alternate translation: “You have seen all that Yahweh did so that you would see and remember what he did” (See: [Synecdoche](#))

your eyes

Moses speaks to the Israelites as if they were one man, so the word “your” here is singular. (See: [Forms of You](#))

ULT

² Moses called to all Israel and said to them, “You have seen everything that Yahweh did before your eyes in the land of Egypt to Pharaoh, to all his servants, and to all his land—

Deuteronomy 29:3

the great sufferings that your eyes saw

Here “eyes” emphasizes that Yahweh expected them to remember that they had seen it. Alternate translation: “you saw for yourselves that the people suffered terribly” (See: [Synecdoche](#))

ULT

³ the great sufferings that your eyes saw, the signs, and those great wonders.

the signs, and those great wonders

The words “signs” and “wonders” both refer to the plagues that Yahweh had sent upon Egypt. Alternate translation: “and all of the powerful things that Yahweh did” (See: [Doublet](#))

Deuteronomy 29:4

Yahweh has not given you a heart to know, eyes to see, or ears to hear

The people do have hearts, eyes, and ears. This metonym says that Yahweh has not enabled them to understand from what they saw and heard who Yahweh is, and how and why they should obey him. (See: [Metonymy](#))

given you a heart to know

This is an idiom. Alternate translation: “enabled you to understand” (See: [Idiom](#))

ULT

⁴ But until today Yahweh has not given you a heart to know, eyes to see, or ears to hear.

Deuteronomy 29:5

I have led you

Yahweh is speaking to the people of Israel.

forty years

"40 years" (See: [Numbers](#))

your sandals ... your feet

Moses speaks to the Israelites as if they were one man, so the word "your" here is singular. (See: [Forms of You](#))

ULT

⁵ I have led you for forty years in the wilderness; your clothes did not wear out on you, and your sandals did not wear out on your feet.

Deuteronomy 29:6

other alcoholic drinks

Alcoholic drinks made probably from fermented grains. They were not distilled liquors.

ULT

⁶ You did not eat any bread, and you did not drink any wine or other alcoholic drinks, so that you might know that I {am} Yahweh your God.

Deuteronomy 29:7

Sihon, the king of Heshbon, and Og, the king of Bashan

See how you translated these names in [Deuteronomy 1:4](#).

came out against us

Here “us” refers to Moses and the people of Israel. (See: [Exclusive and Inclusive ‘We’](#))

ULT

⁷ When you came to this place, Sihon, the king of Heshbon, and Og, the king of Bashan, came out against us to fight, and we struck them down.

Deuteronomy 29:8

(There are no notes for this verse.)

ULT

⁸ We took their land and gave it as an inheritance to the Reubenites, to the Gadites, and to the half tribe of Manasseh.

Deuteronomy 29:9

keep the words of this covenant and do them

These two phrases mean the same thing and emphasize that the people were to obey Yahweh's commands. Alternate translation: "obey all the words of this covenant" (See: [Parallelism](#))

ULT

⁹ Therefore keep the words of this covenant and do them, so that you may prosper in everything that you do.

Deuteronomy 29:10

General Information:

Moses continues speaking to the people of Israel.

ULT

10 You stand today, all of you, before Yahweh your God; your chiefs, your tribes, your elders, and your officers—all the men of Israel,

Deuteronomy 29:11

among you in your camp ... your wood ... your water

Moses speaks to the Israelites as if they were one man, so the words “you” and “your” here are singular. (See: [Forms of You](#))

**the foreigner who is among you in your camp,
from him who cuts your wood to him who draws**

There were many foreigners among the Israelites. Alternate translation: “the foreigners who are among you in your camp, from those who cut your wood to those who get your water” (See: [Generic Noun Phrases](#))

ULT

¹¹ your little ones, your wives, and the foreigner who {is} among you in your camp, from him who cuts your wood to him who draws your water.

Deuteronomy 29:12

General Information:

Moses speaks to the Israelites as if they were one man, so the words “you” and “your” here are singular. (See: [Forms of You](#))

to enter into the covenant of Yahweh your God and into the oath that Yahweh your God is making with you today

“to agree to the covenant and to swear that you will obey all that Yahweh your God commands”

ULT

12 You are here in order to enter into the covenant of Yahweh your God and into the oath that Yahweh your God is making with you today,

Deuteronomy 29:13

a people for himself

“a people group that belongs to him alone”

ULT

13 so that he may make you today into a people for himself, and {that} he may be God for you, as he spoke to you, and as he swore to your ancestors, to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob.

Deuteronomy 29:14

I am making

Here “I” refers to Yahweh. “Yahweh is making”

ULT

¹⁴ For it is not only with you that I am making this covenant and this oath—

Deuteronomy 29:15

standing here with us

Here “us” refers to Moses and the people of Israel.

those who are not here

“our future descendants, who are not here”

ULT

¹⁵ with everyone standing here with us today before Yahweh our God—but also with those who are not here with us today.

Deuteronomy 29:16

we lived

“we were slaves”

ULT

16 You know how we lived in the land of Egypt, and how we came through the midst of the nations through which you passed.

Deuteronomy 29:17

(There are no notes for this verse.)

ULT

17 You have seen their disgusting idols made of wood and stone, silver and gold, that {were} among them.

Deuteronomy 29:18

whose heart is turning away today from Yahweh our God

Here “heart” refers to the whole person, and “turning away” means to stop obeying. Alternate translation: “who no longer obeys Yahweh our God” (See: [Synecdoche](#))

any root that produces gall and wormwood

Moses speaks of someone who secretly worships another God as if he were a root, and the evil deeds he does to serve that god, and which he encourages others to do, as a bitter plant that poisons people. Alternate translation: “any person who worships idols and causes others to disobey Yahweh” (See: [Metaphor](#))

ULT

¹⁸ Make sure there is not among you any man, woman, clan, or tribe whose heart is turning away today from Yahweh our God, so as to go worship the gods of those nations. Make sure there is not among you any root that produces gall and wormwood.

Deuteronomy 29:19

that person

The person described in verse 18.

bless himself in his heart

This is an idiom. Alternate translation: “congratulate himself” or “encourage himself” (See: [Idiom](#))

ULT

19 When that person hears the words of this curse, he will bless himself in his heart and say, ‘I will have peace, though I walk in the stubbornness of my heart.’ This would destroy the wet together with the dry.

though I walk in the stubbornness of my heart

This is an idiom. Alternate translation: “even though I still refuse to obey Yahweh” (See: [Idiom](#))

This would destroy the wet together with the dry

Here the words “wet” and “dry” are metaphors for the righteous people and the wicked people. This forms a merism for “everyone.” Alternate translation: “This would cause Yahweh to destroy both the righteous people and the wicked people in the land” (See: [Metaphor](#) and [Merism](#))

wet ... dry

These nominal adjectives can be translated as nouns. Because the land was usually dry and the people needed rain so their crops would grow, these words are metaphors for “living ... dead” or “good ... bad.” Alternate translation: “wet things ... dry things” or “good people ... bad people” (See: [Nominal Adjectives](#) and [Metaphor](#))

Deuteronomy 29:20

the anger of Yahweh and his jealousy will smolder

Just as a fire can grow in intensity, so can God's anger and Jealousy grow in intensity. Alternate translation: "Yahweh's jealous anger will grow like a fire" (See: [Metaphor](#))

the anger of Yahweh and his jealousy

Here the word "jealousy" describes "the anger of Yahweh." Alternate translation: "Yahweh's jealous anger" (See: [Hendiadys](#))

that are written

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

the curses that are written in this book will come on him

Moses describes the curses as a person who would attack them by surprise. See how you translated these words in [Deuteronomy 28:15](#). Alternate translation: "Yahweh will curse him with the curses written in this book in ways that will completely surprise him" (See: [Metaphor](#) and [Personification](#))

Yahweh will blot out his name from under heaven

This means God will completely destroy the person and his family. In the future people will not remember him. A similar phrase appears in [Deuteronomy 7:24](#).

ULT

²⁰ Yahweh will not pardon him, but instead, the anger of Yahweh and his jealousy will smolder against that man, and all the curses that are written in this book will come on him, and Yahweh will blot out his name from under heaven.

Deuteronomy 29:21

(There are no notes for this verse.)

ULT

²¹ Yahweh will set him apart for disaster out of all the tribes of Israel, in keeping with all the curses of the covenant that are written in this book of the law.

Deuteronomy 29:22

The generation to come, your children who will rise up after you

The words “your children ... after you” tell who “the generation to come” is.

ULT

²² The generation to come, your children who will rise up after you, and the foreigner who comes from a distant land, will speak when they see the plagues on this land and the diseases with which Yahweh has made it sick—

Deuteronomy 29:23

when they see that the whole land has become sulfur and burning salt

People put sulfur and salt on the soil to keep anything from growing. “when they see that Yahweh has burned the land with sulfur and salt”

where nothing is sown or bears fruit

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: “where no one can sow seed and the crops do not bear fruit” (See: [Active or Passive](#))

like the overthrow of Sodom and Gomorrah

The abstract noun “overthrow” can be translated as a clause. Alternate translation: “as when Yahweh completely destroyed Sodom and Gomorrah”

Admah and Zeboyim

These are names of cities that Yahweh destroyed along with Sodom and Gomorrah. (See: [How to Translate Names](#))

ULT

²³ and when they see that the whole land has become sulfur and burning salt, where nothing {is} sown or bears fruit, where no vegetation grows, like the overthrow of Sodom and Gomorrah, Admah and Zeboyim, that Yahweh destroyed in his anger and wrath—

Deuteronomy 29:24

they will say together with all the other nations ... mean?

This can be translated as an indirect quotation. Alternate translation: “they will ask with all the other nations why Yahweh has done this to the land, and what the heat of this great anger means.” (See: [Direct and Indirect Quotations](#))

ULT

²⁴ they will say together with all the other nations, ‘Why has Yahweh done this to this land? What {does} the heat of this great anger {mean}?’

they will say together with all the other nations

“your descendants and the people of all the other nations will say”

What does the heat of this great anger mean?

The writer is communicating one idea through two words. Alternate translation: “What does this terrible anger mean?” (See: [Hendiadys](#))

Deuteronomy 29:25

It is because they abandoned the covenant of Yahweh, the God of their ancestors

This is the answer to “Why has Yahweh done this to this land?” ([Deuteronomy 29:24](#)). “Yahweh has done this to the land because the Israelites did not follow the promises and the laws of his covenant”

ULT

²⁵ Then {people} will say, ‘It is because they abandoned the covenant of Yahweh, the God of their ancestors, that he made with them when he brought them out of the land of Egypt,

Deuteronomy 29:26

served other gods and bowed down to them

“obeyed other gods and worshiped them”

ULT

²⁶ and because they went and served other gods and bowed down to them, gods that they had not known and that he had not given to them.

Deuteronomy 29:27

the anger of Yahweh has been kindled against this land

Moses compares Yahweh being angry to someone starting a fire. This emphasizes God's power to destroy whatever makes him angry, and it can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "Yahweh has become very angry with this land" (See: [Metaphor](#) and [Active or Passive](#))

ULT

²⁷ Therefore the anger of Yahweh has been kindled against this land, so as to bring on it all the curses that are written in this book.

this land, so as to bring on it

Here "land" is a metonym representing the people. Alternate translation: "the people of this land, so as to bring on them" (See: [Metonymy](#))

that are written

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

Deuteronomy 29:28

Yahweh has uprooted them from their land ... and has thrown them

Israel is compared to a bad plant that Yahweh has pulled up and thrown out of a garden. Alternate translation: "Yahweh has removed them from their land ... and has forced them to go" (See: [Metaphor](#))

ULT

²⁸ Yahweh has uprooted them from their land in anger, in wrath, and in great fury, and has thrown them into another land, as today.'

in anger, in wrath, and in great fury

The words "anger" and "wrath" and "fury" mean basically the same thing and emphasize the great intensity of Yahweh's anger. Alternate translation: "in extremely great anger" or "because he was extremely angry" (See: [Doublet](#))

Deuteronomy 29:29

The secret matters belong alone to Yahweh our God

"Some things Yahweh our God has not revealed, and only he knows them"

that are revealed

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

we may do all the words of this law

"we may do everything that this law commands us to do"

ULT

²⁹ The secret matters belong alone to Yahweh our God; but the {things that are} revealed {belong} forever to us and to our descendants, so that {we} may do all the words of this law.

Deuteronomy 30

Deuteronomy 30 General Notes

Structure and formatting

Moses begins to give final instructions to Israel before his death in anticipation of their entrance into the Promised Land. There were warnings and blessings associated with the people's obedience to the covenant Yahweh made with Moses. (See: [Promised Land](#) and [bless, blessed, blessing](#) and [covenant](#))

Deuteronomy 30:1

General Information:

Moses speaks to the Israelites as if they were one man, so the words “you” and “your” here are singular. (See: [Forms of You](#))

When all these things have come on you

Here “these things” refer to the blessings and curses described in chapters 28-29. The phrase “have come on you” is an idiom that means to happen. Alternate translation: “When all these things happen to you” (See: [Idiom](#))

that I have set before you

This speaks of the blessings and curses that Moses told the people as if they were objects that he set in front of them. Alternate translation: “that I have just now told you about” (See: [Metaphor](#))

call them to mind

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

among all the other nations

“while you are living in the other nations”

has driven you

“has forced you to go”

ULT

¹ When it comes to pass that all these things have come on you—the blessings and the curses that I have set before you—and when you bring them back to your mind among all the other nations where Yahweh your God has driven you,

Deuteronomy 30:2

obey his voice

Here “voice” is referring to what Yahweh says. Alternate translation: “obey what he says” (See: [Metonymy](#))

with all your heart and with all your soul

Here “heart” and “soul” are metonyms for a person’s inner being. These two phrases are used together to mean “completely” or “earnestly.” See how you translated these words in [Deuteronomy 4:29](#). (See: [Metonymy](#) and [Doublet](#))

ULT

² and when you return to Yahweh your God and listen to his voice, following all that I am commanding you today—you and your children—with all your heart and with all your soul,

Deuteronomy 30:3

reverse your captivity

“free you from your captivity.” The abstract noun “captivity” can be translated as a verbal clause. Alternate translation: “free you from those who had captured you” (See: [Abstract Nouns](#))

ULT

³ then Yahweh your God will reverse your captivity and have compassion on you, and he will return and gather you from all the peoples where Yahweh your God has scattered you.

Deuteronomy 30:4

General Information:

Moses speaks to the Israelites as if they were one man, so the words “you” and “your” here are singular. (See: [Forms of You](#))

If any of your exiled people are in the farthest places

“Even those of your exiled people who are in the farthest places”

under the heavens

“under the sky” or “on the earth”

ULT

⁴ If {any} of your exiled people are in the farthest {places} under the heavens, from there Yahweh your God will gather you, and from there he will bring you.

Deuteronomy 30:5

(There are no notes for this verse.)

ULT

⁵ Yahweh your God will bring you into the land that your forefathers possessed, and you will possess it again; he will do you good and will multiply you more than he did your forefathers.

Deuteronomy 30:6

General Information:

Moses speaks to the Israelites as if they were one man, so the words “you” and “your” here are singular. (See: [Forms of You](#))

circumcise your heart

This is not a literal removal of flesh. It means God will remove their sin and enable them to love and obey him. (See: [Metaphor](#))

with all your heart and with all your soul

Here “heart” and “soul” are metonyms for a person’s inner being. These two phrases are used together to mean “completely” or “earnestly.” See how you translated this in [Deuteronomy 4:29](#). (See: [Metonymy](#) and [Doublet](#))

ULT

6 Yahweh your God will circumcise your heart and the heart of your descendants, so you will love Yahweh your God with all your heart and with all your soul, so that you may live.

Deuteronomy 30:7

will put all these curses on your enemies

Moses speaks of curses as though they were a load or a cover that someone could physically put on top of a person. Alternate translation: "will cause your enemies to suffer from these curses" (See: [Metaphor](#))

ULT

⁷ Yahweh your God will put all these curses on your enemies and on those who hate you, those who persecuted you.

Deuteronomy 30:8

obey the voice of Yahweh

Here “voice” means what Yahweh says. Alternate translation: “obey what Yahweh says” (See: [Metonymy](#))

ULT

8 You will return and obey the voice of Yahweh, and you will do all his commandments that I am commanding you today.

Deuteronomy 30:9

General Information:

Moses speaks to the Israelites as if they were one man, so the words “you” and “your” here are singular. (See: [Forms of You](#))

the work of your hand

Here “hand” refers to the whole person. Alternate translation: “in all the work you do” (See: [Synecdoche](#))

ULT

⁹ Yahweh your God will make you abundant in all the work of your hand, in the fruit of your body, in the fruit of your cattle, and in the fruit of your ground, for prosperity; for Yahweh will again rejoice over you for prosperity, as he rejoiced over your fathers.

in the fruit of your body ... in the fruit of your cattle ... in the fruit of your ground

These three phrases are idioms for “in children ... in calves ... in crops.” See how you translated these words in [Deuteronomy 28:4](#). (See: [Idiom](#))

Deuteronomy 30:10

that are written

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

with all your heart and all your soul

Here “heart” and “soul” are metonyms for a person’s inner being. These two phrases are used together to mean “completely” or “earnestly.” See how you translated this in [Deuteronomy 4:29](#). (See: [Metonymy](#) and [Doublet](#))

ULT

10 He will do this if you will obey the voice of Yahweh your God, so as to keep his commandments and regulations that are written in this book of the law, if you turn to Yahweh your God with all your heart and all your soul.

Deuteronomy 30:11

General Information:

Moses speaks to the Israelites as if they were one man, so the words “you” and “your” here are singular. (See: [Forms of You](#))

neither is it too far for you to reach

Moses speaks of being able to understand what a commandment requires a person to do as if it were that person being able to reach a physical object. Alternate translation: “neither is it too difficult for you to understand what Yahweh requires you to do” (See: [Metaphor](#))

ULT

11 For this commandment that I am commanding you today is not {too} hard for you, neither is it too far for you to reach.

Deuteronomy 30:12

Who will go up for us to heaven and bring it down to us and make us able to hear it, so that we may do it?

Here Moses uses a rhetorical question to emphasize that the people of Israel think that Yahweh's commands are too difficult for them to know. This question can be translated as a statement. Alternate translation: "Someone must travel to heaven to learn God's commands and then return to tell us what they are so we can obey them." (See: [Rhetorical Question](#))

ULT

¹² It {is} not in heaven, so that you should have to say, 'Who will go up for us to heaven and bring it down to us and make us able to hear it, so that we may do it?'

Deuteronomy 30:13

General Information:

Moses speaks to the Israelites as if they were one man, so the words “you” and “your” here are singular. (See: [Forms of You](#))

Who will go over the sea for us and bring it to us and make us to hear it, so that we may do it?

This rhetorical question continues the idea that the people of Israel think Yahweh’s commands are too difficult to know. This question can be translated as a statement. Alternate translation: “Someone must travel across the sea to learn God’s commands and then return and tell us what they are.” (See: [Rhetorical Question](#))

ULT

13 Neither {is} it beyond the sea, so that you should have to say, ‘Who will go over the sea for us and bring it to us and make us to hear it, so that we may do it?’

Deuteronomy 30:14

in your mouth and your heart

This means that the people already know God's commands and can tell them to others. (See: [Metonymy](#))

ULT

14 But the word is very near to you, in your mouth and your heart, so that you may do it.

Deuteronomy 30:15

General Information:

Moses speaks to the Israelites as if they were one man, so the words “you” and “your” here are singular. (See: [Forms of You](#))

ULT

15 See, today I have placed before you life and good, death and evil.

I have placed before you

Putting something where another person can see it is a metaphor for telling someone about something. Alternate translation: “I have told you about” (See: [Metaphor](#))

life and good, death and evil

You can make clear the implicit information. Alternate translation: “what is good and will cause you to live, and what is evil and will cause you to die” (See: [Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information](#))

Deuteronomy 30:16

multiply

increase greatly in number

ULT

16 If you obey the decrees of Yahweh your God, in which I am commanding you today to love Yahweh your God, to walk in his ways, and to keep his commandments, his regulations, and his statutes, you will live and multiply, and Yahweh your God will bless you in the land that you are entering to possess.

Deuteronomy 30:17

General Information:

Moses continues to speak to the Israelites as if they were one man, so the words “you” and “your” here are singular. (See: [Forms of You](#))

if your heart turns away ... but instead are drawn away and bow down to other gods and worship them

Here “heart” refers to the whole person. This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: “if you stop being loyal to God ... and the people living in the land convince you to bow down and worship other gods” (See: [Synecdoche](#) and [Active or Passive](#))

ULT

17 But if your heart turns away, and you do not listen but instead are drawn away and bow down to other gods and worship them,

Deuteronomy 30:18

to you today that you ... you will not prolong your days

Moses speaks to the Israelites as a group. (See: [Forms of You](#))

prolong your days

Long days are a metaphor for a long life. See how you translated these words in [Deuteronomy 4:26](#). Alternate translation: “be able to live a long time” (See: [Metaphor](#))

ULT

¹⁸ then I announce to you today that you will surely perish; you will not prolong {your} days in the land that you are passing over the Jordan to go into and possess.

Deuteronomy 30:19

General Information:

Moses speaks to the Israelites as if they were one man, so except where noted the words “you” and “your” here are singular. (See: [Forms of You](#))

I call heaven and earth to witness

This could mean: (1) Moses is calling on all those who live in heaven and earth to be witnesses to what he says, or (2) Moses is speaking to heaven and earth as if they are people, and he is calling them to be witnesses to what he says (See: [Metonymy](#) and [Personification](#) and [Apostrophe](#))

to witness against you

“to be willing to say that you have done evil things”

against you today

Moses speaks to the Israelites as a group. (See: [Forms of You](#))

ULT

19 I call heaven and earth to witness against you today {that} I have set before you life and death, the blessings and the curses; therefore choose life so that you may live, you and your descendants.

Deuteronomy 30:20

obey his voice

Here “voice” refers to what Yahweh says. Alternate translation: “obey what he says” (See: [Metonymy](#))

to cling to him

“to rely on him”

For he is your life and the length of your days

These phrases have the same meaning and are metonyms for Yahweh, emphasizing that he is the one who gives life and determines the length of people’s lifetimes. Alternate translation: “Yahweh is the only one who can enable you to live a long life” (See: [Doublet](#) and [Metonymy](#))

swore to your ancestors

The ellipsis can be filled in. Alternate translation: “swore that he would give to your ancestors” (See: [Ellipsis](#))

ULT

20 Do this so as to love Yahweh your God, to obey his voice, and to cling to him. For he {is} your life and the length of your days; do this so that you may live in the land that Yahweh swore to your ancestors, to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob, to give them.”

Deuteronomy 31

Deuteronomy 31 General Notes

Special concepts in this chapter

Final instructions

In the Ancient Near East, it was common for an important leader to give instructions for his people to follow after his death. In this chapter, Moses begins his final words to the people of Israel. These are words that he wants them to remember long after he is gone. This section also helped to make a smooth transition to Joshua's leadership.

Deuteronomy 31:1

(There are no notes for this verse.)

ULT

¹ Moses went and spoke these words to all Israel.

Deuteronomy 31:2

one hundred twenty years old

“120 years old” (See: [Numbers](#))

I can no more go out and come in

Here the extremes “go out” and “come in” used together mean that Moses can no longer do what a healthy person can do. Alternate translation: “I am no longer able to go everywhere that you need to go, so I cannot be your leader any longer” (See: [Merism](#))

ULT

² He said to them, “I am now one hundred twenty years old; I can no more go out and come in; Yahweh has said to me, ‘You will not go over this Jordan.’”

Deuteronomy 31:3

**your God ... before you ... before you ... you
will dispossess ... before you**

Moses speaks to the Israelites as if they were one man, so the words “you” and “your” here are singular. (See: [Forms of You](#))

you will dispossess them

“you will take their land”

Joshua, he will go over before you, as Yahweh has spoken

“Joshua will lead you across the river, as Yahweh promised”

ULT

³ Yahweh your God, he will go over before you; he will destroy these nations from before you, and you will dispossess them. Joshua, he will go over before you, as Yahweh has spoken.

Deuteronomy 31:4

General Information:

Moses continues speaking to the Israelites.

he did to Sihon and to Og, the kings of the Amorites

Here “Sihon” and “Og” refer to two Kings of the Amorites and their armies. See how you translated these names in [Deuteronomy 1:4](#). Alternate translation: “he did to Sihon and Og, the kings of the Amorites, and to their armies” (See: [Synecdoche](#))

ULT

⁴ Yahweh will do to them as he did to Sihon and to Og, the kings of the Amorites, and to their land, which he destroyed.

Deuteronomy 31:5

(There are no notes for this verse.)

ULT

⁵ Yahweh will give you victory over them when you meet them in battle, and you will do to them all that I commanded you.

Deuteronomy 31:6

Be strong and of good courage

“Be strong and courageous”

fear not, and do not be afraid of them

“do not fear them at all”

ULT

⁶ Be strong and of good courage, fear not, and do not be afraid of them; for Yahweh your God, he it is who goes with you; he will not fail you nor forsake you.”

Yahweh your God ... with you ... fail you nor forsake you

Moses speaks to the Israelites as if they were one man, so the words “you” and “your” here are singular. (See: [Forms of You](#))

he will not fail you nor forsake you

This can be treated as litotes and translated positively. Alternate translation: “he will always fulfill his promise to you and will always be with you” (See: [Litotes](#))

Deuteronomy 31:7

General Information:

Moses speaks to the Israelites as if they were one man, so the words “you” and “your” here are singular. (See: [Forms of You](#))

in the sight of all Israel

This means that all of the people of Israel were present. Alternate translation: “in the presence of all the Israelites” (See: [Metonymy](#))

Be strong and of good courage

“Be strong and courageous.” See how you translated this in [Deuteronomy 31:5](#).

you will cause them to inherit it

“you will help them take the land”

ULT

⁷ Moses called to Joshua and said to him in the sight of all Israel, “Be strong and of good courage, for you will go with this people into the land that Yahweh has sworn to their ancestors to give them; you will cause them to inherit it.”

Deuteronomy 31:8

(There are no notes for this verse.)

ULT

⁸ Yahweh, he it is who goes before you; he will be with you; he will not fail you nor abandon you; do not be afraid, do not be discouraged.”

Deuteronomy 31:9

gave it out to the priests, the sons of Levi

“gave it out to the Levites, who are the priests”

ULT

⁹ Moses wrote this law and gave it out to the priests, the sons of Levi, who carried the ark of the covenant of Yahweh; he also gave copies of it to all the elders of Israel.

Deuteronomy 31:10

seven years

“7 years” (See: [Numbers](#))

fixed for the cancellation of debts

“for canceling debts”

Festival of Shelters

Other names for this festival are “Feast of Tabernacles,” “Festival of Booths,” and “Feast of the Ingathering.” During harvest, farmers would set up temporary shelters in the field. This festival took place after the last harvest of the year. See how you translated this in [Deuteronomy 16:13](#).

ULT

¹⁰ Moses commanded them and said,
“At the end of every seven years, at the
time fixed for the cancellation of debts,
during the Festival of Shelters,

Deuteronomy 31:11

Yahweh your God ... you will read

- Moses speaks to the Israelites as if they were one man, so the words “you” and “your” here are singular. (See: [Forms of You](#))

in their hearing

“so that they can hear it”

ULT

11 when all Israel has come to appear before Yahweh your God in the place that he will choose for his sanctuary, you will read this law before all Israel in their hearing.

Deuteronomy 31:12

General Information:

Moses continues speaking to the priests and the elders.

your foreigner who is within your city gates

Here “city gates” represents the cities themselves. Moses speaks to the Israelites as if they were one man, so the instances of “your” here are singular. Alternate translation: “your foreigners who live in your cities” (See: [Synecdoche](#) and [Forms of You](#))

keep all the words of this law

“carefully obey all the commands in this law”

ULT

¹² Assemble the people, the men, the women, and the little ones, and your foreigner who is within your city gates, so that they may hear and learn, and so that they may honor Yahweh your God and keep all the words of this law.

Deuteronomy 31:13

(There are no notes for this verse.)

ULT

13 Do this so that their children, who have not known, may hear and learn to honor Yahweh your God, as long as you live in the land that you are going over the Jordan to possess.”

Deuteronomy 31:14

Look, the

“Pay attention to what I am about to tell you. The”

ULT

14 Yahweh said to Moses, “Look, the day is coming when you must die; call Joshua and present yourselves in the tent of meeting, so that I may give him a command.” Moses and Joshua went and presented themselves in the tent of meeting.

Deuteronomy 31:15

a pillar of cloud

This was a thick cloud of smoke in the shape of an upright column.

ULT

15 Yahweh appeared in the tent in a pillar of cloud; the pillar of cloud stood over the door of the tent.

Deuteronomy 31:16

Look, you

“Pay attention to what I am going to tell you. You”

you will sleep with your fathers

This is a polite way to say “you will die.” Alternate translation: “you will die and join your ancestors who have died before you” (See: [Euphemism](#))

will rise up and act like a prostitute

Being a prostitute is a metaphor for worshiping gods other than Yahweh. Alternate translation: “will start to be unfaithful to me” (See: [Metaphor](#))

ULT

16 Yahweh said to Moses, “Look, you will sleep with your fathers; this people will rise up and act like a prostitute going after the strange gods that are among them in the land where they are going. They will forsake me and break my covenant that I have made with them.”

Deuteronomy 31:17

General Information:

Yahweh continues speaking to Moses.

my anger will be kindled against them

Yahweh compares his anger to someone starting a fire. This emphasizes God's power to destroy whatever makes him angry. This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "I will kindle my anger against them" or "I will become angry with them" (See: [Metaphor](#) and [Active or Passive](#))

ULT

17 Then, on that day, my anger will be kindled against them and I will abandon them. I will hide my face from them and they will be devoured. Many disasters and troubles will find them so that they will say on that day, 'Have these disasters not come upon us because our God is not in our midst?'

I will hide my face from them

This is an idiom. Alternate translation: "I will not help them" (See: [Idiom](#))

they will be devoured

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "I will devour them" or "I will allow their enemies to devour them" (See: [Active or Passive](#))

devoured

This is a metaphor for "completely destroyed." (See: [Metaphor](#))

Many disasters and troubles will find them

This describes the disasters and troubles as if they were human. Alternate translation: "They will experience many disasters and troubles" (See: [Personification](#))

Have these disasters not come upon us ... midst?

This describes the disasters and troubles as if they were human. This rhetorical question can be translated as a statement. Alternate translation: "These disasters are destroying me ... midst." (See: [Personification](#) and [Rhetorical Question](#))

our God is not in our midst

"God is no longer protecting us" or "God has left us alone"

Deuteronomy 31:18

(There are no notes for this verse.)

ULT

18 I will surely hide my face from them on that day because of all the evil that they will have done, because they have turned to other gods.

Deuteronomy 31:19

General Information:

Yahweh continues speaking to Moses about the Israelites.

Put it in their mouths

This is an idiom. Alternate translation: “Make them memorize and sing it” (See: [Idiom](#))

ULT

19 Now therefore write this song for yourselves and teach it to the people of Israel. Put it in their mouths, so that this song may be a witness for me against the people of Israel.

Deuteronomy 31:20

a land flowing with milk and honey

This is an idiom. Alternate translation: “a land where plenty of milk and honey flow” or “a land that is excellent for cattle and farming” See how you translated this in [Deuteronomy 6:3](#).

ULT

20 For when I will have brought them into the land that I swore to give to their ancestors, a land flowing with milk and honey, and when they have eaten and become satisfied and fat, then they will turn to other gods and they will serve them and they will despise me and they will break my covenant.

Deuteronomy 31:21

When many evils and troubles come upon this people

Here evils and troubles are described as if they were human and could find people. Alternate translation: "When this people experiences many evils and troubles" (See: [Personification](#))

this song will testify before them as a witness

This speaks of the song as if it were a human witness testifying in court against Israel. (See: [Personification](#))

ULT

²¹ When many evils and troubles come upon this people, this song will testify before them as a witness (for it will not be forgotten from the mouths of their descendants). For I know the plans that they are forming today, even before I have brought them into the land that I promised them."

it will not be forgotten from the mouths of their descendants

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "their descendants will not forget to keep it in their mouths" (See: [Active or Passive](#))

it will not be forgotten from the mouths of their descendants

This can be stated positively. Alternate translation: "their descendants will remember to keep it in their mouths" (See: [Active or Passive](#))

it will not be forgotten from the mouths of their descendants

The idiom "forget it from the mouth" means to stop speaking about it. Alternate translation: "their descendants will not stop speaking about it to each other" (See: [Active or Passive](#))

the plans that they are forming

What people plan to do is spoken of as if it were a physical object. Alternate translation: "what they plan to do" (See: [Metaphor](#))

the land that I promised

God's promise of the land was to give it to the people of Israel. This can be stated clearly. Alternate translation: "the land that I promised I would give to them" (See: [Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information](#))

Deuteronomy 31:22

(There are no notes for this verse.)

ULT

²² So Moses wrote this song the same day and taught it to the people of Israel.

Deuteronomy 31:23

Be strong and of good courage

“Be strong and courageous.” See how you translated this in [Deuteronomy 31:5](#).

ULT

²³ Yahweh gave Joshua son of Nun a command and said, “Be strong and of good courage; for you will bring the people of Israel into the land that I swore to them, and I will be with you.”

Deuteronomy 31:24

(There are no notes for this verse.)

ULT

²⁴ It happened that when Moses had finished writing the words of this law in a book,

Deuteronomy 31:25

(There are no notes for this verse.)

ULT

²⁵ that he commanded the Levites who carried the ark of the covenant of Yahweh, and he said,

Deuteronomy 31:26

witness against you

Moses speaks to the Levites as if they were one man, so the word “you” is singular. (See: [Forms of You](#))

ULT

26 “Take this book of the law and put it by the side of the ark of the covenant of Yahweh your God, so that it may be there as a witness against you.”

Deuteronomy 31:27

General Information:

Moses continues speaking to the Levites about all the Israelite people.

your rebellion and your stiff neck

Moses speaks to the Levites as if they were one man, so the word “your” is singular. (See: [Forms of You](#))

your stiff neck

See how you translated “stubborn” in [Deuteronomy 9:6](#).

how much more after my death?

This rhetorical question emphasizes how rebellious the people were. It can be translated as a statement. Alternate translation: “you will be even more rebellious after I die.” (See: [Rhetorical Question](#))

ULT

27 For I know your rebellion and your stiff neck; look, while I am still alive with you even today, you have been rebellious against Yahweh; how much more after my death?

Deuteronomy 31:28

so that I may speak these words in their ears

Here “in their ears” means the people themselves. Alternate translation: “so that I may speak the words of this song to them” (See: [Synecdoche](#))

call heaven and earth to witness against them

This could mean: (1) Moses is calling on all those who live in heaven and earth to be witnesses to what he says or (2) Moses is speaking to heaven and earth as if they are people, and he is calling them to be witnesses to what he says. A similar phrase appears in [Deuteronomy 30:19](#). (See: [Metonymy](#) and [Personification](#) and [Apostrophe](#))

ULT

28 Assemble to me all the elders of your tribes, and your officers, so that I may speak these words in their ears and call heaven and earth to witness against them.

Deuteronomy 31:29

you will utterly corrupt yourselves

“you will do what is completely wrong.” See how you translated these words in [Deuteronomy 4:16](#).

turn aside out of the path that I have commanded you

“stop following the instructions I have given to you.” See how you translated these words in [Deuteronomy 9:12](#).

what is evil in the sight of Yahweh

The sight of Yahweh represents Yahweh’s judgment or evaluation. Alternate translation: “what is evil in Yahweh’s judgment” or “what Yahweh considers to be evil” (See: [Metaphor](#))

through the work of your hands

Here “your hands” means the people themselves. Alternate translation: “because of what you have made” (See: [Synecdoche](#))

ULT

29 For I know that after my death you will utterly corrupt yourselves and turn aside out of the path that I have commanded you; disaster will come on you in the following days. This will happen because you will do what is evil in the sight of Yahweh, so as to provoke him to anger through the work of your hands.”

Deuteronomy 31:30

Moses recited in the ears of all the assembly of Israel

Here “ears” refers to the whole person. Alternate translation: “Moses recited to all the people of Israel” (See: [Synecdoche](#))

recited

This could mean: (1) “sang” or (2) “spoke.”

the words of this song

You can make clear the understood information. Alternate translation: “the words of the song that Yahweh taught him” (See: [Ellipsis](#))

ULT

³⁰ Moses recited in the ears of all the assembly of Israel the words of this song until they were finished.

Deuteronomy 32

Deuteronomy 32 General Notes

Structure and formatting

Some translations set each line of poetry farther to the right than the rest of the text to make it easier to read. The ULT does this with the poetic song in 32:1-43.

Special concepts in this chapter

Punishment

This chapter prophesies a time when Israel will be disobedient to Yahweh and he will have to punish them. This is meant to serve as a warning to the nation. (See: [prophet](#), [prophecy](#), [prophesy](#), [seer](#), [prophetess](#))

Deuteronomy 32:1

General Information:

Moses speaks a poetic song to the people of Israel. (See: [Parallelism](#))

Give ear, you heavens ... Let the earth listen

Yahweh speaks to the heavens and earth as if they are there listening. This could mean: (1) Yahweh is speaking to the inhabitants of heaven and earth or (2) Yahweh is speaking to the heavens and earth as if they are persons. (See: [Apostrophe](#))

ULT

¹ Give ear, you heavens, and let me speak. Let the earth listen to the words of my mouth.

Deuteronomy 32:2

Let my teaching drop down like the rain ... and like the showers on the plants

This means Yahweh wants the people to eagerly accept his helpful teaching. (See: [Simile](#))

distill

Use the word in your language for the process by which dew appears.

dew

water that forms on leaves and grass on cool mornings

tender grass

“new plants”

showers

heavy rain

ULT

² Let my teaching drop down like the rain, let my speech distill like the dew, like the gentle rain on the tender grass, and like the showers on the plants.

Deuteronomy 32:3

General Information:

Moses speaks a poetic song to the people of Israel. (See: [Parallelism](#))

proclaim the name of Yahweh

This is an idiom. “tell how good Yahweh is” (See: [Idiom](#))

ascribe greatness to our God

“make sure people know that our God is great”

ULT

³ For I will proclaim the name of Yahweh, and ascribe greatness to our God.

Deuteronomy 32:4

The Rock

This a proper name that Moses gives to Yahweh, who, like a rock, is strong and able to protect his people. (See: [Metaphor](#))

his work

“everything he does”

all his paths are just

Walking on a path is a metaphor for how a person lives his life. Alternate translation: “he does everything in a just way” (See: [Metaphor](#))

He is just and upright

These two words mean basically the same thing and emphasize that Yahweh is fair and does what is right. (See: [Doublet](#))

ULT

⁴ The Rock, his work {is} perfect; for all his paths are just. He is the faithful God, without iniquity. He is just and upright.

Deuteronomy 32:5

General Information:

Moses speaks a poetic song to the people of Israel. Moses continues to use parallelism to emphasize what he is saying. (See: [Parallelism](#))

acted corruptly against him

“opposed him by doing what is wrong.” See how you translated these words in [Deuteronomy 4:16](#).

a perverted and crooked generation

The words “perverted” and “crooked” mean basically the same thing. Moses uses them to emphasize how wicked the generation is. Alternate translation: “a completely wicked generation” (See: [Doublet](#))

ULT

⁵ They have acted corruptly against him.
{They are} not his children. It is their disgrace. They are a perverted and crooked generation.

Deuteronomy 32:6

Do you reward Yahweh in this way ... people?

Moses uses a question to scold the people. Alternate translation: "You should give Yahweh proper praise ... people." (See: [Rhetorical Question](#))

you foolish and senseless people

The words "foolish" and "senseless" mean the same thing and emphasize how foolish the people are for disobeying Yahweh. Alternate translation: "you extremely foolish people" (See: [Doublet](#))

your father ... has created you ... made you and established you

Moses speaks to the Israelites as if they were one man, so the words "you" and "your" here are singular.

Is he not your father, the one who has created you?

Moses uses a question to scold the people. This rhetorical question can be translated as a statement. Alternate translation: "Yahweh is your father and the one who created you." (See: [Rhetorical Question](#))

ULT

⁶ Do you reward Yahweh in this way, you foolish and senseless people? {Is} he not your father, the one {who} has created you? He made you and established you.

Deuteronomy 32:7

General Information:

Moses speaks a poetic song to the people of Israel.

**Call to mind ... think about ... your father ...
show you ... your elders ... tell you**

Moses speaks to the Israelites as if they were one man, so the words “you” and “your” here are singular. (See: [Forms of You](#))

Call to mind

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

days of ancient times

“days of long ago.” Moses refers to the time period when the ancestors of the people of Israel were alive.

think about the years of many ages past

This is a repetition of what Moses just said in the previous portion. Moses wants the people of Israel to focus on their history as a nation. (See: [Parallelism](#))

he will show you

“he will make it clear to you” or “he will enable you to understand it”

ULT

⁷ Call to mind the days of ancient times, think about the years of many ages past. Ask your father and he will show you, your elders and they will tell you.

Deuteronomy 32:8

gave the nations their inheritance

This is an idiom. “put the nations in the places where they would live.” Similar words, “giving to you as an inheritance,” appear in [Deuteronomy 4:21](#). (See: [Idiom](#))

he set the boundaries of the peoples, as he also fixed the number of their gods

God assigned each people group, together with its gods, to its own territory. In this way, he limited the influence of a people group’s idols.

ULT

⁸ When the Most High gave the nations their inheritance— when he divided all of mankind, and he set the boundaries of the peoples, as he also fixed the number of their gods.

Deuteronomy 32:9

General Information:

Moses speaks a poetic song to the people of Israel. As he speaks to the Israelites, he talks about them as if they were someone else and as if they were one man. (See: [Parallelism](#))

ULT

⁹ For Yahweh's portion {is} his people;
Jacob {is} his apportioned inheritance.

For Yahweh's portion is his people; Jacob is his apportioned inheritance

These two phrases means basically the same thing and can be combined. Alternate translation: "The descendants of Jacob are Yahweh's inheritance" (See: [Parallelism](#))

Deuteronomy 32:10

He found him ... shielded him and cared for him ... guarded him

“He found Jacob ... shielded him and cared for him ... guarded him”
You may need to translate this as if Moses were talking about the Israelites as many people. Alternate translation: “He found our ancestors ... shielded them and cared for them ... guarded them”

ULT

¹⁰ He found him in a desert land, and in the barren and howling wilderness; he shielded him and cared for him, he guarded him as the apple of his eye.

howling wilderness

Here “howling” refers to the sound the wind makes as it blows through the empty land.

he guarded him as the apple of his eye

This is an idiom. The apple of an eye refers to the dark part inside the eyeball that allows a person to see. This is a very important and sensitive part of the body. This means that the people of Israel are very important to God and something he protects. Alternate translation: “he protected him as something very valuable and precious” (See: [Idiom](#) and [Simile](#))

Deuteronomy 32:11

General Information:

Moses speaks a poetic song to the people of Israel. (See: [Parallelism](#))

As an eagle that guards her nest and flutters over her young, Yahweh spread out his wings and took them, and carried them on his pinions

This means Yahweh watched over and protected the Israelites while they were in the desert. (See: [Simile](#))

pinions

the outer edges of a bird's wings

ULT

11 As an eagle that guards her nest and flutters over her young, Yahweh spread out his wings and took them, and carried them on his pinions.

Deuteronomy 32:12

led him ... with him

Moses again speaks of the Israelites as “Jacob” ([Deuteronomy 32:9](#)). You may need to translate as if Moses were speaking of the Israelites as many people. Alternate translation: “led them ... with them” (See: [Pronouns](#))

ULT

¹² Yahweh alone led him; no foreign god {was} with him.

Deuteronomy 32:13

General Information:

Moses speaks a poetic song to the people of Israel. (See: [Parallelism](#))

He made him ride on high places of the land

This is an idiom. The word “him” refers to the people of Israel.

Alternate translation: “Yahweh made them ride on high places of the land” or “Yahweh helped them take and occupy the land” (See: [Idiom](#))

ULT

13 He made him ride on high places of the land, and he fed him the fruits of the field; he nourished him with honey from the rock, and oil from the flinty crag.

made him ride ... fed him ... nourished him

Moses continues to speak of the Israelites as “Jacob” ([Deuteronomy 32:9](#)). You may need to translate this as though Moses were speaking of the Israelites as many people. Alternate translation: “made our ancestors ride ... fed them ... nourished them” (See: [Pronouns](#))

he fed him the fruits of the field

“he brought him to a land with plenty of crops he could eat”

he nourished him with honey from the rock, and oil from the flinty crag

The land had many wild bees, which produce honey, with hives inside rock holes. There were also many olive trees, which provide oil, and grow on rocks, hills, and mountains.

nourished him with honey

This is like a mother giving her breast to an infant. “allowed him to suck honey” (See: [Metaphor](#))

Deuteronomy 32:14

General Information:

Moses speaks a poetic song to the people of Israel. He speaks to the Israelites as if they were one man, so the word “you” here is singular. (See: [Parallelism](#) and [Forms of You](#))

He ate

Moses continues to speak of the Israelites as “Jacob” ([Deuteronomy 32:9](#)). You may need to translate as though Moses were speaking of the Israelites as many people. Alternate translation: “Our ancestors ate” (See: [Pronouns](#))

fat of lambs, rams of Bashan and goats

The people of Israel had many healthy herd animals.

ULT

14 He ate butter from the herd and drank milk from the flock, with fat of lambs, rams of Bashan and goats, with the finest of the wheat— and you drank foaming wine made from the juice of grapes.

Deuteronomy 32:15

General Information:

Moses continues speaking his poetic song to the people of Israel. (See: [Parallelism](#))

Jeshurun

Moses speaks of the Israelites as if they were a well-fed animal whose owner named it Jeshurun. You may add a footnote that says, “The name ‘Jeshurun’ means ‘upright one.’” If your language cannot speak of the Israelites as Jeshurun, you may refer to the Israelites as many people, as the UST does. (See: [How to Translate Names](#))

ULT

15 But Jeshurun grew fat and kicked— you grew fat, you were too fat, and you had eaten your fill— he abandoned the God {who} made him, and he rejected the Rock of his salvation.

the Rock of his salvation

This means Yahweh is strong like a rock and able to protect his people. (See: [Metaphor](#))

the Rock

This a proper name that Moses gives to Yahweh, who, like a rock, is strong and able to protect his people. See how you translated this in [Deuteronomy 32:4](#). (See: [Metaphor](#))

Deuteronomy 32:16

They made Yahweh jealous

The Israelites made Yahweh jealous.

ULT

16 They made Yahweh jealous by their strange {gods}; with their abominations they angered him.

Deuteronomy 32:17

General Information:

Moses continues to speak his song to the Israelites. (See: [Forms of You](#))

They sacrificed

“The people of Israel sacrificed”

gods that recently appeared

This means the Israelites recently learned about these gods.

your fathers

Moses is speaking to the Israelites as many people, so the word “your” is plural. (See: [Forms of You](#))

ULT

17 They sacrificed to demons, which are not God— {gods} they had not known, {gods} that recently appeared, gods your fathers did not fear.

Deuteronomy 32:18

You have deserted ... your father ... you forgot ... gave you

Moses is speaking to the Israelites as if they were one man, so all instances of “you” and “your” are singular. (See: [Forms of You](#))

ULT

18 You have deserted the Rock, who became your father, and you forgot the God {who} gave you birth.

You have deserted the Rock

Here Yahweh is called the rock because he is strong and protective. Alternate translation: “You have left the protective care of Yahweh” (See: [Metaphor](#))

the Rock

This a proper name that Moses gives to Yahweh, who, like a rock, is strong and able to protect his people. See how you translated this in [Deuteronomy 32:4](#). (See: [Metaphor](#))

who became your father ... who gave you birth

This compares Yahweh to a father and a mother. This means God caused them to live and to be a nation. Alternate translation: “who fathered you ... who gave life to you” (See: [Metaphor](#))

Deuteronomy 32:19

General Information:

Moses speaks a poetic song to the people of Israel. (See: [Parallelism](#))

his sons and his daughters

This refers to the people of Israel whom Yahweh gave life to and made into a nation. (See: [Metaphor](#))

ULT

19 Yahweh saw this and he rejected {them,} because his sons and his daughters provoked him so.

Deuteronomy 32:20

I will hide my face from them

This is an idiom. Alternate translation: “I will turn away from them” or “I will stop helping them” (See: [Idiom](#))

I will see what their end will be

“I will see what happens to them”

ULT

20 “I will hide my face from them,” he said, “and I will see what their end {will be;} for they are a perverse generation, children who {are} unfaithful.”

Deuteronomy 32:21

General Information:

Moses speaks a poetic song to the people of Israel. He continues to quote Yahweh's words. (See: [Parallelism](#))

They have made me jealous

Here "me" refers to Yahweh.

what is not god

"what are false gods"

worthless things

You may need to make explicit what the "things" are. Alternate translation: "worthless idols" (See: [Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information](#))

those who are not a people

"people who do not belong to one people group"

foolish nation

Translate "foolish" as in [Deuteronomy 32:6](#).

ULT

²¹ They have made me jealous by {what} is not god and angered me by their worthless things. I will make them envious by {those who are} not a people; by a foolish nation I will make them angry.

Deuteronomy 32:22

General Information:

Moses speaks a poetic song to the people of Israel. He continues to quote Yahweh's words. (See: [Parallelism](#))

For a fire is kindled by my anger ... foundations of the mountains

Yahweh compares his anger to a fire. This emphasizes his power to destroy what makes him angry. (See: [Metaphor](#))

a fire is kindled by my anger and is burning ... it is devouring ... it is setting

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "I start a fire because I am angry, and it burns ... it is devouring ... it is setting" or "when I am angry, I destroy my enemies like a fire, and I destroy everything on earth and in ... I devour ... I set" (See: [Active or Passive](#))

to the lowest Sheol

"even to the world of the dead"

ULT

22 For a fire is kindled by my anger and is burning to the lowest Sheol; it is devouring the earth and its harvest; it is setting on fire the foundations of the mountains.

Deuteronomy 32:23

General Information:

Moses speaks a poetic song to the people of Israel. He continues to quote Yahweh's words. (See: [Parallelism](#))

ULT

²³ I will heap disasters on them; I will shoot all my arrows at them;

I will heap disasters on them

Yahweh speaks of bad things that would happen to the Israelites as if they were something like dirt that he could pile up on top of the Israelites. Alternate translation: "I will make sure that many bad things happen to them" (See: [Metaphor](#))

I will shoot all my arrows at them

Here Yahweh compares the bad things he will make sure happen to the Israelites to someone shooting arrows from a bow. Alternate translation: "I will do all I can do to kill them" (See: [Metaphor](#))

Deuteronomy 32:24

They will be wasted by hunger

This can be stated in active form. The abstract noun “hunger” can be translated as the verb “be hungry.” Alternate translation: “They will grow weak and die because they are hungry” (See: [Active or Passive](#) and [Abstract Nouns](#))

They will ... hunger and devoured by burning heat and bitter destruction

Here, **burning heat** could mean: (1) the Israelites will suffer from fevers or (2) the weather will be unusually hot during a drought or famine. This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: “They will ... hunger, and burning heat and terrible disasters will devour them” or “They will ... hunger, and they will die from burning heat and terrible disasters” (See: [Active or Passive](#))

I will send on them the teeth of wild animals, with the poison of things that crawl in the dust

The teeth and the poison are synecdoches for the animals that use these things to kill. Alternate translation: “I will send wild animals to bite them, and things that crawl in the dust to bite and poison them” (See: [Synecdoche](#))

ULT

²⁴ {They will be} wasted by hunger and devoured by burning heat and bitter destruction; I will send on them the teeth of wild animals, with the poison of things that crawl in the dust.

Deuteronomy 32:25

General Information:

Moses speaks a poetic song to the people of Israel. He continues to quote Yahweh's words. (See: [Parallelism](#))

Outside the sword will bereave

Here "sword" represents the army of the enemy. Alternate translation: "When the Israelites are outside, the enemy army will kill them" (See: [Metonymy](#))

terror will do so

Yahweh speaks of being afraid as if it were a person who comes into a house and kills those who live in it. Alternate translation: "you will die because you are afraid" (See: [Personification](#))

young man and virgin, the nursing baby, and the man of gray hairs

These terms describing people of different ages are combined to mean that all kinds of people will die. (See: [Merism](#))

ULT

²⁵ Outside the sword will bereave, and in the bedrooms terror will do so. It will destroy both young man and virgin, the nursing baby, and the man of gray hairs.

Deuteronomy 32:26

**I said that I would ... away, that I would ...
mankind.**

This can be translated as a direct quote. Alternate translation: "I said, 'I will ... away, and I will ... mankind.'" (See: [Direct and Indirect Quotations](#))

ULT

²⁶ I said that I would scatter them far away, that I would make the memory of them to cease from among mankind.

I would make the memory of them to cease from among mankind

"I would make all people forget about them"

Deuteronomy 32:27

General Information:

Moses speaks a poetic song to the people of Israel. He continues to quote Yahweh's words. (See: [Parallelism](#))

Were it not that I feared the provocation of the enemy

"I was afraid of the provocation of the enemy"

the provocation of the enemy

This abstract noun can be translated as a verb. Alternate translation: "that the enemy would provoke me" or "that the enemy would cause me to be angry" (See: [Abstract Nouns](#))

the enemy

Yahweh speaks of his enemies as if they are one man. Alternate translation: "my enemy" or "my enemies" (See: [Pronouns](#))

judge mistakenly

"misunderstand"

Our hand is exalted

Here "hand" represents the strength or power of a person. To be exalted is an idiom for defeating an enemy. Alternate translation: "We have defeated them because we are more powerful" (See: [Metonymy](#) and [Idiom](#))

ULT

27 Were it not that I feared the provocation of the enemy, and that their enemies would judge mistakenly, and that they would say, 'Our hand {is} exalted,' I would have done all this.

Deuteronomy 32:28

General Information:

Moses speaks a poetic song to the people of Israel. He continues to quote Yahweh's words. (See: [Parallelism](#))

ULT

28 For Israel is a nation devoid of wisdom, and {there is} no understanding in them.

Deuteronomy 32:29

Oh, that they were wise, that they understood this, that they would consider their coming fate

Moses states something that he wishes were true, but he knows that they are not wise and do not understand that their disobedience will cause Yahweh to bring this disaster on them. (See: [Hypothetical Situations](#))

ULT

²⁹ Oh, {that} they were wise, {that} they understood this, that they would consider their coming fate!

their coming fate

The abstract noun “fate” can be translated as a verb. Alternate translation: “what is going to happen to them” (See: [Abstract Nouns](#))

Deuteronomy 32:30

General Information:

Moses speaks a poetic song to the people of Israel. He continues to quote Yahweh's words and tell them more of what they would have understood if they were wise ([Deuteronomy 32:29](#)). (See: [Parallelism](#))

How could one chase a thousand ... Yahweh had given them up?

Moses uses a question to scold the people for not being wise enough to understand why their enemies are defeating them. This question can be translated as a statement as in the UST. (See: [Rhetorical Question](#))

How could one chase a thousand, and two put ten thousand to flight

You can make clear the understood information. Alternate translation: "How could 1 enemy soldier chase 1,000 of your men, and 2 enemy soldiers cause 10,000 of your men to run away" (See: [Numbers](#) and [Ellipsis](#))

unless their Rock had sold them

The word "Rock" refers to Yahweh who is strong and able to protect his people. Alternate translation: "unless Yahweh, their Rock, had handed them over" (See: [Metaphor](#))

their Rock

"The Rock" here is a proper name that Moses gives to Yahweh, who, like a rock, is strong and able to protect his people. Translate "Rock" as in [Deuteronomy 32:4](#). (See: [Metaphor](#))

ULT

³⁰ How could one chase a thousand, and two put ten thousand to flight, unless their Rock had sold them, and Yahweh had given them up?

Deuteronomy 32:31

our Rock

“The Rock” here is a proper name that Moses gives to Yahweh, who, like a rock, is strong and able to protect his people. Translate “Rock” as in [Deuteronomy 32:4](#). (See: [Metaphor](#))

ULT

31 For our enemies’ rock {is} not like our Rock, just as even our enemies admit.

our enemies’ rock is not like our Rock

The enemies’ idols and false gods are not powerful like Yahweh.

just as even our enemies admit

“not only do we say so, but our enemies say so also”

Deuteronomy 32:32

General Information:

Moses speaks a poetic song to the people of Israel. He continues to quote Yahweh's words. (See: [Parallelism](#))

For their vine comes from the vine of Sodom ... clusters are bitter

Moses compares enemies who worship false gods to the wicked people who lived in Sodom and Gomorrah and to grapevines that produce poisonous fruit. This means their enemies are wicked and will cause the Israelites to die if the Israelites start to act like the people who live around them. (See: [Metaphor](#))

their vine comes from the vine of Sodom, and from the fields of Gomorrah

The vine is a metaphor for the people group. "it is as if their vine were a branch of the vines that grew in the fields of Sodom and Gomorrah" or Alternate translation: "they do evil the same way the people who lived in Sodom and Gomorrah did" (See: [Metaphor](#))

their clusters

"their clusters of grapes"

ULT

³² For their vine comes from the vine of Sodom, and from the fields of Gomorrah; their grapes {are} grapes of poison; their clusters {are} bitter.

Deuteronomy 32:33

General Information:

Moses speaks a poetic song to the people of Israel. He continues to quote Yahweh's words. (See: [Parallelism](#))

ULT

33 Their wine {is} the poison of serpents and the cruel venom of asps.

Their wine is the poison of serpents and the cruel venom of asps

Moses continues comparing the enemies of the people of Israel to grapevines that produce poisonous fruit and wine. This means their enemies are wicked. (See: [Metaphor](#))

asps

poisonous snakes

Deuteronomy 32:34

Is not this plan secretly kept by me, sealed up among my treasures?

This question emphasizes that Yahweh's plans for the people of Israel are kept secret like a valuable treasure. The rhetorical question can be translated as a statement. It can also be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "I know what I have planned to do to the Israelite people and to their enemies, and I have locked up those plans as someone would lock up his valuable possessions." (See: [Rhetorical Question](#) and [Active or Passive](#))

ULT

³⁴ Is not this plan secretly kept by me, sealed up among my treasures?

Deuteronomy 32:35

General Information:

Moses speaks a poetic song to the people of Israel. This is the end of Moses's quotation of Yahweh's words that begins in [Deuteronomy 32:20](#). (See: [Parallelism](#))

Vengeance is mine to give, and recompense

The words "vengeance" and "recompense" mean basically the same thing. Alternate translation: "I will have vengeance and punish Israel's enemies" (See: [Doublet](#))

recompense

to punish or reward a person for what he has done

their foot slips

Something bad has happened to them. Alternate translation: "they are helpless" (See: [Idiom](#))

the day of disaster for them

"the time for me to destroy them"

the things that are to come on them will hurry to happen

Yahweh speaks of the bad things that will happen to his enemies as if the bad things were people running eagerly to punish them. Alternate translation: "I will punish them quickly" (See: [Metaphor](#))

ULT

³⁵ Vengeance is mine to give, and recompense, at the time when their foot slips; for the day of disaster for them {is} near, and the things that are to come on them will hurry to happen."

Deuteronomy 32:36

General Information:

Moses continues to speak a poetic song to the people of Israel. (See: [Parallelism](#))

For Yahweh will give justice to his people

The abstract noun “justice” can be translated as an adjective or as an adverb. Alternate translation: “For Yahweh will do what is just for his people” or “For Yahweh will act justly towards his people” (See: [Abstract Nouns](#))

he will pity his servants

“he will feel that he needs to help his servants”

ULT

³⁶ For Yahweh will give justice to his people, and he will pity his servants. He will see that {their} power is gone, and no one remains, either slaves or free people.

Deuteronomy 32:37

General Information:

Moses speaks a poetic song to the people of Israel. (See: [Parallelism](#))

ULT

37 Then he will say, “Where {are} their gods, the rock in whom they took refuge?—

Deuteronomy 32:38

The gods who ate the fat of their sacrifices and drank the wine of their drink offerings?

Here Yahweh mocks the people of Israel for offering sacrifices to other gods. This question can be translated as a statement. Alternate translation: "The gods to whom the Israelites offered meat and wine have not come to help them." (See: [Rhetorical Question](#))

ULT

³⁸ The gods who ate the fat of their sacrifices {and} drank the wine of their drink offerings? Let them rise up and help you; let them be your protection.

Let them rise up and help you; let them be your protection

Yahweh says this to mock the Israelites. He knows these gods cannot help them. Alternate translation: "These idols are not even able to get up and help or to protect you" (See: [Irony](#))

Deuteronomy 32:39

General Information:

Moses speaks a poetic song to the people of Israel. (See: [Parallelism](#))

I, even I

“I, I myself” or “I, I alone.” Yahweh repeats “I” to emphasize that only he is God.

ULT

³⁹ See now that I, {even} I, {am} God, and that there is no god besides me; I kill, and I make alive; I wound, and I heal, and {there is} no one who can save you from my might.

Deuteronomy 32:40

I lift up my hand to heaven and say

“I lift up my hand to heaven and swear” or “I have taken an oath.”
Lifting up the hand is a sign of making an oath.

ULT

40 For I lift up my hand to heaven and say, ‘{As} I live forever, I will act.

As I live forever

“As certainly as I live forever” or “I swear by my life which is never-ending.” This statement assures the people that what God says in [Deuteronomy 32:41-Deuteronomy 32:42](#) will happen.

Deuteronomy 32:41

General Information:

Moses speaks a poetic song to the people of Israel. (See: [Parallelism](#))

When I sharpen my glittering sword

“When I sharpen my shining sword.” This means God is preparing to judge and punish his enemies. Alternate translation: “When I am ready to judge my enemies” (See: [Metonymy](#))

when my hand begins to bring justice

Here “hand” represents the whole person. Alternate translation: “when I get ready to judge the wicked” (See: [Synecdoche](#))

ULT

41 When I sharpen my glittering sword, and when my hand begins to bring justice, I will render vengeance on my enemies, and I will pay back those who hate me.

Deuteronomy 32:42

General Information:

Moses speaks a poetic song to the people of Israel. (See: [Parallelism](#))

I will make my arrows drunk with blood, and my sword will devour flesh with the blood

Yahweh speaks of arrows as if they were people to whom he could give alcohol and make them drunk, and of a sword as if it were a person who was so hungry that he would eat an animal before draining the blood out. These metaphors are metonyms for a soldier using arrows and a sword to kill many enemies. This in turn is a metaphor for Yahweh killing his enemies in war. (See: [Metaphor](#) and [Metonymy](#) and [Personification](#))

from the heads of the leaders of the enemy

A possible meaning is “from the long-haired heads of the enemy.”

ULT

42 I will make my arrows drunk with blood, and my sword will devour flesh with the blood of the killed and the captives, and from the heads of the leaders of the enemy.’”

Deuteronomy 32:43

General Information:

This is the end of Moses' song. (See: [Parallelism](#))

Rejoice, you nations

Moses addresses the peoples of all the nations as if they were there listening. (See: [Metonymy](#) and [Apostrophe](#))

ULT

⁴³ Rejoice, you nations, {with} God's people, for he will avenge the blood of his servants; he will render vengeance on his enemies, and he will make atonement for his land, for his people.

for he will avenge the blood of his servants; he will render vengeance on his enemies

Here "blood of his servants" represents the lives of his innocent servants who were killed. Alternate translation: "for he will take revenge on his enemies, who killed his servants" (See: [Metonymy](#))

Deuteronomy 32:44

recited

This could mean: (1) “spoke” or (2) “sang.”

in the ears of the people

Here “ears” represents the people themselves and emphasizes that Moses wanted to make sure they heard the song clearly. Alternate translation: “to the people so they would be sure to hear it” (See: [Synecdoche](#))

ULT

44 Moses came and recited all the words of this song in the ears of the people, he, and Joshua son of Nun.

Deuteronomy 32:45

reciting

This could mean: (1) “speaking” or (2) “singing.”

ULT

⁴⁵ Then Moses finished reciting all these words to all Israel.

Deuteronomy 32:46

He said to them

“Moses said to the people of Israel”

Fix your mind on

This is an idiom. Alternate translation: “Pay attention to” or “Think about” (See: [Idiom](#))

I have witnessed to you

This could mean: (1) “I have testified to you,” referring to what Yahweh has said he will do to the Israelites if they disobey, or (2) “I have commanded you,” referring to what Yahweh was commanding them to do.

your children

“your children and descendants”

ULT

⁴⁶ He said to them, “Fix your mind on all the words that I have witnessed to you today, so that you may command your children to keep them, all the words of this law.”

Deuteronomy 32:47

this is

“this law is”

no trivial matter

This litotes can be stated positively. Alternate translation: “something very important” (See: [Litotes](#))

because it is your life

The abstract noun “life” can be translated as the verb “live.” You may need to make explicit the metonymy of obeying the law, which represents the law itself. Alternate translation: “because you will live if you obey it” (See: [Metonymy](#))

prolong your days

Long days are a metaphor for a long life. See how you translated these words in [Deuteronomy 4:26](#). Alternate translation: “be able to live a long time” (See: [Metaphor](#))

ULT

⁴⁷ For this is no trivial matter for you, because it {is} your life, and through this thing you will prolong {your} days in the land that you are going over the Jordan to possess.”

Deuteronomy 32:48

(There are no notes for this verse.)

ULT

⁴⁸ Yahweh spoke to Moses on that same day and said,

Deuteronomy 32:49

mountains of Abarim

This is the name of a mountain range in Moab. (See: [How to Translate Names](#))

Abarim, up Mount Nebo

“Abarim and climb up Mount Nebo”

Mount Nebo

This is the highest place in the Abarim Mountains. (See: [How to Translate Names](#))

opposite Jericho

“on the other side of the river from Jericho”

ULT

49 “Go up into this range of the mountains of Abarim, up Mount Nebo, which {is} in the land of Moab, opposite Jericho. You will look at the land of Canaan, which I am giving to the people of Israel as their possession.

Deuteronomy 32:50

General Information:

Yahweh finishes speaking to Moses.

be gathered to your people

This is a polite way of saying Moses' spirit would join the spirits of his relatives in the world of the dead. Alternate translation: "join your ancestors who died before you" (See: [Euphemism](#))

Mount Hor

This is the name of a mountain on the border of Edom. (See: [How to Translate Names](#))

ULT

50 You will die on the mountain that you go up, and you will be gathered to your people, as Aaron your fellow Israelite died on Mount Hor and was gathered to his people.

Deuteronomy 32:51

Meribah

This is the name of the place in the desert where Moses disobeyed God. (See: [How to Translate Names](#))

wilderness of Zin

This is the name of a wilderness on the southern border of Judah. (See: [How to Translate Names](#))

ULT

51 This will happen because you were unfaithful to me among the people of Israel at the waters of Meribah in Kadesh, in the wilderness of Zin; because you did not treat me with honor and respect among the people of Israel.

Deuteronomy 32:52

(There are no notes for this verse.)

ULT

⁵² For you will see the land before you,
but you will not go there, into the land
that I am giving to the people of Israel.”

Deuteronomy 33

Deuteronomy 33 General Notes

Structure and formatting

Some translations set each line of poetry farther to the right than the rest of the text to make it easier to read. The ULT does this with the poetic lines of Moses' blessings in 33:1-29.

Special concepts in this chapter

Families

Moses gives a series of prophecies or instructions for each of the tribes of Israel and Israel overall. (See: [prophet](#), [prophecy](#), [prophesy](#), [seer](#), [prophetess](#))

Deuteronomy 33:1

General Information:

Moses begins to bless the tribes of Israel. Moses speaks the blessing in the form of short poems. (See: [Parallelism](#))

ULT

¹ This {is} the blessing with which Moses the man of God blessed the people of Israel before his death.

Deuteronomy 33:2

Yahweh came from Sinai and rose from Seir upon them. He shined out from Mount Paran

Moses compares Yahweh to the rising sun. Alternate translation: "When Yahweh came from Sinai, he looked to them like the sun when it rises from Seir and shines out from Mount Paran" (See: [Metaphor](#))

upon them

"upon the people of Israel"

ten thousands of holy ones

"10,000 angels" (See: [Numbers](#))

In his right hand were flashes of lightning

Other This could mean: (1) "In his right hand were flames of fire" or (2) "He gave them a law of fire" or (3) "He came from the south, down his mountain slopes."

ULT

² He said: Yahweh came from Sinai and rose from Seir upon them. He shined out from Mount Paran, and he came with ten thousands of holy ones. In his right hand were flashes of lightning.

Deuteronomy 33:3

General Information:

These verses are difficult to understand. Moses continues to bless the tribes of Israel, which he began to do in [Deuteronomy 33:2](#). Moses speaks the blessing in the form of short poems. (See: [Parallelism](#))

ULT

³ Indeed, he loves the peoples; all his holy ones are in your hand, and they bowed down at your feet; they received your words.

the peoples

“the people of Israel”

all his holy ones are in your hand ... your feet ... your words

The pronouns “his” and “your” refer to Yahweh. Alternate translation: “all Yahweh’s holy ones are in his hand ... his feet ... his words” (See: [Pronouns](#))

all his holy ones are in your hand

The hand is a metonym for power and protection. Alternate translation: “you protect all his holy people” (See: [Metonymy](#))

Deuteronomy 33:4

an inheritance

“a possession” or “a precious possession”

ULT

⁴ Moses commanded us a law, an inheritance for the assembly of Jacob.

Deuteronomy 33:5

General Information:

Verse 5 is difficult to understand. Moses continues to bless the tribes of Israel, which he began to do in [Deuteronomy 33:2](#). The blessings are short poems. (See: [Parallelism](#))

there was a king

“Yahweh became king”

Jeshurun

This is another name for Israel. Translated as in [Deuteronomy 32:15](#).

ULT

⁵ Then there was a king in Jeshurun,
when the heads of the people had
gathered, all the tribes of Israel
together.

Deuteronomy 33:6

Let Reuben live

This begins Moses' blessings to the individual tribes of Israel.

but may his men be few

Other This could mean: (1) "and may his men not be few" or (2) "even though his men are few."

ULT

⁶ Let Reuben live and not die, but may his men be few.

Deuteronomy 33:7

General Information:

Moses continues to bless the tribes of Israel, which he began to do in [Deuteronomy 33:2](#). The blessings are short poems. (See: [Parallelism](#))

to the voice of Judah

Here “voice of Judah” refers to the cries and prayers of the people of Judah. Alternate translation: “when the people of Judah pray to you” (See: [Metonymy](#))

be a help

The abstract noun “help” can be translated as a verb. Alternate translation: “help him to fight” (See: [Abstract Nouns](#))

ULT

⁷ This is the blessing for Judah. Moses said: Listen, Yahweh, to the voice of Judah, and bring him to his people again. Fight for him; be a help against his enemies.

Deuteronomy 33:8

General Information:

Moses continues to bless the tribes of Israel, which he began to do in [Deuteronomy 33:2](#). The blessings are short poems. (See: [Parallelism](#))

Your Thummim and your Urim

These were sacred stones the high priest carried on his breastplate and used at times to determine God's will. Here "your" refers to Yahweh. (See: [Forms of You](#) and [Translate Unknowns](#))

ULT

⁸ About Levi, Moses said: Your Thummim and your Urim belong to your faithful one, the one whom you tested at Massah, with whom you struggled at the waters of Meribah.

your faithful one, the one whom you tested ... with whom you struggled

Moses refers to the tribe of Levi as if it were one man. (See: [Metonymy](#))

your faithful one

"the one who seeks to please you."

Massah

See how you translated this in [Deuteronomy 6:16](#). Translator may add a footnote that says: "The name 'Massah' means 'testing.'"

Meribah

See how you translated this in [Deuteronomy 32:51](#). Translator may add a footnote that says: "The name 'Meribah' means 'argue' or 'quarrel.'"

Deuteronomy 33:9

General Information:

Moses continues to bless the tribes of Israel, which he began to do in [Deuteronomy 33:2](#). The blessings are short poems. He continues describing the tribe of Levi, which he began to do in [Deuteronomy 33:8](#). (See: [Parallelism](#))

your word

“your commands”

guarded ... kept

These words both mean to watch over and to protect. They are often metaphors for “obeyed,” but here they should be translated literally because they refer to a time when the Levites literally killed people who were rebelling against Yahweh. (See: [Doublet](#) and [Metaphor](#))

ULT

⁹ The man who said about his father and mother, “I have not seen them.” Neither did he acknowledge his brothers, nor did he take account of his own children. For he guarded your word and kept your covenant.

Deuteronomy 33:10

General Information:

Moses continues to bless the tribes of Israel; the blessings are short poems. He continues to describe the tribe of Levi, which he began to do in [Deuteronomy 33:8](#). (See: [Parallelism](#))

your ... your ... you ... your

Moses is speaking to Yahweh, so all these words are singular.

ULT

10 He teaches Jacob your decrees and Israel your law. He will put incense before you and whole burnt offerings on your altar.

Deuteronomy 33:11

General Information:

Moses continues to bless the tribes of Israel; the blessings are short poems. He continues describing the tribe of Levi, which he began to do in [Deuteronomy 33:8](#). (See: [Parallelism](#))

accept

be pleased with

the work of his hands

Here the word “hands” refers to the whole person. Alternate translation: “all the work that he does” (See: [Synecdoche](#))

Shatter the loins of

The loins were considered the center of strength, and are here represent strength. Alternate translation: “Take away the strength of” or “Utterly destroy” (See: [Metonymy](#))

rise up ... rise up

This phrase is used twice as a metaphor. Alternate translation: “rise up to fight ... cause any more trouble” (See: [Metaphor](#))

rise up against

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

ULT

11 Bless, Yahweh, his possessions, and accept the work of his hands. Shatter the loins of those who rise up against him, and those of the people who hate him, so that they do not rise up again.

Deuteronomy 33:12

General Information:

Moses continues to bless the tribes of Israel; the blessings are short poems. (See: [Parallelism](#))

The one loved by Yahweh lives

Here Moses is referring to the members of the tribe of Benjamin.

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "The ones whom Yahweh loves live" (See: [Active or Passive](#))

lives in security

The abstract noun "security" can be translated using a verbal phrase. Alternate translation: "lives where no one can harm him" (See: [Abstract Nouns](#))

he lives between Yahweh's arms

This could mean: (1) Yahweh protects the tribe of Benjamin with his power or (2) Yahweh lives in the hill region of the tribe of Benjamin. In both translations, it means Yahweh takes care of them.

ULT

¹² About Benjamin, Moses said: The one loved by Yahweh lives in security beside him; Yahweh shields him all the day long, and he lives between Yahweh's arms.

Deuteronomy 33:13

General Information:

Moses continues to bless the tribes of Israel; the blessings are short poems. (See: [Parallelism](#))

About Joseph

This refers to the tribe of Ephraim and the tribe of Manasseh. Both tribes descended from Joseph.

ULT

13 About Joseph, Moses said: May his land be blessed by Yahweh with the precious things of heaven, with the dew, and with the deep that lies beneath.

May his land be blessed by Yahweh

The word “his” refers to Joseph which represents the tribes of Ephraim and Manasseh. This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: “May Yahweh bless their land” (See: [Metonymy](#) and [Active or Passive](#))

with the precious things of heaven, with the dew

“with the precious dew from the sky” or “with the precious rain from the sky”

dew

water that forms on leaves and grass on cool mornings. See how you translated this in [Deuteronomy 32:2](#).

the deep that lies beneath

This refers to the water under the ground.

Deuteronomy 33:14

General Information:

Moses continues to bless the tribes of Israel; the blessings are short poems. He continues to describe the tribe of Joseph, which he began to do in [Deuteronomy 33:13](#). (See: [Parallelism](#))

May his land be blessed

This can be stated in active form. See how you translated this in [Deuteronomy 33:13](#). Alternate translation: “May Yahweh bless his land” (See: [Active or Passive](#))

ULT

14 May his land be blessed with the precious things of the harvest of the sun, with the precious things of the produce of the months,

with the precious things of the harvest of the sun

“with the best crops that the sun causes to grow”

with the precious things of the produce of the months

“with the best crops that grow month to month”

Deuteronomy 33:15

finest things ... precious things

Moses is probably referring to food crops. The full meaning of this statement can be made clear. Alternate translation: “the best fruits ... the precious fruits” (See: [Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information](#))

ancient mountains

“the mountains that existed long ago”

everlasting hills

“the hills that will exist forever”

ULT

¹⁵ with the finest things of the ancient mountains, and with the precious things of the everlasting hills.

Deuteronomy 33:16

General Information:

Moses continues to bless the tribes of Israel; the blessings are short poems. He continues to describe the tribe of Joseph, which he began to do in [Deuteronomy 33:13](#). (See: [Parallelism](#))

May his land be blessed

This can be stated in active form. See how you translated this in [Deuteronomy 33:13](#). Alternate translation: “May Yahweh bless his land” (See: [Active or Passive](#))

its abundance

The abstract noun “abundance” can be translated as a verbal phrase. Alternate translation: “what it produces in large amounts”

him who was in the bush

The full meaning of this statement can be made clear. Alternate translation: “Yahweh, who spoke to Moses from the burning bush” (See: [Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information](#))

Let the blessing come on the head of Joseph

This metaphor is of a man putting his hand on the head of a son and asking God to bless the son. The man here is Yahweh. Alternate translation: “May Yahweh bless Joseph as a father blesses his son” (See: [Metaphor](#))

come on the head of Joseph, and on the top of the head of him

Here “head” and “top of the head” represent the whole person. Also, Joseph represents his descendants. Alternate translation: “be upon the descendants of Joseph” (See: [Synecdoche](#) and [Metonymy](#))

top of the head

Another possible meaning is “brow” or “forehead.”

ULT

16 May his land be blessed with the precious things of the earth and its abundance, and with the good will of him who was in the bush. Let {the blessing} come on the head of Joseph, and on the top of the head of him {who was} prince over his brothers.

Deuteronomy 33:17

General Information:

Moses continues to bless the tribes of Israel; the blessings are short poems. He continues to describe the tribe of Joseph, which he began to do in [Deuteronomy 33:13](#). (See: [Parallelism](#))

The firstborn of an ox, majestic is he

The ox is a metaphor for something large and strong. The word “firstborn” is a metaphor for honor. Alternate translation: “People will honor Joseph’s descendants, who are many and powerful” (See: [Metaphor](#))

his horns are the horns of

The horn is a metaphor for strength. Alternate translation: “he is as strong as” (See: [Metaphor](#))

With them he will push

Pushing with his horns is a metaphor for strength. Alternate translation: “He is so strong that he will push” (See: [Metaphor](#))

ten thousands of Ephraim ... the thousands of Manasseh

This means the tribe of Ephraim will be stronger than the tribe of Manasseh. Alternate translation: “the people of Ephraim, who number many times 10,000...the people of Manasseh, who number many times 1,000” (See: [Numbers](#))

ULT

17 The firstborn of an ox, majestic is he, and his horns are the horns of a wild ox. With them he will push the peoples, all of them, to the ends of the earth. These {are} the ten thousands of Ephraim; these {are} the thousands of Manasseh.

Deuteronomy 33:18

General Information:

Moses continues to bless each tribe of Israel; the blessings are short poems. He speaks to the tribes of Zebulun and Issachar as if they were one man, so the word “your” and the command “rejoice” here are singular. (See: [Parallelism](#) and [Forms of You](#))

ULT

18 About Zebulun, Moses said: Rejoice, Zebulun, in your going out, and you, Issachar, in your tents.

Rejoice, Zebulun, in your going out, and you, Issachar, in your tents

The people of Zebulun were located near the Mediterranean Sea. They traveled by sea and traded with other people. The people of Issachar preferred peaceful living and working the land and raising cattle. You can make clear the understood information. (See: [Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information](#))

Deuteronomy 33:19

There will they offer

“It is there that they will offer”

sacrifices of righteousness

“acceptable sacrifices” or “proper sacrifices”

ULT

¹⁹ They will call the peoples {to} the mountains. There will they offer sacrifices of righteousness. For they will suck the abundance of the seas, and from the sand on the seashore.

For they will suck the abundance of the seas, and from the sand on the seashore

This could mean: (1) they will trade with people across the sea or (2) they were beginning to use sand in making pottery.

For they will suck the abundance of the seas

The Hebrew word translated “suck” here refers to how a baby nurses at its mother’s breast. It means the people will gain wealth from the sea like a baby gets milk from its mother. (See: [Metaphor](#))

Deuteronomy 33:20

General Information:

Moses continues to bless the tribes of Israel; the blessings are short poems. (See: [Parallelism](#))

Blessed be he who enlarges Gad

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: This could mean: (1) “May Yahweh bless Gad and give him much land to live in” or (2) “People should say that Yahweh is good because he has given Gad much land to live in” (See: [Active or Passive](#))

ULT

²⁰ About Gad, Moses said: Blessed be he who enlarges Gad. He will live there like a lioness, and he will tear off an arm or a head.

He will live there like a lioness, and he will tear off an arm or a head

This means the people of Gad are strong and secure, and they will defeat their enemies in war. (See: [Simile](#))

Deuteronomy 33:21

General Information:

Moses continues to bless the tribes of Israel; the blessings are short poems. He continues to describe the tribe of Gad as one man, which he began to do in [Deuteronomy 33:20](#). (See: [Parallelism](#))

the leader's portion

This means a larger piece of land that a leader normally took.

He came with the heads of the people

"They met with all the leaders of the Israelites"

He carried out the justice of Yahweh and his decrees with Israel

"They obeyed all that Yahweh had commanded the Israelites"

ULT

21 He provided the best {part} for himself, for there was the leader's portion of land reserved. He came {with} the heads of the people. He carried out the justice of Yahweh and his decrees with Israel.

Deuteronomy 33:22

General Information:

Moses continues to bless the tribes of Israel; the blessings are short poems. (See: [Parallelism](#))

ULT

²² About Dan, Moses said: Dan {is} a lion cub that leaps out from Bashan.

Dan is a lion cub that leaps out from Bashan

The people of Dan are strong like a lion cub, and they attack their enemies who live in Bashan. You can make clear the understood information. (See: [Metaphor](#) and [Ellipsis](#))

Deuteronomy 33:23

General Information:

Moses continues to bless the tribes of Israel; the blessings are short poems. He speaks of the descendants of Naphtali as if they were one man. (See: [Parallelism](#))

satisfied with favor

Yahweh being pleased with Naphtali is spoken of as if “favor” were food that Naphtali ate until he was no longer hungry. Alternate translation: “who has all the good things he desires because Yahweh is pleased with him” (See: [Metaphor](#))

full of the blessing of Yahweh

Blessings are spoken of as if they were food that Naphtali ate until he could hold no more. Alternate translation: “whom Yahweh has blessed so that he has all he needs”

take possession

Moses speaks as if the tribe of Naphtali is one man, so these words are singular. (See: [Forms of You](#))

the land to the west and south

This refers to the land around Lake Galilee. The full meaning of this statement may be made explicit. (See: [Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information](#))

ULT

²³ About Naphtali, Moses said: Naphtali, satisfied with favor, and full of the blessing of Yahweh, take possession of the land to the west and south.

Deuteronomy 33:24

General Information:

Moses continues to bless the tribes of Israel; the blessings are short poems. (See: [Parallelism](#))

dip his foot in olive oil

Olive oil was used for food and for the skin of the face and arms. Feet were dirty, so to put the foot in olive oil was to ruin valuable oil. The full meaning of this statement can be made clear. Alternate translation: “have so much olive oil that he can afford to waste it” (See: [Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information](#))

ULT

²⁴ About Asher, Moses said: Blessed be Asher more than the other sons; let him be acceptable to his brothers, and let him dip his foot in olive oil.

Deuteronomy 33:25

your city bars ... your days ... your security

Moses speaks to the tribe of Asher as if they are one man, so all instances of “your” are singular. (See: [Forms of You](#))

May your city bars be iron and bronze

Cities had large bars across their gates to keep enemies out. The meaning of this statement can be made clear. Alternate translation: “May you be safe from attacks by your enemies” (See: [Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information](#))

ULT

²⁵ May your city bars be iron and bronze; as long as will be your days, {so} long will your security {be}.

Deuteronomy 33:26

rides through the heavens ... on the clouds

This is an image of Yahweh riding on clouds through the sky like a king on his chariot riding through a battlefield. Alternate translation: “rides through the heavens like a king rides through a battlefield ... on the clouds like a king on his chariot” (See: [Metaphor](#))

to your help

“to help you.” Moses speaks to the Israelites as if they were one man, so the word “you” here is singular. (See: [Forms of You](#))

ULT

²⁶ {There is} no one like God, Jeshurun—the upright one, {who} rides through the heavens to your help, and in his majesty on the clouds.

Deuteronomy 33:27

The eternal God is a refuge

The abstract noun “refuge,” which means a shelter or a place safe from danger, can be stated as a verb. Alternate translation: “The eternal God will protect his people” (See: [Abstract Nouns](#))

underneath are the everlasting arms

The words “everlasting arms” are a metaphor for Yahweh’s promise to protect his people forever. Alternate translation: “he will support and take care of his people forever” (See: [Metaphor](#))

He thrust out ... he said

Moses speaks of the future as if it were the past to emphasize that what he is saying will come true. AT “He will thrust out ... he will say” (See: [Predictive Past](#))

before you ... Destroy

Moses speaks to the Israelites as if they were one man, so the word “you” and the command “destroy” here are singular. (See: [Forms of You](#))

he said, “Destroy!”

If this direct quotation would not work well in your language, you may change it to an indirect quotation. Alternate translation: “he will tell you to destroy them!” (See: [Direct and Indirect Quotations](#))

ULT

²⁷ The eternal God {is} a refuge, and underneath {are} the everlasting arms. He thrust out the enemy from before you, and he said, “Destroy!”

Deuteronomy 33:28

Israel dwelt ... Jacob's spring was secure

This could mean: (1) Moses speaks of the future as if it were the past to emphasize that what he is saying will come true, "Israel will dwell ... Jacob's spring will be secure" or (2) Moses is blessing Israel, "May Israel dwell ... and may Jacob's spring be secure." (See: [Predictive Past](#))

ULT

28 Israel dwelt in safety. Jacob's spring was secure in a land of grain and new wine; indeed, let his heavens drop dew on him.

Jacob's spring

This could mean: (1) Jacob's home or (2) Jacob's descendants. (See: [Metonymy](#))

let his heavens drop dew

The dew is spoken of as being so much that it is as if it were raining. This could mean: (1) Moses is blessing Israel, "may much dew cover the land like rain" or (2) Moses is telling what will happen in the future, "much dew will cover the land like rain." (See: [Metaphor](#))

dew

water that forms on leaves and grass on cool mornings. See how you translated this in [Deuteronomy 32:2](#).

Deuteronomy 33:29

General Information:

Moses speaks to the Israelites as if they were one man, so the words “you” and “your” here are singular. (See: [Forms of You](#))

Who is like you, a people saved by Yahweh ... majesty?

This rhetorical question can be translated as a statement. It can also be stated in active form. Alternate translation: “There is no other people group like you, a people whom Yahweh has saved ... majesty.” (See: [Rhetorical Question](#) and [Active or Passive](#))

ULT

29 Your blessings are many, Israel! Who is like you, a people saved by Yahweh, the shield of your help, and the sword of your majesty? Your enemies will come trembling to you; you will trample down their high places.

the shield ... the sword

This merism speaks of Yahweh defending the Israelites from their enemies and enabling them to attack their enemies. (See: [Merism](#))

the shield of your help

The word “shield” is a metaphor for Yahweh protecting and defending the Israelites. The abstract noun “help” can be translated as a verb. Alternate translation: “the one who protects you and helps you” (See: [Metaphor](#) and [Abstract Nouns](#))

the sword of your majesty

The word “sword” is a metaphor for the power to kill with the sword in order to win battles. Alternate translation: “the one who enables you to win battles and so have majesty” (See: [Metaphor](#))

you will trample down their high places

This could mean: (1) the Israelites will destroy the places where the other people worship false gods or (2) the Israelites will walk on the backs of their enemies when the Israelites defeat them.

Deuteronomy 34

Deuteronomy 34 General Notes

Structure and formatting

This chapter may have been written by Joshua, since it recorded Moses' death. This chapter officially ends the revelation of the law of Moses, and life in the Promised Land is about to begin again. (See: [reveal](#), [revealed](#), [revelation](#) and [law](#), [law of Moses](#), [law of Yahweh](#), [law of God](#) and [Promised Land](#))

Deuteronomy 34:1

Mount Nebo

This is the highest point of Mount Pisgah which is in the northern part of the Abarim mountain range. See how you translated this in [Deuteronomy 32:49](#).

Pisgah

See how you translated this in [Deuteronomy 3:17](#).

ULT

¹ Moses went up from the plains of Moab to Mount Nebo, to the top of Pisgah, which is opposite Jericho. There Yahweh showed him all the land of Gilead as far as Dan,

Deuteronomy 34:2

(There are no notes for this verse.)

ULT

² and all Naphtali, and the land of Ephraim and Manasseh, and all the land of Judah, to the western sea,

Deuteronomy 34:3

the City of Palms

This is another name for Jericho. (See: [How to Translate Names](#))

ULT

³ and the Negev, and the plain of the Valley of Jericho, the City of Palms, as far as Zoar.

Deuteronomy 34:4

look at it with your eyes

“see it for yourself”

ULT

⁴ Yahweh said to him, “This is the land that I swore to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob, saying, ‘I will give it to your descendants.’ I have allowed you to look at {it} with your eyes, but you will not go over there.”

Deuteronomy 34:5

(There are no notes for this verse.)

ULT

⁵ So Moses the servant of Yahweh, died there in the land of Moab, as the word of Yahweh promised.

Deuteronomy 34:6

Beth Peor

This was a town in Moab. See how you translated this in [Deuteronomy 3:29](#).

to this day

This refers to the time that this was written or edited, not to the present time in the twenty-first century.

ULT

⁶ Yahweh buried him in the valley in the land of Moab opposite Beth Peor, but no one knows where his grave is to this day.

Deuteronomy 34:7

one hundred twenty years old

“30 days” (See: [Numbers](#))

his eye was not dim, nor his natural force abated

This means his eyes and body were still strong and healthy.

ULT

⁷ Moses {was} one hundred twenty years old when he died; his eye was not dim, nor his natural force abated.

Deuteronomy 34:8

thirty days

“30 days” (See: [Numbers](#))

ULT

⁸ The people of Israel mourned for Moses in the plains of Moab for thirty days, {and} then the days of mourning for Moses were finished.

Deuteronomy 34:9

son of Nun

See how you translated this in [Deuteronomy 1:38](#).

Joshua ... was full of the spirit of wisdom

The writer speaks as if Joshua were a container and the spirit were a physical object that could be put into a container. Alternate translation: "Yahweh enabled Joshua ... to be very wise" (See: [Metaphor](#))

ULT

⁹ Joshua son of Nun was full of the spirit of wisdom, for Moses had laid his hands on him. The people of Israel listened to him and did what Yahweh had commanded Moses.

Moses had laid his hands on him

The full meaning of this statement can be made clear. Alternate translation: "Moses had laid his hands on him to set Joshua apart so Joshua would serve Yahweh" (See: [Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information](#))

Deuteronomy 34:10

Yahweh knew face to face

This is an idiom. It means Yahweh and Moses had a very close relationship. (See: [Idiom](#))

ULT

10 There has not arisen a prophet since in Israel like Moses, whom Yahweh knew face to face.

Deuteronomy 34:11

(There are no notes for this verse.)

ULT

11 There has never been any prophet like him in all the signs and wonders that Yahweh sent him to do in the land of Egypt, to Pharaoh, and to all his servants, and to all his land.

Deuteronomy 34:12

in all the great

“who did all the great”

ULT

¹² There has never been any prophet like him in all the great, fearsome deeds that Moses did in the sight of all Israel.



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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: [Deuteronomy 4:6](#); [5:10](#); [9:10](#); [11:27](#); [12:9](#); [13:5](#); [17:4](#); [17:9](#); [22:14](#); [22:15](#); [22:17](#); [22:19](#); [22:20](#); [28:56](#); [30:3](#); [32:24](#); [32:27](#); [32:29](#); [32:36](#); [33:7](#); [33:12](#); [33:27](#); [33:29](#))

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: Deuteronomy 1:42; 2:20; 3:3; 4:19; 4:26; 4:35; 6:2; 6:15; 7:4; 7:14; 7:23; 7:25; 7:26; 8:13; 9:10; 10:6; 11:16; 11:17; 11:21; 12:22; 12:27; 12:30; 13:5; 13:14; 13:16; 13:17; 14:2; 14:19; 14:21; 15:2; 15:12; 16:4; 16:18; 17:2; 17:4; 17:6; 17:11; 18:10; 19:10; 19:15; 20:11; 21:1; 21:2; 21:4; 21:6; 21:8; 21:13; 21:15; 21:22; 21:23; 22:9; 22:20; 22:22; 22:28; 24:5; 24:7; 24:8; 24:16; 25:2; 25:3; 25:5; 25:10; 26:19; 27:15; 27:16; 27:18; 27:20; 27:22; 27:24; 27:26; 28:3; 28:5; 28:7; 28:10; 28:16; 28:18; 28:20; 28:24; 28:25; 28:27; 28:31; 28:32; 28:33; 28:35; 28:51; 28:58; 28:61; 28:63; 29:20; 29:23; 29:27; 29:29; 30:10; 30:17; 31:17; 31:21; 32:22; 32:24; 32:34; 33:12; 33:13; 33:14; 33:16; 33:20; 33:29)

Apostrophe

Description

An apostrophe is a figure of speech in which a speaker turns his attention away from his listeners and speaks to someone or something that he knows cannot hear him. He does this to tell his listeners his message or feelings about that person or thing in a very strong way.

This page answers the question: *What is the figure of speech called an apostrophe?*

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

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

Reason This Is a Translation Issue

Many languages do not use apostrophe, and readers could be confused by it. They may wonder who the speaker is talking to, or think that the speaker is crazy to talk to things or people who cannot hear.

Examples from the Bible

Mountains of Gilboa, let there not be dew or rain on you. (2 Samuel 1:21a ULT)

King Saul was killed on Mount Gilboa, and David sang a sad song about it. By telling these mountains that he wanted them to have no dew or rain, he showed how sad he was.

Jerusalem, Jerusalem, who kills the prophets and stones those sent to you. (Luke 13:34a ULT)

Jesus was expressing his feelings for the people of Jerusalem in front of his disciples and a group of Pharisees. By speaking directly to Jerusalem as though its people could hear him, Jesus showed how deeply he cared about them.

He cried against the altar by the word of Yahweh: "**Altar, altar!** This is what Yahweh says, 'See, ... on you they will burn human bones.'" (1 Kings 13:2 ULT)

The man of God spoke as if the altar could hear him, but he really wanted the king, who was standing there, to hear him.

Translation Strategies

If apostrophe would be natural and give the right meaning in your language, consider using it. But if this way of speaking would be confusing to your people, let the speaker continue speaking to the people that are listening to him as he tells **them** his message or feelings about the people or thing that cannot hear him. See the example below.

Examples of Translation Strategies Applied

He cried against the altar by the word of Yahweh: "**Altar, altar!** This is what Yahweh says, 'See, ... on you they will burn human bones.'" (1 Kings 13:2 ULT)

He said this about the altar: "This is what Yahweh says **about this altar**. 'See, ... they will burn people's bones on **it**.'"

Mountains of Gilboa, let there not be dew or rain on **you**. (2 Samuel 1:21a ULT)

As for these mountains of Gilboa, let there not be dew or rain on **them**.

(Go back to: [Deuteronomy 30:19; 31:28; 32:1; 32:43](#))

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: [Deuteronomy 1:9](#); [1:18](#); [1:26](#); [1:28](#); [1:37](#); [1:38](#); [2:9](#); [2:19](#); [3:18](#); [3:26](#); [4:3](#); [4:21](#); [5:8](#); [5:10](#); [6:3](#); [6:23](#); [9:2](#); [9:16](#); [10:9](#); [Notes](#); [11:6](#); [Notes](#); [12:15](#); [12:16](#); [12:27](#); [13:11](#); [14:1](#); [14:27](#); [15:9](#); [16:1](#); [16:3](#); [Notes](#); [17:13](#); [Notes](#); [19:3](#); [19:4](#); [19:5](#); [19:9](#); [19:11](#); [19:14](#); [19:15](#); [19:17](#); [19:20](#); [Notes](#); [20:1](#); [20:5](#); [21:13](#); [21:14](#); [21:21](#); [Notes](#); [22:17](#); [22:24](#); [22:30](#); [23:4](#); [23:8](#); [23:15](#); [23:22](#); [23:24](#); [Notes](#); [24:4](#); [24:13](#); [24:15](#); [24:17](#); [Notes](#); [25:7](#); [25:10](#); [25:13](#); [25:14](#); [25:18](#); [26:14](#); [27:2](#); [27:5](#); [27:17](#); [27:20](#); [28:40](#); [28:67](#); [30:15](#); [31:21](#); [32:21](#); [33:15](#); [33:16](#); [33:18](#); [33:23](#); [33:24](#); [33:25](#); [34:9](#))

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: [Deuteronomy 2:9](#); [2:10](#); [2:11](#); [2:12](#); [2:14](#); [2:20](#); [3:11](#); [3:13](#); [10:6](#); [10:7](#); [10:8](#); [10:9](#))

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 handspace 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.

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.

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]]
[[rc://en/ta/man/translate/translate-fraction]]

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: [Deuteronomy 3:11](#))

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:

[\[\[rc://en/ta/man/translate/translate-transliterate\]\]](#)
[Translate Unknowns](#)

(Go back to: [Deuteronomy 22:19; 22:29](#))

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: [Deuteronomy 2:13](#); [12:20](#); [12:30](#); [13:2](#); [13:7](#); [13:13](#); [15:11](#); [15:16](#); [17:14](#); [17:16](#); [18:16](#); [29:24](#); [32:26](#); [33:27](#))

Distinguishing Versus Informing or Reminding

Description

In some languages, phrases that modify a noun can be used with the noun for two different purposes. They can either (1) distinguish the noun from other similar items, or (2) they can give more information about the noun. That information could be new to the reader, or a reminder about something the reader might already know. Other languages use modifying phrases with a noun only for distinguishing the noun from other similar things. When people who speak these languages hear a modifying phrase along with a noun, they assume that its function is to distinguish one item from another similar item.

This page answers the question: *When a phrase is used with a noun, what is the difference between phrases that distinguish the noun from others and phrases that simply inform or remind?*

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

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

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

Some languages use a comma to mark the difference between (1) making a distinction between similar items and (2) giving more information about an item. Without the comma, the sentence below communicates that it is making a distinction:

- Mary gave some of the food to **her sister who was very thankful**.
 - If her sister was usually thankful, the phrase “who was thankful” could distinguish this sister of Mary’s from another sister who was not usually thankful.

With the comma, the sentence is giving more information:

- Mary gave some of the food to **her sister, who was very thankful**.
 - This same phrase can be used to give us more information about Mary’s sister. It tells us about how Mary’s sister responded when Mary gave her the food. In this case it does not distinguish one sister from another sister.

Reasons This Is a Translation Issue

- Many source languages of the Bible use phrases that modify a noun both for distinguishing the noun from another similar item and also for giving more information about the noun. You (the translator) must be careful to understand which meaning the author intended in each case.
- Some languages use phrases that modify a noun only for distinguishing the noun from another similar item. When translating a phrase that is used for giving more information, translators who speak these languages will need to separate the phrase from the noun. Otherwise, people who read it or hear it will think that the phrase is meant to distinguish the noun from other similar items.

Examples From the Bible

Examples of words and phrases that are used to distinguish one item from other possible items:

(These usually do not cause any problem in translation.)

■ The curtain is to separate **the holy place** from **the most holy place**. (Exodus 26:33b ULT)

The words “holy” and “most holy” distinguish two different places from each other and from any other place.

A foolish son is a grief to his father, and bitterness to **the woman who bore him**. (Proverbs 17:25 ULT)

The phrase “who bore him” distinguishes which woman the son is bitterness to. He is not bitterness to all women, but to his mother.

Examples of words and phrases that are used to give added information or a reminder about an item:

(These are a translation issue for languages that do not use these.)

... for **your righteous judgments** are good. (Psalm 119:39b ULT)

The word “righteous” simply reminds us that God’s judgments are righteous. It does not distinguish his righteous judgments from his unrighteous judgments, because all of his judgments are righteous.

How can Sarah, **who is 90 years old**, bear a son? (Genesis 17:17b ULT)

The phrase “who is 90 years old” is the reason that Abraham did not think that Sarah could bear a son. He was not distinguishing one woman named Sarah from another woman named Sarah who was a different age, and he was not telling anyone something new about her age. He simply did not think that a woman who was that old could bear a child.

I will wipe away mankind **whom I have created** from the surface of the earth. (Genesis 6:7 ULT)

The phrase “whom I have created” is a reminder of the relationship between God and mankind. It is the reason God had the right to wipe away mankind. There is not another mankind that God did not create.

Translation Strategies

If readers would understand the purpose of a phrase with a noun, then consider keeping the phrase and the noun together. For languages that use words or phrases with a noun only to distinguish one item from another, here are some strategies for translating phrases that are used to inform or remind.

- (1) Put the information in another part of the sentence and add words that show its purpose.
- (2) Use one of your language’s ways for expressing that this is just added information. It may be by adding a small word, or by changing the way the voice sounds. Sometimes changes in the voice can be shown with punctuation marks, such as parentheses or commas.

Examples of Translation Strategies Applied

- (1) Put the information in another part of the sentence and add words that show its purpose.

I hate those who serve **worthless** idols (Psalm 31:6 ULT)

By saying “worthless idols,” David was commenting about all idols and giving his reason for hating those who serve them. He was not distinguishing worthless idols from valuable idols.

>

Because idols are worthless, I hate those who serve them.

... for your **righteous** judgments are good. (Psalm 119:39b ULT)

... for your judgments are good **because they are righteous**.

Can Sarah, **who is 90 years old**, bear a son? (Genesis 17:17b ULT)

The phrase “who is 90 years old” is a reminder of Sarah’s age. It tells why Abraham was asking the question. He did not expect that a woman who was that old could bear a child.

>

Can Sarah bear a son **even when she is 90 years old**?

I will call on Yahweh, **who is worthy to be praised**. (2 Samuel 22:4a ULT) There is only one Yahweh. The phrase “who is worthy to be praised” gives a reason for calling on Yahweh.

I will call on Yahweh, because **he is worthy to be praised**

(2) Use one of your language’s ways for expressing that this is just added information.

You are my Son, **whom I love**. I am pleased with you. (Luke 3:22 ULT)

You are my Son. **I love you** and I am pleased with you.

Receiving my love, you are my Son. I am pleased with you.

Next we recommend you learn about:

[Double Negatives](#)

(Go back to: [Deuteronomy 8:14](#); [8:15](#); [16:22](#))

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: [Deuteronomy 3:4](#); [5:11](#); [8:9](#); [12:19](#); [14:27](#); [15:11](#); [16:19](#))

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: [Deuteronomy 2:25; 4:6; 4:29; 6:5; 7:26; 9:7; 9:29; 10:12; 11:13; 11:25; 12:28; 13:1; 13:3; 13:14; 15:2; 15:11; 17:15; 20:8; 24:1; 24:14; 25:18; 26:5; 26:6; 26:15; 26:16; 28:4; 28:18; 28:33; 28:37; 28:45; 28:47; 28:49; 29:3; 29:28; 30:2; 30:6; 30:10; 30:20; 32:4; 32:5; 32:6; 32:35; 33:9](#))

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: [Deuteronomy 10:1](#); [10:3](#); [15:6](#); [19:4](#); [19:21](#); [24:19](#); [24:20](#); [25:13](#); [25:14](#); [30:20](#); [31:30](#); [32:30](#); [33:22](#))

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: [Deuteronomy 2:14](#); [21:13](#); [22:13](#); [22:14](#); [22:22](#); [22:23](#); [22:25](#); [22:28](#); [23:10](#); [23:13](#); [23:17](#); [25:5](#); [31:16](#); [32:50](#))

Exclusive and Inclusive 'We'

Description

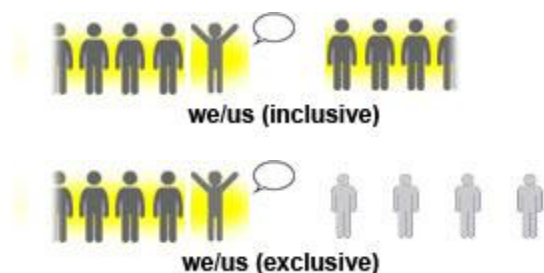
Some languages have more than one form of "we": an inclusive form that means "I and you" and an exclusive form that means "I and someone else but not you." The exclusive form excludes the person being spoken to. The inclusive form includes the person being spoken to and possibly others. This is also 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:

[When Masculine Words Include Women](#)

(Go back to: [Deuteronomy 26:6; 26:8; 29:7](#))

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: Deuteronomy 1:31; 2:7; 2:18; 2:19; 2:24; 2:25; 2:30; 2:37; 3:2; 4:9; 4:10; 4:19; 4:21; 4:23; 4:24; 4:29; 4:32; 4:35; 4:37; 4:39; 5:7; 5:9; 5:11; 5:12; 5:15; 5:16; 5:17; 5:21; 6:1; 6:3; 6:4; 6:6; 6:8; 6:10; 6:13; 6:16; 6:18; 6:20; 6:24; 7:1; 7:2; 7:4; 7:5; 7:6; 7:7; 7:9; 7:12; 7:14; 7:16; 7:17; 7:20; 7:23; 7:25; 8:1; 8:3; 8:4; 8:7; 8:9; 8:11; 8:13; 8:15; 8:18; 8:19; 8:20; 9:1; 9:3; 9:4; 9:5; 9:6; 9:7; 9:8; 10:9; 10:10; 10:12; 10:14; 10:15; 10:20; 10:22; 15:15; 16:19; 16:21; 21:5; 21:8; 21:10; 21:13; 21:20; 21:22; 22:1; 22:3; 22:6; 22:8; 22:9; 22:12; 22:22; 22:23; 22:24; 23:4; 23:5; 23:7; 23:9; 23:12; 23:15; 23:17; 23:19; 23:21; 23:24; 24:3; 24:7; 24:8; 24:9; 24:10; 24:12; 24:14; 24:17; 24:19; 24:21; 25:11; 25:13; 25:15; 25:17; 26:1; 26:3; 26:5; 26:10; 26:12; 26:16; 26:18; 27:1; 27:2; 27:4; 27:6; 27:9; 28:1; 28:3; 28:5; 28:7; 28:9; 28:11; 28:13; 28:15; 28:16; 28:18; 28:20; 28:22; 28:23; 28:25; 28:27; 28:30; 28:32; 28:33; 28:36; 28:38; 28:40; 28:42; 28:45; 28:47; 28:49; 28:52; 28:54; 28:56; 28:58; 28:60; 28:62; 28:63; 28:64; 28:65; 28:67; 29:2; 29:5; 29:11; 29:12; 30:1; 30:4; 30:6; 30:9; 30:11; 30:13; 30:15; 30:17; 30:18; 30:19; 31:3; 31:6; 31:7; 31:11; 31:12; 31:26; 31:27; 32:7; 32:14; 32:17; 32:18; 33:8; 33:18; 33:23; 33:25; 33:26; 33:27; 33:29)

Generic Noun Phrases

Description

Generic noun phrases refer to people or things in general rather than to specific individuals or things. This happens frequently in proverbs, because proverbs tell about things that are true about people in general.

This page answers the question: *What are generic noun phrases and how can I translate them?*

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

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

Can **a man** walk on hot coals without scorching his feet?
So is **the man who goes in to his neighbor's wife;**
the one who touches her will not go unpunished. (Proverbs 6:28-29 ULT)

The phrases in bold above do not refer to a specific man. They refer to any man who does these things.

Reason This Is a Translation Issue

Different languages have different ways of showing that noun phrases refer to something in general. You (the translator) should refer to these general ideas in ways that are natural in your language.

Examples From the Bible

The **righteous person** is kept away from trouble and it comes upon **the wicked** instead. (Proverbs 11:8 ULT)

The bold phrases above do not refer to a specific person but to anyone who does what is right or anyone who is wicked.

People curse **the man who refuses to sell grain**. (Proverbs 11:26 ULT)

This does not refer to a particular man, but to any person who refuses to sell grain.

Yahweh gives favor to **a good man**, but he condemns **a man who makes evil plans**. (Proverbs 12:2 ULT)

The phrase "a good man" does not refer to a particular man, but to any person who is good. The phrase "a man who makes evil plans" does not refer to a particular man, but to any person who makes evil plans.

Translation Strategies

If your language can use the same wording as in the ULT to refer to people or things in general rather than to specific individuals or things, consider using the same wording. If not, here are some strategies you might use.

- (1) Use the word "the" in the noun phrase.
- (2) Use the word "a" in the noun phrase.
- (3) Use the word "any," as in "any person" or "anyone."
- (4) Use the plural form, as in "people."

(5) Use any other way that is natural in your language.

Examples of Translation Strategies Applied

(1) Use the word “the” in the noun phrase.

Yahweh gives favor to **a good man**, but he condemns **a man who makes evil plans**. (Proverbs 12:2 ULT)

“Yahweh gives favor to **the good man**, but he condemns **the man who makes evil plans**.” (Proverbs 12:2)

(2) Use the word “a” in the noun phrase.

People curse **the man** who refuses to sell grain. (Proverbs 11:26 ULT)

“People curse **a man** who refuses to sell grain.”

(3) Use the word “any,” as in “any person” or “anyone.”

People curse **the man** who refuses to sell grain. (Proverbs 11:26 ULT)

“People curse **any man** who refuses to sell grain.”

(4) Use the plural form, as in “people” (or in this sentence, “men”).

People curse **the man** who refuses to sell grain. (Proverbs 11:26 ULT)

“People curse **men** who refuse to sell grain”

(5) Use any other way that is natural in your language.

People curse **the man** who refuses to sell grain. (Proverbs 11:26 ULT)

“People curse **whoever** refuses to sell grain.”

Next we recommend you learn about:

[When Masculine Words Include Women](#)

(Go back to: [Deuteronomy 16:11](#); [24:21](#); [28:43](#); [28:44](#); [29:11](#))

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: [Deuteronomy 17:14; 18:9](#))

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: [Deuteronomy 1:3](#); [16:1](#))

Hendiadys

Description

When a speaker expresses a single idea by using two words that are connected with “and,” it is called a hendiadys. In a hendiadys, the two words work together. Usually one of the words is the primary idea and the other word further describes the primary one.

This page answers the question: *What is hendiadys and how can I translate phrases that have it?*

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

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

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

... his own **kingdom and glory**. (1 Thessalonians 2:12b ULT)

Though “kingdom” and “glory” are both nouns, “glory” actually tells what kind of kingdom it is: it is a **kingdom of glory** or **a glorious kingdom**.

Two phrases connected by “and” can also be a hendiadys when they refer to a single person, thing, or event.

while we look forward to receiving **the blessed hope and appearing of the glory of our great God and Savior Jesus Christ**. (Titus 2:13b ULT)

Titus 2:13 contains two hendiadyses. “The blessed hope” and “appearing of the glory” refer to the same thing and serve to strengthen the idea that the return of Jesus Christ is greatly anticipated and wonderful. Also, “our great God” and “Savior Jesus Christ” refer to one person, not two.

Reasons This Is a Translation Issue

- Often a hendiadys contains an abstract noun. Some languages may not have a noun with the same meaning.
- Many languages do not use the hendiadys, so people may not understand that the second word is further describing the first one.
- Many languages do not use the hendiadys, so people may not understand that only one person or thing is meant, not two.

Examples From the Bible

For I will give you **a mouth and wisdom** ... (Luke 21:15a ULT)

“A mouth” and “wisdom” are nouns, but in this figure of speech “wisdom” describes what comes from the mouth.

If you are willing and obedient ... (Isaiah 1:19a ULT)

“Willing” and “obedient” are adjectives, but “willing” describes “obedient.”

Translation Strategies

If the hendiadys would be natural and give the right meaning in your language, consider using it. If not, here are other options:

- (1) Substitute the describing noun with an adjective that means the same thing.
- (2) Substitute the describing noun with a phrase that means the same thing.
- (3) Substitute the describing adjective with an adverb that means the same thing.

(4) Substitute other parts of speech that mean the same thing and show that one word or phrase describes the other.

(5) If it is unclear that only one thing is meant, change the phrase so that this is clear.

Examples of Translation Strategies Applied

(1) Substitute the describing noun with an adjective that means the same thing.

For I will give you **a mouth and wisdom** ... (Luke 21:15a ULT)

For I will give you **wise words** ...

Walk in a manner that is worthy of God, who calls you into **his own kingdom and glory**. (1 Thessalonians 2:12b ULT)

You should walk in a manner that is worthy of God, who calls you to **his own glorious kingdom**.

(2) Substitute the describing noun with a phrase that means the same thing.

For I will give you **a mouth and wisdom** ... (Luke 21:15a ULT)

for I will give you **words of wisdom**.

You should walk in a manner that is worthy of God, who calls you into **his own kingdom and glory**. (1 Thessalonians 2:12b ULT)

You should walk in a manner that is worthy of God, who calls you to **his own kingdom of glory**.

(3) Substitute the describing adjective with an adverb that means the same thing.

If you are willing and obedient ... (Isaiah 1:19a ULT)

If you are **willingly obedient** ...

(4) Substitute other parts of speech that mean the same thing and show that one word or phrase describes the other.

If you are willing and obedient ... (Isaiah 1:19a ULT)

The adjective “obedient” can be substituted with the verb “obey.”

if you **obey willingly** ...

(4) and (5) If it is unclear that only one thing is meant, change the phrase so that this is clear.

We look forward to receiving **the blessed hope and appearing of the glory of our great God and Savior Jesus Christ**. (Titus 2:13b ULT)

The noun “glory” can be changed to the adjective “glorious” to make it clear that Jesus’ appearing is what we hope for. Also, “Jesus Christ” can be moved to the front of the phrase and “great God and Savior” put into a relative clause that describes the one person, Jesus Christ.

We look forward to receiving **what we are longing for, the blessed and glorious appearing of Jesus Christ, who is our great God and Savior**.

(Go back to: [Deuteronomy 2:25; 4:11; 29:20; 29:24](#))

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:

[[rc://en/ta/man/translate/translate-transliterate]]

(Go back to: [Introduction to Deuteronomy](#); [Deuteronomy 1:1](#); [1:2](#); [1:4](#); [1:24](#); [1:28](#); [1:36](#); [1:38](#); [1:44](#); [2:1](#); [2:8](#); [2:9](#); [2:10](#); [2:11](#); [2:12](#); [2:13](#); [2:18](#); [2:20](#); [2:21](#); [2:22](#); [2:23](#); [2:24](#); [2:26](#); [2:29](#); [2:30](#); [2:32](#); [2:36](#); [2:37](#); [3:1](#); [3:2](#); [3:4](#); [3:6](#); [3:8](#); [3:9](#); [3:10](#); [3:14](#); [3:15](#); [3:16](#); [3:17](#); [3:29](#); [4:43](#); [4:46](#); [6:16](#); [9:2](#); [9:22](#); [10:6](#); [10:7](#); [11:6](#); [11:29](#); [11:30](#); [16:1](#); [25:17](#); [29:23](#); [32:15](#); [32:49](#); [32:50](#); [32:51](#); [34:3](#))

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: [Deuteronomy 1:10](#); [1:28](#); [4:26](#); [5:1](#); [9:1](#); [28:56](#); [28:61](#))

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: [Deuteronomy 19:5](#); [20:5](#); [20:6](#); [20:7](#); [32:29](#))

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: Deuteronomy 1:6; 1:7; 1:9; 1:24; 1:28; 2:8; 2:13; 2:25; 3:27; 4:11; 4:19; 4:20; 4:25; 4:30; 4:39; Notes; 5:4; 5:15; 5:29; 6:3; 6:6; 6:18; 7:6; 7:7; 7:10; 7:13; 7:17; 7:18; 7:20; 7:23; 7:24; 8:2; 8:18; 9:5; 9:27; 10:8; 11:9; 11:13; 11:25; 12:1; 13:6; 13:17; 15:3; 16:3; 16:9; 16:12; 18:6; 19:6; 19:11; 19:12; 19:15; 19:16; 19:17; 20:3; 20:8; 20:20; 21:4; 21:8; 21:17; 22:1; 22:3; 22:19; 22:29; 23:1; 23:3; 23:5; 23:6; 23:20; 23:23; 24:7; 24:9; 24:15; 24:18; 24:22; 25:15; 25:17; 26:19; 27:3; 27:15; 28:4; 28:7; 28:8; 28:11; 28:18; 28:20; 28:25; 28:43; 28:49; 28:60; 28:65; 28:66; 28:67; 29:4; 29:19; 30:1; 30:9; 31:17; 31:19; 32:3; 32:7; 32:8; 32:10; 32:13; 32:20; 32:27; 32:35; 32:46; 33:11; 34:10)

Irony

Description

Irony is a figure of speech in which the sense that the speaker intends to communicate is actually the opposite of the literal meaning of the words. Sometimes a person does this by using someone else's words, but in a way that communicates that he does not agree with them. People do this to emphasize how different something is from what it should be, or how someone else's belief about something is wrong or foolish. It is often humorous.

This page answers the question: *What is irony and how can I translate it?*

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

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

Then Jesus answered and said to them, "People who are well do not have need of a physician, but those who have sickness. I did not come to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance."
(Luke 5:31-32 ULT)

When Jesus spoke of "righteous people," he was not referring to people who were truly righteous, but to people who wrongly believed that they were righteous. By using irony, Jesus communicated that they were wrong to think that they were better than others and did not need to repent.

Reason This Is a Translation Issue

If someone does not realize that a speaker is using irony, he will think that the speaker actually believes what he is saying. He will understand the passage to mean the opposite of what it was intended to mean.

Examples From the Bible

How well you reject the commandment of God so that you may keep your tradition! (Mark 7:9b ULT)

Here Jesus praises the Pharisees for doing something that is obviously wrong. Through irony, he communicates the opposite of praise: He communicates that the Pharisees, who take great pride in keeping the commandments, are so far from God that they do not even recognize that their traditions are breaking God's commandments. The use of irony makes the Pharisee's sin more obvious and startling.

"Present your case," says Yahweh; "present your best arguments for your idols," says the King of Jacob. **"Let them bring us their own arguments; have them come forward and declare to us what will happen, so we may know these things well. Have them tell us of earlier predictive declarations, so we can reflect on them and know how they were fulfilled."** (Isaiah 41:21-22 ULT)

People worshiped idols as if their idols had knowledge or power, and Yahweh was angry at them for doing that. So he used irony and challenged their idols to tell what would happen in the future. He knew that the idols could not do this, but by speaking as if they could, he mocked the idols, making their inability more obvious, and rebuked the people for worshiping them.

Can you lead light and darkness to their places of work?
Can you find the way back to their houses for them?
Undoubtedly you know, for you were born then; "the number of your days is so large!" (Job 38:20-21 ULT)

Job thought that he was wise. Yahweh used irony to show Job that he was not so wise. The two phrases in bold above are irony. They emphasize the opposite of what they say, because they are so obviously false. They

emphasize that Job could not possibly answer God's questions about the creation of light because Job was not born until many, many years later.

Already you are satisfied! Already you have become rich! **You began to reign** apart from us, and I wish you really did reign, so that we also might reign with you. (1 Corinthians 4:8 ULT)

The Corinthians considered themselves to be very wise, self-sufficient, and not in need of any instruction from the Apostle Paul. Paul used irony, speaking as if he agreed with them, to show how proudly they were acting and how far from being wise they really were.

Translation Strategies

If the irony would be understood correctly in your language, translate it as it is stated. If not, here are some other strategies.

- (1) Translate it in a way that shows that the speaker is saying what someone else believes.
- (2) The irony is **not** found in the literal words of the speaker, but instead the true meaning is found in the opposite of the literal meaning of the speaker's words.

Examples of Translation Strategies Applied

- (1) Translate it in a way that shows that the speaker is saying what someone else believes.

How well you reject the commandment of God so that you may keep your tradition! (Mark 7:9a ULT)

You think that you are doing well when you reject God's commandment so you may keep your tradition!
You act like it is good to reject God's commandment so you may keep your tradition!

I did not come to call **the righteous**, but sinners to repentance. (Luke 5:32 ULT)

I did not come to call **people who think that they are righteous** to repentance, but to call sinners to repentance.

- (2) Translate the actual, intended meaning of the statement of irony.

How well you reject the commandment of God so that you may keep your tradition! (Mark 7:9a ULT)

You are doing a terrible thing when you reject the commandment of God so you may keep your tradition!

"Present your case," says Yahweh; "present your best arguments for your idols," says the King of Jacob. **"Let them bring us their own arguments; have them come forward and declare to us what will happen, so we may know these things well. Have them tell us of earlier predictive declarations, so we can reflect on them and know how they were fulfilled."** (Isaiah 41:21-22 ULT)

'Present your case,' says Yahweh; 'present your best arguments for your idols,' says the King of Jacob. Your idols **cannot bring us their own arguments or come forward to declare to us what will happen** so we may know these things well. We cannot hear them because **they cannot speak** to tell us their earlier predictive declarations, so we cannot reflect on them and know how they were fulfilled.

Can you lead light and darkness to their places of work?

Can you find the way back to their houses for them?

**Undoubtedly you know, for you were born then;
the number of your days is so large!** (Job 38:20-21 ULT)

Can you lead light and darkness to their places of work? Can you find the way back to their houses for them? **You act like you know how light and darkness were created, as if you were there; as if you are as old as creation, but you are not!**

Next we recommend you learn about:

[Litotes](#)

(Go back to: [Deuteronomy 32:38](#))

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: [Deuteronomy 2:7](#); [2:27](#); [2:36](#); [3:3](#); [7:10](#); [7:14](#); [8:9](#); [15:10](#); [15:18](#); [16:16](#); [17:20](#); [20:16](#); [31:6](#); [32:47](#))

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: [Deuteronomy 1:17](#); [3:24](#); [4:39](#); [10:14](#); [11:12](#); [11:19](#); [13:7](#); [28:3](#); [28:4](#); [28:6](#); [28:16](#); [28:19](#); [28:64](#); [29:19](#); [31:2](#); [32:25](#); [33:29](#))

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: Deuteronomy 1:11; 1:12; 1:25; 3:20; 4:4; 4:6; 4:20; 4:24; 4:26; 4:27; 4:34; 4:40; Notes; 5:1; 5:15; 5:32; 5:33; Notes; 6:2; 6:8; 6:15; 6:21; 7:2; 7:4; 7:6; 7:8; 7:15; 7:16; 7:19; 7:25; 7:26; 8:12; 8:14; 8:19; 9:12; 9:26; 10:12; 10:16; 10:20; 11:2; 11:9; 11:16; 11:17; 11:18; 11:22; 11:25; 11:26; 11:28; 11:29; 11:32; 12:8; 12:9; 12:10; 12:12; 12:15; 12:22; 12:23; 12:25; 12:28; 12:29; 12:30; 13:2; 13:4; 13:5; 13:10; 13:13; 13:17; 13:18; 14:2; 14:7; 14:8; 14:10; 14:11; 14:19; 14:20; 14:21; 14:27; 14:29; 15:4; 15:7; 15:8; 15:9; 15:11; 15:13; 15:15; 15:22; 16:19; 16:20; 17:11; 17:14; 17:17; 17:20; 18:1; 18:2; 18:15; 18:18; 19:1; 19:3; 19:6; 19:9; 19:10; 19:14; 20:4; 20:16; 21:8; 21:9; 22:7; 24:17; 26:8; 26:19; 27:19; 28:1; 28:2; 28:8; 28:9; 28:12; 28:13; 28:14; 28:15; 28:23; 28:44; 28:45; 28:48; 28:53; 28:63; 29:18; 29:19; 29:20; 29:27; 29:28; 30:1; 30:6; 30:7; 30:11; 30:15; 30:18; 31:16; 31:17; 31:21; 31:29; 32:4; 32:13; 32:15; 32:18; 32:19; 32:22; 32:23; 32:30; 32:31; 32:32; 32:33; 32:35; 32:42; 32:47; 33:2; 33:9; 33:11; 33:16; 33:17; 33:19; 33:22; 33:23; 33:26; 33:27; 33:28; 33:29; 34:9)

Metonymy

Description

Metonymy is a figure of speech in which an item (either physical or abstract) is called not by its own name, but by the name of something closely associated with it. A metonym is a word or phrase used as a substitute for something that it is associated with.

This page answers the question: *What is a metonymy?*

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

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

... and **the blood** of Jesus his Son cleanses us from every sin. (1 John 1:7b ULT)

The blood represents Christ's death.

And he took **the cup** in the same way after supper, saying, "**This cup** is the new covenant in my blood, which is poured out for you." (Luke 22:20 ULT)

The cup represents the wine that is in the cup.

Metonymy can be used

- as a shorter way of referring to something
- to make an abstract idea more meaningful by referring to it with the name of a physical object associated with it

Reason This Is a Translation Issue

The Bible uses metonymy very often. Speakers of some languages are not familiar with metonymy and they may not recognize it when they read it in the Bible. If they do not recognize the metonymy, they will not understand the passage or, worse yet, they will get a wrong understanding of the passage. Whenever a metonym is used, people need to be able to understand what it represents.

Examples From the Bible

The Lord God will give to him **the throne** of his father David. (Luke 1:32b ULT)

A throne represents the authority of a king. "Throne" is a metonym for "kingly authority," "kingship," or "reign." This means that God would make him become a king who would follow King David.

Then immediately his **mouth** was opened (Luke 1:64a ULT)

The mouth here represents the power to speak. This means that he was able to talk again.

Who warned you to flee from **the wrath** that is coming? (Luke 3:7b ULT)

The word "wrath" or "anger" is a metonym for "punishment." God was extremely angry with the people and, as a result, he would punish them.

Translation Strategies

If people would easily understand the metonym, consider using it. Otherwise, here are some options.

(1) Use the metonym along with the name of the thing it represents.

(2) Use only the name of the thing the metonym represents.

Examples of Translation Strategies Applied

(1) Use the metonym along with the name of the thing it represents.

And he took the cup in the same way after the supper, saying, “**This cup** is the new covenant in my blood, which is poured out for you.” (Luke 22:20 ULT)

He took the cup in the same way after supper, saying, “**The wine in this cup** is the new covenant in my blood, which is poured out for you.”

This verse also contains a second metonym: The cup, (representing the wine it contains) also represents the new covenant made with the blood Christ shed for us.

(2) Use the name of the thing the metonym represents.

The Lord God will give him **the throne** of his father David. (Luke 1:32b ULT)

“The Lord God will give him **the kingly authority** of his father, David.”

or:

“The Lord God will **make him king** like his ancestor, King David.”

Who warned you to flee from **the wrath** that is coming? (Luke 3:7b ULT)

“Who warned you to flee from God’s coming **punishment**?”

To learn about some common metonymies, see Biblical Imagery — Common Metonymies.

(Go back to: [Deuteronomy 1:27; 1:41; 1:43; 2:7; 2:9; 2:24; 3:8; 3:24; 4:6; 4:26; 4:29; 4:36; 5:6; 5:10; 6:5; 6:8; 6:12; 6:13; 6:20; 6:22; 6:25; 7:8; 7:16; 8:2; 8:3; 8:5; 8:12; 8:14; 8:17; 8:20; 9:1; 9:4; 9:5; 9:21; 9:23; 9:26; 9:28; 10:8; 10:12; 10:20; 11:3; 11:10; 11:12; 11:16; 11:18; 11:23; 11:25; 12:2; 12:3; 12:5; 12:12; 12:21; 12:23; 12:29; 13:3; 13:4; 13:5; 13:6; 13:10; 13:18; 15:5; 15:6; 15:9; 15:16; 16:2; 16:5; 17:2; 17:6; 17:14; 17:18; 18:5; 18:7; 18:9; 18:14; 18:19; 18:20; 18:21; 18:22; 19:1; 19:6; 19:10; 19:12; 19:13; 19:15; 20:3; 20:8; 20:10; 20:11; 20:12; 20:15; 20:20; 21:5; 21:7; 21:18; 21:20; 21:21; 22:8; 22:9; 24:6; 25:6; 25:7; 25:9; 25:11; 25:17; 26:5; 26:7; 26:14; 26:16; 26:17; 27:10; 27:12; 28:1; 28:5; 28:10; 28:15; 28:17; 28:32; 28:33; 28:45; 28:50; 28:58; 28:62; 29:4; 29:27; 30:2; 30:6; 30:8; 30:10; 30:14; 30:19; 30:20; 31:7; 31:28; 32:25; 32:27; 32:41; 32:42; 32:43; 32:47; 33:3; 33:7; 33:8; 33:11; 33:13; 33:16; 33:28](#))

Nominal Adjectives

Description

In some languages an adjective can be used to refer to a class of things that the adjective describes. When it does, it acts like a noun. For example, the word “rich” is an adjective. Here are two sentences that show that “rich” is an adjective.

The rich man had huge numbers of flocks and herds.
(2 Samuel 12:2 ULT)

The adjective “rich” comes before the word “man” and describes “man.”

He will not be rich; his wealth will not last. (Job 15:29a ULT)

The adjective “rich” comes after the verb “be” and describes “He.”

Here is a sentence that shows that “rich” can also function as a noun.

The rich must not give more than the half shekel, and **the poor** must not give less. (Exodus 30:15b ULT)

In Exodus 30:15, the word “rich” acts as a noun in the phrase “the rich,” and it refers to rich people. The word “poor” also acts as a noun and refers to poor people.

This page answers the question: *How do I translate adjectives that act like nouns?*

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

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

Reason This Is a Translation Issue

- Many times in the Bible adjectives are used as nouns to describe a group of people.
- Some languages do not use adjectives in this way.
- Readers of these languages may think that the text is talking about one particular person when it is really talking about the group of people whom the adjective describes.

Examples From the Bible

The scepter of wickedness must not rule in the land of **the righteous**. (Psalms 125:3a ULT)

“The righteous” here are people who are righteous, not one particular righteous person.

Blessed are **the meek**. (Matthew 5:5a ULT)

“The meek” here are all people who are meek, not one particular meek person.

Translation Strategies

If your language uses adjectives as nouns to refer to a class of people, consider using the adjectives in this way. If it would sound strange, or if the meaning would be unclear or wrong, here is another option:

- (1) Use the adjective with a plural form of the noun that the adjective describes.

Examples of Translation Strategies Applied

- (1) Use the adjective with a plural form of the noun that the adjective describes.

The scepter of wickedness must not rule in the land of **the righteous**. (Psalms 125:3a ULT)

The scepter of wickedness must not rule in the land of **righteous people**.

Blessed are **the meek**. (Matthew 5:5a ULT)

Blessed are **people who are meek**.

(Go back to: [Deuteronomy 13:5](#); [15:4](#); [15:11](#); [16:19](#); [17:7](#); [17:12](#); [19:19](#); [21:21](#); [22:21](#); [22:24](#); [24:7](#); [29:19](#))

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](#)

[[rc://en/ta/man/translate/translate-fraction]]

(Go back to: [Deuteronomy 1:2; 1:3; 1:11; 1:15; 1:23; 2:7; 2:14; 3:4; 5:10; 7:9; 8:2; 8:4; 9:9; 9:11; 9:18; 9:25; 10:10; 10:22; 14:28; 15:1; 15:12; 16:3; 16:8; 16:9; 16:13; 17:6; 19:2; 19:9; 22:19; 22:29; 25:3; 28:25; 29:5; 31:2; 31:10; 32:30; 33:2; 33:17; 34:7; 34:8](#))

Ordinal Numbers

Description

Ordinal numbers are used in the Bible mainly to tell the position of something in a list.

And God has indeed appointed some in the church, **first** apostles, **second** prophets, **third** teachers, then miracles. (1 Corinthians 12:28a ULT)

This page answers the question: *What are ordinal numbers and how can I translate them?*

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

[Numbers](#)

This is a list of workers that God gave to the church in their order.

Ordinal Numbers in English

Most ordinal numbers in English simply have “-th” added to the end.

Numeral	Number	Ordinal Number
4	four	fourth
10	ten	tenth
100	one hundred	one hundredth
1,000	one thousand	one thousandth

Some ordinal numbers in English do not follow that pattern.

Numeral	Number	Ordinal Number
1	one	first
2	two	second
3	three	third
5	five	fifth
12	twelve	twelfth

Reason This Is a Translation Issue

Some languages do not have special numbers for showing the order of items in a list. There are different ways to deal with this.

Examples From the Bible

The **first** lot went to Jehoiarib, the **second** to Jedaiah, the **third** to Harim, the **fourth** to Seorim ... the **twenty-third** to Delaiah, and the **twenty-fourth** to Maaziah. (1 Chronicles 24:7-18 ULT)

The people cast lots and one went to each of these people in the order given.

You must place in it four rows of precious stones. The **first** row must have a ruby, a topaz, and a garnet. The **second** row must have an emerald, a sapphire, and a diamond. The **third** row must have a jacinth, an agate, and an amethyst. The **fourth** row must have a beryl, and an onyx, and a jasper. They must be mounted in gold settings. (Exodus 28:17-20 ULT)

This describes four rows of stones. The first row is probably the top row, and the fourth row is probably the bottom row.

Translation Strategies

If your language has ordinal numbers and using them would give the right meaning, consider using them. If not, here are some strategies to consider:

- (1) Use “one” with the first item and “another” or “the next” with the rest.
- (2) Tell the total number of items and then list them or the things associated with them.

Examples of Translation Strategies Applied

- (1) Tell the total number of items, and use “one” with the first item and “another” or “the next” with the rest.

The first lot went to Jehoiarib, the second to Jedaiah, the third to Harim, the fourth to Seorim ... the twenty-third to Delaiah, and the twenty-fourth to Maaziah. (1 Chronicles 24:7-18 ULT)

There were **24** lots. **One lot** went to Jehoiarib, **another** to Jedaiah, **another** to Harim ... **another** to Delaiah, **and the last** went to Maaziah.

There were **24** lots. **One lot** went to Jehoiarib, **the next** to Jedaiah, **the next** to Harim ... **the next** to Delaiah, **and the last** went to Maaziah.

A river went out of Eden to water the garden. From there it divided and became **four** rivers. The name of **the first** is Pishon. It is the one which flows throughout the whole land of Havilah, where there is gold. The gold of that land is good. There is also bdellium and the onyx stone there. The name of **the second** river is Gihon. This one flows throughout the whole land of Cush. The name of **the third** river is Tigris, which flows east of Asshur. **The fourth** river is the Euphrates. (Genesis 2:10-14 ULT)

A river went out of Eden to water the garden. From there it divided and became **four** rivers. The name of **one** is Pishon. It is the one which flows throughout the whole land of Havilah, where there is gold. The gold of that land is good. There is also bdellium and the onyx stone there. The name of **the next** river is Gihon. This one flows throughout the whole land of Cush. The name of **the next** river is Tigris, which flows east of Asshur. The **last** river is the Euphrates.

- (2) Tell the total number of items and then list them or the things associated with them.

The **first** lot went to Jehoiarib, the **second** to Jedaiah, the **third** to Harim, the **fourth** to Seorim ... the **twenty-third** to Delaiah, and the **twenty-fourth** to Maaziah. (1 Chronicles 24:7-18 ULT)

They cast **24** lots. The lots went to Jerhoiarib, Jedaiah, Harim, Seorim ... Delaiah, and Maaziah.

Next we recommend you learn about:

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

(Go back to: [Deuteronomy 1:3](#); [5:14](#); [10:1](#); [10:3](#); [10:10](#); [15:9](#); [15:12](#); [16:4](#); [16:8](#); [23:2](#); [23:3](#); [23:8](#); [26:2](#); [26:12](#))

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: [Deuteronomy 2:30; 4:9; 9:9; 9:11; 14:2; 15:6; 17:19; 20:3; 26:14; 26:17; 28:53; 29:9; 32:1; 32:3; 32:5; 32:7; 32:9; 32:11; 32:13; 32:14; 32:15; 32:19; 32:21; 32:22; 32:23; 32:25; 32:27; 32:28; 32:30; 32:32; 32:33; 32:35; 32:36; 32:37; 32:39; 32:41; 32:42; 32:43; 33:1; 33:3; 33:5; 33:7; 33:8; 33:9; 33:10; 33:11; 33:12; 33:13; 33:14; 33:16; 33:17; 33:18; 33:20; 33:21; 33:22; 33:23; 33:24](#))

Personification

Description

Personification is a figure of speech in which someone speaks of something as if it could do things that animals or people can do. People often do this because it makes it easier to talk about things that we cannot see:

Such as wisdom:

Does not Wisdom call out? (Proverbs 8:1a ULT)

Or sin:

Sin crouches at the door. (Genesis 4:7b ULT)

People also use personification because it is sometimes easier to talk about people's relationships with non-human things such as wealth as if they were relationships between people.

You cannot serve God and wealth. (Matthew 6:24b ULT)

In each case, the purpose of the personification is to highlight a certain characteristic of the non-human thing. As in metaphor, the reader needs to think of the way that the thing is like a certain kind of person.

Reasons This Is a Translation Issue

- Some languages do not use personification.
- Some languages use personification only in certain situations.

Examples From the Bible

You cannot **serve** God and wealth. (Matthew 6:24b ULT)

Jesus speaks of wealth as if it were a master whom people might serve. Loving money and basing one's decisions on it is like serving it as a slave would serve his master.

Does not Wisdom **call** out? Does not Understanding **raise her voice**? (Proverbs 8:1 ULT)

The author speaks of wisdom and understanding as if they were woman who calls out to teach people. This means that they are not something hidden, but something obvious that people should pay attention to.

Translation Strategies

If the personification would be understood clearly, consider using it. If it would not be understood, here are some other ways for translating it.

- (1) Add words or phrases to make the human (or animal) characteristic clear.
- (2) In addition to Strategy (1), use words such as "like" or "as" to show that the sentence is not to be understood literally.
- (3) Find a way to translate it without the personification.

This page answers the question: *What is personification?*

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

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

Examples of Translation Strategies Applied

(1) Add words or phrases to make the human (or animal) characteristic clear.

Sin crouches at the door. (Genesis 4:7b ULT) — God speaks of sin as if it were a wild animal that is waiting for the chance to attack. This shows how dangerous sin is. An additional phrase can be added to make this danger clear.

Sin is at your door, **waiting to attack you**.

(2) In addition to Strategy (1), use words such as “like” or “as” to show that the sentence is not to be understood literally.

Sin crouches at the door. (Genesis 4:7b ULT) — This can be translated with the word “as.”

Sin is crouching at the door, **just as a wild animal does as it waits to attack a person..**

(3) Find a way to translate it without the personification.

Even the **winds and the sea obey him**. (Matthew 8:27b ULT) — The men speak of the “wind and the sea” as if they are able to hear and obey Jesus, just as people can. This could also be translated without the idea of obedience by speaking of Jesus controlling them.

He even **controls the winds and the sea**.

NOTE: We have broadened our definition of “personification” to include “zoomorphism” (speaking of other things as if they had animal characteristics) and “anthropomorphism” (speaking of non-human things as if they had human characteristics) because the translation strategies for them are the same.

Next we recommend you learn about:

[Apostrophe](#)

[[rc://en/ta/man/translate/bita-part1]]

(Go back to: [Deuteronomy 4:26](#); [8:15](#); [11:6](#); [11:11](#); [24:4](#); [28:2](#); [28:8](#); [28:15](#); [28:22](#); [28:45](#); [29:20](#); [30:19](#); [31:17](#); [31:21](#); [31:28](#); [32:25](#); [32:42](#))

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: [Deuteronomy 3:2](#); [33:27](#); [33:28](#))

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: [Deuteronomy 1:8](#); [1:17](#); [1:21](#); [1:36](#); [4:3](#); [4:9](#); [4:10](#); [17:14](#); [32:12](#); [32:13](#); [32:14](#); [32:27](#); [33:3](#))

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: [Deuteronomy 12:20](#); [12:30](#); [15:11](#); [15:16](#); [17:14](#); [17:16](#); [18:16](#))

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: [Deuteronomy 1:12](#); [1:28](#); [3:11](#); [3:24](#); [Notes](#); [4:7](#); [4:8](#); [4:33](#); [5:25](#); [5:26](#); [7:17](#); [9:2](#); [10:12](#); [10:13](#); [11:30](#); [Notes](#); [20:19](#); [30:12](#); [30:13](#); [31:17](#); [31:27](#); [32:6](#); [32:30](#); [32:34](#); [32:38](#); [33:29](#))

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: [Deuteronomy 1:10](#); [1:31](#); [1:44](#); [9:3](#); [10:22](#); [11:21](#); [28:29](#); [28:49](#); [28:62](#); [32:2](#); [32:10](#); [32:11](#); [33:20](#))

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: [Deuteronomy 14:1](#))

Synecdoche

Description

Synecdoche is a figure of speech in which a speaker uses a part of something to refer to the whole thing, or uses the whole to refer to a part.

■ **My soul** magnifies the Lord. (Luke 1:46b ULT)

Mary was very happy about what the Lord was doing, so she said “my soul,” which means the inner, emotional part of herself, to refer to her whole self.

■ So **the Pharisees** said to him, “Look, why are they doing that which is not lawful?” (Mark 2:24a ULT)

The Pharisees who were standing there did not all say the same words at the same time. Instead, it is more likely that one man representing the group said those words.

Reasons This Is a Translation Issue

- Some readers may not recognize the synecdoche and thus misunderstand the words as a literal statement.
- Some readers may realize that they are not to understand the words literally, but they may not know what the meaning is.

Example From the Bible

■ Then I looked on all the deeds that **my hands** had accomplished. (Ecclesiastes 2:11a ULT)

“My hands” is a synecdoche for the whole person because clearly the arms and the rest of the body and the mind were also involved in the person’s accomplishments. The hands are chosen to represent the person because they are the parts of the body most directly involved in the work.

Translation Strategies

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

(1) State specifically what the synecdoche refers to.

Examples of Translation Strategies Applied

(1) State specifically what the synecdoche refers to.

■ **“My soul** magnifies the Lord.” (Luke 1:46b ULT)

■ **“I** magnify the Lord.”

So **the Pharisees** said to him ... (Mark 2:24a ULT)

■ **A representative of the Pharisees** said to him ...

Then I looked on all the deeds that **my hands** had accomplished. (Ecclesiastes 2:11a ULT)

This page answers the question: *What is a synecdoche, and how can I translate such a thing into my language?*

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

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

I looked on all the deeds that I had accomplished

Next we recommend you learn about:

[Metonymy](#)

[[rc://en/ta/man/translate/bita-part2]]

(Go back to: Deuteronomy 1:8; 1:17; 1:30; 2:7; 2:15; 2:28; 3:2; 3:21; 4:3; 4:9; 4:28; 4:30; 4:33; 4:34; 5:1; 5:14; 5:23; 5:26; 6:22; 7:19; 8:3; 9:17; 10:21; 11:7; 11:24; 12:6; 12:7; 12:11; 12:12; 12:15; 12:17; 12:18; 12:20; 12:21; 12:28; 13:8; 13:9; 13:15; 14:28; 14:29; 15:7; 15:10; 15:22; 16:5; 16:10; 16:11; 16:14; 16:15; 16:18; 17:2; 17:7; 17:17; 17:20; 18:5; 18:16; 19:13; 19:21; 21:7; 21:20; 24:1; 24:14; 24:19; 25:3; 25:12; 26:12; 28:12; 28:32; 28:52; 28:55; 28:57; 28:65; 28:67; 29:2; 29:3; 29:18; 30:9; 30:17; 31:4; 31:12; 31:28; 31:29; 31:30; 32:24; 32:41; 32:44; 33:11; 33:16)

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:

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

[How to Translate Names](#)

(Go back to: [Deuteronomy 1:44](#); [12:15](#); [14:5](#); [14:7](#); [14:12](#); [14:13](#); [14:14](#); [14:17](#); [14:18](#); [15:17](#); [16:9](#); [22:11](#); [33:8](#))

When Masculine Words Include Women

In the Bible, sometimes the words “men,” “brothers,” and “sons” refer only to men. At other times, those words include both men and women. In those places where the writer meant both men and women, you (the translator) need to translate it in a way that does not limit the meaning to men.

This page answers the question: *How do I translate “brother” or “he” when it could refer to anyone, male or female?*

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

[Pronouns](#)

[Generic Noun Phrases](#)

Description

In some languages a word that normally refers to men can also be used in a more general way to refer to both men and women. For example, the Bible sometimes says “brothers” when it refers to both brothers and sisters.

Also in some languages, the masculine pronouns “he” and “him” can be used in a more general way for any person if it is not important whether the person is a man or a woman. In the example below, the pronoun is “his,” but it is not limited to males.

A wise son makes **his** father rejoice
but a foolish son brings grief to **his** mother. (Proverbs 10:1 ULT)

Reason This Is a Translation Issue

- In some cultures words like “man,” “brother,” and “son” can only be used to refer to men. If those words are used in a translation in a more general way, people will think that what is being said does not apply to women.
- In some cultures, the masculine pronouns “he” and “him” can only refer to men. If a masculine pronoun is used, people will think that what is said does not apply to women.

Translation Principles

When a statement applies to both men and women, translate it in such a way that people will be able to understand that it applies to both.

Examples From the Bible

Now we want you to know, **brothers**, the grace of God that has been given to the churches of Macedonia. (2 Corinthians 8:1 ULT)

This verse is addressing the believers in Corinth, not only men, but **men and women**.

Then said Jesus to his disciples, “If anyone wants to follow me, **he** must deny **himself**, take up **his** cross, and follow me.” (Matthew 16:24 ULT)

Jesus was not speaking only of men, but of **men and women**.

Caution: Sometimes masculine words are used specifically to refer to men. Do not use words that would lead people to think that they include women. The words below are specifically about men.

Moses said, ‘If **someone** dies, not having children, **his brother** must marry **his** wife and have children for **his brother**.’ (Matthew 22:24 ULT)

Translation Strategies

If people would understand that that masculine words like “man,” “brother,” and “he” can include women, then consider using them. Otherwise, here are some ways for translating those words when they include women.

- (1) Use a noun that can be used for both men and women.
- (2) Use a word that refers to men and a word that refers to women.
- (3) Use pronouns that can be used for both men and women.

Examples of Translation Strategies Applied

- (1) Use nouns that can be used for both men and women.

The wise **man** dies just like the fool dies. (Ecclesiastes 2:16b ULT)

“The wise **person** dies just like the fool dies.”

“Wise **people** die just like fools die.”

- (2) Use a word that refers to men and a word that refers to women.

For we do not want you to be uninformed, **brothers**, about the troubles that happened to us in Asia. (2 Corinthians 1:8) — Paul was writing this letter to both men and women.

“For we do not want you to be uninformed, **brothers and sisters**, about the troubles that happened to us in Asia.”

- (3) Use pronouns that can be used for both men and women.

“If anyone wants to follow me, he must deny himself, take up his cross, and follow me.”
(Matthew 16:24 ULT)

English speakers can change the masculine singular pronouns, “he,” “himself,” and “his” to plural pronouns that do not mark gender, “they,” “themselves,” and “their” in order to show that it applies to all people, not just men.

“If **people** want to follow me, **they** must deny **themselves**, take up **their** cross, and follow me.”

(Go back to: [Deuteronomy 15:12](#))



unfoldingWord® Translation Words

Version 28

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: [Deuteronomy 19 General Notes](#))

bless, blessed, blessing

Definition:

To “bless” someone or something means to cause good and beneficial things to happen to the person or thing that is being blessed.

- Blessing someone also means expressing a desire for positive and beneficial things to happen to that person.
- In Bible times, a father would often pronounce a formal blessing on his children.
- When people “bless” God or express a desire that God be blessed, this means they are praising him.
- The term “bless” is sometimes used for consecrating food before it is eaten, or for thanking and praising God for the food.

Translation Suggestions:

- To “bless” could also be translated as to “provide abundantly for” or to “be very kind and favorable toward.”
- “God has brought great blessing to” could be translated as “God has given many good things to” or “God has provided abundantly for” or “God has caused many good things to happen to”.
- “He is blessed” could be translated as “he will greatly benefit” or “he will experience good things” or “God will cause him to flourish.”
- “Blessed is the person who” could be translated as “How good it is for the person who.”
- Expressions like “blessed be the Lord” could be translated as “May the Lord be praised” or “Praise the Lord” or “I praise the Lord.”
- In the context of blessing food, this could be translated as “thanked God for the food” or “praised God for giving them food” or “consecrated the food by praising God for it.”

(See also: praise)

Bible References:

- 1 Corinthians 10:16
- Acts 13:34
- Ephesians 1:3
- Genesis 14:20
- Isaiah 44:3
- James 1:25
- Luke 6:20
- Matthew 26:26
- Nehemiah 9:5
- Romans 4:9

Examples from the Bible stories:

- **1:7** God saw that it was good and he **blessed** them.
- **1:15** God made Adam and Eve in his own image. He **blessed** them and told them, “Have many children and grandchildren and fill the earth.”
- **1:16** So God rested from all he had been doing. He **blessed** the seventh day and made it holy, because on this day he rested from his work.
- **4:4** “I will make your name great. I will **bless** those who **bless** you and curse those who curse you. All families on earth will be **blessed** because of you.”

- **4:7** Melchizedek **blessed** Abram and said, "May God Most High who owns heaven and earth **bless** Abram."
- **7:3** Isaac wanted to give his **blessing** to Esau.
- **8:5** Even in prison, Joseph remained faithful to God, and God **blessed** him.

Word Data:

- Strong's: H0833, H0835, H1288, H1289, H1293, G17570, G21270, G21280, G21290, G31060, G31070, G31080, G60500

(Go back to: [Deuteronomy 6 General Notes](#); [Notes](#); [Notes](#); [Notes](#); [Notes](#))

chosen, choose, chosen people, Chosen One, elect

Definition:

The term “the elect” literally means “chosen ones” or “chosen people” and refers to those whom God has appointed or selected to be his people. “Chosen One” or “Chosen One of God” is a title that refers to Jesus, who is the chosen Messiah.

- The term “choose” means to select something or someone or to decide something. It is often used to refer to God appointing people to belong to him and to serve him.
- To be “chosen” means to be “selected” or “appointed” to be or do something.
- God chose people to be holy, to be set apart by him for the purpose of bearing good spiritual fruit. That is why they are called “the chosen (ones)” or “the elect.”
- The term “chosen one” is sometimes used in the Bible to refer to certain people such as Moses and King David whom God had appointed as leaders over his people. It is also used to refer to the nation of Israel as God’s chosen people.
- The phrase “the elect” is an older term that literally means “the chosen ones” or “the chosen people.” This phrase in the original language is plural when referring to believers in Christ.
- In older English Bible versions, the term “elect” is used in both the Old and New Testaments to translate the word for “chosen one(s).” More modern versions use “elect” only in the New Testament, to refer to people who have been saved by God through faith in Jesus. Elsewhere in the Bible text, they translate this word more literally as “chosen ones.”

Translation Suggestions:

- It is best to translate “elect” with a word or phrase that means “chosen ones” or “chosen people.” This could also be translated as “people whom God chose” or “the ones God appointed to be his people.”
- The phrase “who were chosen” could also be translated as “who were appointed” or “who were selected” or “whom God chose.”
- “I chose you” could be translated as “I appointed you” or “I selected you.”
- In reference to Jesus, “Chosen One” could also be translated as “God’s chosen One” or “God’s specially appointed Messiah” or “the One God appointed (to save people).”

(See also: appoint, [Christ](#))

Bible References:

- 2 John 1:1
- Colossians 3:12
- Ephesians 1:3-4
- Isaiah 65:22-23
- Luke 18:7
- Matthew 24:19-22
- Romans 8:33

Word Data:

- Strong’s: H0970, H0972, H0977, H1262, H1305, H4005, H6901, G01380, G01400, G15860, G15880, G15890, G19510, G37240, G44000, G44010, G47580, G48990, G55000

(Go back to: [Deuteronomy 15 General Notes](#); [Notes](#); [Notes](#))

Christ, Messiah

Facts:

The terms “Messiah” and “Christ” mean “Anointed One” and refer to Jesus, God’s Son.

- Both “Messiah” and “Christ” are used in the New Testament to refer to God’s Son, whom God the Father appointed to rule as king over his people, and to save them from sin and death.
- In the Old Testament, the prophets wrote prophecies about the Messiah hundreds of years before he came to earth.
- Often a word meaning “anointed (one)” is used in the Old Testament to refer to the Messiah who would come.
- Jesus fulfilled many of these prophecies and did many miraculous works that proves he is the Messiah; the rest of these prophecies will be fulfilled when he returns.
- The word “Christ” is often used as a title, as in “the Christ” and “Christ Jesus.”
- “Christ” also came to be used as part of his name, as in “Jesus Christ.”

Translation Suggestions:

- This term could be translated using its meaning, “the Anointed One” or “God’s Anointed Savior.”
- Many languages use a transliterated word that looks or sounds like “Christ” or “Messiah.” (See: [How to Translate Unknowns](#))
- The transliterated word could be followed by the definition of the term as in, “Christ, the Anointed One.”
- Be consistent in how this is translated throughout the Bible so that it is clear that the same term is being referred to.
- Make sure the translations of “Messiah” and “Christ” work well in contexts where both terms occur in the same verse (such as John 1:41).

(See also: [How to Translate Names](#))

(See also: Son of God, David, Jesus, anoint)

Bible References:

- 1 John 5:1-3
- Acts 2:35
- Acts 5:40-42
- John 1:40-42
- John 3:27-28
- John 4:25
- Luke 2:10-12
- Matthew 1:16

Examples from the Bible stories:

- **17:7** The **Messiah** was God’s Chosen One who would save the people of the world from sin.
- **17:8** As it happened, the Israelites would have to wait a long time before the **Messiah** came, almost 1,000 years.
- **21:1** From the very beginning, God planned to send the **Messiah**.
- **21:4** God promised King David that the **Messiah** would be one of David’s own descendants.
- **21:5** The **Messiah** would start the New Covenant.
- **21:6** God’s prophets also said that the **Messiah** would be a prophet, a priest, and a king.

- **21:9** The prophet Isaiah prophesied that the **Messiah** would be born from a virgin.
- **43:7** "But God raised him to life again to fulfill the prophecy which says, 'You will not let your **Holy One** rot in the grave.'"
- **43:9** "But know for certain that God has caused Jesus to become both Lord and **Messiah**!"
- **43:11** Peter answered them, "Every one of you should repent and be baptized in the name of Jesus **Christ** so that God will forgive your sins."
- **46:6** Saul reasoned with the Jews, proving that Jesus was the **Messiah**.

Word Data:

- Strong's: H4899, G33230, G55470

(Go back to: [Deuteronomy 18 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: [Deuteronomy 14 General Notes](#))

covenant

Definition:

In the Bible, the term “covenant” refers to a formal, binding agreement between two parties that one or both parties must fulfill.

- This agreement can be between individuals, between groups of people, or between God and people.
- When people make a covenant with each other, they promise that they will do something, and they must do it.
- Examples of human covenants include marriage covenants, business agreements, and treaties between countries.
- Throughout the Bible, God made several different covenants with his people.
- In some of the covenants, God promised to fulfill his part without conditions. For example, when God established his covenant with mankind promising to never destroy the earth again with a worldwide flood, this promise had no conditions for people to fulfill.
- In other covenants, God promised to fulfill his part only if the people obeyed him and fulfilled their part of the covenant.

The term “new covenant” refers to the commitment or agreement God made with his people through the sacrifice of his Son, Jesus.

- God’s “new covenant” was explained in the part of the Bible called the “New Testament.”
- This new covenant is in contrast to the “old” or “former” covenant that God had made with the Israelites in Old Testament times.
- The new covenant is better than the old one because it is based on the sacrifice of Jesus, which completely atoned for people’s sins forever. The sacrifices made under the old covenant did not do this.
- God writes the new covenant on the hearts of those who become believers in Jesus. This causes them to want to obey God and to begin to live holy lives.
- The new covenant will be completely fulfilled in the end times when God establishes his reign on earth. Everything will once again be very good, as it was when God first created the world.

Translation Suggestions:

- Depending on the context, ways to translate this term could include, “binding agreement” or “formal commitment” or “pledge” or “contract.”
- Some languages may have different words for covenant depending on whether one party or both parties have made a promise they must keep. If the covenant is one-sided, it could be translated as “promise” or “pledge.”
- Make sure the translation of this term does not sound like people proposed the covenant. In all cases of covenants between God and people, it was God who initiated the covenant.
- The term “new covenant” could be translated as “new formal agreement” or “new pact” or “new contract.”
- The word “new” in these expressions has the meaning of “fresh” or “new kind of” or “another.”

(See also: [covenant](#), [promise](#))

Bible References:

- Genesis 9:12
- Genesis 17:7
- Genesis 31:44
- Exodus 34:10-11
- Joshua 24:24-26

- 2 Samuel 23:5
- 2 Kings 18:11-12
- Mark 14:24
- Luke 1:73
- Luke 22:20
- Acts 7:8
- 1 Corinthians 11:25-26
- 2 Corinthians 3:6
- Galatians 3:17-18
- Hebrews 12:24

Examples from the Bible stories:

- **4:9** Then God made a **covenant** with Abram. A **covenant** is an agreement between two parties.
- **5:4** "I will make Ishmael a great nation, too, but my **covenant** will be with Isaac."
- **6:4** After a long time, Abraham died and all of the promises that God had made to him in the **covenant** were passed on to Isaac.
- **7:10** "The **covenant** promises God had promised to Abraham and then to Isaac now passed on to Jacob."
- **13:2** God said to Moses and the people of Israel, "If you will obey my voice and keep my **covenant**, you will be my prized possession, a kingdom of priests, and a holy nation."
- **13:4** Then God gave them the **covenant** and said, "I am Yahweh, your God, who saved you from slavery in Egypt. Do not worship other gods."
- **15:13** Then Joshua reminded the people of their obligation to obey the **covenant** that God had made with the Israelites at Sinai.
- **21:5** Through the prophet Jeremiah, God promised that he would make a **New Covenant**, but not like the covenant God made with Israel at Sinai. In the **New Covenant**, God would write his law on the people's hearts, the people would know God personally, they would be his people, and God would forgive their sins. The Messiah would start the **New Covenant**.
- **21:14** Through the Messiah's death and resurrection, God would accomplish his plan to save sinners and start the **New Covenant**.
- **38:5** Then Jesus took a cup and said, "Drink this. It is my blood of the **New Covenant** that is poured out for the forgiveness of sins. Do this to remember me every time you drink it."
- **48:11** But God has now made a **New Covenant** that is available to everyone. Because of this **New Covenant**, anyone from any people group can become part of God's people by believing in Jesus.

Word Data:

- Strong's: H1285, H2319, H3772, G08020, G12420, G49340

(Go back to: [Introduction to Deuteronomy](#); [Deuteronomy 2 General Notes](#); [Notes](#); [Notes](#); [Notes](#); [Notes](#); [Notes](#))

covenant faithfulness, covenant loyalty, covenant love

Definition:

In biblical times, the term translated as “covenant faithfulness” was used to describe the kind of faithfulness, loyalty, kindness, and love that was both expected and demonstrated between people who were closely related to one another, either by marriage or by blood. This same term is used often in the Bible to describe the way God relates to his people, especially his commitment to fulfill the promises that he made to them.

- The way this term is translated can depend on how each of the individual terms “covenant” and “faithfulness” are translated.
- Other ways to translate this term might include: “faithful love;” “loyal, committed love;” or “loving dependability.”

(See also: [covenant](#), [faithful](#), grace, Israel, people of God, [promise](#))

Bible References:

- Ezra 3:11
- Numbers 14:18

Word Data:

- Strong’s: H2617

(Go back to: [Deuteronomy 2 General 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:** [Deuteronomy 29 General Notes](#))

faithful, faithfulness, trustworthy

Definition:

To be “faithful” to God means to consistently live according to God’s teachings. It means to be loyal to him by obeying him. The state or condition of being faithful is “faithfulness.”

- A person who is faithful can be trusted to always keep his promises and to always fulfill his responsibilities to other people.
- A faithful person perseveres in doing a task, even when it is long and difficult.
- Faithfulness to God is the consistent practice of doing what God wants us to do.

Translation Suggestions:

- In many contexts, “faithful” can be translated as “loyal” or “dedicated” or “dependable.”
- In other contexts, “faithful” can be translated by a word or phrase that means “continuing to believe” or “persevering in believing and obeying God.”
- Ways that “faithfulness” could be translated could include “persevering in believing” or “loyalty” or “trustworthiness” or “believing and obeying God.”

(See also: believe, faith, believe)

Bible References:

- Genesis 24:49
- Leviticus 26:40
- Numbers 12:7
- Joshua 2:14
- Judges 2:16-17
- 1 Samuel 2:9
- Psalm 12:1
- Proverbs 11:12-13
- Isaiah 1:26
- Jeremiah 9:7-9
- Hosea 5:7
- Luke 12:46
- Luke 16:10
- Colossians 1:7
- 1 Thessalonians 5:24
- 3 John 1:5

Examples from the Bible stories:

- **8:5** Even in prison, Joseph remained **faithful** to God, and God blessed him.
- **14:12** Even so, God was still **faithful** to His promises to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob.
- **15:13** The people promised to remain **faithful** to God and follow his laws.
- **17:9** David ruled with justice and **faithfulness** for many years, and God blessed him. However, toward the end of his life he sinned terribly against God.
- **35:12** “The older son said to his father, ‘All these years I have worked **faithfully** for you!’”
- **49:17** But God is **faithful** and says that if you confess your sins, he will forgive you.
- **50:4** “If you remain **faithful** to me to the end, then God will save you.”

Word Data:

- Strong's: H0529, H0530, H0539, H0540, H0571, H0898, H2181, H4603, H4604, H4820, G05690, G05710, G41030

(Go back to: [Deuteronomy 1 General Notes](#); [Notes](#); [Notes](#))

god, false god, goddess, idol, idolater, idolatrous, idolatry

Definition:

A false god is something that people worship instead of the one true God. The term “goddess” refers specifically to a female false god.

- These false gods or goddesses do not exist. Yahweh is the only God.
- People sometimes make objects into idols to worship as symbols of their false gods.
- In the Bible, God’s people frequently turned away from obeying him in order to worship false gods.
- Demons often deceive people into believing that the false gods and idols they worship have power.
- Baal, Dagon, and Molech were three of the many false gods that were worshiped by people in Bible times.
- Asherah and Artemis (Diana) were two of the goddesses that ancient peoples worshiped.

An idol is an object that people make so they can worship it. Something is described as “idolatrous” if it involves giving honor to something other than the one true God.

- People make idols to represent the false gods that they worship.
- These false gods do not exist; there is no God besides Yahweh.
- Sometimes demons work through an idol to make it seem like it has power, even though it does not.
- Idols are often made of valuable materials like gold, silver, bronze, or expensive wood.
- An “idolatrous kingdom” means a “kingdom of people who worship idols” or a “kingdom of people who worship earthly things.”
- The term “idolatrous figure” is another word for a “carved image” or an “idol.”

Translation Suggestions:

- There may already be a word for “god” or “false god” in the language or in a nearby language.
- The term “idol” could be used to refer to false gods.
- In English, a lower case “g” is used to refer to false gods, and upper case “G” is used to refer to the one true God. Other languages also do that.
- Another option would be to use a completely different word to refer to the false gods.
- Some languages may add a word to specify whether the false god is described as male or female.

(See also: God, Asherah, Baal, Molech, demon, image, kingdom, worship)

Bible References:

- Genesis 35:2
- Exodus 32:1
- Psalms 31:6
- Psalms 81:8-10
- Isaiah 44:20
- Acts 7:41
- Acts 7:43
- Acts 15:20
- Acts 19:27
- Romans 2:22
- Galatians 4:8-9
- Galatians 5:19-21
- Colossians 3:5
- 1 Thessalonians 1:9

Examples from the Bible stories:

- **10:2** Through these plagues, God showed Pharaoh that he is more powerful than Pharaoh and all of Egypt's **gods**.
- **13:4** Then God gave them the covenant and said, "I am Yahweh, your God, who saved you from slavery in Egypt. Do not worship other **gods**."
- **14:2** They (Canaanites) worshiped false **gods** and did many evil things.
- **16:1** The Israelites began to worship the Canaanite **gods** instead of Yahweh, the true God.
- **18:13** But most of Judah's kings were evil, corrupt, and they worshiped idols. Some of the kings even sacrificed their children to false **gods**.

Word Data:

- Strong's: H0205, H0367, H0410, H0426, H0430, H0457, H1322, H1544, H1892, H2553, H3649, H4656, H4906, H5236, H5566, H6089, H6090, H6091, H6456, H6459, H6673, H6736, H6754, H7723, H8163, H8251, H8267, H8441, H8655, G14930, G14940, G14950, G14960, G14970, G22990, G27120

(Go back to: [Deuteronomy 12 General Notes](#); [Notes](#))

holy, holiness, unholy, sacred

Definition:

The terms “holy” and “holiness” refer to the character of God that is totally set apart and separated from everything that is sinful and imperfect.

- Only God is absolutely holy. He makes people and things holy.
- A person who is holy belongs to God and has been set apart for the purpose of serving God and bringing him glory.
- An object that God has declared to be holy is one that he has set apart for his glory and use, such as an altar that is for the purpose of offering sacrifices to him.
- People cannot approach him unless he allows them to, because he is holy and they are merely human beings, sinful and imperfect.
- In the Old Testament, God set apart the priests as holy for special service to him. They had to be ceremonially cleansed from sin in order to approach God.
- God also set apart as holy certain places and things that belonged to him or in which he revealed himself, such as his temple.

Literally, the term “unholy” means “not holy.” It describes someone or something that does not honor God.

- This word is used to describe someone who dishonors God by rebelling against him.
- A thing that is called “unholy” could be described as being common, profane or unclean. It does not belong to God.

The term “sacred” describes something that relates to worshiping God or to the pagan worship of false gods.

- In the Old Testament, the term “sacred” was oftentimes used to describe the stone pillars and other objects used in the worship of false gods. This could also be translated as “religious.”
- “Sacred songs” and “sacred music” refer to music that was sung or played for God’s glory. This could be translated as “music for worshiping Yahweh” or “songs that praise God.”
- The phrase “sacred duties” referred to the “religious duties” or “rituals” that a priest performed to lead people in worshiping God. It could also refer to the rituals performed by a pagan priest to worship a false god.

Translation Suggestions:

- Ways to translate “holy” might include “set apart for God” or “belonging to God” or “completely pure” or “perfectly sinless” or “separated from sin.”
- To “make holy” is often translated as “sanctify” in English. It could also be translated as “set apart (someone) for God’s glory.”
- Ways to translate “unholy” could include “not holy” or “not belonging to God” or “not honoring to God” or “not godly.”
- In some contexts, “unholy” could be translated as “unclean.”

(See also: Holy Spirit, consecrate, sanctify, set apart)

Bible References:

- Genesis 28:22
- 2 Kings 3:2
- Lamentations 4:1
- Ezekiel 20:18-20
- Matthew 7:6

- Mark 8:38
- Acts 7:33
- Acts 11:8
- Romans 1:2
- 2 Corinthians 12:3-5
- Colossians 1:22
- 1 Thessalonians 3:13
- 1 Thessalonians 4:7
- 2 Timothy 3:15

Examples from the Bible stories:

- **1:16** He (God) blessed the seventh day and made it **holy**, because on this day he rested from his work.
- **9:12** "You are standing on **holy** ground."
- **13:1** "If you will obey me and keep my covenant, you will be my prized possession, a kingdom of priests, and a **holy** nation."
- **13:5** "Always be sure to keep the Sabbath day **holy**."
- **22:5** "So the baby will be **holy**, the Son of God."
- **50:2** As we wait for Jesus to return, God wants us to live in a way that is **holy** and that honors him.

Word Data:

- Strong's: H0430, H2455, H2623, H4676, H4720, H6918, H6922, H6942, H6944, H6948, G00370, G00380, G00400, G00400, G00410, G00420, G04620, G18590, G21500, G24120, G24130, G28390, G37410, G37420

(Go back to: [Deuteronomy 20 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: [Deuteronomy 18 General Notes](#))

judge, judgment

Definition:

The terms “judge” and “judgment” often refer to making a decision about whether or not something is good, wise, or right. However, these terms can also refer to actions performed by a person as the result of a decision, usually in the context of deciding that something is bad, wrong, or evil.

- The terms “judge” and “judgment” can also mean “to cause harm to” (usually because God has decided a person or nation’s actions are wicked).
- The “judgment of God” often refers to his decision to condemn something or someone as sinful.
- God’s judgment usually includes punishing people for their sin.
- The term “judge” can also mean “condemn.” God instructs his people not to judge each other in this way.
- Another meaning is “arbitrate between” or “judge between,” as in deciding which person is right in a dispute between them.
- In some contexts, God’s “judgments” are what he has decided is right and just. They are similar to his decrees, laws, or precepts.
- “Judgment” can refer to wise decision-making ability. A person who lacks “judgment” does not have the wisdom to make wise decisions.

Translation Suggestions:

- Depending on the context, ways to translate to “judge” could include to “decide” or to “condemn” or to “punish” or to “decree.”
- The term “judgment” could be translated as “punishment” or “decision” or “verdict” or “decree” or “condemnation.”
- In some contexts, the phrase “in the judgment” could also be translated as “on judgment day” or “during the time when God judges people.”

(See also: decree, judge, judgment day, [just](#), law, [law](#))

Bible References:

- 1 John 4:17
- 1 Kings 3:9
- Acts 10:42-43
- Isaiah 3:14
- James 2:4
- Luke 6:37
- Micah 3:9-11
- Psalm 54:1

Examples from the Bible stories:

- **19:16** The prophets warned the people that if they did not stop doing evil and start obeying God, then God would **judge** them as guilty, and he would punish them.
- **21:8** A king is someone who rules over a kingdom and **judges** the people. The Messiah would come would be the perfect king who would sit on the throne of his ancestor David. He would reign over the whole world forever, and who would always **judge** honestly and make the right decisions.
- **39:4** The high priest tore his clothes in anger and shouted to the other religious leaders, “We do not need any more witnesses! You have heard him say that he is the Son of God. What is your **judgment**?”

- **50:14** But God will **judge** everyone who does not believe in Jesus. He will throw them into hell, where they will weep and grind their teeth in anguish forever.

Word Data:

- Strong's: H0148, H0430, H1777, H1778, H1779, H1780, H1781, H1782, H2940, H4055, H4941, H6414, H6415, H6416, H6417, H6419, H6485, H8196, H8199, H8201, G01440, G03500, G09680, G11060, G12520, G13410, G13450, G13480, G13490, G29170, G29190, G29200, G29220, G29230, G42320

(Go back to: [Deuteronomy 1 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: [Deuteronomy 15 General Notes](#); [Notes](#); [Notes](#); [Notes](#); [Notes](#); [Notes](#); [Notes](#))

law, law of Moses, law of Yahweh, law of God

Definition:

Most simply, the term “law” refers to a rule or instruction that should be followed. In the Bible, the term “law” is often used generally to refer to anything and everything God wants his people to obey and do. The specific term “law of Moses” refers to the commandments and instructions that God gave Moses for the Israelites to obey.

- Depending on the context, the “law” can refer to:
 - the Ten Commandments that God wrote on stone tablets for the Israelites
 - all the laws given to Moses
 - the first five books of the Old Testament
 - the entire Old Testament (also referred to as “scriptures” in the New Testament).
 - all of God’s instructions and will
- The phrase “the Law and the Prophets” is used in the New Testament to refer to the Hebrew scriptures (or “Old Testament”)

Translation Suggestions:

- These terms could be translated using the plural, “laws,” since they refer to many instructions.
- The term “law of Moses” could be translated as “the laws that God told Moses to give to the Israelites.”
- Depending on the context, “the law of Moses” could also be translated as “the law that God told to Moses” or “God’s laws that Moses wrote down” or “the laws that God told Moses to give to the Israelites.”
- Ways to translate “the law” or “law of God” or “God’s laws” could include “laws from God” or “God’s commands” or “laws that God gave” or “everything that God commands” or “all of God’s instructions.”
- The phrase “law of Yahweh” could also be translated as “Yahweh’s laws” or “laws that Yahweh said to obey” or “laws from Yahweh” or “things Yahweh commanded.”

(See also: instruct, Moses, Ten Commandments, lawful, Yahweh)

Bible References:

- Acts 15:6
- Daniel 9:13
- Exodus 28:42-43
- Ezra 7:25-26
- Galatians 2:15
- Luke 24:44
- Matthew 5:18
- Nehemiah 10:29
- Romans 3:20

Examples from the Bible stories:

- **13:7** God also gave many other **laws** and rules to follow. If the people obeyed these **laws**, God promised that he would bless and protect them. If they disobeyed them, God would punish them.
- **13:9** Anyone who disobeyed **God’s law** could bring an animal to the altar in front of the Tent of Meeting as a sacrifice to God.
- **15:13** Then Joshua reminded the people of their obligation to obey the covenant that God had made with the Israelites at Sinai. The people promised to remain faithful to God and follow **his laws**.
- **16:1** After Joshua died, the Israelites disobeyed God and did not drive out the rest of the Canaanites or obey **God’s laws**.

- **21:5** In the New Covenant, God would write **his law** on the people's hearts, the people would know God personally, they would be his people, and God would forgive their sins.
- **27:1** Jesus answered, "What is written in **God's law**?"
- **28:1** Jesus said to him, "Why do you call me 'good?' There is only one who is good, and that is God. But if you want to have eternal life, obey **God's laws**."

Word Data:

- Strong's: H0430, H1881, H1882, H2706, H2710, H3068, H4687, H4872, H4941, H8451, G23160, G35510, G35650

(Go back to: [Deuteronomy 4 General Notes](#); [Notes](#); [Notes](#); [Notes](#); [Notes](#); [Notes](#); [Notes](#))

mercy, merciful

Definition:

The terms “mercy” and “merciful” refer to helping people who are in need, especially when they are in a lowly or humbled condition.

- The term “mercy” can also include the meaning of not punishing people for something they have done wrong.
- A powerful person such as a king is described as “merciful” when he treats people kindly instead of harming them.
- Being merciful also means to forgive someone who has done something wrong against us.
- We show mercy when we help people who are in great need.
- God is merciful to us, and he wants us to be merciful to others.

Translation Suggestions:

- Depending on the context, “mercy” could be translated as “kindness” or “compassion” or “pity.”
- The term “merciful” could be translated as “showing pity” or “being kind to” or “forgiving.”
- To “show mercy to” or “have mercy on” could be translated as “treat kindly” or “be compassionate toward.”

(See also: compassion, forgive)

Bible References:

- 1 Peter 1:3-5
- 1 Timothy 1:13
- Daniel 9:17
- Exodus 34:6
- Genesis 19:16
- Hebrews 10:28-29
- James 2:13
- Luke 6:35-36
- Matthew 9:27
- Philippians 2:25-27
- Psalms 41:4-6
- Romans 12:1

Examples from the Bible stories:

- **19:16** They (the prophets) all told the people to stop worshiping idols and to start showing justice and **mercy** to others.
- **19:17** He (Jeremiah) sank down into the mud that was in the bottom of the well, but then the king had **mercy** on him and ordered his servants to pull Jeremiah out of the well before he died.
- **20:12** The Persian Empire was strong but **merciful** to the people it conquered.
- **27:11** Then Jesus asked the law expert, “What do you think? Which one of the three men was a neighbor to the man who was robbed and beaten?” He replied, “The one who was **merciful** to him.”
- **32:11** But Jesus said to him, “No, I want you to go home and tell your friends and family about everything that God has done for you and how he has had **mercy** on you.”
- **34:9** “But the tax collector stood far away from the religious ruler, did not even look up to heaven. Instead, he pounded on his chest and prayed, ‘God, please be **merciful** to me because I am a sinner.’”

Word Data:

- Strong's: H2551, H2603, H2604, H2616, H2617, H2623, H3722, H3727, H4627, H4819, H5503, H5504, H5505, H5506, H6014, H7349, H7355, H7356, H7359, G16530, G16550, G16560, G24330, G24360, G36280, G36290, G37410, G46980

(Go back to: [Deuteronomy 7 General 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:** [Deuteronomy 16 General 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: [Deuteronomy 18 General Notes](#); [Notes](#))

promise, promised

Definition:

When used as a verb, the term “promise” refers to the action of a person saying that he will do something in such way that he obligates himself to fulfill what he has said. When used as a noun, the term “promise” refers to the thing that a person obligates himself to do.

- The Bible records many promises that God has made for his people.
- Promises are an important part of formal agreements such as covenants.

Translation Suggestions:

- The term “promise” could be translated as “commitment” or “assurance” or “guarantee.”
- To “promise to do something” could be translated as “assure someone that you will do something” or “commit to doing something.”

(See also: [covenant](#), oath, vow)

Bible References:

- Galatians 3:15-16
- Genesis 25:31-34
- Hebrews 11:9
- James 1:12
- Numbers 30:2

Examples from the Bible stories:

- **3:15** God said, “I **promise** I will never again curse the ground because of the evil things people do, or destroy the world by causing a flood, even though people are sinful from the time they are children.”
- **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: [Deuteronomy 2 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 Deuteronomy](#); [Deuteronomy 1 General Notes](#); [Notes](#); [Notes](#); [Notes](#); [Notes](#); [Notes](#); [Notes](#); [Notes](#); [Notes](#))

prophet, prophecy, prophesy, seer, prophetess

Definition:

A “prophet” is a man who speaks God’s messages to people. A woman who does this is called a “prophetess.”

- Often prophets warned people to turn away from their sins and obey God.
- A “prophecy” is the message that the prophet speaks. To “prophesy” means to speak God’s messages.
- Often the message of a prophecy was about something that would happen in the future.
- Many prophecies in the Old Testament have already been fulfilled.
- In the Bible the collection of books written by prophets are sometimes referred to as “the prophets.”
- For example the phrase, “the law and the prophets” is a way of referring to all the Hebrew scriptures, which are also known as the “Old Testament.”
- An older term for a prophet was “seer” or “someone who sees.”
- Sometimes the term “seer” refers to a false prophet or to someone who practices divination.

Translation Suggestions:

- The term “prophet” could be translated as “God’s spokesman” or “man who speaks for God” or “man who speaks God’s messages.”
- A “seer” could be translated as “person who sees visions” or “man who sees the future from God.”
- The term “prophetess” could be translated as “spokeswoman for God” or “woman who speaks for God” or “woman who speaks God’s messages.”
- Ways to translate “prophecy” could include, “message from God” or “prophet message.”
- The term “prophesy” could be translated as “speak words from God” or “tell God’s message.”
- The figurative expression, “law and the prophets” could also be translated as “the books of the law and of the prophets” or “everything written about God and his people, including God’s laws and what his prophets preached.” (See: [synecdoche](#))
- When referring to a prophet (or seer) of a false god, it may be necessary to translate this as “false prophet (seer)” or “prophet (seer) of a false god” or “prophet of Baal,” for example.

(See also: Baal, divination, [false god](#), false prophet, fulfill, [law](#), vision)

Bible References:

- 1 Thessalonians 2:14-16
- Acts 3:25
- John 1:43-45
- Malachi 4:4-6
- Matthew 1:23
- Matthew 2:18
- Matthew 5:17
- Psalm 51:1

Examples from the Bible stories:

- **12:12** When the Israelites saw that the Egyptians were dead, they trusted in God and believed that Moses was a **prophet** of God.
- **17:13** God was very angry about what David had done, so he sent the **prophet** Nathan to tell David how evil his sin was.
- **19:1** Throughout the history of the Israelites, God sent them **prophets**. The **prophets** heard messages from God and then told the people God’s messages.

- **19:6** All the people of the entire kingdom of Israel, including the 450 **prophets** of Baal, came to Mount Carmel.
- **19:17** Most of the time, the people did not obey God. They often mistreated the **prophets** and sometimes even killed them.
- **21:9** The **prophet** Isaiah **prophesied** that the Messiah would be born from a virgin.
- **43:5** "This fulfills the **prophecy** made by the **prophet** Joel in which God said, 'In the last days, I will pour out my Spirit.'"
- **43:7** "This fulfills the **prophecy** which says, 'You will not let your Holy One rot in the grave.'"
- **48:12** Moses was a great **prophet** who proclaimed the word of God. But Jesus is the greatest **prophet** of all. He is the Word of God.

Word Data:

- Strong's: H2372, H2374, H4853, H5012, H5013, H5016, H5017, H5029, H5030, H5031, H5197, G24950, G43940, G43950, G43960, G43970, G43980, G55780

(Go back to: [Deuteronomy 13 General Notes](#); [Notes](#); [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: [Deuteronomy 13 General Notes](#))

reveal, revealed, revelation

Definition:

The term “reveal” means to cause something to be known. A “revelation” is something that has been made known.

- God has revealed himself through everything he has created and through his communication with people by spoken and written messages.
- God also reveals himself through dreams or visions.
- When Paul said that he received the gospel by “revelation from Jesus Christ,” he means that Jesus himself explained the gospel to him.
- In the New Testament book “Revelation” is about God revealed events that will happen in the end times. He revealed them to the apostle John through visions.

Translation Suggestions:

- Other ways to translate “reveal” could include “make known” or “disclose” or “show clearly.”
- Depending on the context, possible ways to translate “revelation” could be “communication from God” or “things that God has revealed” or “teachings about God.” It is best to keep the meaning of “reveal” in the translation.
- The phrase “where there is no revelation” could be translated as “when God is not revealing himself to people” or “when God is not speaking to people” or “among people whom God has not communicating.”

(See also: good news, good news, dream, vision)

Bible References:

- Daniel 11:1-2
- Ephesians 3:5
- Galatians 1:12
- Lamentations 2:13-14
- Matthew 10:26
- Philippians 3:15
- Revelation 1:1

Word Data:

- Strong’s: H0241, H1540, H1541, G06010, G06020, G55370

(Go back to: [Deuteronomy 34 General Notes](#))

sign, proof, reminder

Definition:

The term “sign” usually refers an object, event, or action that communicates a special meaning.

- In the Bible, signs are sometimes given in connection to a promise or covenant that God has made:
 - The book of Genesis describes the rainbow God created in the sky as a sign (or reminder) to himself that he has promised he will never again destroy all life with a worldwide flood.
 - In the book of Genesis, God commanded the Israelites to circumcise their sons as a sign (or indicator) of the fact that he had made his covenant with them.
- Signs can reveal or point to something:
 - The book of Luke describes that an angel gave shepherds a sign that would help them know which baby in Bethlehem was the newborn Messiah.
 - Judas kissed Jesus as a sign to the religious leaders that Jesus was the one they should arrest.
- Signs can prove that something is true:
 - The book of Exodus describes the plagues that destroyed Egypt as signs that showed who Yahweh was and proved that he was greater than Pharaoh and the Egyptian gods.
 - The book of Acts describes the miracles performed by the prophets and apostles as signs that proved they were speaking God’s message.
 - The book of John describes the miracles that Jesus performed as signs that proved he was truly the Messiah.

Translation Suggestions:

- The frequent expression “signs and wonders” could be translated as “proofs and miracles” or “miraculous works that prove God’s power” or “amazing miracles that show how great God is.”
- Depending on its context, “sign” could also be translated as “signal” or “symbol” or “mark” or “evidence” or “proof” or “gesture.”
- To “make signs with the hands” could also be translated as “motion with the hands” or “gesture with the hands” or “make gestures.”
- In some languages, there may be one word for a “sign” that proves something and a different word for a “sign” that is a miracle.

(See also: miracle, apostle, [Christ](#), [covenant](#), circumcise)

Bible References:

- Acts 2:18-19
- Exodus 4:8-9
- Exodus 31:12-15
- Genesis 1:14
- Genesis 9:12
- John 2:18
- Luke 2:12
- Mark 8:12
- Psalms 89:5-6

Word Data:

- Strong's: H0226, H0852, H2368, H2858, H4150, H4159, H4864, H5251, H5824, H6161, H6725, H6734, H7560, G03640, G08800, G12130, G12290, G17180, G17300, G17320, G17700, G39020, G41020, G45910, G45920, G49530, G49730, G52800

(Go back to: [Deuteronomy 17 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: [Deuteronomy 7 General Notes](#); [Notes](#); [Notes](#); [Notes](#); [Notes](#))

testimony, testify, witness, eyewitness, evidence

Definition:

When a person gives “testimony” he makes a statement about something he knows, claiming that the statement is true. To “testify” is to give “testimony.”

- In some places in the Old Testament, “Testimony” refers specifically to the tablets of stone on which Yahweh wrote his ten commandments. From that use it came to refer to God’s law more broadly.
- Often a person “testifies” about something he has experienced directly.
- A witness who gives “false testimony” does not tell the truth about what happened.
- Sometimes the term “testimony” refers to a prophecy that a prophet has stated.
- In the New Testament, this term was often used to refer to how Jesus’ followers testified about the events of Jesus’ life, death, and resurrection.

The term “witness” refers to a person who has personally experienced something that happened. Usually a witness is also someone who testifies about what they know is true. The term “eyewitness” emphasizes that the person was actually there and saw what happened.

- To “witness” something means to see it happen.
- At a trial, a witness “gives witness” or “bears witness.” This has the same meaning as “testify.”
- Witnesses are expected to tell the truth about what they have seen or heard.
- A witness who does not tell the truth about what happened is called a “false witness.” He is said to “give false witness” or to “bear false witness.”
- The expression “be a witness between” means that something or someone will be evidence that a contract has been made. The witness will make sure each person does what he has promised to do.

Translation Suggestions:

- The term “testify” or “give testimony” could also be translated as “tell the facts” or “tell what was seen or heard” or “tell from personal experience” or “give evidence” or “tell what happened.”
- Ways to translate “testimony” could include, “report of what happened” or “statement of what is true” or “evidence” or “what has been said” or “prophecy.”
- Ways to translate “Testimony” could include, “the stone slabs on which I wrote my commands” or “God’s law” or “God’s commands” or “the record of the agreement between Yahweh and Israel.”
- The phrase, “as a testimony to them” could be translated as to “show them what is true” or to “prove to them what is true.”
- The phrase, “as a testimony against them” could be translated as “which will show them their sin” or “exposing their hypocrisy” or “which will prove that they are wrong.”
- To “give false testimony” could be translated as “say false things about” or “state things that are not true.”
- The term “witness” or “eyewitness” could be translated with a word or phrase that means “person seeing it” or “the one who saw it happen” or “those who saw and heard (those things).”
- Something that is “a witness” could be translated as “guarantee” or “sign of our promise” or “something that testifies that this is true.”
- The phrase “you will be my witnesses” could also be translated as “you will tell other people about me” or “you will teach people the truth that I taught you” or “you will tell people what you have seen me do and heard me teach.”
- To “witness to” could be translated as to “tell what was seen” or to “testify” or to “state what happened.”
- To “witness” something could be translated as to “see something” or to “experience something happen.”

(See also: ark of the covenant, guilt, [judge](#), [prophet](#), true)

Bible References:

- Deuteronomy 31:28
- Micah 6:3
- Matthew 26:60
- Mark 1:44
- John 1:7
- John 3:33
- Acts 4:32-33
- Acts 7:44
- Acts 13:31
- Romans 1:9
- 1 Thessalonians 2:10-12
- 1 Timothy 5:19-20
- 2 Timothy 1:8
- 2 Peter 1:16-18
- 1 John 5:6-8
- 3 John 1:12
- Revelation 12:11

Examples from the Bible stories:

- **39:2** Inside the house, the Jewish leaders put Jesus on trial. They brought many **false witnesses** who lied about him.
- **39:4** The high priest tore his clothes in anger and shouted, "We do not need any more **witnesses**. You have heard him say that he is the Son of God. What is your judgment?"
- **42:8** "It was also written in the scriptures that my disciples will proclaim that everyone should repent in order to receive forgiveness for their sins. They will do this starting in Jerusalem, and then go to all people groups everywhere. You are **witnesses** of these things."
- **43:7** "We are **witnesses** to the fact that God raised Jesus to life again."

Word Data:

- Strong's: H5707, H5713, H5715, H5749, H6030, H8584, G02670, G12630, G19570, G26490, G31400, G31410, G31420, G31430, G31440, G43030, G48280, G49010, G55750, G55760, G55770, G60200

(Go back to: [Deuteronomy 11 General Notes](#); [Notes](#); [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: [Deuteronomy 17 General Notes](#); [Notes](#); [Notes](#))

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