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unfoldingWord® Translation Notes

Job

Introduction to Job

Part 1: General Introduction

Outline of Job

Job is introduced (1:1–2:13)
Job is blameless and wealthy (1:1–5)
Yahweh allows Satan to test Job (1:6–2:10)
Three friends speak to Job (3:1–14:22)
Eliphaz, Bildad, and Zophar
Job replies to each
They speak to him again (15:1–21:34)
Eliphaz, Bildad, and Zophar
Job replies to each
They speak a third time (22:1–31:40)
Eliphaz and Bildad
Job replies to each
Elihu speaks to Job (32:1–37:24)
Yahweh answers Job out of the whirlwind (38:1–41:34)
Job is humbled before Yahweh (42:1–6)
Yahweh rebukes Eliphaz, Bildad, and Zophar (42:7–9)
Yahweh prospers Job again (42:10–17)

What is the Book of Job about?

The Book of Job is about a man named Job who experienced disaster even though he was faithful to Yahweh. Job speaks with three friends and asks why Yahweh lets him experience trials and losses. The book teaches that we cannot understand all of Yahweh's ways, and when we suffer, it is more important to trust Yahweh than it is to understand the reason for the suffering.

How should the title of this book be translated?

The Book of Job is named for Job, the main character in the book. His name is not related to the English word "job." Translators might use the traditional title of "The Book of Job" or just "Job." Or they may choose a clearer title, such as "The Book About Job" or "The Book About a Man Named Job."

Who wrote the Book of Job?

We do not know who wrote the Book of Job. Many people suggest that Moses composed or compiled the book, but it may have been written after the time of Moses.

Part 2: Important Religious and Cultural Concepts

Does sin cause suffering?

When a person sins against Yahweh, it can cause the person to experience suffering. People in the ancient Near East generally believed that a person suffered because they or their ancestors sinned against God. This is what many religions teach. However, the Book of Job shows that a person may suffer even if he or she has not sinned. (See: [sin](#), [sinful](#), [sinner](#), [sinning](#))

Were Eliphaz, Bildad, and Zophar really Job's friends?

Job 2:11 refers to Eliphaz, Bildad, and Zophar as the friends of Job. But they did not comfort Job. Instead, they tried to persuade Job to say something about God that Job believed was not true. So we might wonder if it is right to translate the word as "friends." They did care about Job and they wanted to help him. However, what they said did not help Job because they did not understand the truth about God.

When did the events in the Book of Job take place?

We do not know when the events in the Book of Job took place. It seems to be set around the time of Abraham and Isaac in the Book of Genesis. However, some verses are similar to ones in the Books of Proverbs and Isaiah, which are set much later.

Part 3: Important Translation Issues

What style of writing is in the Book of Job?

The writer starts and ends the Book of Job by telling what happened to Job in narrative form. He wrote the other parts in poetry form. In the ancient Near East, writers often used poetry to discuss matters of wisdom.

Is the Book of Job difficult to translate?

The Book of Job has many uncommon words and phrases, making parts of it hard to understand translate. For this reason, translators may decide to translate this book after they have translated other books of the Bible. However, since the writer did not connect Job with a specific time or place in history, the translator may decide to translate this book before other Old Testament books.

Job 1

Job 1 General Notes

Structure and formatting

This chapter introduces a story about a man named Job who lives during a time long before the author.

Special concepts in this chapter

Wealth

Job is very rich. During his time, a man's wealth is measured by the number of animals he owns. (See: [Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information](#))

Feasts

Job is a very godly man and celebrates Yahweh's provision by having feasts. It must be remembered that Job lives prior to the law of Moses, so his religious practices are different than the Hebrew people after Moses. The events of this book occur about the same time as the life of Abraham. Therefore, this book corresponds more with Genesis 12-50 than the rest of the Old Testament. (See: [godly, godliness, ungodly, godless, ungodliness, godlessness](#) and [law, law of Moses, law of Yahweh, law of God](#))

Job's faith

Satan believes that Job's faith is based on Yahweh's blessings. He challenges Yahweh to remove these blessings from Job's life because he thinks that Job will no longer trust in Yahweh if this happens. (See: [faith, bless, blessed, blessing](#) and [trust, trusted, trustworthy, trustworthiness](#))

Job 1:1

land of Uz

Possible locations are: (1) a place in ancient Edom east of the Jordan River in modern western Jordan or (2) a place east of the Euphrates River in modern Iran. (See: [How to Translate Names](#))

ULT

¹ There was a man in the land of Uz whose name was Job; and Job was blameless and upright, one who feared God and turned from evil.

blameless and upright

The words “blameless” and “upright” share similar meanings and emphasize that Job was a righteous man. Alternate translation: “one who did what was right before God” (See: [Doublet](#))

one who feared God

“one who honored God”

turned from evil

Here evil is spoken of as if it were a place that a person could avoid going to, instead of the doing of evil actions. Alternate translation: “refused to do evil” (See: [Metaphor](#))

Job 1:2

seven sons and three daughters

“7 sons and 3 daughters” (See: [Numbers](#))

ULT

² There were born to him seven sons and three daughters.

Job 1:3

He possessed seven thousand sheep

"He had 7,000 sheep" (See: [Numbers](#))

three thousand camels

"3,000 camels" (See: [Numbers](#))

five hundred pairs of oxen

"500 pairs of oxen" (See: [Numbers](#))

the greatest

"the richest"

all the people of the East

The refers to places that were east of Canaan. Alternate translation: "all the people who live in lands that were east of Canaan" (See: [Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information](#))

ULT

³ He possessed seven thousand sheep, three thousand camels, five hundred pairs of oxen, and five hundred donkeys and a great many servants. He was the man who was the greatest of all the people of the East.

Job 1:4**On each son's assigned day, he would give**

The word "day" perhaps refers to the day when they celebrated the son's birth. But it at least refers to the idea that the sons each took a turn in holding a feast. Alternate translation: "On each son's birthday, the son would give" or "Each son in turn would give"

ULT

⁴ On each son's assigned day, he would give a feast in his house. They would send and call for their three sisters to eat and drink with them.

he would give ... They would send and call for

"he habitually gave ... They habitually sent and called for "

with them

The word "them" refers to the seven sons and the three daughters but does not include Job.

Job 1:5

Job would send ... he would consecrate ... He would rise early in the morning and offer ... he would say

“he habitually gave ... They habitually sent and called for ... Job habitually sent ... he habitually consecrated ... He habitually rose early in the morning and offered ... he habitually said”

When the days of the feast were over

“When the feast was over” or “After the feast”

Job would send for them

“Job habitually sent someone to call them to come to him”

he would consecrate them

Here “consecrate” means to ask God to take away any ritual impurities that Job’s children might have brought upon themselves as they happily feasted together. Job did this by making sacrifices to God for them.

cursed God in their hearts

Their “hearts” represent their thoughts. Often such thoughts could come unintentionally, without the person wanting to think them. Alternate translation: “cursed God in their thoughts” (See: [Metonymy](#))

ULT

⁵ When the days of the feast were over, Job would send for them and he would consecrate them. He would rise early in the morning and offer burnt offerings for each of his children, for he would say, “It may be that my children have sinned and cursed God in their hearts.” Job always did this.

Job 1:6

Then it was the day when

“At the time when” or “One day when.” This is not a specific day but apparently the gathering happened often.

sons of God

This refers to angels, heavenly beings.

to present themselves before Yahweh

“to stand together before Yahweh as he commanded them to do.”

Yahweh

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

ULT

⁶ Then it was the day when the sons of God came to present themselves before Yahweh. Satan also came with them.

Job 1:7**From wandering on the earth, from going back and forth on it**

The phrases “wandering” and “going back and forth” refer to the activity of traveling all over the earth in order to emphasize its completeness. Alternate translation: “From going everywhere on the earth” (See: [Parallelism](#) and [Merism](#))

ULT

⁷ Yahweh said to Satan, “From where have you come?” Then Satan answered Yahweh and said, “From wandering on the earth, from going back and forth on it.”

Job 1:8

Have you considered my servant Job?

“Have you thought about my servant Job?” Here God is beginning to talk with Satan about Job. Alternate translation: “Consider my servant Job” (See: [Rhetorical Question](#))

a blameless and upright man

The words “blameless” and “upright” share similar meanings and emphasize that Job was a righteous man. See how you translated this in [Job 1:1](#). Alternate translation: “one who did what was right before God” (See: [Doublet](#))

one who fears God

“one who honors God.” See how you translated this in [Job 1:1](#).

ULT

⁸ Yahweh said to Satan, “Have you considered my servant Job? For there is no one like him on the earth, a blameless and upright man, one who fears God and turns from evil.”

Job 1:9

Does Job fear God without reason?

“Does Job respect God for no reason?” Satan responds to God by presenting and answering his own question. He says that Job obeys God only because God blesses him. Alternate translation: “Job has a reason for obeying God.” (See: [Rhetorical Question](#))

ULT

⁹ Then Satan answered Yahweh and said, “Does Job fear God without reason?”

Job 1:10

**Have you not put a barrier around him,
around his house, and around all that is his
from every side**

Satan states the facts to support his argument. Alternate translation: "You have protected him, his family and everything he owns" (See: [Rhetorical Question](#))

ULT

¹⁰ Have you not put a barrier around him, around his house, and around all that is his from every side? You have blessed the deeds of his hands, and his cattle have burst forth in the land.

**put a barrier around him, around his house, and around all that is his from
every side**

Just as a barrier such as a wall or a hedge surrounds and protects one's land, God has surrounded Job with his protection. Alternate translation: "protected him and his house and all that is his" (See: [Metaphor](#))

the deeds of his hands

"everything that he does"

his cattle have burst forth in the land

"he has more and more livestock in the land"

Job 1:11

But now stretch out your hand and touch all that he has, and see if he does not curse you to your face

Satan means that if God attacks Job, he will see how Job responds.
Alternate translation: "But now, if you stretch out your hand and touch all that he has, you will see that he will curse you to your face"

ULT

¹¹ But now stretch out your hand and touch all that he has, and see if he does not curse you to your face."

But now stretch out your hand

Here "hand" refers to God's power to act. "But now use your power" (See: [Metonymy](#))

touch all that he has

Here "touch" represents the action of harming or destroying. Alternate translation: "attack all that he has" or "destroy all that he has" (See: [Metonymy](#))

to your face

"in your hearing." This refers to a time when God is paying attention.

Job 1:12

Behold

“Look” or “Pay attention to all that I am about to tell you”

all that he has is in your hand

Here “hand” represents someone’s power to control something.
Alternate translation: “you have power over all that he has” (See: [Metonymy](#))

against him himself

“against his life”

went away from the presence of Yahweh

“departed from Yahweh” or “left Yahweh”

ULT

12 Yahweh said to Satan, “Behold, all that he has is in your hand. Only against him himself do not stretch out your hand.” Then Satan went away from the presence of Yahweh.

Job 1:13

(There are no notes for this verse.)

ULT

13 It came about that on a certain day, his sons and his daughters were eating and drinking wine in their oldest brother's house.

Job 1:14

(There are no notes for this verse.)

ULT

¹⁴ A messenger came to Job and said,
"The oxen were plowing and the
donkeys were feeding beside them."

Job 1:15

the Sabeans

This refers to a people in a region in modern day Yemen. Here it represents a group of raiders or bandits. (See: [How to Translate Names](#) and [Metonymy](#))

fell on them

Here “fell” represents the idea of attacking. Alternate translation: “attacked them” (See: [Metaphor](#))

have struck

Here striking represents killing. (See: [Metonymy](#))

the edge of the sword

Here “edge” represents the part of swords that kill people, that is, either the point or the sharp edge. Also, all the swords of the Sabeans are spoken of as if they were only one sword. (See: [Metaphor](#) and [Generic Noun Phrases](#))

ULT

15 Then the Sabeans fell on them and took them away. As for the servants, they have struck them with the edge of the sword. I alone have escaped to tell you.”

Job 1:16

While he was still speaking

“he” refers to the first messenger

another also came

This refers to another messenger. Alternate translation: “another messenger also came” (See: [Ellipsis](#))

I alone have escaped to tell you

See how you translated this in [Job 1:15](#).

ULT

16 While he was still speaking, another also came and said, “The fire of God fell from the heavens and burned up the sheep and the servants. I alone have escaped to tell you.”

Job 1:17

As for the servants, they have struck them with the edge of the sword. I alone have escaped to tell you

Here “edge” represents the part of swords that kill people, that is, either the point or the sharp edge. Also, all the swords of the Chaldeans are spoken of as if they were only one sword. See how you translated this in [Job 1:15](#). (See: [Metaphor](#) and [Generic Noun Phrases](#))

ULT

¹⁷ While he was still speaking, another also came and said, “The Chaldeans formed three groups, attacked the camels, and have taken them away. As for the servants, they have struck them with the edge of the sword. I alone have escaped to tell you.”

Job 1:18

Your sons and your daughters were eating and drinking wine in their oldest brother's house

See how you translated this in [Job 1:13](#).

ULT

¹⁸ While he was yet speaking, another also came and said, "Your sons and your daughters were eating and drinking wine in their oldest brother's house."

Job 1:19

A strong wind

“A tornado” or “A desert storm”

the four corners of the house

“the structural supports of the house”

It fell on the young people

“The house fell on your sons and daughters”

I alone have escaped to tell you

See how you translated this in [Job 1:15](#).

ULT

19 A strong wind came from the wilderness and struck the four corners of the house. It fell on the young people, and they died. I alone have escaped to tell you.”

Job 1:20

tore his robe, shaved his head

These were ritual mourning actions, symbolizing deep grief. (See: [Symbolic Action](#))

ULT

20 Then Job rose, tore his robe, shaved his head, lay facedown on the ground, and worshiped God.

Job 1:21

I was naked when I came out of my mother's womb, and I will be naked when I will return there

"At my birth, I brought nothing into the world, and at my death I will return to the earth with nothing"

ULT

²¹ He said, "I was naked when I came out of my mother's womb, and I will be naked when I will return there. It is Yahweh who gave, and it is Yahweh who has taken away. May the name of Yahweh be blessed."

Job 1:22

In all this matter

“Regarding all this that happened”

accuse God of wrongdoing

“say that God had done wrong”

ULT

²² In all this matter, Job did not sin, nor did he accuse God of wrongdoing.

Job 2

Job 2 General Notes

Structure and formatting

This chapter repeats the concepts of the previous chapter, but this time it is more severe. After losing his wealth, Job's health is taken from him. His wife also begins to encourage Job to sin by cursing Yahweh. (See: [sin](#), [sinful](#), [sinner](#), [sinning](#) and [curse](#), [cursed](#), [cursing](#))

Job 2:1

General Information:

This verse is almost exactly the same as [Job 1:6](#) and can probably be translated in the same way.

Then it was the day

See how you translated this in [Job 1:6](#).

the day when

This is not a specific day. The gathering happened often. Alternate translation: “at the time when” or “one day when”

sons of God

See how you translated this in [Job 1:6](#).

present themselves before Yahweh

See how you translated this in [Job 1:6](#).

ULT

¹ Then it was the day when the sons of God came to present themselves before Yahweh. Satan also came with them to present himself before Yahweh.

Job 2:2

General Information:

This verse is exactly the same as [Job 1:7](#) and can probably be translated in the same way.

ULT

² Yahweh said to Satan, "From where have you come?" Then Satan answered Yahweh and said, "From wandering on the earth, from going back and forth on it."

Job 2:3

General Information:

This verse is the same as [Job 1:8](#), except for the addition of “He still holds fast to his integrity, although you misled me against him, to destroy him without cause.”

Have you considered my servant Job?

This rhetorical question actually makes a statement. See how you translated this in [Job 1:8](#). Alternate translation: “Consider my servant Job.” (See: [Rhetorical Question](#))

ULT

³ Yahweh said to Satan, “Have you considered my servant Job? For there is no one like him on the earth, a blameless and upright man, one who fears God and turns away from evil. He still holds fast to his integrity, although you misled me against him, to destroy him without cause.”

a blameless and upright man

The words “blameless” and “upright” share similar meanings and emphasize that Job was a righteous man. See how you translated a similar phrase in [Job 1:1](#). Alternate translation: “one who did what was right before God” (See: [Doublet](#))

one who fears God and turns away from evil

See how you translated this in [Job 1:1](#).

still holds fast to his integrity

“remains completely dedicated to doing what is good and right”

misled me against him

“persuaded me without cause to attack him”

to destroy him

Here “destroy” represents “make poor.” Alternate translation: “to make him a poor man”

Job 2:4

Skin for skin, indeed

“Skin” here is a metonym for Job’s life. Alternate translation: “A person will do anything to save his own life, even accept the loss of possessions and loved ones” (See: [Metonymy](#))

ULT

⁴ Satan answered Yahweh and said,
“Skin for skin, indeed; a man will give all
he has for his life.”

Job 2:5

But stretch out your hand now and touch his bones and his flesh, and see if he does not curse you to your face

Satan means that if God attacks Job, he will see how Job responds.
Alternate translation: "But now, if you stretch out your hand and touch his bones and his flesh, you will see that he will curse you to your face"

ULT

⁵ But stretch out your hand now and touch his bones and his flesh, and see if he does not curse you to your face."

stretch out your hand

Here "hand" refers to God's power to act. "But now use your power." See how you translated this in [Job 1:11](#). (See: [Metonymy](#))

touch

Here "touch" represents the action of harming. Alternate translation: "attack" (See: [Metonymy](#))

his bones and his flesh

This expression represents Job's body. (See: [Synecdoche](#))

curse you to your face

See how you translated this in [Job 1:11](#).

to your face

This refers to a time when God is paying attention. Alternate translation: "in your hearing" (See: [Metaphor](#))

Job 2:6

(There are no notes for this verse.)

ULT

⁶ Yahweh said to Satan, “See, he is in your hand; it is only his life that you must spare.”

Job 2:7**Then Satan went away from the presence of Yahweh**

See how you translated this in [Job 1:12](#).

He struck Job with painful boils

“He caused Job to suffer greatly with painful boils”

painful boils

large, itching and painful skin infections

ULT

⁷ Then Satan went away from the presence of Yahweh. He struck Job with painful boils from the sole of his feet to his head.

Job 2:8**a piece of broken pottery to scrape himself**

The scraping scratches the skin to lessen the itch.

sat down in the middle of ashes

This probably refers to a place where trash and garbage were dumped and perhaps burned. Sitting in such a place was a sign of deep mourning. Alternate translation: “sat on the trash heap” (See: [Euphemism](#) and [Symbolic Action](#))

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⁸ Job took a piece of broken pottery to scrape himself with, and he sat down in the middle of ashes.

Job 2:9

Do you still hold fast to your integrity?

This rhetorical question represents a statement. Alternate translation: "You should not still be holding fast to your integrity." (See: [Rhetorical Question](#))

Curse God

"Reject God"

ULT

⁹ Then his wife said to him, "Do you still hold fast to your integrity? Curse God and die."

Job 2:10

You talk as a foolish woman

“You talk the way a stupid woman talks”

Should we receive the good from God and not receive the bad?

This rhetorical question represents a statement. Alternate translation: “We should certainly receive the bad from God as well as the good.” (See: [Rhetorical Question](#))

receive the good

“benefit from all the good things”

the good

This represents all the good things that God gives us. (See: [Generic Noun Phrases](#))

receive the bad

“suffer all the bad things without complaining”

the bad

This represents all the bad things that God makes or allows us to experience. (See: [Generic Noun Phrases](#))

sin with his lips

Here “lips” represents the act of speaking. Alternate translation: “sin by speaking against God” (See: [Metonymy](#))

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¹⁰ But he said to her, “You talk as a foolish woman talks. Should we receive the good from God and not receive the bad?” In all this matter, Job did not sin with his lips.

Job 2:11

Eliphaz the Temanite, Bildad the Shuhite, and Zophar the Naamathite

Eliphaz, Bildad, and Zophar are men's names. Teman was a city in Edom. Shuhites are the decedents of Abraham and Keturah. Naamah was a city in Canaan. (See: [How to Translate Names](#))

set a time

"agreed on a time"

to mourn with him and to comfort him

Here the words "mourn with" and "comfort" share similar meanings. The friends try to comfort Job by mourning with him. Alternate translation: "to grieve with Job in order to help ease his suffering" (See: [Doublet](#))

ULT

¹¹ Now when Job's three friends heard of all this evil that had come on him, each of them came from his own place: Eliphaz the Temanite, Bildad the Shuhite, and Zophar the Naamathite. They set a time to come to mourn with him and to comfort him.

Job 2:12

they lifted up their eyes

This is an idiom that means “they looked intently” or “they looked carefully.” (See: [Idiom](#))

they did not recognize him

This probably means that Job’s visitors did not recognize him at first, when they saw him at a distance. Job looked very different than usual because of his grief and because of the sores covering his body. Alternate translation: “they barely recognized him”

ULT

12 When they lifted up their eyes at a distance, they did not recognize him. They raised their voices and wept; each tore his robe and threw dust into the air and upon his own head.

They raised their voices and wept

Here “raised their voices” is an idiom that means they became loud. Alternate translation: “They wept out loud” or “They wept loudly” (See: [Idiom](#))

tore his robe

This was a sign of mourning. (See: [Symbolic Action](#))

threw dust into the air and upon his own head

These were signs of mourning. (See: [Symbolic Action](#))

Job 2:13

(There are no notes for this verse.)

ULT

13 Then they sat with him on the ground for seven days and seven nights. No one spoke a word to him, for they saw that his grief was very great.

Job 3

Job 3 General Notes

Structure and formatting

The ULT sets the lines of this chapter farther to the right on the page than the rest of the text because it is a poem.

Important figures of speech in this chapter

Rhetorical questions

Job uses several rhetorical questions in this chapter. The purpose of these rhetorical questions is to show Job's earnest desire. (See: [Rhetorical Question](#))

Job 3:1

opened his mouth

This idiom means he began to speak. (See: [Idiom](#))

ULT

¹ After this, Job opened his mouth and cursed the day he was born.

Job 3:2

(There are no notes for this verse.)

ULT

² He said,

Job 3:3

May the day on which I was born perish, the night

Job speaks of that day and night as if they were people. Alternate translation: "I wish that I had never been born" (See: [Personification](#))

ULT

³ "May the day on which I was born perish, the night that said, 'A boy has been conceived.'"

the night that said, 'A boy has been conceived.'

This expression intensifies the statement of Job's grief by going even further back in time from his birth to his conception. Alternate translation: "the night that said, 'A boy has been conceived' perish." (See: [Ellipsis](#))

the night that said

Here the night is spoken of as if it were a person who could speak. The translator may choose, however, to translate it in a less metaphorical way. Alternate translation: "the night about which people said" (See: [Personification](#))

A boy has been conceived

This may be put into active form. Alternate translation: "his mother has conceived a male child"

Job 3:4

General Information:

The expressions in these verses are all wishes that the day of Job's birth would no longer exist. This may imply that the day, although in the past, still existed somehow. The UST translates them as expressions of sadness about what that day was like.

ULT

⁴ May that day be dark; may not God from above call it to mind, neither may the sun shine on it.

May that day be dark ... neither may the sun shine on it

These two clauses describe the darkness of the day of Job's birth, thus repeating Job's regret that he had been born. (See: [Parallelism](#))

May that day be dark

This is a wish for that day to not exist any longer. Alternate translation: "may that day disappear" (See: [Metaphor](#))

Job 3:5

May darkness and the shadow of death claim it for their own

Here darkness and the shadow of death are spoken of as if they were people who could claim something as their own possession. The word “it” refers to the day of Job’s birth. (See: [Personification](#))

ULT

⁵ May darkness and the shadow of death claim it for their own. May a cloud live over it; may everything that makes the day black truly terrify it.

the shadow of death

Here a shadow represents death itself. Alternate translation: “death like a shadow” (See: [Metaphor](#))

May a cloud live over it

Here a cloud is spoken of as if it were a person who could live over the day of Job’s birth. Alternate translation: “May a cloud cover it so no one can see it” (See: [Metaphor](#))

everything that makes the day black

This refers to things that block out the sun’s light and create darkness. Here “black” represents darkness. (See: [Metaphor](#))

terrify it

“terrify that day.” The day is spoken of as if it were a person who could be terrified by the darkness. (See: [Personification](#))

Job 3:6

may thick darkness seize it

This darkness is again spoken of as if it were a person who could grasp and hold the night. Alternate translation: “may thick darkness make it disappear” (See: [Personification](#))

thick darkness

“deep darkness” or “complete darkness”

May it not rejoice

The word “it” refers to the night of Job’s birth or conception. The night of Job’s conception is spoken of as if it were a person who should not rejoice. Alternate translation: “May that night vanish from the calendar” (See: [Personification](#))

may it not come into the number

That night is spoken of as if it were a person who could walk. Alternate translation: “may no one count it in the number” (See: [Personification](#))

ULT

⁶ As for that night, may thick darkness seize it. May it not rejoice among the days of the year; may it not come into the number of the months.

Job 3:7

may that night be barren

The night of Job's birth is spoken of as if it were a woman. Alternate translation: "may no child be born on that night" (See: [Personification](#))

ULT

⁷ See, may that night be barren; may no joyful voice come into it.

may no joyful voice come into it

Here that the night of Job's birth is spoken of as if it were a time when it was still possible for someone to be happy. Alternate translation: "may no one hear the happy cry at the birth of a son" (See: [Metaphor](#))

joyful voice come

Here the voice stands for a person who is happy. Alternate translation: "may no one be happy in it ever again" (See: [Synecdoche](#))

Job 3:8

those who know how to wake up Leviathan

Job is probably referring here to sorcerers and magicians, who he believes might be able to even provoke Leviathan in spreading chaos. Leviathan was an animal well known in Ancient Near Eastern mythology, which was thought to be responsible for all kinds of destruction, disorder, and chaos.

ULT

⁸ May they curse that day, those who know how to wake up Leviathan.

Job 3:9

May the stars of that day's dawn be dark

This refers to the planets that are often visible just before dawn.
Alternate translation: "May the stars that appear before that day's first light be dark"

May that day look for light, but find none

The day of Job's birth is spoken of as if it were a person looking for something. Alternate translation: "May that day hope for light, but have none" (See: [Personification](#))

neither may it see the eyelids of the dawn

The dawn is spoken of as if it had eyelids as a person has. Alternate translation: "nor see the first light of the dawn" (See: [Personification](#))

ULT

⁹ May the stars of that day's dawn be dark. May that day look for light, but find none; neither may it see the eyelids of the dawn,

Job 3:10**because it did not shut up the doors of my mother's womb**

A woman's womb is spoken of as if it were a container with doors. Alternate translation: "because that day did not close my mother's womb" (See: [Metaphor](#))

ULT

¹⁰ because it did not shut up the doors of my mother's womb, and because it did not hide trouble from my eyes.

because it did not hide trouble from my eyes

The day of Job's birth is spoken of here as if it were a person who could hide something. (See: [Personification](#))

from my eyes

Here "eyes" represents the person who sees with them. Alternate translation: "from me" (See: [Metonymy](#))

Job 3:11

General Information:

This passage contains four rhetorical questions, which Job asks in order to really make a series of statements.

Why did I not die when I came out from the womb?

“Why did I not die at birth?” Job poses this question in order to curse the day of his birth and to express his anguish. Alternate translation: “I wish I had died the day I was born” (See: [Rhetorical Question](#))

Why did I not give up my spirit when my mother bore me?

Job means to say that he should not have been born alive. Alternate translation: “I wish I had died when I came out of the womb.” (See: [Rhetorical Question](#))

give up my spirit

This refers to dying. (See: [Idiom](#))

ULT

11 Why did I not die when I came out from the womb? Why did I not give up my spirit when my mother bore me?

Job 3:12

Why did her knees welcome me?

This perhaps refers to the lap of Job's mother. His mother's knees are spoken of as if they were people who could welcome a newborn baby. Alternate translation: "I wish there had been no lap to receive me." (See: [Rhetorical Question](#) and [Personification](#))

ULT

¹² Why did her knees welcome me? Why did her breasts receive me so that I should suck?

Why did her breasts receive me so that I should suck?

Job's mother's breasts are spoken of as if they also were people who could welcome a newborn baby. Alternate translation: "I wish there had been no breasts for me to nurse." (See: [Rhetorical Question](#) and [Personification](#))

Job 3:13

Job begins talking about what would have been true if he had never been born. (See: [Hypothetical Situations](#))

**For now I would have been lying down quietly.
I would have slept and been at rest**

ULT

¹³ For now I would have been lying down quietly. I would have slept and been at rest

Job uses two sentences to think about what it would be like if he had never been born or had died at birth. (See: [Parallelism](#) and [Euphemism](#))

I would have been lying down quietly

Job imagines something that could have happened in the past but which did not happen, as noted above. Alternate translation: "I should have been lying down quietly" (See: [Hypothetical Situations](#))

lying down quietly

"asleep, resting peacefully"

been at rest

Here the word "rest" means to sleep peacefully, but also that Job would not be experiencing the pain that he does. (See: [Idiom](#))

Job 3:14

with kings and counselors of the earth

“with kings and their advisers”

ULT

¹⁴ with kings and counselors of the earth, who built up tombs for themselves that are now in ruins.

Job 3:15

General Information:

Job continues talking about what would have been true if he had never been born.

Or I would have been lying

This describes something that might have happened but did not happen. (See: [Hypothetical Situations](#))

I would have been lying with princes

“I would be resting with princes.” In this phrase, the words “lying” and “resting” are a polite way of saying “no longer alive.” (See: [Euphemism](#))

who once had gold, who had filled their houses with silver

Job uses parallelism to emphasize what he is saying. (See: [Parallelism](#))

ULT

¹⁵ Or I would have been lying with princes who once had gold, who had filled their houses with silver.

Job 3:16

General Information:

Job continues talking about what would have been true if he had never been born. (See: [Hypothetical Situations](#))

I would have been stillborn

“I would have died in my mother’s womb”

like infants that never see the light

“like babies who have never been born”

infants

“babies” or “very small children”

ULT

16 Or perhaps I would have been stillborn, like infants that never see the light.

Job 3:17

General Information:

Job changes his talk from dying to life after death.

There the wicked cease from trouble; there the weary are at rest

Job uses parallelism to emphasize that the lowly will find rest from those causing them hardship. (See: [Parallelism](#))

There the wicked cease from trouble

Job is talking about the place where people go after they stop living. Alternate translation: "In that place, evil people stop causing trouble" (See: [Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information](#))

ULT

17 There the wicked cease from trouble;
there the weary are at rest.

Job 3:18

the voice of the slave driver

Here “voice” is a metonym for the power that the slave drivers have over the slaves. Alternate translation: “They are no longer under the control of the slave drivers” (See: [Metonymy](#))

ULT

18 There the prisoners are at ease together; they do not hear the voice of the slave driver.

Job 3:19

small and great people

This is a figure of speech which means “all people, both poor people and rich people.” (See: [Merism](#))

the servant is free from his master

A servant is no longer obligated to serve his master.

ULT

¹⁹ Both small and great people are there; the servant is free from his master there.

Job 3:20

**Why is light given to him who is in misery?
Why is life given to the one who is bitter in
soul**

Job's two questions mean basically the same thing. He is wondering why those who face hardship continue to live. (See: [Parallelism](#))

ULT

²⁰ Why is light given to him who is in misery? Why is life given to the one who is bitter in soul,

Why is light given to him who is in misery?

Here Job is wondering why people must stay alive and suffer. Alternate translation: "I do not understand why God gives life to a person who is suffering" (See: [Rhetorical Question](#))

light

Here light represents life. (See: [Metaphor](#))

Why is life given to the one who is bitter in soul

"why does God give life to a miserable person?" Alternate translation: "I do not understand why God gives life to a person who is very unhappy" (See: [Rhetorical Question](#))

Job 3:21

to one who longs ... for hidden treasure

This is the end of the question that Job begins asking with the words “Why is life given ... bitter in soul” (verse 20).

to one who longs for death without it coming

Here death is spoken of as if it were an object coming toward someone. Alternate translation: “to a person who no longer wants to be alive, but is still alive” (See: [Metaphor](#))

to one who digs for death more than for hidden treasure

A person hoping to die is spoken of as if he were digging for buried treasure. Alternate translation: “to a person who wants to stop living more than he wants to look for hidden riches” (See: [Metaphor](#))

ULT

²¹ to one who longs for death without it coming; to one who digs for death more than for hidden treasure?

Job 3:22

Why is light given to one who rejoices very much and is glad when he finds the grave

Here Job uses a question to make a statement. Alternate translation: “I do not understand why God allows a person to keep living when the person would be very happy to be buried in the ground” (See: [Rhetorical Question](#))

ULT

²² Why is light given to one who rejoices very much and is glad when he finds the grave?

one who rejoices very much and is glad

The phrase “rejoices very much” means basically the same thing as “is glad.” Together, the two phrases emphasize the intensity of gladness. Alternate translation: “one who is extremely happy” (See: [Doublet](#))

when he finds the grave

This is a polite way of referring to dying. Alternate translation: “when he is dead and can be buried” (See: [Euphemism](#))

the grave

Here the grave represents death. (See: [Metonymy](#))

Job 3:23

Why is light given to a man whose way is hidden, a man whom God has hedged in?

Job asks this question in order to make a statement. Alternate translation: "God should not give life to a man and then take away his future and confine him." (See: [Rhetorical Question](#))

ULT

²³ Why is light given to a man whose way is hidden, a man whom God has hedged in?

Why is light given to a man

Here light represents life. Alternate translation: "Why does God keep a man alive" (See: [Metaphor](#))

whose way is hidden

Here Job speaks of his future, which he does not know in advance, as if God had hidden it from him. (See: [Metaphor](#))

a man whom God has hedged in

Here being in difficulties and dangers is spoken of as if it were being confined within narrow limits. (See: [Metaphor](#))

Job 3:24

For my sighing happens instead of eating; my groaning is poured out like water

Job expresses his anguish in two ways. (See: [Parallelism](#))

my sighing happens instead of eating

“Instead of eating, I mourn”

my groaning is poured out like water

Moral qualities and emotions such as grief are often spoken of as if they were water. (See: [Metaphor](#))

ULT

²⁴ For my sighing happens instead of eating; my groaning is poured out like water.

Job 3:25

the thing that I feared has come on me; what I was afraid of has come to me

These two phrases mean the same thing. Alternate translation: “what I feared most has happened to me” or “my worst fear has come true” (See: [Parallelism](#))

ULT

²⁵ For the thing that I feared has come on me; what I was afraid of has come to me.

Job 3:26

I am not at ease, I am not quiet, and I have no rest

Job expresses his anguish in three separate phrases. Alternate translation: "I am very anxious" or "I am emotionally and physically tormented" (See: [Parallelism](#))

ULT

²⁶ I am not at ease, I am not quiet, and I have no rest; trouble comes instead."

Job 4

Job 4 General Notes

Structure and formatting

The ULT sets the lines of this chapter farther to the right on the page than the rest of the text because it is a poem. This chapter is the advice of Job's friend, Eliphaz.

Special concepts in this chapter

Eliphaz's advice

Eliphaz tells Job to curse Yahweh. The advice Eliphaz gives to Job is bad advice. (See: [curse](#), [cursed](#), [cursing](#))

Important figures of speech in this chapter

Rhetorical questions

Eliphaz uses many different rhetorical questions in this chapter in order to try to convince Job that he is wrong. These questions help to form Eliphaz's argument. (See: [Rhetorical Question](#))

Job 4:1

Eliphaz

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

Temanite

A Temanite belongs to the tribe of Teman. (See: [How to Translate Names](#))

ULT

¹ Then Eliphaz the Temanite answered and said,

Job 4:2

will you be impatient?

Eliphaz asks this question in order to make a statement. Alternate translation: "you will surely be impatient." (See: [Rhetorical Question](#))

will you be impatient?

"will that annoy you?"

But who can stop himself from speaking?

Eliphaz asks this question to say that no one who sees a friend suffering can remain silent. Alternate translation: "No one can restrain himself from speaking (to a friend in such a state as you find yourself)" or "I must speak to you, (seeing that you are in a state of grief)." (See: [Rhetorical Question](#))

ULT

² If anyone tries to speak with you, will you be impatient? But who can stop himself from speaking?

Job 4:3**See, you have instructed many; you have strengthened weak hands**

This verse states a single idea in two different ways. (See: [Parallelism](#))

ULT

³ See, you have instructed many; you have strengthened weak hands.

you have strengthened weak hands

Here “weak hands” represents people who need help. Alternate translation: “you have helped others when they needed help” (See: [Metonymy](#))

Job 4:4

General Information:

The writer uses parallelism in each of these verses to make one idea using two different statements to emphasize: (1) the support that Job has given others in the past, (2) the effect on him of his present troubles, and (3) his piety before God. (See: [Parallelism](#))

ULT

⁴ Your words have supported him who was falling; you have made feeble knees firm.

supported

Someone who has been encouraged is spoken of as if he were kept from falling down. (See: [Metaphor](#))

falling

Here becoming discouraged is spoken of as if it were falling down. (See: [Metaphor](#))

you have made feeble knees firm

Here discouragement is spoken of as if it were a person whose weak knees could not keep him upright. (See: [Metaphor](#))

Job 4:5

But now trouble has come to you

Here trouble is spoken of as if it were an object that could come to a person. Alternate translation: "But now you suffer from disasters" (See: [Metaphor](#))

you are weary

"you are discouraged"

ULT

⁵ But now trouble has come to you, and you are weary; it touches you, and you are troubled.

Job 4:6**your fear**

“the fact that you honor God”

Is not your fear your confidence, and the integrity of your ways your hope?

Eliphaz asks these questions in order to tell Job that it is because of his sin that he is suffering. Alternate translation: “Everyone thinks that you honor God; everyone thinks that you are an honest man. But these things must not be true, because you do not trust God any longer.” (See: [Rhetorical Question](#))

ULT

⁶ Is not your fear your confidence, and the integrity of your ways your hope?

your fear

Eliphaz means Job’s fear of God. Alternate translation: “your fear of God” (See: [Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information](#))

your ways

Here “your ways” represents “your conduct,” “how you behave.” (See: [Metaphor](#))

Job 4:7

Who has ever perished when innocent?

Eliphaz uses this question to prompt Job to search his life for sin (and God's righteous judgment) as the cause of his loss. Alternate translation: "No one has ever perished when innocent." (See: [Rhetorical Question](#))

ULT

⁷ Think about this, please: Who has ever perished when innocent? Or when were the upright people ever cut off?

when were the upright people ever cut off

This question also means to make a statement, and may be put into active form. Alternate translation: "No one has ever cut off an upright person" (See: [Rhetorical Question](#) and [Active or Passive](#))

cut off

Here being cut off represents being destroyed. (See: [Metaphor](#))

Job 4:8**plow iniquity ... sow trouble ... reap**

Here the actions of plowing and sowing represent causing trouble for other people. The action of reaping represents suffering the trouble that one has himself caused. (See: [Metaphor](#))

ULT

⁸ According to what I have seen, those who plow iniquity and sow trouble reap it.

Job 4:9

By the breath of God they perish; by the blast of his anger they are consumed

The writer explains a single idea using two different statements. This is a form of Hebrew poetry used for emphasis, clarity, teaching, or all three. (See: [Parallelism](#))

ULT

⁹ By the breath of God they perish; by the blast of his anger they are consumed.

the breath of God

This may represent the action of God giving a command. (See: [Metaphor](#))

the blast of his anger

This expression suggests the heavy breathing that a person sometimes does through his nose when he is very angry. (See: [Metaphor](#))

breath ... blast

The second builds on the first. They make the same point by using meanings that increase the result. "By the puff of God's mouth they die; the rushing wind of his anger devastates them." (See: [Metaphor](#))

perish ... are consumed

The second phrase builds on the first. They make the same point. "By the puff of God's breath they die, the rushing wind of his anger devastates them." (See: [Active or Passive](#))

they are consumed

Here being consumed or eaten represents being killed. (See: [Metaphor](#))

Job 4:10

General Information:

The writer uses parallelism in these verses, conveying a single idea using different statements to emphasize God's destruction of wicked people. (See: [Parallelism](#))

ULT

10 The roaring of the lion, the voice of the fierce lion, the teeth of the young lions—they are broken.

The roaring of the lion, the voice of the fierce lion, the teeth of the young lions—they are broken.

Here a lion's roar, his voice, and his teeth being broken are used as pictures of the wicked being destroyed. (See: [Metaphor](#))

they are broken

This may be put into active form. Alternate translation: "something breaks them" (See: [Active or Passive](#))

Job 4:11

The old lion perishes for lack of victims; the cubs of the lioness are scattered everywhere

Eliphaz uses the picture of an old lion dying of hunger and of a lion's family being scattered as metaphors for the wicked being destroyed.

ULT

¹¹ The old lion perishes for lack of victims; the cubs of the lioness are scattered everywhere.

the cubs of the lioness are scattered

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "something scatters the cubs of the lioness" (See: [Active or Passive](#))

Job 4:12

Now a certain matter was secretly brought to me ... my ear received a whisper about it

These phrases express the same idea in a different way. They convey the idea that Eliphaz heard a message whispered to him. This repetition is a form of Hebrew poetry used frequently for emphasis, teaching, or clarity. (See: [Parallelism](#))

ULT

¹² Now a certain matter was secretly brought to me, and my ear received a whisper about it.

Job 4:13

visions in the night

“dreams”

when deep sleep falls on people

“when people sleep very deeply”

ULT

13 Then came thoughts from visions in the night, when deep sleep falls on people.

Job 4:14

General Information:

The writer uses parallelism in these verses, conveying a single idea using different statements to emphasize Eliphaz's fear. (See: [Parallelism](#))

fear and trembling came upon me

Here fear and trembling are spoken of as if they were objects that could come to a person. Alternate translation: "I began to be afraid and to tremble" (See: [Metaphor](#))

ULT

14 It was at night when fear and trembling came upon me, and all my bones shook.

Job 4:15

the hair of my flesh stood up

This indicates great fear.

the hair of my flesh

“the hair on my body”

ULT

¹⁵ Then a spirit passed before my face,
and the hair of my flesh stood up.

Job 4:16

General Information:

The writer uses parallelism in verse 17, conveying a single idea using two different statements to emphasize a question about the purity of man before God. (See: [Parallelism](#))

A form was before my eyes

“Something was before my eyes,” “I saw something”

and I heard

“then I heard”

ULT

16 The spirit stood still, but I could not discern its appearance. A form was before my eyes; there was silence, and I heard a voice that said,

Job 4:17

Can a mortal man be more righteous than God?

Eliphaz poses this question so that Job will consider, "Do I regard myself as more righteous than God?" or "Am I justified before God?"

Alternate translation: "A mortal man cannot be more righteous than God." or "A mortal man cannot be righteous before God." (See: [Rhetorical Question](#))

ULT

17 "Can a mortal man be more righteous than God? Can a man be more pure than his Maker?"

Can a man be more pure than his Maker?

This question has the same purpose as the previous question. Alternate translation: "A man cannot be more pure than his Maker." or "A man cannot be pure before his Maker." (See: [Rhetorical Question](#))

his Maker

"his Creator"

Job 4:18

(There are no notes for this verse.)

ULT

¹⁸ See, if God puts no trust in his servants; if he accuses his angels of folly,

Job 4:19**those who live in houses of clay, whose foundation is in the dust**

This is a figurative way of describing human beings, who were created out of the dust of the earth and whose bodies are like houses, which are made of clay and have dirt foundations. (See: [Metaphor](#))

ULT

¹⁹ how much more is this true of those who live in houses of clay, whose foundation is in the dust, who are crushed sooner than a moth?

who are crushed sooner than a moth

Possible meanings for this metaphor are: (1) “who God destroys as easily as he crushes a moth” or (2) “whose lives are as short as the life of a moth.” (See: [Metaphor](#) and [Active or Passive](#))

Job 4:20

General Information:

These verses continue the earlier use of parallelism, here emphasizing in different ways the idea that people die suddenly without having achieved wisdom and without concern from others. (See: [Parallelism](#))

ULT

²⁰ Between morning and evening they are destroyed; they perish forever without anyone noticing them.

Between morning and evening they are destroyed

This refers to the idea of something happening quickly. (See: [Metaphor](#))

they are destroyed

This may also be put into active form. Alternate translation: “they die” (See: [Active or Passive](#))

Job 4:21

Are not their tent cords plucked up among them?

This may be put into active form. Alternate translation: “Have not their enemies plucked up their tent cords from among them?” (See: [Rhetorical Question](#))

their tent cords

Here tent cords represent a tent. Sometimes a person’s home and family are pictured as his tent, which can also represent all his possessions. (See: [Synecdoche](#) and [Metaphor](#))

ULT

²¹ Are not their tent cords plucked up among them? They die; they die without wisdom.

Job 5

Job 5 General Notes

Structure and formatting

The ULT sets the lines of this chapter farther to the right on the page than the rest of the text because it is a poem. This chapter is a continuation of the advice of Job's friend, Eliphaz.

Special concepts in this chapter

Eliphaz's advice

Eliphaz tells Job to curse Yahweh. The advice Eliphaz gives to Job is bad advice. (See: [curse](#), [cursed](#), [cursing](#))

Sickness and sin

In the ancient Near East, it was common to believe that a person's illness was caused by sin. It was seen as the punishment of a god. While Yahweh may punish people because of their sin, not all sicknesses are caused by sin. (See: [believe](#), [believer](#), [belief](#), [unbeliever](#), [unbelief](#) and [sin](#), [sinful](#), [sinner](#), [sinning](#) and [Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information](#))

Important figures of speech in this chapter

Rhetorical questions

Eliphaz uses many different rhetorical questions in this chapter in order to try to convince Job that he is wrong. These questions help to build Eliphaz's argument. (See: [Rhetorical Question](#))

Job 5:1

To which of the holy ones will you turn?

Eliphaz poses this question to make the point that there is no one Job can turn to for help. Alternate translation: “Is there a holy one to whom you may turn?” or “There is no holy one to whom you can turn for help.” (See: [Rhetorical Question](#))

ULT

¹ Call out now; is there anyone who will answer you? To which of the holy ones will you turn?

holy ones

This refers to supernatural beings of some kind, whether angels or other spirits.

Job 5:2

jealousy kills the silly one

“jealousy kills anyone who acts ignorantly and impulsively”

the silly one

any silly person (See: [Generic Noun Phrases](#))

ULT

² For anger kills the foolish man;
jealousy kills the silly one.

Job 5:3

a foolish person

any foolish person (See: [Generic Noun Phrases](#))

a foolish person taking root

Here a person is spoken of as if he were a plant, perhaps becoming more foolish over time. Alternate translation: “a foolish person becoming grounded in foolishness” (See: [Metaphor](#))

his home

This refers to the person’s family and all his property.

ULT

³ I have seen a foolish person taking root, but suddenly I cursed his home.

Job 5:4

General Information:

These verses continue the earlier use of parallelism, here emphasizing in different ways the idea that the children of foolish people are never safe. (See: [Parallelism](#))

ULT

⁴ His children are far from safety; they are crushed in the city gate. There is no one to rescue them.

His children are far from safety

“His” refers to the foolish person or the foolish people in [Job 5:2](#). Alternate translation: “Their children are never safe”

are crushed

Here being crushed represents being oppressed, taken advantage of, at court. This idea may be put into active form. Alternate translation: “someone crushes them” (See: [Metaphor](#) and [Active or Passive](#))

city gate

The city gate, functioning as a court, was the place where disputes were resolved and where judgments were given.

There is no one to rescue them

“There is no one to help the foolish people’s children out of their hardship”

Job 5:5

they even take it from among the thorns

This perhaps refers to parts of a field where the worst crops grow, because of thorn plants present.

The thirsty pant for their wealth

Here greedy people are spoken of as if they were thirsty, and the wealth of the foolish person is spoken of as if it were something that they could drink. (See: [Metaphor](#))

ULT

⁵ The hungry eat up their harvest; they even take it from among the thorns.
The thirsty pant for their wealth.

Job 5:6

**For difficulties do not come out from the soil;
neither does trouble sprout from the ground**

Here difficulties and trouble are spoken of as if they were plants.
(See: [Metaphor](#))

ULT

⁶ For difficulties do not come out from the soil; neither does trouble sprout from the ground.

Job 5:7

mankind is born for trouble, just as sparks fly upward

It is as natural for people, once they are born, to have trouble as it is for sparks to fly up from a fire. (See: [Simile](#))

ULT

⁷ Instead, mankind is born for trouble,
just as sparks fly upward.

Job 5:8

General Information:

In these verses, Eliphaz continues his speech from [Job 4:1](#). The writer continues to use parallelism in each verse, conveying a single idea using two different statements to emphasize that Job needs to plead his case to God who does wonderful things. (See: [Parallelism](#))

ULT

⁸ But as for me, I would turn to God himself; to him I would commit my cause—

Job 5:9

great and unsearchable things, marvelous things without number

“great things that cannot be understood, wonders that cannot be counted”

ULT

⁹ he who does great and unsearchable things, marvelous things without number.

unsearchable things

This refers to things that mankind cannot understand. (See: [Metaphor](#))

great and unsearchable things

Here the writer uses two independent words connected by “and” to emphasize the greatness of God’s actions. Alternate translation: “greatly profound things” (See: [Hendiadys](#))

marvelous things

“wonderful things” or “wonders”

Job 5:10

(There are no notes for this verse.)

ULT

¹⁰ He gives rain on the earth, and sends water on the fields.

Job 5:11

General Information:

The writer continues to use parallelism in each verse, conveying a single idea using two different statements to emphasize how God lifts those who are lowly and debases those who are cunning. (See: [Parallelism](#))

ULT

11 He does this in order to set up on high those who are low; to raise to safety those who mourn.

He does this in order to set up on high those who are low

Humble people in distress are spoken of as if they were in a low position. When God rescues them, they receive honor. When this happens, they are spoken of as being raised up and put into a high position. Alternate translation: "God does this in order to rescue and honor the humble who have been suffering" (See: [Metaphor](#))

Job 5:12

He breaks the plans

Here stopping the plans of crafty people is spoken of as if they were things that could be physically broken. (See: [Metaphor](#))

ULT

12 He breaks the plans of the crafty people, so that their hands cannot achieve success.

Job 5:13

He traps wise people in their own crafty actions

Here making wise people suffer for their own evil actions is spoken of as if it were catching them in traps. Their own actions are spoken of as if they were those traps. (See: [Metaphor](#))

ULT

¹³ He traps wise people in their own crafty actions; the plans of twisted people are hurried to their end.

twisted people

Here being evil in a clever way is spoken of as if it were being twisted. Alternate translation: “those who are cunning” or “those who are devious” or “those who are shrewd” (See: [Metaphor](#))

Job 5:14

General Information:

The writer continues to use parallelism in each verse, conveying a single idea using two different statements to emphasize how God debases those who are cunning and saves those who are poor. (See: [Parallelism](#))

ULT

14 They encounter darkness in the daytime, and grope at noonday as if it were night.

They encounter darkness in the daytime

Here the cunning, wicked people whom God confuses are spoken of as if they unexpectedly are in the dark at noon, when the sun is at its highest position in the sky. They cannot do anything they wish to do, because they cannot see. Alternate translation: “Those who are cunning are in the dark, even at noontime” (See: [Metaphor](#))

grobe

feel around like a blind person

noonday

the middle of the day, when the sun is highest and brightest

Job 5:15

But he saves the poor person from the sword in their mouths

Here the insulting and threatening things that people say are spoken of as if they were a sword in their mouths. Alternate translation: “But he saves the poor person from the threats of the mighty” or “But he saves the poor person when the mighty threaten or insult them” (See: [Metaphor](#))

ULT

¹⁵ But he saves the poor person from the sword in their mouths and the needy person from the hand of mighty people.

Job 5:16

injustice shuts her own mouth

People who say unjust things are spoken of as if they were the injustice itself, who must stop speaking. Alternate translation: "It is as though injustice shut her own mouth" (See: [Personification](#))

ULT

16 So the poor person has hope, and injustice shuts her own mouth.

Job 5:17

General Information:

The writer continues to use parallelism in verses 18 and 19, conveying a single idea using two different statements to emphasize God's acts of chastening and healing. (See: [Parallelism](#))

ULT

17 See, blessed is the man whom God corrects; therefore, do not despise the chastening of the Almighty.

God corrects ... chastening of the Almighty

God is pictured as a parent correcting or instructing a child.

blessed is the man whom God corrects

"God really favors the man whom he corrects"

do not despise

"do not reject" or "do not consider worthless"

chastening

"instruction" or "correction" or "discipline"

Job 5:18

**For he wounds and then binds up; he wounds
and then his hands heal**

“For he wounds but binds up; he crushes but his hands heal”

his hands heal

Here “his hands” represents God. (See: [Synecdoche](#))

ULT

¹⁸ For he wounds and then binds up; he
wounds and then his hands heal.

Job 5:19

He will rescue you out of six troubles; indeed, in seven troubles, no evil will touch you

The use of increasing numbers such as “six” and “seven” represents the idea of many, many times. Alternate translation: “He will rescue you out of trouble over and over again; indeed, time after time, no evil will touch you” (See: [Metaphor](#))

ULT

¹⁹ He will rescue you out of six troubles; indeed, in seven troubles, no evil will touch you.

Job 5:20

General Information:

The shift in pronoun from “he” to “you” which began in [Job 5:19](#) continues through the end of Eliphaz’s speech in [Job 5:27](#).

In famine he will ransom you

Here rescuing is spoken of as if it were ransoming, buying back. Alternate translation: “In famine God will rescue you from danger” (See: [Metaphor](#))

the hands of the sword

Here “hands” probably represents the people who attack with weapons, including swords. Alternate translation: “violent people” or “people who attack you” (See: [Synecdoche](#))

ULT

²⁰ In famine he will ransom you from death, and in war from the hands of the sword.

Job 5:21

of destruction

Here “destruction” refers to the danger of being destroyed by enemies. Alternate translation: “that any enemy will destroy you” (See: [Abstract Nouns](#))

ULT

21 You will be hidden from the scourge of the tongue; and you will not be afraid of destruction when it comes.

Job 5:22

You will laugh at destruction and famine

Here “laugh” represents that the person is not afraid. Alternate translation: “You will not be afraid of any danger of destruction or famine” (See: [Symbolic Language](#))

beasts of the earth

This refers to wild animals. Alternate translation: “wild animals” (See: [Metaphor](#))

ULT

22 You will laugh at destruction and famine, and you will not be afraid of beasts of the earth.

Job 5:23

General Information:

The writer continues to use parallelism in each of these verses, conveying a single idea using two different statements to emphasize security with regard to the natural world, the homestead, and one's descendants. (See: [Parallelism](#))

ULT

²³ For you will have a covenant with the stones in your field, and the beasts of the field will be at peace with you.

you will have a covenant with the stones in your field

Here the stones in farmers' fields are spoken of as if they were people that someone could have a covenant with. Alternate translation: "the stones in your fields will be like people who promise that they will not make any trouble for you" (See: [Metaphor](#))

the beasts of the field

This refers to dangerous wild animals. (See: [Idiom](#))

Job 5:24

You will know that your tent is in safety

Here “tent” represents a person’s family, household, and all his possessions. Alternate translation: “You will know that your family, servants, and everything you own are safe” (See: [Metaphor](#))

you will visit your sheepfold and you will not miss anything

“when you visit where your flock stays at night, you will find all your sheep there”

ULT

24 You will know that your tent is in safety; you will visit your sheepfold and you will not miss anything.

Job 5:25

your seed will be great

Here “seed” represents a person’s descendants. Alternate translation: “your descendants will be many” (See: [Metaphor](#))

your offspring will be like the grass on the ground

Here “offspring” are spoken of as if they were as many as blades of grass, and probably as thriving, too. Alternate translation: “your descendants will be as many and as alive as the grass that grows” (See: [Simile](#))

ULT

25 You will also know that your seed will be great, that your offspring will be like the grass on the ground.

Job 5:26

You will come to your grave at a full age

“You will die at a very old age”

like a stack of grain bundles that goes up at its time

ULT

²⁶ You will come to your grave at a full age, like a stack of grain bundles that goes up at its time.

You may need to make explicit that the grain in this simile is fully ripe but not overly ripe. He would neither die young nor become weak in his old age. (See: [Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information](#) and [Simile](#))

Job 5:27

See, we have examined this matter; it is like this; listen to it, and know it for yourself

The words “we” refers to Job’s friends but not to Job. Alternate translation: “Look, we have thought about this matter. Listen to what I am saying and know that it is true” (See: [Exclusive and Inclusive ‘We’](#))

ULT

²⁷ See, we have examined this matter; it is like this; listen to it, and know it for yourself.”

Job 6

Job 6 General Notes

Structure and formatting

The ULT sets the lines of this chapter farther to the right on the page than the rest of the text because it is a poem. This chapter is Job's response to Eliphaz.

Special concepts in this chapter

Job's righteousness

Despite being upset about his circumstances, and desiring his own death, Job does not curse God. He would rather have God end his life than to curse him. (See: [curse](#), [cursed](#), [cursing](#))

Important figures of speech in this chapter

Metaphors

Job uses many different metaphors in this chapter to express his pain or despair. He also is upset with the advice of his friends, who are supposed to help him during difficult times. (See: [Metaphor](#))

Rhetorical questions

Job uses many different rhetorical questions in this chapter in order to try to convince Eliphaz that he is wrong. These questions help to build Job's response. (See: [Rhetorical Question](#))

Job 6:1

(There are no notes for this verse.)

ULT

¹ Then Job answered and said,

Job 6:2

if only my anguish were weighed; if only all my calamity were laid in the balance

Here the writer uses two different statements to convey a single idea, the burden of Job's suffering. This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "if only I could weigh my anguish and all my calamities in the balance" (See: [Parallelism](#) and [Active or Passive](#))

in the balance

"on a scale"

ULT

² "Oh, if only my anguish were weighed; if only all my calamity were laid in the balance!"

Job 6:3

For now it would be heavier than the sand of the seas

Job compares the burden of his suffering to the weight of wet sand; both can crush a person. Alternate translation: “For my anguish and calamities would be heavier than the sand on the seashore” (See: [Simile](#))

my words were reckless

“I spoke recklessly” or “I spoke rashly”

ULT

³ For now it would be heavier than the sand of the seas. That is why my words were reckless.

Job 6:4

General Information:

The writer continues to use parallelism in each of these verses, conveying a single idea using two different statements to emphasize Job's intense suffering as the grounds for his complaint. (See: [Parallelism](#))

ULT

⁴ For the arrows of the Almighty are in me, my spirit drinks up the poison; the terrors of God have arranged themselves in array against me.

For the arrows of the Almighty are in me

This is a metaphor for Job's suffering. He compares his many troubles to arrows that God has shot his body with. Alternate translation: "It is as though the Almighty has shot arrows into my body" (See: [Metaphor](#))

my spirit drinks up the poison

"my spirit drinks up the arrows' poison." This continues the metaphor of the arrows, by implying that they had tips of poison and that Job feels the pain in his spirit. He speaks of feeling this pain as if his spirit drank the poison. Alternate translation: "I feel the pain of their poison in my inner being" (See: [Metaphor](#))

the terrors of God have arranged themselves in array against me

Job speaks of the terrible things that have happened to him as if they were soldiers that God had lined up to attack him all at once. Alternate translation: "God has caused all the terrible things that could happen to happen to me all at once" (See: [Personification](#))

the terrors of God have arranged themselves in array against me

God causing many things to terrify Job is spoken of as if God's terrors were soldiers lined up to attack Job. Alternate translation: "the terrors of God have arranged themselves like soldiers in an army" (See: [Metaphor](#))

Job 6:5

Does the wild donkey bray in despair when he has grass? Or does the ox low in hunger when it has fodder?

Job poses these rhetorical questions to emphasize that he has a reason to complain. These question can be written as statements.

Alternate translation: "Just as the wild donkey does not bray in despair when he has grass and as the ox does not low in hunger when he has fodder, I would not complain if I did not have a reason" (See: [Rhetorical Question](#))

ULT

⁵ Does the wild donkey bray in despair when he has grass? Or does the ox low in hunger when it has fodder?

bray

the sound a donkey makes

low

the sound an ox makes

fodder

animal food

Job 6:6

Can that which has no taste be eaten without salt? Or is there any taste in the white of an egg?

This could mean: (1) Job is comparing his displeasure for his circumstances to people's dislike for bland food or (2) Job is comparing his displeasure for his friend's advice to people's dislike for bland food. (See: [Metaphor](#))

ULT

⁶ Can that which has no taste be eaten without salt? Or is there any taste in the white of an egg?

Can that which has no taste be eaten without salt? Or is there any taste in the white of an egg?

Job uses these rhetorical questions to emphasize his own displeasure. These questions can be written as a statement. Alternate translation: "Tasteless food cannot be eaten without salt, just as there is no taste in the white of an egg." (See: [Rhetorical Question](#))

Can that which has no taste be eaten

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "Can you eat that which has no taste" (See: [Active or Passive](#))

Job 6:7

General Information:

Job continues to use parallelisms in these verses as he speaks about his sufferings and his desire for death. (See: [Parallelism](#))

I refuse to touch them

“Them” refers to bad tasting foods.

ULT

⁷ I refuse to touch them; they are like disgusting food to me.

Job 6:8

(There are no notes for this verse.)

ULT

⁸ Oh, that I might have my request; oh,
that God would grant me the thing I
long for:

Job 6:9**to crush me once**

This means for God to cause him to die. Alternate translation: “to crush me and let me die” (See: [Euphemism](#))

that he would let loose his hand and cut me off from this life

The phrases “let loose his hand” is an idiom that means to act quickly. Also, the phrase “cut me off from this life” is a euphemism for killing him. Alternate translation: “that he would act quickly and cut short my life” or “that he would act quickly and end my life” (See: [Idiom](#) and [Euphemism](#))

ULT

⁹ that it would please God to crush me once, that he would let loose his hand and cut me off from this life!

Job 6:10

even if I exult in pain that does not lessen

“I would leap for joy in unending pain” or “I would endure pain that does not diminish”

exult

“rejoice”

does not lessen

“does not diminish”

that I have not denied the words of the Holy One

“that I have not disowned God.” This can be written in positive form. Alternate translation: “that I have always obeyed the Holy One”

ULT

10 May this still be my consolation— even if I exult in pain that does not lessen: that I have not denied the words of the Holy One.

Job 6:11

**What is my strength, that I should try to wait?
What is my end, that I should prolong my life?**

Job poses these questions to emphasize that he has no reason to continue living. These questions have the same meaning. They may be written as statements. Alternate translation: "I do not have enough strength to go on living; I have no reason to prolong my life" (See: [Rhetorical Question](#) and [Parallelism](#))

ULT

¹¹ What is my strength, that I should try to wait? What is my end, that I should prolong my life?

Job 6:12

General Information:

The writer uses parallel rhetorical questions in each of these verses to emphasize Job's lack of strength to endure suffering. (See: [Parallelism](#))

ULT

12 Is my strength the strength of stones? Or is my flesh made of bronze?

Is my strength the strength of stones? Or is my flesh made of bronze?

Job describes the weakness of his body by saying that he is not as strong as rocks and bronze to emphasize his lack of strength. These rhetorical questions may be written as statements. Alternate translation: "I am not as strong as the rocks. My flesh is not as strong as metal." (See: [Rhetorical Question](#))

Job 6:13

Is it not true that I have no help in myself ... me?

Job uses this rhetorical question to emphasize his lack of wisdom and his weakness. This question can be written as a statement. Also, the phrase “no help in myself” is an idiom. Alternate translation: “It is true that I have no strength left ... me.” (See: [Rhetorical Question](#) and [Idiom](#))

ULT

¹³ Is it not true that I have no help in myself, and that wisdom has been driven out of me?

wisdom has been driven out of me

“my success has been taken from me.” This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: “my wisdom is gone” (See: [Active or Passive](#))

Job 6:14

To the person who is about to faint, faithfulness should be shown by his friend

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "A friend should be faithful to the person who feels he is about to faint" (See: [Active or Passive](#))

ULT

¹⁴ To the person who is about to faint, faithfulness should be shown by his friend; even to him who forsakes the fear of the Almighty.

who is about to faint

This speaks of a person who feels hopeless and is overwhelmed by his troubles as if he were about to physically faint. Alternate translation: "who feels hopeless" (See: [Metaphor](#))

even to him who forsakes the fear of the Almighty

"even if he stops fearing Almighty God." This could mean: (1) the faint person does not fear God or (2) his friend does not fear God.

Job 6:15

But my brothers have been as faithful to me as a desert streambed

Job speaks of his friends being unfaithful to him as being like a “wadi” which is a stream that can suddenly dry up. Also, Job refers to his friends ironically here as his “brothers.” Alternate translation: “But my friends are unfaithful to me. They are like a desert streambed” (See: [Simile](#) and [Irony](#))

ULT

¹⁵ But my brothers have been as faithful to me as a desert streambed, as channels of water that pass away to nothing,

as channels of water that pass away to nothing

“like streams of water that dry up.” Job continues speaking of his friends being unfaithful as if they were streams that dry up. (See: [Simile](#))

Job 6:16

**which are darkened because of ice over them
... and because of the snow that hides itself in
them**

These two phrases have the same meaning. They describe how the streambed is full of ice and snow in the winter. Alternate translation:

“which look dark in the winter because they are covered with ice and are full of melted snow” (See: [Parallelism](#) and [Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information](#))

ULT

¹⁶ which are darkened because of ice over them, and because of the snow that hides itself in them.

because of the snow that hides itself in them

This speaks of the snow melting and the water going into the streambed as if the snow were hiding in the streambed. Alternate translation: “because the snow melts and goes into them” (See: [Personification](#))

Job 6:17**When they thaw out, they vanish ... when it is hot, they melt out of their place**

These two phrases have the same meaning. They describe how the streambed dries up in the hot season. Alternate translation: "When it is hot, the ice melts and the streambeds dry up" (See: [Parallelism](#) and [Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information](#))

ULT

¹⁷ When they thaw out, they vanish; when it is hot, they melt out of their place.

Job 6:18

Job is continuing his description of his friends being as unreliable as streams that dry up. (See: [Metaphor](#))

The caravans that travel by their way turn aside for water

ULT

¹⁸ The caravans that travel by their way turn aside for water; they wander into barren land and then perish.

“The caravans turn aside from the routes to find water” or “The caravans change course looking for water”

The caravans

A caravan is a large group of travelers riding camels across the desert.

barren land

“wasteland” or “empty land”

Job 6:19

Tema ... Sheba

These are the names of places. The people of these places used caravans to trade things with people from other lands. (See: [How to Translate Names](#))

while companies of Sheba

“while caravans from Sheba”

hoped in them

“hoped for them” or “put their hope in them”

ULT

¹⁹ Caravans from Tema looked there, while companies of Sheba hoped in them.

Job 6:20

but they were deceived

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: “but they were disappointed” or “but they were not satisfied” (See: [Active or Passive](#))

ULT

²⁰ They were disappointed because they had been confident of finding water. They went there, but they were deceived.

Job 6:21

General Information:

In these verses, Job poses four questions to rebuke his friends and to emphasize that he did not ask for help from any of them. (See: [Rhetorical Question](#))

ULT

21 For now you friends are nothing to me; you see my dreadful situation and are afraid.

For now

Job uses this phrase to introduce the main part of what he is saying.

you friends are nothing to me

“you friends have not helped me at all”

are afraid

This means that they see the trouble Job has and are afraid of being in the same situation. Alternate translation: “you are afraid that God might do similar things to you” (See: [Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information](#))

Job 6:22

(There are no notes for this verse.)

ULT

²² Did I say to you, 'Give something to me' or, 'Offer me a gift from your wealth'

Job 6:23

**or, 'Save me from my adversary's hand' or,
'Ransom me from the hand of my
oppressors'?**

These words are the last of a series of rhetorical questions that begins in verse 22. Job uses these questions to emphasize that he has not asked his friends to give him anything or to help him. "I never said to you, 'Give ... me' or, 'Offer ... wealth' or, 'Save ... hand' or, 'Ransom ... oppressors'." (See: [Rhetorical Question](#))

ULT

²³ or, 'Save me from my adversary's hand' or, 'Ransom me from the hand of my oppressors'?

my adversary's hand ... the hand of my oppressors

The word "hand" represents power or control. Alternate translation: "having my adversary control me ... having my oppressors control me" or "my adversary's power ... my oppressors' power" (See: [Metonymy](#))

Ransom me

"Rescue me"

Job 6:24

Teach me ... make me

These verbs “teach” and “make” are second person plural and are spoken to his friends. (See: [Forms of You](#))

I will hold my peace

This is an idiom. Alternate translation: “I will be silent” (See: [Idiom](#))

ULT

24 Teach me, and I will hold my peace;
make me understand where I have
been wrong.

Job 6:25

How painful are truthful words! But your arguments, how do they actually rebuke me?

The exact meaning of the original language is uncertain. Some Bibles translate “How painful” as “How pleasant.” Alternate translation: “When a person speaks the truth, it harms no one. But your arguments are not true, so how do they actually rebuke me?”

ULT

²⁵ How painful are truthful words! But your arguments, how do they actually rebuke me?

But your arguments, how do they actually rebuke me?

Job is using this question to rebuke his friends and to emphasize that what they are saying does not apply to him. This question can be written as a statement. Alternate translation: “Your reasons for rebuking me do not apply to me even though you sternly correct me.” or “But your arguments against me are not true, so they do not actually rebuke me!” (See: [Rhetorical Question](#))

your arguments

“your reasons” or “your claims”

Job 6:26

Do you plan to ignore my words, treating the words of a desperate man like the wind?

Job uses this rhetorical question to scold his friends. He compares his words to the wind to explain that his friends act like his words are empty and useless. Alternate translation: "You ignore my words! I am a desperate man, and you treat my words as if they are as useless as the wind." (See: [Rhetorical Question](#) and [Simile](#))

ULT

²⁶ Do you plan to ignore my words, treating the words of a desperate man like the wind?

Do you

"You" is in second person plural form. (See: [Forms of You](#))

Job 6:27**you cast lots for a fatherless child**

“you would even gamble to win an orphan”

you cast lots ... haggle over your friend

Here “you” and “your” are in second person plural form. (See: [Forms of You](#))

haggle over your friend like merchandise

This compares how the man would sell his friend to how a person sells merchandise or wares. Alternate translation: “bargain to sell your friend for money” (See: [Simile](#))

ULT

²⁷ Indeed, you cast lots for a fatherless child, and haggle over your friend like merchandise.

Job 6:28

Now

This word is used by Job to introduce new information.

please look

The verb “to look” is in second person plural form. (See: [Forms of You](#))

I would not lie to your face

The word “your” refers to Job’s friends. Here his friends are represented by their faces to emphasize that they are looking at him. Alternate translation: “I would not lie to you while I am looking at you” (See: [Synecdoche](#))

ULT

²⁸ Now, therefore, please look at me, for surely I would not lie to your face.

Job 6:29

Relent, I beg you

“Please be merciful to me” or “Stop speaking like this, I beg you”

let there be no injustice with you

This can be stated in positive form. Alternate translation: “treat me fairly” (See: [Double Negatives](#))

Indeed, relent

“Please relent.”

ULT

²⁹ Relent, I beg you; let there be no injustice with you; Indeed, relent, for my cause is just.

Job 6:30

Is there evil on my tongue?

“Do I say wicked things?” Job uses this question to rebuke his friends and to emphasize that he is not wicked. This question can be written as a statement. Alternate translation: “I do not say wicked things.” (See: [Rhetorical Question](#))

ULT

³⁰ Is there evil on my tongue? Cannot my mouth detect malicious things?

on my tongue

Here Job’s speech is represented by his “tongue.” Alternate translation: “in my speech” (See: [Metonymy](#))

Cannot my mouth detect malicious things?

Job uses this question to rebuke his friends and to emphasize that he can tell the difference between right and wrong. Here Job refers to himself by his “mouth” to emphasize his speech. This question can be written as a statement. Alternate translation: “I know what is right to say and what is wrong to say.” (See: [Rhetorical Question](#) and [Synecdoche](#))

Job 7

Job 7 General Notes

Structure and formatting

The ULT sets the lines of this chapter farther to the right on the page than the rest of the text because it is a poem. This chapter is a continuation of Job's response to Eliphaz.

Special concepts in this chapter

Job's righteousness

Despite being upset about his circumstances, and desiring his own death, Job does not curse God. He would rather have God end his life than to curse him. (See: [curse](#), [cursed](#), [cursing](#))

Important figures of speech in this chapter

Metaphors

Job uses many different metaphors in this chapter to express his pain or despair. He also is upset with the advice of his friends, who are supposed to help him during difficult times. (See: [Metaphor](#))

Rhetorical questions

Job uses many different rhetorical questions in this chapter in order to try to convince Eliphaz that he is wrong. These questions help to build Job's response. (See: [Rhetorical Question](#))

Job 7:1

General Information:

The writer continues to use parallelism in each of these verses, conveying a single idea using two different statements to emphasize that his personal suffering is part of the universal suffering which all people experience. (See: [Parallelism](#))

ULT

¹ Does not man have hard labor on earth? Are not his days like the days of a hired man?

Does not man have hard labor on earth?

Job poses this negative question to emphasize his awareness that all people experience hard work. It can be translated as a positive statement. Alternate translation: "There is hard labor for every person on earth." (See: [Rhetorical Question](#))

on earth

This is a generalization that means for the time people are living on the earth. Alternate translation: "while he lives on the earth" (See: [Hyperbole](#))

Are not his days like the days of a hired man?

Job poses this negative question to emphasize his awareness that all people struggle in life. Alternate translation: "And their days are like the days of a hired man." (See: [Rhetorical Question](#) and [Simile](#))

a hired man

"a day laborer." This is a man who worked jobs one day at a time and was paid at the end of every day.

Job 7:2

Like a slave ... like a hired man

Job compares his misery and trouble to that of the slave and hired man. (See: [Simile](#))

the shadows of evening

“cool shade.” The implied information is that the shadows of evening provide coolness and shade from the sun (See: [Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information](#))

looks for his wages

“waits for his pay”

ULT

² Like a slave earnestly desires the shadows of evening, like a hired man looks for his wages—

Job 7:3**I have been made to endure months of misery; I have been given trouble-filled nights**

This can be translated in active form. Alternate translation: “so I endure months of misery; I get trouble-filled nights” (See: [Active or Passive](#))

ULT

³ so I have been made to endure months of misery; I have been given trouble-filled nights.

months of misery

The abstract noun “misery” can be translated as the adjective “miserable.” Alternate translation: “months when I am miserable” (See: [Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information](#))

Job 7:4

When I lie down

The implied information is that this is when Job would lie down to sleep at night. Alternate translation: "When I lie down to sleep" (See: [Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information](#))

I say to myself

Job poses a question to no one else in particular. Alternate translation: "I ask" or "I wonder" (See: [Reflexive Pronouns](#))

When will I get up and when will the night be gone?

Job poses this question to emphasize his intense suffering during the hours he should be sleeping. Alternate translation: "I wish I could get up, but night continues." (See: [Rhetorical Question](#))

tossing to and fro

"turning back and forth." This indicates that Job has moved on his bed all night without any rest.

ULT

⁴ When I lie down, I say to myself, 'When will I get up and when will the night be gone?' I am full of tossing to and fro until the day's dawning.

Job 7:5

My flesh is clothed with worms and clods of dust

The worms and clods of dust are pictured as covering Job as if they were clothing. Alternate translation: “My flesh is covered with worms and clods of dust” (See: [Metaphor](#))

ULT

⁵ My flesh is clothed with worms and clods of dust; the sores in my skin harden up and then dissolve and run afresh.

My flesh

This represents his whole body. Alternate translation: “My body” (See: [Synecdoche](#))

clods of dust

This could mean: (1) lumps or crusts of dirt or (2) scabs on the skin.

dissolve and run afresh

“break out again”

Job 7:6

General Information:

The writer continues to use parallelism in each of these verses, conveying a single idea using two different statements to emphasize Job's sense of the shortness of life. (See: [Parallelism](#))

ULT

⁶ My days are swifter than a weaver's shuttle; they pass without hope.

My days are swifter than a weaver's shuttle

Job compares his lifetime to the quickness of a weaver's shuttle. Alternate translation: "My life goes by very quickly" (See: [Simile](#))

weaver

a person who makes cloth by crossing threads or yarn

a weaver's shuttle

a moving part that carries thread or yarn back and forth quickly in a loom when making cloth

Job 7:7

call to mind

“remember.” The phrase “call to mind” does not mean God forgot. Job is asking God to consider or think about the shortness of Job’s life.

ULT

⁷ God, call to mind that my life is only a breath; my eye will no more see good.

my life is only a breath

Job compares the shortness of his life to the shortness of a breath. Alternate translation: “my life is very short, like taking one breath” (See: [Metaphor](#))

my eye will no more see good

Here “my eye” represents Job’s whole person and his ability to see or experience things. Alternate translation: “I will never again experience good things” (See: [Synecdoche](#))

Job 7:8

General Information:

The writer continues to use parallelism in each of these verses, conveying a single idea using two different statements to emphasize Job's thought that, after death, neither God nor the people he knew will see him again. (See: [Parallelism](#))

ULT

⁸ The eye of God, who sees me, will see me no more; God's eyes will be on me, but I will not exist.

The eye of God, who sees me, will see me no more

Many versions of the Bible translate this as "The eye which sees me will see me no more." The words "of God" were added to this phrase because they are implied by the context. (See: [Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information](#))

The eye of God, who sees me ... God's eyes will be on me

Here God is represented by his "eye" to emphasize what he looks at. Alternate translation: "God who watches me ... God will look for me" (See: [Synecdoche](#))

Job 7:9

As a cloud is consumed and vanishes away, so he who goes down to Sheol will come up no more

Job is describing death as being like the clouds that disappear. (See: [Simile](#))

ULT

⁹ As a cloud is consumed and vanishes away, so he who goes down to Sheol will come up no more.

As a cloud is consumed

This can be expressed in active form. Alternate translation: "As a cloud fades" (See: [Active or Passive](#))

he who goes down to Sheol will come up no more

"he who dies will not return"

Job 7:10

his place

The words “his place” represent those who live in his place. Alternate translation: “the people who live in his place” or “his family” (See: [Metonymy](#))

ULT

10 He will return no more to his house; neither will his place know him again.

Job 7:11

I will speak in the anguish of my spirit; I will complain in the bitterness of my soul

Job conveys a single idea using two different statements to emphasize the reason he will not remain silent. (See: [Parallelism](#))

I will not restrain my mouth

Here the mouth represents speech. Alternate translation: “I will not restrain my speech” (See: [Metonymy](#))

in the anguish of my spirit

“in the distress of my spirit” or “in the torment of my suffering.” The abstract noun “anguish” can be translated using the adverb “distress.” Alternate translation: “while my spirit is distressed” (See: [Abstract Nouns](#))

in the bitterness of my soul

Here sorrow is spoken of as if it tasted bitter, and “soul” refers to the whole man. Alternate translation: “with anger and resentment” (See: [Metaphor](#) and [Synecdoche](#))

ULT

¹¹ Therefore I will not restrain my mouth; I will speak in the anguish of my spirit; I will complain in the bitterness of my soul.

Job 7:12

Am I the sea or a sea monster that you place a guard over me?

Job poses this question to express his anger at God. In comparing himself to the sea or a sea monster, Job suggests that God regards him as a hideous creature. This can be translated as a statement. Alternate translation: "I am not the sea or a sea monster that needs a guard to watch it." (See: [Rhetorical Question](#) and [Metaphor](#))

ULT

¹² Am I the sea or a sea monster that you place a guard over me?

Job 7:13

General Information:

The writer continues to use parallelism in the first two verses, conveying a single idea using two different statements to emphasize Job's intense suffering. (See: [Parallelism](#))

ULT

¹³ When I say, 'My bed will comfort me, and my couch will ease my complaint,'

My bed will comfort me, and my couch will ease my complaint

Here “bed” and “couch” are metonyms for “sleep.” In lying down to sleep, Job would hope to be comforted. The metonyms also have human attributes; they have the ability to comfort and ease a person. Alternate translation: “My bed, my couch, will be like someone who can comfort me” (See: [Metonymy](#) and [Personification](#))

My bed ... my couch

These phrases refer to the same thing. Alternate translation: “My bed ... my bed”

Job 7:14

you scare me

“you” here refers to God

ULT

¹⁴ then you scare me with dreams and
terrify me through visions,

Job 7:15

strangling

killing a person by squeezing the throat and stopping the breathing

these bones of mine

Here Job uses the word “bones” to refer to his body. Alternate translation: “This body of mine” (See: [Synecdoche](#))

ULT

15 so that I would choose strangling and death rather than preserving these bones of mine.

Job 7:16

The writer continues to use parallelism in these verses, conveying a single idea using two different statements to emphasize the impact of Job's misery on his sense of self worth. (See: [Parallelism](#))

I loathe my life

"I despise my life"

to always be alive

"to live forever"

my days are useless

"my days are pointless" or "the days of my life are empty"

ULT

16 I loathe my life; I would not wish to always be alive; let me alone for my days are useless.

Job 7:17

Job asks a rhetorical question to say that he does not understand why God should pay attention to people. (See: [Rhetorical Question](#))

set your mind on him

Here the mind represents thoughts and attention. To “set your mind on” means to give attention to. Alternate translation: “direct your attention to him” (See: [Metonymy](#) and [Metaphor](#))

ULT

¹⁷ What is man that you should pay attention to him, that you should set your mind on him,

Job 7:18

that you should observe ... every moment?

This is the end of the rhetorical question that Job begins asking with the words "What is man that" in verse 17. The question can be translated as a statement. "Tell me what man is that ... mind on him, that you should observe ... every moment." or "I do not understand what man is that ... mind on him, that you should observe ... every moment." (See: [Rhetorical Question](#))

ULT

18 that you should observe him every morning and test him every moment?

observe him

"carefully examine him"

Job 7:19

How long will it be ... swallow down my own saliva?

Here Job conveys a single idea using two different rhetorical questions to emphasize his wish that God would stop watching him. Alternate translation: "Look away from me! Leave me alone long enough for me to swallow my own saliva!" (See: [Parallelism](#) and [Rhetorical Question](#))

ULT

¹⁹ How long will it be before you look away from me, before you let me alone long enough for me to swallow down my own saliva?

saliva

liquid produced in people's mouths that keeps the mouth moist and helps to swallow food

Job 7:20

Even if I have sinned ... burden for you?

Job poses these questions to argue against God treating him unfairly. Alternate translation: “Even if I have sinned, that would do nothing to you, as you watch over people. Tell me why you have made me your target, so that I am a burden for you.” (See: [Rhetorical Question](#))

ULT

²⁰ Even if I have sinned, what would that do to you, you who watch men? Why have you made a target of me, so that I am a burden for you?

Job 7:21

Why do you not pardon my transgression and take away my iniquity?

Here Job uses two similar clauses within a rhetorical question to emphasize his point. Possible meanings are: (1) Job is asking why God does not forgive him. Alternate translation: "Tell me why you do not pardon my transgression and take away my iniquity." or (2) Job is asking God why he cannot just overlook his supposed wrongdoings.

Alternate translation: "Tell me why you do not just bear with my transgression and iniquity." (See: [Parallelism](#) and [Rhetorical Question](#))

ULT

²¹ Why do you not pardon my transgression and take away my iniquity? For now will I lie down in the dust; you will seek me carefully, but I will not exist."

take away

"remove"

now will I lie down in the dust

The phrase "lie down in the dust" is a metonym that represents dying. Alternate translation: "now I will die" (See: [Metonymy](#))

I will not exist

"I will not be here" or "I will be gone"

Job 8

Job 8 General Notes

Structure and formatting

The ULT sets the lines of this chapter farther to the right on the page than the rest of the text because it is a poem. This chapter is the advice of Job's friend, Bildad.

Special concepts in this chapter

Bildad's advice

Bildad tells Job to curse Yahweh. The advice Bildad gives to Job is bad advice. (See: [curse](#), [cursed](#), [cursing](#))

Important figures of speech in this chapter

Rhetorical questions

Bildad uses many different rhetorical questions in this chapter in order to try to convince Job that he is wrong. These questions help to build Bildad's argument. (See: [Rhetorical Question](#))

Job 8:1

General Information:

Verses 2 and 3 each consist of two different questions that have the same meaning. Bildad uses these questions to rebuke Job. (See: [Rhetorical Question](#) and [Parallelism](#))

ULT

¹ Then Bildad the Shuhite answered and said,

Connecting Statement:

In this chapter, Bildad begins to speak about Job's complaints.

Then Bildad the Shuhite answered

"Bildad" is the name of a man who is a member of the tribe of Shuah. (See: [How to Translate Names](#))

Job 8:2

How long will the words of your mouth be a mighty wind?

Bildad speaks of Job's words as if they are as empty and insubstantial as the wind. This can be translated as a statement. Alternate translation: "The words of your mouth are as insignificant as a mighty wind." (See: [Metaphor](#) and [Rhetorical Question](#))

ULT

² "How long will you say these things?
How long will the words of your mouth
be a mighty wind?"

Job 8:3

Does God pervert justice? Does the Almighty pervert righteousness?

Here “God” and “the Almighty” both refer to Yahweh. These questions can be translated as statements. Alternate translation:

“God does not pervert justice; the Almighty does not pervert righteousness.” (See: [Rhetorical Question](#))

ULT

³ Does God pervert justice? Does the Almighty pervert righteousness?

pervert justice?...pervert righteousness?

“approve of and do what is not just?...approve of and do what is not righteous?”

Job 8:4**for he gave them into the hand of their sins**

Here “hand” represents the power or results of sin. Bildad implies that God killed Job’s children because of their sin. Alternate translation: “for God caused the consequences of your children’s sins to kill them” (See: [Metonymy](#) and [Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information](#))

ULT

⁴ Your children have sinned against him; we know this, for he gave them into the hand of their sins.

Job 8:5**But suppose you diligently sought God and presented your request to the Almighty**

Bildad is saying what would have happened if Job had correctly spoken to God, but Bildad does not believe that Job really did this. (See: [Hypothetical Situations](#))

ULT

⁵ But suppose you diligently sought God and presented your request to the Almighty.

diligently sought God ... presented your request to the Almighty

These two phrases both refer to Job asking God for help or pleading with God for mercy. (See: [Doublet](#))

diligently sought God

“earnestly asked God for help”

Job 8:6

General Information:

Bildad says that God would treat Job well if he was pure, but Bildad does not believe that Job is pure. (See: [Hypothetical Situations](#))

If you are pure and upright

“If only you were pure and righteous” or “If only you would obey God and do what is right”

stir himself on your behalf

Here Yahweh is spoken of as if he woke from sleep to help Job. Alternate translation: “help you” or “do good things for you” (See: [Metaphor](#))

restore you to your rightful place

This refers to giving back to Job the things he lost, including his family, wealth, and honor.

ULT

⁶ If you are pure and upright, then he would surely stir himself on your behalf and restore you to your rightful place.

Job 8:7

Even though your beginning was small, still your final condition would be much greater

Here lack of wealth is spoken of as being a “small beginning.”
Alternate translation: “Even if you were poor early in your life, God would make you very wealthy later in your life” (See: [Metaphor](#))

ULT

⁷ Even though your beginning was small, still your final condition would be much greater.

Job 8:8

General Information:

Bildad continues to use parallelism in each of these verses to emphasize that their ancestors agree with the things Bildad is telling Job. (See: [Parallelism](#))

give your attention to what our ancestors learned

“study carefully what our ancestors discovered” or “consider the things our forefathers learned”

ULT

⁸ Please ask the former generations, and give your attention to what our ancestors learned.

Job 8:9

our days on earth are a shadow

The shortness of life is spoken of as if it were a shadow which quickly disappears. (See: [Metaphor](#))

ULT

⁹ (We were only born yesterday and know nothing because our days on earth are a shadow.)

Job 8:10**Will they not teach you and tell you? Will they not speak words from their hearts?**

Bildad uses these rhetorical questions to rebuke Job for not agreeing with Bildad and the ancestors. They can be translated as statements. Alternate translation: "They will teach you and tell you and speak what they sincerely believe." (See: [Rhetorical Question](#))

ULT

¹⁰ Will they not teach you and tell you?
Will they not speak words from their hearts?

from their hearts

Here the word "hearts" represents their inner beliefs. Alternate translation: "that they sincerely believe" (See: [Metonymy](#))

Job 8:11

General Information:

It is unclear if this verse is the teaching of Bildad, or if Bildad is quoting the sayings of the ancestors of [Job 8:8-10](#).

Can papyrus grow without a marsh? Can reeds grow without water?

Bildad uses these two parallel questions to emphasize the single point that people cannot live without God. Here the plants represent people and the water represents God. The questions can be translated as statements. Alternate translation: "Papyrus plants cannot grow away from the marshes. Reeds cannot grow without water." (See: [Rhetorical Question](#) and [Parallelism](#) and [Metaphor](#))

papyrus

a tall reed-like plant that grows in shallow water

ULT

¹¹ Can papyrus grow without a marsh?

Can reeds grow without water?

Job 8:12

General Information:

It is unclear if this verse is the teaching of Bildad, or if Bildad is quoting the sayings of the ancestors of [Job 8:8-10](#).

While they are still green and not cut down, they wither before any other plant

It is implied that they wither when there is no water. This can be stated explicitly. Alternate translation: "Without water, they stop growing and wither faster than any other plant, even if no one cuts them down" (See: [Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information](#))

wither

"dry up"

ULT

¹² While they are still green and not cut down, they wither before any other plant.

Job 8:13

General Information:

It is unclear if this verse is the teaching of Bildad, or if Bildad is quoting the sayings of the ancestors of [Job 8:8-10](#).

ULT

13 So also are the paths of all who forget God; the hope of the godless will perish.

So also are the paths of all who forget God

Here “the paths” represents a person’s future and the events that will happen to them. Alternate translation: “The same thing will happen to everyone who forgets God” (See: [Metonymy](#))

the hope of the godless will perish

“the things the godless person desires will not happen”

Job 8:14

General Information:

It is unclear if this verse is the teaching of Bildad, or if Bildad is quoting the sayings of the ancestors of [Job 8:8-10](#). In this verse the pronoun "his" refers to the godless person, who represents godless people in general. It may be helpful to readers to use the plural pronouns "they" and "their." (See: [Generic Noun Phrases](#))

ULT

14 His confidence will break apart, and his trust is as weak as a spider's web.

His confidence will break apart ... his trust is as weak as a spider's web

These two phrases mean the same thing and emphasize that the godless person is trusting in something that cannot save him. (See: [Parallelism](#))

his trust is as weak as a spider's web

Here Bildad compares the trust of the godless person to a spider's web; the slightest force will break both. (See: [Simile](#))

Job 8:15

General Information:

In this verse the pronouns “he” and “him” refer to the godless person, who represents godless people in general. It may be helpful to readers to use the plural pronouns “they” and “their.” (See: [Generic Noun Phrases](#))

ULT

15 He leans on his house, but it will not support him; he takes hold of it, but it does not stand.

He leans on his house, but it will not support him; he takes hold of it, but it does not stand

This statement probably refers to a man relying on his property and wealth for security. If so, then “house” here represents the owner’s property and wealth. Alternate translation: “He thinks he will be safe because he is wealthy, but he will not be safe” (See: [Metaphor](#))

it will not support him

This negative statement emphasizes the opposite. It can be stated in positive form. Alternate translation: “he will fall down” (See: [Litotes](#))

it does not stand

This negative statement emphasizes the opposite. It can be stated in positive form. Alternate translation: “it will fall down” (See: [Litotes](#))

Job 8:16

General Information:

Here pronouns “he” and “his” refer to the godless person, who represents godless people in general. It may be helpful to readers to use the plural pronouns “they” and “their.” (See: [Generic Noun Phrases](#))

ULT

16 Under the sun he is green, and his shoots go out over his entire garden.

Under the sun he is green, and his shoots go out over his entire garden

Here Bildad compares the godless person to a plant that is healthy. (See: [Metaphor](#))

Under the sun he is green

The meaning of the Hebrew text is unclear. This could mean: (1) he is healthy during the day or (2) he is watered before the sun rises.

Job 8:17

General Information:

In this verse the pronoun “his” refers to the godless person, who represents godless people in general. It may be helpful to readers to use the plural pronouns “they” and “their.” (See: [Generic Noun Phrases](#))

ULT

17 His roots are wrapped about the heaps of stone; they look for good places among the rocks.

His roots are wrapped about the heaps of stone ... they look for good places among the rocks

These two phrases have similar meaning, but the meaning is unclear. This could mean: (1) he appears to be well-rooted in the rocks, taking advantage of every opening or (2) his roots cannot find fertile ground and must try to find nutrients among the rocks. (See: [Parallelism](#) and [Metaphor](#))

Job 8:18

General Information:

In this verse the pronouns “his” and “him” refer to the godless person, who represents godless people in general. It may be helpful to readers to use the plural pronouns “they” and “their.” (See: [Generic Noun Phrases](#))

ULT

18 But if this person is destroyed out of his place, then that place will deny him and say, ‘I never saw you.’

if this person is destroyed out of his place

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: “if someone pulls him out of his place” or “if a gardener tears him out of the garden” (See: [Active or Passive](#))

his place

“the rocky ground” or “the garden”

that place will deny him and say, ‘I never saw you.’

The garden is spoken of as if it had human ability to speak. The garden immediately forgets that he existed. (See: [Personification](#) and [Metaphor](#))

Job 8:19**this is the “joy” of such a person’s behavior**

Bildad is speaking with irony to express that there is not any real joy for the godless person. Alternate translation: “this is all the joy they will receive from their godless actions” (See: [Irony](#))

ULT

¹⁹ See, this is the “joy” of such a person’s behavior; other plants will sprout out of the same soil in his place.

other plants will sprout out of the same soil in his place

Bildad continues the metaphor from [Job 8:16-18](#). Other godless people are spoken of as plants who take the place of the first godless man when he dies. Alternate translation: “when one wicked man dies, another will take his place” (See: [Metaphor](#))

sprout

“grow”

the same soil

“the rocky ground” or “the garden”

in his place

“in the place of the godless man”

Job 8:20

God will not cast away an innocent man

This can be stated in positive form. Alternate translation: “God will accept an innocent man”

neither will he take the hand of evildoers

Here “take the hand” refers to help or support. Alternate translation: “God will not support people who do evil things” (See: [Metonymy](#))

ULT

²⁰ See, God will not cast away an innocent man; neither will he take the hand of evildoers.

Job 8:21

He will yet fill your mouth with laughter, your lips with shouting

These two phrases mean the same thing and emphasize how happy Job would be if he were innocent. The word “he” refers to God and “your” refers to Job. Alternate translation: “God will make you very happy again if you are innocent” (See: [Parallelism](#) and [Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information](#))

ULT

²¹ He will yet fill your mouth with laughter, your lips with shouting.

fill your mouth with laughter

God causing Job to laugh is spoken of as if God had poured laughter into Job’s mouth. Alternate translation: “cause you to continually laugh” (See: [Metaphor](#))

your lips with shouting

The verb “fill” is understood from the previous clause. God causing him to shout for joy is spoken of as if God had poured joy into Job’s mouth. Alternate translation: “God will cause you to shout for joy” (See: [Ellipsis](#) and [Metaphor](#))

Job 8:22

Those who hate you will be clothed with shame

Here “shame” is spoken of as if it were clothing that God will cause Job’s enemies to wear. This means they will be very ashamed.
Alternate translation: “God will cause those who hate you to be very ashamed” (See: [Metaphor](#))

ULT

²² Those who hate you will be clothed with shame; the tent of the wicked will be no more.”

the tent of the wicked will be no more

Here “tent” refers to the homes of the wicked. Alternate translation: “the houses of the wicked will be destroyed”

will be no more

“will not last” or “will be destroyed”

Job 9

Job 9 General Notes

Structure and formatting

The ULT sets the lines of this chapter farther to the right on the page than the rest of the text because it is a poem. This chapter is Job's response to Bildad.

Special concepts in this chapter

Job's righteousness and Yahweh's power

Despite being upset about his circumstances, Job does not curse God. Job does not think that he can make a claim against Yahweh because only God is perfectly wise and just. Yahweh is truly powerful and Job understands this. (See: [curse](#), [cursed](#), [cursing](#) and [wise](#), [wisdom](#) and [just](#), [justice](#), [unjust](#), [injustice](#), [justify](#), [justification](#))

Important figures of speech in this chapter

Metaphors

Job uses many different metaphors in this chapter to express himself or to describe Yahweh's power. He is also upset with the advice of his friends, who are supposed to help him during difficult times. (See: [Metaphor](#))

Rhetorical questions

Job uses many different rhetorical questions in this chapter in order to try to convince Bildad that he is wrong. These questions help to build Job's response. (See: [Rhetorical Question](#))

Job 9:1

(There are no notes for this verse.)

ULT

¹ Then Job answered and said,

Job 9:2

I truly know that this is so

"I know that what you say is true"

this is so

Here the word "this" refers to what Bildad said.

how can a person be in the right with God?

"how can anyone be innocent before God?"

ULT

² "I truly know that this is so. But how can a person be in the right with God?"

Job 9:3

argue

dispute

he cannot answer him once in a thousand times

“Once in a thousand times” here is an idiom that means “at all.” This could mean: (1) “he cannot give any answer to God” or (2) “God will not answer him at all” (See: [Idiom](#))

a thousand times

“1,000 times”

ULT

³ If he wants to argue with God, he cannot answer him once in a thousand times.

Job 9:4

wise in heart

Here the heart represents the inner being or thoughts. Alternate translation: “wise in what he decides” (See: [Metonymy](#))

mighty in strength

The abstract noun “strength” can be expressed as the adjective “strong.” Alternate translation: “mighty in how strong he is” (See: [Abstract Nouns](#))

hardened himself against him

To harden oneself means to be stubborn. Alternate translation: “resisted him” or “defied him” (See: [Reflexive Pronouns](#))

ULT

⁴ God is wise in heart and mighty in strength; who has ever hardened himself against him and succeeded?—

Job 9:5

he who removes the mountains

“God removes the mountains”

ULT

⁵ he who removes the mountains
without warning anyone when he
overturns them in his anger—

Job 9:6

he who shakes the earth

“God shakes the earth”

sets its supports trembling

“makes its foundations tremble”

ULT

⁶ he who shakes the earth out of its place and sets its supports trembling.

Job 9:7

who covers up the stars

“who blocks the stars from view”

ULT

⁷ It is the same God who tells the sun not to rise, and it does not, and who covers up the stars,

Job 9:8

who by himself stretches out the heavens

God is spoken of as creating the heavens without any help, as if the heavens were fabric that he stretches out. (See: [Reflexive Pronouns](#) and [Metaphor](#))

ULT

⁸ who by himself stretches out the heavens and tramples down the waves of the sea,

tramples down the waves of the sea

God is spoken of as calming the sea as if with his feet. Alternate translation: “puts his feet down on the waves of the sea” or “calms the waves of the sea” (See: [Metaphor](#))

Job 9:9

the Bear, Orion, the Pleiades

These are the names of constellations, which are groups of stars that seem like they form a particular shape in the sky. (See: [Translate Unknowns](#))

ULT

⁹ who makes the Bear, Orion, the Pleiades, and the constellations of the south.

Orion

a famous hunter in Greek mythology

Pleiades

several bright stars that look like they are close together in the sky

constellations

groups of stars that seem like they form a particular shape in the sky

Job 9:10

General Information:

The writer uses parallelism in each of these verses, conveying a single idea using double statements to emphasize that God is great, unseen, and sovereign. (See: [Parallelism](#))

unsearchable things

“things that cannot be understood”

ULT

10 He does great and unsearchable things, and wonderful things that cannot be counted.

Job 9:11

See

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

he passes on

“he passes by” or “he moves on”

ULT

11 See, he goes by me, and I do not see him; he passes on also, but I do not perceive him.

Job 9:12

If he takes something away, who can stop him? Who can say to him, 'What are you doing?'

These are rhetorical questions that expect an answer of "No one." They can be reworded as statements. Alternate translation: "If he takes something away, no one can stop him. No one can ask him, 'What are you doing?'" (See: [Rhetorical Question](#))

ULT

¹² If he takes something away, who can stop him? Who can say to him, 'What are you doing?'

If he takes something away

"If he takes someone away" or "If he wants to snatch something away"

Job 9:13

the helpers of Rahab bow beneath him

Here “bow beneath him” symbolizes submission or defeat. Alternate translation: “he crushes the helpers of Rahab” (See: [Symbolic Action](#))

ULT

13 God will not withdraw his anger; the helpers of Rahab bow beneath him.

Rahab

The word “Rahab” here refers to a monster of the sea. (See: [How to Translate Names](#))

Job 9:14**How much less could I answer him, could I choose words to reason with him?**

Job poses two similar questions to emphasize his reluctance to confront God. They can be reworded as a statement. Alternate translation: "So I certainly could not answer him or choose words to reason with him." (See: [Parallelism](#) and [Rhetorical Question](#))

ULT

¹⁴ How much less could I answer him, could I choose words to reason with him?

Job 9:15

(There are no notes for this verse.)

ULT

15 Even if I were righteous, I could not answer him; I could only plead for mercy with my judge.

Job 9:16

(There are no notes for this verse.)

ULT

¹⁶ Even if I called and he answered me, I would not believe that he was listening to my voice.

Job 9:17

For he breaks me with a tempest

Job compares his troubles from God to the effects of a tempest.
Alternate translation: "He injures me as if with a tempest" (See: [Metaphor](#))

tempest

a powerful or violent storm

multiplies my wounds

"gives me many wounds" or "wounds me again and again"

without cause

"even though I have not given him cause to do so" or "even though I am innocent"

ULT

17 For he breaks me with a tempest and multiplies my wounds without cause.

Job 9:18

to regain my breath

This is an idiom that means “to be able to breathe again” or (See: [Idiom](#))

he fills me with bitterness

This verse pictures God as filling up Job’s life with things that make him bitter. The abstract noun “bitterness” can be expressed as the adjective “bitter.” Alternate translation: “he fills me up with bitter things” (See: [Metaphor](#) and [Abstract Nouns](#))

ULT

18 He does not allow me to regain my breath; but he fills me with bitterness.

Job 9:19

If it is a matter of strength

"If there is a contest of strength"

behold, he is mighty

"look and you will see that he is mighty" or "pay attention to what I am about to tell you: he is mighty"

he is mighty

"he is the strong one"

who can summon him?

This question expects an answer of "No one" to make the point that no one is able to bring God to court. This can be reworded as a statement. Alternate translation: "no one can summon him." (See: [Rhetorical Question](#))

ULT

¹⁹ If it is a matter of strength, behold, he is mighty! If it is a matter of justice, who can summon him?

Job 9:20

Though I am in the right, my own mouth would condemn me; and though I am blameless, my words would prove me to be guilty

This verse expresses the same idea twice for emphasis. (See: [Parallelism](#))

ULT

²⁰ Though I am in the right, my own mouth would condemn me; and though I am blameless, my words would prove me to be guilty.

Though I am in the right

Here “I am in the right” means I am the one who has done right things. Alternate translation: “Although I have done right things” or “Even though I am innocent” (See: [Idiom](#) and [Nominal Adjectives](#))

my own mouth would condemn me

Here “mouth” represents Job’s words. Alternate translation: “my own words would accuse me” or “what I say would condemn me” (See: [Metonymy](#))

blameless

“faultless”

my words would prove me to be guilty

Here “my words” are spoken of as if they could take action. Alternate translation: “God would use what I say to prove me guilty” (See: [Metaphor](#))

guilty

The word here has the meaning of “twisted” or “crooked.”

Job 9:21

I am blameless

“I am faultless”

about myself

“what happens to me”

ULT

²¹ I am blameless, but I do not care any more about myself; I despise my own life.

Job 9:22

It makes no difference

“It is all the same” or “It does not matter”

he destroys blameless people and wicked people together

Here “blameless” and “wicked” are two extremes for a merism that include everything in between. Alternate translation: “he brings everyone to an end, whether they are blameless or wicked” (See: [Merism](#))

ULT

²² It makes no difference, which is why I say that he destroys blameless people and wicked people together.

Job 9:23

When a whip suddenly kills

The word “whip” here is a metaphor for any kind of disaster. Alternate translation: “When a disaster suddenly happens and people die” (See: [Metaphor](#))

ULT

²³ When a whip suddenly kills, he mocks the despair of the innocent.

the despair of the innocent

The word “despair” is an abstract noun that can be translated by the verb “despair.” Here it is a metonym for the innocent who are despairing. Alternate translation: “the innocent who are despairing” or “the innocent who have lost all hope” (See: [Metonymy](#))

innocent

This is a nominalized adjective. Alternate translation: “innocent people”. (See: [Nominal Adjectives](#))

Job 9:24

The earth is given

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: “God gives the earth” (See: [Active or Passive](#))

The earth is

Here “the earth” is used to represent the people on the earth. Alternate translation: “The people of the world are” (See: [Metonymy](#))

into the hand of

Here “hand” is a metonym for “control.” Alternate translation: “into the control of” (See: [Metonymy](#))

God covers the faces of its judges

This idiom means God keeps the judges of the earth from being able to judge the difference between right and wrong. Alternate translation: “God makes its judges blind” or “God keeps its judges from judging rightly” (See: [Idiom](#))

If it is not he who does it, then who is it?

“If it is not God who does these things, then who does them?”

ULT

24 The earth is given into the hand of wicked people; God covers the faces of its judges. If it is not he who does it, then who is it?

Job 9:25

My days are swifter than a running messenger

Job compares how quickly his days are passing by to a fast runner.
Alternate translation: "My days pass swiftly" (See: [Simile](#))

ULT

²⁵ My days are swifter than a running messenger; my days flee away; they see no good anywhere.

running messenger

"runner" or "running man"

my days flee away

This pictures the days of Job's life as being able to run away like a person. (See: [Personification](#))

they see no good anywhere

This pictures the days of Job's life as being able to see like a person. (See: [Personification](#))

no good

"no good thing"

Job 9:26

They are as fast as papyrus reed boats

Job compares how quickly his days are passing by to the speed of fast boats. Alternate translation: "They pass quickly by like papyrus reed boats" (See: [Simile](#))

ULT

²⁶ They are as fast as papyrus reed boats, and as fast as the eagle that swoops down on its victim.

papyrus reed boats

"boats made out of reeds." Papyrus reed is a hollow grass that grows along the banks of rivers.

as fast as the eagle that swoops down on its victim

Job compares how quickly his days are passing by to a large bird diving toward its prey. Alternate translation: "as fast as the eagle that flies down quickly to catch its food" (See: [Simile](#))

swoops down

"rushes down"

Job 9:27

I would forget about my complaints

The abstract noun “complaint” can be translated as the verb “complain.” Alternate translation: “I would stop complaining” or “I would stop complaining against God” (See: [Abstract Nouns](#))

ULT

²⁷ If I said that I would forget about my complaints, that I would take off my sad face and be happy,

my complaints

It can be stated clearly whom Job was complaining against. Alternate translation: “my complaints against God” (See: [Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information](#))

I would take off my sad face and be happy

Job’s sad face is spoken of here as if it was something that could be removed. Alternate translation: “I would stop looking unhappy and smile” (See: [Metaphor](#))

Job 9:28

I would be afraid of all my sorrows

Verses 28 and 29 express the consequences if Job does what he says in verse 27. This can be expressed by adding the word “then.”

Alternate translation: “Then I would be afraid of all my sorrows”
(See: [Connecting Words and Phrases](#))

ULT

28 I would be afraid of all my sorrows
because I know that you will not
consider me innocent.

of all my sorrows

The abstract noun “sorrows” can be expressed as a verb. Alternate translation: “of everything that hurts me” (See: [Abstract Nouns](#))

Job 9:29

I will be condemned

"I will be accused and punished." This can be stated in active form.
Alternate translation: "God will condemn me" (See: [Active or Passive](#))

ULT

²⁹ I will be condemned; why, then,
should I try in vain?

why, then, should I try in vain?

Job uses this question to emphasize that he does not think it is of any use trying to get God's attention. The implied information about what Job is trying can be made explicit. Alternate translation: "It is of no use to try to get God's attention." (See: [Rhetorical Question](#) and [Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information](#))

Job 9:30

If I washed myself with snow water

“If I bathed my body in pure, clean water”

snow water

the water that comes from melted snow

snow

white flakes of frozen water that fall from clouds in places where the air temperature is cold

made my hands ever so clean

“made my hands exceedingly clean.” Some other versions of the Bible translate this with the meaning of “cleaned my hands with very strong soap.”

ULT

³⁰ If I washed myself with snow water
and made my hands ever so clean,

Job 9:31

plunge me in a ditch

“throw me into a pit”

my own clothes would be disgusted with me

ULT

³¹ God would plunge me in a ditch, and my own clothes would be disgusted with me.

Job's clothing is spoken of as if it would have a negative response to Job after God plunged him into a ditch.
Alternate translation: “I would be too filthy for my own clothing” (See: [Personification](#))

Job 9:32

answer him

Job implies that God has charged him of doing wrong, and he wants to respond to those charges. Alternate translation: “answer his charges against me” or “defend myself” or “argue my innocence with him” (See: [Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information](#))

ULT

³² For God is not a man, as I am, that I could answer him, that we could come together in court.

come together in court

“come together to trial.” Here “court” is a place where people can come and a judge will settle disputes. “Coming together in court” is a metonym for going against each other in a court of law. Alternate translation: “confront each other before a judge” (See: [Metonymy](#))

Job 9:33

There is no judge between us

This means there is no judge who is greater than God who could decide what is right between him and Job.

lay his hand upon us both

Here “lay his hand upon” means having power or authority over. Alternate translation: “take hold of both of us” or “have authority over both of us” (See: [Idiom](#))

ULT

³³ There is no judge between us who might lay his hand upon us both.

Job 9:34

Connecting Statement:

These verses continue the previous argument that no one is greater than God who could act as a judge between God and Job.

take God's rod off me

Here "God's rod" is a metonym for God punishing or correcting Job. Alternate translation: "stop God from punishing me" (See: [Metonymy](#))

keep his terror from frightening me

The abstract noun "terror" can be translated as the verb "terrify." Alternate translation: "keep him from terrifying and frightening me" (See: [Abstract Nouns](#))

ULT

³⁴ There is no other judge who could take God's rod off me, who could keep his terror from frightening me.

Job 9:35

Then would I speak up

“Then I would speak”

as things are now

“because this is how things are now”

ULT

³⁵ Then would I speak up and not fear him. But as things are now, I cannot do that.

Job 10

Job 10 General Notes

Structure and formatting

The ULT sets the lines of this chapter farther to the right on the page than the rest of the text because it is a poem. This chapter is a continuation of Job's response to Bildad.

Special concepts in this chapter

Job's righteousness

Despite being upset about his circumstances, Job does not curse Yahweh. Instead, he defends himself to Yahweh, while trusting in his decision. (See: [curse](#), [cursed](#), [cursing](#) and [trust](#), [trusted](#), [trustworthy](#), [trustworthiness](#))

Important figures of speech in this chapter

Rhetorical questions

Job uses many different rhetorical questions in this chapter in order to try to defend himself. He does not believe that he committed a sin deserving severe punishment. (See: [Rhetorical Question](#))

Job 10:1

I am weary of my life

"I am tired of living"

I will give free expression to my complaint

The abstract nouns "expression" and "complaint" can be translated as the verbs "express" and "complain."
Alternate translation: "I will freely express what I have to complain about" or "I will argue freely" (See: [Abstract Nouns](#))

ULT

¹ I am weary of my life; I will give free expression to my complaint; I will speak in the bitterness of my soul.

I will speak in the bitterness of my soul

How Job feels is compared to a bitter taste. The abstract noun "bitterness" can be translated as the adverb "bitterly." Alternate translation: "My inner being will speak bitterly" or "I will bitterly speak out" (See: [Metaphor](#) and [Abstract Nouns](#))

Job 10:2

(There are no notes for this verse.)

ULT

² I will say to God, 'Do not merely condemn me; show me why you accuse me.'

Job 10:3

Is it good to you that you should oppress me, to despise the work of your hands while you smile on the plans of the wicked?

This question expects a “no” answer and can be changed into a statement. Alternate translation: “It is not good that you should oppress me, that you should despise the work of your hands, while you smile on the plans of the wicked.” (See: [Rhetorical Question](#))

ULT

³ Is it good to you that you should oppress me, to despise the work of your hands while you smile on the plans of the wicked?

the work of your hands

Here God is represented by his “hands.” Alternate translation: “what you have created” (See: [Synecdoche](#))

smile on the plans of the wicked

Here the idiom “smiling on” represents God’s approval. Alternate translation: “approve the plans of the wicked” (See: [Idiom](#))

Job 10:4**Do you have eyes of flesh? Do you see like a man sees?**

These two questions have nearly the same meaning. These questions expect a negative answer to emphasize that God does not see or understand things the same way a man does. They can be expressed as statements. Alternate translation: "You do not have eyes of flesh, and you do not see like a man sees." (See: [Parallelism](#) and [Rhetorical Question](#))

ULT

⁴ Do you have eyes of flesh? Do you see like a man sees?

Job 10:5

Job begins to ask a rhetorical question. He is saying that God lives forever but people live only for a short time, so God should not worry about Job's sins. (See: [Rhetorical Question](#))

your days like the days of mankind ... your years like the years of people

These two phrases have nearly the same meaning. (See: [Parallelism](#))

your days

"the number of your days"

your years

"the number of your years"

ULT

⁵ Are your days like the days of mankind
or your years like the years of people,

Job 10:6

Connecting Statement:

Job continues the rhetorical question he began in verse 5. (See: [Rhetorical Question](#))

inquire after my iniquity

“look to see if I have committed iniquity”

ULT

⁶ that you inquire after my iniquity and
search after my sin,

Job 10:7

Connecting Statement:

This is the end of the rhetorical question that begins with the words “Are your days” in verse 5.

although you know ... from your hand?

This is the end of the rhetorical question that begins with the words “Are your days” in verse 5. The whole question can be translated as a statement. “Your days are not like the days of mankind, and your years are not like the years of people, so you should not inquire after my iniquity and search after my sin, because you know I am not guilty and there is no one who can rescue me from your hand.” (See: [Rhetorical Question](#))

from your hand

Here “your hand” represents God’s power. Alternate translation: “from your power” (See: [Synecdoche](#))

ULT

⁷ although you know I am not guilty and there is no one who can rescue me from your hand?

Job 10:8

Your hands

Here “hands” represent God and his creative action. Alternate translation: “You” (See: [Synecdoche](#))

Your hands have framed and fashioned me together round about

Job is using a metaphor of a potter forming clay to describe how God carefully created him. (See: [Metaphor](#))

framed and fashioned me

“shaped and formed me.” The words “framed” and “fashioned” are similar in meaning. (See: [Doublet](#))

ULT

⁸ Your hands have framed and fashioned me together round about, yet you are destroying me.

Job 10:9

Call to mind

“Remember”

bring me into dust again

“turn me back into dust again”

ULT

⁹ Call to mind, I beg you, that you have fashioned me like clay; will you bring me into dust again?

Job 10:10

General Information:

In these verses, Job uses the language of poetry to describe how God formed him in the womb. (See: [Poetry](#))

ULT

10 Have you not poured me out like milk and curdled me like cheese?

Have you not poured me out like milk and curdled me like cheese?

This is a question that expects a positive answer. Alternate translation: “You poured me out like milk and curdled me like cheese.” or “You formed me in the womb like poured milk becomes cheese.” (See: [Rhetorical Question](#) and [Simile](#))

you

Here “you” refers to God.

me

Here “me” refers to Job.

Job 10:11

You have clothed me with skin and flesh

God putting skin and flesh on Job's body is spoken of as if God was putting clothing on him. Alternate translation: "You have put skin and flesh on my body" (See: [Metaphor](#))

ULT

11 You have clothed me with skin and flesh and knit me together with bones and sinews.

knit me together

"wove me together." God putting Job's body together in the womb is spoken of as if God was knitting or weaving a piece of cloth. Alternate translation: "put me together" (See: [Metaphor](#))

sinews

the parts of the body that connect muscles to bones or other body parts and are like tough, white bands or cords

Job 10:12

You have granted me life and covenant faithfulness

The abstract nouns “life” and “faithfulness” can be stated as “live” and “faithful.” Alternate translation: “You have been faithful to your covenant and allowed me to live” (See: [Abstract Nouns](#))

ULT

¹² You have granted me life and covenant faithfulness; your help has guarded my spirit.

your help

“your care”

guarded my spirit

Here Job is represented by his “spirit.” Alternate translation: “guarded me” or “watched carefully over me” or “kept me safe” (See: [Synecdoche](#))

Job 10:13

(There are no notes for this verse.)

ULT

13 Yet these things you hid in your heart
— I know that this is what you were
thinking:

Job 10:14

you would notice it

“you would watch me”

ULT

¹⁴ that if I sinned, you would notice it;
you would not acquit me of my iniquity.

Job 10:15

If I have acted wickedly

“If I do evil things”

woe to me

“how terrible will it be for me”

lift up my head

This idiom means to be sure or confident. Alternate translation: “hold my head up” or “be confident” or “be sure about myself” (See: [Idiom](#))

I am filled with disgrace—see my affliction

Another possible meaning, followed by some versions, is, “I am full of disgrace and am completely full of my own suffering,” where the disgrace is bad but the suffering is even worse.

I am filled with disgrace

“I am totally ashamed” or “No one respects me anymore”

disgrace

shame

see my affliction

The abstract noun “affliction” can be translated using the verb “afflict.” Alternate translation: “see how God is afflicting me” (See: [Abstract Nouns](#))

ULT

¹⁵ If I have acted wickedly, woe to me; and even if I acted righteously, I could not lift up my head, since I am filled with disgrace— see my affliction!

Job 10:16

If my head were lifted up, you would stalk me like a lion

This could mean: (1) this is a hypothetical situation that has not happened or (2) this is a description of a situation that happens repeatedly. Alternate translation: "When my head is lifted up, you stalk me like a lion" (See: [Hypothetical Situations](#))

ULT

¹⁶ If my head were lifted up, you would stalk me like a lion; and again you would show yourself with marvellous acts of power against me.

If my head were lifted up

This idiom means to become self-confident or proud. Alternate translation: "If I become proud" (See: [Idiom](#) and [Reflexive Pronouns](#))

you would stalk me like a lion

Possible meanings of this simile are: (1) God hunts Job like a lion hunts its prey or (2) Job is like a lion being hunted by God. (See: [Simile](#))

again you would show yourself with marvellous acts of power against me

This phrase expresses irony in how God displays his marvelous power by acting to harm Job. (See: [Irony](#) and [Reflexive Pronouns](#))

Job 10:17

You bring new witnesses against me

Job's troubles from God are spoken of as if they were people who were witnesses against him. (See: [Metaphor](#))

increase your anger against me

The abstract noun "anger" can be translated as the adjective "angry." Alternate translation: "are more and more angry with me" (See: [Abstract Nouns](#))

you attack me with fresh armies

God sending troubles against Job is spoken of as if God was constantly sending new armies against him. (See: [Metaphor](#))

ULT

17 You bring new witnesses against me
and increase your anger against me;
you attack me with fresh armies.

Job 10:18

brought me out of the womb

Here being brought out of the womb represents being born into this world. Alternate translation: “brought me out of my mother’s womb” or “brought me into this world” (See: [Metaphor](#))

ULT

18 Why, then, have you brought me out of the womb? I wish I had given up my spirit and that no eye had ever seen me.

given up my spirit

Giving up one’s spirit represents dying. Alternate translation: “died” (See: [Metaphor](#))

and that no eye had ever seen me

Job uses “eye” here to refer to the whole person. He wishes he could have died at birth, before anyone saw him. Alternate translation: “before any person had ever seen me” or “before I was born” (See: [Synecdoche](#))

Job 10:19

I had never existed

“I had never lived”

I would have been carried

“My body would have been carried”

ULT

¹⁹ I would have been as though I had never existed; I would have been carried from the womb to the grave.

Job 10:20

Are not my days only a few?

Here “my days” represent the length of Job’s life. This question expects a positive answer, to emphasize that Job only expects to live a few more days. It can be translated as a statement. Alternate translation: “I only have a few days left to live.” or “My life will soon end.” (See: [Rhetorical Question](#))

ULT

²⁰ Are not my days only a few? Stop then, let me alone, so that I may have a little rest

Job 10:21

the land

Here the place where the spirits of dead people go is spoken of as if it was a land. Alternate translation: “the place” (See: [Metaphor](#))

of darkness and of the shadow of death

The phrase “shadow of death” intensifies the idea of “darkness.” Both phrases describe where the spirits of dead people go. (See: [Doublet](#))

the shadow of death

See how you translated this in [Job 3:5](#).

ULT

²¹ before I go from where I will not return, to the land of darkness and of the shadow of death,

Job 10:22

as dark as midnight

The darkness of the place where the spirits of dead people go is compared to the darkness of midnight. (See: [Simile](#))

without any order

This negative phrase can be expressed in positive form. Alternate translation: “full of confusion” or “where all is confused” (See: [Litotes](#))

where the light is like midnight

The light of the place where the spirits of dead people go is compared to midnight. Alternate translation: “where there is no light” (See: [Simile](#))

ULT

²² the land that is as dark as midnight,
the land of the shadow of death,
without any order, where the light is like
midnight.”

Job 11

Job 11 General Notes

Structure and formatting

The ULT sets the lines of this chapter farther to the right on the page than the rest of the text because it is a poem. This chapter is the advice of Job's friend, Zophar.

Special concepts in this chapter

Zophar's advice

Zophar tells Job to curse Yahweh. The advice Zophar gives to Job is bad advice. He even questions the character of God. (See: [curse](#), [cursed](#), [cursing](#))

Important figures of speech in this chapter

Rhetorical questions

Zophar uses many different rhetorical questions in this chapter in order to try to convince Job that he is wrong. These questions help to build Zophar's argument. (See: [Rhetorical Question](#))

Job 11:1

Zophar the Naamathite

See how you translated this man's name in [Job 2:11](#). Alternate translation: "Zophar from the region of Naamah" (See: [How to Translate Names](#))

ULT

¹ Then Zophar the Naamathite answered and said,

Job 11:2

Should not such a multitude of words be answered?

Zophar is asking a question in the negative to emphasize that Job's words must be challenged. Alternate translation: "We must answer all of these words!" or "Someone should respond to all these words!" (See: [Rhetorical Question](#))

ULT

² "Should not such a multitude of words be answered? Should this man, so full of talk, be believed?"

Should this man, so full of talk, be believed?

Zophar uses this question to emphasize that they should not believe what Job was saying. Alternate translation: "This man is so full of talk, but the people should not believe him!" or "Your many words alone do not mean you are innocent!" (See: [Rhetorical Question](#))

Job 11:3

Should your boasting make others remain silent?

Zophar uses this question to rebuke Job. Alternate translation: “Just because you have spoken many words, this does not mean that others must keep silent.” (See: [Rhetorical Question](#))

ULT

³ Should your boasting make others remain silent? When you mock, will no one make you feel ashamed?

When you mock, will no one make you feel ashamed?

Zophar uses this question to rebuke Job. You may need to make explicit what it is that Job is mocking. Alternate translation: “You have mocked us for what we have said. Now we will make you feel ashamed!” (See: [Rhetorical Question](#) and [Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information](#))

Job 11:4

My beliefs are pure

“My understanding is correct”

I am blameless in your eyes

The eyes represent sight, which is a metaphor for God’s evaluation of Job. This could mean: (1) that Job is saying that God judges him as blameless. Alternate translation: “You say that I am blameless” or (2) that Job believes he has been blameless and that God should judge him as blameless. Alternate translation: “You should recognize that I am blameless” (See: [Metaphor](#))

ULT

⁴ For you say to God, ‘My beliefs are pure, I am blameless in your eyes.’

Job 11:5

that God would speak ... open his lips against you

The words “open his lips” are a metonym that means speak. These two phrases mean the same thing and are used together to emphasize Zophar’s desire that God would speak harshly against Job. (See: [Metonymy](#) and [Parallelism](#))

ULT

⁵ But, oh, that God would speak and open his lips against you;

Job 11:6

that he would show ... secrets of wisdom

What the “secrets of wisdom” are can be stated clearly. Alternate translation: “that he would show you that you are suffering because of your sin” (See: [Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information](#))

God demands from you less than your iniquity deserves

Demanding from Job represents punishing Job. Alternate translation: “God is punishing you less than you deserve” (See: [Metaphor](#))

ULT

6 that he would show you the secrets of wisdom! For he is great in understanding. Know then that God demands from you less than your iniquity deserves.

Job 11:7

Can you understand God by searching for him? Can you comprehend the Almighty perfectly?

These two parallel questions are asking the same thing. The writer uses the form of a question to add emphasis. Alternate translation:

“You cannot understand God by searching for him, and you will never completely understand the Almighty!” (See: [Parallelism](#) and [Rhetorical Question](#))

ULT

⁷ Can you understand God by searching for him? Can you comprehend the Almighty perfectly?

Job 11:8

The matter

This refers to understanding God. Alternate translation: "To understand God" (See: [Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information](#))

ULT

⁸ The matter is as high as heaven; what can you do? It is deeper than Sheol; what can you know?

is as high as heaven ... deeper than Sheol

The impossibility of understanding God is spoken of as if it were impossible to go to these extremely far away places. Alternate translation: "is as inaccessible as the highest places in heaven ... is more inaccessible than the deepest places in Sheol" (See: [Parallelism](#) and [Simile](#))

what can you do?

Zophar uses this question to show that a person cannot do anything to understand God fully. Alternate translation: "you cannot do anything." or "you cannot understand him fully." (See: [Rhetorical Question](#))

what can you know?

Zophar uses this question to show that a person cannot do anything to know God fully. Alternate translation: "you cannot know God fully." or "you cannot know all there is to know." (See: [Rhetorical Question](#))

Job 11:9

Its measure

This could mean: (1) God's greatness or (2) the greatness of God's wisdom.

ULT

⁹ Its measure is longer than the earth,
and wider than the sea.

is longer than the earth ... wider than the sea

God's greatness or wisdom is spoken of as if it could be measured in distance. (See: [Metaphor](#))

Job 11:10

If he ... shuts anyone up

"If God ... shuts anyone up in prison"

if he calls anyone to judgment

The abstract noun "judgment" can be translated with the verb "judge." Alternate translation: "if God calls anyone to go to him so that God might judge him" (See: [Abstract Nouns](#))

who can stop him?

This question emphasizes that no one can stop God. Alternate translation: "no one can stop him!" (See: [Rhetorical Question](#))

ULT

¹⁰ If he passes through and shuts anyone up, if he calls anyone to judgment, then who can stop him?

Job 11:11

does he not notice it?

This emphasizes that God does notice sin. Alternate translation: “he surely notices it!” (See: [Rhetorical Question](#))

ULT

11 For he knows false people; when he sees iniquity, does he not notice it?

Job 11:12

But foolish people have no understanding

The abstract noun “understanding” can be expressed with the verb “understand.” Alternate translation: “But foolish people do not understand” (See: [Abstract Nouns](#))

ULT

¹² But foolish people have no understanding; they will get it when a wild donkey gives birth to a man.

they will get it when a wild donkey gives birth to a man

Since a wild donkey can never give birth to a man, this means that foolish people will never get understanding. Alternate translation: “only if a wild donkey could give birth to a man could foolish people get understanding” or “it is as impossible for a foolish person to get understanding as it is for a donkey to give birth to a man” (See: [Irony](#))

Job 11:13

suppose that you had set your heart right

The heart represents thoughts and attitudes. Setting it right represents correcting it. Alternate translation: “even if you had corrected your attitude” (See: [Metaphor](#))

had reached out with your hands toward God

This is a symbolic action representing asking God for help. Alternate translation: “had made an appeal and prayed to God” (See: [Symbolic Action](#))

ULT

13 But suppose that you had set your heart right and had reached out with your hands toward God;

Job 11:14

suppose that iniquity were in your hand

The hand represents what a person does. Alternate translation: “even if you had done some evil things in the past” (See: [Metonymy](#))

but that then you put it far away from you

Putting sin behind represents stopping sinning. Alternate translation: “but that then you stopped doing evil things” (See: [Metaphor](#))

did not let unrighteousness live in your tents

Unrighteousness living represents people doing unrighteous things. Alternate translation: “and you did not allow the members of your household to do unrighteous things” (See: [Personification](#))

ULT

¹⁴ suppose that iniquity were in your hand, but that then you put it far away from you, and did not let unrighteousness live in your tents.

Job 11:15

lift up your face without a sign of shame

“Lifting up your face” represents the attitude of a person who is confident and brave. (See: [Metonymy](#) and [Idiom](#))

ULT

15 Then you would certainly lift up your face without a sign of shame; indeed, you would be steadfast and would not fear.

Job 11:16

you would remember it only like waters that have flowed away

Zophar is comparing misery with water that flows downstream and it is gone. Alternate translation: “You would remember it, but the misery will be gone, like waters that have flowed away” (See: [Simile](#))

ULT

16 You would forget your misery; you would remember it only like waters that have flowed away.

Job 11:17

Your life would ... like the morning.

Zophar repeats the same idea for emphasis. (See: [Parallelism](#))

Your life would be brighter than the noonday

Brightness represents being prosperous and happy. Alternate translation: "Your life would be prosperous and happy like the noonday" (See: [Metaphor](#))

though there were darkness

Darkness represents troubles and sadness. Alternate translation: "Though there were dark troubles and sadness" (See: [Hypothetical Situations](#))

it would become like the morning

The morning represents light, which represents prosperity and happiness. Alternate translation: "it would be prosperous and happy like the morning" (See: [Metaphor](#))

ULT

17 Your life would be brighter than the noonday; though there were darkness, it would become like the morning.

Job 11:18

You would be secure ... take your rest in safety

Zophar repeats the same idea for emphasis and describes the possibility. (See: [Parallelism](#) and [Hypothetical Situations](#))

would take your rest in safety

“Take your rest” here is an idiom for “rest.” The phrase “in safety” can be expressed with the word “safely.” Alternate translation: “would rest safely” (See: [Idiom](#) and [Abstract Nouns](#))

ULT

¹⁸ You would be secure because there is hope; indeed, you would find safety about you and would take your rest in safety.

Job 11:19

Also you would lie down in rest ... your favor.

Zophar repeats the same idea for emphasis and describes the possibility. (See: [Parallelism](#) and [Hypothetical Situations](#))

you would lie down in rest

The abstract noun “rest” can be expressed with the verb “rest.” Alternate translation: “you would lie down and rest” (See: [Abstract Nouns](#))

ULT

¹⁹ Also you would lie down in rest, and none would make you afraid; indeed, many would seek your favor.

Job 11:20

the eyes of wicked people will fail

Their eyes represent their understanding. Alternate translation: “the understanding of the wicked people will fail” or “the wicked people will not be able to understand” (See: [Metaphor](#))

ULT

²⁰ But the eyes of wicked people will fail; they will have no way to flee; their only hope will be a last gasp of life.”

Job 12

Job 12 General Notes

Structure and formatting

The ULT sets the lines of this chapter farther to the right on the page than the rest of the text because it is a poem. This chapter is Job's response to Zophar.

Special concepts in this chapter

Job's righteousness

Despite being upset about his circumstances, Job does not curse God. His friends, on the other hand, judge Job's case, which Job recognizes to be Yahweh's authority. These three friends therefore try to take God's place. (See: [curse, cursed, cursing](#) and [judge, judgment](#))

Important figures of speech in this chapter

Metaphors

Job uses many different metaphors in this chapter to express his pain or despair. He is also upset with the advice of his friends, who are supposed to help him during difficult times. (See: [Metaphor](#))

Rhetorical questions

Job uses many different rhetorical questions in this chapter in order to try to convince Zophar that he is wrong. These questions help to build Job's response. (See: [Rhetorical Question](#))

Job 12:1

(There are no notes for this verse.)

ULT

¹ Then Job answered and said,

Job 12:2

No doubt you are the people; wisdom will die with you

Job mocks how they are acting and shows how ridiculous they sound.

Alternate translation: "Surely you are such important people that wisdom cannot exist without you" or "You all act like you are the only wise people and that when you die, wisdom will disappear" (See: [Irony](#))

ULT

² "No doubt you are the people; wisdom will die with you."

No doubt

"Surely"

you

This is plural in verses 2 and 3. (See: [Forms of You](#))

you are the people

"you are the important people who know everything"

Job 12:3

Indeed, who does not know such things as these?

Job used this question to express a truth that should be obvious to his listeners. It can be expressed as a statement. Alternate translation: "Certainly there is no one who does not know such things as these." or "Certainly everyone knows these things." (See: [Rhetorical Question](#))

ULT

³ But I have understanding as well as you; I am not inferior to you. Indeed, who does not know such things as these?

Job 12:4

**I am something for my neighbor to laugh at—
I, one who called on God and who was
answered by him!**

The relationship between these phrases can be made clear with the words “even though.” Alternate translation: “I am something for my neighbor to laugh at—even though I am one who called on God and he answered me!” (See: [Connecting Words and Phrases](#))

ULT

⁴ I am something for my neighbor to laugh at— I, one who called on God and who was answered by him! I, a just and blameless man—I am now something to laugh at.

I, a just and blameless man—I am now something to laugh at

The relationship between these phrases can be made clear with the words “even though.” Alternate translation: “Even though I am a just and blameless man, people now laugh at me” (See: [Connecting Words and Phrases](#))

Job 12:5

In the thought of someone who is at ease, there is contempt for misfortune

The abstract nouns “thought,” “ease,” “contempt,” and “misfortune” can be expressed with other phrases. Alternate translation: “A person who lives an easy life despises a person who suffers” (See: [Abstract Nouns](#))

ULT

⁵ In the thought of someone who is at ease, there is contempt for misfortune; he thinks in a way that brings more misfortune to those whose foot is slipping.

brings more misfortune

Bringing misfortune represents causing it to happen. Alternate translation: “causes more bad things to happen” (See: [Metaphor](#))

to those whose foot is slipping

The foot slipping represents being in danger or trouble. Alternate translation: “to those who are already in trouble” (See: [Metaphor](#))

Job 12:6

The tents of robbers prosper

Their tents prospering represents the robbers prospering in their tents. Alternate translation: “Robbers live in prosperity in their own tents” (See: [Metonymy](#))

their own hands are their gods

Here “their own hands” is a metonym for strength, and “their gods” is a metaphor for their pride. Alternate translation: “they are extremely proud of their own abilities” (See: [Metonymy](#) and [Metaphor](#))

ULT

⁶ The tents of robbers prosper, and those who provoke God feel secure; their own hands are their gods.

Job 12:7

But now ask the beasts ... the birds ... they will tell you

Job is saying that the beasts and the birds understand God better than Job's friends do. (See: [Irony](#))

ULT

⁷ But now ask the beasts, and they will teach you; ask the birds of the heavens, and they will tell you.

you

All occurrences of "you" are plural. (See: [Forms of You](#))

But now ask the beasts, and they will teach you

The command in the first part of the sentence functions as a hypothetical condition. Alternate translation: "But if you were to ask the beasts, they would teach you" (See: [Imperatives — Other Uses](#) and [Hypothetical Situations](#))

ask the birds of the heavens, and they will tell you

The command in the first part of the sentence functions as a hypothetical condition. Alternate translation: "if you were to ask the birds of the heavens, they would tell you" (See: [Imperatives — Other Uses](#) and [Hypothetical Situations](#))

Job 12:8

Speak to the earth ... will declare to you

Job is saying that the beasts, the birds, the earth, and the fish understand God better than Job's friends do. (See: [Irony](#))

Or speak to the earth, and it will teach you

The command in the first part of the sentence functions as a hypothetical condition. Alternate translation: "Or if you were to speak to the earth, it would teach you" (See: [Imperatives — Other Uses](#) and [Hypothetical Situations](#))

the fish of the sea will declare to you

The command "Ask the fish of the sea" is understood from the previous sentences. It functions as a hypothetical condition. Alternate translation: "and if you were to ask the fish of the sea, they would declare to you" (See: [Ellipsis](#) and [Imperatives — Other Uses](#) and [Hypothetical Situations](#))

ULT

⁸ Or speak to the earth, and it will teach you; the fish of the sea will declare to you.

Job 12:9

Which animal among all these does not know ... this?

This question emphasizes the point that all the animals know that Yahweh has done this. This question can be worded as a statement. Alternate translation: "Every animal among all these knows ... this." (See: [Rhetorical Question](#))

ULT

⁹ Which animal among all these does not know that the hand of Yahweh has done this?

the hand of Yahweh has done this

Yahweh's hand represents his power. Alternate translation: "Yahweh has done this by his power" (See: [Metonymy](#))

Job 12:10

In his hand is the life ... and the breath of all mankind

Yahweh's hand represents his control or power. Alternate translation: "God controls the life of every living thing and gives breath to all mankind" (See: [Metonymy](#))

the breath of all mankind

Here "breath" represents life or the ability to live. (See: [Metonymy](#))

ULT

¹⁰ In his hand is the life of every living thing and the breath of all mankind.

Job 12:11

Does not the ear test words just as the palate tastes its food?

Job uses this question to emphasize that people listen to what others say and judge whether it is good or not. The ear and palate are metonyms for hearing and tasting. Alternate translation: "We hear what people say and test it just as we taste food and test it." (See: [Rhetorical Question](#) and [Metonymy](#) and [Simile](#))

ULT

¹¹ Does not the ear test words just as the palate tastes its food?

Job 12:12

With aged men is wisdom

“Aged men have wisdom.” The abstract noun “wisdom” can be expressed with “wise.” The word “men” refers to people in general. Alternate translation: “Old people are wise” (See: [Abstract Nouns](#) and [When Masculine Words Include Women](#))

ULT

¹² With aged men is wisdom; in length of days is understanding.

in length of days is understanding

This represents people gaining understanding when they live a long time. The abstract noun “understanding” can be expressed with the phrase “understand much.” Alternate translation: “people gain understanding when they live a long time” or “people who live a long time understand much” (See: [Abstract Nouns](#))

Job 12:13

General Information:

Verse 13 says that God is wise and mighty. The rest of this chapter shows that this is true by telling about the wise and mighty things that God does.

ULT

13 With God are wisdom and might; he has counsel and understanding.

With God are wisdom and might

The abstract nouns “wisdom” and “might” can be expressed with the adjectives “wise” and “mighty.” Alternate translation: “God is wise and mighty” (See: [Abstract Nouns](#))

Job 12:14

See

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

it cannot be built again

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

if he imprisons someone, there can be no release

The abstract noun “release” can be expressed with the verb “free.” Alternate translation: “if God shuts someone in, no one can free him” (See: [Abstract Nouns](#))

ULT

¹⁴ See, he breaks down, and it cannot be built again; if he imprisons someone, there can be no release.

Job 12:15

if he withholds the waters, they dry up

Possible meanings are that withholding waters represents: (1) preventing the rain from falling. Alternate translation: “if he stops the rain from falling the land dries up” or (2) preventing running water from flowing. Alternate translation: “if he stops the water from flowing, the land dries up” (See: [Metaphor](#))

ULT

¹⁵ See, if he withholds the waters, they dry up; and if he sends them out, they overwhelm the land.

if he sends them out, they overwhelm the land

Possible meanings are that sending them out is a metaphor meaning: (1) causing the rain to fall. Alternate translation: “if he causes a lot of rain to fall, it floods the land” or (2) causing the waters to flow. Alternate translation: “if he makes a lot of water flow, it floods the land” (See: [Metaphor](#))

Job 12:16

With him are strength and wisdom

The abstract nouns “strength” and “wisdom” can be expressed with the words “strong” and “wise.” Alternate translation: “God is strong and wise” (See: [Abstract Nouns](#))

ULT

16 With him are strength and wisdom; people who are deceived and the deceiver are both in his power.

people who are deceived and the deceiver are both in his power

Being in God’s power represents God ruling over them. Alternate translation: “people who believe a lie and people who lie to others are both in his power” or “God rules over both people who believe lies and people who lie to others”

Job 12:17

He leads counselors away barefoot

Leading counselors away barefoot represents taking away their wisdom and authority. (See: [Metaphor](#))

in sorrow

The abstract noun “sorrow” can be expressed with the words “sad” or “grieve” Alternate translation: “and they feel very sad” or “and they grieve” (See: [Abstract Nouns](#))

he turns judges into fools

“he makes judges become foolish”

ULT

17 He leads counselors away barefoot in sorrow; he turns judges into fools.

Job 12:18

He takes off the chain of authority from kings

Possible meanings are that: (1) this is a metonym for causing kings to no longer have authority. Alternate translation: "He takes away the authority of kings" or (2) this is a metonym for setting people free from the chains that kings have put on them. Alternate translation: "He takes off the bonds that kings have put on people" (See: [Metonymy](#))

ULT

18 He takes off the chain of authority from kings; he wraps a cloth about their waists.

he wraps a cloth about their waists

This cloth is probably what a slave wears. To put these cloths on kings represents making the kings slaves. Alternate translation: "he makes kings wear the clothing of slaves" or "he makes them slaves" (See: [Metonymy](#))

Job 12:19

He leads priests away barefoot

Leading priests away barefoot represents taking away their authority. (See: [Metaphor](#))

in sorrow

The abstract noun “sorrow” can be expressed with the words “sad” or “grieve” Alternate translation: “and they feel sad” or “and they grieve” (See: [Abstract Nouns](#))

overthrows mighty people

“defeats powerful people”

ULT

¹⁹ He leads priests away barefoot in sorrow and overthrows mighty people.

Job 12:20

He removes the speech of those who had been trusted

Removing their speech represents making them unable to speak.
Alternate translation: "He makes those who were trusted unable to speak" or "He silences people whom others trusted" (See: [Metonymy](#))

ULT

²⁰ He removes the speech of those who had been trusted and takes away the understanding of the elders.

takes away the understanding of the elders

Taking away their understanding represents making them unable to understand or make good decisions. Alternate translation: "makes the elders unable to understand" or "makes the elders unable to make good decisions" (See: [Metonymy](#))

the elders

This could mean: (1) the older people or (2) the leaders.

Job 12:21

He pours contempt upon princes

Pouring contempt on princes is a metaphor for causing people to feel contempt for them. Alternate translation: "He causes people to greatly disrespect those who rule" (See: [Metaphor](#))

ULT

²¹ He pours contempt upon princes and unfastens the belt of strong people.

unfastens the belt of strong people

The belt is a symbol of strength. Unfastening a strong person's belt represents taking away his strength and making him weak. Alternate translation: "makes the strong people weak" (See: [Metaphor](#))

Job 12:22

He reveals the deep things of darkness

Revealing things represents making them known. "Deep things from darkness" represent secrets that people do not know. Alternate translation: "He makes known secrets that people do not know" (See: [Metaphor](#))

ULT

²² He reveals the deep things of darkness and brings deep shadows into the light.

brings deep shadows into the light

Bringing things out into the light represents making them known, and here "shadows" is a metonym for the things that are hidden in the shadows, which in turn are a metaphor for truths that God has hidden from people. Alternate translation: "makes known things that no one can see" (See: [Metaphor](#) and [Metonymy](#))

Job 12:23

He enlarges nations

“He makes nations larger” or “He makes nations have more land”

he also leads them along as prisoners

God leading nations represents God causing enemy nations to lead them. The word “them” represents nations, which here represents the people of those nations. Alternate translation: “he also causes their enemies to lead them along as prisoners” (See: [Metonymy](#))

ULT

²³ He makes nations strong, and he also destroys them; He enlarges nations, and he also leads them along as prisoners.

Job 12:24

He takes away understanding from the leaders of the people of the earth

Taking away their understanding represents causing them to be unable to understand. Alternate translation: "He causes the leaders of the people of the earth to be unable to understand" (See: [Metaphor](#))

ULT

²⁴ He takes away understanding from the leaders of the people of the earth; he causes them to wander in a wilderness where there is no path.

to wander in a wilderness where there is no path

Wandering in a wilderness where there is no path represents being in a difficult situation and not knowing what to do. Alternate translation: "to be unsure of what to do like a person wandering in a wasteland with no path" (See: [Metaphor](#))

Job 12:25

They grope in the dark without light

Being in the dark without light represents lacking knowledge. Alternate translation: “They struggle to make decisions without knowledge as people struggle to walk in the dark without light” (See: [Metaphor](#))

ULT

²⁵ They grope in the dark without light; he makes them stagger like a drunk man.

he makes them stagger like a drunk man

Staggering or wandering like a drunk man represents living without purpose. Alternate translation: “he makes them live without purpose like a drunk person who staggers as he walks” or “they wander aimlessly like a drunk person who staggers back and forth” (See: [Simile](#))

Job 13

Job 13 General Notes

Structure and formatting

The ULT sets the lines of this chapter farther to the right on the page than the rest of the text because it is a poem. This chapter is a continuation of Job's response to Zophar. It also contains Job's claim of righteousness to Yahweh. (See: [righteous](#), [righteousness](#), [unrighteous](#), [unrighteousness](#), [upright](#), [uprightness](#))

Special concepts in this chapter

Job's righteousness

Despite being upset about his circumstances, Job does not curse God. His friends, on the other hand, judge Job's case, which Job recognizes to be Yahweh's authority. These three friends therefore try to take God's place. (See: [curse](#), [cursed](#), [cursing](#) and [judge](#), [judgment](#))

Important figures of speech in this chapter

Rhetorical questions

Job uses many different rhetorical questions in this chapter in order to try to convince Zophar that he is wrong. These questions help to build Job's response. (See: [Rhetorical Question](#))

Job 13:1

Connecting Statement:

Job continues to speak to his friends.

See

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

my eye has seen all this

Job referred to himself as his eye since it is with his eyes that he saw these things. Alternate translation: “I have seen all this” (See: [Synecdoche](#))

my ear has heard and understood it

Job referred to himself as his ear since it is with his ears that he heard these things. Alternate translation: “I have heard and understood it” (See: [Synecdoche](#))

ULT

¹ See, my eye has seen all this; my ear has heard and understood it.

Job 13:2

What you know, the same I also know

“What you know, I also know” or “I know as much as you”

ULT

² What you know, the same I also know;
I am not inferior to you.

Job 13:3

Connecting Statement:

Job continues to speak to his friends.

I wish to reason with God

Job's friends are judging him, but they not speaking the truth. Job would rather argue with God alone about his complaint.

ULT

³ However, I would rather speak with the Almighty; I wish to reason with God.

Job 13:4**you whitewash the truth with lies**

Putting whitewash or plaster on the truth represents ignoring the truth. Alternate translation: “you hide the truth with lies” or “you lie and ignore the truth” (See: [Metaphor](#))

ULT

⁴ But you whitewash the truth with lies;
you are all physicians of no value.

you are all physicians of no value

Being a physician represents being a person who comforts others. Being of no value means that they do not know how to do what they should. Alternate translation: “you are all like physicians who do not know how to heal people” or “you all come to comfort me, but you do not know how, like unskilled physicians” (See: [Metaphor](#))

Job 13:5

hold your peace

This expression means “be quiet” or “stop talking.” (See: [Idiom](#))

That would be your wisdom

They thought that they were saying wise things, but Job was saying that they would be wiser if they would stop talking. The abstract noun “wisdom” can be expressed with the word “wise.” Alternate translation: “If you were to do that, you would be wise” or “If you were to stop talking, you would appear wise” (See: [Abstract Nouns](#))

ULT

⁵ Oh, that you would altogether hold your peace! That would be your wisdom.

Job 13:6

Connecting Statement:

Job continues to speak to his friends.

listen to the pleading of my own lips

Here “lips” represent the person who is speaking. Alternate translation: “listen to what I myself plead for” (See: [Synecdoche](#))

ULT

⁶ Hear now my own reasoning; listen to the pleading of my own lips.

Job 13:7

Will you speak unrighteously ... deceitfully for him?

Job uses these two questions to rebuke his friends for speaking unrighteously. Alternate translation: "You think that you are speaking for God, but you are speaking unrighteously. You are speaking deceitfully." (See: [Rhetorical Question](#) and [Parallelism](#) and [Irony](#))

ULT

⁷ Will you speak unrighteously for God, and will you talk deceitfully for him?

talk deceitfully

"lie" or "tell lies"

Job 13:8

Will you show him partiality? Will you argue the case for God?

Showing kindness to God represents helping God or defending God against Job's complaints. Job uses these questions to rebuke his friends for thinking that they can defend God. Alternate translation: "You think that God need you to defend him? You think that you can argue for God like attorneys in court." (See: [Rhetorical Question](#) and [Parallelism](#) and [Irony](#))

ULT

⁸ Will you show him partiality? Will you argue the case for God?

Job 13:9

Connecting Statement:

Job continues to speak to his friends.

Will it be good for you when he searches you out?

Here “searches you out” is a metaphor meaning “examines you.” Job uses this question to warn his friends that if God were to examine them, he would say that what they are doing is wrong. Alternate translation: “When God examines you, it will not be good for you.” (See: [Rhetorical Question](#))

ULT

⁹ Will it be good for you when he searches you out? Could you deceive him as you might deceive men?

Could you deceive him as you might deceive men?

Job uses this question to warn his friends that God knows the truth about them. Alternate translation: “You might be able to deceive men, but you cannot deceive God.” (See: [Rhetorical Question](#))

Job 13:10

reprove you

“rebuke you”

if in secret you showed partiality

“if you secretly show favor to another.” Showing partiality refers to saying only good things about someone so that the judge will say that the person is good. Doing this in secret means pretending to speak fairly, but really favoring one person over another.

ULT

¹⁰ He would surely reprove you if in secret you showed partiality.

Job 13:11

Connecting Statement:

Job continues to speak to his friends.

Will not his majesty terrify you, and the dread of him fall upon you?

Job uses these questions to rebuke his friends. This could mean: (1) Job is saying that they should fear God. Alternate translation: "His majesty should make you afraid, and his dread should fall on you." or (2) Job is saying that they will fear God. Alternate translation: "His majesty will make you afraid, and his dread will fall on you!" (See: [Rhetorical Question](#))

ULT

11 Will not his majesty terrify you, and the dread of him fall upon you?

and the dread of him fall upon you

Dread falling on people represents them becoming terribly afraid. Alternate translation: "and you not be terribly afraid" or "and you not be terrified" (See: [Metaphor](#))

Job 13:12

Your memorable sayings are proverbs made of ashes

Ashes represent things that are worthless and do not last. Alternate translation: "Your memorable sayings are worthless like ashes" or "Your memorable sayings will be forgotten like ashes that are blown away" (See: [Metaphor](#))

ULT

¹² Your memorable sayings are proverbs made of ashes; your defenses are defenses made of clay.

your defenses are defenses made of clay

Job speaks of what they say as if it were a wall made of clay around a city; it cannot defend the people because clay breaks easily. Alternate translation: "What you say in defense is as useless as a wall of clay" (See: [Metaphor](#))

your defenses

Possible meanings are that this refers to: (1) what they say to defend themselves or (2) what they say to defend God.

Job 13:13

Connecting Statement:

Job continues to speak to his friends.

Hold your peace

This is an idiom meaning “Be quiet” or “Stop talking” (See: [Idiom](#))

let me alone

This is an idiom that means “stop bothering me” or “stop hindering me” (See: [Idiom](#))

let come what may on me

Things coming on a person represents things happening to a person. This expression starting with “let” means that he does not care what might happen to him. Alternate translation: “let whatever may happen to me happen” or “I do not care what may happen to me” (See: [Metaphor](#))

ULT

¹³ Hold your peace, let me alone, so that I may speak, let come what may on me.

Job 13:14

I will take my own flesh ... in my hands

“Flesh” here is a metonym for life. “Teeth” and “hands” are metonyms for his own control. These two phrases together emphasize that Job is willing to risk his life by arguing his case with God. Alternate translation: “I am ready to risk my life” (See: [Metonymy](#) and [Parallelism](#))

ULT

14 I will take my own flesh in my teeth; I will take my life in my hands.

Job 13:15

(There are no notes for this verse.)

ULT

¹⁵ See, if he kills me, I will have no hope left; nevertheless, I will defend my ways before him.

Job 13:16

Connecting Statement:

Job finishes speaking to his friends and begins to address God directly.

This will be the reason for my deliverance

The abstract noun “deliverance” can be expressed with the verb “deliver.” Alternate translation: “This is the reason that God will deliver me” or “This is why God will save me from my troubles” (See: [Abstract Nouns](#))

ULT

16 This will be the reason for my deliverance, for no godless person would come before him.

Job 13:17

God, listen carefully

Job begins directing his speech directly to God.

listen carefully to my speech; let my declaration come to your ears

These two lines mean basically the same thing and intensify Job's request for God to listen to him. (See: [Parallelism](#))

let my declaration come to your ears

The abstract noun "declaration" can be expressed with the verb "declare." The ears represent listening. Alternate translation: "listen to my declaration" or "listen to what I declare" (See: [Abstract Nouns](#) and [Metonymy](#))

ULT

17 God, listen carefully to my speech; let my declaration come to your ears.

Job 13:18

Connecting Statement:

Job continues speaking to God.

See now

This emphasizes what follows. "Listen now" or "Please pay special attention"

I have set my defense in order

Setting his defense in order represents deciding what he will say to defend himself. Alternate translation: "I have thought through how I will defend myself" or "I have decided how I will explain myself" (See: [Metaphor](#))

ULT

¹⁸ See now, I have set my defense in order; I know that I am innocent.

Job 13:19

Who is the one who would argue against me in court?

Job uses this question to express his belief that since he is right, no one would argue against him. Alternate translation: "I do not believe that anyone would argue against me in court." (See: [Rhetorical Question](#))

ULT

¹⁹ Who is the one who would argue against me in court? If you came to do so, and if I were proved wrong, then I would be silent and give up my life.

If you came to do so

"If you came to argue against me"

If you

"You" here means God himself.

if I were proved wrong

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "if you were to prove me wrong" (See: [Active or Passive](#))

give up my life

Giving up one's life is a metaphor for dying. Alternate translation: "die" (See: [Metaphor](#))

Job 13:20

Connecting Statement:

Job continues speaking to God.

from your face

“Face” represents the person. Alternate translation: “from you” (See: [Synecdoche](#))

ULT

²⁰ God, do only two things for me, and then I will not hide myself from your face:

Job 13:21

withdraw your oppressive hand

An oppressive hand is a metonym for doing things that oppress someone. Withdrawing the hand is a metaphor for stopping doing those things. Alternate translation: “stop oppressing me” (See: [Metonymy](#) and [Metaphor](#))

ULT

²¹ withdraw your oppressive hand from me, and do not let your terrors make me afraid.

do not let your terrors make me afraid

The phrase “your terrors” refers to what causes people to be terrified of God. Alternate translation: “do not terrify me” (See: [Metonymy](#))

Job 13:22

(There are no notes for this verse.)

ULT

²² Then call me, and I will answer; or let me speak to you, and you answer me.

Job 13:23

Connecting Statement:

Job continues speaking to God.

ULT

²³ How many are my iniquities and sins?
Let me know my transgression and my sin.

Job 13:24

Why do you hide ... like your enemy?

Job asks this question to complain about how God is treating him. He probably hopes for an answer. (See: [Rhetorical Question](#))

ULT

24 Why do you hide your face from me
and treat me like your enemy?

you hide your face from me

Hiding one's face from someone represents refusing to look at him or ignoring him. Alternate translation: "you refuse to look at me" or "you ignore me" (See: [Metaphor](#))

Job 13:25

Will you persecute ... pursue dry stubble?

Job uses these questions to tell God that since Job is so insignificant and weak, it is useless to persecute him. "Leaf" and "stubble" are metaphors describing Job's weakness, insignificance and frailty.

Alternate translation: "You persecute me, but I am weak like a leaf blown by the wind and insignificant like dry stubble." (See: [Rhetorical Question](#) and [Parallelism](#) and [Metaphor](#))

ULT

²⁵ Will you persecute a driven leaf? Will you pursue dry stubble?

Job 13:26

Connecting Statement:

Job finishes presenting his case to God.

For you write down bitter things against me

“Bitter things” represents accusations. Alternate translation: “For you write down accusations against me” (See: [Metaphor](#))

ULT

²⁶ For you write down bitter things against me; you make me inherit the iniquities of my youth.

you make me inherit the iniquities of my youth

Inheriting the iniquities of his youth is a metaphor. This could mean: (1) being guilty for the sins of his youth. Alternate translation: “you say that I am still guilty for the sins of my youth” or (2) being punished for the sins of his youth. Alternate translation: “you punish me for the sins of my youth” (See: [Metaphor](#))

the iniquities of my youth

The abstract noun “youth” can be translated with the word “young.” Alternate translation: “the sins I committed when I was young” (See: [Abstract Nouns](#))

Job 13:27

You also put my feet in the stocks

Doing this represents punishing Job and keeping him from living freely as if Job had committed a crime and was a prisoner. Alternate translation: "It is as though you put my feet in the stocks" (See: [Metaphor](#))

ULT

27 You also put my feet in the stocks; you closely watch all my paths; you examine the ground where the soles of my feet have walked

the stocks

This could mean: (1) a frame that holds a prisoner's feet in place so that he cannot move at all or (2) chains around a prisoner's feet that make it hard for him to walk. These are used as a form of punishment.

all my paths

"Paths" represent the things Job does. Alternate translation: "everything I do" (See: [Metaphor](#))

you examine the ground where the soles of my feet have walked

The soles of his feet represent the person who walks. Alternate translation: "you examine the ground where I have walked" (See: [Synecdoche](#))

you examine the ground where the soles of my feet have walked

Examining this ground represents examining all that Job has done. Alternate translation: "it is as though you examine the ground where I have walked" or "you examine everything I do like a person examining someone's footprints on the ground" (See: [Metaphor](#))

Job 13:28

like a rotten thing that wastes away

Job compares his life to something that is decaying. He is slowly dying. (See: [Simile](#))

like a garment that moths have eaten

Job compares himself to clothes that are full of holes because the moths have eaten parts of it. (See: [Simile](#))

ULT

²⁸ although I am like a rotten thing that wastes away, like a garment that moths have eaten.

Job 14

Job 14 General Notes

Structure and formatting

The ULT sets the lines of this chapter farther to the right on the page than the rest of the text because it is a poem. This chapter is a continuation of Job's claim of righteousness being presented to Yahweh. It also has an abrupt shift in tone. Rather than being hopeful, Job laments. (See: [righteous](#), [righteousness](#), [unrighteous](#), [unrighteousness](#), [upright](#), [uprightness](#) and [lament](#), [lamentation](#))

Special concepts in this chapter

Resurrection

The events of Job occurred long before the Old Testament was written. Therefore, he likely had very little direct revelation about Yahweh. The resurrection of the dead was apparently not well-known during Job's day. (See: [reveal](#), [revealed](#), [revelation](#))

Important figures of speech in this chapter

Rhetorical questions

Job uses many different rhetorical questions in this chapter in his appeal to Yahweh. (See: [Rhetorical Question](#))

Job 14:1

General Information:

This chapter continues Job's speech, which started in [Job 12:1](#). Job is speaking to God.

ULT

¹ Man, who is born of woman, lives only a few days and is full of trouble.

Man, who is born of woman

This refers to all people, both men and women; all are born into this world. (See: [When Masculine Words Include Women](#))

lives only a few days

This is an exaggeration to emphasize that people live only a short time. Alternate translation: "lives only a very short time" (See: [Hyperbole](#))

is full of trouble

Being "full of trouble" represents experiencing much trouble. Alternate translation: "has many troubles" or "suffers much" (See: [Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information](#))

Job 14:2

He sprouts from the ground like a flower and is cut down

Like the life of a flower, a person's life is short and is easily killed.
(See: [Simile](#))

ULT

² He sprouts from the ground like a flower and is cut down; he flees like a shadow and does not last.

he flees like a shadow and does not last

A person's short life is compared to a shadow that disappears quickly. (See: [Simile](#))

Job 14:3

Do you look at any of these?

Job implies that he does not want God to pay so much attention to him. Alternate translation: “You do not look at any of these.” or “You do not pay so much attention to these. Please do not pay so much attention to me.” (See: [Rhetorical Question](#))

ULT

³ Do you look at any of these? Do you bring me into judgment with you?

look at

Here looking at some one represents paying attention to him in order to judge him. Alternate translation: “pay attention to” or “look for faults in”

Do you bring me into judgment with you?

Job uses this question to show his surprise that God judges him even though Job is so insignificant like the flowers. Alternate translation: “But you judge me.” (See: [Rhetorical Question](#))

Job 14:4

General Information:

Job continues speaking to God.

Who can bring something clean out of something unclean? No one

Job uses this question to persuade God to apply what he knows about unclean things to Job. Alternate translation: “No one can bring something clean out of something unclean” (See: [Rhetorical Question](#))

ULT

⁴ Who can bring something clean out of something unclean? No one.

Job 14:5

Man's days are determined

This can be expressed in active form. Alternate translation: "You determine a man's days" or "You decide how long a man lives" (See: [Active or Passive](#))

The number of his months is with you

The number of man's months being with God represents God deciding the number of months that the man will live. "You decide how many months he will live" (See: [Metonymy](#))

you have appointed his limits that he cannot pass

Passing a limit represents living past a time that God has set for a person to die. Alternate translation: "you have appointed the time that he will die, and he cannot live longer than that" (See: [Metaphor](#))

ULT

⁵ Man's days are determined. The number of his months is with you; you have appointed his limits that he cannot pass.

Job 14:6

hired man

a man who is hired to do a job and goes home afterwards

ULT

⁶ Look away from him that he may rest,
so that he may enjoy his day like a hired
man if he can do so.

Job 14:7**There can be hope for a tree**

The abstract noun “hope” can be expressed with the verb “hope.” The hope is explained in verses 7-9. Alternate translation: “We can hope that a tree will live again” (See: [Abstract Nouns](#) and [Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information](#))

ULT

⁷ There can be hope for a tree; if it is cut down, it might sprout again, so that its tender stalk does not disappear.

it might sprout again

“it might start growing again”

so that its tender stalk does not disappear

Disappearing represents dying. Alternate translation: “so that its young shoot will not die” (See: [Metaphor](#))

Job 14:8

Though

“Even if”

stump

ULT

⁸ Though its root grows old in the earth,
and its stump dies in the ground,

the part of the tree that remains sticking out of the ground after someone has cut down most of the tree

Job 14:9**even if it only smells water**

This describes the dead stump as if it could smell water to represent water being near it. Alternate translation: “even if only a little water is near it” (See: [Personification](#))

ULT

⁹ yet even if it only smells water, it will bud and send out branches like a plant.

it will bud

“it will start growing”

send out branches like a plant

The tree sending out branches represents branches growing on the tree. Alternate translation: “branches will start growing on it like a plant” (See: [Personification](#))

Job 14:10

then where is he?

Job uses this question to emphasize that when a person dies, he is not present. Alternate translation: “no one knows where he is.” or “he is gone.” (See: [Rhetorical Question](#))

ULT

10 But man dies; he becomes weak; indeed, man stops breathing, and then where is he?

Job 14:11

Connecting Statement:

Job begins to use word pictures to describe how it is that “man dies; he becomes weak” (verse 10).

ULT

11 As water disappears from a lake, and
as a river loses water and dries up,

As water disappears from a lake ... dries up

Water that has dried up from a lake or a river cannot return, and once a person dies or grows old, he cannot become young again. (See: [Simile](#))

Job 14:12

Connecting Statement:

Job finishes comparing growing old and dying with water drying up (verse 11).

so people lie down

Lying down represents dying. Alternate translation: “so people die” (See: [Metaphor](#))

do not rise again

Rising again represents living again. Alternate translation: “do not live again” (See: [Metaphor](#))

ULT

¹² so people lie down and do not rise again. Until the heavens are no more, they will not awake nor be roused out of their sleep.

Job 14:13

General Information:

Job continues speaking to God.

Oh, that you would hide me

This is an exclamation showing what Job wants very much but does not really expect to happen. Alternate translation: “I wish that you would hide me” (See: [Exclamations](#))

keep me in private

“keep me locked up” or “keep me hidden”

call me to mind

Call someone to mind is an idiom meaning to think about him. Alternate translation: “think about me” or “remember me” (See: [Idiom](#))

ULT

¹³ Oh, that you would hide me away in Sheol away from troubles, and that you would keep me in private until your wrath is over, that you would set me a fixed time to stay there and then call me to mind!

Job 14:14

If a man dies, will he live again?

The implicit answer is “no.” Alternate translation: “If a man dies, he will not live again.” (See: [Rhetorical Question](#))

If so

What “so” refers to is understood from the previous phrase. Alternate translation: “If he would live again” (See: [Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information](#))

to wait all my weary time there

“to wait all my time there even though I would be weary”

until my release should come

The abstract noun “release” can be expressed with the verb “release.” Alternate translation: “until I should be released” or “until you release me” (See: [Abstract Nouns](#))

ULT

14 If a man dies, will he live again? If so, I would wish to wait all my weary time there until my release should come.

Job 14:15

General Information:

Job continues speaking to God.

I would answer

"I would do what you wanted me to do"

You would have a desire for

The noun "desire" can be expressed with the verbs "desire" or "want." Alternate translation: "You would desire" or "You would want" (See: [Abstract Nouns](#))

for the work of your hands

Here God's hands represent him making things. Job refers to himself as the work of God's hands. Alternate translation: "for me, whom you have made" (See: [Metonymy](#) and [First, Second or Third Person](#))

ULT

15 You would call, and I would answer you. You would have a desire for the work of your hands.

Job 14:16

number and care for

These two verbs together express a single action. Alternate translation: “attentively care for” (See: [Hendiadys](#))

my footsteps

Footsteps represent his life or what he does. Alternate translation: “my life” or “the things I do” (See: [Metonymy](#))

you would not keep track of my sin

Keeping track of Job’s sin represents thinking about his sin. Alternate translation: “you would not look at my sin” or “you would not think about my sin” (See: [Metaphor](#))

ULT

16 You would number and care for my footsteps; you would not keep track of my sin.

Job 14:17**My transgression would be ... you would cover up**

These three lines express the same thought and are used together to emphasize his confidence that God would forgive him. (See: [Parallelism](#))

ULT

¹⁷ My transgression would be sealed up in a bag; you would cover up my iniquity.

My transgression would be sealed up in a bag

Sealing transgression in a bag represents hiding it and refusing to think about it. This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "You would refuse to think about my transgression like someone who hides something in a bag" (See: [Metaphor](#))

you would cover up my iniquity

Covering up someone's iniquity so that it cannot be seen represents refusing to think about it. Alternate translation: "you would hide my iniquity" or "you would ignore my iniquity" (See: [Metaphor](#))

Job 14:18

General Information:

Job continues speaking to God.

mountains fall and come to nothing

“Come to nothing” here is an idiom meaning be completely destroyed. This phrase expands on the word “fall” and emphasizes complete destruction. Alternate translation: “mountains completely fall apart” (See: [Doublet](#))

rocks are moved out of their place

This can be expressed in active form. Alternate translation: “rocks tumble down from their place” (See: [Active or Passive](#))

ULT

18 But even mountains fall and come to nothing; even rocks are moved out of their place;

Job 14:19

Like this, you destroy the hope of man

If it is easier in your language, you can put this phrase at the beginning of verse 18 and adjust the text accordingly. Alternate translation: "You destroy the hope of man, just like ... dust of the earth" (See: [Simile](#))

ULT

19 the waters wear down the stones;
their flooding washes away the dust of
the earth. Like this, you destroy the
hope of man.

you destroy the hope of man

Destroying hope represents causing the things people hope for not to happen. Alternate translation: "You prevent the hope of man from happening" (See: [Metaphor](#))

the hope of man

The abstract noun "hopes" can be expressed with the verb "hope." Alternate translation: "the things that man hopes for" (See: [Abstract Nouns](#))

Job 14:20

General Information:

Job continues speaking to God.

You always defeat him

The word “him” refers to any person. Alternate translation: “You always defeat man” or “You always defeat people”

he passes away

Passing away represents dying. Alternate translation: “he dies” (See: [Euphemism](#))

you change his face

This could mean: (1) the pain just before dying makes his face contract or (2) when a person dies, God makes the person’s face look different.

send him away to die

This represents causing him to die. (See: [Metaphor](#))

ULT

²⁰ You always defeat him, and he passes away; you change his face and send him away to die.

Job 14:21

if they are brought low

Being brought low represents being shamed. Alternate translation: “if they are disgraced” or “if people shame them” (See: [Metaphor](#))

ULT

21 If his sons are honored, he does not know it; and if they are brought low, he does not see it.

Job 14:22

(There are no notes for this verse.)

ULT

²² He feels only the pain of his own body, and he mourns for himself.

Job 15

Job 15 General Notes

Structure and formatting

The ULT sets the lines of this chapter farther to the right on the page than the rest of the text because it is a poem. This chapter is a continuation of the advice of Job's friend, Eliphaz. His words in this chapter are much stronger than when he previously spoke.

Special concepts in this chapter

Eliphaz's advice

Eliphaz tells Job to curse Yahweh. The advice Eliphaz gives to Job is bad advice. He tries to convince Job that he is sinning and has been punished by Yahweh. (See: [curse](#), [cursed](#), [cursing](#) and [sin](#), [sinful](#), [sinner](#), [sinning](#))

Important figures of speech in this chapter

Rhetorical questions

Eliphaz uses many different rhetorical questions in this chapter in order to try to convince Job that he is wrong. These questions help to build Eliphaz's argument. (See: [Rhetorical Question](#))

Job 15:1

Eliphaz the Temanite

This is the name of a man. People from Teman are known as Temanites. See how you translated this in [Job 2:11](#). (See: [How to Translate Names](#))

ULT

¹ Then Eliphaz the Temanite answered and said,

Job 15:2

Should a wise man answer with useless knowledge and fill himself with the east wind?

Eliphaz uses this rhetorical question to rebuke Job. This can be written as a statement. Alternate translation: "A wise man should not answer with useless knowledge nor fill himself with the east wind." (See: [Rhetorical Question](#))

ULT

² "Should a wise man answer with useless knowledge and fill himself with the east wind?"

fill himself with the east wind

The wind represents emptiness. This phrase speaks of a person speaking empty and meaningless words as if that person were full of the wind. Alternate translation: "fill himself with empty words" or "only have meaningless words" (See: [Metaphor](#))

the east wind

"hot air" or "the desert wind"

Job 15:3**Should he reason with unprofitable talk or
with speeches with which he can do no good?**

Eliphaz uses this rhetorical question to rebuke Job. This can be written as a statement. Alternate translation: "He should not reason with unprofitable talk nor with speeches with which he can do no good." or "He should not argue using unprofitable talk or make speeches that accomplish nothing good." (See: [Rhetorical Question](#))

ULT

³ Should he reason with unprofitable talk or with speeches with which he can do no good?

Job 15:4

you diminish respect for God

This could mean: (1) "because of what you say and do, other people no longer respect God" or (2) "you are no longer respecting God."

ULT

⁴ Indeed, you diminish respect for God;
you obstruct devotion to him,

diminish

make smaller

you obstruct devotion to him

This could mean: (1) "you make it difficult for others to devote themselves to God" or (2) "you are no longer devoting yourself to God."

obstruct

block someone's path

devotion to

"meditation on" or "concern for"

Job 15:5

your iniquity teaches your mouth

This describes “iniquity” as if it were a teacher and Job’s mouth is described as if it is learning. This means that his speech is greatly influenced by his iniquity. Alternate translation: “your iniquity is like a teacher and your mouth is like its student” or “it is because of your sin that you speak the way you do” (See: [Personification](#) and [Metaphor](#))

ULT

⁵ for your iniquity teaches your mouth;
you choose to have the tongue of a
crafty man.

your mouth

This speaks of Job, but refers to his “mouth” to place emphasis on what he says. Alternate translation: “you to speak” or “you to say what you say” (See: [Synecdoche](#))

to have the tongue of a crafty man

This refers to the way a crafty man speaks as his “tongue.” Alternate translation: “to speak in the way of a crafty man” (See: [Metonymy](#))

crafty man

man who harms others by lying to them

Job 15:6

Your own mouth condemns you, not mine

This refers to Job and Eliphaz by their “mouths” to place emphasis on what they say. Alternate translation: “You are condemned by what you say, not by what I say” or “You condemn yourself by what you say, it is not I who condemns you” (See: [Synecdoche](#))

ULT

⁶ Your own mouth condemns you, not mine; indeed, your own lips testify against you.

your own lips testify

This speaks of Job, but refers to his “lips” to place emphasis on what he says. Alternate translation: “your own words” or “you testify” (See: [Synecdoche](#))

Job 15:7

General Information:

Each verse is a parallelism that contains two rhetorical questions.
(See: [Parallelism](#) and [Rhetorical Question](#))

Are you the first man that was born?

The implicit answer here is “no.” This rhetorical question can be written as a statement. Alternate translation: “You are not the first man that was born.” (See: [Rhetorical Question](#))

Were you brought into existence before the hills?

The implicit answer here is “no.” This rhetorical question can be written as a statement. Alternate translation: “You were not brought into existence before the hills.” or “God did not bring you into existence before he brought the hills into existence.” (See: [Rhetorical Question](#))

Were you brought

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: “Did God bring you” (See: [Active or Passive](#))

ULT

⁷ Are you the first man that was born?
Were you brought into existence before
the hills?

Job 15:8

Have you heard the secret knowledge of God?

The implicit answer here is “no.” This rhetorical question can be written as a statement. Alternate translation: “You have not heard the secret knowledge of God.” (See: [Rhetorical Question](#))

ULT

⁸ Have you heard the secret knowledge of God? Do you limit wisdom to yourself?

Do you limit wisdom to yourself?

This rhetorical question emphasizes that he cannot limit wisdom to himself. This can be written as a statement. Alternate translation: “You cannot limit wisdom to yourself.” or “You are not the only wise person.” (See: [Rhetorical Question](#))

Job 15:9

What do you know that we do not know?

The implicit answer here is “nothing.” This question can be written as a statement. Alternate translation: “There is nothing that you know that we do not know.” or “Everything you know, we also know.” (See: [Rhetorical Question](#))

ULT

⁹ What do you know that we do not know? What do you understand that is not also in us?

What do you understand that is not also in us?

This speaks of the men having understanding as if it were something “inside” them. Alternate translation: “Everything you understand, we also understand.” or “We understand everything that you understand.” (See: [Rhetorical Question](#))

Job 15:10

With us are both the gray-headed and the very aged men

Eliphaz speaks of him and the other men having learned wisdom from older men and wisdom that had been passed down from men of previous generations as if these older men were physically present with them. Alternate translation: "We acquired wisdom from old gray-haired people, from people who were born before your father was" (See: [Metaphor](#))

ULT

¹⁰ With us are both the gray-headed and the very aged men who are much older than your father.

Job 15:11

Are the consolations of God ... gentle toward you?

This rhetorical question is an accusation, with the implicit answer to the question being “yes.” This question may be written as a statement. Alternate translation: “You must think that the consolations of God are too small for you, the words that are gentle toward you”

ULT

¹¹ Are the consolations of God too small for you, the words that are gentle toward you?

consolations

“comforts” or “sympathies”

Job 15:12

Why does your heart carry you away?

Here the “heart” represents a person’s emotions. Alternate translation: “Why do your emotions take you away?” or “Why do you allow your emotions to guide your decisions?” (See: [Metonymy](#) and [Idiom](#))

ULT

¹² Why does your heart carry you away?
Why do your eyes flash,

Why do your eyes flash

This probably refers to Job appearing angry, specifically the appearance of his eyes. Alternate translation: “Why do your eyes look angry” or “Why are you angry” (See: [Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information](#))

Job 15:13

turn your spirit

Here the “spirit” refers to the whole person. Alternate translation: “turn yourself” (See: [Synecdoche](#))

bring out such words from your mouth

This describes him speaking. Alternate translation: “so you say harsh things against him” (See: [Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information](#))

ULT

13 so that you turn your spirit against God and bring out such words from your mouth?

Job 15:14

What is man ... What is he who is born

These two questions are basically the same and are used together to emphasize that a man cannot be perfect. (See: [Parallelism](#))

What is man that he should be clean?

This rhetorical question is asked to emphasize that a man cannot be completely "clean." This can be written as a statement. Alternate translation: "A man, he cannot be completely clean." (See: [Rhetorical Question](#))

clean

A person who God considers spiritually acceptable is spoken of as if the person were physically clean. (See: [Metaphor](#))

What is he who is born of a woman that he should be righteous?

This rhetorical question is asked to emphasize that a man cannot be completely "righteous." This can be written as a statement. Alternate translation: "A man who is born from a woman cannot be completely righteous." (See: [Rhetorical Question](#))

ULT

14 What is man that he should be clean?
What is he who is born of a woman that
he should be righteous?

Job 15:15

See

This word is used here to draw Job's attention to what is said next.
Alternate translation: "Listen"

his holy ones

"his angels"

clean

Something that God considers spiritually acceptable is spoken of as if it were physically clean. (See: [Metaphor](#))

in his sight

Here sight represents judgment or evaluation. Alternate translation: "in his judgment" (See: [Metaphor](#))

ULT

15 See, God puts no trust even in his holy ones; indeed, the heavens are not clean in his sight;

Job 15:16

abominable and corrupt

These two words basically mean the same thing and emphasize how wicked humans are. (See: [Doublet](#))

who drinks iniquity like water

This describes iniquity as if it were water you can drink. It compares how the evil man desires to commit sin to how readily he desires to drink cool water. Alternate translation: “who love iniquity as much as they love a cup of fresh water” or “who commit evil deeds as often as they drink water” (See: [Metaphor](#))

ULT

16 how much less clean is one who is abominable and corrupt, a man who drinks iniquity like water!

Job 15:17

I will show you

This is an idiom. Alternate translation: “I will explain to you” or “I will make it clear to you” (See: [Idiom](#))

I will announce

“I will declare”

ULT

17 I will show you; listen to me; I will announce to you the things I have seen,

Job 15:18

their ancestors did not hide

Eliphaz emphasizes that their ancestors purposefully taught them these things. Alternate translation: “their ancestors taught openly” (See: [Litotes](#))

ULT

18 the things that wise men have passed down from their fathers, the things that their ancestors did not hide.

Job 15:19**to whom alone the land was given**

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: “to whom alone God gave the land” (See: [Active or Passive](#))

among whom no stranger ever passed

This means that no foreigner lived among them, specifically so that they would not be influenced by pagan religions. Alternate translation: “no one from another country came and caused them to think wrongly about God” (See: [Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information](#))

ULT

19 These were their ancestors, to whom alone the land was given, and among whom no stranger ever passed.

Job 15:20

twists in pain

“suffers a lot of pain.” This is either physical or emotional pain.

the number of years that are laid up

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: “all the years that God has laid up” (See: [Active or Passive](#))

that are laid up

This is an idiom. Alternate translation: “that are prepared” or “that are set aside” (See: [Idiom](#))

ULT

²⁰ The wicked man twists in pain all his days, the number of years that are laid up for the oppressor to suffer.

Job 15:21

A sound of terrors is in his ears

“He constantly hears sounds that terrify him”

ULT

²¹ A sound of terrors is in his ears; while he is in prosperity, the destroyer will come upon him.

Job 15:22

Connecting Statement:

Eliphaz continues describing the wicked man he began to describe in [Job 15:20](#).

return out of darkness

Here “darkness” is a metaphor for trouble or misfortune. Alternate translation: “escape misfortune” (See: [Idiom](#))

the sword waits for him

Here “the sword” is a metonym that represents an enemy who is waiting to kill the evil man. This could mean: (1) he is worried that someone will murder him. Alternate translation: “he worries that someone is about to murder him” or (2) it is certain that he is going to be murdered. Alternate translation: “someone is waiting to murder him” (See: [Metonymy](#) and [Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information](#))

ULT

²² He does not think that he will return out of darkness; the sword waits for him.

Job 15:23

for bread

Here “bread” refers to food in general. Alternate translation: “for food” (See: [Synecdoche](#))

the day of darkness

This is an idiom. Alternate translation: “the day of disaster” or “the moment of his death” (See: [Idiom](#))

is at hand

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

ULT

²³ He goes to various places for bread, saying, ‘Where is it?’ He knows that the day of darkness is at hand.

Job 15:24

Distress and anguish make him afraid; they prevail against him

The words “distress” and “anguish” mean basically the same thing and emphasize the intensity of the emotion. Here these feelings are spoken of as if they were an enemy who is attacking the wicked man. (See: [Doublet](#) and [Personification](#))

ULT

²⁴ Distress and anguish make him afraid; they prevail against him, as a king ready for battle.

prevail against

“overpower” or “defeat”

as a king ready for battle

This compares how his distress and anguish overpower him to how a king, who is ready for battle, would prevail against him. Alternate translation: “just like a king, who is ready for a battle, would prevail against him” (See: [Simile](#))

Job 15:25

he has reached out with his hand against God

“he has shook his fist against God.” This is a sign of aggression. (See: [Symbolic Action](#))

ULT

²⁵ Because he has reached out with his hand against God and has behaved proudly against the Almighty,

Job 15:26

runs at God

This speaks of the wicked man acting aggressively against God as if he were running towards him to attack him. Alternate translation: “attacks God” or “acts violently against God” (See: [Metaphor](#))

with a thick shield

“with his strong shield”

ULT

²⁶ this wicked man runs at God with a stiff neck, with a thick shield.

Job 15:27

This is true

“This” refers to the wicked man running at God from the previous verse.

he has covered his face with his fat and gathered fat on his loins

This wicked man is described as fat and weak, while believing himself to be strong enough to defeat God. Alternate translation: “he is weak with a fat face and fat loins” (See: [Irony](#))

ULT

²⁷ This is true, even though he has covered his face with his fat and gathered fat on his loins,

Job 15:28

which no man inhabits

“which are abandoned”

heaps

piles of useless things

ULT

²⁸ and has lived in desolate cities; in houses which no man inhabits now and which were ready to become heaps.

Job 15:29

He will not be rich; his wealth will not last

These two litotes express that he will be the opposite of rich, that he will be poor. Alternate translation: "he will be poor; all his money will disappear" (See: [Litotes](#))

ULT

²⁹ He will not be rich; his wealth will not last and his possessions will not spread over the land.

Job 15:30

out of darkness

Darkness here represents death. Alternate translation: “out of the darkness of death” (See: [Metonymy](#))

a flame will dry up his stalks

Here the flame represents God’s judgment and the drying up of his stalks represents either the fact that his possessions disappear, or that he will die. Alternate translation: “God will take everything he owns away, like a fire dries out the moist branches of a tree” (See: [Metaphor](#))

the breath of God’s mouth

Here God’s “breath” represents his judgement. Alternate translation: “God’s breath” or “God’s judgment” (See: [Metonymy](#))

he will go away

This refers to him dying. Alternate translation: “he will die” (See: [Euphemism](#))

ULT

³⁰ He will not depart out of darkness; ^[1]
a flame will dry up his stalks; at the
breath of God’s mouth he will go away.
^[2]

Job 15:31

for uselessness will be his reward

This is implied that this is what will happen if he trusts in useless things. Alternate translation: “for if he trusts in them, uselessness will be his reward” (See: [Ellipsis](#))

ULT

³¹ Let him not trust in useless things, deceiving himself; for uselessness will be his reward.

Job 15:32

his branch will not be green

This speaks of the man looking pale and dead as if he were a dried out stalk or tree branch. Alternate translation: "he will look dead, just like the branch of a dead tree does not look green" (See: [Metaphor](#))

ULT

³² It will happen before his time should come to die; his branch will not be green.

Job 15:33

He will drop his ... he will cast off his

These two lines give a similar image, which is repeated to emphasize that this will surely happen. (See: [Parallelism](#))

He will drop his unripe grapes like a grapevine

This speaks of the wicked man growing weak and dying as if he were a grapevine dropping unripe grapes. Alternate translation: "Just like a grapevine drops its unripe grapes, so the wicked man will drop his strength" (See: [Metaphor](#))

ULT

³³ He will drop his unripe grapes like a grapevine; he will cast off his flowers like the olive tree.

he will cast off his flowers like the olive tree

This speaks of the wicked man growing weak and dying as if he were an olive tree dropping its flowers. Alternate translation: "just like an olive tree loses its flowers, so the wicked man will lose his strength" (See: [Metaphor](#))

Job 15:34

the company of godless people

“the group of godless people”

fire will consume their tents of bribery

The phrase “tents of bribery” means that the wicked people bought these tents with the money they made by bribery. Alternate translation: “the tents they bought with their bribes will be burned by fire” (See: [Possession](#))

ULT

³⁴ For the company of godless people will be barren; fire will consume their tents of bribery.

Job 15:35

They conceive mischief and give birth to iniquity; their womb conceives deceit

The same thought is repeated three times to emphasize how much evil these people produce. This speaks of a person planning to do evil things and doing them as if the person were conceiving and giving birth to these things as a woman conceives and gives birth to a child. Alternate translation: “They plan to cause mischief and do evil things; they are always planning to deceive others” (See: [Parallelism](#) and [Metaphor](#))

ULT

³⁵ They conceive mischief and give birth to iniquity; their womb conceives deceit.”

their womb conceives

Here the “womb” is used to refer to the person to emphasize conception, as it is in the womb that conception takes place. Alternate translation: “they conceive” (See: [Synecdoche](#))

Job 16

Job 16 General Notes

Structure and formatting

The ULT sets the lines of this chapter farther to the right on the page than the rest of the text because it is a poem. This chapter is Job's response to Eliphaz.

Special concepts in this chapter

Job's response

Job expresses shock and disgust at the advice Eliphaz gives to him. He even mocks Eliphaz. He describes the difficulties of his circumstances but never curses Yahweh. (See: [curse](#), [cursed](#), [cursing](#))

Advocate

Job describes the need for someone to intercede for him in heaven. This person would be his advocate and provide a witness for him. Although this is probably not intended as a prophecy, it closely parallels the way Jesus intercedes for people in heaven. (See: [intercede](#), [intercession](#), [heaven](#), [sky](#), [heavens](#), [heavenly](#) and [testimony](#), [testify](#), [witness](#), [eyewitness](#), [evidence](#) and [prophet](#), [prophecy](#), [prophesy](#), [seer](#), [prophetess](#))

Job 16:1

(There are no notes for this verse.)

ULT

¹ Then Job answered and said,

Job 16:2

you are all miserable comforters

“instead of comforting me, you all make me more miserable”

ULT

² “I have heard many such things; you are all miserable comforters.”

Job 16:3

Will useless words ever have an end?

Job uses this rhetorical question to express that he wishes that they would stop speaking useless words. This question can be written as a statement. Alternate translation: "How I wish your useless words would end!" (See: [Rhetorical Question](#))

ULT

³ Will useless words ever have an end?
What is wrong with you that you answer like this?

What is wrong with you that you answer like this?

Job uses this rhetorical question to rebuke Eliphaz. Here the word "you" is singular and refers to Eliphaz, who just finished speaking to Job. This question can be written as a statement. Alternate translation: "Eliphaz, you should stop answering me like this!" (See: [Rhetorical Question](#))

Job 16:4

I could collect and join words together

Job speaks of thinking of useless things to say as if his words were random items that he collected and joined together. Alternate translation: "I could think of things to say" (See: [Metaphor](#))

shake my head

This is an action that shows disapproval. (See: [Symbolic Action](#))

in mockery

The word "mockery" can be expressed as a verb. Alternate translation: "to mock you" (See: [Abstract Nouns](#))

ULT

⁴ I also could speak as you do, if you were in my place; I could collect and join words together against you and shake my head at you in mockery.

Job 16:5

I would strengthen you with my mouth, and the quivering of my lips will bring you relief!

The words “mouth” and “lips” are metonyms for the words or messages that a person speaks using his mouth and lips. Here Job is speaking sarcastically and means the opposite of what he says.

Alternate translation: “My words would surely not be encouraging to you! They would surely not lighten your grief” or “By speaking to you as you spoke to me earlier, I would not encourage you or lighten your grief!” (See: [Metonymy](#) and [Irony](#))

ULT

⁵ I would strengthen you with my mouth, and the quivering of my lips will bring you relief!

with my mouth

Here Job’s “mouth” represents what he says. Alternate translation: “with what I say” (See: [Metonymy](#))

the quivering of my lips

This is a metonym for the words or message that he speaks. Alternate translation: “my comforting words” (See: [Metonymy](#))

will bring you relief

This speaks of grief as if it were a heavy physical burden. Alternate translation: “will lessen your grief” or “will help you feel less grief” (See: [Metaphor](#))

Job 16:6

grief

Job has experienced great loss of family and health that is unexplained and therefore causes him "great sorrow and emotional pain."

ULT

⁶ If I speak, my grief is not lessened; if I keep from speaking, how am I helped?

how am I helped?

Job uses this rhetorical question to express that keeping quiet does not lessen his grief. This question can be written as a statement. Alternate translation: "it does not help me at all." (See: [Rhetorical Question](#))

Job 16:7

But now, God, you

Job now turns his complaining to God.

made all my family desolate

“destroyed all my family”

ULT

⁷ But now, God, you have made me weary; you have made all my family desolate.

Job 16:8

You have made me dry up

This means that Job's body has shriveled and become wrinkled.
Alternate translation: "You have made my body shrivel up" (See: [Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information](#))

which itself is a witness against me

Job describes the shriveling of his body as if it were an accuser against him. Alternate translation: "and people think that shows me to be a sinner" (See: [Personification](#))

the leanness of my body rises up against me, and it testifies against

Job describes the thinness of his body as if it were accuser against him. Alternate translation: "They see how thin my body is, and they think that proves that I am guilty" (See: [Personification](#))

against my face

Here Job is referred to by his "face." Alternate translation: "against me" (See: [Synecdoche](#))

ULT

⁸ You have made me dry up, which itself is a witness against me; the leanness of my body rises up against me, and it testifies against my face.

Job 16:9

God has torn me in his wrath and persecuted me ... as he tears me apart

This speaks of God causing Job pain as if God were a wild animal and Job were his prey that he was killing. Alternate translation: “Because God is very angry with me, it is as though he were a wild animal that tore my body apart with his teeth because he was my enemy” (See: [Metaphor](#))

ULT

⁹ God has torn me in his wrath and persecuted me; He grinds his teeth in rage; my enemy fastens his eyes on me as he tears me apart.

my enemy

Job refers to God as his “enemy” as he describes how he has caused him great pain.

fastens his eyes on me

This is an idiom. Alternate translation: “glares at me” (See: [Idiom](#))

Job 16:10

People have gaped with open mouth

To “gape” means to stare in amazement with open mouth.

ULT

10 People have gaped with open mouth at me; they have hit me reproachfully on the cheek; they have gathered together against me.

Job 16:11

hands me over to ungodly people, and throws me into the hands of wicked people

These two lines mean basically the same thing. Together they emphasize Job's feeling of having been betrayed by God. (See: [Parallelism](#))

ULT

¹¹ God hands me over to ungodly people, and throws me into the hands of wicked people.

hands me over to

This is an idiom. Alternate translation: "puts me under the control of" (See: [Idiom](#))

throws me into the hands

Here a person's "hands" refer to his "control." Alternate translation: "delivers me to the control" (See: [Metonymy](#))

Job 16:12

and he broke me apart

Job speaks of his pain and despair as if he himself were something that was broken into pieces. Alternate translation: “but then it felt as though he broke me apart” (See: [Metaphor](#))

dashed me to pieces

Job speaks of God causing him pain and despair as if he were something that God had taken and smashed into pieces. Alternate translation: “it is as though he has taken me by the neck and smashed me to pieces” (See: [Metaphor](#))

he has also set me up as his target

Job speaks of himself being the focus of God’s attacks as if God has set him up as a target to shoot arrows at. Alternate translation: “it is as though he set me up like a target” (See: [Metaphor](#))

ULT

12 I was at ease, and he broke me apart. Indeed, he has taken me by the neck and dashed me to pieces; he has also set me up as his target.

Job 16:13

His archers surround me all around

Job speaks of himself being the focus of God's attacks as if God has set him up as a target and God had archers surrounding him to attack him. Alternate translation: "It is as though his archers have me surrounded" (See: [Metaphor](#))

God pierces my kidneys and does not spare me; he pours out my bile on the ground

Job speaks of the pain he is feeling by comparing it to God piercing his body with arrows. Here "God" represents the arrows that he shoots. Alternate translation: "It feels like God's arrows have pierced my kidneys and my liver, spilling my bile on the ground. He does not spare me" (See: [Metaphor](#))

ULT

13 His archers surround me all around; God pierces my kidneys and does not spare me; he pours out my bile on the ground.

Job 16:14

He smashes through my wall

Job speaks of the pain that he feels by comparing himself to a wall that God smashes through. Alternate translation: “I feel like a wall that God smashes through” or “I feel like a wall that God breaks through” (See: [Metaphor](#))

ULT

14 He smashes through my wall again and again; he runs upon me like a warrior.

he runs upon me like a warrior

Job describes God as a soldier that attacks him. Alternate translation: “it is like he is a warrior who runs at me to attack me” (See: [Metaphor](#))

Job 16:15

I have sewn sackcloth on my skin

Job speaks of wearing clothing made of sackcloth as if the cloth were attached to his body. People often wore sackcloth to express mourning or great grief. Alternate translation: “Because I am mourning, I have sewn together sackcloth to wear as my clothing” or “I wear clothing that I made from sackcloth, because I am mourning” (See: [Metaphor](#))

ULT

15 I have sewn sackcloth on my skin; I have thrust my horn into the ground.

I have thrust my horn into the ground

Job’s “horn” represents the power and authority he had before but now is no more. Alternate translation: “I sit here in the dirt, very depressed” (See: [Metaphor](#))

Job 16:16

on my eyelids is the shadow of death

Here Job's eyes are represented by his "eyelids." Job speaks of his eyes' dark appearance as if his eyes looked like the eyes of a dead person. Alternate translation: "there are dark circles around my eyes" or "my eyes are dark, like the eyes of a dead person" (See: [Synecdoche](#) and [Metaphor](#))

ULT

16 My face is red with weeping; on my eyelids is the shadow of death

Job 16:17

there is no violence in my hands

“Hands” refers to a person’s ability and activity. Alternate translation: “I have not acted violently” (See: [Metonymy](#))

ULT

17 although there is no violence in my hands, and my prayer is pure.

Job 16:18

Earth, do not cover up my blood

Jobs speaks to the “earth” directly even though it cannot hear him, to add strength to his statement. The earth is personified as purposefully covering up his blood after he dies. Alternate translation: “I wish my blood would not soak into the ground but that it would remain on top of the ground as proof of how I died” (See: [Apostrophe](#) and [Personification](#))

ULT

18 Earth, do not cover up my blood; let my cry have no resting place.

Earth, do not cover up my blood

Job speaks of himself dying as if he would be murdered. Here his “blood” is a metonym referring to his death. Alternate translation: “Earth, when I die, do not hide how I died unfairly” or “Let it not be hidden how I died unfairly” (See: [Metonymy](#))

let my cry have no resting place

Job speaks of wanting everyone to know what happened to him as if his “cry” were a person that never stopped testifying to what happened to him and never rested. Alternate translation: “let everyone hear about what has happened to me” (See: [Personification](#))

Job 16:19

see

Job uses this word to draw attention to what he says next. Alternate translation: "listen"

vouches for me

"testifies that I am righteous"

on high

This is an idiom. Alternate translation: "in heaven" or "in heaven on high" (See: [Idiom](#))

ULT

19 Even now, see, my witness is in heaven; he who vouches for me is on high.

Job 16:20

scoff at

“scorn” or “ridicule”

my eye pours out tears

ULT

²⁰ My friends scoff at me, but my eye pours out tears to God.

Job describes how strongly he feels his sorrow. Here he exaggerates how he often cries by saying that tears pour from his eyes. Alternate translation: “my eyes are full of tears while I cry out” (See: [Hyperbole](#))

Job 16:21

for this man

“for me.” Here Job refers to himself in the third person. (See: [First, Second or Third Person](#))

as a man does with his neighbor!

“as a man does for his neighbor.” Job describes how he wants that one in heaven to plead for him. (See: [Simile](#))

ULT

²¹ I ask for that witness in heaven to argue for this man with God as a man does with his neighbor!

Job 16:22

I will go to a place

Here Job is referring to himself dying. Alternate translation: “I will die and go to a place” (See: [Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information](#))

ULT

²² For when a few years have passed, I will go to a place from where I will not return.

Job 17

Job 17 General Notes

Structure and formatting

The ULT sets the lines of this chapter farther to the right on the page than the rest of the text because it is a poem. This chapter is a continuation of Job's response to Eliphaz, but it is more directly addressed to Yahweh.

Special concepts in this chapter

Job's grief

Job expresses grief or great sadness in this chapter. He awaits the justice and intercession of Yahweh as he awaits his own death. (See: [curse](#), [cursed](#), [cursing](#) and [intercede](#), [intercession](#))

Advocate

Job describes the need for someone to intercede for him in heaven. This person would be his advocate and provide a witness for him. Although this is probably not intended as a prophecy, it closely parallels the way Jesus intercedes for people in heaven. (See: [heaven](#), [sky](#), [heavens](#), [heavenly](#) and [testimony](#), [testify](#), [witness](#), [eyewitness](#), [evidence](#) and [prophet](#), [prophecy](#), [prophesy](#), [seer](#), [prophetess](#))

Job 17:1

General Information:

Job continues to speak.

My spirit is consumed

Job refers to himself by his “spirit” to emphasize his inner emotions. He speaks of not having any strength left as if he were something that has been used up. Alternate translation: “I am consumed” or “I have lost all of my strength” (See: [Synecdoche](#) and [Metaphor](#))

my days are over

“my time is over” or “I am going to die soon”

the grave is ready for me

This phrase describes “the grave” as if it is a person who will receive Job as a guest. Alternate translation: “soon I will be dead and buried” (See: [Personification](#))

ULT

¹ My spirit is consumed, and my days are over; the grave is ready for me.

Job 17:2

Surely there are mockers with me

“Those who are around me are mocking me”

Surely

“Certainly” or “There is no doubt that”

my eye must always see

Job refers to himself by his “eyes” to emphasize what he sees. Alternate translation: “I must always see” or “I must always hear” (See: [Synecdoche](#))

their provocation

“their insults.” The word “provocation” can be expressed as a verb. Alternate translation: “them provoking me” or “them, trying to make me angry” (See: [Abstract Nouns](#))

ULT

² Surely there are mockers with me; my eye must always see their provocation.

Job 17:3

Give now a pledge, be a guarantee for me with yourself

Job begins to speak to God. Here he speaks of his situation as if he were in prison. He is asking God to provide a pledge so that he may be released. Alternate translation: "God, give now a pledge so that I may be released from this prison" or "pay for my release from prison" (See: [Metaphor](#))

ULT

³ Give now a pledge, be a guarantee for me with yourself; who else is there who will help me?

who else is there who will help me?

Job uses this rhetorical question to emphasize that there is no one else to help him. This question can be written as a statement. Alternate translation: "there is no one else who will help me." (See: [Rhetorical Question](#))

Job 17:4

General Information:

Job continues to speak.

have kept their hearts

The word “their” refers to his friends. They are referred to by their “hearts” to emphasize their emotions. Alternate translation: “have kept them” or “have kept my friends” (See: [Synecdoche](#))

you will not exalt them over me

“you will not allow them to triumph over me”

ULT

⁴ For you, God, have kept their hearts from understanding; therefore, you will not exalt them over me.

Job 17:5

He who

“Anyone who”

denounces his friends for a reward

“falsely accuses his friends in order to get a profit” or “betrays his friends to receive a reward”

the eyes of his children will fail

The person’s children are referred to here by their “eyes.” This phrase describes the children suffering because of what their father or mother did. Alternate translation: “his children will suffer for it” (See: [Synecdoche](#) and [Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information](#))

ULT

⁵ He who denounces his friends for a reward, the eyes of his children will fail.

Job 17:6

General Information:

Job continues to speak.

he has made me a byword of the people

This means that people speak of him in a mocking way and use his name as an insult. Alternate translation: “because of him, people use my name as an insult” or “because of them, people use my name as a byword” (See: [Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information](#))

they spit in my face

“people spit in my face.” In this culture spitting on someone was a great insult. If spitting has a different meaning in your culture you can write this differently. Alternate translation: “people insult me greatly, by spitting in my face” (See: [Symbolic Action](#))

ULT

⁶ But he has made me a byword of the people; they spit in my face.

Job 17:7

My eye is also dim because of sorrow

Job speaks of his vision as his “eyes.” Alternate translation: “My vision has become weak because I am so sad” or “I am almost blind because of my sorrow” (See: [Metonymy](#))

ULT

⁷ My eye is also dim because of sorrow;
all my body parts are as thin as
shadows.

all my body parts are as thin as shadows

Shadows have no thickness and are infinitely thin. That is an exaggeration of how thin Job’s body parts are. Alternate translation: “all my body parts are very thin” (See: [Simile](#) and [Hyperbole](#))

all my body parts

This is a generalization used to emphasize that his whole body is thin, but refers specifically to his arms and legs. Alternate translation: “my arms and legs” (See: [Hyperbole](#))

Job 17:8

will be stunned

“will be shocked” or “will be horrified”

by this

“by what has happened to me”

will stir himself up against

This is an idiom. Alternate translation: “will be distressed because of” or “will be very angry with” (See: [Idiom](#))

ULT

⁸ Upright men will be stunned by this;
the innocent man will stir himself up
against godless men.

Job 17:9

General Information:

Job continues to speak.

will keep to his way

This is an idiom. Alternate translation: “will continue to live in a righteous way” (See: [Idiom](#))

he who has clean hands

This speaks of a person being innocent as having clean hands. Alternate translation: “he who does what is right” or “he who is innocent” (See: [Metaphor](#))

will grow stronger and stronger

This does not refer only to physical strength but also to the strength of a person’s will and emotions.

ULT

⁹ The righteous man will keep to his way; he who has clean hands will grow stronger and stronger.

Job 17:10

you all

Job is speaking to Eliphaz, Bildad, and Zophar.

come on now

Job invites his friends to debate what he has said. Alternate translation: “come on now, argue with me again” (See: [Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information](#))

ULT

¹⁰ But as for you all, come on now; I will not find a wise man among you.

Job 17:11

General Information:

Job continues to speak.

My days are past

This is an idiom. Alternate translation: “My time is past” or “My life is over” (See: [Idiom](#))

my plans are shattered, and so are the desires of my heart

Here Job’s “heart” represents his inner being. Alternate translation: “my plans will never happen, nor will the things that I have desired most” (See: [Metonymy](#))

ULT

11 My days are past; my plans are shattered, and so are the desires of my heart. ^[1]

Job 17:12

These people, these mockers

These two phrases refer to the same people, namely Job's friends, Eliphaz, Bildad, and Zophar. The second phrase emphasizes their unfriendly attitude. (See: [Doublet](#))

ULT

¹² These people, these mockers, change the night into day; light is near to darkness.

change the night into day

This speaks of the people claiming that night is day as if they actually changed night into day. Alternate translation: "claim it is daytime when it is night" or "say the opposite of what is true, just as night is the opposite of day" (See: [Metaphor](#))

light is near to darkness

It is implied that the mockers claim that it is light when it is close to dark. Alternate translation: "they claim that light is near to darkness" or "they claim that when it is becoming dark, that it is getting light" (See: [Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information](#))

Job 17:13

General Information:

Job continues to speak.

If the only home ... and if I have spread

The instances of “if” here have the meaning of “since”; Job is speaking as if all these things were true. “Since the only home ... and since I have spread” (See: [Hypothetical Situations](#))

have spread my couch in the darkness

Here Job speaks of being prepared to die as having laid his bed in the darkness. Alternate translation: “have prepared myself to go and sleep among the dead” (See: [Metaphor](#))

have spread my couch

“have made my bed”

ULT

13 If the only home I hope for is Sheol;
and if I have spread my couch in the
darkness;

Job 17:14

if I have said

The word “if” here has the meaning of “since”; Job is speaking as if this were true. “since I have said” (See: [Hypothetical Situations](#))

I have said to the pit ... and to the worm

These two lines are a variation to each other and are used together to emphasize how desperate Job is. (See: [Parallelism](#))

the pit

“the grave”

You are my father

Job speaks of the closeness he will soon have with his grave by comparing it to the closeness a man has with his father. Alternate translation: “You are as close to me as my father” or “When I am buried, you will be as close to me as a father” (See: [Metaphor](#))

the worm

“the maggot.” Worms are the small creatures that eat dead bodies.

You are my mother or my sister

Job speaks of the closeness he will soon have with the worms in his grave by comparing it to the closeness a man has with his mother and sisters. Alternate translation: “You are as close to me as my mother or my sister” or “You will be as close to me as a mother or sister” (See: [Metaphor](#))

ULT

14 and if I have said to the pit, ‘You are my father,’ and to the worm, ‘You are my mother or my sister,’

Job 17:15

where then is my hope?

The implicit answer is “nowhere,” because he has no hope. This rhetorical question can be written as a statement. Alternate translation: “I have no hope.” (See: [Rhetorical Question](#))

ULT

¹⁵ where then is my hope? As for my hope, who can see any?

As for my hope, who can see any?

This rhetorical question is used to emphasize that no one expects him to have any hope. This question can be written as a statement. Alternate translation: “No one can see any hope for me.” or “No one expects me to have any more hope.” (See: [Rhetorical Question](#))

Job 17:16

Will hope go down with me ... dust?

The implicit answer is “no.” This question can be written as a statement. Alternate translation: “Hope will not go down with me ... dust.” or “I will no longer hope when I go down ... dust.” (See: [Rhetorical Question](#))

ULT

16 Will hope go down with me to the gates of Sheol when we descend to the dust?”

gates of Sheol

Sheol does not really have gates, but it is a metaphor for Job entering Sheol. Alternate translation: “when I go into Sheol” (See: [Metaphor](#))

when we

“when I and the things that I hope for” or “when I and my hopes.” The word “we” refers to Job and his hope.

descend to the dust

This is an idiom. Alternate translation: “die and are buried” or “go to the grave” (See: [Idiom](#))

Job 18

Job 18 General Notes

Structure and formatting

The ULT sets the lines of this chapter farther to the right on the page than the rest of the text because it is a poem. This chapter is the advice of Job's friend, Bildad. His words in this chapter are much stronger than when he previously spoke, and he is even angry at Job.

Special concepts in this chapter

Bildad's advice

Bildad tells Job to curse Yahweh. The advice Bildad gives to Job is bad advice. He tries to convince Job that he is sinning and has been punished by Yahweh. (See: [curse](#), [cursed](#), [cursing](#) and [sin](#), [sinful](#), [sinner](#), [sinning](#))

Job 18:1

General Information:

Bildad the Shuhite is speaking to Job. (See: [Poetry](#) and [Parallelism](#))

Then Bildad the Shuhite answered and said

“Bildad” is the name of a man who is a member of the tribe of Shuah. See how you translated this in [Job 8:1](#).

ULT

¹ Then Bildad the Shuhite answered and said,

Job 18:2

When will you stop your talk?

This rhetorical question means that Job has been talking for too long. This may be written as a statement. Alternate translation: “Stop talking!” (See: [Rhetorical Question](#))

ULT

² “When will you stop your talk?
Consider, and afterwards we will speak.

Consider, and

“Be reasonable, and” or “Think about these things, and”

Job 18:3

General Information:

Bildad continues speaking to Job.

ULT

³ Why are we regarded as beasts, stupid in your sight?

Why are we regarded as beasts, stupid in your sight?

Bildad uses this rhetorical questions to emphasize to Job that he should not consider his friends as animals who cannot think or speak. It can be written as a statement in active form. Alternate translation: "We should not be regarded as beasts, as stupid in your sight." or "You should not regard us as beasts or think of us as stupid." (See: [Rhetorical Question](#) and [Active or Passive](#))

Why are we

The word "we" probably refers to Bildad and Job's other friends and so is exclusive. (See: [Exclusive and Inclusive 'We'](#))

regarded

Regarding, looking, is a metonym here for thinking well or badly of someone. (See: [Metonymy](#))

in your sight

Here sight represents judgment or evaluation. Alternate translation: "in your judgment" or "in your thinking" (See: [Metaphor](#))

your sight

The word "your" here is plural. Bildad is using sarcasm to tell Job that Job should not think of himself as a great man. Alternate translation: "your sight, you who wrongly think you are great" (See: [First, Second or Third Person](#) and [Irony](#))

Job 18:4

You who tear at yourself in your anger

Here Bildad is stating that it is because of Job's anger and disobedience that he has been injured, not because of God's anger as Job has previously claimed. The word "tear" here means to "injure." Alternate translation: "You who have caused your own injuries because of your anger" (See: [Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information](#))

ULT

⁴ You who tear at yourself in your anger, should the earth be forsaken for you or should the rocks be removed out of their places?

should the earth be forsaken for you or should the rocks be removed out of their places?

This rhetorical question suggests that letting Job, whom they consider a guilty man, go free would be like changing the whole world. Bildad uses these huge exaggerations here to emphasize how outrageous he thinks this is. This can be written as a statement. Alternate translation: "asking God to let you, a guilty man, go free is as silly as asking for God to forsake the earth for your sake or for God to move the rocks out of their places to please you!" (See: [Rhetorical Question](#) and [Hyperbole](#))

should the earth be forsaken

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "should everyone leave the earth" (See: [Active or Passive](#))

should the rocks be removed out of their places

This can be stated in active form. The word "rocks" here refers to large rocks, such as those in the mountains. Alternate translation: "should God remove the rocks from their places" or "should God move mountains around" (See: [Active or Passive](#))

Job 18:5

General Information:

Bildad continues speaking to Job.

Indeed, the light of the wicked person will be put out; the spark of his fire will not shine

Bildad speaks of a wicked person dying as if his lamp were being blown out. Alternate translation: “What will happen is that the lives of wicked people like you end as quickly as we can put out a light or extinguish the flame of a fire” (See: [Metaphor](#))

will be put out

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

ULT

⁵ Indeed, the light of the wicked person will be put out; the spark of his fire will not shine.

Job 18:6**The light will be dark in his tent; his lamp
above him will be put out**

Bildad continues to speak of the wicked person dying. He speaks of the wicked man's life as if it were the light in his tent. Alternate translation: It will be like the light in his tent has turned to darkness, like the lamp above him has gone out" (See: [Metaphor](#))

ULT

⁶ The light will be dark in his tent; his lamp above him will be put out.

Job 18:7

General Information:

Bildad continues to describe the wicked person.

The steps of his strength will be made short

This speaks of the wicked person suddenly experiencing disaster as if he no longer had strength to walk. Alternate translation: "It will be like he no longer has the strength to walk" (See: [Metaphor](#))

his own plans will cast him down

"his own advice makes him fall down." This speaks of the wicked person undergoing disaster as if he fell down. Alternate translation: "his own plans will lead him into disaster" (See: [Metaphor](#))

ULT

⁷ The steps of his strength will be made short; his own plans will cast him down.

Job 18:8

For he will be thrown into a net by his own feet; he will walk into a pitfall

“His own feet will lead him into a net.” Bildad uses this image to say that the way that a wicked person lives his life leads him to sudden disaster. Alternate translation: “It will be as though he led himself into a net, as if he walked right into a pitfall” (See: [Metaphor](#))

ULT

⁸ For he will be thrown into a net by his own feet; he will walk into a pitfall.

a net

cords or ropes that people weave together to create a mesh. People used nets to catch animals.

a pitfall

a pit that has branches and leaves over it so that an animal will walk onto the branches and leaves and fall into the pit

Job 18:9

General Information:

Bildad continues to speak and uses three parallel images to describe how suddenly the wicked person will experience disaster. (See: [Parallelism](#))

ULT

⁹ A trap will take him by the heel; a snare will lay hold on him.

A trap will take him ... a snare will

These four phrases speak of the wicked man experiencing disaster as if he were caught in a trap. Alternate translation: "It will be as though a trap will take him ... a snare will" (See: [Metaphor](#))

A trap

People used this kind of trap to catch birds. The trap snapped shut and held on to the foot of the bird.

will take him by the heel

Here the "heel" refers to the whole foot. Alternate translation: "will take hold of his foot" (See: [Synecdoche](#))

Job 18:10

A noose is ... and a trap for him in the way

These four phrases speak of the wicked man experiencing disaster as if he were caught in a trap. Alternate translation: "It will be as though a noose is ... and a trap for him in the way" (See: [Metaphor](#))

ULT

¹⁰ A noose is hidden for him on the ground; and a trap for him in the way.

A noose is hidden for him on the ground

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "Someone has hidden a noose on the ground in order to catch him" (See: [Active or Passive](#))

A noose

a rope with a loop that grabs hold of an animal's leg when the animal steps in the middle of the loop

a trap for him

The understood verbal phrase "is hidden" may be supplied. Alternate translation: "a trap is hidden on the path to catch him" or "someone will hide a trap to catch him in the way" (See: [Ellipsis](#))

Job 18:11

Terrors will make him afraid on every side

"Terrors all around will make him afraid"

they will chase him at his heels

This speaks of the things that terrify the wicked person as if they were enemies who chased him. Alternate translation: "it will be as if the terrors will chase him all around" (See: [Personification](#))

ULT

¹¹ Terrors will make him afraid on every side; they will chase him at his heels.

Job 18:12

General Information:

Bildad continues to describe the wicked person.

His wealth will turn into hunger

This speaks of the wicked man becoming poor and hungry as if his wealth were something that turned into something else. Alternate translation: “Instead of being wealthy, he will become poor and hungry” (See: [Metaphor](#))

calamity will be ready at his side

The phrase “ready at his side” is an idiom that means that something is continually present. Alternate translation: “he will continually experience disaster” or “he will not be able to avoid calamity” (See: [Idiom](#))

ULT

¹² His wealth will turn into hunger, and calamity will be ready at his side.

Job 18:13

The parts of his body will be devoured

This can be stated in active form. Also, this speaks of a disease destroying his body as if it were an animal that had attacked him and was eating him. Alternate translation: “Disease will eat away at his skin” or “Disease will destroy his skin” (See: [Active or Passive](#) and [Metaphor](#))

ULT

13 The parts of his body will be devoured; indeed, the firstborn of death will devour his parts.

the firstborn of death will devour his parts

Here a disease that kills many people is referred to as “the firstborn of death.” This speaks of that disease destroying his body as if it were an animal that had attacked him and was eating him. Alternate translation: “a deadly disease will destroy the different parts of his body” (See: [Metaphor](#))

Job 18:14

General Information:

Bildad continues to describe the wicked person.

He is torn from the safety of his tent

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: “Disaster rips him out of his tent, where he is safe” (See: [Active or Passive](#))

marched off

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: “it marches him off” or “it forces him to go” (See: [Active or Passive](#))

the king of terrors

This is a reference to “King Death,” a pagan god who was believed to rule over death. Alternate translation: “the one who rules over the dead” or “the king of death” (See: [Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information](#))

ULT

¹⁴ He is torn from the safety of his tent and marched off to the king of terrors.

Job 18:15

People not his own

“People who are not his family”

after they see that sulfur is scattered within his home

People used sulfur to get rid of any diseases from a dying person. This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: “after they spread sulfur all over his home” (See: [Active or Passive](#))

ULT

¹⁵ People not his own will live in his tent after they see that sulfur is scattered within his home.

Job 18:16

General Information:

Bildad continues to describe the wicked person.

His roots will be dried up ... branch be cut off

This speaks of the wicked man dying and having no descendants as if he were a tree whose roots dried up and branches withered, producing no fruit. Alternate translation: "He will die and leave no descendants, he will be like a tree whose roots have dried up and whose branches have all withered" (See: [Metaphor](#))

will his branch be cut off

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "his branches will wither" (See: [Active or Passive](#))

ULT

¹⁶ His roots will be dried up beneath;
above will his branch be cut off.

Job 18:17

His memory will perish from the earth; he will have no name in the street

These phrases have the same meaning and are used together to emphasize the fact that nobody will remember him after he dies. (See: [Parallelism](#))

ULT

¹⁷ His memory will perish from the earth; he will have no name in the street.

His memory will perish from the earth

This speaks of the “memory” of the wicked man as if it were a person who died. Alternate translation: “No one on the earth will remember him” (See: [Metaphor](#))

he will have no name in the street

This is an idiom. Alternate translation: “no one walking along the street will even remember his name” (See: [Idiom](#))

Job 18:18

General Information:

Bildad continues to describe the wicked person.

He will be driven from light into darkness ... and be chased out of this world

These phrases together emphasize the fact that the wicked person will be sent to Sheol, the place of the dead.
(See: [Parallelism](#))

He will be driven from light into darkness

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "God will drive the wicked person from light into darkness"
(See: [Active or Passive](#))

from light into darkness

The word "light" refers to life, and the word "darkness" refers to death. Alternate translation: "from the light of life to the darkness of death" (See: [Metonymy](#))

be chased out of this world

This speaks of God making him leave earth and go where dead people go as if he were chasing him. Alternate translation: "God will make him leave this world" or "God will send him to the place where dead people go" (See: [Metaphor](#))

be chased out

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "God will chase him" (See: [Active or Passive](#))

ULT

18 He will be driven from light into darkness and be chased out of this world.

Job 18:19

He will have no son ... nor any remaining kinfolk where he had stayed

Together these two phrases emphasize that he will have no family or descendants left. (See: [Parallelism](#))

son's son

"grandson" or "grandchild"

kinfolk

"relatives"

ULT

¹⁹ He will have no son or son's son among his people, nor any remaining kinfolk where he had stayed.

Job 18:20

Those who live in the west ... those who live in the east will be frightened by it

The phrases “in the west” and “in the east” are together a merism that refers to all people living everywhere. This is an exaggeration as not everyone on the earth will hear about what happened to a specific wicked person. Alternate translation: “Everyone in the whole world will be horrified and frightened when they see what happens to the wicked person” or “Many people who live in the east and in the west will be horrified and frightened when they see what happens to the wicked person” (See: [Merism](#) and [Hyperbole](#))

ULT

²⁰ Those who live in the west will be horrified at what happens to him one day; those who live in the east will be frightened by it.

one day

“someday”

Job 18:21

General Information:

Bildad continues to describe the wicked person.

**the homes of unrighteous people, the places
of those who do not know God**

ULT

²¹ Surely such are the homes of
unrighteous people, the places of those
who do not know God."

These two phrases have the same meaning and refer to the same people. Here these people are referred to by the places where they live. Alternate translation: "unrighteous people, those who do not know God" (See: [Parallelism](#) and [Metonymy](#))

Job 19

Job 19 General Notes

Structure and formatting

The ULT sets the lines of this chapter farther to the right on the page than the rest of the text because it is a poem. This chapter is Job's response to Bildad.

Verses 25-27 are very important to this book. They show the great depth of Job's faith in Yahweh after his most difficult time. (See: [faith](#))

Job 19:1

General Information:

See: [Poetry](#) and [Parallelism](#)

Connecting Statement:

Job speaks to his three friends.

ULT

¹ Then Job answered and said,

Job 19:2

How long will you make me suffer and break me into pieces with words?

Job uses this question to complain about how his friends are treating him. Alternate translation: “Stop making me suffer and breaking me into pieces with words.” (See: [Rhetorical Question](#))

ULT

² “How long will you make me suffer and break me into pieces with words?”

break me into pieces with words

Job uses this image to say that their words make him feel very sad and hopeless. Alternate translation: “torment me with your words” (See: [Metaphor](#))

Job 19:3

General Information:

Job continues to speak to his three friends.

These ten times you have reproached me

The phrase “These ten times” refers to the way that the friends have completely rebuked Job. Alternate translation: “You have completely reproached me” or “You have reproached me many times” (See: [Idiom](#))

ULT

³ These ten times you have reproached me; you are not ashamed that you have treated me harshly.

you are not ashamed that you have treated me harshly

Job is rebuking them for this. This can be written in positive form. Alternate translation: “You should be ashamed that you have treated me so harshly”

have treated me harshly

“have despised me” or “have publicly ridiculed me”

Job 19:4

have erred

“have sinned by accident” or “mistakenly sinned”

my error remains my own concern

Job implies that his friends are not responsible for continuing to rebuke him since he is the one who made the error. Alternate translation: “my error is my own responsibility, so you should not continue to rebuke me” or “my error did not hurt you, so you should not continue to rebuke me” (See: [Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information](#))

my error

“my sin” or “my mistake”

ULT

⁴ If it is indeed true that I have erred,
my error remains my own concern.

Job 19:5

General Information:

Job continues to speak to his three friends.

If indeed you will exalt yourselves above me

“If you think you are better than I am” or “Since you act as though you are better than I am”

use my humiliation against me

How his friends would do this can be stated clearly. Alternate translation: “claim that my humiliation is proof against me” or “use my humiliation as evidence that I am guilty” (See: [Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information](#))

use my humiliation against me

The abstract noun “humiliation” can be expressed with the verb “humiliate.” Alternate translation: “claim that what has happened to humiliate me proves that I am guilty” (See: [Abstract Nouns](#))

ULT

⁵ If indeed you will exalt yourselves above me and use my humiliation against me,

Job 19:6

has caught me in his net

Job speaks as if God were a hunter that has trapped Job in his net. This metaphor represents God taking control of Job and Job's feeling of helplessness. Alternate translation: "has trapped me" or "has taken control of me" or "has control of what happens to me, so that I am helpless" (See: [Metaphor](#))

ULT

⁶ then you should know that God has done wrong to me and has caught me in his net.

Job 19:7

General Information:

Job continues to speak to his three friends.

See, I cry out

“Pay attention, because what I am about to say is both true and important: I cry out”

Violence!

This is a cry for help. This can be stated clearly. Alternate translation: “Violence! Help!” or “Help! I am being attacked!” (See: [Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information](#))

I call out for help

“I shout for help” or “I cry for help”

but there is no justice

The abstract noun “justice” can be translated with a phrase that makes the meaning clear. Alternate translation: “but no one protects me from those who do me wrong” (See: [Abstract Nouns](#) and [Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information](#))

ULT

⁷ See, I cry out, “Violence!” but I get no answer. I call out for help, but there is no justice.

Job 19:8

He has walled up ... darkness in my path

Job uses these images to describe how God has made him feel helpless and hopeless. (See: [Metaphor](#))

He has walled up my way so that I cannot pass

“God has put a wall on the road that I am walking on” or “He has blocked the way so I cannot keep going”

ULT

⁸ He has walled up my way so that I cannot pass, and he has set darkness in my path.

Job 19:9

He has stripped ... the crown from my head

Job uses these images to say that God has taken his good reputation, wealth, and dignity away from him. (See: [Metaphor](#))

ULT

⁹ He has stripped me of my glory, and he has taken the crown from my head.

He has stripped me of my glory

Job speaks of his glory as if it were a robe that God has taken away. Alternate translation: “He has taken away my glory” (See: [Metaphor](#))

he has taken the crown from my head

The crown refers to Job’s dignity or honor. Alternate translation: “he has taken away my dignity and honor” or “it is as though he has taken my crown off my head” (See: [Metaphor](#))

Job 19:10

General Information:

Job continues to speak to his three friends.

He has broken me down on every side

Job speaks of God ruining him as if Job were building that God is smashing down. Alternate translation: “He has ruined me in every way” or “He has attacked me in every way” (See: [Metaphor](#))

I am gone

The metaphor “being gone” represents being completely destroyed. Alternate translation: “I am completely destroyed” (See: [Metaphor](#))

he has pulled up my hope like a tree

Job speaks of God causing Job not to have hope as if Job’s hope were a tree that God has pulled with its roots out of the ground. Alternate translation: “he has completely taken away all my hope” or “because of what he has done, I can no longer hope for anything good” (See: [Simile](#))

like a tree

This simile is also an ellipsis. You may need to supply the omitted words. Alternate translation: “the way a man pulls a tree up by its roots” (See: [Simile](#) and [Ellipsis](#))

ULT

¹⁰ He has broken me down on every side, and I am gone; he has pulled up my hope like a tree.

Job 19:11

He has also kindled his wrath against me

Job speaks of God's wrath as if it were a fire. Alternate translation: "God has also lit a fire of anger against me" or "God has also become very angry with me" (See: [Metaphor](#))

he regards me as one of his adversaries

"he thinks of me as an enemy"

ULT

11 He has also kindled his wrath against me; he regards me as one of his adversaries.

Job 19:12

His troops come on together

Job speaks of God attacking him as if Job was a city and God was sending an army to attack it. Alternate translation: "God sends his army to attack me" (See: [Metaphor](#))

ULT

¹² His troops come on together; they cast up siege mounds against me and encamp around my tent.

they cast up siege mounds against me

Job speaks of God attacking him as if Job was a city and God's army was piling up dirt against the city wall in order to climb over the wall and attack the city. Alternate translation: "the soldiers pile up dirt in order to climb over my wall" (See: [Metaphor](#))

encamp around my tent

Job speaks of God attacking him as if Job was in his tent and God's army was camping around him and preparing to attack him. Alternate translation: "they camp around my tent and prepare to attack me" (See: [Metaphor](#))

Job 19:13

General Information:

Job continues to speak to his three friends.

He has put my brothers far from me

Being “far from” someone represents being unwilling to relate to him or help him. Alternate translation: “God has caused my brothers to stay away from me” or “God caused my brothers to refuse to help me” (See: [Metaphor](#))

my acquaintances are wholly alienated from me

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: “my acquaintances have alienated themselves from me” or “my friends treat me like a stranger” (See: [Active or Passive](#))

ULT

13 He has put my brothers far from me;
my acquaintances are wholly alienated
from me.

Job 19:14

My kinsfolk have failed me

“My relatives have left me without help”

my close friends

“my intimate friends”

have forgotten me

“have abandoned me” or “have neglected me.” This means that they refuse to treat him according to how he and they had related to each other in the past. It implies that they abandoned him.

ULT

14 My kinsfolk have failed me; my close friends have forgotten me.

Job 19:15

General Information:

Job continues to speak to his three friends.

regard me

“consider me”

I am an alien in their sight

Job describes how people now think of him as an outsider. Here sight represents judgement or evaluation.
Alternate translation: “they think of me as a foreigner” (See: [Metaphor](#))

ULT

¹⁵ Those who once stayed as guests in my house and my female servants regard me as a stranger; I am an alien in their sight.

Job 19:16

but he gives me no answer

“but he does not respond to me” or “but he does not come to me.”
The answer is a response to Job’s call.

although I entreat him with my mouth

The phrase “my mouth” is a metonym which refers to Job speaking. Alternate translation: “even though I speak to him and plead with him” (See: [Metonymy](#))

entreat him

“plead with him”

ULT

16 I call to my servant, but he gives me no answer although I entreat him with my mouth.

Job 19:17

General Information:

Job continues to speak to his three friends.

My breath is offensive to my wife

Here “breath” represents the smell of his breath. If something is offensive to someone, it means that he hates it. Alternate translation: “My wife hates the smell of my breath” (See: [Metonymy](#))

ULT

17 My breath is offensive to my wife; I am even disgusting to those who were born from my mother’s womb.

those who were born from my mother’s womb

Job refers to his brothers and sisters this way to imply that they are people who should love him. The full meaning of this can be made clear. Alternate translation: “my own brothers who should love me” or “my brothers and sisters who should love me” (See: [Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information](#))

Job 19:18

despise me

“hate me” or “detest me”

they speak against me

“they ridicule me” or “they make fun of me”

ULT

¹⁸ Even young children despise me; if I rise to speak, they speak against me.

Job 19:19

All my familiar friends

“All my closest friends” or “All of my friends with whom I shared my secrets.” This refers to his closest friends.

abhor me

“think I am disgusting”

have turned against me

“have betrayed me”

ULT

19 All my familiar friends abhor me;
those whom I love have turned against
me.

Job 19:20

General Information:

Job continues to speak to his three friends.

My bones cling to my skin and to my flesh

“I am just skin and bones” or “My skin sticks to my bones.” Job speaks of his bones, skin, and flesh to describe his appearance. He was extremely thin, and people could easily see the shape of his bones. Some languages have idioms for this.

I survive only by the skin of my teeth

This idiom means that he is barely surviving, that he almost does not survive. Alternate translation: “I am barely alive” or “I hardly survive” (See: [Idiom](#))

ULT

²⁰ My bones cling to my skin and to my flesh; I survive only by the skin of my teeth.

Job 19:21

Have pity upon me

“Have compassion on me”

for the hand of God has touched me

Here “touched me” is a metonym for “hit me.” And, “hand” represents God’s power. Causing Job to suffer is spoken of as if Yahweh were physically hitting him with his hand. Alternate translation: “because God has afflicted me” (See: [Metonymy](#) and [Metaphor](#))

ULT

²¹ Have pity upon me, have pity upon me, my friends, for the hand of God has touched me.

Job 19:22

Why do you pursue me ... God does?

Job uses this question to complain about how his friends are treating him. Alternate translation: "Do not persecute me ... God does!" (See: [Rhetorical Question](#))

ULT

²² Why do you pursue me like God does? Will you ever be satisfied with my flesh?

Will you ever be satisfied with my flesh?

Job uses this question to complain about how his friends are treating him. Alternate translation: "You have consumed my flesh enough!" or "Stop consuming my flesh!" (See: [Rhetorical Question](#))

Will you ever be satisfied with my flesh?

Job speaks of his friends speaking so cruelly to him as if they were wild beasts eating up another animal. Alternate translation: "Stop violently slandering me." or "Stop attacking me with your words." (See: [Metaphor](#))

Job 19:23

General Information:

Job continues to speak to his three friends.

Oh, that my words were now written down

This exclamation tells what Job wishes for. It can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: “I wish that someone would write down my words” (See: [Exclamations](#) and [Active or Passive](#))

my words

“what I am saying”

Oh, that they were inscribed in a book

This exclamation tells what Job wishes for. It can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: “I wish that someone would write them in a book” (See: [Exclamations](#) and [Active or Passive](#))

ULT

²³ Oh, that my words were now written down! Oh, that they were inscribed in a book!

Job 19:24

Oh, that with an iron pen and lead they were engraved in the rock forever

This exclamation tells what Job wishes for. It can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "I wish that someone would use an iron pen and lead to carve them in the rock forever" (See: [Exclamations](#) and [Active or Passive](#))

ULT

²⁴ Oh, that with an iron pen and lead they were engraved in the rock forever!

an iron pen

"an iron chisel." This was a tool used for writing. It was made of iron so that people could carve words in rock.

lead

Lead is a soft metal. We do not know how people used lead when carving rock. They may have filled the letters of the inscription with lead in order to make the inscription last longer.

Job 19:25

General Information:

Job continues to speak to his three friends.

my Redeemer

“My Defender.” Here “Redeemer” refers to a person who will rescue Job by proving Job’s innocence, restoring his honor, and giving him justice.

ULT

²⁵ But as for me, I know that my Redeemer lives, and that at last he will stand on the earth;

at last he will stand on the earth

This refers to standing to speak in court. This could mean: (1) the Redeemer will be the last one to speak in the court. Alternate translation: “he will judge whether or not I am guilty” or (2) the Redeemer will stand in this final court to defend Job. Alternate translation: “at last he will defend me in court” (See: [Metonymy](#))

Job 19:26

after my skin ... is destroyed

Possible meanings are that this refers to: (1) his body being destroyed by disease or (2) his body decaying after he has died.

in my flesh I will see God

His flesh represents his body, and “in my flesh” represents being alive. Alternate translation: “while I live in my body, I will see God” (See: [Metonymy](#))

ULT

²⁶ after my skin, that is, this body, is destroyed, then in my flesh I will see God.

Job 19:27

my own eyes—I, and not someone else

The synecdoche “my own eyes” represents Job. The phrases “my eyes” and “and not someone else” emphasize that Job himself will actually see God. It is not that someone else will see God and tell Job about him. (See: [Synecdoche](#))

ULT

²⁷ I will see him with my own eyes—I, and not someone else. My heart fails within me.

My heart fails within me

People thought of the heart as being where the emotions are. So the heart failing represents him having very many emotions. Alternate translation: “I am very emotional about it” or “My emotions overwhelm me as I think about that” (See: [Metaphor](#))

My heart fails within me

This could mean: (1) Job feels very hopeful, thankful, and happy or (2) Job feels exhausted waiting to see his Redeemer. (See: [Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information](#))

Job 19:28

General Information:

Job continues to speak to his three friends.

How we will persecute him!

This is an exclamation. This could mean: (1) that they will certainly persecute Job or (2) that they will persecute him severely. (See: [Exclamations](#))

The root of his troubles lies in him

The “root” represents the source. Alternate translation: “He is the source of all his troubles” or “He has all these troubles because of what he has done” (See: [Metaphor](#))

ULT

²⁸ If you say, ‘How we will persecute him! The root of his troubles lies in him,’

Job 19:29

then be afraid of the sword

Possible meanings are that the sword represents: (1) God judging them. Alternate translation: “then be afraid that God will judge you” or (2) God killing them. Alternate translation: “then be afraid that God will kill you” (See: [Metonymy](#))

ULT

²⁹ then be afraid of the sword, because wrath brings the punishment of the sword, so that you may know there is a judgment.”

because wrath brings the punishment of the sword

The abstract nouns “wrath” and “punishment” can be expressed with the adjective “angry” and the verb “punish.” This could mean: (1) God’s anger results in punishment. Alternate translation: “because God will be angry with you and punish you” or (2) the anger of Job’s friends results in punishment. Alternate translation: “because if you are so angry with me, God will punish you” (See: [Abstract Nouns](#))

brings

“causes” or “results in”

there is a judgment

The abstract noun “judgment” can be expressed with the verb “judge.” Alternate translation: “God judges people” (See: [Abstract Nouns](#))

Job 20

Job 20 General Notes

Structure and formatting

The ULT sets the lines of this chapter farther to the right on the page than the rest of the text because it is a poem. This chapter is the advice of Job's friend, Zophar. His words in this chapter are much stronger than when he previously spoke, and he is even angry at Job. He claims that Job took advantage of the poor and is being punished for it.

Special concepts in this chapter

Zophar's advice

Zophar tells Job to curse Yahweh. The advice Zophar gives to Job is bad advice. He tries to convince Job that he is sinning and has been punished by Yahweh. (See: [curse](#), [cursed](#), [cursing](#) and [sin](#), [sinful](#), [sinner](#), [sinning](#))

Important figures of speech in this chapter

Metaphors

There are many metaphors used in this chapter. Zophar uses them to explain the temporary nature of life and riches. He also uses them to describe God's punishment of Job. (See: [Metaphor](#))

Job 20:1

General Information:

Zophar replies to Job.

Zophar the Naamathite

See how you translated this man's name in [Job 2:11](#). Since this is the second time that Zophar speaks, some translations omit "the Naamathite" here.

ULT

¹ Then Zophar the Naamathite answered and said,

Job 20:2

My thoughts make me answer quickly

The idea of Zophar's thoughts making him do something represents his strong desire to do something. Alternate translation: "I want very much to answer you quickly" (See: [Metaphor](#))

ULT

² "My thoughts make me answer quickly because of the worry that is in me."

because of the worry that is in me

The abstract noun "worry" can be expressed with the adjective "worried." The reason for the worry can be stated clearly. Alternate translation: "because I am very worried about you" or "because I am very worried because of what you said" (See: [Abstract Nouns](#) and [Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information](#))

Job 20:3

I hear a rebuke that dishonors me

The abstract noun “rebuke” can be expressed with the verb “rebuke.” Alternate translation: “I hear you rebuke me, and what you say dishonors me” or “You insult me by how you rebuke me” (See: [Abstract Nouns](#))

ULT

³ I hear a rebuke that dishonors me, but a spirit from my understanding answers me.

a spirit from my understanding answers me

Here “spirit” probably refers to a thought or idea. Alternate translation: “a thought from my understanding answers me”

a spirit from my understanding answers me

This “spirit” or thought is spoken of as if it were a person that could answer Zophar. Alternate translation: “I have a thought from my understanding, and now I know what I wanted to know” (See: [Personification](#))

a spirit from my understanding answers me

The content of the answer can be stated clearly. Alternate translation: “a thought from my understanding answers me about how I can reply to you” or “I have a thought from my understanding, and now I know how I can reply to you” (See: [Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information](#))

a spirit from my understanding answers me

The abstract nouns “spirit” and “understanding” can be expressed with the verbs “think” and “understand.” Alternate translation: “because I understand things, I have thought, and now I know how I can reply to you” (See: [Abstract Nouns](#))

Job 20:4

General Information:

Zophar continues speaking with Job.

**Do you not know this fact from ancient times
... man on earth**

Zophar begins a rhetorical question to cause Job to think deeply about what he will now say.

ULT

⁴ Do you not know this fact from ancient times, when God placed man on earth:

Job 20:5

Connecting Statement:

Zophar finishes the rhetorical question he began in verse 4.

the triumph ... for a moment?

Zophar uses a rhetorical question to cause Job to think deeply about what he will now say. This can be translated as a statement. "Surely you know ... man on earth; the triumph ... for a moment." (See: [Rhetorical Question](#))

ULT

⁵ the triumph of a wicked man is short,
and the joy of a godless man lasts only
for a moment?

the triumph of a wicked man is short

The abstract noun "triumph" can be expressed with the verbs "triumph" or "celebrate." Alternate translation: "the wicked man triumphs only a short time" or "the wicked person celebrates for only a little while" (See: [Abstract Nouns](#))

the joy of a godless man lasts only for a moment

The abstract noun "joy" can be expressed with the verb "rejoice" or the adjective "happy." The word "moment" is an exaggeration to emphasize that the time is very short. Alternate translation: "a godless man rejoices for only a moment" or "the godless man is happy for only a very short time" (See: [Abstract Nouns](#) and [Hyperbole](#))

Job 20:6

General Information:

Zophar continues speaking to Job.

Though his height reaches up to the heavens

“Though the wicked person’s height reaches up to the heavens.” The abstract noun “height” can be expressed with the adjective “tall.” Alternate translation: “Though he is as tall as the heavens” (See: [Abstract Nouns](#))

Though his height reaches up to the heavens

The wicked man’s height represents either his reputation or his pride. Also, here “reaches up to the heavens” represents being very great. Alternate translation: “Though his reputation is great” or “Though his pride is great” (See: [Metaphor](#))

his head reaches to the clouds

“and though his head is as high as the clouds.” This also represents his reputation or pride being great. This means the same as the previous phrase. (See: [Metaphor](#) and [Parallelism](#))

ULT

⁶ Though his height reaches up to the heavens, and his head reaches to the clouds,

Job 20:7

will perish permanently like his own feces

Feces mixes in with the ground and disappears. The reference to feces may also imply that the wicked person is worthless. Alternate translation: “will perish permanently like his feces, which completely disappears in the ground” (See: [Simile](#))

ULT

⁷ yet such a person will perish permanently like his own feces; those who have seen him will say, ‘Where is he?’

will perish permanently like his own feces

If people are embarrassed about the word feces, translators may refer to something else that disappears completely. Alternate translation: “will disappear permanently like dust that the wind blows away” (See: [Simile](#))

Job 20:8

General Information:

Zophar continues speaking to Job.

He will

“The wicked person will”

ULT

⁸ He will fly away like a dream and will not be found; indeed, he will be chased away like a vision of the night.

He will fly away like a dream ... he will be chased away like a vision of the night

Here “fly away” and “be chased away” represent disappearing. They may also imply being forgotten, since dreams and visions disappear when people forget them. Alternate translation: “He will disappear like a dream ... he will be forgotten like a vision of the night” (See: [Parallelism](#) and [Simile](#))

will not be found

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

Job 20:9

The eye that saw him

The eye represents a person. Alternate translation: “Anyone who saw him” or “The people who saw him” (See: [Synecdoche](#))

his place

The phrase “his place” represents those who live in his place. Alternate translation: “the people who live in his place” or “his family” (See: [Metonymy](#))

ULT

⁹ The eye that saw him will see him no more; his place will see him no longer.

Job 20:10

General Information:

Zophar continues speaking to Job.

His children

“The wicked person’s children”

his hands will have to give back his wealth

Here the word “hands” refers to the wicked man’s children. When he dies, his children will have to return everything that he took from others. (See: [Metonymy](#))

ULT

¹⁰ His children will apologize to poor people; his hands will have to give back his wealth.

Job 20:11

His bones are full of youthful strength

The word “bones” represents his body. Being “full of youthful strength” represents being strong like a young person. Alternate translation: “His body is strong like a young person’s body” (See: [Synecdoche](#) and [Metaphor](#))

ULT

11 His bones are full of youthful strength, but it will lie down with him in the dust.

but it will lie down with him in the dust

The word “it” refers to his youthful strength. The metonym “lie down ... in the dust” represents dying. The strength dying is a metaphor for disappearing. Alternate translation: “but his youthful strength will die with him” or “but his youthful strength will disappear when he dies” (See: [Metonymy](#) and [Metaphor](#))

Job 20:12

General Information:

Zophar continues speaking to Job.

Although wickedness is sweet in his mouth

Here “wickedness is sweet” represents a person enjoying doing wicked things. Alternate translation: “Although doing wicked things is pleasurable like tasting sweet food in the mouth” (See: [Metaphor](#))

although he hides it under his tongue

Zophar speaks of wickedness as if it were sweet food that a person puts under his tongue so it will stay in his mouth and he can taste it for a long time. (See: [Metaphor](#))

ULT

¹² Although wickedness is sweet in his mouth, although he hides it under his tongue,

Job 20:13

he holds it there and does not let it go but keeps it still in his mouth

Zophar speaks of wickedness as if it were sweet food that a person puts under his tongue so it will stay in his mouth and he can taste it for a long time. (See: [Metaphor](#))

ULT

¹³ although he holds it there and does not let it go but keeps it still in his mouth—

Job 20:14

the food in his intestines turns bitter

When food turns bitter in the stomach, it causes pain and a bitter taste. This is a metaphor for a person experiencing the painful consequences of doing wicked things. Alternate translation: “those wicked things become like food that has turned bitter in the stomach” or “the consequences of those wicked things are painful like food that becomes sour in the stomach” (See: [Metaphor](#))

ULT

14 the food in his intestines turns bitter;
it becomes the poison of asps inside him.

it becomes the poison of asps inside him

This image is even worse than sour food in the stomach. This is a metaphor for a person experiencing the terrible consequences of doing wicked things. Alternate translation: “the consequences of doing those wicked things are painful like the poison of asps inside him” (See: [Metaphor](#))

asps

poisonous snakes

Job 20:15

General Information:

Zophar continues speaking to Job.

He swallows down riches ... cast them out of his stomach

Zophar speaks of gaining and losing wealth as if it were food that a person eats and vomits. Alternate translation: "The wicked person becomes very wealthy, but he loses his wealth like a person who vomits up his food. God causes him to lose it all" (See: [Metaphor](#))

He swallows down riches

Here, **swallows down riches** could mean: (1) accumulating riches and storing them selfishly. Alternate translation: "The wicked man gains much wealth and keeps it all for himself" or (2) accumulating riches in wicked ways. Alternate translation: "The wicked man steals many riches" (See: [Metaphor](#))

God will cast them out of his stomach

Here "cast them out of his stomach" is a metonym for causing the man to vomit them. This is a metaphor for causing the man to lose his riches. (See: [Metonymy](#) and [Metaphor](#))

cast

throw

ULT

¹⁵ He swallows down riches, but he will vomit them up again; God will cast them out of his stomach.

Job 20:16

He will suck the poison of asps

Here “suck the poison of asps” represents doing evil things. Both are very dangerous. Alternate translation: “Doing evil things is like sucking the poison of asps” or “He will do evil things and endanger his life like a person who sucks the poison of asps” (See: [Metaphor](#))

ULT

16 He will suck the poison of asps; the viper’s tongue will kill him.

asps

poisonous snakes

the viper’s tongue will kill him

The viper is a poisonous snake. Its tongue represents its poisonous bite. Alternate translation: “the viper’s poisonous bite will kill him” or “the viper will bite him and he will die” (See: [Metonymy](#))

the viper’s tongue will kill him

The viper represents the man’s wickedness. Alternate translation: “his wickedness will kill him like a viper’s bite” (See: [Metaphor](#))

Job 20:17

General Information:

Zophar continues speaking to Job.

the streams, the torrents of honey and butter

ULT

17 He will not enjoy the streams, the torrents of honey and butter.

“Streams” and “torrents” are metaphors that represent abundance. “Honey” and “butter” are metonyms that represent the good things that God gives people. Alternate translation: “the abundance of good things that God gives his people” (See: [Metaphor](#) and [Metonymy](#))

Job 20:18

the fruit of his labor

Normally “the fruit of his labor” simply refers to the results of his labor. In this case it refers to the things the wicked man had stolen. Alternate translation: “the things he had worked to get” or “the things he had stolen” (See: [Metaphor](#) and [Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information](#))

ULT

18 He will give back the fruit of his labor and will not be able to eat it; he will not enjoy the wealth earned by his commerce.

will not be able to eat it

Here “to eat” the fruit of his labor represents enjoying the things he had stolen. Alternate translation: “will not be able to enjoy them” (See: [Metaphor](#))

Job 20:19

(There are no notes for this verse.)

ULT

¹⁹ For he has oppressed and neglected poor people; he has violently taken away houses that he did not build.

Job 20:20

(There are no notes for this verse.)

ULT

²⁰ Because he has known no satisfaction himself, he will not be able to save anything in which he takes pleasure.

Job 20:21

There is nothing left that he did not devour

This can be reworded with only one of the negatives. Alternate translation: "He devoured everything, and there is nothing left" or "There is nothing left because he devoured everything" (See: [Double Negatives](#))

ULT

²¹ There is nothing left that he did not devour; therefore his prosperity will not be permanent.

There is nothing left that he did not devour

Here "devour" represents taking things for himself. Alternate translation: "There is nothing left that he did not take for himself" or "He took everything for himself, and there is nothing left" (See: [Metaphor](#))

Job 20:22

he will fall into trouble

“he will suddenly experience trouble”

the hand of everyone who is in poverty will come against him

ULT

²² In the abundance of his wealth he will fall into trouble; the hand of everyone who is in poverty will come against him.

Here “hand” represents power, and “hand ... will come against him” represents people attacking him. The abstract noun “poverty” can be expressed with the adjective “poor.” Alternate translation: “everyone who is in poverty will attack him” or “everyone who is poor will attack him” (See: [Metonymy](#) and [Abstract Nouns](#))

Job 20:23

General Information:

Zophar continues speaking to Job.

to fill his stomach

Here “fill his stomach” is a metonym meaning eat a lot. (See: [Metonymy](#))

ULT

²³ When he is about to fill his stomach, God will throw the fierceness of his wrath on him; God will rain it down on him while he is eating.

God will throw the fierceness of his wrath on him

The “fierceness of his wrath” represents God’s anger and punishment. Throwing the punishment on him represents punishing him severely. Alternate translation: “God will be angry and throw down his punishment on him” or “God will be angry and punish him severely” (See: [Metaphor](#))

God will rain it down on him

“God will cause it to rain down on him.” Here “rain it down on him” represents causing much punishment to happen to the man. Alternate translation: “God will punish him severely” (See: [Metaphor](#))

Job 20:24

will flee from the iron weapon

The iron weapon represents the person carrying it. Alternate translation: "will flee from the person carrying an iron weapon" (See: [Metonymy](#))

ULT

²⁴ Although that man will flee from the iron weapon, a bow of bronze will shoot him.

a bow of bronze will shoot him

The bow represents the person who shoots an arrow with it. Alternate translation: "someone with a bronze bow will shoot him" (See: [Metonymy](#))

Job 20:25

liver

This is a large and important part of the body. If someone shoots through it with an arrow, the person who is shot will die.

Terrors come over him

He will suddenly become very afraid. Alternate translation: “he is terrified” (See: [Metaphor](#))

ULT

²⁵ He pulls it out of his back and the gleaming point comes out of his liver. Terrors come over him.

Job 20:26

Complete darkness is reserved for his treasures

“Complete darkness” here is a metaphor for destruction. Alternate translation: “Destruction is reserved for his treasures” or “His treasures will be destroyed” (See: [Metaphor](#))

ULT

²⁶ Complete darkness is reserved for his treasures; a fire not fanned will devour him; it will consume what is left in his tent.

a fire not fanned will devour him

Here “devour” is a metaphor meaning destroy. Alternate translation: “a fire that is not fanned will destroy him” (See: [Metaphor](#))

a fire not fanned will devour him

The phrase “not fanned” implies that no human will start the fire. Rather, God will cause the fire. Alternate translation: “a fire that is not started by humans will destroy him” or “God will cause a fire to destroy him” (See: [Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information](#))

it will consume

Here “consume” is a metaphor meaning destroy. Alternate translation: “the fire will destroy” (See: [Metaphor](#))

Job 20:27

The heavens ... the earth

Possible meanings are: (1) those who live in the heavens and the earth or (2) Zophar is describing the heavens and the earth as if they are humans who will testify in court against the wicked person. (See: [Metonymy](#) and [Personification](#))

ULT

²⁷ The heavens will reveal his iniquity,
and the earth will rise up against him as
a witness.

Job 20:28

General Information:

This concludes Zophar's speech to Job.

vanish

disappear

his goods will flow away on

Here "flow away" represents being taken away from him. Alternate translation: "his goods will be taken away from him, like goods that float away in a flood, on" (See: [Metaphor](#))

his goods

"his possessions"

the day of God's wrath

Here "wrath" represents punishment. The abstract noun "wrath" can be expressed with the verb punish. Alternate translation: "the day when God punishes people" (See: [Metonymy](#))

ULT

²⁸ The wealth of his house will vanish;
his goods will flow away on the day of
God's wrath.

Job 20:29

This is the wicked man's portion from God

Here "portion from God" represents what God has decided should happen to someone. It is spoken of as if it were something that God would give him. Alternate translation: "This is what God has decided should happen to the wicked man" (See: [Metaphor](#))

ULT

²⁹ This is the wicked man's portion from God, the heritage reserved for him by God."

the heritage reserved for him by God

This represents what God has decided should happen to someone. It is spoken of as if it were something that God would give him as an inheritance. Alternate translation: "what God has planned to give to him" or "what God has planned should happen to him" (See: [Metaphor](#))

Job 21

Job 21 General Notes

Structure and formatting

The ULT sets the lines of this chapter farther to the right on the page than the rest of the text because it is a poem. This chapter is Job's response to Zophar. It is also a response to all three of his friends in general.

Special concepts in this chapter

Ancestor's sin

In the ancient Near East, it was common to believe that a person could be punished because of the sins of their fathers and ancestors. It was seen as the punishment of a god. While a father's sin may have consequences for their children, Yahweh does not punish people because of their father's sin. (See: [believe](#), [believer](#), [belief](#), [unbeliever](#), [unbelief](#) and [sin](#), [sinful](#), [sinner](#), [sinning](#) and [Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information](#))

Important figures of speech in this chapter

Rhetorical questions

Job uses many different rhetorical questions in this chapter in order to try to convince Zophar that he is wrong. These questions help to build Job's argument. (See: [Rhetorical Question](#))

Job 21:1

Connecting Statement:

Job begins to answer Zophar's accusations.

ULT

¹ Then Job answered and said,

Job 21:2

(There are no notes for this verse.)

ULT

² “Listen carefully to my words, and let this be the comfort you offer to me.

Job 21:3

Put up with me

“Allow me” or “Be patient with me”

mock on

“you can continue mocking me.” Job is using sarcasm to imply that his friends would ignore what he would say and continue to mock him. (See: [Irony](#))

ULT

³ Put up with me, and I also will speak;
after I have spoken, mock on.

Job 21:4

Connecting Statement:

Job continues speaking to his friends.

As for me, is my complaint to a person? Why should I not be impatient?

Job uses questions to emphasize that he thinks it is fair for him to complain to God. Alternate translation: "I am not complaining to a person. I have the right to be impatient" (See: [Rhetorical Question](#))

ULT

⁴ As for me, is my complaint to a person? Why should I not be impatient?

Job 21:5

lay your hand upon your mouth

“cover your mouth with your hand.” Possible meanings are that: (1) this is a response to being astonished. Alternate translation: “cover your mouth with your hand” or (2) this is a symbol that the person will not speak. Alternate translation: “do not say anything” (See: [Symbolic Action](#))

ULT

⁵ Look at me and be astonished, and lay your hand upon your mouth.

Job 21:6

trembling seizes my body

“fear causes my body to tremble” or “I shake with fear”

ULT

⁶ When I think about my sufferings, I am terrified, and trembling seizes my body.

Job 21:7

Connecting Statement:

Job continues speaking to his friends.

Why do wicked people continue to live, become old, and grow mighty in power?

Job uses this question to show that his friends are wrong to think evil men always suffer. Alternate translation: "Wicked people indeed continue to live, become old, and become wealthier." (See: [Rhetorical Question](#))

ULT

⁷ Why do wicked people continue to live, become old, and grow mighty in power?

Job 21:8

**Their descendants are established with them
in their sight ... their offspring are established
before their eyes**

This two clauses mean the same thing and emphasize that this is true. (See: [Parallelism](#))

ULT

⁸ Their descendants are established with them in their sight, and their offspring are established before their eyes.

in their sight ... before their eyes

These phrases mean the same thing because “eyes” refers to sight. Wicked people get to watch their descendants grow strong and wealthy. (See: [Parallelism](#) and [Metonymy](#))

Job 21:9

Their houses

Here “houses” refers to the family members that lives in them.
Alternate translation: “Their families” (See: [Metonymy](#))

rod of God

This refers to God’s punishment. (See: [Metonymy](#))

ULT

⁹ Their houses are safe from fear;
neither is the rod of God on them.

Job 21:10

Connecting Statement:

Job continues speaking to his friends.

does not lose her calf prematurely

“she does not miscarry” or “her calf is born healthy and strong”

ULT

¹⁰ Their bull breeds; it does not fail to do so; their cow gives birth and does not lose her calf prematurely.

Job 21:11

little ones like a flock

Job compares these children to lambs to emphasize that they run, play, and are happy. (See: [Simile](#))

ULT

11 They send out their little ones like a flock, and their children dance.

Job 21:12

tambourine

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

ULT

¹² They sing to the tambourine and harp and rejoice with the music of the flute.

Job 21:13

Connecting Statement:

Job continues speaking with his friends.

their days

“their lifetime”

they go down quietly to Sheol

This is a polite way of saying that they die. Alternate translation: “they die peacefully” (See: [Euphemism](#))

ULT

¹³ They spend their days in prosperity,
and they go down quietly to Sheol.

Job 21:14

your ways

This refers to how God wants people to behave.

ULT

¹⁴ They say to God, 'Depart from us for we do not wish any knowledge of your ways.'

Job 21:15

What is the Almighty, that we should worship him? What advantage would we get if we prayed to him?

The wicked people use these questions to mock God. Alternate translation: "We do not believe that this Almighty God is worthy of our worship. He can do nothing for us." (See: [Rhetorical Question](#))

ULT

¹⁵ What is the Almighty, that we should worship him? What advantage would we get if we prayed to him?'

Job 21:16

Connecting Statement:

Job continues speaking to his friends.

See, is not their prosperity in their own hands?

Here “hands” refers to their power or control. Job uses this question to challenge his friends. Alternate translation: “Look, these wicked people claim that they make themselves prosper!” (See: [Metonymy](#) and [Rhetorical Question](#))

ULT

¹⁶ See, is not their prosperity in their own hands? I have nothing to do with the advice of wicked people.

Job 21:17

How often is it ... their calamity comes upon them?

Job uses this question to emphasize that it seems to him that God does not punish the wicked very often. Alternate translation: "It is not often ... their calamity comes upon them." (See: [Rhetorical Question](#))

ULT

¹⁷ How often is it that the lamp of wicked people is put out, or that their calamity comes upon them? How often does it happen that God distributes sorrows to them in his anger?

the lamp of wicked people is put out

Job compares extinguishing the lamp to a person dying. This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "that God causes them to die suddenly" (See: [Metaphor](#) and [Active or Passive](#))

the lamp of wicked people

Job compares the life of the wicked to a lamp that is burning. (See: [Metaphor](#))

How often does it happen ... in his anger?

Job uses this second question to emphasize that it seems to him that God does not punish the wicked very often. Alternate translation: "It is not often ... in his anger." (See: [Rhetorical Question](#))

Job 21:18

How often is it ... the storm carries away?

Job uses this third question to emphasize that it seems to him that God does not punish the wicked very often. Alternate translation: "It is not often ... the storm carries away." (See: [Rhetorical Question](#))

ULT

18 How often is it that they become like stubble before the wind or like chaff that the storm carries away?

they become like stubble before the wind or like chaff that the storm carries away

The death of the wicked is spoken of as if they were worthless less chaff and stubble that blows away. This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "God takes them away like the wind blows away the chaff" (See: [Simile](#) and [Active or Passive](#))

Job 21:19

Connecting Statement:

Job continues speaking to his friends.

You say

These words are added by most versions in order to make it clear that the Job is quoting his friends in the next statement.

ULT

¹⁹ You say, 'God lays up one's guilt for his children to pay.' Let him pay it himself, so that he might know his guilt.

God lays up one's guilt for his children to pay

Guilt is spoken of as something that can be stored for later use. Here "to pay" refers to punishment for sin.

Alternate translation: "God keeps a record of a person's sins, then he punishes the person's children for his wicked deeds" (See: [Metaphor](#))

Let him pay it himself,...know his guilt

Job now begins to state his own opinion. It may be helpful to state this explicitly using an indirect quotation. "But I say that he should pay it himself,...know his guilt" (See: [Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information](#))

Job 21:20

Let his eyes see

Here “eyes” refers to the person. Alternate translation: “Let him see” (See: [Synecdoche](#))

let him drink of the wrath of the Almighty

Here the wrath of God is spoken of as if it were a drink that a person can taste, and tasting is a metonym for experiencing the drink. Job wants the wicked person to experience God’s punishment. (See: [Metaphor](#) and [Metonymy](#))

ULT

20 Let his eyes see his own destruction, and let him drink of the wrath of the Almighty.

Job 21:21

For what does he care about his family after him when the number of his months is cut off?

Job uses this question to show that punishing the evil man's children is not effective. This can be stated in active form. Alternate

translation: "For the wicked man does not care what happens to his family after he has died!" (See: [Rhetorical Question](#) and [Active or Passive](#))

ULT

²¹ For what does he care about his family after him when the number of his months is cut off?

the number of his months is cut off

This is a polite way of saying that he dies. (See: [Euphemism](#))

the number of his months

This refers to the length of his life.

Job 21:22

Connecting Statement:

Job continues speaking to his friends.

Can anyone teach God knowledge since he judges even those who are high?

Job asks this question to emphasize that God knows everything. Alternate translation: "Obviously, no one can teach anything to God since he even judges those in heaven." (See: [Rhetorical Question](#))

those who are high

This could mean: (1) "those who are in heaven" or (2) "powerful people."

ULT

²² Can anyone teach God knowledge since he judges even those who are high?

Job 21:23

One man dies in his full strength

Job contrasts this man who dies in health and peace to the man who dies in sorrow and pain in [Job 21:25](#). You can make this explicit. Alternate translation: "If there are two men, one may die in his full strength" (See: [Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information](#))

ULT

²³ One man dies in his full strength, being completely quiet and at ease.

Job 21:24

His body is full of milk ... the marrow of his bones is moist

Both of these phrases mean that the person is very healthy. (See: [Parallelism](#))

ULT

²⁴ His body is full of milk, and the marrow of his bones is moist.

His body is full of milk

The word for "milk" may mean "fat." Either rendering means he is well-fed. Alternate translation: "His body if full of fat" (See: [Idiom](#))

the marrow of his bones is moist

This idiom means his body is youthful and healthy. (See: [Idiom](#))

Job 21:25

Connecting Statement:

Job continues speaking to his friends.

Another man dies

Job contrasts this man to the man who dies in peace in [Job 21:23](#).

in bitterness of soul

Here sorrow is spoken of as if it tasted bitter, and “soul” refers to the whole man. Alternate translation: “with anger and resentment” or “after living a sad life” (See: [Metaphor](#) and [Synecdoche](#))

has never experienced anything good

This can be stated in positive form. Alternate translation: “has experienced only bad things”

ULT

²⁵ Another man dies in bitterness of soul, one who has never experienced anything good.

Job 21:26

They lie down alike in the dust

This is a polite way to say that they died. Alternate translation: "They both die and people bury them" (See: [Euphemism](#))

ULT

²⁶ They lie down alike in the dust; the worms cover them both.

the worms cover them both

Worms are associated with decay of dead bodies. Alternate translation: "the worms in the dirt eat their dead bodies" (See: [Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information](#))

Job 21:27

Connecting Statement:

Job continues speaking to his friends.

See

Job uses this phrase to call attention to the statement that follows. Alternate translation: "Listen"

ULT

²⁷ See, I know your thoughts, and the ways in which you wish to wrong me.

Job 21:28

Where now is the house of the prince? Where is the tent in which the wicked man once lived?

Job believes his friends will ask these question to scold him. Both questions mean the same thing. Alternate translation: "See, the house of the evil ruler is gone. The tent of the wicked man has disappeared." (See: [Rhetorical Question](#) and [Parallelism](#))

ULT

²⁸ For you say, 'Where now is the house of the prince? Where is the tent in which the wicked man once lived?'

Job 21:29

Connecting Statement:

Job continues speaking to his friends.

Have you never asked traveling people?

Job uses these questions to rebuke his friends for not learning from people who travel. Alternate translation: “You should listen to those who have traveled to distant places.” (See: [Rhetorical Question](#))

ULT

²⁹ Have you never asked traveling people? Do you not know the evidence they can tell,

Job 21:30

Connecting Statement:

Job finishes asking a rhetorical question that begins with the words “Do you not know” in verse 29.

the wicked man is kept ... from the day of wrath?

Job uses these questions to rebuke his friends for not learning from people who travel. “Those who have traveled to distant places will tell you ... from the day of wrath.” (See: [Rhetorical Question](#))

the wicked man is kept from the day of calamity ... he is led away from the day of wrath

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: “God keeps the wicked man from the day of calamity ... God leads him away from the day of wrath” (See: [Active or Passive](#))

ULT

³⁰ that the wicked man is kept from the day of calamity, and that he is led away from the day of wrath?

Job 21:31

Connecting Statement:

Job continues speaking to his friends.

Who will condemn the wicked man's way to his face?

Job uses this question to contradict his friends' belief that the wicked are always judged. Alternate translation: "No one condemns the wicked man to his face." (See: [Rhetorical Question](#))

to his face

This means no one will go directly to the wicked person and condemn him personally. (See: [Idiom](#))

Who will repay him for what he has done?

Job uses this question to contradict his friends' belief that the wicked are always judged. Alternate translation: "No one repays him for the bad things that he has done." (See: [Rhetorical Question](#))

ULT

³¹ Who will condemn the wicked man's way to his face? Who will repay him for what he has done?

Job 21:32

he will be borne

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

ULT

32 Yet he will be borne to the grave;
men will keep watch over his tomb.

Job 21:33

The clods of the valley will be sweet to him

Job imagines that the dead person will even enjoy the dirt that is put on him. This means the wicked person will even have a good death and a nice burial after a fulfilling life. "Clods" refer to the earth that covers the grave. Alternate translation: "He will enjoy being covered with the dirt of the valley" or "He will enjoy being buried in the dirt of the valley" (See: [Synecdoche](#))

ULT

33 The clods of the valley will be sweet to him; all people will follow after him, as there were innumerable people before him.

all people will follow after him, as there were innumerable people before him

Job emphasizes that a large crowd of people will be in the funeral procession of this imaginary wicked man to honor him. Alternate translation: "a huge number of people go to the grave site; some go in front of the procession and some come behind" (See: [Hypothetical Situations](#))

Job 21:34

Connecting Statement:

This concludes Job's speech to his friends.

**How then do you comfort me with nonsense,
since in your answers there is nothing but
falsehood?**

Job uses a question to scold his friends. Alternate translation: "You cannot comfort me with nonsense. All of your answers are false." (See: [Rhetorical Question](#))

ULT

³⁴ How then do you comfort me with nonsense, since in your answers there is nothing but falsehood?"

Job 22

Job 22 General Notes

Structure and formatting

The ULT sets the lines of this chapter farther to the right on the page than the rest of the text because it is a poem. This chapter is a continuation of the advice of Job's friend, Eliphaz. His words in this chapter are much stronger than when he previously spoke.

Special concepts in this chapter

Repentance

Eliphaz tries to get Job to repent in this chapter. Eliphaz assumes that he is righteous, while assuming Job is not. (See: [repent](#), [repentance](#) and [righteous](#), [righteousness](#), [unrighteous](#), [unrighteousness](#), [upright](#), [uprightness](#))

Important figures of speech in this chapter

Rhetorical questions

Eliphaz uses many different rhetorical questions in this chapter in order to try to convince Job that he is wrong. These questions help to build Eliphaz's argument. (See: [Rhetorical Question](#))

Job 22:1

Eliphaz the Temanite

See how you translated this man's name in [Job 2:11](#). (See: [How to Translate Names](#))

ULT

¹ Then Eliphaz the Temanite answered and said,

Job 22:2

Can a man be useful to God? Can a wise man be useful to him?

Both questions mean basically the same thing. Eliphaz uses questions to emphasize that a person's actions and wisdom do not benefit God. Alternate translation: "A man cannot be useful to God. A wise man cannot be useful to him." (See: [Parallelism](#) and [Rhetorical Question](#))

ULT

² "Can a man be useful to God? Can a wise man be useful to him?"

Job 22:3

Is it any pleasure to the Almighty if you are righteous? Is it gain to him if you make your ways blameless?

Both of these statements mean the same thing. Eliphaz uses questions to emphasize that Job's actions do not help God. Alternate translation: "The Almighty does not receive any pleasure if you are righteous. He does not gain anything if you make your ways blameless." (See: [Parallelism](#) and [Rhetorical Question](#))

ULT

³ Is it any pleasure to the Almighty if you are righteous? Is it gain to him if you make your ways blameless?

Job 22:4

Connecting Statement:

Eliphaz continues speaking to Job.

Is it because of your reverence for him that he rebukes you and takes you to judgment?

ULT

⁴ Is it because of your reverence for him that he rebukes you and takes you to judgment?

Eliphaz uses questions to scold Job and accuse him of committing terrible sins. Alternate translation: "It is certainly not because you have been devoted to him that God rebukes you and takes you to judgment!" (See: [Rhetorical Question](#))

Job 22:5

Is not your wickedness great? Is there no end to your iniquities?

Eliphaz uses questions to scold Job and accuse him of committing terrible sins. Alternate translation: "As you know, he judges you because your wickedness is great and you keep on sinning!" (See: [Rhetorical Question](#))

ULT

⁵ Is not your wickedness great? Is there no end to your iniquities?

Job 22:6

Connecting Statement:

Eliphaz continues speaking to Job.

you have demanded guarantee of a loan

This refers to a lender taking something from the borrower to ensure that the borrower pays him back.

you have stripped away clothing from the naked

Eliphaz is accusing Job of taking clothes as security from poor people who borrowed from him.

ULT

⁶ For you have demanded guarantee of a loan from your brother for no reason, and you have stripped away clothing from the naked.

Job 22:7

withheld bread

Here “bread” refers to food in general. Alternate translation: “withheld food” (See: [Synecdoche](#))

ULT

⁷ You have not given water to weary people to drink; you have withheld bread from hungry people

Job 22:8

possessed the earth ... lived in it

Eliphaz is accusing Job of taking land from poor people and not allowing them to live on it. He is emphasizing this point by restating it twice. (See: [Parallelism](#))

possessed the earth

Eliphaz is exaggerating the amount of land that Job owned in order to portray Job as greedy. Alternate translation: “possessed a great amount of land” (See: [Hyperbole](#))

ULT

⁸ although you, a mighty man,
possessed the earth, although you, an
honored man, lived in it.

Job 22:9

Connecting Statement:

Eliphaz continues speaking to Job.

You have sent widows away empty

“You made widows go away with nothing”

widows

women whose husbands have died

the arms of the fatherless have been broken

Here “arms” refer to power. This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: “you even oppressed orphans” (See: [Metonymy](#) and [Active or Passive](#))

ULT

⁹ You have sent widows away empty;
the arms of the fatherless have been
broken.

Job 22:10

snare are all around you ... **sudden** fear troubles you

These are metaphors for trouble and danger. Alternate translation: "you are always in danger ... you become afraid for no reason" (See: [Metaphor](#))

ULT

¹⁰ Therefore, snares are all around you, and sudden fear troubles you.

Job 22:11

There is darkness ... an abundance of waters covers you

Each of these metaphors means troubles and dangers are all around Job because of his sin. (See: [Metaphor](#))

an abundance of waters

“a flood”

ULT

¹¹ There is darkness, so that you cannot see; an abundance of waters covers you.

Job 22:12

Connecting Statement:

Eliphaz continues speaking to Job.

Is not God in the heights of heaven?

Eliphaz uses this question to say that God sees Job's sin and will judge him. Alternate translation: "God is in the heights of heaven and sees everything that happens on earth." (See: [Rhetorical Question](#) and [Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information](#))

ULT

¹² Is not God in the heights of heaven?
Look at the height of the stars, how
high they are!

Look at the height of the stars, how high they are!

Eliphaz implies that God is higher than the stars. This can be made explicit. Alternate translation: "Look at how high the stars are. God is even higher than the stars!" (See: [Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information](#))

Job 22:13

What does God know? Can he judge through the thick darkness?

Eliphaz uses these questions to imply that Job has said these things against God. Alternate translation: "God does not know what happens on earth. He sits in dark clouds and cannot see to judge us." (See: [Rhetorical Question](#))

ULT

¹³ You say, 'What does God know? Can he judge through the thick darkness?'

Job 22:14

he walks on the vault of heaven

Here “vault” refers to the barrier that ancient people believed separated the earth from heaven. Alternate translation: “he lives too far away in heaven to see what happens here” (See: [Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information](#))

ULT

14 Thick clouds are a covering to him, so that he does not see us; he walks on the vault of heaven.’

Job 22:15

Connecting Statement:

Eliphaz continues speaking to Job.

ULT

¹⁵ Will you keep the old way that wicked men have walked—

Job 22:16

those who were snatched away

Dying is compared to God snatching them away. This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: “those who died” or “those whom God took away” (See: [Metaphor](#) and [Active or Passive](#))

those whose foundations have washed away like a river

The death of wicked people is compared to buildings that had their foundations washed away by a flood. (See: [Simile](#))

ULT

16 those who were snatched away
before their time, those whose
foundations have washed away like a
river,

Job 22:17

What can the Almighty do to us?

Eliphaz quotes a question wicked people use to mock God. Alternate translation: "The Almighty cannot do anything to us!" (See: [Rhetorical Question](#))

ULT

17 those who said to God, 'Depart from us'; those who said, 'What can the Almighty do to us?'

Job 22:18

Connecting Statement:

Eliphaz continues speaking to Job.

Yet he filled

“Yet God filled”

the plans of wicked people are far from me

The idiom “far from me” means Eliphaz rejects them. Alternate translation: “but I will not listen to their wicked plans” (See: [Idiom](#))

ULT

18 Yet he filled their houses with good things; the plans of wicked people are far from me.

Job 22:19

see their fate

“know what will happen to the wicked”

laugh them to scorn

“mock the wicked people”

ULT

¹⁹ Righteous people see their fate and are glad; innocent people laugh them to scorn.

Job 22:20

They say

"The righteous say"

Surely those who rose up against us are cut off

ULT

²⁰ They say, 'Surely those who rose up against us are cut off; fire has consumed their possessions.'

Here "those who rose up" refers to the wicked people. This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "Surely God has destroyed the wicked people who harmed us" (See: [Active or Passive](#))

Job 22:21

Connecting Statement:

Eliphaz continues speaking to Job.

Now

Eliphaz uses this word to introduce something important he is about to say.

ULT

²¹ Now agree with God and be at peace with him; in that way, good will come to you.

Job 22:22

instruction from his mouth

Here “from his mouth” represents what God has spoken. Alternate translation: “the instruction that God has spoken” (See: [Metonymy](#))

store up his words

God’s words are compared to treasures that Job could keep in a storeroom. Alternate translation: “treasure his commands” (See: [Idiom](#))

your heart

Here “heart” refers to Job’s thoughts. Alternate translation: “your mind” (See: [Metonymy](#))

ULT

²² Receive, I beg you, instruction from his mouth; store up his words in your heart.

Job 22:23

Connecting Statement:

Eliphaz continues speaking to Job.

you will be built up

Eliphaz compares Job's restoration to the rebuilding of a house that has fallen. This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "he will heal you and make you prosper again" (See: [Metaphor](#) and [Active or Passive](#))

if you put unrighteousness far away from your tents

Unrighteousness is pictured as a person who is living in Job's tent who must be removed. Alternate translation: "if you and everyone in your house stops sinning" (See: [Metaphor](#))

ULT

²³ If you return to the Almighty, you will be built up, if you put unrighteousness far away from your tents.

Job 22:24

Lay your treasure down in the dust

To lay a treasure in the dust is to treat it as unimportant. Alternate translation: "Consider your riches as unimportant as dust" (See: [Idiom](#))

ULT

²⁴ Lay your treasure down in the dust, the gold of Ophir among the stones of the brooks,

the gold of Ophir among the stones of the brooks

To put gold in the stream is to treat it as no more valuable than stones. Alternate translation: "the gold of Ophir is as worthless as stones in a stream" (See: [Idiom](#))

Ophir

This is the name of a region famous for its gold. (See: [How to Translate Names](#))

Job 22:25

the Almighty will be your treasure, precious silver to you

This means God will be more valuable to Job than any treasure. (See: [Metaphor](#))

ULT

²⁵ and the Almighty will be your treasure, precious silver to you.

Job 22:26

Connecting Statement:

Eliphaz continues speaking to Job.

you will lift up your face to God

This means Job will no longer be ashamed but will trust in God. Alternate translation: “you will be able to approach God confidently” (See: [Idiom](#))

ULT

²⁶ For then you will take pleasure in the Almighty; you will lift up your face to God.

Job 22:27

(There are no notes for this verse.)

ULT

²⁷ You will make your prayer to him, and he will hear you; you will pay your vows to him.

Job 22:28

it will be confirmed for you

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

light will shine on your paths

God’s blessing is compared to a light on all of Job’s paths. Alternate translation: “it will be like a light shining on the road in front of you” (See: [Metaphor](#))

ULT

28 You will also decree anything, and it will be confirmed for you; light will shine on your paths.

Job 22:29

Connecting Statement:

This concludes Eliphaz's speech to Job.

the one with lowered eyes

Here "lowered eyes" refers to humility. Alternate translation: "the humble person" (See: [Idiom](#))

ULT

²⁹ God humbles a proud man, and he saves the one with lowered eyes.

Job 22:30

He will rescue even the man who is not innocent; who will be rescued through the cleanness of your hands

Job being innocent is spoken of as if his hands were physically clean.

The phrase “who will be rescued” can be stated in active form.

Alternate translation: “Yahweh will rescue even the person who is not innocent because you do what is right” (See: [Metaphor](#) and [Active or Passive](#))

ULT

³⁰ He will rescue even the man who is not innocent; who will be rescued through the cleanness of your hands.”

He will rescue even the man who is not innocent; who will be rescued through the cleanness of your hands

Some versions of the Bible read, “He rescues the innocent person; so he will rescue you when your hands are clean”

Job 23

Job 23 General Notes

Structure and formatting

The ULT sets the lines of this chapter farther to the right on the page than the rest of the text because it is a poem. This chapter is Job's response to Eliphaz.

Special concepts in this chapter

Court

This chapter uses an extended metaphor of a court case to describe Job's "case," which he seeks to bring to Yahweh, who is a judge. Cultures without a legal system will have difficulty translating this chapter. (See: [Metaphor](#))

Job 23:1

(There are no notes for this verse.)

ULT

¹ Then Job answered and said,

Job 23:2

Even today my complaint is bitter

Here “Even today” emphasizes that his friends arguments have not changed Job’s situation at all. Alternate translation: “In spite of what you have said, my complaint is still bitter”

ULT

² “Even today my complaint is bitter; my hand ^[1] is heavy because of my groaning.

my complaint is bitter

Job speaks of his unanswered complaint against God as if it was a bitter taste in his mouth. Alternate translation: “my unanswered complaint is as bad as bitter food in my mouth” (See: [Idiom](#))

my hand ... heavy because of my groaning

This could mean: (1) “I can barely lift my hand because of my groaning” or (2) “God’s hand continues to make me suffer in spite of my groaning” where “hand” refers to God’s power to punish. (See: [Metonymy](#))

Job 23:3

Connecting Statement:

Job continues speaking.

Oh, that I knew where ... Oh, that I might come

These two lines mean the same thing and emphasize Job's desire to meet with God. (See: [Parallelism](#))

I might find him

"I might find God"

ULT

³ Oh, that I knew where I might find him! Oh, that I might come to his place!

Job 23:4

lay my case ... fill my mouth

These two lines mean the same thing and emphasize Job's desire to explain his situation to God. (See: [Parallelism](#))

fill my mouth with arguments

Here "fill my mouth" refers to speaking. Alternate translation: "I would speak all of my arguments" (See: [Metonymy](#))

ULT

⁴ I would lay my case in order before him and fill my mouth with arguments.

Job 23:5

I would learn the words ... would understand

These two lines mean basically the same thing and emphasize Job's desire to hear God's answer. (See: [Parallelism](#))

the words with which he would answer me

"the answer that he would give me"

ULT

⁵ I would learn the words with which he would answer me and would understand what he would say to me.

Job 23:6

Connecting Statement:

Job continues speaking.

Would he

“Would God”

ULT

⁶ Would he argue against me in the greatness of his power? No, he would pay attention to me.

Job 23:7

There

This refers to the place where God is.

I would be acquitted forever by my judge

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: “my judge would acquit me forever” or “God, who is my judge, would say that I am innocent once and for all” (See: [Active or Passive](#))

ULT

⁷ There the upright person might argue with him. In this way I would be acquitted forever by my judge.

Job 23:8

Job continues speaking. He begins using a merism to say that he has looked everywhere. (See: [Merism](#))

ULT

⁸ See, I go eastward, but he is not there,
and westward, but I cannot perceive
him.

Job 23:9

north ... south

This is the end of the merism that begins with the words “eastward ... westward” in verse 8. By mentioning these four directions, Job emphasizes that he has looked everywhere. (See: [Merism](#))

where he hides himself

Job speaks of God as if he is a person who hides.

ULT

⁹ To the north, where he is at work, but I cannot see him, and to the south, where he hides himself so that I cannot see him.

Job 23:10

Connecting Statement:

Job continues speaking.

he knows the way that I take

Job's actions are spoken of as if he is walking on a path. Alternate translation: "God knows what I do" (See: [Metaphor](#))

I will come out like gold

Job believes that the test will prove that he is as pure as refined gold. Alternate translation: "he will see that I am as pure as gold when anything not pure has been burned away" (See: [Simile](#))

ULT

10 But he knows the way that I take;
when he has tested me, I will come out
like gold.

Job 23:11

My foot has held fast to his steps

Here “My foot” refers to Job. Alternate translation: “I have followed the path he has shown me” (See: [Synecdoche](#))

I have kept to his way

Job’s obedience is spoken of as if he is walking in a path that God showed him. Alternate translation: “I have done what he told me to do” (See: [Metaphor](#))

turned not aside

This can be stated in positive form. Alternate translation: “followed it exactly”

ULT

11 My foot has held fast to his steps; I have kept to his way and turned not aside.

Job 23:12

I have not gone back from

This can be stated in positive form. Alternate translation: "I have always obeyed"

of his lips

This phrase refers to the message that God spoke. Alternate translation: "that he spoke" (See: [Metonymy](#))

the words of his mouth

Here God is represented by his "mouth." Alternate translation: "what he said" (See: [Synecdoche](#))

ULT

¹² I have not gone back from the commandment of his lips; I have treasured the words of his mouth more than my portion of food.

Job 23:13

Connecting Statement:

Job continues speaking.

But he is one of a kind, who can turn him back?

Job uses this question to emphasize that there is no one like God and no one can force him to change. Alternate translation: "But there is no one like him, and nobody can make him change his mind." or "But he alone is God, and no one can influence him." (See: [Rhetorical Question](#))

What he desires, he does

"He does whatever he wants to do"

ULT

¹³ But he is one of a kind, who can turn him back? What he desires, he does.

Job 23:14

he carries out his decree against me

“he is doing to me what he said he would do”

there are many like them

“he has many similar plans for me”

ULT

¹⁴ For he carries out his decree against me; there are many like them.

Job 23:15

General Information:

Each of these verses has the form of a parallelism to emphasize the main point Job makes there. (See: [Parallelism](#))

Connecting Statement:

Job continues speaking.

ULT

15 Therefore, I am terrified in his presence; when I think about him, I am afraid of him.

Job 23:16

For God has made my heart weak; the Almighty has terrified me

These two lines mean basically the same thing and emphasize that Job is very afraid of God. (See: [Parallelism](#))

ULT

¹⁶ For God has made my heart weak;
the Almighty has terrified me.

made my heart weak

A person whose heart is weak is a person who is timid or fearful. Alternate translation: “made me afraid” (See: [Idiom](#))

Job 23:17

I have not been brought to an end by darkness

This can be stated in active form. This could mean: (1) "The thick darkness in front of me has not made me silent" or (2) "Darkness has not stopped me" or "God has stopped me, not the darkness."

(See: [Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information](#) and [Active or Passive](#))

ULT

¹⁷ I have not been brought to an end by darkness, because of the thick darkness that covers the gloom of my face.

the gloom of my face

Here Job refers to himself by his "face." Alternate translation: "my sadness" (See: [Synecdoche](#))

Job 24

Job 24 General Notes

Structure and formatting

The ULT sets the lines of this chapter farther to the right on the page than the rest of the text because it is a poem. This chapter is Job's response to Eliphaz. It is a continuation of the previous chapter.

Special concepts in this chapter

Court

This chapter uses an extended metaphor of a court case to describe Job's "case," which he seeks to bring to Yahweh, who is a judge. Cultures without a legal system will have difficulty translating this chapter. (See: [Metaphor](#))

Important figures of speech in this chapter

Rhetorical questions

Job uses many different rhetorical questions in this chapter in order to try to convince Eliphaz that he is wrong. These questions help to build Job's argument. (See: [Rhetorical Question](#))

Job 24:1

Connecting Statement:

Job continues speaking.

Why are times for judging wicked people not set by the Almighty?

Job uses this question to express his frustration that God has not judged evil. This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "I do not understand why God does not set a time when he will judge wicked people." or "The Almighty should set a time when he will judge wicked people." (See: [Rhetorical Question](#) and [Active or Passive](#))

ULT

¹ Why are times for judging wicked people not set by the Almighty? Why do not those who are faithful to God see his days of judgment come?

Why do not those who are faithful to God see his days of judgment come?

Job uses this question to express his frustration that the righteous have not seen God judge evil. Alternate translation: "It seems that those who obey him never get to see him judge the wicked." or "God should show the day he will judge the wicked to those who know him." (See: [Rhetorical Question](#))

Job 24:2

Connecting Statement:

Job continues speaking.

boundary markers

These are stones or other objects to mark the boundary between the lands owned by different people.

pastures

land with grass for animals to eat

ULT

² There are wicked people who remove boundary markers; there are wicked people who take away flocks by force and put them in their own pastures.

Job 24:3

They drive away

“They steal”

those without fathers

“orphans” or “children whose parents have died”

they take the widow’s ox as security

“they take widows’ oxen to guarantee that the widows will pay back the money that they loaned to those widows”

widow

a woman whose husband has died

as security

A lender would take something from a borrower to ensure that the borrower pays him back.

ULT

³ They drive away the donkey of those without fathers; they take the widow’s ox as security.

Job 24:4

out of their path

“out of their way” or “off the road”

poor people of the earth all hide themselves

The word “all” is an exaggeration to show that many poor people are afraid of these wicked people. (See: [Hyperbole](#))

ULT

⁴ They force needy people out of their path; poor people of the earth all hide themselves from them.

Job 24:5

Connecting Statement:

Job continues speaking.

**these poor people go out to their work like
wild donkeys in the wilderness, looking
carefully for food**

ULT

⁵ See, these poor people go out to their work like wild donkeys in the wilderness, looking carefully for food; perhaps the Arabah will provide them food for their children.

These poor people are spoken of as if they are wild donkeys who do not know where they will find food. Alternate translation: “these poor people go out to search for food as if they were wild donkeys in the wilderness” (See: [Simile](#))

wild donkeys

“donkeys that no one owns or cares for”

Job 24:6**Poor people reap in the night ... they glean grapes**

These two lines describe the same thing and are used together to emphasize that these people are so hungry that they are forced to steal food at night. (See: [Parallelism](#))

ULT

⁶ Poor people reap in the night in other people's fields; they glean grapes from the harvest of those wicked people.

Job 24:7**They lie naked ... they have no covering**

These two lines describe the same thing and are used together to emphasize that these people do not have enough clothing to keep warm. (See: [Parallelism](#))

ULT

⁷ They lie naked all night without clothing; they have no covering in the cold.

Job 24:8

Connecting Statement:

Job continues speaking.

They are wet with the showers of the mountains

“They become wet when it rains in the mountains”

ULT

⁸ They are wet with the showers of the mountains; they lie next to large rocks because they have no shelter.

Job 24:9

orphans from their mothers' breast

Here "breast" refers to the mother. This implies that these orphans are still very young. This can be made explicit. Alternate translation: "young orphans out of their mothers' arms" or "fatherless infants from their mothers" (See: [Synecdoche](#) and [Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information](#))

ULT

⁹ There are wicked people who pluck orphans from their mothers' breast, and wicked people who take children as security from poor people.

orphans

This generally refers to children without parents. Here, however, it is used for children who have mothers but do not have fathers.

take children as security from poor people

"take poor people's children to guarantee that the poor people will pay back money that they borrowed from the wicked people"

as security

A lender would take something from a borrower to ensure that the borrower pays him back. See how you translated this in [Job 24:3](#).

Job 24:10

go about

“walk around”

naked without clothing

The words “without clothing” mean the same thing as “naked.”

Alternate translation: “completely naked” or “naked because they have no clothing” (See: [Doublet](#))

ULT

¹⁰ But the poor people go about naked without clothing; although they go hungry, they carry bundles of grain belonging to other people.

they carry bundles of grain belonging to other people

This means their work will provide food for others but not for themselves.

Job 24:11

Connecting Statement:

Job continues speaking.

The poor people make oil

they squeezed olives in order to extract olive oil from them

within the walls of those wicked men

Here “walls” refers to the whole house. Alternate translation: “in the houses of those evil men” (See: [Synecdoche](#))

they tread the wicked men’s winepresses

It may be helpful to state that they do this to produce juice to make wine. Alternate translation: “they tread on grapes to make juice for wine” (See: [Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information](#))

they themselves suffer thirst

“they suffer from thirst” or “they are thirsty”

ULT

11 The poor people make oil within the walls of those wicked men; they tread the wicked men’s winepresses, but they themselves suffer thirst.

Job 24:12

(There are no notes for this verse.)

ULT

¹² From out of the city the dying groan,
and the throat of the wounded cries out
for help. But God does not ascribe
blame

Job 24:13

Connecting Statement:

Job continues speaking.

rebel against the light

Here, **light** could mean: (1) visible light or (2) spiritual light, which refers to God or living righteously. Alternate translation: “hate the daylight” or “do not want to do things openly” or “rebel against God” (See: [Metaphor](#))

they know not its ways, nor do they stay in its paths

These two lines describe the same thing, and are used together to emphasize that they do not want to follow the ways of the light. Alternate translation: “they do not know how to live a moral life; they stay far away from living a righteous life” (See: [Metaphor](#) and [Parallelism](#))

ULT

¹³ Some of these wicked people rebel against the light; they know not its ways, nor do they stay in its paths.

Job 24:14

poor and needy people

The words “poor” and “needy” refer to the same group of people and emphasize that these are people who are unable to help themselves. (See: [Doublet](#))

he is like a thief

The murderer kills in secret just like a thief steals without anyone seeing what he does. Alternate translation: “he kills people secretly, just like a thief steals secretly” (See: [Simile](#))

ULT

14 Before daylight the murderer rises and he kills poor and needy people; in the night he is like a thief.

Job 24:15

Connecting Statement:

Job continues speaking.

the eye of the adulterer

Here “eye” refers to the whole person. Alternate translation: “the adulterer” (See: [Synecdoche](#))

for the twilight

“for the sunset”

No eye will see me

Here “eye” refers to the whole person. Alternate translation: “No one will see me” (See: [Synecdoche](#))

ULT

¹⁵ Also, the eye of the adulterer waits for the twilight; he says, ‘No eye will see me.’ He disguises his face.

Job 24:16

wicked people dig into houses

They dig into the houses in order to steal from them. This can be stated explicitly. Alternate translation: “wicked people dig into houses to steal from them” (See: [Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information](#))

they shut themselves up

“they hide inside”

ULT

16 In the darkness wicked people dig into houses; but they shut themselves up in the daytime; they do not care for the light.

Job 24:17

For all of them, thick darkness is like the morning

The thick darkness is as comfortable for the wicked as light of the morning is for normal people. (See: [Simile](#))

the terrors of thick darkness

“the scary things that happen at night”

ULT

¹⁷ For all of them, thick darkness is like the morning; for they are friends with the terrors of thick darkness.

Job 24:18

Connecting Statement:

Job continues speaking.

like foam on the surface of the waters

Foam lasts only a short time. This emphasizes how quickly God will cause the wicked to disappear. (See: [Simile](#))

their portion of the land is cursed

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: “God curses the part of the land that they own” (See: [Active or Passive](#))

ULT

¹⁸ Swiftly they pass away, however, like foam on the surface of the waters; their portion of the land is cursed; no one goes to work in their vineyards.

Job 24:19**As drought and heat melt away ... those who have sinned**

Job says that sinners will disappear in Sheol in the same way as snow melts and disappears when it becomes warm. (See: [Simile](#))

ULT

¹⁹ As drought and heat melt away the snow into waters, so Sheol takes away those who have sinned.

drought and heat

These two words describe essentially the same weather and are used together to describe it fully. (See: [Hendiadys](#))

Job 24:20

Connecting Statement:

Job continues speaking.

The womb

This refers to the mother. Alternate translation: “The mother” (See: [Synecdoche](#))

ULT

²⁰ The womb that bore him will forget him; the worm will feed sweetly on him; he will be remembered no more; in this way, wickedness will be broken like a tree.

the worm will feed sweetly on him

This means that he will die and worms will eat his body. Alternate translation: “the worm will enjoy eating his dead body” or “he will die and then his body will be eaten by worms” (See: [Idiom](#))

he will be remembered no more

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: “no one will remember him anymore” (See: [Active or Passive](#))

wickedness will be broken like a tree

God’s destruction of the wicked man is describes as if he were cutting down a tree. This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: “God will destroy the wicked as if he were a tree” (See: [Metaphor](#) and [Active or Passive](#))

Job 24:21

The wicked one devours

This metaphor emphasizes how ruthless the wicked man is.
Alternate translation: "Just like a wild animal kills its prey, so the wicked person harms" (See: [Metaphor](#))

the barren women who have not borne children

The people of that day considered that a woman who was barren was cursed by God. Therefore, this represents the most unfortunate women.

widow

a woman whose husband has died

ULT

²¹ The wicked one devours the barren women who have not borne children; he does no good to the widow.

Job 24:22

Connecting Statement:

Job continues speaking.

by his power

“by using his power” or “because he is powerful”

he rises up and does not strengthen them in life

Here “does not strengthen them in life” means God does not keep them alive. Alternate translation: “God rises up and does not give wicked people the strength to live” or “God rises up and causes them to die” (See: [Idiom](#))

ULT

²² Yet God drags away the mighty people by his power; he rises up and does not strengthen them in life.

Job 24:23

but his eyes are on their ways

Here “eyes” refers to God. Alternate translation: “but he is always watching what they do” (See: [Synecdoche](#))

ULT

²³ God allows them to think they are secure, and they are happy about that, but his eyes are on their ways.

Job 24:24

Connecting Statement:

This concludes Job's speech.

they will be brought low

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "God will bring them low" or "God will destroy them" (See: [Active or Passive](#))

ULT

²⁴ These people are exalted; still, in only a little while, they will be gone; indeed, they will be brought low; they will be gathered up like all the others; they will be cut off like the tops of ears of grain.

they will be gathered up like all the others

Some translations are based on a different early text, which says "they wither and fade like weeds." (See: [Textual Variants](#))

they will be gathered up like all the others

This can be stated in active form. What "the others" refers to can be stated clearly. Alternate translation: "God will gather them up as he gathered up the other wicked people" (See: [Active or Passive](#) and [Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information](#))

they will be cut off like the tops of ears of grain

These wicked people will be cut off in the same way heads of grain are cut off during harvest. This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "God will cut them off like a farmer cuts off the top of a stalk of grain" (See: [Simile](#) and [Active or Passive](#))

Job 24:25

If it is not so, who can prove me to be a liar; who can make my speech worth nothing?

Job uses this question to express the certainty of his argument. The implicit answer is: "no one." Alternate translation: "This is true, and no one can prove that I am a liar; no one can prove me wrong." (See: [Rhetorical Question](#))

make my speech worth nothing

"prove what I say is wrong"

ULT

²⁵ If it is not so, who can prove me to be a liar; who can make my speech worth nothing?"

Job 25

Job 25 General Notes

Structure and formatting

The ULT sets the lines of this chapter farther to the right on the page than the rest of the text because it is a poem. This chapter is a continuation of the advice of Job's friend, Bildad. His words in this chapter are much stronger than when he previously spoke.

Special concepts in this chapter

God's holiness and man's sin

Bildad describes the holiness of Yahweh and the universal nature of man's sinfulness. While his points are accurate, they are not convincing for Job because he has been righteous. (See: [holy](#), [holiness](#), [unholy](#), [sacred](#) and [sin](#), [sinful](#), [sinner](#), [sinning](#) and [righteous](#), [righteousness](#), [unrighteous](#), [unrighteousness](#), [upright](#), [uprightness](#))

Important figures of speech in this chapter

Rhetorical questions

Bildad uses many different rhetorical questions in this chapter in order to try to convince Job that he is wrong. These questions help to build Bildad's argument. (See: [Rhetorical Question](#))

Job 25:1

Bildad the Shuhite

See how you translated this man's name in [Job 2:11](#).

ULT

¹ Then Bildad the Shuhite answered and said,

Job 25:2

Dominion and fear are with him

Here “him” refers to God. The abstract nouns “dominion” and “fear” can be stated as verbs. Alternate translation: “God rules over all and people should fear only him” (See: [Abstract Nouns](#))

he makes order in his high places of heaven

“he makes peace in the high heaven”

ULT

² “Dominion and fear are with him; he makes order in his high places of heaven.

Job 25:3

Is there any end to the number of his armies?

Bildad uses this question to emphasize how great God is. The implicit answer is “no.” This refers to the armies of God’s angels. Alternate translation: “There is no end to the number of angels in his army.” or “His armies are so big that no one can count them.” (See: [Rhetorical Question](#) and [Metonymy](#))

ULT

³ Is there any end to the number of his armies? Upon whom does his light not shine?

Upon whom does his light not shine?

Bildad uses this question to emphasize that God gives light to every person. Alternate translation: “There is no one upon whom his light does not shine.” or “God makes his light shine over everyone.” (See: [Rhetorical Question](#))

Job 25:4

Connecting Statement:

Bildad continues speaking.

How then can man ... God? How can he who is born ... him?

These two questions are used together to emphasize that it is impossible for a man to be good enough before God. (See: [Parallelism](#) and [Rhetorical Question](#))

How then can man be righteous with God?

The implicit reaction is that he cannot. Alternate translation: "A man can never be righteous before God." (See: [Rhetorical Question](#))

How can he who is born ... acceptable to him?

The implicit reaction is that he cannot. Alternate translation: "He who is born of a woman cannot be clean or acceptable to him." (See: [Rhetorical Question](#))

he who is born of a woman

This idiom includes everyone. Alternate translation: "any person" (See: [Idiom](#))

ULT

⁴ How then can man be righteous with God? How can he who is born of a woman be clean, acceptable to him?

Job 25:5

See

The word “See” here adds emphasis to what follows. Alternate translation: “Indeed”

the moon has no brightness to him

The abstract noun “brightness” can be stated as an adjective. Alternate translation: “the moon is not bright enough for God” (See: [Abstract Nouns](#))

the stars are not pure in his sight

Here “pure” means “perfect.” Alternate translation: “he does not think even the stars are perfect”

ULT

⁵ See, even the moon has no brightness to him; the stars are not pure in his sight.

Job 25:6

How much less man ... a son of man, who is a worm

These two lines say the same thing and are used together to emphasize that man is not perfect. (See: [Parallelism](#))

ULT

⁶ How much less man, who is a worm—
a son of man, who is a worm!”

who is a worm

Bildad states that human beings are as worthless as worms. Alternate translation: “who is as worthless as a worm” (See: [Metaphor](#))

a son of man

This is another way of referring to a person. Alternate translation: “a person” (See: [Metonymy](#))

Job 26

Job 26 General Notes

Structure and formatting

The ULT sets the lines of this chapter farther to the right on the page than the rest of the text because it is a poem. This chapter is Job's response to Bildad.

This chapter begins a section continuing through chapter 31.

Special concepts in this chapter

Yahweh's power

While Bildad describes Yahweh's power as being so much greater than Job's, Job understands the true extent of Yahweh's power. It is not just over Job's life, but over all of creation.

Other possible translation difficulties in this chapter

Sarcasm

Job uses sarcasm in this chapter. This is the use of irony to insult Bildad. (See: [Job 1-4](#) and [Irony](#))

Job 26:1

(There are no notes for this verse.)

ULT

¹ Then Job answered and said,

Job 26:2

How you have helped one ... the arm that has no strength

In these statements, Job is accusing Bildad. The word “one” refers to Job. And, the word “arm” represents the whole person. Alternate translation: “I am powerless and have no strength, but you act like you have helped me; but really, you have not helped me at all” (See: [Irony](#) and [Synecdoche](#))

ULT

² “How you have helped one who has no power! How you have saved the arm that has no strength!

Job 26:3

How you have advised one who has no wisdom and announced to him sound knowledge

Job is saying that Bildad has not provided him with good advice and knowledge. Alternate translation: "You act like I have no wisdom and that you have advised me, that you have given me good advice" (See: [Irony](#))

ULT

³ How you have advised one who has no wisdom and announced to him sound knowledge!

announced to him sound knowledge

"given him good advice"

Job 26:4

With whose help have you spoken these words? Whose spirit was it ... you?

In these questions Job continues to mock Bildad. They are both rhetorical questions and have basically the same meaning. They are used together to strengthen each other. Alternate translation: "You must have had help speaking these words. Perhaps some spirit helped you speak them!" (See: [Rhetorical Question](#))

ULT

⁴ With whose help have you spoken these words? Whose spirit was it that came out from you?

Job 26:5

The dead

This refers to dead people. Alternate translation: “Those who are dead” or “The spirits of the dead” (See: [Nominal Adjectives](#))

tremble

They tremble because they are afraid of God. This can be stated clearly. Alternate translation: “tremble in fear” or “tremble in fear of God” (See: [Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information](#))

those who are beneath the waters

This refers to the dead people who tremble.

all who dwell in them

This refers to the dead people who dwell in the waters.

ULT

⁵ The dead are made to tremble, those who are beneath the waters and all who dwell in them.

Job 26:6

Sheol is naked before God; destruction itself has no covering

Sheol is spoken of as if it were a person. These two phrases have the same meaning. To be “naked” or have “no covering” is to be completely exposed and not able to hide anything. Alternate translation: “It is like sheol is naked before God, for nothing in sheol, the place of destruction, is hidden from God” (See: [Metaphor](#) and [Parallelism](#))

ULT

⁶ Sheol is naked before God; destruction itself has no covering against him.

destruction

This is another name for sheol. Alternate translation: “the place of destruction”

Job 26:7

He stretches out the northern skies over the empty space

The northern skies represent heaven, the place where God dwells with the beings he created to dwell there. (See: [Metaphor](#))

ULT

⁷ He stretches out the northern skies over the empty space, and he hangs the earth over nothing.

Job 26:8

He binds up the waters in his thick clouds

The clouds are compared to a large blanket in which God wraps the rainwater. Alternate translation: “He wraps up the water in his thick clouds”

ULT

⁸ He binds up the waters in his thick clouds, but the clouds are not torn under them.

but the clouds are not torn under them

This can be stated actively. The word “them” refers to the waters. Alternate translation: “but the weight of the waters does not tear the clouds” (See: [Active or Passive](#))

Job 26:9

and spreads his clouds on it

This phrase tells how he covers the surface of the moon. Alternate translation: "by spreading his clouds in front of it"

ULT

⁹ He covers the surface of the moon and spreads his clouds on it.

Job 26:10

He has engraved a circular boundary on the surface of the waters

This speaks of the horizon, where the earth appears to meet the sky, as if God has marked a boundary on the ocean.

ULT

¹⁰ He has engraved a circular boundary on the surface of the waters as the line between light and darkness.

Job 26:11

The pillars of heaven tremble and are astonished at his rebuke

People thought of heaven or the sky as resting on pillars. Job speaks as though the pillars are humans that shake in fear when God is angry. Alternate translation: “The pillars that hold up heaven shake in fear when God rebukes them” or “The pillars that hold up the sky shake like people who are afraid when God rebukes them” (See: [Personification](#))

ULT

¹¹ The pillars of heaven tremble and are astonished at his rebuke.

Job 26:12

he shattered Rahab

“he destroyed Rahab”

Rahab

This is the name of a frightening monster that lived in the sea. See how you translated this in [Job 9:13](#). (See: [How to Translate Names](#))

ULT

¹² He calmed the sea with his power; by his understanding he shattered Rahab.

Job 26:13

By his breath he made the skies clear

The noun “breath” can be translated with the verb “breathe” or “blow.” This image represents God causing the wind to blow away the clouds. Alternate translation: “God blew away the clouds so that the skies were clear” (See: [Metaphor](#))

ULT

13 By his breath he made the skies clear;
his hand pierced the fleeing serpent.

his hand pierced the fleeing serpent

It is implied that God is holding a sword, and here “his hand” represents that sword. Also, “pierced” represents killing. Alternate translation: “With his sword he pierced the fleeing serpent” (See: [Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information](#) and [Metonymy](#))

the fleeing serpent

“the serpent as it was trying to escape from him.” This refers to Rahab, the monster in the sea. See [Job 26:12](#).

Job 26:14

See, these are but the fringes of his ways

Here “fringes” represents a small part that we can see of something that is much bigger. Alternate translation: “See, these things that God has done show only a small part of his great power” (See: [Metaphor](#))

ULT

14 See, these are but the fringes of his ways; how small a whisper do we hear of him! Who can understand the thunder of his power?”

how small a whisper do we hear of him!

This is an exclamation that expresses Job’s amazement of all the great things that God does that we do not even know about. Seeing what God does is spoken of as hearing God’s voice. Alternate translation: “it is as if we heard only his quiet whisper!” (See: [Exclamations](#) and [Metaphor](#))

Who can understand the thunder of his power?

The “thunder of his power” represents God’s greatness. Job uses this question to emphasize that God’s power is so great that no one can understand it. Alternate translation: “The thunder displays the greatness of his power which no one can understand!” (See: [Rhetorical Question](#) and [Metaphor](#))

Job 27

Job 27 General Notes

Structure and formatting

The ULT sets the lines of this chapter farther to the right on the page than the rest of the text because it is a poem. This chapter is a continuation of Job's response to Bildad.

Special concepts in this chapter

Job's righteousness

Despite being upset about his circumstances, Job does not curse God. Instead, he recognizes Yahweh's authority. (See: [curse](#), [cursed](#), [cursing](#))

Job 27:1

(There are no notes for this verse.)

ULT

¹ Job resumed speaking and he said,

Job 27:2

As surely as God lives

This phrase shows that Job is taking an oath. Job compares the certainty that God is alive to the certainty of what he is saying. This is a way of making a solemn promise. Alternate translation: "I swear by God"

ULT

² "As surely as God lives, who has taken away my justice, the Almighty, who made my life bitter,

has taken away my justice

Justice is spoken of as if it were an object that could be taken away or given. Taking it away represents refusing to treat Job with justice. Alternate translation: "has refused to treat me justly" (See: [Metaphor](#))

made my life bitter

Job's "life" being bitter represents Job feeling resentful toward God. Alternate translation: "has caused me to become resentful" or "has made me feel angry because of the unfair way he has treated me" (See: [Metonymy](#))

Job 27:3

while my life is yet in me

This refers to the duration of the rest of his life. Alternate translation: “during the whole time that my life is yet in me” or “as long as my life is yet in me”

ULT

³ while my life is yet in me, and the breath from God is in my nostrils, this is what I will do.

while my life is yet in me

The abstract noun “life” can be expressed with the adjective “alive” or the verb “live.” Alternate translation: “as long as I am still alive” or “while I still live” (See: [Abstract Nouns](#))

the breath from God is in my nostrils

“Breath ... in my nostrils” represents being able to breathe. “Breath from God” represents God making him able to breathe. Alternate translation: “God enables me to breathe” (See: [Metonymy](#))

nostrils

“nose”

Job 27:4**My lips will not speak wickedness, neither will my tongue speak deceit**

These two phrases have basically the same meaning and are used together to emphasize that he will not speak in such ways. The phrases “My lips” and “my tongue” represent Job himself. Alternate translation: “I will not speak wickedness or deceit” (See: [Parallelism](#) and [Synecdoche](#))

ULT

⁴ My lips will not speak wickedness, neither will my tongue speak deceit;

speak wickedness ... speak deceit

The abstract nouns “wickedness” and “deceit” can be expressed with “wickedly” and “deceitfully.” Alternate translation: “speak wickedly ... speak deceitfully” (See: [Abstract Nouns](#))

Job 27:5

I will never admit that you three are right

“I will never agree with you and say that you three are right”

that you three are right

The word “you” here is plural. It refers to Job’s friends. (See: [Forms of You](#))

I will never deny my integrity

“I will never say that I am not innocent” or “I will always say that I am innocent”

ULT

⁵ I will never admit that you three are right; until I die I will never deny my integrity.

Job 27:6

I hold fast to my righteousness

Here “hold fast” is a metaphor that represents being determined to continue to say something. The abstract noun “righteousness” can be expressed with “righteous.” Alternate translation: “I am determined to continue saying that I am righteous” (See: [Metaphor](#) and [Abstract Nouns](#))

ULT

⁶ I hold fast to my righteousness and will not let it go; my thoughts will not reproach me so long as I live.

will not let it go

Here “will not let it go” is a metaphor that represents not stopping saying something. Alternate translation: “will not stop saying that I am righteous” or “will not stop saying so” (See: [Metaphor](#))

my thoughts will not reproach me

Here the phrase “my thoughts” represents Job. Alternate translation: “even in my thoughts, I will not reproach myself” (See: [Metonymy](#))

Job 27:7

Let my enemy be ... let him who rises up against me be

The two clauses that start with these words share the same meaning. They are used together to emphasize Job's strong desire that this should happen. (See: [Parallelism](#))

ULT

⁷ Let my enemy be like a wicked man;
let him who rises up against me be like
an unrighteous man.

Let my enemy be like a wicked man

How he wants his enemy to be like a wicked person can be stated clearly. Alternate translation: "Let my enemy be punished like a wicked man" or "Let God punish my enemy as he punishes wicked people" (See: [Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information](#))

let him who rises up against me be like an unrighteous man

How he wants this person to be like an unrighteous man can be stated clearly. Alternate translation: "let him who rises up against me be punished like an unrighteous man" (See: [Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information](#))

him who rises up against me

Here "rises up against me" is a metaphor meaning "opposes me." The whole phrase refers to Job's adversary. Alternate translation: "him who opposes me" or "my adversary" (See: [Metaphor](#))

Job 27:8

For what is the hope of a godless man when ... when God takes away his life?

Job uses this question to say that such a man has no hope. This question can be translated as a simple statement. Alternate translation: "There is no hope for the godless when God ... takes away his soul." (See: [Rhetorical Question](#))

ULT

⁸ For what is the hope of a godless man when God cuts him off, when God takes away his life?

when God cuts him off, when God takes away his life

These two phrases have the same meaning. Alternate translation: "when God cuts him off and takes away his life" or "when God causes him to die" (See: [Parallelism](#))

cuts him off

This is a metaphor meaning "kills him" or "causes him to die" (See: [Metaphor](#))

takes away his life

This is a metaphor meaning "kills him" or "makes him stop living" (See: [Metaphor](#))

Job 27:9

Will God hear his cry when trouble comes upon him?

Job uses this question to say that God will not help that person. This question can be translated as a simple statement. Alternate translation: "God will not hear his cry when trouble comes upon him." or "When trouble comes upon him and he cries out for help, God will not hear him." (See: [Rhetorical Question](#))

ULT

⁹ Will God hear his cry when trouble comes upon him?

Will God hear his cry

Here "hear his cry" represents responding to the godless man's cry and helping him. Alternate translation: "Will God respond to his cry" (See: [Metonymy](#))

Job 27:10

Will he delight himself in the Almighty and call upon God at all times?

Job uses this question to say that the godless man will not do these things. This question can be translated as a simple statement.

Alternate translation: "He will not delight himself in the Almighty and call upon God at all times." or "He will not be happy about what the Almighty does and he will not pray to God often." (See: [Rhetorical Question](#))

ULT

¹⁰ Will he delight himself in the Almighty and call upon God at all times?

Job 27:11

I will teach you

Each occurrence of “you” in these verses is plural and refers to Job’s three friends. (See: [Forms of You](#))

the hand of God

God’s “hand” represents his power. Alternate translation: “the power of God” (See: [Metonymy](#))

I will not conceal the thoughts of the Almighty

The abstract noun “thoughts” can be expressed with the verb “think.” Alternate translation: “I will not hide from you what the Almighty thinks” (See: [Abstract Nouns](#))

ULT

11 I will teach you concerning the hand of God; I will not conceal the thoughts of the Almighty.

Job 27:12

why then have you spoken all this nonsense?

Job uses this question to rebuke his friends for saying such foolish things. This question can be translated as a simple statement.
Alternate translation: "you should not have spoken so foolishly!"
(See: [Rhetorical Question](#))

ULT

¹² See, all of you have seen this yourselves; why then have you spoken all this nonsense?

Job 27:13

This is the portion of a wicked man with God

“This is what God has planned for the wicked man”

the heritage of the oppressor that he receives from the Almighty

Here “the heritage of the oppressor” is a metaphor representing what will happen to the oppressor. What God will do to him is spoken of as if it were an inheritance that God will give him. Alternate translation: “what the Almighty will do to the oppressor” (See: [Metaphor](#))

ULT

¹³ This is the portion of a wicked man with God, the heritage of the oppressor that he receives from the Almighty:

Job 27:14

it is for the sword

Here “the sword” represents dying in battle. Alternate translation: “they will die in battle” (See: [Metonymy](#))

ULT

14 If his children multiply, it is for the sword; his offspring will never have enough food.

Job 27:15

Those who survive him

This refers to the wicked man's children. This can be stated clearly.
Alternate translation: "Those who continue to live after their wicked father dies" (See: [Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information](#))

ULT

15 Those who survive him will be buried by plague, and their widows will make no lament for them.

will be buried by plague

Here "be buried" represents dying. Alternate translation: "will die by plague" (See: [Metonymy](#))

their widows ... them

The words "their" and "them" refer to "Those who survive him," that is, the children of the wicked man.

Job 27:16

heaps up silver like the dust

Here “heaps up” is a metonym meaning “gathers much.” Job speaks as if the silver were as easy to get as dust. Alternate translation: “gathers large piles of silver” or “gathers silver as easily as he could gather dust” (See: [Simile](#))

ULT

16 Though the wicked man heaps up silver like the dust, and heaps up clothing like clay,

heaps up clothing like clay

Here “heaps up” is a metonym meaning “gathers much.” Job speaks as if the clothing were as easy to get as clay. Alternate translation: “gathers large piles of clothing” or “gathers clothing as easily as he could gather clay” (See: [Simile](#))

Job 27:17

(There are no notes for this verse.)

ULT

17 he may heap up clothing, but
righteous people will put it on, and
innocent people will divide up the silver
among themselves.

Job 27:18

He builds his house like a spider

After “spider,” the phrase “builds its web” is understood information. It can be made clear. Alternate translation: “He builds his house as a spider builds its web” (See: [Ellipsis](#))

ULT

18 He builds his house like a spider, like a hut that a guard makes.

He builds his house like a spider

A spider web is fragile and easily destroyed. Alternate translation: “He builds his house as fragile as a spider builds its web” or “He builds his house as fragile as a spider’s web” (See: [Simile](#))

like a hut

A hut is a temporary house that is also not very strong. Alternate translation: “like a temporary hut” (See: [Simile](#))

Job 27:19

He lies down in bed rich

“He is wealthy when he lies down in bed.” This refers to his lying down in bed at night and sleeping.

but he will not keep doing so

“but he will not keep lying down in bed rich” or “but he will not continue to be wealthy when he lies down in bed”

he opens his eyes

Opening his eyes represents waking up in the morning. Alternate translation: “he wakes up” (See: [Metonymy](#))

everything is gone

“all of his riches are gone” or “everything has vanished”

ULT

¹⁹ He lies down in bed rich, but he will not keep doing so; he opens his eyes, and everything is gone.

Job 27:20

Terrors overtake him

Here “overtake him” represents suddenly happening to him. Possible meanings are that **terrors** is a metonym for:: (1) things that cause people to be afraid. Alternate translation: “Terrifying things suddenly happen to him” or (2) fear. Alternate translation: “He suddenly becomes terrified”

ULT

20 Terrors overtake him like waters; a storm takes him away in the night.

like waters

The word “waters” refers to a flood. Floods can happen very suddenly when people do not expect them, and they are dangerous and frightening. Alternate translation: “like a flood” or “like waters that rise up suddenly” (See: [Simile](#))

a storm takes him away

“a violent wind blows him away”

Job 27:21

it sweeps him out of his place

Job speaks of the wind blowing the wicked man out of his house as if the wind were a person sweeping dust out of a house with a broom. Alternate translation: “the wind sweeps him out of his place like a woman who sweeps dirt out of a house” or “the wind easily blows him out of his place” (See: [Personification](#))

his place

“his home”

ULT

²¹ The east wind carries him away, and he leaves; it sweeps him out of his place.

Job 27:22

General Information:

In verses 22-23 Job speaks of the wind as if it were a person attacking the wicked person. (See: [Personification](#))

ULT

22 It throws itself at him and does not stop; he tries to flee out of its hand.

It throws itself at him

Here the phrase “throws itself at him” represents the wind blowing strong against him like an attacker. Alternate translation: “It blows strong against him like someone attacking him” (See: [Personification](#))

he tries to flee out of its hand

Here “hand” represents the power or control that the wind has over the wicked man. Alternate translation: “he tries to flee out of its control” (See: [Personification](#) and [Metonymy](#))

Job 27:23

It claps its hands at him

Clapping the hands is a way of mocking someone. Here it represents the wind making loud noises. Alternate translation: "It makes loud noises like someone clapping his hands to mock him" (See: [Symbolic Action](#) and [Personification](#))

ULT

23 It claps its hands at him and hisses him from his place.

hisses him from his place

The wind makes a noise as it blows him out of his place, and the noise is like the hissing sound that people make to mock someone. Alternate translation: "it makes a hissing noise as it causes him to leave his home" or "it blows him out of his place and makes a hissing noise like someone who hisses at him to mock him" (See: [Symbolic Action](#) and [Personification](#))

Job 28

Job 28 General Notes

Structure and formatting

The ULT sets the lines of this chapter farther to the right on the page than the rest of the text because it is a poem. This chapter is a continuation of Job's response to Bildad.

Special concepts in this chapter

Yahweh's wisdom

Despite being upset about his circumstances, Job does not curse God. Instead, he recognizes Yahweh's wisdom and authority. This chapter especially focuses on Yahweh's wisdom as he controls the circumstances of Job's life. Men cannot understand because they do not have Yahweh's wisdom. (See: [curse](#), [cursed](#), [cursing](#) and [wise](#), [wisdom](#))

Job 28:1

mine

This is a place where people dig rocks out of the earth. These rocks have metal in them.

refine

This is the process of heating a metal to remove all of the impurities that are in it.

ULT

¹ Surely there is a mine for silver, a place where they refine gold.

Job 28:2

Iron is taken out of the earth

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: “People take iron out of the earth” (See: [Active or Passive](#))

ULT

² Iron is taken out of the earth; copper is smelted out of the stone.

copper is smelted out of the stone

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: “people smelt copper out of the stone” or “people heat stone to melt copper out of it” (See: [Active or Passive](#))

copper

an important red-brown colored metal

smelted

This is a process of heating rocks to melt the metal in them in order to get the metal out of the rocks.

Job 28:3

A man sets an end to darkness

Here “sets an end to darkness” represents shining a light in the darkness. People used a lantern or a torch for light. Alternate translation: “A man carries light into dark places” (See: [Metonymy](#))

to the farthest limit

“to the farthest parts of the mine”

obscurity ... thick darkness

These two phrases are used together to emphasize that the mine is extremely dark. (See: [Doublet](#))

ULT

³ A man sets an end to darkness and searches out, to the farthest limit, the stones in obscurity and thick darkness.

Job 28:4

shaft

a deep narrow hole dug into the ground or rock. People go down into the hole to mine it.

places that are forgotten by anyone's foot

The foot is spoken of as if it is a person who can remember.

Alternate translation: "places where people no longer walk" or "where no one ever walks" (See: [Personification](#))

He hangs far away from people

How and where he hangs can be stated clearly. Alternate translation: "Far away from people, he hangs from a rope in the shaft" (See: [Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information](#))

ULT

⁴ He breaks open a shaft away from where people live, places that are forgotten by anyone's foot. He hangs far away from people; he swings to and fro.

Job 28:5

the earth, out of which comes bread

Here “bread” represents food in general. Food coming out of the ground is a metaphor for food growing out of the ground. Alternate translation: “the earth, where food grows” (See: [Synecdoche](#) and [Metaphor](#))

ULT

⁵ As for the earth, out of which comes bread, it is turned up below as if by fire.

it is turned up below as if by fire

This could mean: (1) people made fires under the ground to break apart the rock. Alternate translation: “it is broken up below by the fires that the miners make” or (2) “turned” is a metaphor for changed. Alternate translation: “it is broken up below so much that it appears that it was destroyed by fire”

it is turned

The word “it” refers to the earth.

Job 28:6

Its stones ... its dust

The word “its” refers to the earth.

sapphires

a rare and valuable blue gemstone

ULT

⁶ Its stones are the place where sapphires are found, and its dust contains gold.

Job 28:7**No bird of prey knows the path to it ... nor has the falcon's eye seen it**

These clauses express a similar meaning. Alternate translation: "No bird of prey or falcon knows or has ever seen the path that goes to the mine" (See: [Parallelism](#))

ULT

⁷ No bird of prey knows the path to it,
nor has the falcon's eye seen it.

bird of prey

a bird that eats other animals

falcon

This may also be translated "hawk." Both are birds that hunt and eat other animals. You may translate this with a similar bird from your culture.

Job 28:8

The proud animals have not walked such a path ... nor has the fierce lion passed there

These clauses also express similar meaning. (See: [Parallelism](#))

The proud animals

This refers to very strong, wild animals.

ULT

⁸ The proud animals have not walked such a path, nor has the fierce lion passed there.

Job 28:9

lays his hand on the flinty rock

This represents breaking up the rock. Alternate translation: “digs into the flinty rock” (See: [Metonymy](#))

flinty rock

“hard rock”

he overturns mountains by their roots

Digging up the mountains and the ground underneath them is a metaphor from digging out weeds or trees, an exaggeration that represents digging minerals out of the ground. Alternate translation: “he turns the mountains upside down by pulling out their roots” (See: [Hyperbole](#) and [Metaphor](#))

ULT

⁹ A man lays his hand on the flinty rock;
he overturns mountains by their roots.

Job 28:10

his eye sees

Here “his eye” represents him. Alternate translation: “he sees” (See: [Synecdoche](#))

ULT

10 He cuts out channels among the rocks; his eye sees every valuable thing there.

Job 28:11

He ties up the streams so they do not run

Here “ties up the streams” means damming or blocking the streams.
Alternate translation: “He blocks the streams so they do not flow”
(See: [Metaphor](#))

ULT

11 He ties up the streams so they do not run; what is hidden there he brings out to the light.

what is hidden there

This refers to things that people normally do not see because they are in the ground or underwater.

Job 28:12

General Information:

In 28:12-28, wisdom and understanding are spoken of as if they were precious objects that are in some place and people want to find them. Finding wisdom and understanding represents becoming wise and learning to understand things well. (See: [Metaphor](#))

ULT

12 Where will wisdom be found? Where is the place of understanding?

Where will wisdom be found? Where is the place of understanding?

These questions mean the same thing and are used to show that it is very difficult to find wisdom and understanding. Alternate translation: "It is very difficult to find wisdom and understanding." (See: [Parallelism](#) and [Rhetorical Question](#))

Where will wisdom be found? Where is the place of understanding

Becoming wise and understanding is spoken of as finding wisdom and understanding. Alternate translation: "How do people become wise? How do people learn to understand things well" (See: [Metaphor](#))

Job 28:13

Man does not know its price

This could mean: (1) wisdom is spoken of as if it were something that people can buy. Alternate translation: "People do not know what it is worth" or (2) the word translated as "price" means "place."
Alternate translation: "People do not know where it is" (See: [Metaphor](#))

ULT

13 Man does not know its price; neither is it found in the land of the living.

neither is it found in the land of the living

"and it is not found in the land of the living." The "land of the living" refers to this world where people live. This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "and no one can find wisdom in this world" (See: [Active or Passive](#))

Job 28:14

The deep waters ... say, 'It is not in me'; the sea says, 'It is not with me.'

The deep waters and the sea are presented as if they are people that can speak. Alternate translation: "Wisdom is not in the deep waters under the earth, nor is it in the sea" (See: [Personification](#))

ULT

¹⁴ The deep waters under the earth say, 'It is not in me'; the sea says, 'It is not with me.'

Job 28:15

It cannot be gotten for gold

This can be stated in active form. This implies that wisdom is worth much more than gold. Alternate translation: "People cannot pay for wisdom with gold" (See: [Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information](#))

ULT

¹⁵ It cannot be gotten for gold; neither can silver be weighed as its price.

neither can silver be weighed as its price

This implies that wisdom is worth much more than silver. It can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "and people cannot weigh out enough silver to pay for wisdom" (See: [Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information](#))

Job 28:16

It cannot be valued with ... sapphire

This implies that wisdom is much more valuable than the gold of Ophir, precious onyx and sapphire. (See: [Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information](#))

ULT

16 It cannot be valued with the gold of Ophir, with precious onyx or sapphire.

Ophir

This is the name of a land where there was fine gold. (See: [How to Translate Names](#))

onyx

a valuable black gemstone

sapphire

a valuable blue gemstone

Job 28:17

Gold and crystal cannot equal it in worth

This implies that wisdom is much more valuable than gold and crystal.

crystal

a valuable gemstone that is clear or lightly colored

neither can it be exchanged for jewels of fine gold

“and it cannot be exchanged for jewels of fine gold.” This implies that wisdom is much more valuable than jewels of fine gold.

exchanged

“traded”

ULT

17 Gold and crystal cannot equal it in worth; neither can it be exchanged for jewels of fine gold.

Job 28:18

No mention is worth making of coral or jasper

“It is not worth making mention of coral and jasper.” This implies that wisdom is worth so much more than coral and jasper that there is no need for Job to say anything about them. Alternate translation: “I will not bother to mention coral or jasper” or “Coral and jasper are worthless compared to wisdom” (See: [Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information](#))

ULT

18 No mention is worth making of coral or jasper; indeed, the price of wisdom is more than rubies.

coral

This is a beautiful, hard substance that grows on ocean reefs. (See: [Translate Unknowns](#))

jasper ... rubies

These are valuable gemstones.

Job 28:19

The topaz of Cush does not equal it

This implies that wisdom is much more valuable than the finest topaz.

topaz

This is a valuable gemstone.

neither can it be valued in terms of pure gold

“and wisdom cannot be valued in terms of pure gold.” This implies that wisdom is much more valuable than pure gold.

ULT

¹⁹ The topaz of Cush does not equal it; neither can it be valued in terms of pure gold.

Job 28:20

From where, then, comes wisdom? Where is the place of understanding?

Job uses these questions to introduce how people get wisdom and understanding. Alternate translation: "I will tell you where wisdom comes from and where understanding is." or "I will tell you how to become wise and how to learn to understand things." (See: [Rhetorical Question](#))

ULT

²⁰ From where, then, comes wisdom?
Where is the place of understanding?

From where, then, comes wisdom

Wisdom is spoken of as if it were in a place and comes to people. Its coming represents people becoming wise. (See: [Metaphor](#))

Where is the place of understanding

Understanding is spoken of as if it were in a place. (See: [Metaphor](#))

Job 28:21

Wisdom is hidden from the eyes of all living things

This means that living things are unable to see wisdom. It can be expressed in active form. Alternate translation: "No living thing can see wisdom" (See: [Synecdoche](#) and [Active or Passive](#))

ULT

²¹ Wisdom is hidden from the eyes of all living things and is kept hidden from the birds of the heavens.

is kept hidden from the birds of the heavens

This means that the birds are unable to see wisdom. This can be expressed in active form. Alternate translation: "even the birds that fly in the skies cannot see wisdom" (See: [Active or Passive](#))

Job 28:22

Destruction and Death say

Here “Destruction” and “Death” are spoken of as if they are living things who can speak. (See: [Personification](#))

ULT

²² Destruction and Death say, ‘We have heard just a rumor about it with our ears.’

Job 28:23

God understands the way to it; he knows its place

Wisdom is spoken of as if it were in a certain place. Alternate translation: "God knows how to find wisdom. He knows where it is" (See: [Metaphor](#))

ULT

²³ God understands the way to it; he knows its place.

Job 28:24

the very ends of the earth

“the farthest places on the earth”

ULT

²⁴ For he looks to the very ends of the earth and sees under all the heavens.

Job 28:25

parceled out the waters by measure

This describes God deciding how much water should be in each place. Possible meanings are that this refers to deciding: (1) how much rain should be in each cloud or (2) how much water should be in each sea. Alternate translation: “decided how much water should be in each place” (See: [Metaphor](#))

ULT

²⁵ He made the force of the wind and
parceled out the waters by measure.

Job 28:26

a path for the thunder

“he decided how the thunder can be heard” or “he decided the path of the thunderstorm”

ULT

²⁶ He made a decree for the rain and a path for the thunder.

Job 28:27

(There are no notes for this verse.)

ULT

²⁷ Then he saw wisdom and announced it; he established it, indeed, and he examined it.

Job 28:28

See, the fear of the Lord—that is wisdom

The abstract noun “fear” can be expressed with the verbs “fear” or “respect.” The abstract noun “wisdom” can be expressed with the word “wise.” Alternate translation: “Listen, if you fear the Lord, you will be wise” (See: [Abstract Nouns](#))

ULT

²⁸ To people he said, ‘See, the fear of the Lord—that is wisdom; to depart from evil is understanding.’”

to depart from evil is understanding

Here “depart from evil” means refusing to do evil things. The abstract noun “understanding” can be expressed with the verb “understand.” Alternate translation: “if you refuse to do evil, then you will understand many things” (See: [Metaphor](#))

Job 29

Job 29 General Notes

Structure and formatting

The ULT sets the lines of this chapter farther to the right on the page than the rest of the text because it is a poem. This chapter is a continuation of Job's statement, but now it is directly addressed to Yahweh.

In this chapter, Job recalls the days before Yahweh's blessings were taken from him. This is only one part of Job's argument that continues for the next 3 chapters.

Job 29:1

(There are no notes for this verse.)

ULT

¹ Job resumed speaking and said,

Job 29:2

Oh, that I were as I was in the past months

Job uses this exclamation to express a wish. Alternate translation: "I wish that I were as I was in past months" (See: [Exclamations](#))

ULT

² "Oh, that I were as I was in the past months when God cared for me,

Job 29:3

when his lamp shined on my head

God's lamp shining on Job represents God blessing Job. Alternate translation: "when God's blessing was like a lamp shining its light on my head" (See: [Metaphor](#))

ULT

³ when his lamp shined on my head,
and when I walked through darkness by
his light.

when I walked through darkness by his light

Walking through darkness represents experiencing difficult situations. (See: [Metaphor](#))

Job 29:4

in the ripeness of my days

Job speaks of when he was young and strong as if his days were the time when the harvest is ripe. Alternate translation: “when I was young and strong” (See: [Metaphor](#))

ULT

⁴ Oh, that I were as I was in the ripeness of my days when the friendship of God was on my tent,

when the friendship of God was on my tent

The abstract noun “friendship” can be expressed with the noun “friend.” The word “tent” represents Job’s home. Alternate translation: “when God was my friend and protected my home” (See: [Abstract Nouns](#) and [Metonymy](#))

Job 29:5

(There are no notes for this verse.)

ULT

⁵ when the Almighty was yet with me,
and my children were around me,

Job 29:6

when my way was covered with cream

“when my path was flowing with cream.” Job uses this exaggeration to express that he had many cows and they produced much more cream than he and his family needed. Alternate translation: “when my cows provided an abundance of cream” (See: [Hyperbole](#))

ULT

⁶ when my way was covered with cream,
and the rock poured out for me streams
of oil!

and the rock poured out for me streams of oil

“and the rock poured out streams of oil for me.” Job uses this exaggeration to express that he had many olive vines and great amounts of olive oil. The rock is where his servants pressed the oil out of the olives. Alternate translation: “when my servants pressed out a great amount of olive oil” or “when oil flowed like streams from the pressing rock” (See: [Hyperbole](#) and [Metaphor](#))

Job 29:7

city square

This is an open area in a village or city where two or more streets meet.

ULT

⁷ When I went out to the city gate, when
I sat in my place in the city square,

Job 29:8

rose and stood for me

This is a symbol of respect. It can be stated clearly. Alternate translation: "rose and stood respectfully for me" (See: [Symbolic Action](#))

ULT

⁸ the young men saw me and kept their distance from me in respect, and the aged people rose and stood for me.

Job 29:9

The princes used to refrain from talking when I came

This was a sign of respect. (See: [Symbolic Action](#))

they would lay their hand on their mouths

They did this to show that they would not speak. This was a sign of their respect for Job. (See: [Symbolic Action](#))

ULT

⁹ The princes used to refrain from talking when I came; they would lay their hand on their mouths.

Job 29:10

The voices of the noblemen were hushed

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: “The noblemen hushed their voices” or “The noblemen stopped speaking” (See: [Active or Passive](#))

ULT

¹⁰ The voices of the noblemen were hushed, and their tongue clung to the roof of their mouths.

their tongue clung to the roof of their mouths

This represents them having so much respect for Job that they had nothing to say. Alternate translation: “they felt that they were unable to speak” or “they had nothing to say” (See: [Metonymy](#))

Job 29:11

after their ears heard me ... after their eyes saw me

The ears represent those who heard him, and the eyes represent those who saw him. Alternate translation: “after they heard what I told them ... after they saw me” (See: [Synecdoche](#))

ULT

¹¹ For after their ears heard me, they would then bless me; after their eyes saw me, they would then give witness to me and approve of me

they would then give witness to me and approve of me

“they would witness approvingly of me”

Job 29:12

I rescued the one who was poor when he cried out

Here “the one who was poor” refers to any poor person. Alternate translation: “I used to rescue poor people who cried out” (See: [Generic Noun Phrases](#))

ULT

¹² because I rescued the one who was poor when he cried out, and the one who had no father when he had no one to help him.

Job 29:13

The blessing of him who was about to perish came on me

Someone's blessing coming on another represents that person blessing another. Alternate translation: "He who was about to perish would bless me" (See: [Metaphor](#))

ULT

¹³ The blessing of him who was about to perish came on me; I caused the widow's heart to sing for joy.

him who was about to perish

This represents anyone who was about to die. Alternate translation: "those who were about to die" (See: [Generic Noun Phrases](#))

I caused the widow's heart to sing for joy

Here "the widow's heart" represents any widow. Alternate translation: "I caused widows to sing joyfully" (See: [Synecdoche](#) and [Generic Noun Phrases](#))

Job 29:14

I put on righteousness, and it clothed me

People often spoke of righteousness as if it were clothing. Alternate translation: "I did what was righteous, and it was like clothing that I put on" (See: [Metaphor](#))

ULT

14 I put on righteousness, and it clothed me; my justice was like a robe and a turban.

my justice was like a robe and a turban

People often spoke of justice as if it were clothing. Alternate translation: "I did what was just, and it was like a robe and a turban on me" (See: [Simile](#))

turban

a long cloth that men wrap around their heads and wear as a hat

Job 29:15

I was eyes to blind people

This represents helping blind people. Alternate translation: “I was like eyes for blind people” or “I guided blind people” (See: [Metaphor](#))

ULT

15 I was eyes to blind people; I was feet to lame people.

I was feet to lame people

This represents helping blind people. Alternate translation: “I was like feet for lame people” or “I supported lame people” (See: [Metaphor](#))

Job 29:16

I was a father to needy people

Here “I was a father” represents providing for people. Alternate translation: “I provided for needy people as a father provides for his children” (See: [Metaphor](#))

ULT

16 I was a father to needy people; I would examine the case even of one whom I did not know.

Job 29:17

General Information:

In verses 18-20 Job tells about the things he used to say before bad things happened to him.

I broke the jaws of ... I plucked the victim

Job speaks of unrighteous people who persecute others as if they were wild animals that attack their victims by picking them up between their teeth. Alternate translation: "I made unrighteous people stop persecuting people, like someone who breaks the jaw of a wild animal and rescues its victim from between its teeth" (See: [Metaphor](#))

ULT

17 I broke the jaws of the unrighteous man; I plucked the victim out from between his teeth.

Job 29:18

I will die in my nest

Here “nest” represents Job’s home and family. Job used to speak as if he were a bird that lived in a nest with his baby birds. Alternate translation: “I will die at home with my family” or “I will die in the safety of my home” (See: [Metaphor](#))

ULT

18 Then I said, ‘I will die in my nest; I will multiply my days like the grains of sand.’

I will multiply my days like the grains of sand

There are more grains of sand on the shore than anyone can count. To say that he would live more days than anyone could count is an exaggeration to express that he would live a very long time. Alternate translation: “I will live a very long time” or “I will live many years” (See: [Hyperbole](#) and [Simile](#))

Job 29:19

My roots ... my branches

Job used to speak of his strength as if he were strong like a well-watered tree. (See: [Metaphor](#))

ULT

19 My roots are spread out to the waters, and dew lies all night on my branches.

Job 29:20

The honor in me is always fresh

The abstract noun “honor” can be expressed with the verb “honor.” Here “fresh” represents the honor being constantly given. Alternate translation: “People constantly give me honor” or “People always honor me” (See: [Abstract Nouns](#))

ULT

²⁰ The honor in me is always fresh, and the bow of my strength is always new in my hand.’

the bow of my strength is always new in my hand

A new bow is very strong. Job’s bow of strength in his hand represents his physical strength. Alternate translation: “I am always strong like a new bow” (See: [Metaphor](#))

Job 29:21

(There are no notes for this verse.)

ULT

²¹ To me men listened; they waited for me; they stayed silent to hear my advice.

Job 29:22

my speech dropped like water on them

Here “dropped like water on them” represents refreshing the people who heard him. The abstract noun “speech” can be translated with the verb “speak” or “say.” Alternate translation: “my speech refreshed their hearts as drops of water refresh people’s bodies” or “what I said to them refreshed them like drops of water” (See: [Simile](#) and [Abstract Nouns](#))

ULT

²² After my words were done, they did not speak again; my speech dropped like water on them.

Job 29:23

They always waited for me as they waited for rain

People waited for Job patiently and expected to hear good things.
(See: [Simile](#))

they opened their mouth wide to drink in my words

This represents waiting eagerly for Job to speak in order to benefit from what said. Alternate translation: “they eagerly waited for me to speak in order to benefit from what I said” (See: [Metaphor](#))

as they would do for the latter rain

“as farmers wait eagerly for the latter rain”

the latter rain

This refers to the large amount of rain that falls just before the dry season.

ULT

²³ They always waited for me as they waited for rain; they opened their mouth wide to drink in my words, as they would do for the latter rain.

Job 29:24

I smiled on them

It can be stated clearly that the purpose of smiling was to encourage them. Alternate translation: "I smiled on them to encourage them" (See: [Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information](#))

the light of my face

This represents the kindness they saw in Job's face. (See: [Metaphor](#))

ULT

²⁴ I smiled on them when they did not expect it; they did not reject the light of my face.

Job 29:25

I selected their way

Here “selected their way” represents deciding what they should do. (See: [Metaphor](#))

sat as their chief

Here “sat” represents ruling or leading. Chiefs sat down when they made important decisions. Alternate translation: “led them as their chief” (See: [Metonymy](#))

sat as their chief

Job was their chief. Alternate translation: “led them because I was their chief” (See: [Metonymy](#))

I lived like a king in his army

Job speaks of how he led the people and how they obeyed him as if he were a king and they were his army. (See: [Simile](#))

like one who comforts mourners

This phrase means that Job actually was one who comforted people. Alternate translation: “I comforted them when they mourned” (See: [Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information](#))

ULT

²⁵ I selected their way and sat as their chief; I lived like a king in his army, like one who comforts mourners.

Job 30

Job 30 General Notes

Structure and formatting

The ULT sets the lines of this chapter farther to the right on the page than the rest of the text because it is a poem. This chapter is a continuation of Job's statement, but now it is directly addressed to Yahweh.

In this chapter, Job laments his current condition as others insult him. (See: [lament](#), [lamentation](#))

Job 30:1

whose fathers I would have refused to allow to work beside the dogs of my flock

This shows how much he despised those fathers. They were not even good enough to be with his dogs. Alternate translation: “whose fathers I despised and would not have allowed to work beside the dogs of my flock” (See: [Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information](#))

ULT

¹ Now those who are younger than I have nothing but mockery for me—these young men whose fathers I would have refused to allow to work beside the dogs of my flock.

the dogs of my flock

The dogs' relationship to the flock can be stated clearly. Alternate translation: “the dogs that guarded my flock” (See: [Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information](#))

Job 30:2

**Indeed, the strength of their fathers' hands,
how could it have helped me ... perished?**

Job uses this question to mock the weakness of those men. Alternate translation: "The strength of their fathers' hands could not have helped me ... perished." (See: [Rhetorical Question](#))

ULT

² Indeed, the strength of their fathers' hands, how could it have helped me—men in whom the strength of their mature age had perished?

men in whom the strength of their mature age had perished

Their strength perishing is a metaphor that represents no longer being strong but weak. The phrase "mature age" refers to them being old. Alternate translation: "men who had become old and had no strength" or "men who had become old and weak" (See: [Metaphor](#))

Job 30:3

They were thin from poverty and hunger

The word “They” refers to the fathers of the young mockers.

They were thin from poverty and hunger

The abstract noun “poverty” can be expressed with the word “poor.”

The abstract noun “hunger” can be expressed with the words “hungry” or “starving.” Alternate translation: “They were very thin because they were poor and starving” (See: [Abstract Nouns](#))

ULT

³ They were thin from poverty and hunger; they gnawed at the dry ground in the darkness of wilderness and desolation.

they gnawed at the dry ground

This could mean: (1) “dry ground” is a metonym for the dry roots that grow in the ground. Alternate translation: “they chewed on the dry roots they found in the ground” or (2) “gnawed at the dried ground” is a metonym for eating whatever they could find in the dry ground. (See: [Metonymy](#))

Job 30:4

Connecting Statement:

Job continues to talk about the fathers of the mockers.

saltwort ... bushes' leaves ... the roots of the broom tree

These are plants that people would eat only if they could find nothing better.

the roots of the broom tree were their food

This could mean: (1) the people ate the roots of the broom tree or (2) the people warmed themselves by burning the roots of broom trees.

ULT

⁴ They plucked saltwort and bushes' leaves; the roots of the broom tree were their food.

Job 30:5**They were driven out from among people who shouted after them as ... a thief**

The phrase “were driven out” means “were forced to leave.” These phrases can be reordered and stated in active form. Alternate translation: “The people shouted after them as ... a thief and forced them to leave” (See: [Active or Passive](#))

ULT

⁵ They were driven out from among people who shouted after them as one would shout after a thief.

shouted after them as one would shout after a thief

“shouted at them as though they were thieves”

Job 30:6

(There are no notes for this verse.)

ULT

⁶ So they had to live in river valleys, in holes of the earth and of the rocks.

Job 30:7

Connecting Statement:

Job continues to talk about the fathers of the mockers.

brayed like donkeys

Job speaks of the men crying out in hunger as if they were wild donkeys making a loud noise. Alternate translation: “cried out like wild donkeys because they were hungry” (See: [Simile](#))

they gathered together under the nettles

“Nettles” are bushes with sharp thorns. This implies that they did not have a home.

ULT

⁷ Among the bushes they brayed like donkeys and they gathered together under the nettles.

Job 30:8

They were the sons of fools

Here “were the sons of fools” represents having the characteristics of fools. Alternate translation: “They were like fools” or “they were fools” (See: [Metaphor](#))

ULT

⁸ They were the sons of fools, indeed, sons of nameless people! They were driven out of the land with whips.

indeed, sons of nameless people

The word “indeed” shows that what follows strengthens the previous thought. Here “sons of nameless people” represents having the characteristics of nameless people. Alternate translation: “indeed, they were nameless people” or “indeed, they were worthless” (See: [Metaphor](#))

nameless people

Here being “nameless” represents having no honor or respect. It means that they are worthless. Alternate translation: “worthless people” (See: [Metaphor](#))

They were driven out of the land with whips

This can be stated in active form. This could mean: (1) the idea of whips implies that they were being treated like criminals. Alternate translation: “People treated them like criminals and forced them to leave the land” or (2) people actually used whips to force them out. Alternate translation: “People whipped them and forced them to leave the land” (See: [Metonymy](#))

They were driven out of the land

Here “the land” refers to the land where they lived before they were forced to go out to the wilderness.

Job 30:9

Connecting Statement:

Job speaks again about the people who were mocking him.

But now I have become the subject of their taunting song

The abstract noun “song” can be expressed with the verb “sing.” Alternate translation: “But now they sing songs about me to taunt me” (See: [Abstract Nouns](#))

I have become a byword for them

Here “byword” is a metonym for the person about whom people make cruel jokes. Alternate translation: “I am now one whom they make cruel jokes about” or “They joke and say cruel things about me” (See: [Metonymy](#))

ULT

⁹ But now I have become the subject of their taunting song; I have become a byword for them.

Job 30:10

they do not refrain from spitting in my face

This can be stated positively. Alternate translation: “they even spit in my face” (See: [Litotes](#))

ULT

10 They abhor me and stand far off from me; they do not refrain from spitting in my face.

Job 30:11

God has unstrung the string to my bow

A bow that is unstrung is not useful. The phrase “has unstrung the string of my bow” is a metaphor for making Job powerless. Alternate translation: “God has taken away my power to defend myself” (See: [Metaphor](#))

those who taunt me

“those who mock me”

cast off restraint before my face

A restraint keeps a person from moving freely and doing what he wants. Here “restraint” represents refraining from doing something, and “cast off restraint” represents not refraining from doing something. In this case the mockers did not refrain from being cruel to Job. Alternate translation: “do not refrain from being cruel to me” or “do whatever cruel things they want to do to me” (See: [Metaphor](#) and [Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information](#))

ULT

11 For God has unstrung the string to my bow and afflicted me, and those who taunt me cast off restraint before my face.

Job 30:12

General Information:

Job speaks about the mockers treating him cruelly as if they were a mob and an army attacking him. (See: [Metaphor](#))

Connecting Statement:

Job continues to speak about the people who were mocking him.

Upon my right hand rise the rabble

“the rabble rise upon my right hand.” This could mean: (1) rising upon Job’s right hand represents attacking his strength. Alternate translation: “Gangs of young people attack my strength” or (2) rising upon Job’s right hand represents attacking his honor. Alternate translation: “Mobs attack my honor” (See: [Metonymy](#) and [Metaphor](#))

they drive me away

“they force me to run away”

pile up against me their siege mounds

Armies would pile up mounds of dirt along a city’s wall in order to climb over the wall and attack the city. Job speaks of the mockers preparing to attack him as if they were doing that. Alternate translation: “prepare to attack me like an army that prepares to attack a city” (See: [Metaphor](#))

ULT

¹² Upon my right hand rise the rabble;
they drive me away and pile up against
me their siege mounds.

Job 30:13

They destroy my path

This represents keeping Job from escaping their attack. Alternate translation: "They prevent me from escaping from them" (See: [Metaphor](#))

ULT

13 They destroy my path; they push forward disaster for me, men who have no one to hold them back.

they push forward disaster for me

Here "push forward disaster" represents trying to make disaster happen. Alternate translation: "they try to make disaster happen to me" or "they try to destroy me" (See: [Metaphor](#))

men who have no one to hold them back

Here "hold them back" represents stopping them from doing something. Alternate translation: "men who have no one to stop them from attacking me" (See: [Metaphor](#))

Job 30:14

General Information:

Job speaks about the mockers treating him cruelly as if they were an army attacking him. (See: [Metaphor](#))

Connecting Statement:

Job continues to speak about the people who were mocking him.

They come against me like an army through a wide hole in a city wall

This represents attacking Job forcefully. (See: [Simile](#))

they roll themselves in on me

This represents many coming to attack him at once, like giant ocean waves rolling in on him. (See: [Metaphor](#))

ULT

14 They come against me like an army through a wide hole in a city wall; in the midst of the destruction they roll themselves in on me.

Job 30:15

Terrors are turned upon me

This could mean: (1) Job has become terrified or (2) things are happening to Job that make him afraid. (See: [Metaphor](#))

my honor is driven away as if by the wind

Job speaks of suddenly having no honor as if the wind had blown it from him. Alternate translation: “Nobody honors me” or “I am now a person that people do not honor” (See: [Simile](#))

my prosperity passes away as a cloud

Job speaks of his prosperity ending as if it were a cloud that was blown away. Here “prosperity” may refer to well-being or safety. Alternate translation: “I no longer prosper at all” or “I am no longer safe” (See: [Simile](#))

ULT

15 Terrors are turned upon me; my honor is driven away as if by the wind; my prosperity passes away as a cloud.

Job 30:16

Now my life is pouring out from within me

Job speaks as if his life were a liquid and his body were a container. He feels he is about to die. Alternate translation: "Now I am dying" (See: [Metaphor](#))

ULT

16 Now my life is pouring out from within me; many days of suffering have laid hold on me.

many days of suffering have laid hold on me

Job speaks of his continuous suffering as if the days of suffering have grabbed hold of him. Alternate translation: "I suffer many days, and the suffering does not end" (See: [Personification](#))

Job 30:17

my bones in me are pierced

Job speaks of the pain in his bones as if his bones were being pierced. Alternate translation: “my bones ache terribly” or “I have sharp pain in my bones” (See: [Metaphor](#))

ULT

17 In the night my bones in me are pierced; the pains that gnaw at me take no rest.

the pains that gnaw at me take no rest

Job speaks of his constant pain as if it were alive and biting him and refuses to rest. Alternate translation: “the pains that cause me to suffer do not stop” or “I am in constant pain” (See: [Personification](#))

Job 30:18

God's great force has seized my clothing

Job speaks of God using his force as if God's force were actually doing something. Here "God's ... force" stands for "God." Alternate translation: "God has seized my clothing by his great force" (See: [Metonymy](#))

ULT

18 God's great force has seized my clothing; it wraps around me like the collar of my tunic.

God's great force has seized my clothing

The image of God's force seizing Job is a metaphor. This could mean: (1) it represents Job's pain. Alternate translation: "My pain feels like God has grabbed my clothing tightly" or (2) it represents God's causing Job's many problems. Alternate translation: "It is as though by his great force God has grabbed me by my clothes" (See: [Metaphor](#))

it wraps around me like the collar of my tunic

The image of God's force wrapping around Job is a metaphor. This could mean: (1) it represents Job's pain. Alternate translation: "he wraps the collar of my tunic tightly around me" or (2) it represents God's causing Job's many problems. Alternate translation: "It is as though he grabs me by the collar of my tunic" (See: [Metaphor](#))

Job 30:19

He has thrown me into the mud

Job says that God has humiliated him. Alternate translation: "It is as though he has thrown me in the mud" or "He has humiliated me, like a person thrown in the mud" (See: [Metaphor](#))

ULT

19 He has thrown me into the mud; I have become like dust and ashes.

I have become like dust and ashes

This represents Job's feeling of being worthless. Alternate translation: "I have become as worthless as dust and ashes" (See: [Simile](#))

Job 30:20

(There are no notes for this verse.)

ULT

²⁰ I cry to you, God, but you do not answer me; I stand up, and you merely look at me.

Job 30:21

cruel

This word means unkind.

with the strength of your hand you persecute me

The word “hand” represents God’s power. Alternate translation: “you persecute me with your power” (See: [Metonymy](#))

ULT

21 You have changed and become cruel to me; with the strength of your hand you persecute me.

Job 30:22

Connecting Statement:

Job continues speaking to God.

lift me up to the wind ... throw me back and forth in a storm

These expressions represent the extreme suffering that God made Job endure. (See: [Metaphor](#))

cause it to drive me along

“cause the wind to push me along”

ULT

²² You lift me up to the wind and cause it to drive me along; you throw me back and forth in a storm. ^[1]

Job 30:23

you will bring me to death

Here “bring me to death” represents causing Job to die. Alternate translation: “you will cause me to die” (See: [Metaphor](#))

the house appointed for all the living

Job speaks of the world of the dead as if it were a house to which God has appointed all living things to go. Alternate translation: “the world of the dead, to which everything that has ever lived goes” (See: [Metaphor](#))

all the living

That is, all things now alive, but that will die one day.

ULT

²³ For I know that you will bring me to death, to the house appointed for all the living.

Job 30:24

Connecting Statement:

Job continues speaking to God.

does no one reach out with his hand to beg for help when he falls? Does no one in trouble call out for help?

ULT

²⁴ However, does no one reach out with his hand to beg for help when he falls?
Does no one in trouble call out for help?

Job uses these questions to justify himself for crying out to God for help. Alternate translation: “Everyone reaches out with his hand to beg for help when he falls. Everyone who is in trouble calls out for help.” or “I have fallen, and so God should not think I am doing wrong when I beg for his help. I am in trouble, so of course I call out for help!” (See: [Rhetorical Question](#))

does no one reach out with his hand to beg for help when he falls? Does no one in trouble call out for help?

Some versions interpret these questions as Job complaining that God has reached out with his hand to harm Job when Job was in trouble and crying out for help. Alternate translation: “Surely no one would reach out with his hand against someone who falls and calls out for help.” (See: [Rhetorical Question](#))

Job 30:25

Did not I weep ... trouble? Did I not grieve ... man?

Job uses these questions to remind God of how Job had done good to others. A: "You know that I wept ... trouble, and I grieved ... man!" (See: [Rhetorical Question](#))

ULT

²⁵ Did not I weep for him who was in trouble? Did I not grieve for the needy man?

Job 30:26

When I hoped for good, then evil came

Looking for good represents hoping for good things, and evil coming represents evil things happening. (See: [Metaphor](#))

I waited for light ... darkness came

Here “light” represents God’s blessing and favor and “darkness” represents trouble and suffering. Alternate translation: “I waited for the light of God’s blessing, but instead I experienced the darkness of suffering” (See: [Metaphor](#))

ULT

26 When I hoped for good, then evil came; when I waited for light, darkness came instead.

Job 30:27

My heart is troubled and does not rest

Job speaks of his heart as if it were a person. Alternate translation: "I am troubled in my heart and the feeling does not end" (See: [Personification](#))

ULT

27 My heart is troubled and does not rest; days of affliction have come on me.

days of affliction have come on me

Days of affliction coming on Job represents Job experiencing affliction for many days. Alternate translation: "I experience affliction many days" or "I suffer every day" (See: [Metaphor](#))

Job 30:28

I have gone about

Here “have gone about” represents living. Alternate translation: “I have lived” or “I live” (See: [Metaphor](#))

like one who was living in the dark, but not because of the sun

Here “living in the dark” is a metaphor that represents being extremely sad. The phrase “but not because of the sun” clarifies that “living in the dark” is a metaphor, that is, the darkness is not caused by the sun being hidden. Alternate translation: “like one who is terribly sad” (See: [Metaphor](#))

ULT

28 I have gone about like one who was living in the dark, but not because of the sun; I stand up in the assembly and cry for help.

Job 30:29

a brother to jackals, a companion of ostriches

Being a brother to these animals is a metaphor for being like them.
Alternate translation: "I am like jackals and ostriches that cry out in the wilderness" (See: [Metaphor](#))

ULT

²⁹ I am a brother to jackals, a companion of ostriches.

Job 30:30

my bones are burned with heat

Here “bones” refers to the whole body, which suffers from fever.
(See: [Synecdoche](#))

ULT

³⁰ My skin is black and falls away from me; my bones are burned with heat.

Job 30:31

my harp is tuned for songs of mourning

Here “my harp” represents Job himself, and also represents his desire to sing only songs of mourning. Alternate translation: “I play only songs of mourning on my harp” (See: [Metonymy](#))

ULT

³¹ Therefore my harp is tuned for songs of mourning, my flute for the singing of those who wail.

my flute for the singing of those who wail

Here “my flute” represents Job himself, and also his desire to sing only songs of crying. Alternate translation: “I play only songs of wailing on my flute” (See: [Metonymy](#))

wail

To wail is to cry very loudly because of terrible sadness or pain.

Job 31

Job 31 General Notes

Structure and formatting

The ULT sets the lines of this chapter farther to the right on the page than the rest of the text because it is a poem. This chapter is a continuation of Job's statement and it is directly addressed to Yahweh.

In this chapter, Job presents his case to Yahweh that he is upright and not guilty of the sins he is being accused of. (See: [righteous](#), [righteousness](#), [unrighteous](#), [unrighteousness](#), [upright](#), [uprightness](#) and [guilt](#), [guilty](#) and [sin](#), [sinful](#), [sinner](#), [sinning](#))

Job 31:1

General Information:

Job continues speaking.

I have made a covenant with my eyes

Job speaks of making a promise about what he would look at as though his eyes were a person and he made a covenant with them. Alternate translation: "I have made a firm promise about what I will look at" (See: [Metaphor](#) and [Personification](#))

I have made a covenant with my eyes

What job promised can be stated clearly. Alternate translation: "I made a promise that I will not look lustfully on a virgin" or "I promised that I will not look lustfully on a virgin" (See: [Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information](#))

how then should I look with desire on a virgin?

Job uses this question to emphasize that he would never break his promise. Alternate translation: "So I certainly will not look with lust at a virgin." (See: [Rhetorical Question](#))

ULT

¹ I have made a covenant with my eyes;
how then should I look with desire on a
virgin?

Job 31:2

For what is the portion from God above, the inheritance from the Almighty on high?

Job speaks of God's response to people's behavior as if it were the portion of an inheritance that God gives. Alternate translation: "For how will God above respond to me? What will the Almighty on high do?" (See: [Metaphor](#) and [Parallelism](#))

ULT

² For what is the portion from God above, the inheritance from the Almighty on high?

For what is the portion from God above, the inheritance from the Almighty on high?

Possible meanings are Job uses this question to emphasize: (1) that God will not bless bad behavior. Alternate translation: "For if I look lustfully on a woman, God Almighty on high will not bless me." or (2) that God will punish bad behavior. Alternate translation: "For if I look lustfully on a woman, God Almighty on high will certainly punish me." (See: [Rhetorical Question](#))

Job 31:3

General Information:

Job continues speaking.

ULT

³ I used to think that calamity is for unrighteous people, and that disaster is for doers of wickedness.

Job 31:4

Does not God see my ways and count all my steps?

Here “my ways” and “my steps” are metaphors for Job’s behavior. Here “see my ways” and “count all my steps” are metaphors for knowing everything Job does. Job uses this question to emphasize that God does know all he does. Alternate translation: “Certainly God watches me and knows everything that I do.” (See: [Metaphor](#) and [Rhetorical Question](#))

ULT

⁴ Does not God see my ways and count all my steps?

Does not God see my ways and count all my steps?

Job may be implying that God should know that Job is righteous and does not deserve calamity and disaster. (See: [Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information](#))

Job 31:5

General Information:

Job continues speaking.

If I have

ULT

⁵ If I have walked with falsehood, if my foot has hurried to deceit,

In 31:5-40 Job describes different situations in which he would deserve God's punishment. But, he knows that they are not true and he is innocent. (See: [Hypothetical Situations](#))

walked with falsehood, if my foot has hurried to deceit

Here "walked" and "hurried" are metaphors that represent how Job lived. Alternate translation: "done anything false or purposely deceived anyone" (See: [Metaphor](#))

Job 31:6

let me be weighed in an even balance

People used balances to weigh items and to determine their value. This image represents judging honestly. It can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: “let me be judged honestly” or “let God judge me honestly” (See: [Metaphor](#) and [Active or Passive](#))

ULT

⁶ let me be weighed in an even balance
so that God will know my integrity.

Job 31:7

General Information:

Job continues describing situations in which he would deserve God's punishment, but he knows they are not true. (See: [Hypothetical Situations](#))

ULT

⁷ If my step has turned aside from the way, if my heart has gone after my eyes, if any spot has stuck to my hands,

If my step has turned aside from the way

Here "my step" is a metaphor for Job's behavior, and "turned out of the right way" is a metaphor for changing from living right. Alternate translation: "If I have changed from living right" or "If I have stopped doing what is right" (See: [Metaphor](#))

if my heart has gone after my eyes

Here "my heart" and "my eyes" are metonyms for what Job desires and sees. The heart going after the eyes is a metaphor for desiring to do what he sees. It is implied that this refers to sinful things that Job sees. Alternate translation: "if I have wanted to do any sinful things that I see" (See: [Metonymy](#) and [Metaphor](#))

if any spot has stuck to my hands

This is a metaphor for being guilty. Alternate translation: "if I am guilty of any sin at all" (See: [Metaphor](#))

Job 31:8

then let me sow, and let another eat, and let my crops be uprooted

Job is saying that if he really has sinned, then this bad thing should happen to him. He would do the hard work of sowing his fields, but he would not be able to eat any of it.

let my crops be uprooted

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: “let someone else come and take the harvest from my field” (See: [Active or Passive](#))

ULT

⁸ then let me sow, and let another eat, and let my crops be uprooted.

Job 31:9

General Information:

Job continues describing situations in which he would deserve God's punishment, but he knows they are not true. (See: [Hypothetical Situations](#))

ULT

⁹ If my heart has been deceived by a woman, if I have lain in wait at my neighbor's door,

If my heart has been deceived by a woman

Here "my heart" represents Job. Here the word "deceived" expresses the idea of "enticed." The word "woman" expresses the idea of "another man's wife." This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "If another man's wife has enticed me" or "If I have desired another man's wife" (See: [Synecdoche](#) and [Active or Passive](#))

if I have lain in wait at my neighbor's door

It can be stated clearly why he was waiting at his neighbor's door. Alternate translation: "if I have waited at my neighbor's door so I could sleep with his wife" (See: [Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information](#))

Job 31:10**then let my wife grind grain for another**

This could mean: (1) this is an euphemism which means Job is saying may his wife sleep with another man or (2) it means she will become a slave and work for another man. (See: [Euphemism](#))

ULT

10 then let my wife grind grain for another, and let others bow down on her.

Job 31:11

General Information:

Job continues describing situations in which he would deserve God's punishment, but he knows they are not true. (See: [Hypothetical Situations](#))

ULT

11 For that would be a terrible crime; indeed, it would be a crime to be punished by judges.

For that would be a terrible crime

The word "that" refers to Job sleeping with another woman.

it would be a crime to be punished by judges

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "it would be a crime for which judges would be right to punish me" (See: [Active or Passive](#))

Job 31:12

For that is a fire that consumes as far as Abaddon, and it would burn all my harvest to the root

Job speaks of the harm that sleeping with another woman causes as if it were a fire that destroys everything. The words “that” and “it” refer to sleeping with another man’s wife. Alternate translation: “For adultery is like a fire that burns up everything from here to Abaddon and that would burn up all my harvest” (See: [Metaphor](#))

ULT

¹² For that is a fire that consumes as far as Abaddon, and it would burn all my harvest to the root.

consumes as far as Abaddon

These words are probably a metaphor for “destroys everything so I have nothing good for the rest of my life,” but you should probably translate this literally. (See: [Metaphor](#))

it would burn all my harvest to the root

The word “it” here refers to the action sleeping with another man’s wife. This action is a metonym for the punishment that Job would suffer as a result of the action. A fire burning up his harvest is a synecdoche for losing everything he has worked for. Alternate translation: “those who punish me would take away everything I have worked for” (See: [Metonymy](#) and [Synecdoche](#))

Job 31:13

General Information:

Job continues describing situations in which he would deserve God's punishment, but he knows they are not true. (See: [Hypothetical Situations](#))

ULT

13 If I ignored the plea for justice from my male or female servant when they argued with me,

Job 31:14

**what then would I do when God rises up to
accuse me? When he comes to judge me, how
would I answer him?**

Job uses these questions to emphasize that if God were to judge him, Job would not be able to make himself appear to be good. Alternate translation: “then there would be absolutely nothing I could say to defend myself when God comes to judge me.” (See: [Rhetorical Question](#))

ULT

¹⁴ what then would I do when God rises up to accuse me? When he comes to judge me, how would I answer him?

Job 31:15

Did the one who made me in the womb not make them also? Did not the same one mold us all in the womb?

Job uses these questions to emphasize that he is no different from his servants. He implies that God would be angry if Job were to treat his servants as less valuable than himself. Alternate translation: "The one who made me in the womb also made them. He formed us all in the womb." (See: [Rhetorical Question](#))

ULT

¹⁵ Did the one who made me in the womb not make them also? Did not the same one mold us all in the womb?

Job 31:16

General Information:

Job continues describing situations in which he would deserve God's punishment, but he knows they are not true. He does not finish his sentence in verses 16 and 17. Instead he explains in verse 18 why they are not true. (See: [Hypothetical Situations](#))

ULT

16 If I have withheld poor people from their desire, or if I have caused the eyes of the widow to grow dim from crying,

If I have withheld poor people from their desire

"If I have kept poor people from getting what they desire"

if I have caused the eyes of the widow to grow dim from crying

Here "to grow dim" refers to the widow having bad eyesight from crying a lot. Alternate translation: "if I have caused a widow to cry in great sadness" (See: [Idiom](#))

Job 31:17

my morsel

“my food”

ULT

17 or if I have eaten my morsel alone
and not allowed those without fathers
to eat it also—

Job 31:18

because from my youth the orphan grew up with me as with a father

Here “the orphan” represents orphans in general. Job is describing how he truly treated orphans. Alternate translation: “because even when I was young I took care of orphans like a father” (See: [Generic Noun Phrases](#))

ULT

¹⁸ because from my youth the orphan grew up with me as with a father, and I have guided his mother, a widow, from my own mother’s womb.

because from my youth

The phrase “But I have done none of those things” is understood from the context. Alternate translation: “But I have done none of those things, because from my youth” (See: [Ellipsis](#))

I have guided his mother, a widow, from my own mother’s womb

Job is describing how he truly treated widows. With the phrase “from my own mother’s womb” he uses exaggeration to emphasize that he did this all his life. Alternate translation: “all my life I have guided the orphan’s mother, a widow” or “all my life I have guided widows” (See: [Hyperbole](#))

Job 31:19

General Information:

Job continues describing situations in which he would deserve God's punishment, but he knows they are not true. (See: [Hypothetical Situations](#))

ULT

19 If I have seen anyone perish for lack of clothing, or if I have seen that a needy man had no clothing;

Job 31:20

if his heart has not blessed me

The phrase “his heart” represents the poor man who needs clothing.
Alternate translation: “if he has not blessed me” (See: [Synecdoche](#))

because he has not been warmed with the wool of my sheep

Here “the wool of my sheep” represents blankets or clothing made from the wool of Job’s sheep. This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: “because the wool of my sheep has not warmed him” or “because I have not given him clothing made from the wool of my sheep” (See: [Metonymy](#) and [Active or Passive](#))

ULT

²⁰ if his heart has not blessed me
because he has not been warmed with
the wool of my sheep,

Job 31:21

if I have lifted up my hand against fatherless people

Lifting up the hand against someone represents threatening to harm him. Alternate translation: “if I have threatened to harm fatherless people” (See: [Metonymy](#))

ULT

²¹ if I have lifted up my hand against fatherless people because I saw my support in the city gate, then bring charges against me!

I saw my support in the city gate

Here “saw” is a metaphor for “knew,” “support” is a metaphor for “approval,” and “the city gate” is a metonym for the leaders who sit at the city gate. Alternate translation: “I knew that the leaders at the city gate would approve of me” (See: [Metaphor](#) and [Metonymy](#))

in the city gate

This is where the important men of the city would gather to make decisions.

then bring charges against me

This phrase is not in the original language or in other versions of the Bible. It was added here to help preserve the meaning of Job’s statement in this long sentence.

Job 31:22

then let my shoulder fall from the shoulder blade, and let my arm be broken from its joint

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: “then let someone tear off my shoulder from the shoulder blade and break my arm from its joint” (See: [Active or Passive](#))

ULT

²² If I have done these things, then let my shoulder fall from the shoulder blade, and let my arm be broken from its joint.

Job 31:23

For I dreaded ... his majesty

This is the reason that Job did not do any of the wicked things he spoke of in verses 7 through 21.

ULT

²³ For I dreaded destruction from God;
because of his majesty, I was not able to
do those things.

Job 31:24

General Information:

Job continues describing situations in which he would deserve God's punishment, but he knows they are not true. (See: [Hypothetical Situations](#))

ULT

24 If I have made gold my hope, and if I have said to fine gold, 'You are what I am confident in';

If I have made gold my hope

The abstract noun "hope" can be translated with the verbs "trust" or "hope." Alternate translation: "If I trusted in gold" or "If I hoped that having a lot of gold would make me secure" (See: [Abstract Nouns](#))

if I have said to fine gold, 'You are what I am confident in'

This line means the same as the previous line. (See: [Parallelism](#))

Job 31:25

my hand had gotten many possessions

Here “my hand” represents Job’s ability to do things. Alternate translation: “I have gained many possessions by my own ability” (See: [Metonymy](#))

then bring charges against me

This phrase is not in the original language or in other versions of the Bible. It was added here to help preserve the meaning of Job’s statement in this long sentence.

ULT

²⁵ if I have rejoiced because my wealth was great, because my hand had gotten many possessions, then bring charges against me!

Job 31:26

General Information:

Job continues describing situations in which he would deserve God's punishment, but he knows they are not true. (See: [Hypothetical Situations](#))

ULT

26 If I have seen the sun when it shone,
or the moon walking in its brightness,

the moon walking

Here "walking" represents moving slowly. Alternate translation: "the moon moving across the sky" (See: [Personification](#))

the moon walking in its brightness

The abstract noun "brightness" can be expressed with the words "bright" or "brightly." Alternate translation: "the bright moon moving across the sky" or "the moon moving brightly across the sky" (See: [Abstract Nouns](#))

Job 31:27

if my heart has been secretly attracted

Here “my heart” represents Job. This phrase can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: “if I have been secretly attracted to them” or “if I have secretly desired to worship them” (See: [Synecdoche](#) and [Active or Passive](#))

ULT

²⁷ and if my heart has been secretly attracted, so that my mouth has kissed my hand in worship of them—

so that my mouth has kissed my hand

Here “my mouth” represents Job. This is a sign of love and devotion. Alternate translation: “so that I have kissed my hand” (See: [Symbolic Action](#))

Job 31:28

to be punished by judges

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: “for which judges would be right to punish me” (See: [Active or Passive](#))

I would have denied the God who is above

“I would have been unfaithful to the God who is above”

ULT

²⁸ this also would be a crime to be punished by judges, for I would have denied the God who is above.

Job 31:29

General Information:

Job continues describing situations in which he would deserve God's punishment, but he knows they are not true. (See: [Hypothetical Situations](#))

at the destruction of anyone who hated me

The abstract noun "destruction" can be translated with the verb "destroy." Alternate translation: "when anyone who hated me was destroyed" or "when bad things happened to anyone who hated me" (See: [Abstract Nouns](#))

when disaster overtook him

"when he experienced disasters"

then bring charges against me

This phrase is not in the original language or in other versions of the Bible. It was added here to help preserve the meaning of Job's statement in this long sentence.

ULT

²⁹ If I have rejoiced at the destruction of anyone who hated me or congratulated myself when disaster overtook him, then bring charges against me!

Job 31:30

Indeed, I have not even allowed my mouth to sin

Here “my mouth” represents Job speaking. Alternate translation: “Truly I did not let myself sin” or “Truly, I did not sin” (See: [Synecdoche](#))

ULT

³⁰ Indeed, I have not even allowed my mouth to sin by asking for his life with a curse.

by asking for his life with a curse

Here “asking for his life with a curse” represents cursing someone’s life so that he will die. Alternate translation: “by cursing him so that he would die” or “by cursing his life” (See: [Metonymy](#))

Job 31:31

General Information:

Job continues describing situations in which he would deserve God's punishment, but he knows they are not true. (See: [Hypothetical Situations](#))

ULT

31 If the men of my tent have never said, 'Who can find one who has not been filled with Job's food?'

the men of my tent

The tent represents Job's household. The men of his tent includes family members and servants. All of these knew Job well. Alternate translation: "the men of my household" or "my family members and servants" (See: [Metonymy](#))

Who can find one who has not been filled with Job's food?

Job's men would have used this question to emphasize that Job was generous to everyone. Alternate translation: "Everyone has been filled with Job's food!" or "Everyone we know of has eaten as much of Job's food as he wanted!" (See: [Rhetorical Question](#))

Job 31:32

even the foreigner has never had to stay in the city square

Job is explaining how he truly treated foreigners. Here “stay in the city square” represents sleeping overnight in the city square. Alternate translation: “foreigners have never had to sleep in the city square” or “foreigners have never had to sleep outside” (See: [Metonymy](#))

ULT

³² (even the foreigner has never had to stay in the city square, because I have always opened my doors to the traveler), and if that is not so, then bring charges against me!

I have always opened my doors to the traveler

Here “opened my doors to the traveler” represents welcoming the traveler into his home. Alternate translation: “I have always welcomed the traveler into my home” (See: [Metonymy](#))

and if that is not so, then bring charges against me

This phrase is not in the original language or in other versions of the Bible. It was added here to help preserve the meaning of Job’s statement in this long sentence.

Job 31:33

General Information:

Job continues describing situations in which he would deserve God's punishment, but he knows they are not true. (See: [Hypothetical Situations](#))

ULT

33 If, like mankind, I have hidden my sins by hiding my guilt inside my tunic

If ... I have hidden my sins

Here "have hidden my sins" represents trying to keep people from knowing that he had sinned. Alternate translation: "If ... I have tried to keep my sins a secret" (See: [Metaphor](#))

by hiding my guilt inside my tunic

This represents trying to keep people from knowing that he is guilty. Alternate translation: "by hiding the evidence of my guilt inside my tunic" or "like one who hides the evidence of his guilt inside his tunic" (See: [Metaphor](#))

Job 31:34

because I feared the great multitude, because the contempt of families terrified me

This would be the reason for hiding his sins. These mean the same thing. They emphasize that a person may hide his sin because he fears what other people may think about him. (See: [Parallelism](#))

then bring charges against me

This phrase is not in the original language or in other versions of the Bible. It was added here to help preserve the meaning of Job's statement in this long sentence.

ULT

³⁴ (because I feared the great multitude, because the contempt of families terrified me, so that I kept silent and would not go outside), then bring charges against me!

Job 31:35

Oh, if only I had someone to hear me!

This exclamation expresses Job's wish. Alternate translation: "I wish I had someone to hear me" or "I wish that someone would listen to me" (See: [Exclamations](#))

here is my signature

Here "my signature" represents Job's promise that everything he is saying is true. He speaks of his complaint as if he had written a legal document. Alternate translation: "I solemnly promise that all I have said is true" (See: [Metaphor](#))

let the Almighty answer me!

Here an answer probably refers to telling Job what wrong he accuses Job of doing. Alternate translation: "let the Almighty tell me what I have done wrong" or "I wish the Almighty would say what I have done wrong" (See: [Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information](#))

If only I had the indictment that my opponent has written!

This expresses Job's wish. Job speaks as though his troubles are evidence that someone has written something accusing him of terrible sin. Alternate translation: "I wish I had the accusation that my opponent has written" or "If only I could read my opponent's complaint against me"

my opponent

This could mean: (1) this refers to God or (2) this refers to someone else.

ULT

³⁵ Oh, if only I had someone to hear me! See, here is my signature; let the Almighty answer me! If only I had the indictment that my opponent has written!

Job 31:36

**Surely I would carry it openly on my shoulder;
I would put it on like a crown**

This represents putting it where everyone could read it. (See:
[Metaphor](#))

ULT

³⁶ Surely I would carry it openly on my
shoulder; I would put it on like a crown.

Job 31:37

I would declare to him an accounting for my steps

Here “my steps” represents Job’s actions. Alternate translation: “I would declare to him an accounting for all I have done” or “I would tell him everything I have done” (See: [Metaphor](#))

ULT

³⁷ I would declare to him an accounting for my steps; as a confident prince I would go up to him.

as a confident prince I would go up to him

This means Job would approach God without any fear. Job implies that he could do this because he was not guilty. Alternate translation: “I would approach him boldly” (See: [Simile](#))

Job 31:38

General Information:

This concludes Job's description of situations in which he would deserve God's punishment, but he knows they are not true. (See: [Hypothetical Situations](#))

ULT

³⁸ If my land ever cries out against me,
and its furrows weep together,

If my land ever cries out against me, and its furrows weep together

Job speaks of being guilty as if his land were a person who cries out against Job because of the wrong Job has done to the land. Alternate translation: "If I have done wrong concerning my land" or "If I have stolen my land from someone" (See: [Personification](#))

Job 31:39

to lose their lives

This represents dying. Alternate translation: “to die” (See: [Metonymy](#))

ULT

³⁹ if I have eaten its harvest without paying for it or have caused its owners to lose their lives,

Job 31:40

weeds instead of barley

The words “let” and “grow” are understood from the previous phrase. Alternate translation: “let weeds grow instead of barley” (See: [Ellipsis](#))

ULT

⁴⁰ then let thorns grow instead of wheat and weeds instead of barley.” The words of Job are finished.

Job 32

Job 32 General Notes

Structure and formatting

Job's friends give up on trying to convince him that he is being punished for sinning. This chapter introduces Elihu who was a witness to these interactions between Job and his friends. According to Elihu, instead of being punished for his sins, Job is sinning in the midst of these difficulties. This is the first of Elihu's four statements. (See: [sin](#), [sinful](#), [sinner](#), [sinning](#) and [testimony](#), [testify](#), [witness](#), [eyewitness](#), [evidence](#))

Some translations prefer to set apart extended quotations, prayers, or songs. The ULT and many other English translations set the lines of 32:6-22, which is an extended quotation, farther to the right on the page than the rest of the text. This quotation continues through the next chapter.

Job 32:1

he was righteous in his own eyes

The eyes represent seeing, and seeing represents thoughts or judgment. Alternate translation: "he considered himself righteous" (See: [Metaphor](#))

ULT

¹ So these three men stopped answering Job because he was righteous in his own eyes.

Job 32:2

Then was kindled the anger of Elihu son of Barakel the Buzite, of the family of Ram; it was kindled against Job

This compares Elihu's anger to someone starting a fire. Also, this can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "Then Elihu son of Barakel the Buzite, of the family of Ram, became very angry with Job" (See: [Metaphor](#) and [Active or Passive](#))

ULT

² Then was kindled the anger of Elihu son of Barakel the Buzite, of the family of Ram; it was kindled against Job because he justified himself rather than God.

Elihu ... Barakel ... Ram

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

Buzite

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

he justified himself rather than God

This means that he considered himself innocent and believed God had been wrong to punish him. Alternate translation: "he justified himself and claimed that God had been wrong to punish him" (See: [Assumed Knowledge](#) and [Implicit Information](#))

Job 32:3

Elihu's anger was also kindled against his three friends

This compares Elihu's anger to someone starting a fire. This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "Elihu also became very angry with his three friends" (See: [Metaphor](#) and [Active or Passive](#))

ULT

³ Elihu's anger was also kindled against his three friends because they had found no answer to Job, and yet they had condemned Job.

Job 32:4

Now

This word is used here to mark a break in the main story line. This tells background information about Elihu. (See: [Background Information](#))

ULT

⁴ Now Elihu had waited to speak to Job because the other men were older than he.

Job 32:5

that there was no answer in the mouths of these three men

This means that the men were done speaking to Job. This speaks of the men possibly having an answer as if the answer were an object that would be in their mouths. Alternate translation: “that these three men had nothing else to say” or “that these three men had no more answers to give Job” (See: [Metaphor](#))

ULT

⁵ However, when Elihu saw that there was no answer in the mouths of these three men, his anger was kindled.

his anger was kindled

This compares Elihu’s anger to someone starting a fire. This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: “he became very angry” (See: [Metaphor](#) and [Active or Passive](#))

Job 32:6

you are very old

Here “you” is plural and refers to Job and his three friends. (See: [Forms of You](#))

ULT

⁶ Then Elihu son of Barakel the Buzite spoke up and said, “I am young, and you are very old. That is why I held back and did not dare to tell you my own opinion.

Job 32:7**Length of days should speak; a multitude of years should teach wisdom**

These two lines mean the same thing. Elihu emphasizes that since older people are wiser than younger people, they should be the first to speak of what they know. Alternate translation: "He who has lived many years should speak; He would is older should teach wisdom" (See: [Metonymy](#) and [Parallelism](#))

ULT

⁷ I said, "Length of days should speak; a multitude of years should teach wisdom."

Job 32:8

General Information:

Elihu continues speaking to Job and his friends.

there is a spirit in a man; the breath of the Almighty

Both phrases mean the same thing. Elihu is emphasizing that a man's wisdom comes from God. Alternate translation: "there is a spirit in a man, that is, the breath of the Almighty that" (See: [Parallelism](#))

the breath of the Almighty

Here the spirit is represented by "breath." Alternate translation: "the spirit of the Almighty" (See: [Metonymy](#))

ULT

⁸ But there is a spirit in a man; the breath of the Almighty gives him understanding.

Job 32:9

(There are no notes for this verse.)

ULT

⁹ It is not only the great people who are wise, nor the aged people alone who understand justice.

Job 32:10

(There are no notes for this verse.)

ULT

¹⁰ Therefore I say to you, 'Listen to me; I will also tell you my knowledge.'

Job 32:11

See

Elihu uses this word here to draw the mens' attention to what he says next. Alternate translation: "Listen"

I waited for your words

"I waited to hear what you would say." The word "your" refers to Job's friends. (See: [Forms of You](#))

ULT

11 See, I waited for your words; I listened to your arguments while you were thinking about what to say.

Job 32:12

who could respond to his words

Here the word “respond” does not just mean to answer, but to answer with a helpful response.

ULT

¹² Indeed, I paid attention to you, but, see, there was not one of you who could convince Job or who could respond to his words.

Job 32:13

General Information:

Elihu continues speaking to Job's friends.

We have found wisdom

This means that they believe that they have figured out what is wise. Alternate translation: "We have discovered what is wise"

to defeat Job

This speaks of God responding to Job and correcting him as if he were defeating him in battle. Alternate translation: "to refute Job" or "to answer Job" (See: [Metaphor](#))

ULT

¹³ Be careful not to say, 'We have found wisdom!' God will have to defeat Job; mere man cannot do it.

Job 32:14

with your words

“by saying what you have said”

ULT

¹⁴ For Job has not directed his words against me, so I will not answer him with your words.

Job 32:15

General Information:

Elihu continues speaking.

dumbfounded

amazed, unable to speak

ULT

¹⁵ These three men are dumbfounded; they can answer Job no longer; they have not a word more to say.

Job 32:16

**Should I wait because they are not speaking,
because they stand there silent and answer
no more?**

Elihu uses a question to emphasize that he will not wait any longer to speak. Elihu answers this question himself in the next verse.

Alternate translation: But because you do not speak, I certainly will not wait any longer; you merely stand there and do not reply anymore. (See: [Rhetorical Question](#))

ULT

¹⁶ Should I wait because they are not speaking, because they stand there silent and answer no more?

Job 32:17

General Information:

Elihu continues speaking using parallelisms.

I also will answer on my part

“I will now take my turn to answer”

ULT

17 No, I also will answer on my part; I will also tell them my knowledge.

Job 32:18

I am full of words

Elihu speaks of having a lot to say as being full of words. Alternate translation: "I have so much to say" (See: [Metaphor](#))

the spirit in me compels me

"my spirit forces me to say it"

ULT

18 For I am full of words; the spirit in me compels me.

Job 32:19

my breast is like fermenting wine that has no vent; like new wineskins, it is ready to burst

While wine is fermenting, gas collects in the container. If the gas is not let out the container will burst. Elihu means that he has so much to say that if he does not speak he feels like he will burst. Also, these two phrases are parallel and have the same meaning. Alternate translation: "I feel like my breast is about to burst, like a container of fermenting wine that has no vent" (See: [Simile](#) and [Parallelism](#))

ULT

¹⁹ See, my breast is like fermenting wine that has no vent; like new wineskins, it is ready to burst.

my breast is

This represents Elihu, specifically his spirit. Alternate translation: "my spirit is" or "I am" (See: [Synecdoche](#))

Job 32:20

General Information:

Elihu continues speaking using parallelisms for emphasis.

I may be refreshed

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: “I may feel better” (See: [Active or Passive](#))

open my lips

Here the “lips” represent the mouth. Alternate translation: “open my mouth” (See: [Synecdoche](#))

ULT

²⁰ I will speak so that I may be refreshed; I will open my lips and answer.

Job 32:21

neither will I give honorific titles to any man

“neither will I praise any man or give him titles of honor”

ULT

²¹ I will not show favoritism; neither will I give honorific titles to any man.

Job 32:22

my Maker

This is a name referring to God. Alternate translation: “God who made me”

take me away

This means that he would destroy him. Alternate translation: “destroy me” (See: [Euphemism](#))

ULT

²² For I do not know how to give such titles; if I did so, my Maker would soon take me away.

Job 33

Job 33 General Notes

Structure and formatting

According to Elihu, instead of being punished for his sins, Job is sinning in the midst of these difficulties. This is a continuation of the first of Elihu's four statements and it is addressed to Job. (See: [sin](#), [sinful](#), [sinner](#), [sinning](#) and [testimony](#), [testify](#), [witness](#), [eyewitness](#), [evidence](#))

The ULT sets the lines of this chapter farther to the right on the page than the rest of the text because it is a poem. This quotation is a continuation of the previous chapter.

Special concepts in this chapter

God's mercy

While Job has been complaining about the lack of justice and response from Yahweh, Elihu shows Job that Yahweh has shown him great mercy along the way. He is still alive because of Yahweh's mercy. (See: [mercy](#), [merciful](#))

Job 33:1

General Information:

Elihu continues speaking.

hear my speech; listen to all my words

These two phrases mean the same thing. Elihu is emphasizing that Job must listen carefully. (See: [Parallelism](#))

ULT

¹ So now, Job, I beg you, hear my speech; listen to all my words.

Job 33:2**I have opened my mouth ... my tongue has spoken in my mouth**

These mean the same thing. Elihu is emphasizing that he is now ready to speak. His “tongue” speaking represents himself speaking.

Alternate translation: “I have opened my mouth and I have begun to speak” (See: [Parallelism](#) and [Metonymy](#))

ULT

² See now, I have opened my mouth;
my tongue has spoken in my mouth.

Job 33:3

My words come from the uprightness of my heart

Here Elihu refers to himself by his “heart” as he speaks of being upright. Alternate translation: “I will speak with uprightness” or “I will speak with complete honesty” (See: [Synecdoche](#))

ULT

³ My words come from the uprightness of my heart; my lips speak pure knowledge.

my lips speak pure knowledge

Here Elihu refers to himself by his “lips” to emphasize his speech. Alternate translation: “I will speak sincerely to you the things I know” (See: [Synecdoche](#))

Job 33:4

General Information:

Elihu continues speaking to Job.

The Spirit of God ... has given me life

These two lines mean the same thing. Elihu is emphasizing that God has made him and so gives authority to what he is saying. (See: [Parallelism](#))

ULT

⁴ The Spirit of God has made me; the breath of the Almighty has given me life.

Job 33:5

set your words in order before me and stand up

This speaks of Job preparing what he will say as if he were setting up and organizing physical objects. Alternate translation: “prepare what you will say, and stand up and answer me” (See: [Metaphor](#))

ULT

⁵ If you can, answer me; set your words in order before me and stand up.

Job 33:6

General Information:

Elihu continues speaking to Job.

See

Elihu uses this word here to draw Job's attention to what he says next. Alternate translation: "Listen"

ULT

⁶ See, I am just as you are in God's sight; I also have been formed out of the clay.

I am just as you are in God's sight

Here sight represents judgment or evaluation. Alternate translation: "I am just as you are in God's judgment" or "God judges me the same way that he judges you" (See: [Metaphor](#))

I also have been formed out of the clay

Though people are not made out of clay, God has made everyone as a potter carefully makes things out of clay. Alternate translation: "God has made both of us just as a potter forms things from clay" (See: [Metaphor](#))

I also have been formed

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "God has also made me" or "God has formed both of us" (See: [Active or Passive](#))

Job 33:7**terror of me will not make you afraid**

“you do not need to be afraid of me”

neither will my pressure be heavy upon you

This means that he will not hinder Job or burden him. He speaks of emotional burden here as if it were a heavy physical burden. Alternate translation: “neither will I burden you” or “I will not oppress you with what I say” (See: [Metaphor](#))

ULT

⁷ See, terror of me will not make you afraid; neither will my pressure be heavy upon you.

Job 33:8

General Information:

Elihu continues speaking to Job.

in my hearing

“where I could hear you”

I have heard the sound of your words saying

“I have heard you say”

ULT

⁸ You have certainly spoken in my hearing; I have heard the sound of your words saying,

Job 33:9

clean

A person who God considers spiritually acceptable is spoken of as if the person were physically clean. (See: [Metaphor](#))

there is no sin in me

“I have not sinned”

ULT

⁹ ‘I am clean and without transgression;
I am innocent, and there is no sin in me.

Job 33:10

General Information:

Elihu continues quoting what he heard Job say.

See

The speaker uses this word here to draw attention to what he says next. Alternate translation: "Listen"

ULT

¹⁰ See, God finds opportunities to attack me; he regards me as his enemy.

Job 33:11

He puts my feet in stocks

“Stocks” are wooden blocks a jailer puts around a prisoner’s feet to restrict his movement. Job speaks of feeling like he is a prisoner by saying that he is in stocks. Alternate translation: “I feel he has made me a prisoner” (See: [Metaphor](#))

ULT

11 He puts my feet in stocks; he watches all my paths.’

my paths

These words refer to where he goes. Here where he goes represents what he does. Alternate translation: “everything that I do” (See: [Metonymy](#))

Job 33:12

I will answer you

Elihu is speaking to Job.

ULT

¹² See, in this you are not right—I will answer you, for God is greater than man.

Job 33:13

General Information:

Elihu continues speaking to Job.

Why do you struggle against him?

Elihu uses this question to emphasize that Job should not struggle against God. This question can be written as a statement. Alternate translation: "You should not struggle against God." or "You should not try to argue with God." (See: [Rhetorical Question](#))

ULT

¹³ Why do you struggle against him? He does not account for any of his doings.

He does not account for any of his doings

"He does not have to explain to us anything he does"

Job 33:14

God speaks once—yes, twice

This is an idiom. Alternate translation: “God speaks again and again in different ways” (See: [Idiom](#))

ULT

14 For God speaks once— yes, twice,
though man does not notice it.

Job 33:15

a dream ... a vision of the night

These phrases have the same meaning. (See: [Parallelism](#))

when deep sleep falls upon men, in slumber on the bed

This speaks of people being in a deep sleep as if the sleep fell upon them or overcame them. Alternate translation: “when people are fully asleep on their bed” (See: [Metaphor](#))

ULT

15 In a dream, in a vision of the night,
when deep sleep falls upon men, in
slumber on the bed—

Job 33:16

General Information:

Elihu continues speaking to Job.

then God opens the ears of men

This speaks of God making people aware of things as if he were opening their ears so that they could hear.
Alternate translation: "then God reveals things to people" (See: [Metaphor](#))

ULT

16 then God opens the ears of men, and
frightens them with threats,

Job 33:17**in order to pull man back from**

This speaks of God keeping someone from doing something as if he were physically pulling him away from harm. Alternate translation: “in order to keep him from” (See: [Metaphor](#))

ULT

17 in order to pull man back from his sinful purposes, and keep pride from him.

Job 33:18

God keeps man's life back from the pit ... his life from crossing over to death

Both of these statements mean the same thing. Alternate translation: "God saves people from the grave and from death" (See: [Parallelism](#))

ULT

¹⁸ God keeps man's life back from the pit, his life from crossing over to death.

the pit

The place where people go when they die is referred to here as "the pit." Alternate translation: "the place where dead people are" (See: [Metaphor](#))

man's life back ... his life

This is an idiom. Alternate translation: "man from dying and ... he keeps him" (See: [Idiom](#))

from crossing over to death

Here "death" represents the place where people go when they die, that is, sheol. Alternate translation: "from going to sheol" (See: [Metonymy](#))

Job 33:19

General Information:

Elihu continues speaking to Job.

Man is punished also

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: “God also punishes a person” (See: [Active or Passive](#))

with pain on his bed

This means that the person is experiencing such pain that he must lie in bed. Alternate translation: “with pain so that he must lie in bed” (See: [Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information](#))

ULT

¹⁹ Man is punished also with pain on his bed, with constant agony in his bones,

Job 33:20

so that his life abhors food, and his soul abhors delicacies

These two phrases mean basically the same thing, that the person is in so much pain that he cannot even eat. The person is represented by his "life" and his "soul." Alternate translation: "the result is that he does not desire any food, not even very special food" (See: [Parallelism](#) and [Synecdoche](#))

ULT

²⁰ so that his life abhors food, and his soul abhors delicacies.

abhors delicacies

"hates even very special food"

Job 33:21

General Information:

Elihu continues speaking to Job.

His flesh is consumed away so that it cannot be seen; his bones, once not seen, now stick out

ULT

²¹ His flesh is consumed away so that it cannot be seen; his bones, once not seen, now stick out.

This can be stated in active form. "His flesh" refers to his fat and muscles, not to his body's outer skin. Alternate translation: "Disease makes his body weak and thin so that a person can see his bones" (See: [Active or Passive](#))

Job 33:22

his soul draws close to the pit

Here a person is represented by his “soul.” Alternate translation: “he is close to going into the grave” (See: [Synecdoche](#))

the pit

The place where people go when they die is referred to here as “the pit.” Alternate translation: “the place where dead people are” (See: [Metaphor](#))

his life to those who wish to destroy it

Here the person is represented by his “life.” The phrase “those who wish to destroy it” refers to the place where people go after they die. Alternate translation: “and he is close to going to the place where dead people go” or “and he will soon go to the place of the dead” (See: [Synecdoche](#) and [Metonymy](#))

ULT

²² Indeed, his soul draws close to the pit, his life to those who wish to destroy it.

Job 33:23

General Information:

Elihu continues speaking to Job.

for him

This does not refer to a specific person. Elihu continues speaking about any person in general.

one out of a thousand

In some languages it may be more natural to refer to “a great number” instead of “a thousand.” Alternate translation: “one from the great number of angels” (See: [Numbers](#))

ULT

²³ But if there is an angel who can be a mediator for him, one out of a thousand, to tell a man what is right for him,

Job 33:24

the pit

The place where people go when they die is referred to here as “the pit.” Alternate translation: “the place where dead people are” (See: [Metaphor](#))

I have found a ransom for him

This means that the angel has found a way to pay for the sins of the man so that he does not have to die. Alternate translation: “for I have found a way for you to keep him from dying” (See: [Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information](#))

ULT

²⁴ to be gracious to him and say, ‘Save this person from going down to the pit; I have found a ransom for him.’

Job 33:25

General Information:

Elihu continues speaking to Job.

Then

This word is used here to mark what will happen if God grants the angel's request. Alternate translation: "Then as a result" or "As a result of the angel's request to God"

ULT

²⁵ Then his flesh will become fresher than a child's; it is restored to the days of his youth.

his flesh will become fresher than a child's

This speaks of the man being healed and his body growing strong again as if his body became new like a child's body. Alternate translation: "the sick man's body will become new again like a young person's body" (See: [Simile](#))

fresher than a child's

In this comparison, the word "fresher" is an exaggeration. Alternate translation: "fresh like a child's" (See: [Hyperbole](#))

a child's

This refers to a child's flesh. Alternate translation: "a child's flesh" (See: [Ellipsis](#))

it is restored to the days of his youth

This speaks of the man's flesh again being as strong as it was when he was young. Alternate translation: "it will become strong again, as it was when he was young" (See: [Metaphor](#))

Job 33:26

he sees God's face with joy

This is an idiom. Alternate translation: "he joyfully worships God"
(See: [Idiom](#))

God's face

Here God is represented by his "face." Alternate translation: "God" (See: [Synecdoche](#))

God will give the person his triumph

"God will save the person" or "God will make things right for the person again"

ULT

²⁶ He will pray to God, and God will be kind to him, so that he sees God's face with joy. God will give the person his triumph.

Job 33:27

General Information:

Elihu continues speaking to Job.

but my sin was not punished

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: “but God did not punish me for sinning” (See: [Active or Passive](#))

ULT

²⁷ Then that person will sing in front of other people and say, ‘I sinned and perverted that which was right, but my sin was not punished.’

Job 33:28

rescued my soul from going down into the pit

Here the person is referred to by his “soul.” Alternate translation: “rescued me from dying and going to the pit” (See: [Synecdoche](#))

the pit

The place where people go when they die is referred to here as “the pit.” Alternate translation: “the place where dead people are” (See: [Metaphor](#))

my life will continue to see light

Here the person is represented by his “life.” Also, living is spoken of as seeing the light. Alternate translation: “I will continue to live and see the daylight” or “I will continue to live” (See: [Metonymy](#) and [Metaphor](#))

ULT

²⁸ God has rescued my soul from going down into the pit; my life will continue to see light.'

Job 33:29

General Information:

Elihu continues speaking to Job.

See

Elihu uses this word here to draw Job's attention to what he says next. Alternate translation: "Listen"

twice, yes, even three times

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

ULT

²⁹ See, God does all these things with a person, twice, yes, even three times,

Job 33:30

his soul

The person is represented by his “soul.” Alternate translation: “him” (See: [Synecdoche](#))

to bring his soul back from the pit

This speaks of saving the man from dying as if he had died and was being brought back to life. Alternate translation: “to keep him from dying and going to the pit” (See: [Metaphor](#))

the pit

The place where people go when they die is referred to here as “the pit.” Alternate translation: “the place where dead people are” (See: [Metaphor](#))

he may be enlightened with the light of life

This is an idiom and may be stated in active form. Alternate translation: “he may be happy to still be alive” (See: [Active or Passive](#) and [Idiom](#))

ULT

³⁰ to bring his soul back from the pit, so that he may be enlightened with the light of life.

Job 33:31

General Information:

Elihu continues speaking to Job.

Pay attention, Job, and listen to me

These phrases mean the same thing. Alternate translation: “Listen carefully to me, Job” (See: [Doublet](#))

ULT

³¹ Pay attention, Job, and listen to me;
be silent and I will speak.

Job 33:32

that you are in the right

This is an idiom. Alternate translation: “that you are innocent” (See: [Idiom](#))

ULT

³² If you have anything to say, answer me; speak, for I wish to prove that you are in the right.

Job 33:33

(There are no notes for this verse.)

ULT

³³ If not, then listen to me; remain silent, and I will teach you wisdom.”

Job 34

Job 34 General Notes

Structure and formatting

According to Elihu, instead of being punished for his sins, Job is sinning in the midst of these difficulties. This is the second of Elihu's four statements and it is addressed first to Job's friends and then to Job. (See: [sin](#), [sinful](#), [sinner](#), [sinning](#) and [testimony](#), [testify](#), [witness](#), [eyewitness](#), [evidence](#))

The ULT sets the lines of this chapter farther to the right on the page than the rest of the text because it is a poem. Elihu uses many of Job's statements against him. His attitude is not too different from Job's friends.

Special concepts in this chapter

Yahweh's justice

Elihu defends the justice of Yahweh after Job claimed that Yahweh was being unjust. (See: [just](#), [justice](#), [unjust](#), [injustice](#), [justify](#), [justification](#))

Job 34:1

Moreover, Elihu

“Then, Elihu”

Elihu

See how you translated this man’s name in [Job 32:2](#). (See: [How to Translate Names](#))

ULT

¹ Moreover, Elihu continued to speak:

Job 34:2

Listen to my words

“Listen to what I say”

you wise men ... you who have knowledge

Elihu is criticizing Job and his friends. He does not think they are actually wise. (See: [Irony](#))

ULT

² “Listen to my words, you wise men;
hear me, you who have knowledge.

Job 34:3

For the ear tries words as the palate tastes food

Elihu means people listen carefully to determine what is right or wrong just like we taste food to determine if it is good or bad. Here people are referred to by their “ear” and their “palate” to emphasize that they are tasting and hearing. Alternate translation: “For we listen to words to know what is good and bad, just as we taste foods to know what is good to eat” (See: [Simile](#) and [Synecdoche](#))

ULT

³ For the ear tries words as the palate tastes food.

Job 34:4

General Information:

Elihu continues speaking.

Let us

Here “us” refers to Elihu, Job, and his three friends. (See: [Exclusive and Inclusive ‘We’](#))

ULT

⁴ Let us choose for ourselves what is just: let us discover among ourselves what is good.

Job 34:5

has taken away my rights

“refused to give me justice”

ULT

⁵ For Job has said, ‘I am righteous, but God has taken away my rights.’

Job 34:6

I am considered to be a liar

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: “God considers me to be a liar” (See: [Active or Passive](#))

My wound is incurable

Here Job’s sickness and suffering is spoken of as if it were a “wound.” Alternate translation: “I am sick and no one can heal me” (See: [Metaphor](#))

ULT

⁶ Regardless of my rights, I am considered to be a liar. My wound is incurable, although I am without sin.’

Job 34:7

General Information:

Elihu continues speaking.

What man is like Job

Elihu uses this rhetorical question to scold Job. This question can be written as a statement. Alternate translation: “There is no one else like Job” (See: [Rhetorical Question](#))

who drinks up mockery like water

Elihu is accusing Job of mocking others as often as a person drinks water. Alternate translation: “who mocks other people as frequently as he drinks water” (See: [Simile](#))

ULT

⁷ What man is like Job, who drinks up
mockery like water,

Job 34:8

who walks with wicked men

Here “walk” is an idiom for how a person acts. Alternate translation: “who behaves like wicked men” (See: [Metaphor](#))

ULT

⁸ who goes around in the company of those who do evil, and who walks with wicked men?

Job 34:9

(There are no notes for this verse.)

ULT

⁹ For he has said, 'It is no use to a person to take pleasure in doing what God wants.'

Job 34:10

General Information:

Elihu continues speaking. Each of these verses contain parallel phrases. (See: [Parallelism](#))

you men of understanding

Elihu is criticizing Job and his friends. He does not actually think they are wise. (See: [Irony](#))

far be it from God ... far be it from the Almighty that he should commit sin

These two phrases have the same meaning and are used together to emphasize that God would never do anything wrong. The phrase “far be it from” is an idiom. Alternate translation: “Almighty God would never consider doing anything that is wicked or wrong” (See: [Parallelism](#) and [Idiom](#))

ULT

10 So listen to me, you men of understanding: far be it from God that he should do wickedness; far be it from the Almighty that he should commit sin.

Job 34:11

For he pays back a person's work

This means that he gives to a person what he deserves for the work he has done. Here "work" is a metaphor for what a person does. Alternate translation: "For he gives to a person what he deserves in return for he does" (See: [Metaphor](#))

ULT

11 For he pays back a person's work; he makes every man come upon the reward of his own ways.

he makes every man come upon the reward of his own ways

The phrase "his own ways" is an idiom for how a person lives his life. Elihu emphasizes that God gives to people what they deserve. Alternate translation: "he causes every man to receive the reward he deserves for how he lives" (See: [Idiom](#))

Job 34:12

(There are no notes for this verse.)

ULT

¹² Indeed, God does nothing wicked,
nor does the Almighty ever pervert
justice.

Job 34:13

General Information:

Elihu continues speaking.

Who put him in charge over the earth? Who put the whole world under him?

ULT

13 Who put him in charge over the earth? Who put the whole world under him?

Both of these rhetorical questions have the same meaning and emphasize that no one needed to grant God authority because it was already his. These questions can be written as statements. Alternate translation: "No one needed to give permission to God to take responsibility over all the earth. He is the rightful one to rule the world." (See: [Parallelism](#) and [Rhetorical Question](#))

Job 34:14

If he ever

Elihu is describing a situation that he does not believe would ever happen. (See: [Hypothetical Situations](#))

his spirit and his breath

The “spirit” and “breath” of God are what makes all living things alive. Alternate translation: “his spirit and breath which give us life” (See: [Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information](#))

ULT

14 If he ever set his intentions only on himself, and if he ever gathered back to himself his spirit and his breath,

Job 34:15

all flesh

Here all living things are represented by their “flesh.” Alternate translation: “all living things” (See: [Synecdoche](#))

mankind would return to dust again

This means that all people would die and their bodies would decay and become soil. In the beginning God created man from the dust. Alternate translation: “the bodies of mankind would soon become soil again” (See: [Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information](#))

ULT

15 then all flesh would perish together;
mankind would return to dust again.

Job 34:16

General Information:

Elihu continues speaking.

now

Elihu uses this word to bring attention to something important he is about to say.

you have

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

listen to the sound of my words

“listen to what I say.” This means the same as the previous part of the sentence. (See: [Parallelism](#))

ULT

¹⁶ If now you have understanding, listen to this; listen to the sound of my words.

Job 34:17

Can one who hates justice govern? Will you condemn God, who is righteous and mighty?

Elihu uses this question to rebuke Job for implying that God hates justice. Alternate translation: “One who hates justice cannot be expected to rule over people. So you really cannot criticize God, who is righteous and powerful, and you cannot say that what he has done is wrong.” (See: [Rhetorical Question](#))

ULT

¹⁷ Can one who hates justice govern?
Will you condemn God, who is righteous
and mighty?

Can one who hates justice govern?

The implicit answer to this rhetorical question is “no.” This question implies that God could not rule the world if he hated justice. This can be written as a statement. Alternate translation: “One who hates justice cannot govern the world.” or “God could certainly never hate what is right and still rule the world.” (See: [Rhetorical Question](#) and [Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information](#))

Will you condemn God, who is righteous and mighty?

This rhetorical question is used to emphasize that Job does not have the authority or a reason to condemn God. Alternate translation: “You cannot condemn God, who is righteous and mighty!” (See: [Rhetorical Question](#))

Job 34:18

General Information:

Elihu continues speaking.

God, who says to a king, 'You are vile,' or says to nobles, 'You are wicked'?

ULT

18 God, who says to a king, 'You are vile,' or says to nobles, 'You are wicked'?

This continues the rhetorical question from the previous verse, emphasizing to Job that he cannot condemn God. This can be written as a statement. Alternate translation: "He says to some kings, 'You are vile,' and he says to some nobles, 'You are wicked.'" (See: [Rhetorical Question](#))

God, who says to a king

This is part of the previous question. The understood words from the previous verse, "will you condemn God," may be supplied. Alternate translation: "Will you condemn God, who says to a king" (See: [Ellipsis](#))

vile

"evil" or "worthless"

Job 34:19

for they all are the work of his hands

Here “hands” refer to power. Alternate translation: “for God made them all” (See: [Metonymy](#))

ULT

19 God, who does not show favoritism to leaders and does not acknowledge rich people more than poor, for they all are the work of his hands.

Job 34:20

at midnight

Midnight is the time when one day ends and another begins. Here “midnight” is used as an idiom. Alternate translation: “at night” or “suddenly, at night” (See: [Idiom](#))

people will be shaken and will pass away

This can be stated in active form. The phrase “will be shaken” is an idiom that means to be “struck.” Alternate translation: “God strikes them and they die” (See: [Active or Passive](#) and [Idiom](#))

mighty people will be taken away, but not by human hands

This means that it is God who causes people to die, not people. Also, this can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: “it is God and not humans who cause mighty people to die” (See: [Euphemism](#) and [Active or Passive](#))

not by human hands

Here people are represented by their “hands.” Alternate translation: “not by humans” or “not by people” (See: [Synecdoche](#))

ULT

²⁰ In a moment they will die; at midnight people will be shaken and will pass away; mighty people will be taken away, but not by human hands.

Job 34:21

For God's eyes are upon a person's ways

God's "eyes" represent his sight. The phrase "a person's ways" is an idiom for what he does and how he lives. Alternate translation: "For God watches everything a person does" (See: [Metonymy](#) and [Idiom](#))

ULT

²¹ For God's eyes are upon a person's ways; he sees all his steps.

he sees all his steps

This means that he always knows where the person is and where he is going. Alternate translation: "he sees him wherever he goes" (See: [Assumed Knowledge](#) and [Implicit Information](#))

Job 34:22

no darkness, no thick gloom

The words “thick gloom” mean basically the same thing as, and intensify, the word “darkness.” (See: [Doublet](#))

ULT

²² There is no darkness, no thick gloom where the doers of iniquity may hide themselves.

Job 34:23

in judgment

“so he may judge him” or “to be judged”

ULT

²³ For God does not need to examine a person further; there is no need for any person to go before him in judgment.

Job 34:24

General Information:

Elihu continues speaking.

He breaks mighty men into pieces

This speaks of God destroying these men as if he actually broke their bodies into pieces. Alternate translation: “He destroys mighty men” or “He destroys important people” (See: [Idiom](#))

ULT

²⁴ He breaks mighty men into pieces for their ways that need no further investigation; he puts others in their places.

for their ways that need no further investigation

He does not need to investigate what they have done because he already knows everything about them. Alternate translation: “without needing to do further investigation, because he already knows their ways” (See: [Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information](#))

their ways

This is an idiom. Alternate translation: “the things they have done”

he puts others in their places

This means that he appoints other people to rule in their positions. Alternate translation: “and he chooses other people to rule in their places” (See: [Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information](#))

Job 34:25

in the night

This is an idiom. Alternate translation: “when they are not expecting it” (See: [Idiom](#))

they are destroyed

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

ULT

²⁵ In this way he has knowledge of their deeds; he overthrows these people in the night; they are destroyed.

Job 34:26

General Information:

Elihu continues speaking.

In the open sight of others, he kills them for their wicked deeds like criminals

This phrase compares the way that these people die to how criminals die. Alternate translation: “He kills them for their wicked deeds, in the open sight of others as if they were criminals” (See: [Simile](#))

In the open sight of others

This is an idiom. Alternate translation: “In a place where everyone can see” (See: [Idiom](#))

he kills them

This speaks of God causing these people to die, though he does not actually strike them with a sword himself. He may cause someone else to kill them or disaster to come upon them. Alternate translation: “he causes them to die” (See: [Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information](#))

ULT

²⁶ In the open sight of others, he kills them for their wicked deeds like criminals

Job 34:27

his ways

This refers to God's instructions for how people should behave. (See: [Idiom](#))

ULT

27 because they turned away from following him and refused to acknowledge any of his ways.

Job 34:28

they made the cry of poor people come to him

The word “cry” can be expressed as a verb. This speaks of God hearing their cry as if the cry were a person that came to him. Alternate translation: “they made the poor people cry, and God heard them” (See: [Abstract Nouns](#) and [Personification](#))

ULT

²⁸ In this way, they made the cry of poor people come to him; he heard the cry of afflicted people.

Job 34:29

General Information:

Elihu continues speaking.

**When he stays silent, who can condemn him?
If he hides his face, who can perceive him?**

ULT

²⁹ When he stays silent, who can condemn him? If he hides his face, who can perceive him? He rules over nation and individual alike,

These two questions speak of God not punishing wicked people as if he were being silent and hiding his face. (See: [Metaphor](#))

When he stays silent, who can condemn him?

Elihu uses this rhetorical question to teach Job. This question can be written as a statement. Alternate translation: "No one can criticize God if he decides to remain silent" (See: [Rhetorical Question](#))

If he hides his face, who can perceive him?

Elihu uses this rhetorical question to teach Job. This question can be written as a statement. Alternate translation: "No one can go and see him if he decides to hide his face" (See: [Rhetorical Question](#))

his face

Here God is represented by his "face." Alternate translation: "himself" (See: [Synecdoche](#))

Job 34:30

no one to entrap people

This compares a godless ruler harming people as if he were a hunter trapping his prey. Alternate translation: “no one to harm the people” (See: [Metaphor](#))

ULT

³⁰ so that a godless man may not rule,
so that there may be no one to entrap
people.

Job 34:31

General Information:

Elihu continues speaking.

ULT

³¹ Suppose someone says to God, 'I am certainly guilty, but I will not sin any longer;

Job 34:32

teach me what I cannot see

Here to “see” means to know. Alternate translation: “teach me what I have done wrong that I am not aware of” (See: [Metonymy](#))

ULT

32 teach me what I cannot see; I have committed sin, but I will do it no longer.’

Job 34:33

Do you think that God will punish that person's sin, since you dislike what God does?

"Since you dislike what God does, do you think that God should punish this person's sin?" Elihu uses this rhetorical question to emphasize that he should not think that God will not punish this man. This can be written as a statement. Alternate translation: "Even though you do not like what God does, surely even you do not think that God will punish this person" (See: [Rhetorical Question](#))

ULT

³³ Do you think that God will punish that person's sin, since you dislike what God does? You must choose, not I. So say what it is that you know.

that person's sin

Here punishing the person because of his sin is referred to as punishing the "person's sin." Alternate translation: "that person because of his sin" (See: [Metonymy](#))

since you dislike

"because you dislike"

what it is that you know

"what you are thinking about this"

Job 34:34

General Information:

Elihu continues speaking.

who hears me

“who hears me speaking”

ULT

³⁴ Men of understanding will say to me
— indeed, every wise man who hears
me will say,

Job 34:35

(There are no notes for this verse.)

ULT

³⁵ 'Job speaks without knowledge; his words are without wisdom.'

Job 34:36

If only Job were put on trial in

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: “If only we could put Job on trial in” or “If only we could take Job to court so a judge could listen to” (See: [Active or Passive](#))

in the smallest details of his case

This is an idiom. Alternate translation: “to listen to his case thoroughly” or “to hear all of the details of his case” (See: [Idiom](#))

of his talking like wicked men

“of how he has spoken like a wicked man”

ULT

³⁶ If only Job were put on trial in the smallest details of his case because of his talking like wicked men.

Job 34:37

he adds rebellion

This refers to rebellion against God. Alternate translation: “he adds rebellion against God” (See: [Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information](#))

ULT

37 For he adds rebellion to his sin; he claps his hands in mockery in our midst; he piles up words against God.”

he claps his hands in mockery in our midst

In this accusation, this means that Job clapped his hands to strengthen his mockery of God. Alternate translation: “he claps his hands as he mocks God in our midst” or “he mocks God right in front of us” (See: [Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information](#) and [Symbolic Action](#))

he piles up words against God

Elihu speaks of “words” as if they were objects, and of speaking many words as if it were piling those objects one on top of the other. Alternate translation: “he speaks many words against God” (See: [Metaphor](#))

Job 35

Job 35 General Notes

Structure and formatting

According to Elihu, instead of being punished for his sins, Job is sinning in the midst of these difficulties. This is the third of Elihu's four statements and it is addressed first to Job's friends and then to Job. (See: [sin](#), [sinful](#), [sinner](#), [sinning](#) and [testimony](#), [testify](#), [witness](#), [eyewitness](#), [evidence](#))

The ULT sets the lines of this chapter farther to the right on the page than the rest of the text because it is a poem. Elihu uses many of Job's statements against him.

Important figures of speech in this chapter

Rhetorical questions

Elihu uses many different rhetorical questions in this chapter in order to try to convince Job. These questions help to build Elihu's argument. (See: [Rhetorical Question](#))

Other possible translation difficulties in this chapter

Ironic situation

Elihu explains the irony of Job's claim. He claimed to be righteous and desired Yahweh to intervene. In this chapter, Elihu explains to Job that his claims of righteousness are prideful. This makes him unrighteous. (See: [Irony](#) and [righteous](#), [righteousness](#), [unrighteous](#), [unrighteousness](#), [upright](#), [uprightness](#))

Job 35:1

(There are no notes for this verse.)

ULT

¹ Moreover Elihu continued, saying,

Job 35:2

Do you think this is just... 'My right before God'?

Elihu uses questions to challenge Job. Alternate translation: "You must think you are right... 'My right before God.'" or "It is not just... 'My right before God.'" (See: [Rhetorical Question](#))

ULT

² "Do you think this is just when you say, 'My right before God'?"

Do you think this is just when you say

"Do you think it is right for you to say"

Do you think

Here "you" is singular and refers to Job. (See: [Forms of You](#))

My right before God

This could mean: (1) Job is claiming to be innocent before God or (2) Job is claiming that he, rather than God, is right.

Job 35:3

**For you ask, 'What use is it to me?' and,
'Would I be better off if I had sinned?'**

Elihu quotes Job as saying the these two rhetorical questions.

Alternate translation: "For you say, 'It does not benefit me' and, 'I am no better off than if I had sinned.'" (See: [Rhetorical Question](#))

ULT

³ For you ask, 'What use is it to me?'
and, 'Would I be better off if I had
sinned?'

Job 35:4

Connecting Statement:

Elihu continues speaking.

ULT

⁴ I will answer you, both you and your friends.

Job 35:5

(There are no notes for this verse.)

ULT

⁵ Look up at the sky, and see it; see the sky, which is higher than you.

Job 35:6

Connecting Statement:

Elihu continues speaking.

If you have sinned ... what do you do to him?

These two lines share similar meanings. The second line intensifies the meaning of the first line. (See: [Parallelism](#))

If you have sinned, what harm do you do to God?

Elihu asks this question to emphasize that Job's sins cannot actually do anything to God. Alternate translation: "If you have sinned, you have not done any harm to God." (See: [Rhetorical Question](#))

If your transgressions pile up high, what do you do to him?

Elihu speaks of "transgressions" as if they were objects, and of committing many transgressions as if it were piling those objects one on top of the other. He asks this question to emphasize that Job does nothing to God by his transgressions. Alternate translation: "If you committed a great many transgressions, you still do nothing to him." (See: [Metaphor](#) and [Rhetorical Question](#))

ULT

⁶ If you have sinned, what harm do you do to God? If your transgressions pile up high, what do you do to him?

Job 35:7

If you are righteous, what can you give to him? What will he receive from your hand?

The two rhetorical questions mean basically the same thing, that Job's righteousness adds nothing to God. Alternate translation: "If you are righteous, that does not enable you to give anything to him, and there is nothing that he will receive from your hand." (See: [Rhetorical Question](#) and [Parallelism](#))

ULT

⁷ If you are righteous, what can you give to him? What will he receive from your hand?

receive from your hand

Here the word "hand" represents Job. Alternate translation: "receive from you" (See: [Synecdoche](#))

Job 35:8

another son of man

“another human-being” or “another person”

ULT

⁸ Your wickedness may hurt a man, as you are a man, and your righteousness might benefit another son of man.

Job 35:9

General Information:

Elihu continues speaking.

Because of many acts of oppression

The word “oppression” can be translated with a verbal phrase. Alternate translation: “Because of the many things that people do to oppress others” (See: [Abstract Nouns](#))

they call for help from the arms of mighty men

Here “arms” refers to power or strength. Alternate translation: “they call for someone to deliver them from the power of mighty men” (See: [Metonymy](#))

ULT

⁹ Because of many acts of oppression, people cry out; they call for help from the arms of mighty men.

Job 35:10

who gives songs in the night

Elihu speaks of God enabling people to have hope in troubling circumstances as if he were giving to them songs which they can sing during the night. (See: [Metaphor](#))

ULT

10 But no one says, 'Where is God my Maker, who gives songs in the night,

Job 35:11

(There are no notes for this verse.)

ULT

11 who teaches us more than he teaches
the beasts of the earth, and who makes
us wiser than the birds of the sky?’

Job 35:12

Connecting Statement:

Elihu continues speaking.

they cry out

“the oppressed people cry out”

ULT

¹² There they cry out, but God gives no answer because of the pride of evil men.

Job 35:13

(There are no notes for this verse.)

ULT

¹³ God will certainly not hear a foolish cry; the Almighty will pay no attention to it.

Job 35:14

How much less will he answer you ... that you are waiting for him!

Since God will not hear the prayers of prideful, evil men, it is even less likely that he will hear Job, who is complaining against him.
Alternate translation: "So he certainly will not answer you ... that you are waiting for him!" (See: [Exclamations](#))

ULT

¹⁴ How much less will he answer you if you say that you do not see him, that your case is before him, and that you are waiting for him!

that your case is before him

"you have presented your case to him"

you are waiting for him

"you are waiting for him to respond"

Job 35:15

General Information:

Elihu continues speaking.

**Now you say that his anger does not punish,
and he does not take even a litte notice of
transgression**

Because Job is saying these things about God that are untrue, it is even less likely that God will answer Job's prayers.

his anger does not punish

Here "his anger" is a metonym for "him." Alternate translation: "he never punishes anyone because he is angry" (See: [Metonymy](#))

ULT

¹⁵ Now you say that his anger does not punish, and he does not take even a litte notice of transgression.

Job 35:16

he piles up words without knowledge

Elihu speaks of “words” as if they were objects, and of speaking many words as if it were piling those objects one on top of the other. The word “knowledge” can be translated with a verbal phrase. Alternate translation: “he speaks many words without knowing what he is talking about” (See: [Metaphor](#) and [Abstract Nouns](#))

ULT

16 So Job opens his mouth only to speak foolishness; he piles up words without knowledge.”

Job 36

Job 36 General Notes

Structure and formatting

According to Elihu, instead of being punished for his sins, Job is sinning in the midst of these difficulties. This is the last of Elihu's four statements and it is addressed first to Job's friends and then to Job. (See: [sin](#), [sinful](#), [sinner](#), [sinning](#) and [testimony](#), [testify](#), [witness](#), [eyewitness](#), [evidence](#))

The ULT sets the lines of this chapter farther to the right on the page than the rest of the text because it is a poem. His attitude is not too different from Job's friends.

Special concepts in this chapter

Yahweh's justice

This chapter focuses on the justice of Yahweh. It is important to remember that justice won't always come in this life. (See: [just](#), [justice](#), [unjust](#), [injustice](#), [justify](#), [justification](#))

Job 36:1

(There are no notes for this verse.)

ULT

¹ Elihu continued on and said,

Job 36:2

I will show you some things

Elihu speaks of explaining things to Job as if he were going to show those things to Job. Alternate translation: "I will explain some things to you" (See: [Metaphor](#))

ULT

² "Permit me to speak a little longer,
and I will show you some things
because I have a little more to say in
defense of God.

Job 36:3

I will obtain my knowledge from far off

Elihu speaks of having knowledge of many different subjects as if it were getting his knowledge from far away places. Alternate translation: "I will show you my great knowledge" (See: [Metaphor](#))

ULT

³ I will obtain my knowledge from far off; I will acknowledge that righteousness belongs to my Maker.

that righteousness belongs to my Maker

Here the word "righteousness" can be translated with an adjective. Alternate translation: "that my Maker is righteous" (See: [Abstract Nouns](#))

Job 36:4

my words will not be false

“what I say will not be false”

someone who is mature in knowledge is with you

ULT

⁴ For indeed, my words will not be false; someone who is mature in knowledge is with you.

The word “someone” refers to Elihu himself. He speaks of being very knowledgeable as if it were being mature in knowledge. Alternate translation: “I, who am with you, am very knowledgeable” (See: [Metaphor](#))

Job 36:5

See

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

he is mighty in strength of understanding

The phrase “mighty in strength” forms a doublet that means “very strong.” Elihu speaks of God understanding everything perfectly as if his understanding were very strong. Alternate translation: “he is very strong in understanding” or “he understands everything completely” (See: [Doublet](#) and [Metaphor](#))

ULT

⁵ See, God is mighty, and despises no one; he is mighty in strength of understanding.

Job 36:6

(There are no notes for this verse.)

ULT

⁶ He does not preserve the life of wicked people but instead does what is right for those who suffer.

Job 36:7

He does not withdraw his eyes from righteous people

Elihu speaks of God protecting righteous people as if God were watching them with his eyes, and of God ceasing to protect them as if he withdrew his eyes from them. Alternate translation: “He does not stop protecting the righteous people” (See: [Metaphor](#))

ULT

⁷ He does not withdraw his eyes from righteous people but instead sets them on thrones like kings forever, and they are lifted up.

sets them on thrones like kings

Elihu speaks of God honoring the righteous people as if God were causing them to sit on thrones like kings do. (See: [Metaphor](#))

they are lifted up

Elihu speaks of God honoring the righteous people as if he lifted them up to a high place. This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: “he lifts them up” or “he honors them” (See: [Metaphor](#) and [Active or Passive](#))

Job 36:8

If they are bound in chains

Here the word “they” refers righteous people whom God will discipline if they sin. This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: “If someone binds them in chains” or “If someone makes them a prisoner” (See: [Active or Passive](#))

ULT

⁸ If they are bound in chains and trapped in cords of suffering,

trapped in cords of suffering

Elihu speaks of a person being made to suffer as if that person were trapped in ropes that cause suffering. Alternate translation: “someone causes them to suffer” (See: [Metaphor](#) and [Active or Passive](#))

Job 36:9

their transgressions and their pride

The verb may be supplied from the previous phrase. Alternate translation: "he reveals to them their transgressions and their pride" (See: [Ellipsis](#))

ULT

⁹ then he reveals to them what they have done, and their transgressions and their pride.

Job 36:10

He also opens their ears

Elihu speaks of causing a person to listen as if it were opening that person's ear. Alternate translation: "He also causes them to listen" (See: [Metaphor](#))

ULT

10 He also opens their ears to his instruction, and commands them to turn back from iniquity.

to his instruction

The noun "instruction" can be translated with a verbal phrase. Alternate translation: "to what he is instructing them" (See: [Abstract Nouns](#))

to turn back from iniquity

Elihu speaks of stopping an action as if it were turning back from it. Alternate translation: "to stop committing iniquity" (See: [Metaphor](#))

Job 36:11

they will spend their days in prosperity, their years in contentment

The words “days” and “years” both refer to the person’s lifetime.
Alternate translation: “they will spend their lives in prosperity and contentment” (See: [Synecdoche](#))

ULT

¹¹ If they listen to him and worship him, they will spend their days in prosperity, their years in contentment.

Job 36:12

they will perish by the sword

Elihu speaks of a person dying violently as if someone had killed them with a sword. Alternate translation: “they will die a violent death” (See: [Metaphor](#))

ULT

¹² However, if they do not listen, they will perish by the sword; they will die because they have no knowledge.

Job 36:13

who are godless in heart

Here the word “heart” refers to the thoughts and emotions. The phrase may indicate that the person stubbornly refuses to trust God. Alternate translation: “who refuse to trust in God” (See: [Metonymy](#))

ULT

13 Those who are godless in heart store up their anger; they do not cry out for help even when God ties them up.

store up their anger

Elihu speaks of a person remaining angry as if that person stored up their anger like one would store up treasure. Alternate translation: “are always angry” (See: [Metaphor](#))

even when God ties them up

Elihu speaks of God disciplining people as if God were tying them up with ropes. Alternate translation: “even when God punishes them” (See: [Metaphor](#))

Job 36:14

their lives end among the cultic prostitutes

Here “cultic prostitutes” refers to young men who served in pagan temples performing sexually immoral acts as part of their rituals. This phrase could mean: (1) the godless die because of their immoral behavior or (2) the godless die in shame and disgrace.

ULT

14 They die in their youth; their lives end among the cultic prostitutes.

Job 36:15

he opens their ears

Elihu speaks of God causing a person to listen as if God were opening their ears. See how you translated this in [Job 36:10](#).
Alternate translation: “he causes them to listen” (See: [Metaphor](#))

ULT

¹⁵ God rescues afflicted people by means of their afflictions; he opens their ears by means of their oppression.

Job 36:16

into a broad place where there is no hardship

Elihu speaks of living without trouble as if it were being in a wide-open space where there were no hardships. (See: [Metaphor](#))

where your table would be set with food full of fatness

Elihu speaks of living prosperously as if it were having one's table filled with the best foods. (See: [Metaphor](#))

your table would be set

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "your servants would set your table" (See: [Active or Passive](#))

food full of fatness

Meat that had plenty of fat on it was a sign of prosperity because the animals were healthy and well-fed. Alternate translation: "the very best food" (See: [Idiom](#))

ULT

16 Indeed, he would like to draw you out of distress into a broad place where there is no hardship and where your table would be set with food full of fatness.

Job 36:17

you are full of judgment on wicked people

This could mean: (1) "God is punishing you as he would punish the wicked" or (2) "you are obsessed with the judgment that the wicked deserve."

ULT

17 But you are full of judgment on wicked people; judgment and justice have laid hold of you.

judgment and justice have laid hold of you

Elihu speaks of God judging Job and giving him justice as if judgment and justice were people that have laid hold of Job. Alternate translation: "God has brought you to judgment and given you justice" (See: [Personification](#))

Job 36:18

Do not let your anger entice you to mockery

Some versions of the Bible translate this as “Beware that you are not enticed by wealth.”

ULT

18 Do not let your anger entice you to mockery, or the greatness of a ransom to turn you aside.

Job 36:19

Can your wealth benefit you, so that you will not be in distress, or can all the force of your strength help you?

Elihu asks these questions to state that money and power will not be able to help Job if he acts unjustly. Alternate translation: “Your wealth cannot cause you to no longer be in distress, and all the force of your strength cannot help you.” (See: [Rhetorical Question](#))

ULT

¹⁹ Can your wealth benefit you, so that you will not be in distress, or can all the force of your strength help you?

all the force of your strength

“all of your great strength” or “all of your mighty efforts”

Job 36:20

when peoples are cut off in their place

This could mean: (1) that “peoples” refers to people in general and “cut off in their place” is a metaphor for oppressing others by dragging them away from their homes. Alternate translation: “when people drag others away from their homes” or (2) that “peoples” represents nations and “cut off in their place” is a metaphor for nations being destroyed. Alternate translation: “when nations will perish” (See: [Metaphor](#))

ULT

²⁰ Do not desire the night, to commit sin against others, when peoples are cut off in their place.

Job 36:21

you are being tested by suffering

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: “God is testing you by making you suffer” (See: [Active or Passive](#))

ULT

21 Be careful that you do not turn to sin because you are being tested by suffering so that you will stay away from sinning.

Job 36:22

See, God

“You know this already: God”

God is exalted in his power

This could mean: (1) “God is extremely powerful” or (2) “people exalt God because he is powerful”

who is a teacher like him?

Elihu asks this rhetorical question to emphasize that no one is a teacher like God. Alternate translation: “no one is a teacher like him.” or “no one teaches like he does.” (See: [Rhetorical Question](#))

ULT

²² See, God is exalted in his power; who is a teacher like him?

Job 36:23

Who has ever instructed him about his way?

Elihu asks this rhetorical question to emphasize that no one has ever taught God what to do. Alternate translation: "No one has ever instructed him about what he should do." (See: [Rhetorical Question](#))

ULT

²³ Who has ever instructed him about his way? Who can ever say to him, 'You have committed unrighteousness?'

Who can ever say to him, 'You have committed unrighteousness?'

Elihu asks this rhetorical question to emphasize that no one can accuse God of having committed unrighteousness. Alternate translation: "No one can ever say to him, 'You have committed unrighteousness.'" (See: [Rhetorical Question](#))

Job 36:24

(There are no notes for this verse.)

ULT

²⁴ Remember to praise his deeds, of which people have sung.

Job 36:25

they see those deeds only from far away

Elihu speaks of people not being fully able to understand God's deeds as if people were only able to see those deeds from far away. Alternate translation: "they do not fully understand them" (See: [Metaphor](#))

ULT

²⁵ All people have looked on those deeds, but they see those deeds only from far away.

Job 36:26

See

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

the number of his years is incalculable

This refers to how long God has existed. Alternate translation: “people cannot know how long he has lived” or “people cannot know his age” (See: [Idiom](#))

ULT

²⁶ See, God is great, but we do not understand him well; the number of his years is incalculable.

Job 36:27**that he distills as rain from his vapor**

The word “distills” can also mean “refine” or “filter.” Elihu describes how God turns the drops of water, or vapor, that he draws up into rain. Alternate translation: “that he turns into rain” (See: [Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information](#))

ULT

27 For he draws up the drops of water that he distills as rain from his vapor, ^[1]

Job 36:28

(There are no notes for this verse.)

ULT

²⁸ which the clouds pour down and
drop in abundance on mankind.

Job 36:29

can anyone understand the extensive spread of the clouds and the thunder from his hut?

Elihu asks this rhetorical question to emphasize that no one can do these things. Alternate translation: “no one can understand the extensive spread of the clouds and the thunder from his hut.” (See: [Rhetorical Question](#))

ULT

²⁹ Indeed, can anyone understand the extensive spread of the clouds and the thunder from his hut?

the extensive spread of the clouds

The phrase “the extensive spread” can be translated with a verbal phrase. Alternate translation: “how the clouds spread across the sky” (See: [Abstract Nouns](#))

from his hut

Elihu speaks of the sky as if it were a “hut” in which God lives. Alternate translation: “from the sky, where God lives” (See: [Metaphor](#))

Job 36:30

See, he spreads

“Look carefully and see how he spreads”

and covers the roots of the sea

ULT

³⁰ See, he spreads his lightning around him and covers the roots of the sea.

Elihu speaks of the deep parts of the sea as if the sea were a plant and its depths were its roots. This could mean: (1) although the lightning causes light in the sky, the deep parts of the sea remain dark. Alternate translation: “but the depths of the sea remain dark” or (2) the lightning in the sky cause even the depths of the sea to have light. Alternate translation: “and lights up the depths of the sea” (See: [Metaphor](#))

Job 36:31

(There are no notes for this verse.)

ULT

³¹ In this way he judges the peoples and gives food in abundance.

Job 36:32

He fills his hands with the lightning

Elihu speaks of the lightning that storms cause as if God were holding the lightning in his hand and directing it to strike where he wills. This could mean: (1) that God holds the lightning bolts in his hands in order to throw them, or (2) that God hides the lightning bolts in his hands until he is ready to use them. (See: [Metaphor](#))

ULT

³² He fills his hands with the lightning until he commands it to strike its mark.

Job 36:33

Its thunder

“The thunder caused by the lightning” or “The thunder”

hear it is coming

“hear that the storm is coming”

ULT

³³ Its thunder warns of the storm, the cattle can also hear it is coming.

Job 37

Job 37 General Notes

Structure and formatting

According to Elihu, instead of being punished for his sins, Job is sinning in the midst of these difficulties. This is a continuation of the previous chapter and the last of Elihu's four statements, and it is addressed first to Job's friends and then to Job. (See: [sin](#), [sinful](#), [sinner](#), [sinning](#) and [testimony](#), [testify](#), [witness](#), [eyewitness](#), [evidence](#))

The ULT sets the lines of this chapter farther to the right on the page than the rest of the text because it is a poem. His attitude is not too different from Job's friends.

Special concepts in this chapter

Yahweh's justice

This chapter focuses on the justice of Yahweh. It is important to remember that justice won't always come in this life. (See: [just](#), [justice](#), [unjust](#), [injustice](#), [justify](#), [justification](#))

Job 37:1**my heart trembles ... it is moved out of its place**

These two phrases mean basically the same thing and emphasize the intensity of his fear. (See: [Parallelism](#))

ULT

¹ Indeed, my heart trembles at this; it is moved out of its place.

my heart trembles at this

The word “this” refers to the storm in [Job 36:33](#).

it is moved out of its place

Elihu speaks of his heart beating violently as if it were to jump out of his chest. Alternate translation: “it moves out of its place” or “it beats violently” (See: [Metaphor](#) and [Active or Passive](#))

Job 37:2**the noise of his voice, the sound that goes out from his mouth**

These two phrases mean basically the same thing. Elihu speaks of the thunder as if it is God's voice. (See: [Metaphor](#) and [Parallelism](#))

ULT

² Hear, oh, hear the noise of his voice, the sound that goes out from his mouth.

Job 37:3

to the edges of the earth

Elihu speaks of the farthest places on the earth as if they were the earth's borders. Alternate translation: "everywhere in the world" (See: [Metaphor](#))

ULT

³ He sends it out under the whole sky,
and he sends out his lightning to the
edges of the earth.

Job 37:4

A voice roars after it ... the voice of his majesty

Elihu continues to speak of the thunder as if it is God's voice. (See: [Metaphor](#))

roars after it

"roars after the lightning"

the voice of his majesty

"his majestic voice"

when his voice is heard

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "when people hear his voice" (See: [Active or Passive](#))

ULT

⁴ A voice roars after it; he thunders with the voice of his majesty; he does not restrain the lightning bolts when his voice is heard.

Job 37:5

(There are no notes for this verse.)

ULT

⁵ God thunders marvelously with his voice; he does great things that we cannot comprehend.

Job 37:6

likewise to the rain shower

The verb may be supplied from the previous phrase. Alternate translation: "likewise, he says to the rain shower" (See: [Ellipsis](#))

ULT

⁶ For he says to the snow, 'Fall on the earth'; likewise to the rain shower, 'Become a great shower of rain.'

Job 37:7

He stops the hand of every man

Here the word “hand” represents the entire person. Alternate translation: “He stops every man” (See: [Synecdoche](#))

ULT

⁷ He stops the hand of every man from working, so that all people whom he has made may see his deeds.

Job 37:8

(There are no notes for this verse.)

ULT

⁸ Then the beasts go into hiding and stay in their dens.

Job 37:9

The storm comes from its chamber in the south and the cold from the scattering winds in the north

In Israel, strong wind storms blow in from the south and cold weather approaches from the north. (See: [Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information](#))

ULT

⁹ The storm comes from its chamber in the south and the cold from the scattering winds in the north.

The storm comes from its chamber in the south

Elihu speaks of the storm blowing in from the south as if the storm has a place where it resides until it comes. (See: [Metaphor](#))

Job 37:10

By the breath of God ice is given

Elihu speaks of the cold north wind as if it were God's breath. This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "God's breath makes ice" (See: [Metaphor](#) and [Active or Passive](#))

frozen like metal

Elihu compares the hardness of ice to the hardness of metal. Alternate translation: "frozen, as hard as metal" (See: [Simile](#))

ULT

¹⁰ By the breath of God ice is given; the expanse of the waters is frozen like metal.

Job 37:11

he weighs down the thick cloud with moisture

Elihu speaks of God causing the storm clouds to be full of water as if the moisture weighed heavily on the clouds. Alternate translation: "he causes the thick clouds to be full of moisture" (See: [Metaphor](#))

ULT

11 Indeed, he weighs down the thick cloud with moisture; he scatters his lightning through the clouds.

Job 37:12

(There are no notes for this verse.)

ULT

¹² He swirls the clouds around by his guidance, so that they may do whatever he commands them above the surface of the whole world.

Job 37:13

sometimes it happens for correction

The word “correction” can be translated with a verbal phrase. The object of his “correction” is people. Alternate translation: “sometimes it happens to correct his people” (See: [Abstract Nouns](#) and [Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information](#))

ULT

13 He makes all of this happen; sometimes it happens for correction, sometimes for his land, and sometimes as acts of covenant faithfulness.

sometimes for his land

This means that the rain waters the ground and causes vegetation to grow. Alternate translation: “sometimes to water the land” (See: [Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information](#))

sometimes as acts of covenant faithfulness

The abstract noun “faithfulness” can be stated as “faithful” or “faithfully.” Alternate translation: “sometimes to act faithfully to his covenant” or “sometimes to be faithful to his people” (See: [Abstract Nouns](#))

Job 37:14

(There are no notes for this verse.)

ULT

¹⁴ Listen to this, Job; stop and think about God's marvelous deeds.

Job 37:15

Do you know how God establishes the clouds and makes the lightning bolts to flash in them?

Elihu asks this question to emphasize that Job cannot know this.

Alternate translation: "You cannot understand how God establishes the clouds and makes the lightning bolts to flash in them." (See: [Rhetorical Question](#))

ULT

¹⁵ Do you know how God establishes the clouds and makes the lightning bolts to flash in them?

establishes the clouds

"controls the clouds" or "makes the clouds obey him"

Job 37:16

**Do you understand the floating of the clouds,
the marvelous deeds of God, who is perfect in
knowledge?**

Elihu asks this question to emphasize that Job does not know these things. Alternate translation: “You do not understand the floating of the clouds, the marvelous deeds of God, who is perfect in knowledge.” (See: [Rhetorical Question](#))

ULT

¹⁶ Do you understand the floating of the clouds, the marvelous deeds of God, who is perfect in knowledge?

the floating of the clouds

“how the clouds float”

the marvelous deeds of God

The verb may be supplied from the previous phrase. Alternate translation: “or do you understand the marvelous deeds of God” or “and you do not understand the marvelous deeds of God” (See: [Ellipsis](#))

Job 37:17

Do you understand how your garments become hot ... from the south?

Elihu asks this question to emphasize that Job does not know these things. Alternate translation: "You do not understand how your garments become hot ... from the south." (See: [Rhetorical Question](#))

ULT

¹⁷ Do you understand how your garments become hot when the land is still because the wind comes from the south?

how your garments become hot

"how you become hot in your clothes" or "how you sweat in your clothes"

because the wind comes from the south

In Israel, hot winds blow in across the desert from the south and cause hot temperatures. Alternate translation: "because of the hot, dry wind blowing in from the south" (See: [Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information](#))

Job 37:18

Can you spread out the sky ... a mirror of cast metal?

Elihu asks this question to emphasize that Job cannot do this.

Alternate translation: "You cannot spread out the sky ... a mirror of cast metal." (See: [Rhetorical Question](#))

ULT

¹⁸ Can you spread out the sky as he can
— the sky, which is as strong as a mirror
of cast metal?

as strong as a mirror of cast metal

In biblical days, mirrors were made of metal. Elihu speaks of the sky giving no rain as if it were as hard as solid metal. (See: [Metaphor](#))

cast metal

This refers to metal that is melted, poured into a mold, and then hardens as it cools.

Job 37:19

Teach us what we should say to him

Here the words “us” and “we” refer to Elihu, Eliphaz, Bildad, and Zophar, but not to Job. Elihu uses this phrase sarcastically. (See: [Exclusive and Inclusive ‘We’](#))

because of the darkness of our minds

Elihu speaks of the inability to understand as if it were having darkness in one’s mind. Alternate translation: “because we do not understand” (See: [Metaphor](#))

ULT

19 Teach us what we should say to him, for we cannot lay out our arguments in order because of the darkness of our minds.

Job 37:20

Should he be told that I wish to speak with him?

Elihu asks this rhetorical question to emphasize that no one can do this. Alternate translation: "I cannot have someone tell him that I wish to speak with him." (See: [Rhetorical Question](#))

ULT

²⁰ Should he be told that I wish to speak with him? Would a person wish to be swallowed up?

Should he be told

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "Should I have someone tell him" (See: [Active or Passive](#))

Would a person wish to be swallowed up?

Elihu asks this rhetorical question to emphasize that no one would want this to happen. Alternate translation: "No person would want to be swallowed up." (See: [Rhetorical Question](#))

to be swallowed up

Elihu speaks of a person being destroyed as if the person were swallowed up. This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "for God to destroy him" (See: [Metaphor](#) and [Active or Passive](#))

Job 37:21

(There are no notes for this verse.)

ULT

²¹ Now, people cannot look at the sun when it is bright in the sky after the wind has passed through and has cleared it of its clouds.

Job 37:22

over God is fearsome majesty

The word “fearsome” means that it causes fear. Elihu speaks of God’s majesty as if it were something that rests upon God. Alternate translation: “God’s majesty causes people to fear” (See: [Metaphor](#))

ULT

²² Out of the north comes golden splendor— over God is fearsome majesty.

Job 37:23

we cannot find him

This could mean: (1) “we cannot approach him” or (2) this is a metaphor in which Elihu speaks of a person’s being unable to fully understand God as if he could not find God. Alternate translation: “we cannot comprehend him” (See: [Metaphor](#))

ULT

²³ As for the Almighty, we cannot find him! He is great in power; he does not oppress justice and abundant righteousness.

Job 37:24

those who are wise in their own minds

Here “minds” represents the person’s thoughts. Alternate translation: “those who are wise in their own thinking” or “those who consider themselves to be wise” (See: [Metonymy](#))

ULT

²⁴ Therefore, people fear him. He does not pay any attention to those who are wise in their own minds.”

Job 38

Job 38 General Notes

Structure and formatting

The ULT sets the lines of this chapter farther to the right on the page than the rest of the text because it is a poem. Yahweh finally speaks in this chapter.

Special concepts in this chapter

Yahweh's greatness

Yahweh is far greater than any man. He is the creator of the earth, and his ways will not always be understood by men because their knowledge is always limited.

Important figures of speech in this chapter

Rhetorical questions

Yahweh uses a series of rhetorical questions in this chapter in order to defend his character. (See: [Rhetorical Question](#))

Job 38:1

Then Yahweh called

Here, the word “then” marks the beginning of a new part of the book. See if your language has a similar way to introduce a new scene. Alternate translation: “After all that had happened, Yahweh called.”

called to Job

“answered Job” or “responded to Job”

out of a fierce storm

“from a powerful storm”

ULT

¹ Then Yahweh called to Job out of a fierce storm and said,

Job 38:2

Who is this who brings darkness to plans by means of words without knowledge?

Yahweh uses this question to emphasize that Job spoke of things he did not know about. It can be translated as a statement. Alternate translation: "You bring darkness to my plans by means of words without knowledge." (See: [Rhetorical Question](#))

ULT

² "Who is this who brings darkness to plans by means of words without knowledge?"

Who is this who brings

"Who are you to bring"

brings darkness to plans

"obscures my plans" or "confuses my purposes." How Job confuses God's plans is spoken of as if he were making God's plans harder to see. The abstract noun "darkness" can be translated as the verb "darkens." Alternate translation: "darkens plans" or "makes plans hard to see" (See: [Metaphor](#) and [Abstract Nouns](#))

by means of words without knowledge

"by speaking of things about which you do not know"

words without knowledge

The abstract noun "knowledge" can be translated as an adjective. Alternate translation: "unknowing words" or "ignorant words" (See: [Abstract Nouns](#))

Job 38:3

gird up your loins like a man

“tie your robe up around your waist like a man.” Men tied up their robes around their waists so that their legs could move more freely as they did heavy work. The idiom “gird up your loins like a man” means to get ready to do something involving action such as work, a contest, or a battle. Job was to prepare for the hard work of answering God. Alternate translation: “get yourself ready for hard work” (See: [Idiom](#))

ULT

³ Now gird up your loins like a man for I will ask you questions, and you must answer me.

Job 38:4

General Information:

Yahweh begins to challenge Job with a series of questions that emphasize he created the earth and Job did not. (See: [Rhetorical Question](#))

ULT

⁴ Where were you when I laid the earth's foundations? Tell me, if you have so much understanding.

Where were you when I laid the earth's foundations? Tell me, if you have so much understanding

This can be translated as a statement. Alternate translation: "Tell me where you were when I laid the foundations of the earth, if you have so much understanding" (See: [Rhetorical Question](#))

I laid the earth's foundations

Yahweh describes creating the earth as though he was building a structure. (See: [Metaphor](#))

if you have so much understanding

The abstract noun "understanding" can be translated as the verb "understand." Alternate translation: "if you understand so much" (See: [Abstract Nouns](#))

Job 38:5

Who determined its dimensions? Tell me, if you know

This can be translated as a statement. Alternate translation: "Tell me who determined its dimensions, if you know" (See: [Rhetorical Question](#))

ULT

⁵ Who determined its dimensions? Tell me, if you know. Who stretched the measuring line over it?

dimensions

"size"

Who stretched the measuring line over it?

This can be translated as a statement. Alternate translation: "Tell me who stretched the measuring line over it." (See: [Rhetorical Question](#))

measuring line

a rope or cord that people use to make something the right size and shape

Job 38:6

General Information:

The word “its” refers to the earth. Yahweh uses more questions to emphasize that Job could never understand how great God is. (See: [Rhetorical Question](#))

ULT

⁶ On what were its foundations laid?
Who laid its cornerstone

Connecting Statement:

Yahweh continues to challenge Job.

On what were its foundations laid?

This can be stated in active form. This can be translated as a statement. Alternate translation: “On what did I set its foundations?” or “Tell me on what its foundations were laid.” (See: [Rhetorical Question](#) and [Active or Passive](#))

Who laid its cornerstone

This can be translated as a statement. Alternate translation: “Tell me who laid its cornerstone” (See: [Rhetorical Question](#))

Job 38:7

Job finishes the rhetorical question that begins with the words “Who laid its cornerstone” in verse 6. (See: [Rhetorical Question](#))

when the morning stars ... the sons of God shouted for joy?

Job finishes the rhetorical question that begins with the words “Who laid its cornerstone” in verse 6. This can be translated as a statement. “Tell me who laid its cornerstone when the morning stars ... the sons of God shouted for joy.” (See: [Rhetorical Question](#))

ULT

⁷ when the morning stars sang together
and all the sons of God shouted for joy?

when the morning stars sang together

The morning stars are spoken of as singing like people sing. Possible meanings are: (1) the “morning stars” are the same as the “sons of God” in the next line or (2) “the morning stars” refer to stars in the sky. (See: [Personification](#))

the morning stars

“the bright stars that shine in the morning”

sons of God

This refers to angels, heavenly beings. See how you translated this in [Job 1:6](#).

shouted for joy

The abstract noun “joy” can be translated as the adverb “joyfully.” Alternate translation: “shouted joyfully” (See: [Abstract Nouns](#))

for joy

“because they were full of joy”

Job 38:8

General Information:

Yahweh uses another question to emphasize that he created the earth and Job did not. (See: [Rhetorical Question](#))

Connecting Statement:

Yahweh continues to challenge Job.

Who shut up the sea ... of the womb

This can be translated as a command. Alternate translation: "Tell me who shut up the sea ... of the womb" (See: [Rhetorical Question](#))

shut up the sea with doors

Yahweh compares the way that he prevented the sea from covering all of the earth to holding it back with doors. Alternate translation: "prevented the water from flooding over the land" (See: [Metaphor](#))

as if it had come out of the womb

Yahweh compares his creation of the sea to childbirth. (See: [Simile](#))

ULT

⁸ Who shut up the sea with doors when it burst out, as if it had come out of the womb—

Job 38:9

This is the end of the rhetorical question that begins with the words “Who shut up” in verse 8. (See: [Rhetorical Question](#))

when I made clouds ... and thick darkness its swaddling bands?

This can be translated as a command. Alternate translation: “Tell me who shut up ... when I made clouds ... and thick darkness its swaddling bands.” (See: [Rhetorical Question](#))

ULT

⁹ when I made clouds its clothing, and thick darkness its swaddling bands?

its clothing

“as clothes for the sea”

thick darkness its swaddling bands

The abstract noun “darkness” can be translated as the adjective “dark.” Alternate translation: “made dark clouds its swaddling bands” (See: [Abstract Nouns](#))

swaddling bands

long pieces of cloth that people use to wrap a baby in after it is born

Job 38:10

I marked out for the sea my boundary

"I made a boundary for the sea"

boundary

Yahweh set a limit beyond which the sea was not allowed to cross.

I placed its bars and doors

Yahweh compares the way that he made a boundary for the sea to containing the sea with bars and doors.

Alternate translation: "I set up its barriers" (See: [Metaphor](#))

bars

long pieces of wood or metal that are used to keep a door shut

ULT

¹⁰ That was when I marked out for the sea my boundary, and when I placed its bars and doors,

Job 38:11

when I said to it

“when I said to the sea.” Yahweh speaks to the sea as though it were a person. (See: [Personification](#))

You may come this far, but no farther

The words “this far” mean only as far as the boundary that Yahweh set up. Alternate translation: “You may come as far as this boundary, but no farther” (See: [Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information](#))

to the pride of your waves

“to the power of your waves.” The waves are spoken of as if they could have pride. The abstract noun “pride” can be translated as the adjective “proud.” Alternate translation: “to your proud waves” or “to your powerful waves” (See: [Personification](#) and [Abstract Nouns](#))

ULT

11 and when I said to it, ‘You may come this far, but no farther; here is where I will put a boundary to the pride of your waves.’

Job 38:12

General Information:

Yahweh uses a question to emphasize that he created the light of day and Job did not. (See: [Rhetorical Question](#))

Yahweh continues to challenge Job. He begins to ask a rhetorical question. (See: [Rhetorical Question](#))

ULT

12 Have you given orders to the morning, or caused the dawn to know its place,

Have you ... to know its place

This question expects a negative answer. It can be translated as a statement. Alternate translation: “You have never ... shaken the wicked out of it.” (See: [Rhetorical Question](#))

given orders to the morning

Yahweh describes the morning as being able to receive orders and know things like a person. (See: [Personification](#))

caused the dawn to know its place

“caused the dawn to know where it belongs”

dawn

the daylight that appears in the morning sky before the sun rises

Job 38:13

Connecting Statement:

This is the end of the rhetorical question that begins with the words “Have you given” in verse 12.

so that it might take hold ... shake the wicked out of it?

This is the end of the rhetorical question that begins with the words “Have you given” in verse 12. This question expects a negative answer. It can be translated as a statement. “You have never given ... so that it might take hold ... shaken the wicked out of it.” (See: [Rhetorical Question](#))

take hold of the edges of the earth

The light of dawn is spoken of as if it seizes the horizons of the earth. Alternate translation: “grasp the ends of the earth” (See: [Metaphor](#) and [Personification](#))

shake the wicked out of it

The daylight is pictured as causing wicked people to leave like shaking something to remove unwanted things. Alternate translation: “shake wicked people out of the earth” (See: [Metaphor](#))

ULT

13 so that it might take hold of the edges of the earth and shake the wicked out of it?

Job 38:14

The earth is changed in appearance like clay changes under a seal

At nighttime, people cannot see clearly, but in the morning the light reveals the distinct shape of everything, just like a seal creates distinct images in clay. (See: [Simile](#))

ULT

¹⁴ The earth is changed in appearance like clay changes under a seal; all things on it stand out clearly like the folds of a piece of clothing.

all things on it stand out clearly like the folds of a piece of clothing

Here “it” refers to the earth. This phrase has a similar meaning to the first phrase in this verse. (See: [Simile](#) and [Parallelism](#))

Job 38:15

From wicked people their 'light' is taken away

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "The morning takes away the 'light' of wicked people" (See: [Active or Passive](#))

their 'light'

The wicked consider darkness to be their light, because they do their evil deeds in the darkness and they are familiar with the darkness. (See: [Irony](#))

their uplifted arm is broken

The raised arm of the wicked represents their power and intention to do evil things, but the wicked stop doing those evil things when the morning light comes. (See: [Metaphor](#))

ULT

15 From wicked people their 'light' is taken away; their uplifted arm is broken.

Job 38:16

General Information:

Yahweh uses five questions to emphasize that he understands the earth and seas and Job does not. (See: [Rhetorical Question](#))

Connecting Statement:

Yahweh continues to challenge Job.

ULT

16 Have you gone to the sources of the waters of the sea? Have you walked in the lowest parts of the deep?

Have you gone to the sources of the waters of the sea?

This can be expressed as a statement. Alternate translation: "You have not gone to the sources of the waters of the sea." (See: [Rhetorical Question](#))

Have you walked in the lowest parts of the deep?

This can be expressed as a statement. Alternate translation: "You have not walked in the lowest parts of the deep." (See: [Rhetorical Question](#))

the sources of the waters

"the springs"

the deep

This refers to the sea or ocean where the water is very deep. Alternate translation: "the deep sea" or "the ocean depths" or "the deep water" (See: [Nominal Adjectives](#))

Job 38:17

Have the gates of death been revealed to you

Death is spoken of as if it were a city that had gates through which people enter into it. This can be expressed in active form. Alternate translation: "Has anyone shown the gates of death to you" (See: [Metaphor](#) and [Active or Passive](#))

the shadow of death

See how you translated this in [Job 3:5](#).

ULT

17 Have the gates of death been revealed to you? Have you seen the gates of the shadow of death?

Job 38:18

Have you understood the earth in its expanse?

This can be expressed as a statement. Alternate translation: “You do not understand the earth in its expanse.” (See: [Rhetorical Question](#))

the earth in its expanse

“the great broad places of the earth”

if you know it all

“if you know all about these things”

ULT

¹⁸ Have you understood the earth in its expanse? Tell me, if you know it all.

Job 38:19

General Information:

Yahweh uses three questions to emphasize that he understands light and darkness and Job does not. Each of these verses have two parallel phrases. (See: [Rhetorical Question](#) and [Parallelism](#))

ULT

19 Where is the way to the resting place of light— as for darkness, where is its place?

Connecting Statement:

Yahweh continues to challenge Job.

Where is the way to the resting place of light—as for darkness, where is its place?

This question can be expressed as a statement. Alternate translation: “You do not know the way to the resting place of light or the place of darkness.” (See: [Rhetorical Question](#))

the resting place of light

“the dwelling of light.” Light is spoken of as having a resting place from which it comes forth each day. (See: [Personification](#))

light

“daylight” or “sunlight”

Job 38:20

Can you lead light and darkness to their places of work? Can you find the way back to their houses for them?

These questions expect a negative answer. They can be expressed as statements. Alternate translation: "You cannot lead light and darkness to their places of work, or find the way back to their houses for them." (See: [Rhetorical Question](#))

ULT

²⁰ Can you lead light and darkness to their places of work? Can you find the way back to their houses for them?

to their places of work

"to their territory." Light and darkness are spoken of as being led out and back each day to accomplish Yahweh's purposes. (See: [Personification](#))

Job 38:21

Undoubtedly ... so large

Yahweh uses mocking irony to emphasize that Job does not understand light and darkness. Alternate translation: "It is obvious that you do not know, because you were not born when I created them, and you are not very old" (See: [Irony](#))

ULT

²¹ Undoubtedly you know, for you were born then; the number of your days is so large!

for you were born then

"for you were already living then." The word "then" refers to the time when light was created and separated from darkness. Alternate translation: "for you were already born when I created them"

the number of your days is so large

"you have lived so many years"

Job 38:22

General Information:

Yahweh uses a question to emphasize that he rules over the natural world and Job does not. (See: [Rhetorical Question](#))

Yahweh continues to challenge Job. He begins to ask a rhetorical question. (See: [Rhetorical Question](#))

ULT

²² Have you entered the storehouses for the snow, or have you seen the storehouses for the hail,

storehouses for the snow ... storehouses for the hail

Snow and hail are pictured as being stored by Yahweh to do his will. (See: [Metaphor](#))

hail

balls of ice (usually small) that sometimes fall down from the sky during a storm

Job 38:23

Connecting Statement:

The rhetorical question that begins with the words “Have you entered” in verse 22 ends here.

these things that I have kept ... and war?

The rhetorical question that begins with the words “Have you entered” in verse 22 ends here. “You have never entered the storehouses for the snow, and you have never seen the storehouses for the hail, these things that I have kept ... and war.” (See: [Rhetorical Question](#))

these things that I have kept

The words “these things” refer to the snow and the hail (verse 22).

ULT

²³ these things that I have kept for
times of trouble, for days of battle and
war?

Job 38:24

What is the path to where the lightning bolts are distributed or to where the winds are scattered from the east over the earth?

These can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "What is the path to where I distribute the lightning bolts or to where I scatter the winds from the east over the earth?" (See: [Active or Passive](#))

the winds are scattered

"the winds are blown"

ULT

²⁴ What is the path to where the lightning bolts are distributed or to where the winds are scattered from the east over the earth?

Job 38:25

General Information:

Yahweh questions Job to emphasize that he causes it to rain and thunder and Job does not. (See: [Rhetorical Question](#))

Yahweh continues to challenge Job. He begins to ask a series of rhetorical questions. (See: [Rhetorical Question](#))

ULT

²⁵ Who has created the channels for the floods of rain, or who has made a path for the thunder,

Who has created the channels for the floods of rain

This can be translated as a statement. Alternate translation: "Only I have created the channels for the floods of rain" (See: [Rhetorical Question](#))

or who has made a path for the thunder

This can be translated as a statement. Alternate translation: "and only I have made a path for the thunder" (See: [Rhetorical Question](#))

the floods of rain

"the torrents of rain"

a path for the thunder

"a way for the rumble of thunder to be heard."

Job 38:26

on lands where no person exists, and on the wilderness, in which there is no one

These two phrases have nearly the same meaning. (See: [Parallelism](#))

where no person exists

“where there are no people”

ULT

²⁶ to cause it to rain on lands where no person exists, and on the wilderness, in which there is no one,

Job 38:27

The rhetorical question that begins with the words “Who has created” in verse 25 ends here. (See: [Rhetorical Question](#))

to satisfy ... sprout with grass?

The rhetorical question that begins with the words “Who has created” in verse 25 ends here. This can be translated as a statement. “I am the one who has created ... of rain, and I am the one who has made ... to satisfy ... sprout with grass.” (See: [Rhetorical Question](#))

ULT

²⁷ to satisfy the devastated and desolate places, and to make the ground sprout with grass?

to satisfy

The implied information is that it is the rain that meets the needs of the land to grow grass. Alternate translation: “so that the rain can satisfy the needs of” (See: [Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information](#))

devastated and desolate

“ruined and wasted.” These two words have nearly the same meaning and emphasize the ruined and empty nature of these regions. (See: [Hendiadys](#))

with grass

“the new grass” or “the fresh grass.” This is grass that is just starting to grow.

make the ground sprout with

“make the ground support new grass”

Job 38:28

Yahweh begins a series of four questions to emphasize to Job that he makes rain, dew, ice, and frost and Job does not. (See: [Rhetorical Question](#)) Rain, dew, ice, and frost are spoken of as though they could be born like people are. (See: [Personification](#))

ULT

²⁸ Does the rain have a father, or, who fathers the drops of dew?

Connecting Statement:

Yahweh continues to challenge Job.

Does the rain have a father, or, who fathers the drops of dew?

These can be translated as statements. Alternate translation: "Tell me who the rain's father is, and tell me who has become the father of the drops of dew." (See: [Rhetorical Question](#))

fathers the drops of dew

Becoming the father of the dew is a metaphor for creating it. Alternate translation: "causes the drops of dew to exist" (See: [Metaphor](#))

Job 38:29

Out of whose womb did the ice come? Who bore the white frost out of the sky?

These can be translated as statements. Alternate translation: "Tell me whose womb the ice came out of. Tell me who bore the white frost out of the sky." (See: [Rhetorical Question](#))

ice

"frozen water"

bore

"gave birth to"

the white frost

dew that freezes on the ground on cold, clear nights

ULT

²⁹ Out of whose womb did the ice come? Who bore the white frost out of the sky?

Job 38:30

The waters hide themselves and become like stone

The waters are spoken of as being able to hide. During the winter the ice hides the water underneath it. (See: [Personification](#) and [Reflexive Pronouns](#))

ULT

³⁰ The waters hide themselves and become like stone; the surface of the deep becomes frozen.

become like stone

The hardness of ice is spoken of as if it was stone. Alternate translation: “become hard like stone” (See: [Simile](#))

the deep

This refers to the sea or ocean where the water is very deep. Alternate translation: “the deep sea” or “the ocean depths” or “the deep water” (See: [Nominal Adjectives](#))

Job 38:31

General Information:

Yahweh uses five questions to emphasize to Job that he rules the heavens and Job does not. (See: [Rhetorical Question](#))

ULT

³¹ Can you fasten chains on the Pleiades, or undo the cords of Orion?

Connecting Statement:

Yahweh continues to challenge Job.

Can you fasten chains on the Pleiades, or undo the cords of Orion?

These can be translated as statements. Alternate translation: "You cannot fasten chains on the Pleiades, and you cannot undo the cords of Orion." (See: [Rhetorical Question](#))

fasten chains on

"bind chains onto" or "tie the bonds of"

the Pleiades ... Orion

These are the names of constellations. See how you translated them in [Job 9:9](#).

undo the cords of Orion

"loosen the cords that hold Orion"

Job 38:32

Connecting Statement:

Yahweh continues to challenge Job.

Can you lead the constellations ... proper times? Can you guide ... children?

These rhetorical questions can be translated as statements. Alternate translation: “You cannot lead the constellations ... proper times. You cannot guide ... children.” (See: [Rhetorical Question](#))

constellations

groups of stars that seem like they form a particular shape in the sky

to appear at their proper times

“so that they appear at the right time”

the Bear

This is the name of a constellation. Translate as in [Job 9:9](#).

its children

“its cubs”

ULT

³² Can you lead the constellations to appear at their proper times? Can you guide the Bear with its children?

Job 38:33

**Do you know the regulations of the sky?
Could you set in place the sky's rule over the
earth?**

These can be translated as statements. Alternate translation: "You do not know the regulations of the sky? You could not set in place the sky's rule over the earth." (See: [Rhetorical Question](#))

ULT

³³ Do you know the regulations of the sky? Could you set in place the sky's rule over the earth?

Job 38:34

General Information:

Yahweh uses two questions to emphasize to Job that he rules the rain clouds and lightning and Job does not. (See: [Rhetorical Question](#))

Connecting Statement:

Yahweh continues to challenge Job.

Can you raise ... may cover you?

These can be translated as statements. Alternate translation: "You cannot raise ... may cover you." (See: [Rhetorical Question](#))

an abundance of rainwater

The abstract noun "abundance" can be translated as the adjective "abundant." Alternate translation: "an abundant amount of rainwater" or "a flood of waters" (See: [Abstract Nouns](#))

ULT

³⁴ Can you raise your voice up to the clouds, so that an abundance of rainwater may cover you?

Job 38:35

Can you send out ... you, 'Here we are'?

These can be translated as statements. Alternate translation: "You cannot send out you, 'Here we are!'" (See: [Rhetorical Question](#))

Here we are

The lightning bolts are spoken of as servants saying they are ready to follow commands. (See: [Personification](#))

ULT

³⁵ Can you send out bolts of lightning that they may go out, that they say to you, 'Here we are'?

Job 38:36

General Information:

Yahweh uses three questions to emphasize to Job that he rules the clouds and rain and Job does not. (See: [Rhetorical Question](#))

ULT

³⁶ Who has put wisdom in the clouds or has given understanding to the mists?

Connecting Statement:

Yahweh continues to challenge Job.

Who has put wisdom in the clouds or has given understanding to the mists?

These questions can be translated as statements. Alternate translation: "I am the one who has put wisdom in the clouds and given understanding to the mists." (See: [Rhetorical Question](#))

has put wisdom in the clouds

"has given wisdom to the clouds"

Job 38:37

A rhetorical question begins here. (See: [Rhetorical Question](#))

Who can pour out the water skins of the sky

This can be translated as a statement. Alternate translation: “I am the one who can pour out the water skins of the sky.” (See: [Rhetorical Question](#))

the water skins

These are skins that people sew together so that they can hold water. Yahweh refers to the thick clouds as “waters skins” because they hold much water just like water skins. (See: [Metaphor](#))

ULT

³⁷ Who can number the clouds by his skill? Who can pour out the water skins of the sky

Job 38:38

when the dust runs ... tightly together?

The rhetorical question that begins with the words “Who can pour out” in verse 37 ends here. “Only I can pour out ... when the dust runs ... tightly together.” (See: [Rhetorical Question](#))

ULT

38 when the dust runs into a hard mass
and the clods of earth clump tightly
together?

when the dust runs into a hard mass

The rain makes the loose dry dirt stick together like one piece of dirt. This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: “when the rain molds the dirt into a hard mass” (See: [Active or Passive](#))

the clods of earth clump tightly together

“the lumps of soil stick together”

Job 38:39

General Information:

Yahweh uses a question to emphasize that he knows how to feed the lions and Job does not. (See: [Rhetorical Question](#))

ULT

³⁹ Can you hunt down a victim for a lioness or satisfy the appetite of her young lion cubs

Connecting Statement:

Yahweh continues to challenge Job.

Can you hunt down a victim for a lioness or satisfy the appetite of her young lion cubs

This can be translated as a statement. Alternate translation: "You know that you cannot hunt down a victim for a lioness or satisfy the appetite of her young lion cubs" (See: [Rhetorical Question](#))

a victim

"prey." This is an animal that a lion could eat.

lioness

This is a female lion.

appetite

hunger

of her young lion cubs

"of young lions." These are young lions that are old enough to hunt for themselves.

Job 38:40

Connecting Statement:

The rhetorical question that begins with the words “Can you hunt” in verse 39 ends here.

ULT

40 when they are crouching in their dens
and sheltering in hiding to lie in wait?

when they are crouching ... to lie in wait?

The rhetorical question that begins with the words “Can you hunt” in verse 39 ends here. This can be translated as a statement. “You know that you cannot hunt down ... when they are crouching ... to lie in wait.” (See: [Rhetorical Question](#))

dens

A “den” is a lair or shelter where lions live.

sheltering in hiding

“hiding in a thicket.” Lions hide in thick vegetation when hunting their prey.

to lie in wait

The implied information is that the lions are hiding and waiting for their prey to come near. Alternate translation: “to lie waiting for a victim” (See: [Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information](#))

Job 38:41

General Information:

Yahweh uses a question to emphasize that he provides food for the ravens and Job does not. (See: [Rhetorical Question](#))

Connecting Statement:

Yahweh continues to challenge Job.

Who provides victims ... for lack of food?

This can be translated as a statement. Alternate translation: "Tell me who provides victims ... for lack of food." (See: [Rhetorical Question](#))

provides victims

"provides food." This refers to animals that ravens look for and can eat.

ravens

large birds with shiny black feathers that feed on dead animals

cry out to God

The implied information is that the ravens are crying out for food. Alternate translation: "cry to God for help" or "cry out for God to give them food" (See: [Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information](#))

stagger about

This means to walk around in an unsteady way.

for lack of food

"because they have no food" or "because they have nothing to eat"

ULT

41 Who provides victims for the ravens when their young ones cry out to God and stagger about for lack of food?

Job 39

Job 39 General Notes

Structure and formatting

The ULT sets the lines of this chapter farther to the right on the page than the rest of the text because it is a poem. Yahweh continues to speak in this chapter.

Special concepts in this chapter

Yahweh's greatness

Yahweh is far greater than any man. He is the creator of the earth, and his ways will not always be understood by men because their knowledge is always limited. Since Job cannot understand creation, he cannot truly understand Yahweh.

Important figures of speech in this chapter

Rhetorical questions

Yahweh uses a series of rhetorical questions in this chapter in order to defend his character. Many of these questions focus on nature because Yahweh is the creator of the heavens and the earth. (See: [Rhetorical Question](#) and [heaven, sky, heavens, heavenly](#))

Job 39:1

General Information:

Yahweh uses four questions to emphasize that he is greater than Job because Yahweh takes care of the wild mountain goats and deer and Job does not. (See: [Rhetorical Question](#))

Connecting Statement:

Yahweh continues to challenge Job.

Do you know at what time ... bear their young?

This can be translated as a statement. Alternate translation: "Surely you do not know when ... bear their young!" (See: [Rhetorical Question](#))

Can you watch when the deer are having their fawns?

This can be translated as a statement. Alternate translation: "You are not able to watch to make sure everything goes well when the deer give birth to their fawns!" (See: [Rhetorical Question](#))

are having their fawns

"give birth to their fawns"

ULT

¹ Do you know at what time the wild goats in the rocks bear their young?
Can you watch when the deer are having their fawns?

Job 39:2

Can you count the months that they gestate?

This can be translated as a statement. Alternate translation: "You cannot count the months that they are pregnant." (See: [Rhetorical Question](#))

ULT

² Can you count the months that they gestate? Do you know the time when they bear their young?

that they gestate

"to complete their pregnancy"

they

The word "they" refers to the goats and the deer.

gestate

"are pregnant"

Do you know the time when they bear their young?

This can be translated as a statement. Alternate translation: "Of course you do not know when they give birth to their young." (See: [Rhetorical Question](#))

Job 39:3

Connecting Statement:

Yahweh continues to challenge Job.

They crouch down

The word “They” refers to the wild mountain goats and the deer.

birth their young

“give birth to their offspring”

then they finish their labor pains

This could mean: (1) their labor pains are over when the birth is finished or (2) “labor pains” is a metonym that refers to the offspring of the goats and deer because they are the result of the mother’s labor and pain. Alternate translation: “send out their offspring from their womb” (See: [Metonymy](#))

ULT

³ They crouch down and birth their young, and then they finish their labor pains.

Job 39:4

the open fields

“the countryside” or “the wild”

do not come back again

“do not come back to them” or “do not come back to their mothers”

ULT

⁴ Their young ones become strong and grow up in the open fields; they go out and do not come back again.

Job 39:5

General Information:

Yahweh uses two questions to emphasize that he is greater than Job because Yahweh takes care of the wild donkeys and Job does not. (See: [Rhetorical Question](#))

ULT

⁵ Who let the wild donkey go free? Who has untied the bonds of the swift donkey,

Connecting Statement:

Yahweh continues to challenge Job.

Who let the wild donkey go free?

This can be translated as a statement. Alternate translation: "I am the one who let the wild donkey go free." (See: [Rhetorical Question](#))

the wild donkey ... the swift donkey

These are different names for the same kind of donkey.

Who has untied the bonds of the swift donkey

This can be translated as a statement. Alternate translation: "I am the one who untied the bonds of the swift donkey" (See: [Rhetorical Question](#))

bonds

ropes, chains, or straps that hold an animal and keep it from running away

Job 39:6

General Information:

The rhetorical question that begins with the words “Who has untied” in verse 5 ends here. (See: [Rhetorical Question](#))

ULT

⁶ whose home I have made in the Arabah, his house in the salt land?

whose home I have made ... in the salt land?

The rhetorical question that begins with the words “Who has untied” in verse 5 ends here. This can be translated as a statement. “I am the one who has untied ... whose home I have made in the Arabah, his house in the salt land.” (See: [Rhetorical Question](#))

whose home I have made in the Arabah

Yahweh describes the donkey as though he were a person that had a house. “I gave him the Arabah as a place to live” (See: [Personification](#))

the salt land

the land around the Salt Sea that has a lot of salt in it

Job 39:7

Connecting Statement:

Yahweh continues to challenge Job.

He

The word “He” refers to the wild donkey.

laughs in scorn

Yahweh describes the donkey as though he were a person. The donkey laughs because those in the city have to hear loud noise, but he lives in a quiet place. (See: [Personification](#))

the driver’s

someone who forces an animal to work

ULT

⁷ He laughs in scorn at the noises in the city; he does not hear the driver’s shouts.

Job 39:8

pastures

places where animals can eat plants growing in the field

ULT

⁸ He roams over the mountains as his pastures; there he looks for every green plant to eat.

Job 39:9

General Information:

Here Yahweh uses four questions to emphasize that Job is not like Yahweh because Job cannot control the wild ox. (See: [Rhetorical Question](#))

ULT

⁹ Will the wild ox be happy to serve you?
Will he consent to stay by your manger?

Connecting Statement:

Yahweh continues to challenge Job.

Will the wild ox be happy to serve you?

This question can be translated as a statement. Alternate translation: “The wild ox will not be happy to serve you.” (See: [Rhetorical Question](#))

the wild ox

This could mean: (1) a type of ox that used to live in the wild or (2) some kind of buffalo that looked like oxen.

be happy

“be willing”

Will he consent to stay by your manger?

This question can be translated as a statement. Alternate translation: “He will not consent to stay by your manger.” (See: [Rhetorical Question](#))

consent to stay by your manger

“stay by your manger through the night”

manger

something that holds food so that animals can eat it

Job 39:10

Can you use ropes to hold the wild ox in the furrows?

This question can be translated as a statement. Alternate translation: “You cannot control the wild ox with a rope in order to plow furrows in your fields.” (See: [Rhetorical Question](#))

ULT

¹⁰ Can you use ropes to hold the wild ox in the furrows? Will he harrow the valleys as he follows after you?

ropes

Farmers would tie ropes to animals’ heads or necks in order to lead them.

furrows

These are long channels made in the dirt while plowing. See how you translated this in [Job 31:38](#).

Will he harrow the valleys as he follows after you?

This question can be translated as a statement. Alternate translation: “He will never harrow the valleys as he follows after you.” (See: [Rhetorical Question](#))

harrow

to smooth and break up the soil

Job 39:11

General Information:

Here Yahweh uses three questions to continue his argument that Job is not like Yahweh because Job cannot control the wild ox. (See: [Rhetorical Question](#))

ULT

11 Will you trust him because his strength is great? Will you leave your work to him to do?

Connecting Statement:

Yahweh continues to challenge Job.

Will you trust him because his strength is great?

This question can be translated as a statement. Alternate translation: “You cannot trust him because his strength is great.” (See: [Rhetorical Question](#))

trust him

The word “him” refers to the “wild ox.”

Will you leave your work to him to do?

This question can be translated as a statement. Alternate translation: “You will not be able to make him do your work for you.” (See: [Rhetorical Question](#))

leave your work to him to do

“have him do your hard work for you”

Job 39:12

Will you depend on him ... grain for your threshing floor?

These two clauses basically mean the same thing. This question can be translated as a statement. Alternate translation: "You will not be able to depend on him ... grain for your threshing floor." (See: [Rhetorical Question](#) and [Parallelism](#))

ULT

¹² Will you depend on him to bring your grain home, to gather the grain for your threshing floor?

Job 39:13

Connecting Statement:

Yahweh continues to challenge Job.

The wings of the ostrich ... pinions and plumage of love?

Yahweh uses this question to emphasize that Job cannot explain why ostriches behave the way they do. Alternate translation: "You do not know whether the pinions and plumage of the ostrich represent love when they wave their wings proudly." (See: [Rhetorical Question](#))

ULT

¹³ The wings of the ostrich wave proudly, but are they the pinions and plumage of love?

ostrich

a very large bird that can run very fast but cannot fly

wave proudly

"move with joy"

pinions

the very long feathers on the wings of birds

plumage

the smaller feathers that cover the body of a bird

of love

The Hebrew word is uncertain. This could mean: (1) "of faithfulness" or (2) "of a stork." The name of the stork meant "the faithful one" or "the loving one" because people knew that storks take very good care of their chicks.

Job 39:14

on the earth

“on the ground”

ULT

¹⁴ For she leaves her eggs on the earth,
and she lets them keep warm in the
dust;

Job 39:15

crush them

The word “them” refers to the eggs.

trample them

“step on them”

ULT

¹⁵ she forgets that a foot might crush them or that a wild beast might trample them.

Job 39:16

Connecting Statement:

Yahweh continues to challenge Job.

She deals roughly

The word “She” refers to the female ostrich.

her labor

the work that she does when she lays the eggs

might have been in vain

If the chicks die, all of her work was useless. Alternate translation: “might have been useless if the chicks die” (See: [Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information](#))

ULT

¹⁶ She deals roughly with her young ones as if they were not hers; she does not fear that her labor might have been in vain,

Job 39:17

deprived her of wisdom

“made her forget wisdom” or “not given her wisdom”

understanding

See how you translated this in [Job 11:6](#).

ULT

17 because God has deprived her of wisdom and has not given her any understanding.

Job 39:18

When she runs

This verse is in contrast to her weakness in caring for her chicks.
Alternate translation: "However, when she runs"

she laughs ... its rider

It is implied that she laughs because she is faster than the horse. Alternate translation: "she laughs ... its rider because she can run faster than the horse" (See: [Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information](#))

ULT

18 When she runs swiftly, she laughs in scorn at the horse and its rider.

Job 39:19

General Information:

Yahweh uses three questions to emphasize that Job is not like Yahweh because Job cannot control the wild horse. (See: [Rhetorical Question](#))

ULT

19 Have you given the horse his strength? Did you clothe his neck with his flowing mane?

Connecting Statement:

Yahweh continues to challenge Job.

Have you given the horse his strength?

This question can be translated as a statement. Alternate translation: “You have never given the horse his strength.” (See: [Rhetorical Question](#))

Did you clothe his neck with his flowing mane?

This question can be translated as a statement. Alternate translation: “You cannot clothe his neck with his flowing mane.” (See: [Rhetorical Question](#))

clothe his neck with his flowing mane

The horse’s “mane” is spoken of as if it was clothing for the neck of the horse. Alternate translation: “made his flowing main to cover his neck like clothes” (See: [Metonymy](#))

flowing mane

the long hair on the top of the neck of a horse

Job 39:20

Have you ever made him jump like a locust?

This question can be translated as a statement. Alternate translation: "You are not able to make him jump like a locust." (See: [Rhetorical Question](#))

a locust

a large kind of grasshopper that can jump very far and very quickly

snorting

a very loud sound that horses make with their nose

ULT

²⁰ Have you ever made him jump like a locust? The majesty of his snorting is fearsome.

Job 39:21

Connecting Statement:

Yahweh continues to challenge Job.

He paws

The word “He” refers to the horse. The horse paws the ground because he is very excited to begin the fight. Alternate translation: “He paws with excitement and” (See: [Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information](#))

paws

“digs at the ground with his hooves”

to meet the weapons

Here “the weapons” represent the battle in which they are used. Alternate translation: “to join in the battle” (See: [Metonymy](#))

ULT

²¹ He paws in might and rejoices in his strength; he rushes out to meet the weapons.

Job 39:22

He mocks fear

“He is not afraid at all”

mocks

“laughs at”

dismayed

discouraged

does not turn back

“does not run away”

ULT

²² He mocks fear and is not dismayed;
he does not turn back from the sword.

Job 39:23

quiver

a container that holds arrows

rattles

shakes and makes noise

flank

the side of a horse

javelin

a long stick with a sharp end that people throw at their enemies

ULT

²³ The quiver rattles against his flank, along with the flashing spear and the javelin.

Job 39:24

Connecting Statement:

Yahweh continues to challenge Job.

He

The word “He” refers to the horse.

swallows up ground

The horse runs over the ground so quickly that the ground passes by like water that a person drinks. Alternate translation: “runs very fast over the ground” (See: [Metaphor](#))

with fierceness and rage

The horse is very excited, so he moves quickly and strongly.

at the trumpet’s sound

It can be stated that someone blows the trumpet. Alternate translation: “when someone blows a trumpet to announce that a battle has begun” (See: [Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information](#))

he cannot stand in one place

“he is too excited to stand still”

ULT

²⁴ He swallows up ground with fierceness and rage; at the trumpet’s sound, he cannot stand in one place.

Job 39:25

he says, 'Aha

The word “Aha” is a sound people make when they discover something. The horse makes a sound because he has discovered the battle. (See: [Personification](#))

the thunderous shouts

It is implied that the horse hears these things. Alternate translation: “he hears the thunderous shouts” (See: [Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information](#))

the outcries

“the battle cries.” People have special shouts that they use in war to show their great strength and bravery and to scare the enemy.

ULT

²⁵ Whenever the trumpet sounds, he says, ‘Aha!’ He smells the battle from far away— the thunderous shouts of the commanders and the outcries.

Job 39:26

Connecting Statement:

Yahweh continues to challenge Job.

Is it by your wisdom ... for the south?

Yahweh uses this question to prove that Job is not as great as Yahweh. The implicit answer to this question is “no.” Alternate translation: “It is not by your wisdom ... for the south.” (See: [Rhetorical Question](#))

ULT

²⁶ Is it by your wisdom that the hawk soars, that he stretches out his wings for the south?

stretches out his wings for the south

Here the stretching out of his wings refers to flying. Alternate translation: “flies to the south” (See: [Metonymy](#))

for the south

In the biblical geography, birds fly south during the winter in order to live in warmer climates.

Job 39:27

Connecting Statement:

Yahweh continues to challenge Job.

Is it at your orders ... nest in high places?

Yahweh uses this question to prove that Job is not powerful enough to command the eagles. The implicit answer to this question is “no.” Alternate translation: “You are not able to command the eagle to mount up and build his nest in high places.” (See: [Rhetorical Question](#))

ULT

²⁷ Is it at your orders that the eagle mounts up and makes his nest in high places?

at your orders

The abstract noun “orders” can be stated as a verb. Alternate translation: “because you tell it to do so” (See: [Abstract Nouns](#))

mounts up

This means he flies upward. Alternate translation: “flies up into the sky” (See: [Idiom](#))

Job 39:28

a stronghold

The high cliffs are strongholds for eagles because the animals that would want to eat them cannot reach them.

ULT

²⁸ He lives on cliffs and makes his home on the peaks of cliffs, a stronghold.

Job 39:29

Connecting Statement:

Yahweh continues to challenge Job.

he searches for victims

Here the word “he” refers to the eagle.

for victims

“for animals that he can kill and eat”

his eyes see them

Here “his eyes” refer to the eagle. Alternate translation: “he sees them” (See: [Synecdoche](#))

ULT

²⁹ From there he searches for victims;
his eyes see them from very far away.

Job 39:30

His young

“The baby eagles.” It may be helpful to state that this happens after the eagle kills an animal. Alternate translation: “After an eagle kills an animal, the baby eagles”

ULT

³⁰ His young also drink up blood; where killed people are, there he is.”

drink up blood

“drink the blood of the animal that he killed”

where killed people are

“where there are dead people.” This phrase refers to dead bodies that are lying out in the open, not to bodies that are buried in the ground.

there he is

It can be made explicit that he comes to eat the dead bodies. Alternate translation: “he is there to eat them” (See: [Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information](#))

Job 40

Job 40 General Notes

Structure and formatting

Some translations prefer to set apart extended quotations, prayers, or songs. The ULT and many other English translations set the lines of 40:1-2, 4-5, 7-24, which are extended quotations of Job and Yahweh, farther to the right on the page than the rest of the text.

Special concepts in this chapter

Job's righteousness

In seeking to defend his own righteousness, Job accuses Yahweh of being unjust. Yahweh asks a very important question: "Will you condemn me so you may claim you are right?" This is the essence of Job's error.

Important figures of speech in this chapter

Irony

Yahweh states, "He who argues with God, let him answer." Job immediately answers him. This is irony. While Job is forced to acknowledge the power of Yahweh, he does not repent of his former statements. Because of this, Yahweh asks him more questions. (See: [repent](#), [repentance](#))

Other possible translation difficulties in this chapter

Animals

There are several animals mentioned in this chapter that do not exist and may never have existed. It may be necessary to leave these names untranslated or to translate their names as adjectives.

Job 40:1

Connecting Statement:

Yahweh continues to challenge Job.

ULT

¹ Yahweh continued to speak to Job; he said,

Job 40:2

Should anyone who wishes to criticize try to correct the Almighty?

Yahweh is rebuking Job. This can be translated as a statement.

Alternate translation: "No one who wants to criticize me should try to argue with me, for I am Almighty God." or "You, a person, want to criticize me, Almighty God, but you should not try to correct me." (See: [Rhetorical Question](#))

ULT

² "Should anyone who wishes to criticize try to correct the Almighty? He who argues with God, let him answer."

He who argues with God, let him answer

Yahweh speaks of Job and himself as if they were two other people to remind Job that no person anywhere should argue with God. Alternate translation: "You want to argue with me, so answer me" (See: [Pronouns](#))

Job 40:3

(There are no notes for this verse.)

ULT

³ Then Job answered Yahweh and said,

Job 40:4

See, I am

"You are right when you say that I am" or "Look at me and you will see that I am"

I am insignificant

"I am not important"

how can I answer you?

Job uses this question to apologize for questioning God. Alternate translation: "I cannot answer you." (See: [Rhetorical Question](#))

ULT

⁴ "See, I am insignificant; how can I answer you? I put my hand over my mouth."

Job 40:5

(There are no notes for this verse.)

ULT

⁵ I spoke once, and I will not answer;
indeed, twice, but I will proceed no
further.”

Job 40:6

(There are no notes for this verse.)

ULT

⁶ Then Yahweh answered Job out of a fierce storm and said,

Job 40:7**gird up your loins like a man**

A man who tucks his robe up under his sash or belt is preparing for hard physical work, and Job was to prepare for the hard work of answering God. See how you translated this in [Job 38:3](#). (See: [Simile](#) and [Metaphor](#))

ULT

7 “Now gird up your loins like a man, for I will ask you questions, and you must answer me.

Job 40:8

Connecting Statement:

Yahweh continues to challenge Job.

Will you actually say that I am unjust?

The word “actually” indicates that Yahweh is surprised that Job would say that Yahweh is unjust and that Job should make sure that he really wants to say that. This can be translated as a statement. Alternate translation: “I am surprised that you are saying I am unjust.” or “You should be sure that you want to say that I am unjust, because that is what you are saying.” (See: [Rhetorical Question](#))

ULT

⁸ Will you actually say that I am unjust?
Will you condemn me so you may claim
you are right?

Will you condemn me so you may claim you are right?

This can be translated as a statement. Alternate translation: “You are condemning me so you can claim that you are innocent.” (See: [Rhetorical Question](#))

Job 40:9**an arm like God's**

The arm is a metonym for the strength in the arm. Alternate translation: "strength like God's strength" (See: [Simile](#))

ULT

⁹ Do you have an arm like God's? Can you thunder with a voice like him?

Can you thunder with a voice like him?

This can be translated as a statement. Alternate translation: "You certainly cannot cause thunder with your voice the way God does with his." (See: [Rhetorical Question](#) and [Metonymy](#))

a voice like him

"a voice the way he does" or "a voice like his voice"

Job 40:10**clothe yourself in glory and dignity; array yourself in honor and majesty**

The abstract nouns “glory,” “dignity,” “honor,” and “majesty” are spoken of as if they were clothing that a person could put on. They can be translated as adjectives and verbs. Alternate translation:

“make yourself glorious; do something great so people will respect you and honor you; make people think you are a great king” (See: [Metaphor](#) and [Abstract Nouns](#))

ULT

¹⁰ Now clothe yourself in glory and dignity; array yourself in honor and majesty.

Job 40:11

Scatter around the excess of your anger

The abstract noun “anger” is spoken of as if it were something that usually could be held in a container, but in this situation there is so much of it that what does not fit needs to be spread around. It is also a metonym for the actions a person takes when he is angry. You may need to make explicit why the person is angry. Alternate translation:

“Be angry because people are proud, and punish them” (See: [Metaphor](#) and [Abstract Nouns](#) and [Metonymy](#))

ULT

11 Scatter around the excess of your anger; look at everyone who is proud and bring him down.

bring him down

“take away everything he is proud of”

Job 40:12

(There are no notes for this verse.)

ULT

¹² Look at everyone who is proud and bring him low; trample down wicked people where they stand.

Job 40:13

their faces

The “face” represents the whole person. Alternate translation: “them” (See: [Synecdoche](#))

the hidden place

a euphemism for the place where people’s spirits go when they die (See: [Euphemism](#))

ULT

13 Bury them in the earth together;
imprison their faces in the hidden place.

Job 40:14

(There are no notes for this verse.)

ULT

14 Then will I also acknowledge about you that your own right hand can save you.

Job 40:15

behemoth

a large water animal, possibly the hippopotamus

he eats

the behemoth eats

eats grass like an ox

Both the behemoth and the ox eat grass. (See: [Simile](#))

ULT

15 Look now at the behemoth, which I made when I made you; he eats grass like an ox.

Job 40:16

loins ... belly's muscles

These two phrases refer to the same part of the body.

ULT

16 See now, his strength is in his loins;
his power is in his belly's muscles.

Job 40:17

like a cedar

Cedar is a very hard wood, and his tail becomes very hard. (See: [Simile](#))

ULT

17 He makes his tail like a cedar; the sinews of his thighs are joined together.

Job 40:18

like tubes of bronze

Here, his bones are compared to tubes made of bronze to show how tough this animal is. (See: [Simile](#))

like bars of iron

This last comparison describes the strength of this great animal. (See: [Simile](#))

ULT

18 His bones are like tubes of bronze;
his legs are like bars of iron.

Job 40:19

chief of the creatures

“most important of the creatures” or “strongest of the creatures”

the creatures of God. Only God

Yahweh speaks as if he were another person. Alternate translation: “of my creatures. Only I, God” (See: [Pronouns](#))

ULT

19 He is the chief of the creatures of God. Only God, who made him, can defeat him.

Job 40:20

the hills provide him with food

The hills are spoken of as if they were people capable of giving him food. Alternate translation: “food grows on the hills for him” (See: [Personification](#))

ULT

²⁰ For the hills provide him with food;
the beasts of the field play nearby.

Job 40:21

lotus plants

flowering plants that float on the water in swampy areas

reeds

tall grasses found in swamps or marshes

ULT

²¹ He lies under the lotus plants in the shelter of the reeds, in the marshes.

Job 40:22

lotus plants

flowering plants that float on the water in swampy areas. See how you translated this in [Job 40:19](#).

willows of the brook

Willows are large trees that grow in damp ground. If they are unknown in your culture, you can use a general term for trees that grow near water.

ULT

²² The lotus plants cover him with their shade; the willows of the brook are all around him.

Job 40:23

banks

sides of the river

though the Jordan should surge up to his mouth

“even if the flood of the Jordan should come up to his mouth”

ULT

²³ See, if a river floods its banks, he does not tremble; he is confident, though the Jordan should surge up to his mouth.

Job 40:24

Can anyone capture him with a hook ... snare?

This can be translated as a statement. Alternate translation: "No one can capture him with a hook or pierce his nose through with a snare." (See: [Rhetorical Question](#))

ULT

²⁴ Can anyone capture him with a hook, or pierce his nose through with a snare?

Job 41

Job 41 General Notes

Structure and formatting

Some translations prefer to set apart extended quotations, prayers, or songs. The ULT and many other English translations set the lines of this chapter, which is an extended quotation of Yahweh, farther to the right on the page than the rest of the text. It is a continuation of the previous chapter.

Important figures of speech in this chapter

Rhetorical questions

Yahweh uses a series of rhetorical questions in this chapter in order to defend his character and to convince Job to repent. (See: [Rhetorical Question](#) and [repent, repentance](#))

Other possible translation difficulties in this chapter

Animals

There are several animals mentioned in this chapter that do not exist and may never have existed. It may be necessary to leave these names untranslated or to translate their names as adjectives.

Job 41:1

General Information:

God continues speaking. He is using many rhetorical questions to challenge Job.

ULT

¹ Can you draw out Leviathan with a fishhook? Or tie up his jaws with a cord?

Can you draw out Leviathan with a fishhook?

God uses this question to remind Job that Job is not powerful like Leviathan. This question can be translated as a statement. Alternate translation: "You know that you cannot draw out Leviathan with a fishhook." (See: [Rhetorical Question](#))

draw out

pull out of the water

Or tie up his jaws with a cord?

The words "can you" are understood from the previous question. They can be repeated here. God uses this question to remind Job that Job is not powerful like Leviathan. This question can be translated as a statement. Alternate translation: "Or can you tie up his jaws with a cord?" or "And you know that you cannot tie up his jaws with a cord." (See: [Ellipsis](#) and [Rhetorical Question](#))

his jaws

Leviathan's jaws

Job 41:2**Can you put a rope into his nose ... with a hook?**

God uses this question to remind Job that Job is not powerful like Leviathan. This question can be translated as a statement. Alternate translation: "You know that you cannot put a rope into Leviathan's nose ... with a hook." (See: [Rhetorical Question](#))

ULT

² Can you put a rope into his nose, or pierce his jaw through with a hook?

Job 41:3

Will he make many pleas to you?

God uses this question to remind Job that Job is not powerful like Leviathan. This question can be translated as a statement. Alternate translation: "You know that he will not make pleas to you." (See: [Rhetorical Question](#))

ULT

³ Will he make many pleas to you? Will he speak soft words to you?

he

Leviathan

Will he speak soft words to you?

God uses this question to remind Job that Job is not powerful like Leviathan. This question can be translated as a statement. Alternate translation: "You know that he will not speak soft words to you." (See: [Rhetorical Question](#))

Job 41:4

Connecting Statement:

Yahweh continues to rebuke Job. He uses rhetorical questions to remind Job that Job is not powerful like Leviathan.

Will he make a covenant with you, that you should take him for a servant forever?

This question can be translated as a statement. Alternate translation: “You know that he will not make a covenant with you, that you should take him for a servant forever.” (See: [Rhetorical Question](#))

he ... him

The words “he” and “him” refer to Leviathan.

ULT

⁴ Will he make a covenant with you, that you should take him for a servant forever?

Job 41:5**Will you play with him as you would with a bird?**

This question can be translated as a statement. Alternate translation: "You know that you cannot play with him as you would play with a bird." (See: [Rhetorical Question](#))

ULT

⁵ Will you play with him as you would with a bird? Will you tie him up for your servant girls?

Will you tie him up for your servant girls?

This question can be translated as a statement. Alternate translation: "You know that you cannot tie him up for your servant girls." (See: [Rhetorical Question](#))

Job 41:6

Will the groups of fishermen bargain for him?

This question can be translated as a statement. Alternate translation: "You know that the groups of fishermen will not bargain for him."
(See: [Rhetorical Question](#))

ULT

6 Will the groups of fishermen bargain for him? Will they divide him up to trade among the merchants?

Will they divide him up to trade among the merchants?

This question can be translated as a statement. Alternate translation: "You know that they will not divide him up to trade among the merchants." (See: [Rhetorical Question](#))

Will they divide

"Will the groups of fishermen divide"

Job 41:7**Connecting Statement:**

Yahweh continues to rebuke Job. He uses rhetorical questions to remind Job that Job is not powerful like Leviathan.

ULT

⁷ Can you fill his hide with harpoons or his head with fishing spears?

Can you fill his hide with harpoons or his head with fishing spears?

This question can be translated as a statement. Alternate translation: “You cannot pierce his skin with your hunting weapons, nor can you pierce his head with fishing spears.” (See: [Rhetorical Question](#))

his

Leviathan’s

harpoons

large spears with barbed points that people use to hunt large sea creatures

Job 41:8

him

Leviathan

ULT

⁸ Put your hand on him just once, and you will remember the battle and do it no more.

Job 41:9

See

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

will not anyone be thrown down to the ground just by the sight of him?

This generalization can be translated as a statement in active form. Alternate translation: “Anyone who looks at him will be so frightened that he will throw himself on the ground.” (See: [Active or Passive](#) and [Rhetorical Question](#))

the sight of him

“by looking at him” or “by seeing him”

ULT

⁹ See, the hope of anyone who does that is a lie; will not anyone be thrown down to the ground just by the sight of him?

Job 41:10

Connecting Statement:

Yahweh continues to rebuke Job by asking him rhetorical questions. He uses rhetorical questions to remind Job that Yahweh is much more powerful than both Leviathan and Job.

ULT

10 None is so fierce that he dare stir Leviathan up; who, then, is he who can stand before me?

None is so fierce that he dare stir Leviathan up; who, then, is he who can stand before me?

It would be easier to stir up Leviathan than to stand before Yahweh. This question can be translated as a statement. Alternate translation: "Since you know that no person is so fierce that he dare stir Leviathan up, you should certainly know that no one can stand before me." (See: [Rhetorical Question](#))

Job 41:11

Who has first given anything to me in order that I should repay him?

This question can be translated as a statement. Alternate translation: "You know that no one has first given anything to me, so there is no one whom I need to repay." (See: [Rhetorical Question](#))

ULT

¹¹ Who has first given anything to me in order that I should repay him?
Whatever is under the whole sky is mine.

Job 41:12

I will not keep silent concerning ... nor about ... nor about

This can be translated in positive form. Alternate translation: "I will certainly speak about ... and about ... and about" (See: [Litotes](#))

concerning Leviathan's legs, nor about the matter of his strength, nor about his graceful form

These are three things about which God will not keep silent.

his

The word "his" refers to Leviathan.

ULT

¹² I will not keep silent concerning Leviathan's legs, nor about the matter of his strength, nor about his graceful form.

Job 41:13

Connecting Statement:

Yahweh continues to rebuke Job by asking him rhetorical questions.

Who can strip off his outer covering?

This question can be translated as a statement. Alternate translation: “No one can strip off his outer clothing.” (See: [Rhetorical Question](#))

his ... his

Leviathan’s

Who can penetrate his double armor?

The word “armor” is a metaphor for the hard scales or hide on his back. This question can be translated as a statement. Alternate translation: “No one can penetrate his very thick hide.” (See: [Metaphor](#) and [Rhetorical Question](#))

ULT

13 Who can strip off his outer covering?

Who can penetrate his double armor?

Job 41:14

Who can open the doors of his face ... terror?

This question can be translated as a statement. Alternate translation: "No one can pry his jaws apart ... terror." (See: [Rhetorical Question](#))

ULT

14 Who can open the doors of his face—
ringed with his teeth, which are a
terror?

Job 41:15

shields

The word “shields” is a metaphor for Leviathan’s hide. Both shields and Leviathan’s hide protect well and deflect arrows and other weapons. (See: [Metaphor](#))

tight together as with a close seal

This means the “shields” are very close to one another and nothing can get between them.

ULT

15 his back is made up of rows of shields, tight together as with a close seal.

Job 41:16

One is so near to another

One row of shields is so near to another ([Job 41:15](#)).

between them

between the rows of shields ([Job 41:15](#))

ULT

16 One is so near to another that no air can come between them.

Job 41:17

They ... they ... they

the rows of shields ([Job 41:15](#)).

they cannot be pulled apart

ULT

¹⁷ They are joined to each other; they stick together, so that they cannot be pulled apart.

This can be translated in active form. Alternate translation: “no one can pull them apart” (See: [Active or Passive](#))

Job 41:18

from his snorting

“when he snorts.” A snort is a sound like a short snore. Another possible meaning is “from his sneezing” or “when he sneezes.”

his eyes are like the eyelids of the morning dawn

This means that his eyes are red as the morning dawn is red. (See: [Simile](#))

his

The word “his” refers to Leviathan.

ULT

18 Light flashes out from his snorting;
his eyes are like the eyelids of the
morning dawn.

Job 41:19

Out of his mouth go burning torches, sparks of fire leap out

God expresses the same idea in two different ways in order to emphasize the terrifying appearance of Leviathan. You can make this clear by adding the omitted words. Alternate translation: "Out of his mouth go burning torches, sparks of fire leap out of his mouth" (See: [Parallelism](#) and [Ellipsis](#))

ULT

¹⁹ Out of his mouth go burning torches, sparks of fire leap out.

his

The word "his" refers to Leviathan.

Job 41:20

nostrils

the two openings of the nose

smoke like a boiling pot

Both the smoke and a boiling pot are very hot. (See: [Simile](#))

ULT

²⁰ Out of his nostrils goes smoke like a boiling pot on a fire that has been fanned to be very hot.

Job 41:21

kindles coals into flame

“causes coals to catch fire”

ULT

²¹ His breath kindles coals into flame;
fires go out from his mouth.

Job 41:22

his ... him

The words “his” and “him” refer to Leviathan.

terror dances in front of him

The abstract noun “terror” can be translated as the verb “be afraid.” Alternate translation: “when people see him coming, they are very afraid” (See: [Abstract Nouns](#))

ULT

²² In his neck is strength, and terror dances in front of him.

Job 41:23

they cannot be moved

This can be translated in active form. Alternate translation: “no one can move them” (See: [Active or Passive](#))

ULT

²³ The folds of his flesh are joined together; they are firm on him; they cannot be moved.

Job 41:24

His heart is as hard as a stone

A rock or stone does not change and become soft. This could mean: (1) Leviathan's physical chest and the organs inside it are physically hard or (2) Leviathan is not afraid of anything or (3) Leviathan is spoken of as a person who kills without ever being sorry. (See: [Simile](#) and [Personification](#))

ULT

²⁴ His heart is as hard as a stone—indeed, as hard as a lower millstone.

a lower millstone

“the hardest of rocks.” The lower millstone is the larger and harder of the two rocks used to grind grain. It would be the hardest rock people could find.

Job 41:25

he ... himself

Leviathan

the gods

This could mean: (1) “mighty people” or (2) “very strong people” .

ULT

²⁵ When he raises himself up, even the gods become afraid; because of fear, they draw back.

Job 41:26

strikes him

strikes Leviathan

ULT

²⁶ If a sword strikes him, it does nothing
— and neither does a spear, an arrow,
or any other pointed weapon.

Job 41:27

He thinks of iron as if it were straw

“He thinks of weapons made of iron as if they were weapons made of straw.” Straw would not get through his hide, and iron weapons do not get through his hide. (See: [Simile](#))

ULT

²⁷ He thinks of iron as if it were straw,
and of bronze as if it were rotten wood.

of bronze as if it were rotten wood

You can make this clear by adding the omitted words. Alternate translation: “he thinks of weapons made of bronze as if they were weapons made of rotten wood” (See: [Ellipsis](#) and [Simile](#))

Job 41:28

to him sling stones become chaff

Chaff cannot hurt Leviathan, and sling stones are just as ineffective as chaff. (See: [Metaphor](#))

him ... him

Leviathan

ULT

²⁸ An arrow cannot make him flee; to him sling stones become chaff.

Job 41:29

Clubs are regarded as straw

A club made of straw would not hurt him, and a club made of wood would not hurt him. This can be translated in active form. Alternate translation: "He thinks of clubs as if they were straw" (See: [Active or Passive](#))

ULT

²⁹ Clubs are regarded as straw; he laughs at the whirring flight of a spear.

he laughs at the whirring flight of a spear

The person throwing the spear hopes that the spear will kill Leviathan, but the writer speaks as if Leviathan knows the spear will not kill him and so laughs. (See: [Personification](#))

he laughs

Leviathan laughs

Job 41:30

His ... he ... he

These words refer to Leviathan.

he leaves a spreading trail in the mud as if he were a threshing sledge

Just as a threshing sledge goes over grain on a threshing floor and turns it to powder, so Leviathan's tail leaves a trail in the mud as he wags it when he walks. (See: [Simile](#))

ULT

³⁰ His lower parts are like sharp pieces of broken pottery; he leaves a spreading trail in the mud as if he were a threshing sledge.

Job 41:31

He makes the deep to foam up like a pot of boiling water

“As he passes through the water, he leaves a trail of bubbles behind him, like the bubbling of boiling water in a pot”

He

The word “he” refers to Leviathan.

he makes the sea like a pot of ointment

The ointment in a pot is cloudy if someone shakes it, and the sea is muddy when Leviathan swims in it. (See: [Simile](#))

ULT

³¹ He makes the deep to foam up like a pot of boiling water; he makes the sea like a pot of ointment.

Job 41:32

one would think the deep had gray hair

This is because the bubbles in his wake are white.

ULT

³² He makes a shining wake behind him;
one would think the deep had gray hair.

Job 41:33

there is no equal to him

“no other creature is like Leviathan”

him

Leviathan

ULT

³³ On earth there is no equal to him,
who has been made to live without fear.

Job 41:34

He sees everything that is proud

“He is very, very proud”

he is king over all the sons of pride

Leviathan is spoken of as if he were a person who is able to become king and be proud. Alternate translation: “Leviathan has more reason to be proud than anyone else on earth” (See: [Personification](#))

ULT

³⁴ He sees everything that is proud; he is king over all the sons of pride.”

He ... he

Leviathan

Job 42

Job 42 General Notes

Structure and formatting

Some translations prefer to set apart extended quotations, prayers, or songs. The ULT and many other English translations set the lines of 42:1-6, which is an extended quotation of Job, farther to the right on the page than the rest of the text.

Having faced the temptation to curse Yahweh, and after being rebuked by him, in the end Job shows his complete trust in Yahweh. (See: [tempt, temptation](#) and [curse, cursed, cursing](#) and [trust, trusted, trustworthy, trustworthiness](#))

Special concepts in this chapter

Justice

Yahweh enacts justice at the end of this book. He punishes Job's friends and restores Job's blessings. Yahweh's blessing was not dependent upon Job's repentance, but upon Yahweh's grace. (See: [just, justice, unjust, injustice, justify, justification, restore, restoration, bless, blessed, blessing](#) and [repent, repentance and grace, gracious](#))

Job 42:1

(There are no notes for this verse.)

ULT

¹ Then Job answered Yahweh and said,

Job 42:2**I know that you can do all things, that no purpose of yours can be stopped**

You may want to repeat the words “I know.” Alternate translation: “I know that you can do all things. I know that no purpose of yours can be stopped” (See: [Ellipsis](#))

ULT

² “I know that you can do all things, that no purpose of yours can be stopped.

no purpose of yours can be stopped

This can be translated in active form. Alternate translation: “no one can stop any of your plans” (See: [Active or Passive](#))

Job 42:3

Who is this

The ULT and most modern versions agree that Job is loosely quoting God's own words from [Job 38:2](#). You may decide, as does the UST, to make it clear that God asked this question of Job and that Job is now remembering it. Alternate translation: "You said to me, 'Who is this'" (See: [Rhetorical Question](#))

conceals plans

That is, hides or misrepresents God's plans. (See: [Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information](#))

ULT

³ 'Who is this who without knowledge conceals plans?' Indeed, I have spoken things that I did not understand, things too difficult for me to understand, which I did not know about.

Job 42:4

(There are no notes for this verse.)

ULT

⁴ You said to me, 'Listen, now, and I will speak; I will ask you things, and you will tell me.'

Job 42:5

but now my eye sees you

The eyes represent seeing, and seeing represents understanding.
Alternate translation: "but now I really understand you" (See: [Metaphor](#))

ULT

⁵ I had heard about you by my ear's hearing, but now my eye sees you.

Job 42:6

despise myself

Job's self is a metonym for what he said. Alternate translation: "I despise the things I said" (See: [Metonymy](#))

despise

intensely dislike

I repent in dust and ashes

Sitting in dust and ashes is a symbolic act showing the person is sorry. (See: [Symbolic Action](#))

ULT

⁶ So I despise myself; I repent in dust and ashes."

Job 42:7

It came about that

This phrase is used here to mark an important event in the story. If your language has a way for doing this, you could consider using it here.

Eliphaz the Temanite

See how you translated this man's name in [Job 2:11](#)

My wrath is kindled against you

Fire is a metaphor for anger, and starting a fire is a metaphor for becoming angry. Alternate translation: "I have become very angry with you" (See: [Metaphor](#))

ULT

⁷ It came about that after he had said these words to Job, Yahweh said to Eliphaz the Temanite, "My wrath is kindled against you and against your two friends, for you have not spoken of me what is right, as my servant Job has done."

Job 42:8

seven bulls

“7 bulls” (See: [Numbers](#))

so that I may not deal with you after your folly

The abstract noun “folly” can be translated as an adjective. Alternate translation: “even though you have been very foolish, I will not punish you as you deserve” (See: [Abstract Nouns](#))

ULT

⁸ Now therefore, take for yourselves seven bulls and seven rams, go to my servant Job, and offer up for yourselves a burnt offering. My servant Job will pray for you, and I will accept his prayer, so that I may not deal with you after your folly. You have not said what is right about me, as my servant Job has done.”

Job 42:9

Bildad the Shuhite

See how you translated this man's name in [Job 2:11](#)

Zophar the Naamathite

See how you translated this man's name in [Job 2:11](#)

Yahweh accepted Job

The person is a metonym for the prayer he prays. Alternate translation: "God accepted Job's prayer for his three friends" (See: [Metonymy](#))

ULT

⁹ So Eliphaz the Temanite, Bildad the Shuhite, and Zophar the Naamathite went and did as Yahweh had commanded them, and Yahweh accepted Job.

Job 42:10

Yahweh restored his fortunes

“Yahweh restored his riches” or “Yahweh restored his wealth”

ULT

10 When Job prayed for his friends, Yahweh restored his fortunes. Yahweh gave him twice as much as he had possessed before.

Job 42:11

all who knew him before

“all the people he had known before”

ULT

11 Then all Job’s brothers, and all his sisters, and all who knew him before, came to him and ate food with him in his house. They showed him sympathy and comforted him for all the disasters that Yahweh had brought upon him, and each of them gave Job a piece of silver and a ring of gold.

Job 42:12

more than the first

The words “he blessed” and “of Job’s life” are understood from the previous phrase. They can be repeated here Alternate translation: “more than he blessed the first part of Job’s life” (See: [Ellipsis](#))

fourteen thousand sheep

14,000 sheep (See: [Numbers](#))

six thousand camels

6,000 camels (See: [Numbers](#))

one thousand yoke of oxen

1,000 yoke of oxen (See: [Numbers](#))

ULT

12 Yahweh blessed the final end of Job’s life more than the first; he had fourteen thousand sheep, six thousand camels, one thousand yoke of oxen, and one thousand female donkeys.

Job 42:13

seven sons and three daughters

7 sons and 3 daughters (See: [Numbers](#))

ULT

¹³ He also had seven sons and three daughters.

Job 42:14

Jemimah ... Keziah ... Keren-Happuch

women's names (See: [How to Translate Names](#))

ULT

¹⁴ He named the first daughter Jemimah, the second Keziah, and the third Keren-Happuch.

Job 42:15

no women were found as beautiful as Job's daughters

"Job's daughters were more beautiful than all the other women"

ULT

¹⁵ In all the land no women were found as beautiful as Job's daughters. Their father gave them an inheritance along with their brothers.

Job 42:16

lived 140 years

“lived 140 years” (See: [Numbers](#))

ULT

¹⁶ After this, Job lived 140 years; he saw his sons and his sons' sons, up to four generations.

Job 42:17

being old and full of days

The words “full of days” means basically the same thing as “being old.” The two phrases form a common idiom. Alternate translation: “a very old man” (See: [Doublet](#) and [Idiom](#))

ULT

17 Then Job died, being old and full of days.



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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: Job 5:21; 7:11; 9:4; 9:18; 9:27; 9:28; 9:34; 10:1; 10:12; 10:15; 10:17; 11:10; 11:12; 11:18; 11:19; 12:5; 12:12; 12:13; 12:14; 12:16; 12:17; 12:19; 13:5; 13:16; 13:17; 13:26; 14:7; 14:14; 14:15; 14:19; 16:4; 17:2; 19:5; 19:7; 19:29; 20:2; 20:3; 20:5; 20:6; 20:22; 25:2; 25:5; 27:3; 27:4; 27:6; 27:11; 28:28; 29:4; 29:20; 29:22; 30:3; 30:9; 31:24; 31:26; 31:29; 34:28; 35:9; 35:16; 36:3; 36:10; 36:29; 37:13; 38:2; 38:4; 38:7; 38:9; 38:11; 38:34; 39:27; 40:10; 40:11; 41:22; 42:8)

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: [Job 4:7](#); [4:9](#); [4:10](#); [4:11](#); [4:19](#); [4:20](#); [5:4](#); [6:2](#); [6:6](#); [6:13](#); [6:14](#); [6:20](#); [7:3](#); [7:9](#); [8:18](#); [9:24](#); [9:29](#); [12:14](#); [13:19](#); [14:5](#); [14:18](#); [15:7](#); [15:19](#); [15:20](#); [18:3](#); [18:4](#); [18:5](#); [18:10](#); [18:13](#); [18:14](#); [18:15](#); [18:16](#); [18:18](#); [19:13](#); [19:23](#); [19:24](#); [20:8](#); [21:17](#); [21:18](#); [21:21](#); [21:30](#); [21:32](#); [22:9](#); [22:16](#); [22:20](#); [22:23](#); [22:28](#); [22:30](#); [23:7](#); [23:17](#); [24:1](#); [24:18](#); [24:20](#); [24:24](#); [26:8](#); [28:2](#); [28:13](#); [28:21](#); [29:10](#); [30:5](#); [31:6](#); [31:8](#); [31:9](#); [31:11](#); [31:20](#); [31:22](#); [31:27](#); [31:28](#); [32:2](#); [32:3](#); [32:5](#); [32:20](#); [33:6](#); [33:19](#); [33:21](#); [33:27](#); [33:30](#); [34:6](#); [34:20](#); [34:25](#); [34:36](#); [36:7](#); [36:8](#); [36:16](#); [36:21](#); [37:1](#); [37:4](#); [37:10](#); [37:20](#); [38:6](#); [38:15](#); [38:17](#); [38:24](#); [38:38](#); [41:9](#); [41:17](#); [41:23](#); [41:29](#); [42:2](#))

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: [Job 16:18](#))

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: [Job 1 General Notes](#); [1:3](#); [3:17](#); [4:6](#); [Notes](#); [5:26](#); [6:16](#); [6:17](#); [6:21](#); [7:2](#); [7:3](#); [7:4](#); [7:8](#); [8:4](#); [8:12](#); [8:21](#); [9:27](#); [9:29](#); [9:32](#); [11:3](#); [11:6](#); [11:8](#); [14:1](#); [14:7](#); [14:14](#); [15:12](#); [15:13](#); [15:19](#); [15:22](#); [16:8](#); [16:22](#); [17:5](#); [17:6](#); [17:10](#); [17:12](#); [18:4](#); [18:14](#); [19:4](#); [19:5](#); [19:7](#); [19:17](#); [19:27](#); [20:2](#); [20:3](#); [20:18](#); [20:26](#); [Notes](#); [21:19](#); [21:23](#); [21:26](#); [22:12](#); [22:14](#); [23:17](#); [24:9](#); [24:11](#); [24:16](#); [24:24](#); [26:5](#); [26:13](#); [27:7](#); [27:15](#); [28:4](#); [28:15](#); [28:16](#); [28:18](#); [29:24](#); [29:25](#); [30:1](#); [30:11](#); [31:1](#); [31:4](#); [31:9](#); [31:35](#); [32:2](#); [33:19](#); [33:24](#); [34:14](#); [34:15](#); [34:17](#); [34:21](#); [34:24](#); [34:26](#); [34:37](#); [36:27](#); [37:9](#); [37:13](#); [37:17](#); [38:11](#); [38:27](#); [38:40](#); [38:41](#); [39:16](#); [39:18](#); [39:21](#); [39:24](#); [39:25](#); [39:30](#); [42:3](#))

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:

[Connecting Words and Phrases](#)

[[rc://en/ta/man/translate/writing-newevent]]

(Go back to: [Job 32:4](#))

Connecting Words and Phrases

Description

This page answers the question: *How do connecting words work to join parts of the text in different ways?*

As humans, we write our thoughts in phrases and sentences. We usually want to communicate a series of thoughts that are connected to each other in different ways. **Connecting words and phrases** show how these thoughts are related to each other. For example, we can show how the following thoughts are related by using the Connecting Words in bold type:

- It was raining, **so** I opened my umbrella.
- It was raining, **but** I did not have an umbrella. **So** I got very wet.

Connecting words or phrases can connect phrases or clauses within a sentence. They can connect sentences to each other. They can also connect entire chunks to one another in order to show how the chunk before relates to the chunk after the connecting word. Very often, the connecting words that connect entire chunks to one another are either conjunctions or adverbs.

It was raining, but I did not have an umbrella, so I got very wet.

Now I must change my clothes. Then I will drink a cup of hot tea and warm myself by the fire.

In the above example, the word **now** connects the two short chunks of text, showing the relationship between them. The speaker must change his clothes, drink hot tea, and warm himself because of something that happened earlier (that is, he got wet in the rain).

Sometimes people might not use a connecting word because they expect the context to help the readers understand the relationship between the thoughts. Some languages do not use connecting words as much as other languages do. They might say:

- It was raining. I did not have an umbrella. I got very wet.

You (the translator) will need to use the method that is most natural and clear in the target language. But in general, using connecting words whenever possible helps the reader to understand the ideas in the Bible most clearly.

Reasons This Is a Translation Issue

- You need to understand the relationship between paragraphs, between sentences, and between parts of sentences in the Bible, and how connecting words and phrases can help you to understand the relationship between the thoughts that they are connecting.
- Each language has its own ways of showing how thoughts are related.
- You need to know how to help readers understand the relationship between the thoughts in a way that is natural in your language.

Translation Principles

- You need to translate in a way that readers can understand the same relationship between thoughts that the original readers would have understood.
- Whether or not a connecting word is used is not as important as readers being able to understand the relationship between the ideas.

The Different Types of Connections

Listed below are different types of connections between ideas or events. These different types of connections can be indicated by using different connecting words. When we write or translate something, it is important to use the right connecting word so that these connections are clear for the reader. If you would like additional information, simply click the colored, hyperlinked word to be directed to a page containing definitions and examples for each type of connection.

- Sequential Clause — a time relationship between two events in which one happens and then the other happens.
- Simultaneous Clause — a time relationship between two or more events that occur at the same time.
- Background Clause — a time relationship in which the first clause describes a long event that is happening at the time when the beginning of the second event happens, which is described in the second clause.
- Exceptional Relationship — one clause describes a group of people or items, and the other clause excludes one or more items or people from the group.
- Hypothetical Condition — the second event will only take place if the first one takes place. Sometimes what takes place is dependent on the actions of other people.
- Factual Condition — a connection that sounds hypothetical but is already certain or true, so that the condition is guaranteed to happen.
- Contrary-to-Fact Condition — a connection that sounds hypothetical but is already certain that it is not true. See also: [Hypothetical Statements](#).
- Goal Relationship — a logical relationship in which the second event is the purpose or goal of the first.
- Reason and Result Relationship — a logical relationship in which one event is the reason for the other event, the result.
- Contrast Relationship — one item is being described as different or in opposition to another.

Examples from the Bible

I did not immediately consult with flesh and blood. I did not go up to Jerusalem to those who were apostles before me. **Instead**, I went to Arabia and then returned to Damascus. **Then** after three years, I went up to Jerusalem to visit Cephas, and I stayed with him 15 days. (Galatians 1:16b-18 ULT)

The word “instead” introduces something that contrasts with what was said before. The contrast here is between what Paul did not do and what he did do. The word “then” introduces a sequence of events. It introduces something that Paul did after he returned to Damascus.

Therefore, whoever breaks the least one of these commandments **and** teaches others to do so will be called least in the kingdom of heaven. **But** whoever keeps them and teaches them, that one will be called great in the kingdom of heaven. (Matthew 5:19 ULT)

The word “therefore” links this section with the section before it, signaling that the section that came before gave the reason for this section. “Therefore” usually links sections larger than one sentence. The word “and” links only two actions within the same sentence, that of breaking commandments and teaching others. In this verse the word “but” contrasts what one group of people will be called in God’s kingdom with what another group of people will be called.

We place nothing as a stumbling block in front of anyone, **so that** our ministry might not be discredited. **Instead**, we commend ourselves in everything as God’s servants. (2 Corinthians 6:3-4 ULT)

Here the words “so that” connect what follows as the reason for what came before; the reason that Paul does not place stumbling blocks is that he does not want his ministry brought into disrepute. “Instead” contrasts what Paul does (prove by his actions that he is God’s servant) with what he said he does not do (place stumbling blocks).

General Translation Strategies

See each type of Connecting Word above for specific strategies

If the way the relationship between thoughts is shown in the ULT would be natural and give the right meaning in your language, then consider using it. If not, here are some other options.

- (1) Use a connecting word (even if the ULT does not use one).
- (2) Do not use a connecting word if it would be strange to use one and people would understand the right relationship between the thoughts without it.
- (3) Use a different connecting word.

Examples of Translation Strategies Applied

- (1) Use a connecting word (even if the ULT does not use one).

Jesus said to them, "Come follow me, and I will make you to become fishers of men." Then immediately they left the nets and followed him. (Mark 1:17-18 ULT)

They followed Jesus because he told them to. Some translators may want to mark this clause with the connecting word "so."

Jesus said to them, "Come follow me, and I will make you to become fishers of men." **So**, immediately they left the nets and followed him.

- (2) Do not use a connecting word if it would be odd to use one, and if people would understand the right relationship between the thoughts without it.

Therefore, whoever breaks the least one of these commandments **and** teaches others to do so will be called least in the kingdom of heaven. **But** whoever keeps them and teaches them, that one will be called great in the kingdom of heaven. (Matthew 5:19 ULT)

Some languages would prefer not to use connecting words here because the meaning is clear without them and using them would be unnatural. They might translate like this:

Therefore, whoever breaks the least one of these commandments, teaching others to do so as well, will be called least in the kingdom of heaven. Whoever keeps them and teaches them, that one will be called great in the kingdom of heaven.

I did not immediately consult with flesh and blood. I did not go up to Jerusalem to those who were apostles before me. **Instead**, I went to Arabia and then returned to Damascus. **Then** after three years, I went up to Jerusalem to visit Cephas, and I stayed with him 15 days. (Galatians 1:16b-18 ULT) (Galatians 1:16-18 ULT)

Some languages might not need the words "instead" or "then" here. They might translate like this:

I did not immediately consult with flesh and blood, nor did I go up to Jerusalem to those who had become apostles before me. I went to Arabia and then returned to Damascus. After three years I went up to Jerusalem to visit Cephas, and I stayed with him 15 days.

- (3) Use a different connecting word.

Therefore, whoever breaks the least one of these commandments **and** teaches others to do so will be called least in the kingdom of heaven. **But** whoever keeps them and teaches them, that one will be called great in the kingdom of heaven. (Matthew 5:19 ULT)

Instead of a word like “therefore,” a language might need a phrase to indicate that there was a section before it that gave the reason for the section that follows. Also, the word “but” is used here because of the contrast between the two groups of people. But in some languages, the word “but” would show that what comes after it is surprising because of what came before it. So “and” might be clearer for those languages. They might translate like this:

Because of that, whoever breaks the least one of these commandments and teaches others to do so will be called least in the kingdom of heaven.
And whoever keeps them and teaches them, that one will be called great in the kingdom of heaven.

(Go back to: [Job 9:28](#); [12:4](#))

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: [Job 6:29](#); [20:21](#))

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: [Job 1:1](#); [1:8](#); [2:3](#); [2:11](#); [3:22](#); [8:5](#); [10:8](#); [10:21](#); [14:18](#); [15:16](#); [15:24](#); [17:12](#); [24:10](#); [24:14](#); [28:3](#); [33:31](#); [34:22](#); [36:5](#); [42:17](#))

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: [Job 1:16](#); [3:3](#); [8:21](#); [12:8](#); [15:31](#); [18:10](#); [19:10](#); [27:18](#); [31:18](#); [31:40](#); [33:25](#); [34:18](#); [36:9](#); [37:6](#); [37:16](#); [41:1](#); [41:19](#); [41:27](#); [42:2](#); [42:12](#))

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: [Job 2:8](#); [3:13](#); [3:15](#); [3:22](#); [6:9](#); [14:20](#); [15:30](#); [21:13](#); [21:21](#); [21:26](#); [31:10](#); [32:22](#); [34:20](#); [40:13](#))

Exclamations

Description

Exclamations are words or sentences that show strong feeling such as surprise, joy, fear, or anger. In the ULT and UST, they usually have an exclamation mark (!) at the end. The mark shows that it is an exclamation. The situation and the meaning of what the people said helps us understand what feelings they were expressing. In the example below from Matthew 8, the speakers were terribly afraid. In the example from Matthew 9, the speakers were amazed, because something happened that they had never seen before.

Save us, Lord; we are about to die! (Matthew 8:25b ULT)

When the demon had been driven out, the mute man spoke. The crowds were astonished and said, "This has never been seen before in Israel!" (Matthew 9:33 ULT)

This page answers the question: *What are ways of translating exclamations?*

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

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

Reason This Is a Translation Issue

Languages have different ways of showing that a sentence communicates strong emotion.

Examples From the Bible

Some exclamations have a word that shows feeling. The sentences below have "Oh" and "Ah." The word "oh" here shows the speaker's amazement.

Oh, the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and the knowledge of God! (Romans 11:33 ULT)

The word "Alas" below shows that Gideon was very frightened.

When Gideon saw that he was the angel of Yahweh, Gideon lamented, "**Alas**, O my Lord Yahweh, for because of this I have seen the angel of Yahweh face to face!" (Judges 6:22 ULT)

Some exclamations start with a question word such as "how" or "why," even though they are not questions. The sentence below shows that the speaker is amazed at how unsearchable God's judgments are.

How unsearchable are his judgments, and his ways beyond discovering! (Romans 11:33b ULT)

Some exclamations in the Bible do not have a main verb. The exclamation below shows that the speaker is disgusted with the person he is speaking to.

You worthless person! (Matthew 5:22b ULT)

Translation Strategies

- (1) If an exclamation in your language needs a verb, add one. Often a good verb is "is" or "are."
- (2) Use an exclamation word from your language that shows the strong feeling.
- (3) Translate the exclamation word with a sentence that shows the feeling.
- (4) Use a word that emphasizes the part of the sentence that brings about the strong feeling.

(5) If the strong feeling is not clear in the target language, then tell how the person felt.

Examples of Translation Strategies Applied

(1) If an exclamation in your language needs a verb, add one. Often a good verb is “is” or “are.”

You worthless person! (Matthew 5:22b ULT)

“You **are** such a worthless person!”

Oh, the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and the knowledge of God! (Romans 11:33b ULT)

“Oh, the riches of the wisdom and the knowledge of God **are** so deep!”

(2) Use an exclamation word from your language that shows the strong feeling. In the first suggested translation below, the word “wow” shows that they were astonished. In the second suggested translation, the expression “Oh no” shows that something terrible or frightening has happened.

They were extremely astonished, saying, “He has done everything well. He even makes the deaf hear and the mute speak.” (Mark 7:37 ULT)

“They were extremely astonished, saying, ‘**Wow!** He has done everything well. He even makes the deaf to hear and the mute to speak.’”

Alas, oh my Lord Yahweh! For because of this I have seen the angel of Yahweh face to face! (Judges 6:22b ULT)

“**Oh no**, Lord Yahweh! I have seen the angel of Yahweh face to face!”

(3) Translate the exclamation word with a sentence that shows the feeling.

“**Alas**, O my Lord Yahweh, for because of this I have seen the angel of Yahweh face to face!” (Judges 6:22 ULT)

“Lord Yahweh, **what will happen to me?** For I have seen the angel of Yahweh face to face!”

“**Help**, Lord Yahweh! For I have seen the angel of Yahweh face to face!”

(4) Use a word that emphasizes the part of the sentence that brings about the strong feeling.

How unsearchable are his judgments, and his ways beyond discovering! (Romans 11:33b ULT)

“His judgments are **so** unsearchable and his ways are **far** beyond discovering!”

(5) If the strong feeling is not clear in the target language, then tell how the person felt.

When Gideon saw that he was the angel of Yahweh, Gideon lamented, “**Alas**, O my Lord Yahweh, for because of this I have seen the angel of Yahweh face to face!” (Judges 6:22 ULT)

Gideon understood that this was the angel of Yahweh. **He was terrified** and said, “**Alas**, Lord Yahweh! I have seen the angel of Yahweh face to face!”

(Go back to: [Job 14:13](#); [19:23](#); [19:24](#); [19:28](#); [26:14](#); [29:2](#); [31:35](#); [35:14](#))

Exclusive and Inclusive 'We'

Description

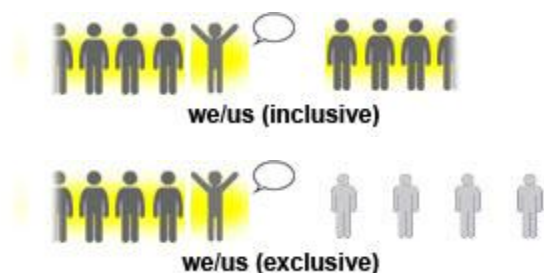
Some languages have more than one form of "we": an inclusive form that means "I and you" and an exclusive form that means "I and someone else but not you." The exclusive form excludes the person being spoken to. The inclusive form includes the person being spoken to and possibly others. This is also 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: [Job 5:27](#); [18:3](#); [34:4](#); [37:19](#))

First, Second or Third Person

Normally a speaker refers to himself as “I” and the person he is speaking to as “you.” Sometimes in the Bible a speaker refers to himself or to the person he is speaking to with terms other than “I” or “you.”

Description

- First person — This is how a speaker normally refers to himself. English uses the pronouns “I” and “we.” (Also: me, my, mine; us, our, ours)
- Second person — This is how a speaker normally refers to the person or people he is speaking to. English uses the pronoun “you.” (Also: your, yours)
- Third person — This is how a speaker refers to someone else. English uses the pronouns “he,” “she,” “it,” and “they.” (Also: him, his, her, hers, its; them, their, theirs) Noun phrases like “the man” or “the woman” are also third person.

This page answers the question: *What are first, second, and third person, and how do I translate when a third person form does not refer to the third person?*

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

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

[Pronouns](#)

Reason This Is a Translation Issue

Sometimes in the Bible a speaker uses the third person to refer to himself or to the people he is speaking to. Readers might think that the speaker was referring to someone else. They might not understand that he meant “I” or “you.”

Examples From the Bible

Sometimes people used the third person instead of “I” or “me” to refer to themselves.

But David said to Saul, “**Your servant** used to keep **his** father’s sheep.” (1 Samuel 17:34 ULT)

David referred to himself in the third person as “your servant” and used “his.” He was calling himself Saul’s servant in order to show his humility before Saul.

Then Yahweh answered Job out of a fierce storm and said,
“... Do you have an arm like **God’s**? Can you thunder with a voice like **his**?” (Job 40:6, 9 ULT)

God referred to himself in the third person with the words “God’s” and “his.” He did this to emphasize that he is God, and he is powerful.

Sometimes people use the third person instead of “you” or “your” to refer to the person or people they are speaking to.

Abraham answered and said, “Look, I have undertaken to speak to my Lord, even though I am only dust and ashes!” (Genesis 18:27 ULT)

Abraham was speaking to the Lord, and referred to the Lord as “My Lord” rather than as “you.” He did this to show his humility before God.

So also my heavenly Father will do to you, if **each of you** does not forgive **his** brother from your heart. (Matthew 18:35 ULT)

After saying “each of you,” Jesus used the third person “his” instead of “your.”

Translation Strategies

If using the third person to mean “I” or “you” would be natural and give the right meaning in your language, consider using it. If not, here are some other options.

- (1) Use the third person phrase along with the pronoun “I” or “you.”
- (2) Simply use the first person (“I”) or second person (“you”) instead of the third person.

Examples of Translation Strategies Applied

- (1) Use the third person phrase along with the pronoun “I” or “you.”

But David said to Saul, “**Your servant** used to keep **his** father’s sheep.” (1 Samuel 17:34)

But David said to Saul, “**I, your servant**, used to keep **my** father’s sheep.”

- (2) Simply use the first person (“I”) or second person (“you”) instead of the third person.

Then Yahweh answered Job out of a fierce storm and said, “... Do you have an arm like **God’s**? Can you thunder with a voice like **his**?” (Job 40:6, 9 ULT)

Then Yahweh answered Job out of a fierce storm and said, “... Do you have an arm like **mine**? Can you thunder with a voice like **mine**?”

So also my heavenly Father will do to you if **each of you** does not forgive **his** brother from your heart. (Matthew 18:35 ULT)

So also my heavenly Father will do to you if **each of you** does not forgive **your** brother from your heart.

Next we recommend you learn about:

[Forms of You](#)

(Go back to: [Job 14:15](#); [16:21](#); [18:3](#))

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: [Job 6:24](#); [6:26](#); [6:27](#); [6:28](#); [12:2](#); [12:7](#); [27:5](#); [27:11](#); [32:6](#); [32:11](#); [34:16](#); [35:2](#))

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: [Job 1:15](#); [1:17](#); [2:10](#); [5:2](#); [5:3](#); [8:14](#); [8:15](#); [8:16](#); [8:17](#); [8:18](#); [29:12](#); [29:13](#); [31:18](#))

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: [Job 5:9](#); [14:16](#); [24:19](#); [38:27](#))

How to Translate Names

Description

The Bible contains the names of many people, groups of people, and places. Some of these names may sound strange and be hard to say. Sometimes readers may not know what a name refers to, and sometimes they may need to understand what a name means. This page will help you see how you can translate these names and how you can help people understand what they need to know about them.

This page answers the question: *How can I translate names that are new to my culture?*

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

[Translate Unknowns](#)

Meaning of names

Most names in the Bible have meaning. Most of the time, names in the Bible are used simply to identify the people and places they refer to, but sometimes the meaning of a name is especially important.

For this **Melchizedek**, king of Salem, priest of God Most High, was the one who met Abraham returning from the slaughter of the kings and blessed him. (Hebrews 7:1 ULT)

Here the writer uses the name “Melchizedek” primarily to refer to a man who had that name, and the title “king of Salem” tells us that he ruled over a certain city.

His name first indeed means “king of righteousness,” and then also “king of Salem,” that is, “king of peace.” (Hebrews 7:2b ULT)

Here the writer explains the meanings of Melchizedek’s name and title because those things tell us more about the person. Other times, the writer does not explain the meaning of a name because he expects the reader to already know the meaning. If the meaning of the name is important to understand the passage, you can include the meaning in the text or in a footnote.

Reasons This Is a Translation Issue

- Readers may not know some of the names in the Bible. They may not know whether a name refers to a person or place or something else.
- Readers may need to understand the meaning of a name in order to understand the passage.
- Some names may have different sounds or combinations of sounds that are not used in your language or are unpleasant to say in your language. For strategies to address this problem, see Borrow Words.
- Some people and places in the Bible have two names. Readers may not realize that two names refer to the same person or place.

Examples From the Bible

Then you crossed over the **Jordan** and came to **Jericho**, and the men of Jericho, and the **Amorites** ... fought against you, but I gave them into your hand. (Joshua 24:11 ULT)

Readers might not know that “Jordan” is the name of a river, “Jericho” is the name of a city, and “Amorites” is the name of a group of people.

She said, “Do I really continue to see, even after he has seen me?” Therefore, the well was called **Beer Lahai Roi**. (Genesis 16:13b-14a ULT)

Readers may not understand the second sentence if they do not know that “Beer Lahai Roi” means “Well of the Living One who sees me.”

And she called his name **Moses** and she said, “For out of the water I drew him.” (Exodus 2:10b ULT)

Readers may not understand why she said this if they do not know that the name Moses sounds like the Hebrew words “pull out.”

Saul was in agreement with his execution. (Acts 8:1a ULT)

But when the apostles, Barnabas and **Paul**, heard of it, they tore their clothing. (Acts 14:14a ULT)

Readers may not know that the names Saul and Paul refer to the same person.

Translation Strategies

- (1) If readers cannot easily understand from the context what kind of a thing a name refers to, you can add a word to clarify it.
- (2) If readers need to understand the meaning of a name in order to understand what is said about it, copy the name and tell about its meaning either in the text or in a footnote.
- (3) Or if readers need to understand the meaning of a name in order to understand what is said about it, and that name is used only once, translate the meaning of the name instead of copying the name.
- (4) If a person or place has two different names, use one name most of the time and the other name only when the text tells about the person or place having more than one name or when it says something about why the person or place was given that name. Write a footnote when the source text uses the name that is used less frequently.
- (5) Or if a person or place has two different names, then use whatever name is given in the source text, and add a footnote that gives the other name.

Examples of Translation Strategies Applied

- (1) If readers cannot easily understand from the context what kind of a thing a name refers to, you can add a word to clarify it.

Then you crossed over the **Jordan** and came to **Jericho**, and the men of Jericho, and the **Amorites** ... fought against you, but I gave them into your hand. (Joshua 24:11 ULT)

You went over the **Jordan River** and came to the **city of Jericho**. The men of Jericho fought against you, along with **the tribe of the Amorites**.

At that hour, certain Pharisees approached, saying to him, “Leave and go away from here, because **Herod** wants to kill you.” (Luke 13:31 ULT)

At that hour, certain Pharisees approached, saying to him, “Go and leave here, because **King Herod** wants to kill you.”

- (2) If readers need to understand the meaning of a name in order to understand what is said about it, copy the name and tell about its meaning either in the text or in a footnote.

And she called his name **Moses** and she said, "For out of the water I drew him." (Exodus 2:10b ULT)

She called his name **Moses (which sounds like 'drawn out')**, and she said, "For out of the water I drew him."

(3) Or if readers need to understand the meaning of a name in order to understand what is said about it, and that name is used only once, translate the meaning of the name instead of copying the name.

She said, "Do I really continue to see, even after he has seen me?" Therefore, the well was called **Beer Lahai Roi**. (Genesis 16:13b-14a ULT)

She said, "Do I really continue to see, even after he has seen me?"
Therefore, the well was called **Well of the Living One who sees me**.

(4) If a person or place has two different names, use one name most of the time and the other name only when the text tells about the person or place having more than one name or when it says something about why the person or place was given that name. Write a footnote when the source text uses the name that is used less frequently. For example, Paul is called "Saul" before Acts 13 and "Paul" after Acts 13. You could translate his name as "Paul" all of the time, except in Acts 13:9 where it talks about him having both names.

... a young man named **Saul**. (Acts 7:58b ULT)

... a young man named **Paul** ¹

The footnote would look like:

^[1] Most versions say "Saul" here, but most of the time in the Bible he is called "Paul."

Then later in the story, you could translate this way:

But **Saul**, who is also called **Paul**, was filled with the Holy Spirit; (Acts 13:9)

But **Saul**, who is also called **Paul**, was filled with the Holy Spirit;

(5) Or if a person or place has two names, use whatever name is given in the source text, and add a footnote that gives the other name. For example, you could write "Saul" where the source text has "Saul" and "Paul" where the source text has "Paul."

a young man named **Saul** (Acts 7:58 ULT)

a young man named **Saul**

The footnote would look like:

^[1] This is the same man who is called Paul beginning in Acts 13.

Then later in the story, you could translate this way:

But **Saul**, who is also called **Paul**, was filled with the Holy Spirit; (Acts 13:9)

But **Saul**, who is also called **Paul**, was filled with the Holy Spirit;

Then after the story has explained the name change, you could translate this way.

It came about in Iconium that **Paul** and Barnabas entered together into the synagogue (Acts 14:1 ULT)

It came about in Iconium that **Paul**¹ and Barnabas entered together into the synagogue

The footnote would look like:

^[1] This is the same man who was called Saul before Acts 13.

Next we recommend you learn about:

[[rc://en/ta/man/translate/translate-transliterate]]

(Go back to: [Job 1:1](#); [1:15](#); [2:11](#); [4:1](#); [6:19](#); [8:1](#); [9:13](#); [11:1](#); [15:1](#); [22:1](#); [22:24](#); [26:12](#); [28:16](#); [32:2](#); [34:1](#); [42:14](#))

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: [Job 7:1](#); [14:1](#); [16:20](#); [17:7](#); [18:4](#); [18:20](#); [20:5](#); [22:8](#); [24:4](#); [28:9](#); [29:6](#); [29:18](#); [31:18](#); [33:25](#))

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: [Job 3:13](#); [3:15](#); [3:16](#); [8:5](#); [8:6](#); [10:16](#); [11:17](#); [11:18](#); [11:19](#); [12:7](#); [12:8](#); [17:13](#); [17:14](#); [21:33](#); [31:5](#); [31:7](#); [31:9](#); [31:11](#); [31:13](#); [31:16](#); [31:19](#); [31:24](#); [31:26](#); [31:29](#); [31:31](#); [31:33](#); [31:38](#); [34:14](#))

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: Job 2:12; 3:1; 3:11; 3:13; 5:23; 6:9; 6:13; 6:24; 9:3; 9:18; 9:20; 9:24; 9:33; 10:3; 10:15; 10:16; 11:15; 11:18; 13:5; 13:13; 14:13; 15:12; 15:17; 15:20; 15:22; 15:23; 16:9; 16:11; 16:19; 17:8; 17:9; 17:11; 17:16; 18:12; 18:17; 19:3; 19:20; 21:24; 21:31; 22:18; 22:22; 22:24; 22:26; 22:29; 23:2; 23:16; 24:20; 24:22; 25:4; 31:16; 33:14; 33:18; 33:26; 33:29; 33:30; 33:32; 34:10; 34:11; 34:20; 34:21; 34:24; 34:25; 34:26; 34:27; 34:36; 36:16; 36:26; 38:3; 39:27; 42:17)

Imperatives — Other Uses

Description

Imperative sentences are mainly used to express a desire or requirement that someone do something. In the Bible, sometimes imperative sentences have other uses.

This page answers the question: *What other uses are there for imperative sentences in the Bible?*

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

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

Reason This Is a Translation Issue

Some languages would not use an imperative sentence for some of the functions that they are used for in the Bible.

Examples From the Bible

Speakers often use imperative sentences to tell or ask their listeners to do something. In Genesis 26, God spoke to Isaac and told him not to go to Egypt but to live where God would tell him to live.

Now Yahweh appeared to him and said, “**Do not go down** to Egypt; **live** in the land that I tell you to live in.” (Genesis 26:2 ULT)

Sometimes imperative sentences in the Bible have other uses.

Imperatives that make things happen

God can make things happen by commanding that they happen. Jesus healed a man by commanding that the man be healed. The man could not do anything to obey the command, but Jesus caused him to be healed by commanding it. (In this context, the command “Be clean” means to “be healed” so that others around would know that it was safe to touch the man again.)

“I am willing. **Be clean.**” Immediately he was cleansed of his leprosy. (Matthew 8:3b ULT)

In Genesis 1, God commanded that there should be light, and by commanding it, he caused it to exist. Some languages, such as the Hebrew of the Bible, have commands that are in the third person. English does not do that, and so it must turn the third-person command into a general, second-person command, as in the ULT:

God said, “**Let there be** light,” and there was light. (Genesis 1:3 ULT)

Languages that have third-person commands can follow the original Hebrew, which translates into English as something like “light must be.”

Imperatives that function as blessings

In the Bible, God blesses people by using imperatives. This indicates what his will is for them.

God blessed them and said to them, “**Be fruitful**, and **multiply**. **Fill** the earth, and **subdue** it. **Have dominion** over the fish of the sea, over the birds of the sky, and over every living thing that moves upon the earth.” (Genesis 1:28 ULT)

Imperatives that function as conditions

An imperative sentence can also be used to tell the **condition** under which something will happen. The proverbs mainly tell about life and things that often happen. The purpose of Proverbs 4:6 below is not primarily to give a command, but to teach what people can expect to happen **if** they love wisdom.

Do not abandon wisdom and she will watch over you;
love her and she will keep you safe. (Proverbs 4:6 ULT)

The purpose of Proverbs 22:6, below, is to teach what people can expect to happen if they teach their children the way they should go.

Teach a child the way he should go,
and when he is old he will not turn away from that instruction. (Proverbs 22:6 ULT)

Translation Strategies

- (1) If people would not use an imperative sentence for one of the functions in the Bible, try using a statement instead.
- (2) If people would not understand that a sentence is used to cause something to happen, add a connecting word like “so” to show that what happened was a result of what was said.
- (3) If people would not use a command as a condition, translate it as a statement with the words “if” and “then.”

Examples of Translation Strategies Applied

- (1) If people would not use an imperative sentence for one of the functions in the Bible, try using a statement instead.

Be clean. (Matthew 8:3b ULT)

“You are now clean.”
“I now cleanse you.”

God said, “**Let there be light,**” and there was light. (Genesis 1:3 ULT)

God said, “**There is now light**” and there was light.

God blessed them and said to them, “**Be fruitful, and multiply. Fill the earth, and subdue it. Have dominion** over the fish of the sea, over the birds of the sky, and over every living thing that moves upon the earth.” (Genesis 1:28 ULT)

God blessed them and said to them, “**My will for you is that you be fruitful, and multiply. Fill the earth, and subdue it. I want you to have dominion** over the fish of the sea, over the birds of the sky, and over every living thing that moves upon the earth.”

- (2) If people would not understand that a sentence is used to cause something to happen, add a connecting word like “so” to show that what happened was a result of what was said.

God said, “**Let there be light,**” and there was light. (Genesis 1:3 ULT)

God said, ‘Let there be light,’ **so** there was light.
God said, “Light must be;” **as a result,** there was light.

(3) If people would not use a command as a condition, translate it as a statement with the words “if” and “then.”

Teach a child the way he should go, and when he is old he will not turn away from that instruction. (Proverbs 22:6 ULT)

Translated as:

“If you teach a child the way he should go,
then when he is old he will not turn away from that instruction.”

(Go back to: [Job 12:7](#); [12:8](#))

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: [Job 6:15](#); [8:19](#); [10:16](#); [11:12](#); [12:2](#); [12:7](#); [12:8](#); [13:7](#); [13:8](#); [15:27](#); [16:5](#); [18:3](#); [21:3](#); [Notes](#); [26:2](#); [26:3](#); [34:2](#); [34:10](#); [Notes](#); [38:15](#); [38:21](#))

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: [Job 8:15](#); [10:22](#); [15:18](#); [15:29](#); [30:10](#); [41:12](#))

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: [Job 1:7](#); [3:19](#); [9:22](#); [18:20](#); [23:8](#); [23:9](#))

Metaphor

Description

A metaphor is a figure of speech in which someone speaks of one thing as if it were a different thing because he wants people to think about how those two things are alike.

For example, someone might say, “The girl I love is a red rose.”

A girl and a rose are very different things, but the speaker considers that they are alike in some way. The hearer’s task is to understand in what way they are alike.

This page answers the question: *What is a metaphor and how can I translate a Bible passage that has one?*

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

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

[Simile](#)

The Parts of a Metaphor

The example above shows us that a metaphor has three parts. In this metaphor, the speaker is talking about “the girl I love.” This is the **Topic**. The speaker wants the hearer to think about what is similar between her and “a red rose.” The red rose is the **Image** to which he compares the girl. Most probably, he wants the hearer to consider that they are both beautiful. This is the **Idea** that the girl and the rose both share, and so we may also call it the **Point of Comparison**.

Every metaphor has three parts:

- The **Topic**, the item being immediately discussed by the writer/speaker.
- The **Image**, the physical item (object, event, action, etc.) which the speaker uses to describe the topic.
- The **Idea**, the abstract concept or quality that the physical **Image** brings to the mind of the hearer when he thinks of how the **Image** and the **Topic** are similar. Often, the **Idea** of a metaphor is not explicitly stated in the Bible, but it is only implied from the context. The hearer or reader usually needs to think of the **Idea** himself.

Using these terms, we can say that a metaphor is a figure of speech that uses a physical **Image** to apply an abstract **Idea** to the speaker’s **Topic**.

Usually, a writer or speaker uses a metaphor in order to express something about a **Topic**, with at least one **Point of Comparison (Idea)** between the **Topic** and the **Image**. Often in metaphors, the **Topic** and the **Image** are explicitly stated, but the **Idea** is only implied. The writer/speaker often uses a metaphor in order to invite the readers/listeners to think about the similarity between the **Topic** and the **Image** and to figure out for themselves the **Idea** that is being communicated.

Speakers often use metaphors in order to strengthen their message, to make their language more vivid, to express their feelings better, to say something that is hard to say in any other way, or to help people remember their message.

Sometimes speakers use metaphors that are very common in their language. However, sometimes speakers use metaphors that are uncommon, and even some metaphors that are unique. When a metaphor has become very common in a language, often it becomes a “passive” metaphor, in contrast to uncommon metaphors, which we describe as being “active.” Passive metaphors and active metaphors each present a different kind of translation problem, which we will discuss below.

Passive Metaphors

A passive metaphor is a metaphor that has been used so much in the language that its speakers no longer regard it as one concept standing for another. Linguists often call these “dead metaphors.” Passive metaphors are extremely common. Examples in English include the terms “table **leg**,” “family **tree**,” “book **leaf**” (meaning a page

in a book), or the word “crane” (meaning a large machine for lifting heavy loads). English speakers simply think of these words as having more than one meaning. Examples of passive metaphors in Biblical Hebrew include using the word “hand” to represent “power,” using the word “face” to represent “presence,” and speaking of emotions or moral qualities as if they were “clothing.”

Patterned Pairs of Concepts Acting as Metaphors

Many ways of metaphorical speaking depend on pairs of concepts, where one underlying concept frequently stands for a different underlying concept. For example, in English, the direction “up” (the Image) often represents the concepts of “more” or “better” (the Idea). Because of this pair of underlying concepts, we can make sentences such as “The price of gasoline is going **up**,” “A **highly** intelligent man,” and also the opposite kind of idea: “The temperature is going **down**,” and “I am feeling very **low**.”

Patterned pairs of concepts are constantly used for metaphorical purposes in the world’s languages because they serve as convenient ways to organize thought. In general, people like to speak of abstract qualities (such as power, presence, emotions, and moral qualities) as if they were body parts, or as if they were objects that could be seen or held, or as if they were events that could be watched as they happened.

When these metaphors are used in normal ways, it is rare that the speaker and audience regard them as figurative speech. Examples of metaphors in English that go unrecognized are:

- “Turn the heat **up**.” More is spoken of as up.
- “Let us **go ahead** with our debate.” Doing what was planned is spoken of as walking or advancing.
- “You **defend** your theory well.” Argument is spoken of as war.
- “A **flow** of words.” Words are spoken of as liquids.

English speakers do not view these as metaphorical expressions or figures of speech, so it would be wrong to translate them into other languages in a way that would lead people to pay special attention to them as figurative speech. For a description of important patterns of this kind of metaphor in biblical languages, please see Biblical Imagery — Common Patterns and the pages it will direct you to.

When translating something that is a passive metaphor into another language, do not treat it as a metaphor. Instead, just use the best expression for that thing or concept in the target language.

Active Metaphors

These are metaphors that people recognize as one concept standing for another concept, or one thing for another thing. Metaphors make people think about how the one thing is like the other thing, because in most ways the two things are very different. People also easily recognize these metaphors as giving strength and unusual qualities to the message. For this reason, people pay attention to these metaphors. For example,

But for you who fear my name, the sun of righteousness will rise with healing in its wings.
(Malachi 4:2a ULT)

Here, God speaks about his salvation as if it were the sun rising in order to shine its rays on the people whom he loves. He also speaks of the sun’s rays as if they were wings. Also, he speaks of these wings as if they were bringing medicine that would heal his people. Here is another example:

And he said to them, “Go and tell that fox ...” (Luke 13:32a ULT)

Here, “that fox” refers to King Herod. The people listening to Jesus certainly understood that Jesus was intending for them to apply certain characteristics of a fox to Herod. They probably understood that Jesus intended to communicate that Herod was evil, either in a cunning way or as someone who was destructive, murderous, or who took things that did not belong to him, or all of these.

Active metaphors require the translator's special care to make a correct translation. To do so, you need to understand the parts of a metaphor and how they work together to produce meaning.

Jesus said to them, "I am the bread of life; he who comes to me will not be hungry, and he who believes in me will never be thirsty." (John 6:35 ULT)

In this metaphor, Jesus called himself the bread of life. The **Topic** is "I" (meaning Jesus himself) and the **Image** is "bread." Bread was the primary food that people ate in that place and time. The similarity between bread and Jesus is that people need both to live. Just as people need to eat food in order to have physical life, people need to trust in Jesus in order to have eternal life. The **Idea** of the metaphor is "life." In this case, Jesus stated the central Idea of the metaphor, but often the Idea is only implied.

Purposes of Metaphor

- One purpose of metaphor is to teach people about something that they do not know (the **Topic**) by showing that it is like something that they already do know (the **Image**).
- Another purpose is to emphasize that something (the **Topic**) has a particular quality (the **Idea**) or to show that it has that quality in an extreme way.
- Another purpose is to lead people to feel the same way about the **Topic** as they would feel about the **Image**.

Reasons This Is a Translation Issue

- People may not recognize that something is a metaphor. In other words, they may mistake a metaphor for a literal statement, and thus, misunderstand it.
- People may not be familiar with the thing that is used as an image, and so, not be able to understand the metaphor.
- If the topic is not stated, people may not know what the topic is.
- People may not know the points of comparison that the speaker wants them to understand. If they fail to think of these points of comparison, they will not understand the metaphor.
- People may think that they understand the metaphor, but they do not. This can happen when they apply points of comparison from their own culture, rather than from the biblical culture.

Translation Principles

- Make the meaning of a metaphor as clear to the target audience as it was to the original audience.
- Do not make the meaning of a metaphor more clear to the target audience than you think it was to the original audience.

Examples From the Bible

Listen to this word, **you cows of Bashan**, (Amos 4:1q ULT)

In this metaphor Amos speaks to the upper-class women of Samaria ("you," the Topic) as if they were cows (the Image). Amos does not say what similarity(s) he intends between these women and cows. He wants the reader to think of them, and he fully expects that readers from his culture will easily do so. From the context, we can see that he means that the women are like cows in that they are fat and interested only in feeding themselves. If we were to apply similarities from a different culture, such as that cows are sacred and should be worshiped, we would get the wrong meaning from this verse.

NOTE: Amos does not actually mean that the women are cows. He speaks to them as human beings.

Yet, Yahweh, you are our father; **we are the clay. You are our potter**; and we all are the work of your hand. (Isaiah 64:8 ULT)

The example above has two related metaphors. The Topic(s) are “we” and “you,” and the Image(s) are “clay” and “potter.” The similarity between a potter and God is the fact that both make what they wish out of their material. The potter makes what he wishes out of the clay, and God makes what he wishes out of his people. The Idea being expressed by the comparison between the potter’s clay and “us” is that **neither the clay nor God’s people have a right to complain about what they are becoming**.

Jesus said to them, “Take heed and beware of **the yeast of the Pharisees and Sadducees**.”
The disciples reasoned among themselves and said, “It is because we did not take bread.”
(Matthew 16:6-7 ULT)

Jesus used a metaphor here, but his disciples did not realize it. When he said “yeast,” they thought he was talking about bread, but “yeast” was the Image in his metaphor, and the Topic was the teaching of the Pharisees and Sadducees. Since the disciples (the original audience) did not understand what Jesus meant, it would not be good to state clearly here what Jesus meant.

Translation Strategies

If people would understand the metaphor in the same way that the original readers would have understood it, go ahead and use it. Be sure to test the translation to make sure that people do understand it in the right way.

If people do not or would not understand it, here are some other strategies.

- (1) If the metaphor is a common expression in the source language or expresses a patterned pair of concepts in a biblical language (that is, it is a passive metaphor), then express the **Idea** in the simplest way preferred by your language.
- (2) If the metaphor seems to be an active metaphor, you can translate it literally **if you think that the target language also uses this metaphor in the same way to mean the same thing as in the Bible**. If you do this, be sure to test it to make sure that the language community understands it correctly.
- (3) If the target audience does not realize that it is a metaphor, then change the metaphor to a simile. Some languages do this by adding words such as “like” or “as.” See [Simile](#).
- (4) If the target audience would not know the **Image**, see [Translate Unknowns](#) for ideas on how to translate that image.
- (5) If the target audience would not use that **Image** for that meaning, use an image from your own culture instead. Be sure that it is an image that could have been possible in Bible times.
- (6) If the target audience would not know what the **Topic** is, then state the topic clearly. (However, do not do this if the original audience did not know what the Topic was.)
- (7) If the target audience would not know the intended similarity (the **Idea**) between the topic and the image, then state it clearly.
- (8) If none of these strategies is satisfactory, then simply state the **Idea** plainly without using a metaphor.

Examples of Translation Strategies Applied

(1) If the metaphor is a common expression in the source language or expresses a patterned pair of concepts in a biblical language (that is, a passive metaphor), then express the Idea in the simplest way preferred by your language.

Then, see, one of the leaders of the synagogue, named Jairus, came, and when he saw him, **fell at his feet**. (Mark 5:22 ULT)

Then one of the leaders of the synagogue, named Jairus, came, and when he saw him, **immediately bowed down in front of him**.

(2) If the metaphor seems to be an active metaphor, you can translate it literally **if you think that the target language also uses this metaphor in the same way to mean the same thing as in the Bible**. If you do this, be sure to test it to make sure that the language community understands it correctly.

But Jesus said to them, "He wrote this commandment to you because of your **hardness of heart**." (Mark 10:5 ULT)

It was because of your **hard hearts** that he wrote you this law.

We made no change to this one, but it must be tested to make sure that the target audience correctly understands this metaphor.

(3) If the target audience does not realize that it is a metaphor, then change the metaphor to a simile. Some languages do this by adding words such as "like" or "as."

Yet, Yahweh, you are our father; we **are the clay**. You **are our potter**; and we all are the work of your hand. (Isaiah 64:8 ULT)

And yet, Yahweh, you are our father; we are **like** clay. You are **like** a potter; and we all are the work of your hand.

(4) If the target audience would not know the **Image**, see [Translate Unknowns](#) for ideas on how to translate that image.

Saul, Saul, why do you persecute me? It is hard for you **to kick against a goad**. (Acts 26:14b ULT)

Saul, Saul, why do you persecute me? It is hard for you to **kick against a pointed stick**.

(5) If the target audience would not use that **Image** for that meaning, use an image from your own culture instead. Be sure that it is an image that could have been possible in Bible times.

Yet, Yahweh, you are our father; we are the **clay**. You are our **potter**; and we all are the work of your hand. (Isaiah 64:8 ULT)

"And yet, Yahweh, you are our father; we are the **wood**. You are our **carver**; and we all are the work of your hand."

"And yet, Yahweh, you are our father; we are the **string**. You are the **weaver**; and we all are the work of your hand."

(6) If the target audience would not know what the **Topic** is, then state the topic clearly. (However, do not do this if the original audience did not know what the topic was.)

Yahweh lives; may **my rock** be praised. May the God of my salvation be exalted. (Psalm 18:46 ULT)

Yahweh lives; **He is my rock**. May he be praised. May the God of my salvation be exalted.

(7) If the target audience would not know the intended similarity between the Topic and the Image, then state it clearly.

Yahweh lives; may **my rock** be praised. May the God of my salvation be exalted. (Psalm 18:46 ULT)

Yahweh lives; may he be praised because he is the rock **under which I can hide from my enemies**. May the God of my salvation be exalted.

Saul, Saul, why do you persecute me? It is hard for you **to kick against a goad**. (Acts 26:14 ULT)

Saul, Saul, why do you persecute me? You **fight against me and hurt yourself like an ox that kicks against its owner's pointed stick**.

(8) If none of these strategies are satisfactory, then simply state the idea plainly without using a metaphor.

I will make you to become **fishers of men**. (Mark 1:17b ULT)

I will make you to become **people who gather men**.
Now you gather fish. I will make you **gather people**.

To learn more about specific metaphors, see Biblical Imagery — Common Patterns.

(Go back to: Job 1:1; 1:10; 1:15; 1:17; 2:5; 3:4; 3:5; 3:7; 3:10; 3:20; 3:21; 3:23; 3:24; 4:4; 4:5; 4:6; 4:7; 4:8; 4:9; 4:10; 4:14; 4:19; 4:20; 4:21; 5:3; 5:4; 5:5; 5:6; 5:9; 5:11; 5:12; 5:13; 5:14; 5:15; 5:19; 5:20; 5:22; 5:23; 5:24; 5:25; Notes; 6:4; 6:6; 6:14; 6:18; Notes; 7:5; 7:7; 7:11; 7:12; 7:17; 8:2; 8:6; 8:7; 8:9; 8:11; 8:15; 8:16; 8:17; 8:18; 8:19; 8:21; 8:22; Notes; 9:8; 9:17; 9:18; 9:20; 9:23; 9:27; 10:1; 10:8; 10:11; 10:17; 10:18; 10:21; 11:4; 11:6; 11:9; 11:13; 11:14; 11:17; 11:20; Notes; 12:5; 12:6; 12:15; 12:17; 12:19; 12:21; 12:22; 12:24; 12:25; 13:4; 13:11; 13:12; 13:13; 13:18; 13:19; 13:21; 13:24; 13:25; 13:26; 13:27; 14:5; 14:7; 14:12; 14:16; 14:17; 14:19; 14:20; 14:21; 15:2; 15:5; 15:10; 15:14; 15:15; 15:16; 15:26; 15:30; 15:32; 15:33; 15:35; 16:4; 16:5; 16:9; 16:12; 16:13; 16:14; 16:15; 16:16; 17:1; 17:3; 17:9; 17:12; 17:13; 17:14; 17:16; 18:3; 18:5; 18:6; 18:7; 18:8; 18:9; 18:10; 18:12; 18:13; 18:16; 18:17; 18:18; 19:2; 19:6; 19:8; 19:9; 19:10; 19:11; 19:12; 19:13; 19:15; 19:21; 19:22; 19:27; 19:28; Notes; 20:2; 20:6; 20:11; 20:12; 20:13; 20:14; 20:15; 20:16; 20:17; 20:18; 20:21; 20:23; 20:25; 20:26; 20:28; 20:29; 21:17; 21:19; 21:20; 21:25; 22:10; 22:11; 22:16; 22:23; 22:25; 22:28; 22:30; Notes; 23:10; 23:11; Notes; 24:13; 24:20; 24:21; 25:6; 26:6; 26:7; 26:13; 26:14; 27:2; 27:6; 27:7; 27:8; 27:13; 28:5; 28:9; 28:11; 28:12; 28:13; 28:20; 28:23; 28:25; 28:28; 29:3; 29:4; 29:6; 29:13; 29:14; 29:15; 29:16; 29:17; 29:18; 29:19; 29:20; 29:23; 29:24; 29:25; 30:2; 30:8; 30:11; 30:12; 30:13; 30:14; 30:15; 30:16; 30:17; 30:18; 30:19; 30:22; 30:23; 30:26; 30:27; 30:28; 30:29; 31:1; 31:2; 31:4; 31:5; 31:6; 31:7; 31:12; 31:21; 31:33; 31:35; 31:36; 31:37; 32:1; 32:2; 32:3; 32:5; 32:13; 32:18; 33:5; 33:6; 33:7; 33:9; 33:11; 33:15; 33:16; 33:17; 33:18; 33:22; 33:24; 33:25; 33:28; 33:30; 34:6; 34:8; 34:11; 34:29; 34:30; 34:37; 35:6; 35:10; 35:16; 36:2; 36:3; 36:4; 36:5; 36:7; 36:8; 36:10; 36:12; 36:13; 36:15; 36:16; 36:20; 36:25; 36:29; 36:30; 36:32; 37:1; 37:2; 37:3; 37:4; 37:9; 37:10; 37:11; 37:18; 37:19; 37:20; 37:22; 37:23; 38:2; 38:4; 38:8; 38:10; 38:13; 38:15; 38:17; 38:22; 38:28; 38:37; 39:24; 40:7; 40:10; 40:11; 41:13; 41:15; 41:28; 42:5; 42:7)

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: [Job 1:5](#); [1:11](#); [1:12](#); [1:15](#); [2:4](#); [2:5](#); [2:10](#); [3:10](#); [3:18](#); [3:22](#); [4:3](#); [6:23](#); [6:30](#); [7:10](#); [7:11](#); [7:13](#); [7:17](#); [7:21](#); [8:4](#); [8:10](#); [8:13](#); [8:20](#); [9:4](#); [9:20](#); [9:23](#); [9:24](#); [9:32](#); [9:34](#); [11:5](#); [11:14](#); [11:15](#); [12:6](#); [12:9](#); [12:10](#); [12:11](#); [12:18](#); [12:20](#); [12:22](#); [12:23](#); [13:14](#); [13:17](#); [13:21](#); [14:5](#); [14:15](#); [14:16](#); [15:5](#); [15:12](#); [15:22](#); [15:30](#); [16:5](#); [16:11](#); [16:17](#); [16:18](#); [17:7](#); [17:11](#); [18:3](#); [18:18](#); [18:21](#); [19:16](#); [19:17](#); [19:21](#); [19:25](#); [19:26](#); [19:29](#); [20:9](#); [20:10](#); [20:11](#); [20:15](#); [20:16](#); [20:17](#); [20:22](#); [20:23](#); [20:24](#); [20:27](#); [20:28](#); [21:8](#); [21:9](#); [21:16](#); [21:20](#); [22:9](#); [22:22](#); [23:2](#); [23:4](#); [23:12](#); [25:3](#); [25:6](#); [26:13](#); [27:2](#); [27:3](#); [27:6](#); [27:9](#); [27:11](#); [27:14](#); [27:15](#); [27:19](#); [27:22](#); [28:3](#); [28:9](#); [29:4](#); [29:10](#); [29:25](#); [30:3](#); [30:8](#); [30:9](#); [30:12](#); [30:18](#); [30:21](#); [30:31](#); [31:7](#); [31:12](#); [31:20](#); [31:21](#); [31:25](#); [31:30](#); [31:31](#); [31:32](#); [31:39](#); [32:7](#); [32:8](#); [33:2](#); [33:11](#); [33:18](#); [33:22](#); [33:28](#); [34:19](#); [34:21](#); [34:32](#); [34:33](#); [35:9](#); [35:15](#); [36:13](#); [37:24](#); [39:3](#); [39:19](#); [39:21](#); [39:26](#); [40:9](#); [40:11](#); [42:6](#); [42:9](#))

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: [Job 9:20](#); [9:23](#); [26:5](#); [38:16](#); [38:30](#))

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:

[[rc://en/ta/man/translate/translate-ordinal]]

[[rc://en/ta/man/translate/translate-fraction]]

(Go back to: [Job 1:2](#); [1:3](#); [33:23](#); [42:8](#); [42:12](#); [42:13](#); [42:16](#))

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: [Job 1:7; 3:4; 3:13; 3:15; 3:17; 3:20; 3:24; 3:25; 3:26; 4:3; 4:4; 4:9; 4:10; 4:12; 4:14; 4:16; 4:20; 5:4; 5:8; 5:11; 5:14; 5:17; 5:23; 6:2; 6:4; 6:7; 6:11; 6:12; 6:16; 6:17; 7:1; 7:6; 7:8; 7:11; 7:13; 7:16; 7:19; 7:21; 8:1; 8:8; 8:11; 8:14; 8:17; 8:21; 9:10; 9:14; 9:20; 10:4; 10:5; 11:5; 11:7; 11:8; 11:17; 11:18; 11:19; 13:7; 13:8; 13:14; 13:17; 13:25; 14:17; 15:7; 15:14; 15:33; 15:35; 16:11; 17:14; 18:1; 18:9; 18:17; 18:18; 18:19; 18:21; 19:1; 20:6; 20:8; 21:8; 21:24; 21:28; 22:2; 22:3; 22:8; 23:3; 23:4; 23:5; 23:15; 23:16; 24:6; 24:7; 24:13; 25:4; 25:6; 26:6; 27:4; 27:7; 27:8; 28:7; 28:8; 28:12; 31:2; 31:24; 31:34; 32:7; 32:8; 32:19; 33:1; 33:2; 33:4; 33:15; 33:18; 33:20; 34:10; 34:13; 34:16; 35:6; 35:7; 37:1; 37:2; 38:14; 38:19; 38:26; 39:12; 41:19](#))

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: [Job 3:3; 3:5; 3:6; 3:7; 3:9; 3:10; 3:12; 5:16; 6:4; 6:16; 7:13; 8:18; 9:25; 9:31; 11:14; 14:9; 15:5; 15:24; 16:8; 16:18; 17:1; 18:11; 20:3; 20:27; 26:11; 27:21; 27:22; 27:23; 28:4; 28:14; 28:22; 30:16; 30:17; 30:27; 31:1; 31:26; 31:38; 34:28; 36:17; 38:7; 38:11; 38:12; 38:13; 38:19; 38:20; 38:28; 38:30; 38:35; 39:6; 39:7; 39:25; 40:20; 41:24; 41:29; 41:34](#))

Poetry

Description

Poetry is one of the ways that people use the words and sounds of their language to make their speech and writing more beautiful and to express strong emotion. Through poetry, people can communicate deeper emotion than they can through simple non-poetic forms. Poetry gives more weight and elegance to statements of truth, such as proverbs, and is also easier to remember than ordinary speech.

This page answers the question: *What is poetry and how do I translate it into my language?*

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

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

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

In poetry we commonly find:

- many figures of speech such as [Apostrophe](#)
- arrangements of clauses into particular patterns such as:
 - parallel lines (See [Parallelism](#))
 - acrostics (beginning lines with successive letters of the alphabet)
 - chiasms (in which the first line relates to the last line, the second to the next-to-last line, etc.):
 - > You should not give what is holy to the dogs,
 - >
 - >> and should not throw your pearls in front of the pigs.
 - >>
 - >> Otherwise they will trample them under their feet,
 - >
 - > and having turned, they might tear you to pieces. (Matt 7:6 ULT)

- repetition of some or all of a line:

Praise him, all his angels; praise him, all his hosts. Praise him, sun and moon; praise him, all you shining stars. (Psalm 148:2-3 ULT)

- lines of similar length:

Listen to my call to you,
Yahweh; think about my groanings.
Listen to the sound of my call, my King and my God,
for it is to you that I pray. (Psalm 5:1-2 ULT)

- the same sound used at the end or at the beginning of two or more lines:

“Twinkle, twinkle little **star**. How I wonder what you **are**.” (from an English rhyme)

- the same sound repeated many times:

“Peter, Peter, pumpkin eater” (from an English rhyme)

We also find:

- old words and expressions
- dramatic imagery
- different use of grammar — including:

- incomplete sentences
- lack of connective words

Some places to look for poetry in your language

Songs, particularly old songs or songs used in children's games
Religious ceremony or chants of priests or witch doctors
Prayers, blessings, and curses
Old legends

Elegant or fancy speech

Elegant or fancy speech is similar to poetry in that it uses beautiful language, but it does not use all of the language's features of poetry, and it does not use them as much as poetry does. Popular speakers in the language often use elegant speech, and this is probably the easiest source of text to study to find out what makes speech elegant in your language.

Reasons This Is a Translation Issue:

- Different languages use poetry for different things. If a poetic form would not communicate the same meaning in your language, you may need to write it without the poetry.
- Different languages use different poetic devices. A poetic device that conveys elegance or emotion in a biblical language may be confusing or misunderstood in another language.
- In some languages, using poetry for a particular part of the Bible would make it much more powerful.

Examples From the Bible

The Bible uses poetry for songs, teaching, and prophecy. Almost all of the books of the Old Testament have poetry in them and many of the books are completely made up of poetry.

... for you saw my affliction; you knew the distress of my soul. (Psalm 31:7b ULT)

This example of [Parallelism](#) has two lines that mean the same thing.

Yahweh, judge the nations; vindicate me, Yahweh, because I am righteous and innocent, Most High. (Psalm 7:8 ULT)

This example of parallelism shows the contrast between what David wants God to do to him and what he wants God to do to the unrighteous nations. (See [Parallelism](#).)

Keep your servant also from arrogant sins; let them not rule over me. (Psalm 19:13a ULT)

This example of personification speaks of sins as if they could rule over a person. (See [Personification](#).)

Oh, give thanks to Yahweh; for he is good,
for his covenant faithfulness endures forever.

Oh, give thanks to the God of gods,
for his covenant faithfulness endures forever.

Oh, give thanks to the Lord of lords,
for his covenant faithfulness endures forever.
(Psalm 136:1-3 ULT)

This example repeats the phrases “give thanks” and “his covenant faithfulness endures forever.”

Translation Strategies

If the style of poetry that is used in the source text would be natural and give the right meaning in your language, consider using it. If not, here are some other ways of translating it.

- (1) Translate the poetry using one of your styles of poetry.
- (2) Translate the poetry using your style of elegant speech.
- (3) Translate the poetry using your style of ordinary speech.

If you use poetry it may be more beautiful.

If you use ordinary speech it may be more clear.

Examples of Translation Strategies Applied

Blessed is the man who does not walk in the advice of the wicked, or stand in the pathway with sinners, or sit in the assembly of mockers. But his delight is in the law of Yahweh, and on his law he meditates day and night. (Psalm 1:1-2 ULT)

The following are examples of how people might translate Psalm 1:1-2.

- (1) Translate the poetry using one of your styles of poetry. (The style in this example has words that sound similar at the end of each line.)

“Happy is the person not encouraged **to sin**, Disrespect for God he will not **begin**, To those who laugh at God he is **no kin**. God is his constant **delight**, He does what God says **is right**, He thinks of it all day **and night**.”

- (2) Translate the poetry using your style of elegant speech.

This is the kind of person who is truly blessed: the one who does not follow the advice of wicked people nor stop along the road to speak with sinners nor join the gathering of those who mock God. Rather, he takes great joy in Yahweh’s law, and he meditates on it day and night.

- (3) Translate the poetry using your style of ordinary speech.

The people who do not listen to the advice of bad people are really happy. They do not spend time with people who continually do evil things or join with those who do not respect God. Instead, they love to obey Yahweh’s law, and they think about it all the time.

Next we recommend you learn about:

[Symbolic Language](#)

(Go back to: [Job 10:10](#); [18:1](#); [19:1](#))

Possession

Description

In English, the grammatical form that commonly indicates possession is also used to indicate a variety of relationships between people and objects or people and other people. In English, that grammatical relationship is shown by using the word “**of**,” by using **an apostrophe and the letter “s”**, or by using a **possessive pronoun**. The following examples are different ways to indicate that my grandfather owns a house.

- the house **of** my grandfather
- my grandfather’s house
- **his** house

Possession is used in Hebrew, Greek, and English for a variety of situations. Here are a few common situations that it is used for.

- Ownership — Someone owns something.
 - My clothes — The clothes that I own
- Social Relationship — Someone has some kind of social relationship with another.
 - my mother — the woman who gave birth to me, or the woman who cared for me
 - my teacher — the person who teaches me
- Association — A particular thing is associated with a particular person, place, or thing.
 - David’s sickness — the sickness that David is experiencing
 - the fear of the Lord — the fear that is appropriate for a human being to have when relating to the Lord
- Contents — Something has something in it.
 - a bag of clothes — a bag that has clothes in it, or a bag that is full of clothes
- Part and whole: One thing is part of another.
 - my head — the head that is part of my body
 - the roof of a house — the roof that is part of a house

In some languages there is a special form of possession, termed **inalienable possession**. This form of possession is used for things that cannot be removed from you, as opposed to things you could lose. In the examples above, *my head* and *my mother* are examples of inalienable possession (at least in some languages), while *my clothes* or *my teacher* would be alienably possessed. What may be considered alienable vs. inalienable may differ by language.

This page answers the question: *What is possession and how can I translate phrases that show it?*

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

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

Reasons This Is a Translation Issue

- You (the translator) need to understand the relationship between two ideas represented by the two nouns when one is in the grammatical relationship of possessing the other.
- Some languages do not use grammatical possession for all of the situations that your source text Bible might use it for.

Examples From the Bible

Ownership — In the example below, the son owned the money.

█ The younger son ... wasted his wealth by living recklessly. (Luke 15:13b)

Social Relationship — In the example below, the disciples were people who learned from John.

█ Then **the disciples of John** came to him. (Matthew 9:14a ULT)

Association — In the example below, the gospel is the message associated with Paul because he preaches it.

█ Remember Jesus Christ, raised from the dead, from the seed of David, according to **my gospel**, (2 Timothy 2:8 ULT)

Material — In the example below, the material used for making the crowns was gold.

█ On their heads were something like **crowns of gold**. (Revelation 9:7b)

Contents — In the example below, the cup has water in it.

█ For whoever gives you **a cup of water** to drink ... will not lose his reward. (Mark 9:41 ULT)

Part of a whole — In the example below, the door was a part of the palace.

█ But Uriah slept at **the door of the king's palace**. (2 Samuel 11:9a ULT)

Part of a group — In the example below, “us” refers to the whole group and “each one” refers to the individual members.

█ Now to **each one of us** grace has been given according to the measure of the gift of Christ. (Ephesians 4:7 ULT)

Events and Possession

Sometimes one or both of the nouns is an abstract noun that refers to an event or action. In the examples below, the abstract nouns are in **bold** print. These are just some of the relationships that are possible between two nouns when one of them refers to an event.

Subject — Sometimes the word after “of” tells who would do the action named by the first noun. In the example below, **John baptized people**.

█ The **baptism of John**, was it from heaven or from men? Answer me. (Mark 11:30)

In the example below, **Christ loves us**.

█ Who will separate us from the **love of Christ**? (Romans 8:35)

Object — Sometimes the word after “of” tells who or what something would happen to. In the example below, **people love money**.

For the **love of money** is a root of all kinds of evil. (1 Timothy 6:10a ULT)

Instrument — Sometimes the word after “of” tells how something would happen. In the example below, God would **punish people by sending enemies to attack them with swords**.

Then be afraid of the sword, because wrath brings **the punishment of the sword**. (Job 19:29a ULT)

Representation — In the example below, John was baptizing people who were repenting of their sins. They were being baptized to show that they were repenting. Their **baptism represented their repentance**.

John came, baptizing in the wilderness and preaching **a baptism of repentance** for the forgiveness of sins. (Mark 1:4 ULT)

Strategies for learning what the relationship is between the two nouns

- (1) Read the surrounding verses to see if they help you to understand the relationship between the two nouns.
- (2) Read the verse in the UST. Sometimes it shows the relationship clearly.
- (3) See what the notes say about it.

Translation Strategies

If possession would be a natural way to show a particular relationship between two nouns, consider using it. If it would be strange or hard to understand, consider these.

- (1) Use an adjective to show that one noun describes the other.
- (2) Use a verb to show how the two are related.
- (3) If one of the nouns refers to an event, translate it as a verb.

Examples of Translation Strategies Applied

- (1) Use an adjective to show that one noun describes the other.

On their heads were something like **crowns of gold**. (Revelation 9:7b)

“On their heads were **gold crowns**”

- (2) Use a verb to show how the two are related.

Whoever gives you **a cup of water** to drink ... will not lose his reward. (Mark 9:41 ULT)

Whoever gives you a **cup that has water in it** to drink ... will not lose his reward.

Wealth is worthless on **the day of wrath**. (Proverbs 11:4a ULT)

Wealth is worthless on **the day when God shows his wrath**.

or:

Wealth is worthless on the **day when God punishes people because of his wrath**.

(3) If one of the nouns refers to an event, translate it as a verb. (In the example below, there are two possession relationships, “punishment of Yahweh” and “your God.”)

Notice that I am not speaking to your children, who have not known or seen **the punishment of Yahweh your God**. (Deuteronomy 11:2a ULT)

Notice that I am not speaking to your children who have not known or seen **how Yahweh, the God whom you worship, punished the people of Egypt**.

You will only observe and see the **punishment of the wicked**. (Psalms 91:8 ULT)

You will only observe and see **how Yahweh punishes the wicked**.

You will receive **the gift of the Holy Spirit**. (Acts 2:38b ULT)

You will receive the **Holy Spirit, whom God will give to you**.

(Go back to: [Job 15:34](#))

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: [Job 40:2](#); [40:19](#))

Reflexive Pronouns

Description

All languages have ways of showing that the same person fills two different roles in a sentence. English does this by using reflexive pronouns. These are pronouns that refer to someone or something that has already been mentioned in a sentence. In English the reflexive pronouns are: “myself,” “yourself,” “himself,” “herself,” “itself,” “ourselves,” “yourselves,” and “themselves.” Other languages may have other ways to show this.

This page answers the question: *What are reflexive pronouns?*

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

[Pronouns](#)

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

Reason This Is a Translation Issue

- Languages have different ways of showing that the same person fills two different roles in a sentence. For those languages, translators will need to know how to translate the English reflexive pronouns.
- The reflexive pronouns in English also have other functions.

Uses of Reflexive Pronouns

- To show that the same person or things fills two different roles in a sentence
- To emphasize a person or thing in the sentence
- To show that someone did something alone
- To show that someone or something was alone

Examples From the Bible

Reflexive pronouns are used to show the same person or thing fills two different roles in a sentence.

If **I** should testify about **myself**, my testimony would not be true. (John 5:31 ULT)

Now the Passover of the Jews was near, and **many** went up to Jerusalem from the country before the Passover in order to purify **themselves**. (John 11:55 ULT)

Reflexive pronouns are used to emphasize a person or thing in the sentence.

Jesus himself was not baptizing, but his disciples were. (John 4:2 ULT)

So they left the crowd, taking Jesus with them, just as he was, in the boat. There also were other boats with him. Then a violent windstorm arose and the waves were breaking into the boat so that the boat was already full of water. But **Jesus himself** was in the stern, asleep on the cushion. (Mark 4:36-38a ULT)

Reflexive pronouns are used to show that someone did something alone.

When Jesus realized that they were about to come and seize him by force to make him king, he withdrew again up the mountain **by himself**. (John 6:15 ULT)

Reflexive pronouns are used to show that someone or something was alone.

He saw the linen cloths lying there and the cloth that had been on his head. **It** was not lying with the linen cloths but was folded up in a place **by itself**. (John 20:6b-7 ULT)

Translation Strategies

If a reflexive pronoun would have the same function in your language, consider using it. If not, here are some other strategies.

- (1) In some languages people put something on the verb to show that the object of the verb is the same as the subject.
- (2) In some languages people emphasize a certain person or thing by referring to it in a special place in the sentence.
- (3) In some languages people emphasize a certain person or thing by adding something to that word or putting another word with it.
- (4) In some languages people show that someone did something alone by using a word like “alone.”
- (5) In some languages people show that something was alone by using a phrase that tells about where it was.

Examples of Translation Strategies Applied

- (1) In some languages people modify the verb to show that the object of the verb is the same as the subject.

If I should testify about **myself** alone, my testimony would not be true. (John 5:31)

“If I should **self-testify** alone, my testimony would not be true.”

Now the Passover of the Jews was near, and many went up to Jerusalem from the country before the Passover in order to **purify themselves**. (John 11:55)

“Now the Passover of the Jews was near, and many went up to Jerusalem out from country before the Passover in order to **self-purify**.”

- (2) In some languages people emphasize a certain person or thing by referring to it in a special place in the sentence.

He himself took our sickness and bore our diseases. (Matthew 8:17 ULT)

“**It was he who** took our sickness and bore our diseases.”

Jesus himself was not baptizing, but his disciples were. (John 4:2)

“**It was not Jesus who** was baptizing, but his disciples were.”

- (3) In some languages people emphasize a certain person or thing by adding something to that word or putting another word with it. English adds the reflexive pronoun.

But Jesus said this to test Philip, for he **himself** knew what he was going to do. (John 6:6)

- (4) In some languages people show that someone did something alone by using a word like “alone.”

When Jesus realized that they were about to come and seize him by force to make him king, he withdrew again up the mountain **by himself**. (John 6:15)

“When Jesus realized that they were about to come and seize him by force to make him king, he withdrew again **alone** up the mountain.”

- (5) In some languages people show that something was alone by using a phrase that tells about where it was.

He saw the linen cloths lying there and the cloth that had been on his head. It was not lying with the linen cloths but was folded up in a place **by itself**. (John 20:6b-7 ULT)

“He saw the linen cloths lying there and the cloth that had been on his head. It was not lying with the linen cloths but was folded up and lying **in it’s own place.**”

(Go back to: [Job 7:4](#); [9:4](#); [9:8](#); [10:16](#); [38:30](#))

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: Job 1:8; 1:9; 1:10; 2:3; 2:9; 2:10; Notes; 3:11; 3:12; 3:20; 3:22; 3:23; Notes; 4:2; 4:6; 4:7; 4:17; 4:21; Notes; 5:1; Notes; 6:5; 6:6; 6:11; 6:12; 6:13; 6:21; 6:23; 6:25; 6:26; 6:30; Notes; 7:1; 7:4; 7:12; 7:17; 7:18; 7:19; 7:20; 7:21; Notes; 8:1; 8:2; 8:3; 8:10; 8:11; Notes; 9:12; 9:14; 9:19; 9:29; Notes; 10:3; 10:4; 10:5; 10:6; 10:7; 10:10; 10:20; Notes; 11:2; 11:3; 11:7; 11:8; 11:10; 11:11; Notes; 12:3; 12:9; 12:11; Notes; 13:7; 13:8; 13:9; 13:11; 13:19; 13:24; 13:25; Notes; 14:3; 14:4; 14:10; 14:14; Notes; 15:2; 15:3; 15:7; 15:8; 15:9; 15:14; 16:3; 16:6; 17:3; 17:15; 17:16; 18:2; 18:3; 18:4; 19:2; 19:22; 20:5; Notes; 21:4; 21:7; 21:15; 21:16; 21:17; 21:18; 21:21; 21:22; 21:28; 21:29; 21:30; 21:31; 21:34; Notes; 22:2; 22:3; 22:4; 22:5; 22:12; 22:13; 22:17; 23:13; Notes; 24:1; 24:25; Notes; 25:3; 25:4; 26:4; 26:14; 27:8; 27:9; 27:10; 27:12; 28:12; 28:20; 30:2; 30:24; 30:25; 31:1; 31:2; 31:4; 31:14; 31:15; 31:31; 32:16; 33:13; 34:7; 34:13; 34:17; 34:18; 34:29; 34:33; Notes; 35:2; 35:3; 35:6; 35:7; 36:19; 36:22; 36:23; 36:29; 37:15; 37:16; 37:17; 37:18; 37:20; Notes; 38:2; 38:4; 38:5; 38:6; 38:7; 38:8; 38:9; 38:12; 38:13; 38:16; 38:18; 38:19; 38:20; 38:22; 38:23; 38:25; 38:27; 38:28; 38:29; 38:31;

[38:32](#); [38:33](#); [38:34](#); [38:35](#); [38:36](#); [38:37](#); [38:38](#); [38:39](#); [38:40](#); [38:41](#); [Notes](#); [39:1](#); [39:2](#); [39:5](#); [39:6](#); [39:9](#); [39:10](#); [39:11](#); [39:12](#); [39:13](#); [39:19](#); [39:20](#); [39:26](#); [39:27](#); [40:2](#); [40:4](#); [40:8](#); [40:9](#); [40:24](#); [Notes](#); [41:1](#); [41:2](#); [41:3](#); [41:4](#); [41:5](#); [41:6](#); [41:7](#); [41:9](#); [41:10](#); [41:11](#); [41:13](#); [41:14](#); [42:3](#))

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: [Job 5:7](#); [5:25](#); [5:26](#); [6:3](#); [6:15](#); [6:26](#); [6:27](#); [7:1](#); [7:2](#); [7:6](#); [7:9](#); [8:14](#); [9:25](#); [9:26](#); [10:10](#); [10:16](#); [10:22](#); [11:8](#); [11:16](#); [12:11](#); [12:25](#); [13:28](#); [14:2](#); [14:11](#); [14:19](#); [15:24](#); [16:21](#); [17:7](#); [19:10](#); [20:7](#); [20:8](#); [21:11](#); [21:18](#); [22:16](#); [23:10](#); [24:5](#); [24:14](#); [24:17](#); [24:18](#); [24:19](#); [24:24](#); [27:16](#); [27:18](#); [27:20](#); [29:14](#); [29:18](#); [29:22](#); [29:23](#); [29:25](#); [30:7](#); [30:14](#); [30:15](#); [30:19](#); [31:37](#); [32:19](#); [33:25](#); [34:3](#); [34:7](#); [34:26](#); [37:10](#); [38:8](#); [38:14](#); [38:30](#); [40:7](#); [40:9](#); [40:15](#); [40:17](#); [40:18](#); [41:18](#); [41:20](#); [41:24](#); [41:27](#); [41:30](#); [41:31](#))

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: [Job 1:20](#); [2:8](#); [2:12](#); [9:13](#); [11:13](#); [15:25](#); [16:4](#); [17:6](#); [21:5](#); [27:23](#); [29:8](#); [29:9](#); [31:27](#); [34:37](#); [42:6](#))

Symbolic Language

Description

Symbolic language in speech and writing is the use of symbols to represent other things, other events, etc. In the Bible it occurs most in prophecy and poetry, especially in visions and dreams about things that will happen in the future. Though people may not immediately know the meaning of a symbol, it is important to keep the symbol in the translation.

This page answers the question: *What is symbolic language and how do I translate it?*

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

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

■ Eat this scroll; then go speak to the house of Israel. (Ezekiel 3:1 ULT)

This was in a dream. Eating the scroll is a symbol of Ezekiel reading and understanding well what was written on the scroll, and accepting these words from God into himself.

Purposes of Symbolism

- One purpose of symbolism is to help people understand the importance or severity of an event by putting it in other, very dramatic terms.
- Another purpose of symbolism is to tell some people about something while hiding the true meaning from others who do not understand the symbolism.

Reason This Is a Translation Issue

People who read the Bible today may find it hard to recognize that the language is symbolic, and they may not know what the symbol stands for.

Translation Principles

- When symbolic language is used, it is important to keep the symbol in the translation.
- It is also important not to explain the symbol more than the original speaker or writer did, since he may not have wanted everyone living then to be able to understand it easily.

Examples From the Bible

■ After this I saw in my visions of the night **a fourth animal**, terrifying, frightening, and very strong. It had **large iron teeth**; it devoured, broke in pieces, and trampled underfoot what was left. It was different from the other animals, and it had **ten horns**. (Daniel 7:7 ULT)

The meaning of the bolded symbols is explained in Daniel 7:23-24 as shown below. The animals represent kingdoms, iron teeth represent a powerful army, and the horns represent powerful leaders.

■ This is what that person said, 'As for the fourth animal, it will be **a fourth kingdom** on earth that will be different from all the other kingdoms. It will devour the whole earth, and it will trample it down and break it into pieces. As for the ten horns, out of this kingdom **ten kings** will arise, and another will arise after them. He will be different from the previous ones, and he will conquer the three kings.' (Daniel 7:23-24 ULT)

■ I turned around to see the voice that was speaking to me, and as I turned I saw **seven golden lampstands**. In the middle of the lampstands there was one like a son of man ... He had **seven**

stars in his right hand and **a sword with two sharp edges** was coming out of his mouth. As for the hidden meaning about the seven stars that you saw in my right hand, and the seven golden lampstands: **The seven stars are the angels of the seven churches**, and **the seven lampstands are the seven churches**. (Revelation 1:12-13a, 16a, 20 ULT)

This passage explains the meaning of the seven lampstands and the seven stars. The two-edged sword represents God's word and judgment.

Translation Strategies

- (1) Translate the text with the symbols. Often the speaker or author explains the meaning later in the passage.
- (2) Translate the text with the symbols. Then explain the symbols in footnotes.

Examples of Translation Strategies Applied

- (1) Translate the text with the symbols. Often the speaker or author explains the meaning later in the passage.

This is what that person said, 'As for the fourth animal, it will be **a fourth kingdom** on earth that will be different from all the other kingdoms. It will devour the whole earth, and it will trample it down and break it into pieces. As for the ten horns, out of this kingdom **ten kings** will arise, and another will arise after them. He will be different from the previous ones, and he will conquer the three kings.' (Daniel 7:23-24 ULT)

- (2) Translate the text with the symbols. Then explain the symbols in footnotes.

After this I saw in my visions of the night **a fourth animal**, terrifying, frightening, and very strong. It had **large iron teeth**; it devoured, broke in pieces, and trampled underfoot what was left. It was different from the other animals, and it had **ten horns**. (Daniel 7:7 ULT)

After this I saw in my dream at night a fourth animal, ¹ terrifying, frightening, and very strong. It had large iron teeth; ² it devoured, broke in pieces, and trampled underfoot what was left. It was different from the other animals, and it had ten horns. ³

The footnotes would look like:

[1] The animal is a symbol for a kingdom.

[2] The iron teeth is a symbol for the kingdom's powerful army.

[3] The horns are a symbol of powerful kings.

(Go back to: [Job 5:22](#))

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: [Job 2:5](#); [3:7](#); [4:21](#); [5:18](#); [5:20](#); [6:28](#); [6:30](#); [7:5](#); [7:7](#); [7:8](#); [7:11](#); [7:15](#); [10:3](#); [10:7](#); [10:8](#); [10:12](#); [10:18](#); [13:1](#); [13:6](#); [13:20](#); [13:27](#); [15:5](#); [15:6](#); [15:13](#); [15:23](#); [15:35](#); [16:8](#); [16:16](#); [17:1](#); [17:2](#); [17:4](#); [17:5](#); [18:9](#); [19:27](#); [20:9](#); [20:11](#); [21:20](#); [21:25](#); [21:33](#); [22:7](#); [23:11](#); [23:12](#); [23:17](#); [24:9](#); [24:11](#); [24:15](#); [24:20](#); [24:23](#); [26:2](#); [27:4](#); [28:5](#); [28:10](#); [28:21](#); [29:11](#); [29:13](#); [30:30](#); [31:9](#); [31:12](#); [31:20](#); [31:27](#); [31:30](#); [32:19](#); [32:20](#); [33:3](#); [33:20](#); [33:22](#); [33:26](#); [33:28](#); [33:30](#); [34:3](#); [34:15](#); [34:20](#); [34:29](#); [35:7](#); [36:11](#); [37:7](#); [39:29](#); [40:13](#))

Textual Variants

Description

Thousands of years ago, people wrote the books of the Bible. Other people then copied them by hand and translated them. They did this work very carefully, and over the years many people made thousands of copies. However, people who looked at them later saw that there were small differences between them. Some copiers accidentally left out some words, or some mistook one word for another that looked like it. Occasionally, they added words or even whole sentences, either by accident or because they wanted to explain something. Modern Bibles are translations of the old copies. Some modern Bibles include some of these sentences that were added. In the ULT, these added sentences are usually written in footnotes.

Bible scholars have read many old copies and compared them with each other. For each place in the Bible where there was a difference, they have figured out which wordings are most likely correct. The translators of the ULT based the ULT on wordings that scholars say are most likely correct. Because people who use the ULT may have access to Bibles that are based on other copies, the ULT translators have sometimes included information about some of the differences between them, either in the ULT footnotes or in the unfoldingWord® Translation Notes.

Translators are encouraged to translate the text in the ULT and to write about added sentences in footnotes, as is done in the ULT. However, if the local church really wants those sentences to be included in the main text, translators may put them in the text and include a footnote about them.

This page answers the question: *Why does the ULT have missing or added verses, and should I translate them?*

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

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

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

Examples From the Bible

Matthew 18:10-11 ULT has a footnote about verse 11.

¹⁰ See that you do not despise one of these little ones. For I say to you that in heaven their angels always look on the face of my Father who is in heaven. ¹¹ [1]

[1] Many authorities, some ancient, insert v. 11: **For the Son of Man came to save that which was lost.**

John 7:53-8:11 is not in the best earliest manuscripts. It has been included in the ULT, but it is marked off with square brackets ([]) at the beginning and end, and there is a footnote after verse 11.

53 [Then everyone went to his own house ... 11 She said, "No one, Lord." Jesus said, "Neither do I condemn you. Go and sin no more."] [2]

[2] Some ancient manuscripts include John 7:53-8:11

Translation Strategies

When there is a textual variant, you may choose to follow the ULT or another version that you have access to.

- (1) Translate the verses as they are in the ULT and include the footnote that the ULT provides.
- (2) Translate the verses as another version has them, and change the footnote so that it fits this situation.

Examples of Translation Strategies Applied

The translation strategies are applied to Mark 7:14-16 ULT, which has a footnote about verse 16.

¹⁴ He called the crowd again and said to them, "Listen to me, all of you, and understand. ¹⁵ There is nothing from outside the man that can defile him when it enters into him. But the things that come out of the man are the things that defile the man." ¹⁶ ^[1]

^[1] Some ancient manuscripts include verse 16: **If any man has ears to hear, let him hear.**

(1) Translate the verses as they are in the ULT and include the footnote that the ULT provides.

¹⁴ He called the crowd again and said to them, "Listen to me, all of you, and understand. ¹⁵ There is nothing from outside the man that can defile him when it enters into him. But the things that come out of the man are the things that defile the man." ¹⁶ ^[1]

^[1] Some ancient manuscripts include verse 16: **If any man has ears to hear, let him hear.**

(2) Translate the verses as another version has them, and change the footnote so that it fits this situation.

¹⁴ He called the crowd again and said to them, "Listen to me, all of you, and understand. ¹⁵ There is nothing from outside the man that can defile him when it enters into him. But the things that come out of the man are the things that defile the man. ¹⁶ If any man has ears to hear, let him hear." ^[1]

^[1] Some ancient manuscripts do not include verse 16.

Next we recommend you learn about:

[\[\[rc://en/ta/man/translate/translate-chapverse\]\]](#)
[\[\[rc://en/ta/man/translate/translate-manuscripts\]\]](#)
[\[\[rc://en/ta/man/translate/translate-terms\]\]](#)
[\[\[rc://en/ta/man/translate/translate-original\]\]](#)

(Go back to: [Job 24:24](#))

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: [Job 9:9](#); [21:12](#); [28:18](#))

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: [Job 12:12](#); [14:1](#))



unfoldingWord® Translation Words

Version 28

believe, believer, belief, unbeliever, unbelief

Definition:

The terms “believe” and “believe in” are closely related, but have slightly different meanings:

1. believe

- To believe something is to accept or trust that it is true.
- To believe someone is to acknowledge that what that person has said is true.

2. believe in

- To “believe in” someone means to “trust in” that person. It means to trust that the person is who he says he is, that he always speaks the truth, and that he will do what he has promised to do.
- When a person truly believes in something, he will act in such a way that shows that belief.
- The phrase “have faith in” usually has the same meaning as “believe in.”
- To “believe in Jesus” means to believe that he is the Son of God, that he is God himself who also became human and who died as a sacrifice to pay for our sins. It means to trust him as Savior and live in a way that honors him.

3. believer

In the Bible, the term “believer” refers to someone who believes in and relies on Jesus Christ as Savior.

- The term “believer” literally means “person who believes.”
- The term “Christian” eventually came to be the main title for believers because it indicates that they believe in Christ and obey his teachings.

4. unbelief

The term “unbelief” refers to not believing something or someone.

- In the Bible, “unbelief” refers to not believing in or not trusting in Jesus as one’s Savior.
- A person who does not believe in Jesus is called an “unbeliever.”

Translation Suggestions:

- To “believe” could be translated as to “know to be true” or “know to be right.”
- To “believe in” could be translated as “trust completely” or “trust and obey” or “completely rely on and follow.”
- Some translations may prefer to say “believer in Jesus” or “believer in Christ.”
- This term could also be translated by a word or phrase that means “person who trusts in Jesus” or “someone who knows Jesus and lives for him.”
- Other ways to translate “believer” could be “follower of Jesus” or “person who knows and obeys Jesus.”
- The term “believer” is a general term for any believer in Christ, while “disciple” and “apostle” were used more specifically for people who knew Jesus while he was alive. It is best to translate these terms in different ways, in order to keep them distinct.
- Other ways to translate “unbelief” could include “lack of faith” or “not believing.”

- The term “unbeliever” could be translated as “person who does not believe in Jesus” or “someone who does not trust in Jesus as Savior.”

(See also: [believe](#), apostle, Christian, disciple, [faith](#), [trust](#))

Bible References:

- Genesis 15:6
- Genesis 45:26
- Job 9:16-18
- Habakkuk 1:5-7
- Mark 6:4-6
- Mark 1:14-15
- Luke 9:41
- John 1:12
- Acts 6:5
- Acts 9:42
- Acts 28:23-24
- Romans 3:3
- 1 Corinthians 6:1
- 1 Corinthians 9:5
- 2 Corinthians 6:15
- Hebrews 3:12
- 1 John 3:23

Examples from the Bible stories:

- **3:4** Noah warned the people about the coming flood and told them to turn to God, but they did not **believe** him.
- **4:8** Abram **believed** God’s promise. God declared that Abram was righteous because he **believed** God’s promise.
- **11:2** God provided a way to save the firstborn of anyone who **believed in** him.
- **11:6** But the Egyptians did not **believe** God or obey his commands.
- **37:5** Jesus replied, “I am the Resurrection and the Life. Whoever **believes in** me will live, even though he dies. Everyone who **believes in** me will never die. Do you **believe** this?”
- **43:1** After Jesus returned to heaven, the disciples stayed in Jerusalem as Jesus had commanded them to do. The **believers** there constantly gathered together to pray.
- **43:3** While the **believers** were all together, suddenly the house where they were was filled with a sound like a strong wind. Then something that looked like flames of fire appeared over the heads of all the **believers**.
- **43:13** Every day, more people became **believers**.
- **46:6** That day many people in Jerusalem started persecuting the followers of Jesus, so the **believers** fled to other places. But in spite of this, they preached about Jesus everywhere they went.
- **46:1** Saul was the young man who guarded the robes of the men who killed Stephen. He did not believe in Jesus, so he persecuted the **believers**.
- **46:9** Some **believers** who fled from the persecution in Jerusalem went far away to the city of Antioch and preached about Jesus.
- **46:9** It was at Antioch that **believers** in Jesus were first called “Christians.”
- **47:14** They also wrote many letters to encourage and teach the **believers** in the churches.

Word Data:

- Strong’s: H0539, H0540, G05430, G05440, G05690, G05700, G05710, G39820, G41000, G41020, G41030, G41350

(Go back to: [Job 5 General Notes; Notes](#))

bless, blessed, blessing

Definition:

To “bless” someone or something means to cause good and beneficial things to happen to the person or thing that is being blessed.

- Blessing someone also means expressing a desire for positive and beneficial things to happen to that person.
- In Bible times, a father would often pronounce a formal blessing on his children.
- When people “bless” God or express a desire that God be blessed, this means they are praising him.
- The term “bless” is sometimes used for consecrating food before it is eaten, or for thanking and praising God for the food.

Translation Suggestions:

- To “bless” could also be translated as to “provide abundantly for” or to “be very kind and favorable toward.”
- “God has brought great blessing to” could be translated as “God has given many good things to” or “God has provided abundantly for” or “God has caused many good things to happen to”.
- “He is blessed” could be translated as “he will greatly benefit” or “he will experience good things” or “God will cause him to flourish.”
- “Blessed is the person who” could be translated as “How good it is for the person who.”
- Expressions like “blessed be the Lord” could be translated as “May the Lord be praised” or “Praise the Lord” or “I praise the Lord.”
- In the context of blessing food, this could be translated as “thanked God for the food” or “praised God for giving them food” or “consecrated the food by praising God for it.”

(See also: praise)

Bible References:

- 1 Corinthians 10:16
- Acts 13:34
- Ephesians 1:3
- Genesis 14:20
- Isaiah 44:3
- James 1:25
- Luke 6:20
- Matthew 26:26
- Nehemiah 9:5
- Romans 4:9

Examples from the Bible stories:

- **1:7** God saw that it was good and he **blessed** them.
- **1:15** God made Adam and Eve in his own image. He **blessed** them and told them, “Have many children and grandchildren and fill the earth.”
- **1:16** So God rested from all he had been doing. He **blessed** the seventh day and made it holy, because on this day he rested from his work.
- **4:4** “I will make your name great. I will **bless** those who **bless** you and curse those who curse you. All families on earth will be **blessed** because of you.”

- **4:7** Melchizedek **blessed** Abram and said, "May God Most High who owns heaven and earth **bless** Abram."
- **7:3** Isaac wanted to give his **blessing** to Esau.
- **8:5** Even in prison, Joseph remained faithful to God, and God **blessed** him.

Word Data:

- Strong's: H0833, H0835, H1288, H1289, H1293, G17570, G21270, G21280, G21290, G31060, G31070, G31080, G60500

(Go back to: [Job 1 General Notes](#); [Notes](#))

curse, cursed, cursing

Definition:

The term “curse” means to cause negative things to happen to the person or thing that is being cursed.

- A curse can be a statement that harm will happen to someone or something.
- To curse someone can also be an expression of desire that bad things will happen to them.
- It can also refer to the punishment or other negative things that someone causes to happen to someone.

Translation Suggestions:

- This term could be translated as “cause bad things to happen to” or “declare that something bad will happen to” or “swear to cause evil things to happen to.”
- In the context of God sending curses on his disobedient people, it could be translated as “punish by allowing bad things to happen.”
- The term “cursed” when used to describe people could be translated as “(this person) will experience much trouble.”
- The phrase “cursed be” could be translated as “May (this person) experience great difficulties.”
- The phrase, “Cursed is the ground” could be translated as “The soil will not be very fertile.”
- However, if the target language has the phrase “cursed be” and it has the same meaning, then it is good to keep the same phrase.

(See also: [bless](#))

Bible References:

- 1 Samuel 14:24-26
- 2 Peter 2:12-14
- Galatians 3:10
- Galatians 3:14
- Genesis 3:14
- Genesis 3:17
- James 3:10
- Numbers 22:6
- Psalms 109:28

Examples from the Bible stories:

- **2:9** God said to the snake, “You are **cursed!**”
- **2:11** “Now the ground is **cursed**, and you will need to work hard to grow food.”
- **4:4** “I will bless those who bless you and **curse** those who **curse** you.”
- **39:7** Then Peter vowed, saying, “May God **curse** me if I know this man!”
- **50:16** Because Adam and Eve disobeyed God and brought sin into this world, God **cursed** it and decided to destroy it.

Word Data:

- Strong’s: H0422, H0423, H0779, H1288, H2763, H2764, H3994, H5344, H6895, H7043, H7045, H7621, H8381, G03310, G03320, G06850, G19440, G25510, G26520, G26530, G26710, G26720, G60350

(Go back to: [Job 2 General Notes](#); [Notes](#); [Notes](#); [Notes](#); [Notes](#); [Notes](#); [Notes](#); [Notes](#); [Notes](#); [Notes](#); [Notes](#); [Notes](#); [Notes](#); [Notes](#); [Notes](#); [Notes](#); [Notes](#); [Notes](#))

faith

Definition:

In general, the term “faith” refers to a belief, trust or confidence in someone or something.

- To “have faith” in someone is to believe that what he says and does is true and trustworthy.
- To “have faith in Jesus” means to believe all of God’s teachings about Jesus. It especially means that people trust in Jesus and his sacrifice to cleanse them from their sin and to rescue them from the punishment they deserve because of their sin.
- True faith or belief in Jesus will cause a person to produce good spiritual fruits or behaviors because the Holy Spirit is living in him.
- Sometimes “faith” refers generally to all the teachings about Jesus, as in the expression “the truths of the faith.”
- In contexts such as “keep the faith” or “abandon the faith,” the term “faith” refers to the state or condition of believing all the teachings about Jesus.

Translation Suggestions:

- In some contexts, “faith” can be translated as “belief” or “conviction” or “confidence” or “trust.”
- For some languages these terms will be translated using forms of the verb “believe.” (See: [abstractnouns](#))
- The expression “keep the faith” could be translated by “keep believing in Jesus” or “continue to believe in Jesus.”
- The sentence “they must keep hold of the deep truths of the faith” could be translated by “they must keep believing all the true things about Jesus that they have been taught.”
- The expression “my true son in the faith” could be translated by something like “who is like a son to me because I taught him to believe in Jesus” or “my true spiritual son, who believes in Jesus.”

(See also: [believe](#), faithful)

Bible References:

- 2 Timothy 4:7
- Acts 6:7
- Galatians 2:20-21
- James 2:20

Examples from the Bible stories:

- **5:6** When Isaac was a young man, God tested Abraham’s **faith** by saying, “Take Isaac, your only son, and kill him as a sacrifice to me.”
- **31:7** Then he (Jesus) said to Peter, “You man of little **faith**, why did you doubt?”
- **32:16** Jesus said to her, “Your **faith** has healed you. Go in peace.”
- **38:9** Then Jesus said to Peter, “Satan wants to have all of you, but I have prayed for you, Peter, that your **faith** will not fail.”

Word Data:

- Strong’s: H0529, H0530, G16800, G36400, G41020, G60660

(Go back to: [Job 1 General Notes](#); [Notes](#))

godly, godliness, ungodly, godless, ungodliness, godlessness

Definition:

The term “godly” is used to describe a person who acts in a way that honors God and shows what God is like. “Godliness” is the character quality of honoring God by doing his will.

- A person who has godly character will show the fruits of the Holy Spirit, such as love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, and self control.
- The quality of godliness shows that a person has the Holy Spirit and is obeying him.

The terms “ungodly” and “godless” describe people who are in rebellion against God. Living in an evil way, without thought of God, is called “ungodliness” or “godlessness.”

- The meanings of these words are very similar. However, “godless” and “godlessness” may describe a more extreme condition in which people or nations do not even acknowledge God or his right to rule them.
- God pronounces judgment and wrath on ungodly people, on everyone who rejects him and his ways.

Translation Suggestions:

- The phrase “the godly” could be translated as “godly people” or “people who obey God.” (See: [nominaladj](#))
- The adjective “godly” could be translated as “obedient to God” or “righteous” or “pleasing to God.”
- The phrase “in a godly manner” could be translated as “in a way that obeys God” or “with actions and words that please God.”
- Ways to translate “godliness” could include “acting in a way that pleases God” or “obeying God” or “living in a righteous manner.”
- Depending on the context, the term “ungodly” could be translated as “displeasing to God” or “immoral” or “disobeying God.”
- The terms “godless” and “godlessness” literally mean that the people are “without God” or “having no thought of God” or “acting in a way that does not acknowledge God.”
- Other ways to translate “ungodliness” or “godlessness” could be “wickedness” or “evil” or “rebellion against God”.

(See also evil, honor, obey, [righteous](#), [righteous](#))

Bible References:

- Job 27:10
- Proverbs 11:9
- Acts 3:12
- 1 Timothy 1:9-11
- 1 Timothy 4:7
- 2 Timothy 3:12
- Hebrews 12:14-17
- Hebrews 11:7
- 1 Peter 4:18
- Jude 1:16

Word Data:

- Strong’s: H0430, H1100, H2623, H5760, H7563, G05160, G07630, G07640, G07650, G21240, G21500, G21520, G21530, G23160, G23170

(Go back to: [Job 1 General Notes](#))

grace, gracious

Definition:

The word “grace” refers to help or blessing that is given to someone who has not earned it. The term “gracious” describes someone who shows grace to others.

- God’s grace toward sinful human beings is a gift that is freely given.
- The concept of grace also refers to being kind and forgiving to someone who has done wrong or hurtful things.
- The expression to “find grace” is an expression that means to receive help and mercy from God. Often it includes the meaning that God is pleased with someone and helps him.

Translation Suggestions:

- Other ways that “grace” could be translated include “divine kindness” or “God’s favor” or “God’s kindness and forgiveness for sinners” or “merciful kindness.”
- The term “gracious” could be translated as “full of grace” or “kind” or “merciful” or “mercifully kind.”
- The expression “he found grace in the eyes of God” could be translated as “he received mercy from God” or “God mercifully helped him” or “God showed his favor to him” or “God was pleased with him and helped him.”

Bible References:

- Acts 4:33
- Acts 6:8
- Acts 14:4
- Colossians 4:6
- Colossians 4:18
- Genesis 43:28-29
- James 4:7
- John 1:16
- Philippians 4:21-23
- Revelation 22:20-21

Word Data:

- Strong’s: H2580, H2587, H2589, H2603, H8467, G21430, G54850, G55430

(Go back to: [Job 42 General Notes](#))

guilt, guilty

Definition:

The term “guilt” refers to the fact of having sinned or committed a crime.

- To “be guilty” means to have done something morally wrong, that is, to have disobeyed God.
- The opposite of “guilty” is “innocent.”

Translation Suggestions:

- Some languages might translate “guilt” as “the weight of sin” or “the counting of sins.”
- Ways to translate to “be guilty” could include a word or phrase that means, to “be at fault” or “having done something morally wrong” or “having committed a sin.”

(See also: innocent, iniquity, punish, [sin](#))

Bible References:

- Exodus 28:36-38
- Isaiah 6:7
- James 2:10-11
- John 19:4
- Jonah 1:14

Examples from the Bible stories:

- **39:2** They brought many witnesses who lied about him (Jesus). However, their statements did not agree with each other, so the Jewish leaders could not prove he was **guilty** of anything.
- **39:11** After speaking with Jesus, Pilate went out to the crowd and said, “I find no **guilt** in this man.” But the Jewish leaders and the crowd shouted, “Crucify him!” Pilate replied, “He is not **guilty**.” But they shouted even louder. Then Pilate said a third time, “He is not **guilty**!”
- **40:4** Jesus was crucified between two robbers. One of them mocked Jesus, but the other said, “Don’t you fear God? We are **guilty**, but this man is innocent.”
- **49:10** Because of your sin, you are **guilty** and deserve to die.

Word Data:

- Strong’s: H0816, H0817, H0818, H5352, H5355, H7563, G03380, G17770, G37840, G52670

(Go back to: [Job 31 General Notes](#))

heaven, sky, heavens, heavenly

Definition:

The term that is translated as “heaven” usually refers to where God lives. The same word can also mean “sky,” depending on the context.

- The term “heavens” refers to everything we see above the earth, including the sun, moon, and stars. It also includes the heavenly bodies, such as far-off planets, that we can’t directly see from the earth.
- The term “sky” refers to the blue expanse above the earth that has clouds and the air we breathe. Often the sun and moon are also said to be “up in the sky.”
- In some contexts in the Bible, the word “heaven” could refer to either the sky or the place where God lives.

Translation Suggestions:

- For “kingdom of heaven” in the book of Matthew, it is best to keep the word “heaven” since this is distinctive to Matthew’s gospel.
- The terms “heavens” or “heavenly bodies” could also be translated as “sun, moon, and stars” or “all the stars in the universe.”
- The phrase, “stars of heaven” could be translated as “stars in the sky” or “stars in the galaxy” or “stars in the universe.”

(See also: kingdom of God)

Bible References:

- 1 Kings 8:22-24
- 1 Thessalonians 1:8-10
- 1 Thessalonians 4:17
- Deuteronomy 9:1
- Ephesians 6:9
- Genesis 1:1
- Genesis 7:11
- John 3:12
- John 3:27
- Matthew 5:18
- Matthew 5:46-48

Examples from the Bible stories:

- **4:2** They even began building a tall tower to reach **heaven**.
- **14:11** He (God) gave them bread from **heaven**, called “manna.”
- **23:7** Suddenly, the skies were filled with angels praising God, saying, “Glory to God in **heaven** and peace on earth to the people he favors!”
- **29:9** Then Jesus said, “This is what my **heavenly** Father will do to every one of you if you do not forgive your brother from your heart.”
- **37:9** Then Jesus looked up to **heaven** and said, “Father, thank you for hearing me.”
- **42:11** Then Jesus went up to **heaven**, and a cloud hid him from their sight.

Word Data:

- Strong’s: H1534, H6160, H6183, H7834, H8064, H8065, G09320, G20320, G33210, G37700, G37710, G37720

(Go back to: [Job 16 General Notes](#); [Notes](#); [Notes](#))

holy, holiness, unholy, sacred

Definition:

The terms “holy” and “holiness” refer to the character of God that is totally set apart and separated from everything that is sinful and imperfect.

- Only God is absolutely holy. He makes people and things holy.
- A person who is holy belongs to God and has been set apart for the purpose of serving God and bringing him glory.
- An object that God has declared to be holy is one that he has set apart for his glory and use, such as an altar that is for the purpose of offering sacrifices to him.
- People cannot approach him unless he allows them to, because he is holy and they are merely human beings, sinful and imperfect.
- In the Old Testament, God set apart the priests as holy for special service to him. They had to be ceremonially cleansed from sin in order to approach God.
- God also set apart as holy certain places and things that belonged to him or in which he revealed himself, such as his temple.

Literally, the term “unholy” means “not holy.” It describes someone or something that does not honor God.

- This word is used to describe someone who dishonors God by rebelling against him.
- A thing that is called “unholy” could be described as being common, profane or unclean. It does not belong to God.

The term “sacred” describes something that relates to worshiping God or to the pagan worship of false gods.

- In the Old Testament, the term “sacred” was 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: [Job 25 General Notes](#))

intercede, intercession

Definition:

The terms “intercede” and “intercession” refer to making requests to someone on behalf of another person. In the Bible this usually refers to praying for other people.

- The expressions “make intercession for” and “intercede for” mean to make requests to God for the benefit of other people.
- The Bible teaches that the Holy Spirit intercedes for us, that is, he prays to God for us.
- A person intercedes for other people by making requests for them to someone in authority.

Translation Suggestions:

- Other ways to translate “intercede” could include “plead for” or “urge (someone) to do something (for someone else).”
- The noun “intercessions” could be translated as “appeals” or “requests” or “urgent prayers.”
- The phrase “make intercession for” could be translated as “make requests for the benefit of” or “make an appeal on behalf of” or “ask God to help” or “appeal to God to bless (someone).”

(See also: pray)

Bible References:

- Hebrews 7:25-26
- Isaiah 53:12
- Jeremiah 29:6-7
- Romans 8:26-27
- Romans 8:33-34

Word Data:

- Strong’s: H6293, G17830, G17930, G52410

(Go back to: [Job 16 General Notes](#); [Notes](#))

judge, judgment

Definition:

The terms “judge” and “judgment” often refer to making a decision about whether or not something is good, wise, or right. However, these terms can also refer to actions performed by a person as the result of a decision, usually in the context of deciding that something is bad, wrong, or evil.

- The terms “judge” and “judgment” can also mean “to cause harm to” (usually because God has decided a person or nation’s actions are wicked).
- The “judgment of God” often refers to his decision to condemn something or someone as sinful.
- God’s judgment usually includes punishing people for their sin.
- The term “judge” can also mean “condemn.” God instructs his people not to judge each other in this way.
- Another meaning is “arbitrate between” or “judge between,” as in deciding which person is right in a dispute between them.
- In some contexts, God’s “judgments” are what he has decided is right and just. They are similar to his decrees, laws, or precepts.
- “Judgment” can refer to wise decision-making ability. A person who lacks “judgment” does not have the wisdom to make wise decisions.

Translation Suggestions:

- Depending on the context, ways to translate to “judge” could include to “decide” or to “condemn” or to “punish” or to “decree.”
- The term “judgment” could be translated as “punishment” or “decision” or “verdict” or “decree” or “condemnation.”
- In some contexts, the phrase “in the judgment” could also be translated as “on judgment day” or “during the time when God judges people.”

(See also: decree, judge, judgment day, [just](#), law, [law](#))

Bible References:

- 1 John 4:17
- 1 Kings 3:9
- Acts 10:42-43
- Isaiah 3:14
- James 2:4
- Luke 6:37
- Micah 3:9-11
- Psalm 54:1

Examples from the Bible stories:

- **19:16** The prophets warned the people that if they did not stop doing evil and start obeying God, then God would **judge** them as guilty, and he would punish them.
- **21:8** A king is someone who rules over a kingdom and **judges** the people. The Messiah would come would be the perfect king who would sit on the throne of his ancestor David. He would reign over the whole world forever, and who would always **judge** honestly and make the right decisions.
- **39:4** The high priest tore his clothes in anger and shouted to the other religious leaders, “We do not need any more witnesses! You have heard him say that he is the Son of God. What is your **judgment**?”

- **50:14** But God will **judge** everyone who does not believe in Jesus. He will throw them into hell, where they will weep and grind their teeth in anguish forever.

Word Data:

- Strong's: H0148, H0430, H1777, H1778, H1779, H1780, H1781, H1782, H2940, H4055, H4941, H6414, H6415, H6416, H6417, H6419, H6485, H8196, H8199, H8201, G01440, G03500, G09680, G11060, G12520, G13410, G13450, G13480, G13490, G29170, G29190, G29200, G29220, G29230, G42320

(Go back to: [Job 12 General Notes](#); [Notes](#))

just, justice, unjust, injustice, justify, justification

Definition:

“Just” and “justice” refer to treating people fairly according to God’s laws. Human laws that reflect God’s standard of right behavior toward others are also just.

- To be “just” is to act in a fair and right way toward others. It also implies honesty and integrity to do what is morally right in God’s eyes.
- To act “justly” means to treat people in a way that is right, good, and proper according to God’s laws.
- To receive “justice” means to be treated fairly under the law, either being protected by the law or being punished for breaking the law.
- Sometimes the term “just” has the broader meaning of “righteous” or “following God’s laws.”

The terms “unjust” and “unjustly” refer to treating people in an unfair and often harmful manner.

- An “injustice” is something bad that is done to someone that the person did not deserve. It refers to treating people unfairly.
- Injustice also means that some people are treated badly while others are treated well.
- Someone who is acting in an unjust way is being “partial” or “prejudiced” because he is not treating people equally.

The terms “justify” and “justification” refer to causing a guilty person to be righteous. Only God can truly justify people.

- When God justifies people, he forgives their sins and makes it as though they have no sin. He justifies sinners who repent and trust in Jesus to save them from their sins.
- “Justification” refers to what God does when he forgives a person’s sins and declares that person to be righteous in his sight.

Translation Suggestions:

- Depending on the context, other ways to translate “just” could include “morally right” or “fair.”
- The term “justice” could be translated as “fair treatment” or “deserved consequences.”
- To “act justly” could be translated as “treat fairly” or “behave in a just way.”
- In some contexts, “just” could be translated as “righteous” or “upright.”
- Depending on the context, “unjust” could also be translated as “unfair” or “partial” or “unrighteous.”
- The phrase “the unjust” could be translated as “the unjust ones” or “unjust people” or “people who treat others unfairly” or “unrighteous people” or “people who disobey God.”
- The term “unjustly” could be translated as “in an unfair manner” or “wrongly” or “unfairly.”
- Ways to translate “injustice” could include, “wrong treatment” or “unfair treatment” or “acting unfairly.” (See: [abstractnouns](#))
- Other ways to translate “justify” could include “declare (someone) to be righteous” or “cause (someone) to be righteous.”
- The term “justification” could be translated as “being declared righteous” or “becoming righteous” or “causing people to be righteous.”
- The phrase “resulting in justification” could be translated as “so that God justified many people” or “which resulted in God causing people to be righteous.”
- The phrase “for our justification” could be translated as “in order that we could be made righteous by God.”

(See also: [forgive](#), [guilt](#), [judge](#), [righteous](#), [righteous](#))

Bible References:

- Genesis 44:16
- 1 Chronicles 18:14
- Isaiah 4:3-4
- Jeremiah 22:3
- Ezekiel 18:16-17
- Micah 3:8
- Matthew 5:43-45
- Matthew 11:19
- Matthew 23:23-24
- Luke 18:3
- Luke 18:8
- Luke 18:13-14
- Luke 21:20-22
- Luke 23:41
- Acts 13:38-39
- Acts 28:4
- Romans 4:1-3
- Galatians 3:6-9
- Galatians 3:11
- Galatians 5:3-4
- Titus 3:6-7
- Hebrews 6:10
- James 2:24
- Revelation 15:3-4

Examples from the Bible stories:

- **17:9** David ruled with **justice** and faithfulness for many years, and God blessed him.
- **18:13** Some of these kings (of Judah) were good men who ruled **justly** and worshiped God.
- **19:16** They (the prophets) all told the people to stop worshiping idols and to start showing **justice** and mercy to others.
- **50:17** Jesus will rule his kingdom with peace and **justice**, and he will be with his people forever.

Word Data:

- Strong's: H0205, H2555, H3477, H4941, H5765, H5766, H5767, H6662, H6663, H6664, H6666, H8003, H8264, H8636, G00910, G00930, G00940, G13420, G13440, G13450, G13460, G13470, G17380

(Go back to: [Job 9 General Notes](#); [Notes](#); [Notes](#); [Notes](#); [Notes](#))

lament, lamentation

Definition:

The terms “lament” and “lamentation” refer to a strong expression of mourning, sorrow, or grief.

- Sometimes this includes deep regret for sin, or compassion for people who have experienced disaster.
- A lamentation could include moaning, weeping, or wailing.

Translation Suggestions:

- The term to “lament” could be translated as to “deeply mourn” or to “wail in grief” or to “be sorrowful.”
- A “lamentation” (or a “lament”) could be translated as “loud wailing and weeping” or “deep sorrow” or “sorrowful sobbing” or “mournful moaning.”

Bible References:

- Amos 8:9-10
- Ezekiel 32:1-2
- Jeremiah 22:18
- Job 27:15-17
- Lamentations 2:5
- Lamentations 2:8
- Micah 2:4
- Psalm 102:1-2
- Zechariah 11:2

Word Data:

- Strong’s: H0056, H0421, H0578, H0592, H1058, H4553, H5091, H5092, H5594, H6088, H6969, H7015, H8567, G23540, G23550, G28700, G28750

(Go back to: [Job 14 General 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: [Job 1 General Notes](#))

mercy, merciful

Definition:

The terms “mercy” and “merciful” refer to helping people who are in need, especially when they are in a lowly or humbled condition.

- The term “mercy” can also include the meaning of not punishing people for something they have done wrong.
- A powerful person such as a king is described as “merciful” when he treats people kindly instead of harming them.
- Being merciful also means to forgive someone who has done something wrong against us.
- We show mercy when we help people who are in great need.
- God is merciful to us, and he wants us to be merciful to others.

Translation Suggestions:

- Depending on the context, “mercy” could be translated as “kindness” or “compassion” or “pity.”
- The term “merciful” could be translated as “showing pity” or “being kind to” or “forgiving.”
- To “show mercy to” or “have mercy on” could be translated as “treat kindly” or “be compassionate toward.”

(See also: compassion, forgive)

Bible References:

- 1 Peter 1:3-5
- 1 Timothy 1:13
- Daniel 9:17
- Exodus 34:6
- Genesis 19:16
- Hebrews 10:28-29
- James 2:13
- Luke 6:35-36
- Matthew 9:27
- Philippians 2:25-27
- Psalms 41:4-6
- Romans 12:1

Examples from the Bible stories:

- **19:16** They (the prophets) all told the people to stop 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: [Job 33 General Notes](#))

prophet, prophecy, prophesy, seer, prophetess

Definition:

A “prophet” is a man who speaks God’s messages to people. A woman who does this is called a “prophetess.”

- Often prophets warned people to turn away from their sins and obey God.
- A “prophecy” is the message that the prophet speaks. To “prophesy” means to speak God’s messages.
- Often the message of a prophecy was about something that would happen in the future.
- Many prophecies in the Old Testament have already been fulfilled.
- In the Bible the collection of books written by prophets are sometimes referred to as “the prophets.”
- For example the phrase, “the law and the prophets” is a way of referring to all the Hebrew scriptures, which are also known as the “Old Testament.”
- An older term for a prophet was “seer” or “someone who sees.”
- Sometimes the term “seer” refers to a false prophet or to someone who practices divination.

Translation Suggestions:

- The term “prophet” could be translated as “God’s spokesman” or “man who speaks for God” or “man who speaks God’s messages.”
- A “seer” could be translated as “person who sees visions” or “man who sees the future from God.”
- The term “prophetess” could be translated as “spokeswoman for God” or “woman who speaks for God” or “woman who speaks God’s messages.”
- Ways to translate “prophecy” could include, “message from God” or “prophet message.”
- The term “prophesy” could be translated as “speak words from God” or “tell God’s message.”
- The figurative expression, “law and the prophets” could also be translated as “the books of the law and of the prophets” or “everything written about God and his people, including God’s laws and what his prophets preached.” (See: [synecdoche](#))
- When referring to a prophet (or seer) of a false god, it may be necessary to translate this as “false prophet (seer)” or “prophet (seer) of a false god” or “prophet of Baal,” for example.

(See also: Baal, divination, false god, false prophet, fulfill, [law](#), vision)

Bible References:

- 1 Thessalonians 2:14-16
- Acts 3:25
- John 1:43-45
- Malachi 4:4-6
- Matthew 1:23
- Matthew 2:18
- Matthew 5:17
- Psalm 51:1

Examples from the Bible stories:

- **12:12** When the Israelites saw that the Egyptians were dead, they trusted in God and believed that Moses was a **prophet** of God.
- **17:13** God was very angry about what David had done, so he sent the **prophet** Nathan to tell David how evil his sin was.
- **19:1** Throughout the history of the Israelites, God sent them **prophets**. The **prophets** heard messages from God and then told the people God’s messages.

- **19:6** All the people of the entire kingdom of Israel, including the 450 **prophets** of Baal, came to Mount Carmel.
- **19:17** Most of the time, the people did not obey God. They often mistreated the **prophets** and sometimes even killed them.
- **21:9** The **prophet** Isaiah **prophesied** that the Messiah would be born from a virgin.
- **43:5** "This fulfills the **prophecy** made by the **prophet** Joel in which God said, 'In the last days, I will pour out my Spirit.'"
- **43:7** "This fulfills the **prophecy** which says, 'You will not let your Holy One rot in the grave.'"
- **48:12** Moses was a great **prophet** who proclaimed the word of God. But Jesus is the greatest **prophet** of all. He is the Word of God.

Word Data:

- Strong's: H2372, H2374, H4853, H5012, H5013, H5016, H5017, H5029, H5030, H5031, H5197, G24950, G43940, G43950, G43960, G43970, G43980, G55780

(Go back to: [Job 16 General Notes](#); [Notes](#))

repent, repentance

Definition:

The terms “repent” and “repentance” refer to turning away from sin and turning back to God.

- To “repent” literally means to “change one’s mind.”
- In the Bible, “repent” usually means to turn away from a sinful, human way of thinking and acting, and to turn to God’s way of thinking and acting.
- When people truly repent of their sins, God forgives them and helps them start obeying him.

Translation Suggestions:

- The term “repent” can be translated with a word or phrase that means “turn back (to God)” or “turn away from sin and toward God” or “turn toward God, away from sin.”
- Often the term “repentance” can be translated using the verb “repent.” For example, “God has given repentance to Israel” could be translated as “God has enabled Israel to repent.”
- Other ways to translate “repentance” could include “turning away from sin” or “turning to God and away from sin.”

(See also: forgive, [sin](#), turn)

Bible References:

- Acts 3:19-20
- Luke 3:3
- Luke 3:8
- Luke 5:32
- Luke 24:47
- Mark 1:14-15
- Matthew 3:3
- Matthew 3:11
- Matthew 4:17
- Romans 2:4

Examples from the Bible stories:

- **16:2** After many years of disobeying God and being oppressed by their enemies, the Israelites **repented** and asked God to rescue them.
- **17:13** David **repented** of his sin and God forgave him.
- **19:18** They (prophets) warned people that God would destroy them if they did not **repent**.
- **24:2** Many people came out to the wilderness to listen to John. He preached to them, saying, “**Repent**, for the kingdom of God is near!”
- **42:8** “It was also written in the scriptures that my disciples will proclaim that everyone should repent in order to **receive** forgiveness for their sins.”
- **44:5** “So now, **repent** and turn to God so that your sins will be washed away.”

Word Data:

- Strong’s: H5150, H5162, H5164, G02780, G33380, G33400, G33410

(Go back to: [Job 22 General Notes](#); [Notes](#); [Notes](#); [Notes](#))

restore, restoration

Definition:

The terms “restore” and “restoration” refer to causing something to return to its original place or condition.

- When a diseased body part is restored, this means it has been “healed.”
- A broken relationship that is restored has been “reconciled.” God restores sinful people and brings them back to himself.
- If people have been restored to their home country, they have been “brought back” or “returned” to that country.

Translation Suggestions:

- Depending on the context, ways to translate “restore” could include “renew” or “repay” or “return” or “heal” or “bring back.”
- Other expressions for this term could be “make new” or “make like new again.”
- When property is “restored,” it has been “repaired” or “replaced” or “given back” to its owner.
- Depending on the context, “restoration” could be translated as “renewal” or “healing” or “reconciliation.”

Bible References:

- 2 Kings 5:10
- Acts 3:21
- Acts 15:15-18
- Isaiah 49:5-6
- Jeremiah 15:19-21
- Lamentations 5:22
- Leviticus 6:5-7
- Luke 19:8
- Matthew 12:13
- Psalm 80:1-3

Word Data:

- Strong’s: H7725, H7999, H8421, G06000, G26750

(Go back to: [Job 42 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: [Job 14 General Notes](#))

righteous, righteousness, unrighteous, unrighteousness, upright, uprightness

Definition:

The term “righteousness” refers to God’s absolute goodness, justice, faithfulness, and love. Having these qualities makes God “righteous.” Because God is righteous, he must condemn sin.

- These terms are also often used to describe a person who obeys God and is morally good. However, because all people have sinned, no one except God is completely righteous.
- Examples of people the Bible who were called “righteous” include Noah, Job, Abraham, Zachariah, and Elisabeth.
- When people trust in Jesus to save them, God cleanses them from their sins and declares them to be righteous because of Jesus’ righteousness.

The term “unrighteous” means to be sinful and morally corrupt. “Unrighteousness” refers to sin or the condition of being sinful.

- These terms especially refer to living in a way that disobeys God’s teachings and commands.
- Unrighteous people are immoral in their thoughts and actions.
- Sometimes “the unrighteous” refers specifically to people who do not believe in Jesus.

The terms “upright” and “uprightness” refer to acting in a way that follows God’s laws.

- The meaning of these words includes the idea of standing up straight and looking directly ahead.
- A person who is “upright” is someone who obeys God’s rules and does not do things that are against his will.
- Terms such as “integrity” and “righteous” have similar meanings and are sometimes used in parallelism constructions, such as “integrity and uprightness.” (See: [parallelism](#))

Translation Suggestions:

- When it describes God, the term “righteous” could be translated as “perfectly good and just” or “always acting rightly.”
- God’s “righteousness” could also be translated as “perfect faithfulness and goodness.”
- When it describes people who are obedient to God, the term “righteous” could also be translated as “morally good” or “just” or “living a God-pleasing life.”
- The phrase “the righteous” could also be translated as “righteous people” or “God-fearing people.”
- Depending on the context, “righteousness” could also be translated with a word or phrase that means “goodness” or “being perfect before God” or “acting in a right way by obeying God” or “doing perfectly good.”
- The term “unrighteous” could simply be translated as “not righteous.”
- Depending on the context, other ways to translate this could include “wicked” or “immoral” or “people who rebel against God” or “sinful.”
- The phrase “the unrighteous” could be translated as “unrighteous people.”
- The term “unrighteousness” could be translated as “sin” or “evil thoughts and actions” or “wickedness.”
- If possible, it is best to translate this in a way that shows its relationship to “righteous, righteousness.”
- Ways to translate “upright” could include “acting rightly” or “one who acts rightly” or “following God’s laws” or “obedient to God” or “behaving in a way that is right.”
- The term “uprightness” could be translated as “moral purity” or “good moral conduct” or “rightness.”
- The phrase “the upright” could be translated as “people who are upright” or “upright people.”

(See also: evil, faithful, good, [holy](#), integrity, [just](#), law, [law](#), obey, pure, [righteous](#), [sin](#), unlawful)

Bible References:

- Deuteronomy 19:16
- Job 1:8
- Psalms 37:30
- Psalms 49:14
- Psalms 107:42
- Ecclesiastes 12:10-11
- Isaiah 48:1-2
- Ezekiel 33:13
- Malachi 2:6
- Matthew 6:1
- Acts 3:13-14
- Romans 1:29-31
- 1 Corinthians 6:9
- Galatians 3:7
- Colossians 3:25
- 2 Thessalonians 2:10
- 2 Timothy 3:16
- 1 Peter 3:18-20
- 1 John 1:9
- 1 John 5:16-17

Examples from the Bible stories:

- **3:2** But Noah found favor with God. He was a **righteous** man, living among wicked people.
- **4:8** God declared that Abram was **righteous** because he believed in God's promise.
- **17:2** David was a humble and **righteous** man who trusted and obeyed God.
- **23:1** Joseph, the man Mary was engaged to, was a **righteous** man.
- **50:10** Then the **righteous** ones will shine like the sun in the kingdom of God their Father.

Word Data:

- Strong's: H0205, H1368, H2555, H3072, H3474, H3476, H3477, H3483, H4334, H4339, H4749, H5228, H5229, H5324, H5765, H5766, H5767, H5977, H6662, H6663, H6664, H6665, H6666, H6968, H8535, H8537, H8549, H8552, G00930, G00940, G04580, G13410, G13420, G13430, G13440, G13450, G13460, G21180, G37160, G37170

(Go back to: [Job 13 General Notes](#); [Notes](#); [Notes](#); [Notes](#); [Notes](#); [Notes](#))

sin, sinful, sinner, sinning

Definition:

The term “sin” refers to actions, thoughts, and words that are against God’s will and laws. Sin can also refer to not doing something that God wants us to do.

- Sin includes anything we do that does not obey or please God, even things that other people don’t know about.
- Thoughts and actions that disobey God’s will are called “sinful.”
- Because Adam sinned, all human beings are born with a “sinful nature,” a nature that 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: [Introduction to Job](#); [Job 2 General Notes](#); [Notes](#); [Notes](#); [Notes](#); [Notes](#); [Notes](#); [Notes](#); [Notes](#); [Notes](#); [Notes](#); [Notes](#); [Notes](#))

tempt, temptation

Definition:

To tempt someone is to try to get that person to do something wrong.

- A temptation is something that causes a person to want to do something wrong.
- People are tempted by their own sinful nature and by other people.
- Satan also tempts people to disobey God and to sin against God by doing wrong things.
- Satan tempted Jesus and tried to get him to do something wrong, but Jesus resisted all of Satan's temptations and never sinned.
- Someone who is "tempting God" is not trying to get him to do something wrong, but rather, is continuing in stubborn disobedience of him to the point that God must respond by punishing him. This is also called "testing God."

Translation Suggestions:

- The term "tempt" can be translated as "try to cause to sin" or "entice" or "cause a desire to sin."
- Ways to translate "temptations" could include, "things that tempt" or "things that entice someone to sin" or "things that cause desire to do something wrong."
- To "tempt God" could be translated as to "put God to the test" or to "test God" or to "try God's patience" or to "cause God to have to punish" or to "stubbornly keep disobeying God."

(See also: disobey, Satan, [sin](#), test)

Bible References:

- 1 Thessalonians 3:4-5
- Hebrews 4:15
- James 1:13
- Luke 4:2
- Luke 11:4
- Matthew 26:41

Examples from the Bible stories:

- **25:1** Then Satan came to Jesus and **tempted** him to sin.
- **25:8** Jesus did not give in to Satan's **temptations**, so Satan left him.
- **38:11** Jesus told his disciples to pray that they would not enter into **temptation**.

Word Data:

- Strong's: H0974, H4531, H5254, G05510, G15980, G39850, G39860, G39870

(Go back to: [Job 42 General 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: [Job 16 General Notes](#); [Notes](#); [Notes](#); [Notes](#); [Notes](#); [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: [Job 1 General Notes](#); [Notes](#); [Notes](#))

wise, wisdom

Definition:

The term “wise” describes someone who understands what is the right and moral thing to do and then does that. “Wisdom” is the understanding and practice of what is true and morally right.

- Being wise includes the ability to make good decisions, especially choosing to do what pleases God.
- People become wise by listening to God and humbly obeying his will.
- A wise person will show the fruits of the Holy Spirit in his life, such as joy, kindness, love, and patience.

Translation Suggestions:

- Depending on the context, other ways to translate “wise” could include “obedient to God” or “sensible and obedient” or “God-fearing.”
- “Wisdom” could be translated by a word or phrase that means “wise living” or “sensible and obedient living” or “good judgment.”
- It is best to translate “wise” and “wisdom” in such a way that they are different terms from other key terms like righteous or obedient.

(See also: obey, fruit)

Bible References:

- Acts 6:3
- Colossians 3:15-17
- Exodus 31:6
- Genesis 3:6
- Isaiah 19:12
- Jeremiah 18:18
- Matthew 7:24

Examples from the Bible stories:

- **2:5** She also wanted to be **wise**, so she picked some of the fruit and ate it.
- **18:1** When Solomon asked for **wisdom**, God was pleased and made him the **wisest** man in the world.
- **23:9** Some time later, **wise** men from countries far to the east saw an unusual star in the sky.
- **45:1** He (Stephen) had a good reputation and was full of the Holy Spirit and of **wisdom**.

Word Data:

- Strong's: H0998, H1350, H2445, H2449, H2450, H2451, H2452, H2454, H2942, H3820, H3823, H6195, H6493, H6912, H7535, H7919, H7922, H8454, G46780, G46790, G46800, G49200, G54280, G54290, G54300

(Go back to: [Job 9 General Notes](#); [Notes](#))

Contributors

unfoldingWord® Translation Notes Contributors

Door43 World Missions Community

Aaron Fenlason

Abner Bauman

Adam Van Goor

Alan Bird

Alan Borkenhagen

Alfred Van Dellen

Alice Wright

Allen Bair

Allyson Presswood Nance

Amanda Adams

Andrew Belcher

Andrew Johnson

Andrew Rice

Angelo Palo

Anita Moreau

April Linton

Aurora Lee

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Wendy Coleman
Wendy Colon
Wilbur Zirk
Wil Gipson
William Carson
William Cline
William Dickerson
William Smitherman
William Wilder
Yvonne Tallent

unfoldingWord® Literal Text Contributors

Nicholas Alsop
Scott Bayer
Larry T Brooks, M.Div., Assemblies of God Theological Seminary
Matt Carlton
George "Drew" Curley, M.Div., PhD, Professor of Biblical Languages
Dan Dennison
Jamie Duguid
Paul M Fahnestock, M.Div. Reformed Theological Seminary, D.Min. Pittsburgh Theological Seminary
Michael Francis
Laura Glassel, MA in Bible Translation
Jesse Griffin, BA Biblical Studies, MA Biblical Languages

Jesse Harris
C. Harry Harriss, M.Div.
Alrick G. Headley, M.Div., Th.M.
Bram van den Heuvel, M.A.
John Huffman
D. Allen Hutchison, MA in Old Testament, MA in New Testament
Jack Messarra
Gene Mullen
Adam W. Nagelvoort, M.Div. Academic Ministries, Columbia International University
Timothy Neu, Ph.D. Biblical Studies
Kristy Nickell
Tom Nickell
Elizabeth Oakes, BA in Religious Studies, Linguistics
Perry Oakes, PhD in Old Testament, MA in Linguistics
James N. Pohlig, M.Div., MA in Linguistics, D. Litt. in Biblical Languages
Ward Pyles, M.Div., Western Baptist Theological Seminary
Susan Quigley, MA in Linguistics
Dean Ropp
Joel D. Ruark, M.A.Th., Th.M., Ph.D. in Old Testament, University of Stellenbosch
Larry Sallee, Th.M Dallas Theological Seminary, D.Min. Columbia Biblical Seminary
Peter Smircich, BA Philosophy
Doug Smith, M.T.S., M.Div., Th.M., Midwestern Baptist Theological Seminary
Leonard Smith
Suzanna Smith
Tim Span
Dave Statezni, BA Orig langs., M.Div. Fuller Theological Seminary
Maria Tijerina
David Trombold, M. Div.
Aaron Valdizan, M.Div., Th.M. in Old Testament, The Masters Seminary
James Vigen
Hendrik "Henry" de Vries
Thomas Warren, M.Div., Trinity Evangelical Divinity School, D.Min, Reformed Theological Seminary
Angela Westmoreland, M.A. in Theological Studies (Biblical Language track)
Henry Whitney, BA Linguistics
Benjamin Wright, MA Applied Linguistics, Dallas International University
Grant Ailie, BA Biblical Studies, M.Div.
Door43 World Missions Community

unfoldingWord® Translation Academy Contributors

Jesse Griffin, BA in Biblical Studies, MA in Biblical Languages
Perry Oakes, PhD in Old Testament, MA in Linguistics, MA in Theology, BA in Biblical Studies
Susan Quigley, MA in Linguistics
Henry Whitney, BA in Linguistics
James N. Pohlig, M.Div., MA in Linguistics, D. Litt. in Biblical Languages
Ben Jore, BA Biblical Studies, M.Div.
Joel D. Ruark, PhD in Old Testament, MA in Theology
Todd L. Price, PhD in New Testament/Linguistics
Bev Staley
Carol Brinneman
Jody Garcia
Kara Anderson
Kim Puterbaugh
Lizz Carlton
Door43 World Missions Community

unfoldingWord® Translation Words Contributors

Andrew Belcher

David Book

Jesse Griffin, BA Biblical Studies, MA Biblical Languages

Henry Whitney, Bible translator, Papua New Guinea, 1982–2000

Larry Saltee, Th.M Dallas Theological Seminary, D.Min. Columbia Biblical Seminary

Lizz Carlton

Jan Zanutto

Matthew Latham

Perry Oakes, PhD in Old Testament, MA in Linguistics

Richard Joki

Door43 World Missions Community

unfoldingWord® Translation Words Links Contributors

Door43 World Missions Community

Jesse Griffin (BA Biblical Studies, Liberty University; MA Biblical Languages, Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary)

Perry Oakes (BA Biblical Studies, Taylor University; MA Theology, Fuller Seminary; MA Linguistics, University of Texas at Arlington; PhD Old Testament, Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary)

Larry Saltee (Th.M Dallas Theological Seminary, D.Min. Columbia Biblical Seminary)

Joel D. Ruark (M.A.Th. Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary; Th.M. Stellenbosch University; Ph.D. Candidate in Old Testament Studies, Stellenbosch University)