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unfoldingWord® Translation Notes

Jeremiah

Introduction to Jeremiah

Part 1: General Introduction

Outline of the Book of Jeremiah

Yahweh calls Jeremiah to be a prophet (1:1-19)
Yahweh will judge and punish Judah (2:1-29:32)
Judah called to repent of spiritual adultery (2:1-6:30)
Judah judged for its false religion (7:1-10:16)
Jeremiah stands between Yahweh and his people (11:1-20:19)
Jeremiah confronts his people (21:1-29:32)
Yahweh promises to restore Judah (30:1-33:26)
Yahweh will bring the people of Judah back to their land (30:1-24)
Yahweh will create a new covenant with them (31:1-40)
The people will come back (32:1-44)
Kings descended from David will rule again (33:1-26)
Jeremiah suffers (34:1-45:5)
Before Yahweh punishes Judah (34:1-36:32)
While Yahweh punishes Judah (37:1-39:18)
After Yahweh punishes Judah (40:1-45:5)
Yahweh will judge and punish the nations (46:1-51:64)
Egypt (46:1-28)
Philistia (47:1-28)
Moab (48:1-47)
Ammon (49:1-6)
Edom (49:7-22)
Damascus (49:23-27)
Kedar (49:28-33)
Elam (49:34-39)
Babylonia (50:1-51:64)
Jerusalem captured and destroyed (52:1-34)

What is the Book of Jeremiah about?

The Book of Jeremiah gives the prophesies of a priest named Jeremiah. It also tells how Jeremiah suffered in different ways while he prophesied.

Jeremiah began prophesying about 626 B.C. After the death of King Josiah, many groups of people in Israel opposed Jeremiah. Some of these people wanted to depend on Egypt to protect the nation. Others were idol worshipers. They hated Jeremiah for denouncing their gods. (See: [god](#), [false god](#), [goddess](#), [idol](#), [idolater](#), [idolatrous](#), [idolatry](#))

During the reign of King Jehoiakim, Jeremiah prophesied about the temple of Yahweh. King Jehoiakim received some of these prophecies in writing and burned the document. The next king, Zedekiah, put Jeremiah in prison when he told the king to surrender to Babylon.

King Nebuchadnezzar of Babylonia invaded Judah in 597 B.C. He conquered Jerusalem in 587 B.C. He offered Jeremiah housing and money if Jeremiah would go to Babylon. But Jeremiah remained in Jerusalem to help the few Jews left there.

Shortly after that, Gedaliah, whom Nebuchadnezzar had chosen to be governor over Judah, was murdered. Some Jewish rebels captured Jeremiah and took him to Egypt. Those rebels went to Egypt to be protected there rather

than to live under Nebuchadnezzar's rule. Jeremiah may have died soon after being taken to Egypt. But while in Egypt he prophesied that the Babylonians would invade and conquer Egypt.

How should the title of this book be translated?

The traditional title of this book is "The Book of Jeremiah" or just "Jeremiah." Translators may also call it the "The Book about Jeremiah" or "What the Prophet Jeremiah Said." (See: [How to Translate Names](#))

Who wrote the Book of Jeremiah?

Jeremiah was a priest and a prophet living in Judah. He spoke the prophecies in the Book of Jeremiah. A friend named Baruch wrote down many of the prophecies as Jeremiah spoke them to him.

Part 2: Important Religious and Cultural Concepts

What is the new covenant that is presented in the Book of Jeremiah?

Jeremiah introduced a "new covenant" between Yahweh and Israel (chapter 31). Yahweh would "write this covenant on the hearts" of the people. This means that the covenant would be a part of the people instead of just written on stone or paper. The people would obey the new covenant with all their heart. (See: [covenant](#))

What relationship do Jeremiah's prophecies have to the other nations besides Israel?

Much of the Old Testament before this time is only about the nation of Israel. But Jeremiah also spoke of how Yahweh would judge other nations of the world. Yahweh would also punish the other nations for their wicked deeds. (See: [judge, judgment](#) and [sin, sinful, sinner, sinning](#))

Part 3: Important Translation Issues

Are the events in the Book of Jeremiah told in the order that they actually happened?

Many of the events in the Book of Jeremiah are not told in the order that they actually happened. Instead, the various prophecies appear to be arranged by topic.

Why does the Book of Jeremiah refer to this prophet as "he" or "him"?

Many times in the book, the author refers to Jeremiah as "Jeremiah" or "he." This is unusual if Jeremiah wrote the book. The reason this occurs is perhaps because Baruch, Jeremiah's secretary, wrote down some parts of the book. Translators should keep the words "Jeremiah" and "he."

Jeremiah 1

Jeremiah 1 General Notes

Structure and formatting

Some translations set each line of poetry farther to the right than the rest of the text to make it easier to read. The ULT does this with the poetry in 1:4-10.

Special concepts in this chapter

Jeremiah appointed as prophet

God chose Jeremiah to be his prophet and although many powerful people would be against him, God promised to protect him. This chapter emphasizes that Jeremiah was chosen by God to be his prophet. (See: [appoint](#), [appointed](#), [prophet](#), [prophecy](#), [prophesy](#), [seer](#), [prophetess](#) and [chosen](#), [choose](#), [chosen people](#), [Chosen One](#), [elect](#) and [promise](#), [promised](#))

Northern kingdom

This was not a reference to the northern kingdom of Israel; it had already been conquered. It was a reference to a kingdom located north of Judah, that is, to Babylon. The Babylonian armies would attack Judah and conquer it.

Opposition

The people were supposed to listen to God's prophet. When he prophesied, they should have repented. Instead, they persecuted Jeremiah. (See: [repent](#), [repentance](#))

Jeremiah 1:1

Jeremiah son of Hilkiah, one of the priests

“Jeremiah son of Hilkiah. Jeremiah was one of the priests”

Hilkiah

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

Anathoth

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

the land of Benjamin

“the land that belongs to the tribe of Benjamin”

ULT

¹ These are the words of Jeremiah son of Hilkiah, one of the priests at Anathoth in the land of Benjamin.

Jeremiah 1:2

The word of Yahweh came to him

This idiom is used to announce that God gave messages to him.
Alternate translation: "Yahweh gave messages to him" or "Yahweh spoke to Jeremiah" (See: [Idiom](#))

ULT

² The word of Yahweh came to him in the days of Josiah son of Amon, king of Judah, in the 13th year of his reign.

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.

in the days of Josiah son of Amon, king of Judah

Here "in the days of" is an idiom that refers to the time when a king reigned. Alternate translation: "when Josiah son of Amon was king of Judah" (See: [Idiom](#))

the thirteenth

The word "thirteenth" is the ordinal form of "13." (See: [Ordinal Numbers](#))

Amon

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

his reign

"Josiah's reign"

Jeremiah 1:3

the eleventh

The word “eleventh” is the ordinal form of “11.”(See: [Ordinal Numbers](#))

It also came

“The word of Yahweh also came”

ULT

³ It also came in the days of Jehoiakim son of Josiah, king of Judah, until the fifth month of the 11th year of Zedekiah son of Josiah, king of Judah, when the people of Jerusalem were taken away as prisoners.

in the days of Jehoiakim son of Josiah, king of Judah

Here “in the days of” is an idiom that refers to the time when a king reigned. Alternate translation: “when Johoiakim son of Josiah was king of Judah” (See: [Idiom](#))

the fifth month

This is the fifth month of the Hebrew calendar. It is during the last part of July and the first part of August on Western calendars. (See: [Hebrew Months](#) and [Ordinal Numbers](#))

of Zedekiah

This refers to the rule of Zedekiah. This can be stated explicitly. Alternate translation: “of the reign of Zedekiah” (See: [Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information](#))

when the people of Jerusalem were taken away as prisoners

This can be stated in active form. It can be stated clearly that they were taken to Babylon. Alternate translation: “when the army of Babylon took the people of Jerusalem away as prisoners” or “when the army of Babylon took the people of Jerusalem as prisoners to Babylon” (See: [Active or Passive](#) and [Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information](#))

Jeremiah 1:4

The word of Yahweh came to me, saying

This idiom is used to introduce a special message from God.
Alternate translation: "Yahweh gave me a message. He said" or
"Yahweh spoke this message to me" (See: [Idiom](#))

ULT

⁴ The word of Yahweh came to me,
saying,

Jeremiah 1:5

formed you

“shaped you”

before you came out from the womb

This can also be expressed without referring to the womb. Alternate translation: “before you were born”

ULT

⁵ “Before I formed you in the womb, I chose you; before you came out from the womb I set you apart; I made you a prophet to the nations.”

Jeremiah 1:6

Ah, Lord Yahweh

Here “Ah” shows Jeremiah’s fear of doing what God has said.

I do not know how to speak

Jeremiah may have been exaggerating to show his fear of speaking in public. Alternate translation: “I do not know how to speak in public” or “I do not know how to make announcements to people” (See: [Hyperbole](#))

ULT

⁶ “Ah, Lord Yahweh!” I said, “Behold, I do not know how to speak, for I am only a young boy.”

Jeremiah 1:7

(There are no notes for this verse.)

ULT

⁷ But Yahweh said to me, "Do not say, 'I am only a young boy.' You must go everywhere I send you, and you must say whatever I command you!"

Jeremiah 1:8

Do not be afraid of them

“Do not be afraid of the people I will send you to speak to”

this is Yahweh’s declaration

The word “this” refers to what Yahweh just said in verses 7 and 8.

this is Yahweh’s declaration

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

ULT

⁸ Do not be afraid of them, for I am with you to rescue you—this is Yahweh’s declaration.”

Jeremiah 1:9

Then Yahweh reached out with his hand, touched my mouth

This could mean: (1) this is a metaphor representing Yahweh giving Jeremiah special authority to speak. Alternate translation: “Then it was as though Yahweh touched my mouth” or (2) Jeremiah was seeing a vision and Yahweh actually did this as a symbolic act of giving Jeremiah authority to speak. Alternate translation: “Then Yahweh touched my mouth with his hand” (See: [Metaphor](#) and [Symbolic Action](#))

ULT

⁹ Then Yahweh reached out with his hand, touched my mouth, and said to me, “Now, I have placed my word in your mouth.”

I have placed my word in your mouth

This phrase represents giving Jeremiah his message. Alternate translation: “I have given you my message for you to speak to the people” or “I have enabled you to tell the people my message” (See: [Metaphor](#))

Jeremiah 1:10

I am appointing you ... to uproot and break down, to destroy and overthrow, to build and plant

Jeremiah would do these things to various nations by saying that they would happen.

ULT

¹⁰ Look, I am appointing you today over nations and over kingdoms, to uproot and break down, to destroy and overthrow, to build and plant.”

to uproot and break down, to destroy and overthrow, to build and plant

He would uproot, break down, destroy and overthrow some nations, and he would build and plant other nations.

to uproot

God speaks of Jeremiah destroying the nations by what he says as if the nations were plants and he were to pull them up out of the ground. (See: [Metaphor](#))

to destroy and overthrow

Jeremiah uses these words, which mean almost the same thing, to show that this will certainly happen. (See: [Doublet](#))

to build and plant

God speaks of Jeremiah causing nations to become strong as if they were a building and he would build them, and as if they were plants and he would plant them. (See: [Metaphor](#))

Jeremiah 1:11

The word of Yahweh came to me, saying, “What

This idiom is used to introduce a special message from God. See how you translated similar words in [Jeremiah 1:4](#). Alternate translation: “Yahweh gave me a message. He said, ‘What’ or ‘Yahweh spoke this message to me: ‘What’” (See: [Idiom](#))

I see an almond branch

Yahweh shows Jeremiah a spiritual vision.

an almond branch

An almond tree is a kind of nut tree. (See: [Translate Unknowns](#))

ULT

¹¹ The word of Yahweh came to me, saying, “What do you see, Jeremiah?” I said, “I see an almond branch.”

Jeremiah 1:12

I am watching over my word to carry it out

This represents guaranteeing that he will do what he has said.

Alternate translation: "I am remembering my word to carry it out" or "I guarantee that I will do what I have said" (See: [Metaphor](#))

ULT

¹² Yahweh said to me, "You have seen well, for I am watching over my word to carry it out."

for I am watching over my word

The Hebrew words for "almond" and "watch over" sound almost the same. God wants Jeremiah to remember that God will make his word succeed.

Jeremiah 1:13

The word of Yahweh came to me a second time, saying

The idiom “The word of Yahweh came to” is used to introduce a special message from God. See how you translated a similar phrase in [Jeremiah 1:4](#), and make any changes as needed. Alternate translation: “Yahweh gave me a message a second time. He said” or “Yahweh spoke this second message to me” (See: [Idiom](#))

ULT

¹³ The word of Yahweh came to me a second time, saying, “What do you see?” I said, “I see a heated pot, whose surface is churning, tipping away from the north.”

whose surface is churning

The surface refers to the surface of the water in the pot. Jeremiah could see the water boiling. Alternate translation: “whose water is boiling” (See: [Metonymy](#))

tipping away from the north

This means that it was tipping toward the south, where Jeremiah was in Judah.

Jeremiah 1:14

Disaster will be opened up out of the north

“Disaster will be let loose from the north.” This represents God causing disaster to come from the north to the south. Alternate translation: “Disaster will come from the north” or “I will send disaster from the north” (See: [Metaphor](#))

ULT

14 Yahweh said to me, “Disaster will be released out of the north on all who live in this land.”

Jeremiah 1:15

Connecting Statement:

Yahweh continues speaking to Jeremiah about the disaster that would come from the north.

everyone

This generalization refers to the kings of the northern kingdoms. Alternate translation: “every king” or “all of the northern kings” (See: [Hyperbole](#))

ULT

15 For behold, I am calling all the tribes of the northern kingdoms, declares Yahweh. They will come, and everyone will set his throne at the entrance of the gates of Jerusalem, against all the walls that surround it, and against all the cities of Judah.

will set his throne at the entrance of the gates of Jerusalem

This could mean: (1) this represents ruling over Jerusalem. Alternate translation: “will rule at the gates of Jerusalem” or (2) this represents judging Jerusalem. Alternate translation: “will judge Jerusalem” (See: [Metaphor](#))

against all the walls that surround it

Setting their thrones “against all the walls that surround it” represents commanding their armies to destroy the walls surrounding Jerusalem. Alternate translation: “and they will command their armies to destroy the walls surrounding Judah” (See: [Metonymy](#))

against all the cities of Judah

Setting their thrones “against all the cities of Judah” represents commanding their armies to destroy all the cities of Judah. (See: [Metonymy](#))

Jeremiah 1:16

I will pronounce sentence against them

"I will announce how I will punish them"

I will pronounce sentence against them

"I will pronounce sentence against the people of Judah"

ULT

16 I will pronounce sentence against them for all their evil in forsaking me, in burning incense to other gods, and in worshiping what they made with their own hands.

worshiping what they made with their own hands

Since the people had made the idols with their own hands, they should have known that the idols are not worthy of worship.

Jeremiah 1:17

Connecting Statement:

Yahweh continues speaking to Jeremiah.

Do not be shattered ... I will shatter you

Here “be shattered” represents being extremely afraid, and “shatter” represents causing Jeremiah to be extremely afraid. Alternate translation: “Do not be terrified ... I will terrify you” (See: [Metaphor](#))

ULT

17 Get yourself ready! Stand up and say to them whatever I command you. Do not be shattered before them, or I will shatter you before them!

Jeremiah 1:18

Behold!

“Pay attention!”

Today I have made you a fortified city, an iron pillar, and bronze walls against the whole land

ULT

18 Behold! Today I have made you a fortified city, an iron pillar, and bronze walls against the whole land—against the kings of Judah, its officials, its priests, and the people of the land.

Being strong like these things represents being confident and unchanging in saying what God had told him to say. Alternate translation: “I have made you strong against the whole land like a fortified city, an iron pillar, and bronze walls” (See: [Metaphor](#))

iron ... bronze

These were the strongest materials known at that time. (See: [Metaphor](#))

the whole land

This represents all the people of the land. (See: [Metonymy](#))

Jeremiah 1:19

They will fight against you

This refers to the people of Judah.

this is Yahweh's declaration

Yahweh speaks of himself by name to express the certainty of what he is declaring. See how you translated this in [Jeremiah 1:8](#). Alternate translation: "this is what Yahweh has declared" or "this is what I, Yahweh, have declared" (See: [First, Second or Third Person](#))

ULT

¹⁹ They will fight against you, but they will not defeat you, for I will be with you to rescue you—this is Yahweh's declaration."

Jeremiah 2

Jeremiah 2 General Notes

Structure and formatting

Some translations set each line of poetry farther to the right than the rest of the text to make it easier to read. The ULT does this with the poetry in 2:1-31.

The prophecy revealed to Jeremiah is recorded in 2:1-3:5. Despite covering more than one chapter, this should be seen as one unit. (See: [prophet](#), [prophecy](#), [prophecy](#), [seer](#), [prophetess](#) and [reveal](#), [revealed](#), [revelation](#))

Special concepts in this chapter

The people refuse to learn

The people worshiped other gods, particularly the fertility gods of Baal and Ashtoreth. Even when the nation was punished, the people did not learn. (See: [god](#), [false god](#), [goddess](#), [idol](#), [idolater](#), [idolatrous](#), [idolatry](#))

Important figures of speech in this chapter

Metaphor

Israel is compared to a female camel or a wild donkey for being unstable and lustful. (See: [Metaphor](#))

Jeremiah 2:1

The word of Yahweh came to me, saying,

This idiom is used to introduce a special message from God. See how you translated similar words in [Jeremiah 1:4](#). Alternate translation: “Yahweh gave me a message. He said,” or “Yahweh spoke this message to me:” (See: [Idiom](#))

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¹ The word of Yahweh came to me, saying,

Jeremiah 2:2

Go and proclaim in the hearing of Jerusalem

“Go and speak where the people in Jerusalem can hear you”

I have called to mind on your behalf

“I remember about you”

the covenant faithfulness in your youthfulness, your love

The abstract nouns “faithfulness,” “youthfulness” and “love” can be expressed with the adjectives “faithful” and “young,” and the verb “love.” Alternate translation: “how, when you were young, you were faithful to our covenant, and how you loved me” (See: [Abstract Nouns](#))

when we were engaged

God speaks of his relationship with the people of Israel as though they had been engaged to be married. Alternate translation: “when we first agreed that we would marry each other” (See: [Metaphor](#))

the land that was not sown

This can be expressed in active form. Alternate translation: “the land where no one had sown seed” or “the land where no food was growing” (See: [Active or Passive](#))

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² “Go and proclaim in the hearing of Jerusalem. Say, ‘Yahweh says this: I have called to mind on your behalf the covenant faithfulness in your youthfulness, your love at the time when we were engaged, when you went after me in the wilderness, the land that was not sown.’”

Jeremiah 2:3

the firstfruits of his harvest

God speaks of Israel as if they were an offering dedicated to God.

Alternate translation: “like the firstfruits of his harvest” (See:

[Metaphor](#))

All who ate from the firstfruits were held guilty

God speaks of those who attacked Israel as if they were eating the offering that was set apart for God. Alternate translation: “All who attacked Israel were held guilty like people who ate from the first fruits of his harvest” (See:

[Metaphor](#))

disaster came upon them

The phrase “came upon them” is a metaphor for happened to them. Alternate translation: “Disasters happened to them” or “I made terrible things happen to them” (See: [Metaphor](#))

this is Yahweh’s declaration

Yahweh speaks of himself by name to express the certainty of what he is declaring. See how you translated this in [Jeremiah 1:8](#). Alternate translation: “this is what Yahweh has declared” or “this is what I, Yahweh, have declared” (See: [First, Second or Third Person](#))

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³ Israel was set apart to Yahweh, the firstfruits of his harvest! All who ate from the firstfruits were held guilty; disaster came upon them—this is Yahweh’s declaration.”

Jeremiah 2:4

house of Jacob, all you clans of the house of Israel

Jacob and Israel were two names for one man, and these two phrases refer to the same group of people. Alternate translation: “all you descendants of Jacob” (See: [Parallelism](#))

ULT

⁴ Hear the word of Yahweh, house of Jacob, all you clans of the house of Israel.

house of Jacob

The word “house” is a metonym for the family that lives in the house. In this case it refers to Jacob’s descendants. Alternate translation: “descendants of Jacob” (See: [Metonymy](#))

the house of Israel

The word “house” is a metonym for the family that lives in the house. In this case it refers to Israel’s descendants, who had become the nation of Israel. Alternate translation: “the Israelites” or “the Israelite people group” (See: [Metonymy](#))

Jeremiah 2:5

What did your fathers find wrong with me, that they went far from following me? That they went after useless idols and became useless themselves?

Yahweh uses these questions to say that since he has done no wrong, his people should not have rejected him and worshiped idols.

Alternate translation: "I did nothing wrong to your forefathers, so they should not have gone far from following me, and they should not have gone after useless idols. By doing that they themselves have become useless!" (See: [Rhetorical Question](#))

ULT

⁵ Yahweh says this, "What did your fathers find wrong with me, that they went far from following me? That they went after useless idols and became useless themselves?"

they went far from following me

This represents rejecting God and refusing to be loyal to him. Alternate translation: "they rejected me" (See: [Metaphor](#))

they went after useless idols

This represents choosing to be loyal to idols and worship them. Alternate translation: "they worshiped useless idols" (See: [Metaphor](#))

useless idols

idols that people can use for nothing good. The translation should not make people think that there are some idols that are useful.

Jeremiah 2:6

They did not say

It is implied that they should have said what follows. Alternate translation: "They should have said" (See: [Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information](#))

Where is Yahweh, who brought us ... Egypt?

This rhetorical question would have been used to show the people's need of Yahweh. Alternate translation: "We need Yahweh. He is the one who brought us ... Egypt." (See: [Rhetorical Question](#))

Where is Yahweh, who led us ... lives?

This rhetorical question would have been used to show the people's need of Yahweh. Alternate translation: "We need Yahweh. He is the one who led us ... lives." (See: [Rhetorical Question](#))

a land of drought and deep darkness

A "land of drought" is a land that does not have enough water. Here "deep darkness" is a metaphor for danger. Alternate translation: "a dangerous land where there is not enough water" (See: [Metaphor](#))

ULT

⁶ They did not say, 'Where is Yahweh, who brought us up from the land of Egypt? Where is Yahweh, who led us to the wilderness, into the land of the Arabah and pits, in a land of drought and deep darkness, a land through which no one passes and where no one lives?'

Jeremiah 2:7

you defiled my land, you made my inheritance an abomination!

These two phrases mean the same thing. Alternate translation: “you sinned and made the land I gave you disgusting to me!” (See: [Parallelism](#))

you defiled my land

Here “defiled” represents making the land unacceptable to God. They did this by sinning against him there when they worshiped idols. Alternate translation: “by sinning, you made my land no good” (See: [Metaphor](#))

you made my inheritance an abomination

“you made my inheritance disgusting by your sin” or “by sinning, you made my inheritance repulsive”

my inheritance

This could mean: (1) God is speaking of his land as if he had inherited it. Alternate translation: “my land” or (2) God is speaking of the land he gave to Israel as if he had given it to them as an inheritance. Alternate translation: “the land I gave you” or “the land I gave you as an inheritance” (See: [Metaphor](#))

ULT

⁷ But I brought you to the land of Carmel, to eat its fruit and other good things! Yet when you came, you defiled my land, you made my inheritance an abomination!

Jeremiah 2:8

Where is Yahweh?

This question would have shown that they wanted to obey Yahweh. Alternate translation: “We need to obey Yahweh!” (See: [Rhetorical Question](#))

did not care about me

“were not committed to me” or “rejected me”

The shepherds transgressed against me

The leaders are spoken of as if they were shepherds and the people who followed them were sheep. Alternate translation: “Their leaders sinned against me” (See: [Metaphor](#))

walked after unprofitable things

Here “walked after” represents obeying or worshiping. Alternate translation: “obeyed unprofitable things” or “worshiped unprofitable things” (See: [Metaphor](#))

unprofitable things

Unprofitable things are things that cannot help a person. Here it refers to idols.

ULT

⁸ The priests did not say, ‘Where is Yahweh?’ and the experts in the law did not know me! The shepherds transgressed against me. The prophets prophesied for Baal and walked after unprofitable things.

Jeremiah 2:9

your sons' sons

“your future generations”

ULT

⁹ So I will still accuse you—this is Yahweh's declaration—and I will accuse your sons' sons.

Jeremiah 2:10

cross over to the coasts of Kittim

Kittim was an island west of Israel. Today it is called Cyprus. It represented all the lands far to the west of Israel. Alternate translation: “go west across the ocean to Kittim” (See: [How to Translate Names](#))

Send messengers out to Kedar

Kedar is the name of a land far to the east of Israel. Alternate translation: “Send messengers far east to the land of Kedar” (See: [How to Translate Names](#))

ULT

10 For cross over to the coasts of Kittim and look. Send messengers out to Kedar and find out and see if there has ever before been anything like this.

Jeremiah 2:11

Has a nation exchanged gods ... gods?

God uses this question to tell the people of Israel that other nations continue to worship their own gods. They do not change and worship other gods. Alternate translation: "You will see that no nation has ever exchanged gods ... gods." (See: [Rhetorical Question](#))

ULT

11 Has a nation exchanged gods, even though they were not gods? But my people have exchanged their glory for what cannot help them. ^[1]

But my people have exchanged their glory for what cannot help them

Here God speaks as though he were not speaking directly to his people. Alternate translation: "But you, my people, have exchanged me, your glorious God, for what cannot help you" (See: [First, Second or Third Person](#))

their glory

This expression refers to God himself, who is glorious. Alternate translation: "their glorious God" or "me, your glorious God" (See: [Metonymy](#))

for what cannot help

Here false gods are spoken of in terms of what they cannot do. Alternate translation: "for false gods, which cannot help" or "for gods who cannot help" (See: [Metonymy](#))

Jeremiah 2:12

this is Yahweh's declaration

Yahweh speaks of himself by name to express the certainty of what he is declaring. See how you translated this in [Jeremiah 1:8](#). Alternate translation: "this is what Yahweh has declared" or "this is what I, Yahweh, have declared" (See: [First](#), [Second](#) or [Third Person](#))

ULT

¹² Shudder, heavens, because of this!
Be shocked and horrified—this is
Yahweh's declaration.

Jeremiah 2:13

have abandoned the springs of living waters

God speaks of himself as if he were springs of living waters.
Alternate translation: "have abandoned me, their springs of living waters" or "have abandoned me, who is like springs of living water"
(See: [Metaphor](#))

have dug out cisterns for themselves

God speaks of false gods as if they were cisterns that people dig in order to get water. Alternate translation: "have gone to false gods, which are like cisterns they have dug for themselves" (See: [Metaphor](#))

cisterns

deep holes for storing water

ULT

13 For my people have committed two evils against me: They have abandoned the springs of living waters, and they have dug out cisterns for themselves, broken cisterns that cannot hold water.

Jeremiah 2:14

Is Israel a slave? Was he born in his master's home? So why has he become plunder?

Though Yahweh was speaking to the people of Israel, he used the third person as though he were talking to someone else about Israel. Alternate translation: "Israel, are you a slave? Were you born at home? So why have you become plunder?" (See: [First, Second or Third Person](#))

ULT

¹⁴ Is Israel a slave? Was he born in his master's home? So why has he become plunder?

Is Israel a slave? Was he born in his master's home?

Yahweh uses these questions to tell why Israel should not have become plunder. Alternate translation: "Israel is not a slave. Israel was not born at home." (See: [Rhetorical Question](#))

Was he born in his master's home

Here "born in his master's home" is metonym for being born into slavery. Alternate translation: "Was he born a slave" (See: [Metonymy](#))

So why has he become plunder?

Yahweh uses this question to indicate that Israel should not have become plunder. Alternate translation: "So he should not have become plunder." (See: [Rhetorical Question](#))

So why has he become plunder

Here "become plunder" represents being attacked and taken as captives to another country. Alternate translation: "So why has Israel been taken away as captives" or "So why have Israel's enemies taken Israel away as captives" (See: [Metaphor](#))

Jeremiah 2:15

Young lions roared against him. They made a lot of noise

God speaks of Israel's enemies attacking Israel as if the enemies were lions roaring and attacking Israel. (See: [Metaphor](#))

made his land a horror

This represents destroying the land in such a way that people will feel horror when they see it. Alternate translation: "destroyed Israel's land" (See: [Metonymy](#))

Young lions roared

A roar is a loud sound that a wild animal makes when it attacks.

His cities are destroyed without any inhabitants

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "They have destroyed Israel's cities and now no one lives in them" (See: [Active or Passive](#))

inhabitants

people who live in a certain place

ULT

¹⁵ Young lions roared against him. They made a lot of noise and made his land a horror. His cities are destroyed without any inhabitants.

Jeremiah 2:16

Memphis and Tahpanhes

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

will shave your skull

The Egyptians shaved the head of their slaves to mark them as slaves.

will shave your skull

Some versions interpret the Hebrew text as “have cracked your skull.”

ULT

16 Also, the people of Memphis and Tahpanhes will shave your skull.

Jeremiah 2:17

Did you not do this to yourselves when you abandoned Yahweh your God, while he was leading you along the way?

Yahweh uses this question to remind Israel that it is their own fault that their enemies attacked them. Alternate translation: "You caused this yourselves by abandoning Yahweh your God while he was leading you along the way." (See: [Rhetorical Question](#))

ULT

¹⁷ Did you not do this to yourselves when you abandoned Yahweh your God, while he was leading you along the way?

Jeremiah 2:18

So now, why take the road to Egypt and drink the waters of Shihor? Why take the road to Assyria and drink the waters of the Euphrates River?

Yahweh uses these questions to remind his people that it does not do any good to ask Egypt and Assyria to help them. Alternate translation: "It does not help you to go to Egypt and drink from the waters of the Shihor River, or to go to Assyria and drink from the waters of the Euphrates River." (See: [Rhetorical Question](#))

ULT

¹⁸ So now, why take the road to Egypt and drink the waters of Shihor? Why take the road to Assyria and drink the waters of the Euphrates River?

why take the road to Egypt and drink the waters of Shihor ... Why take the road to Assyria and drink the waters of the Euphrates River

These are a metaphor for asking the Egyptian and Assyrian armies to help them. Alternate translation: "why ask the Egyptians to help you ... Why ask the Assyrians to help you" (See: [Metaphor](#))

Shihor

This is the name of a stream associated with Egypt. It may have been a branch of the Nile River. Some versions call it the Nile. Alternate translation: "the Shihor Stream" or "the Shihor River" or "the Nile River" (See: [How to Translate Names](#))

Jeremiah 2:19

Your wickedness rebukes you, and your faithlessness punishes you

Both of these phrases mean that their punishment is the result of their wicked behavior. Alternate translation: “Because you have been wicked and unfaithful, I will punish you” (See: [Personification](#) and [Parallelism](#))

it is wicked and bitter

Here the word “bitter” describes “wicked.” Alternate translation: “it is bitterly wicked” or “it is extremely wicked” (See: [Hendiadys](#))

ULT

¹⁹ Your wickedness rebukes you, and your faithlessness punishes you. So think about it and understand that it is wicked and bitter when you forsake Yahweh your God, and have no fear of me—this is the declaration of Lord Yahweh of hosts.

Jeremiah 2:20

For I broke your yoke that you had in ancient days; I tore your fetters off you. Still you said, 'I will not serve!'

Here “broke your yoke” and “tore your fetters off you” are metaphors for setting them free from slavery. The people of Israel had been slaves in Egypt. Alternate translation: “Long ago I released you from slavery, but still you refused to worship me!” (See: [Metaphor](#))

ULT

²⁰ For I broke your yoke that you had in ancient days; I tore your fetters off you. Still you said, ‘I will not serve!’ since you bowed down on every high hill and beneath every leafy tree, you adulterer.

fetters

chains used to restrain a person or an animal

since you bowed down on every high hill and beneath every leafy tree, you adulterer

What they bowed down to can be stated clearly. Here “adulterer” is a metaphor for someone who is unfaithful to God. Alternate translation: “You bowed down to idols and worshiped them instead of me, like an adulterous wife who is unfaithful to her husband” (See: [Metaphor](#))

beneath

below

Jeremiah 2:21

I planted you as a choice vine, completely from pure seed

God speaks of making his people into a great nation in Canaan as if they were the seed of a grapevine that he had planted. Alternate translation: "I, Yahweh, started you with a very good beginning, like a farmer who uses excellent seed to plant the best kind of vine" (See: [Metaphor](#))

ULT

²¹ I planted you as a choice vine, completely from pure seed. How then have you changed yourself into a corrupt, worthless vine?

a choice vine

"a vine of very good quality"

completely from pure seed

Here "pure seed" is the best seed that has not been mixed with seed that is not good. Alternate translation: "that grew from excellent seed"

How then have you have changed yourself into a corrupt, worthless vine?

God uses this question to rebuke his people for changing and becoming like a corrupt worthless vine. Alternate translation: "But you have changed yourself into a corrupt, worthless vine!" (See: [Rhetorical Question](#))

Jeremiah 2:22

this is the declaration of the Lord Yahweh

Yahweh speaks of himself by name to express the certainty of what he is declaring. See how you translated a similar phrase in [Jeremiah 1:8](#). Alternate translation: “this is what the Lord Yahweh has declared” or “this is what I, the Lord Yahweh, have declared” (See: [First, Second or Third Person](#))

ULT

²² For even if you clean yourself with lye or wash with strong soap, your iniquity is a stain before me—this is the declaration of the Lord Yahweh.

Jeremiah 2:23

How can you say, 'I ... have not walked after the Baals'?

God uses this question to rebuke his people for saying that they have not worshiped the Baals. Alternate translation: "You lie when you say, 'I ... have not walked after the Baals.'" (See: [Rhetorical Question](#))

walked after

This is a metaphor for serving or worshiping. (See: [Metaphor](#))

you are a swift female camel running here and there

God speaks of Israel worshiping other gods as if they were like a female camel running in different directions looking for a male camel to mate with. Alternate translation: "You are like a swift female camel running back and forth looking for a male camel to mate with" (See: [Metaphor](#))

swift

able to run quickly

ULT

²³ How can you say, 'I am not defiled! I have not walked after the Baals'? Look at what you did in the valleys! Consider what you have done—you are a swift female camel running here and there,

Jeremiah 2:24

a wild donkey accustomed to the wilderness, in her heat sniffing the wind

God speaks of Israel worshiping other gods as if they were a wild female donkey running to find male donkeys. Alternate translation: “You are like a young female donkey that lives in the desert. When she wants to mate she is out of control and constantly sniffs the breeze to find a mate” (See: [Metaphor](#))

ULT

²⁴ a wild donkey accustomed to the wilderness, in her heat sniffing the wind! Who can restrain her lust? None of the males need wear themselves out pursuing her; at mating time they will find her.

in her heat

This phrase is an idiom referring to the time when a female donkey wants to mate with male donkeys. Alternate translation: “when she wants to mate” (See: [Idiom](#))

Who can restrain her lust?

This question is used to emphasize that no one can control a female donkey when she is wants to mate with a male donkey. Alternate translation: “No one can turn her around when she wants to mate.” (See: [Rhetorical Question](#))

Jeremiah 2:25

You must restrain your feet from becoming bare and your throat from being thirsty!

God speaks of Israel wanting to worship other gods as if they were running around in the desert looking for those gods. Alternate translation: "I have told you to stop running here and there chasing after false gods, because all that it does is wear out your sandals and make you very thirsty" (See: [Metaphor](#))

ULT

²⁵ You must restrain your feet from becoming bare and your throat from being thirsty! But you have said, 'It is hopeless! No, I love strangers and go after them!'

It is hopeless

"There is no hope for us to restrain ourselves." This implies that they cannot stop themselves from running after other gods. Alternate translation: "We cannot stop ourselves" (See: [Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information](#))

No, I love strangers and go after them!

Here "strangers" represents foreign gods, and "go after them" represents worshiping them. Alternate translation: "We must follow after foreign gods and worship them!" (See: [Metaphor](#))

Jeremiah 2:26

the house of Israel

The word “house” is a metonym for the family that lives in the house. In this case it refers to Israel’s descendants. See how you translated this in [Jeremiah 2:4](#). Alternate translation: “the Israelites” or “the Israelite people group” (See: [Metonymy](#))

ULT

²⁶ Like the shame of a thief when he is found, so the house of Israel will be ashamed— they, their kings, their princes, and their priests and prophets!

when he is found

This idiom means that someone discovers that the person’s actions. This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: “when someone finds him” or “when people know that he has stolen things” (See: [Idiom](#) and [Active or Passive](#))

they, their kings, their princes, and their priests and prophets

This list shows that everyone belonging to Israel will be ashamed.

Jeremiah 2:27

These are the ones who say to the tree, 'You are my father,' and to the stone, 'You gave birth to me.'

Here "tree" and "stone" represent idols carved from wood and stone. These words emphasize that the idol was made of ordinary things and is not worthy of worship. Alternate translation: "These people are the ones who say to a carved piece of wood, 'You are my father,' and to a carved stone, 'You gave birth to me.''" (See: [Metonymy](#))

ULT

²⁷ These are the ones who say to the tree, 'You are my father,' and to the stone, 'You gave birth to me.' For their back faces me and not their faces. Nevertheless, they say in the time of troubles, 'Arise and save us!'

their back faces me and not their faces

"their backs are toward me; their faces are not toward me." This represents them rejecting God. Alternate translation: "they have turned away from me" or "they have turned their backs toward me and not their faces" or "they have completely rejected me" (See: [Metaphor](#))

Arise and save us

It can be made clear that they say this to Yahweh. "Yahweh, come and save us" (See: [Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information](#))

Jeremiah 2:28

Yet where are the gods that you made for yourselves?

With this question God implies that people should ask the gods they worship to help them. He uses this irony to show that he is angry that they worship other gods. Alternate translation: “You should ask the gods you made to help you.” or “You do not ask the gods you made to help you.” (See: [Rhetorical Question](#) and [Irony](#))

ULT

²⁸ Yet where are the gods that you made for yourselves? Let them arise if they wish to save you in your time of troubles, for your idols equal your cities in number, Judah!

Let them arise if they wish to save you in your time of troubles

God implies that false gods should help the people who worship them. He knows that false gods cannot help people. When he said this he was using irony to show that he was angry that his people worshiped false gods. Alternate translation: “You do not ask them because know you that they cannot save you in your time of troubles” (See: [Irony](#))

Jeremiah 2:29

this is Yahweh's declaration

Yahweh speaks of himself by name to express the certainty of what he is declaring. See how you translated this in [Jeremiah 1:8](#). Alternate translation: "this is what Yahweh has declared" or "this is what I, Yahweh, have declared" (See: [First](#), [Second](#) or [Third Person](#))

ULT

²⁹ So why do you accuse me of doing wrong? All of you have sinned against me—this is Yahweh's declaration.

Jeremiah 2:30

They would not accept discipline

Here “accept discipline” represents learning from discipline.
Alternate translation: “They refused to learn from discipline” or
“When I disciplined them, they refused to learn to obey me” (See: [Metaphor](#))

ULT

³⁰ I have punished your people in vain.
They would not accept discipline. Your
sword has devoured your prophets like
a destructive lion!

Your sword has devoured your prophets like a destructive lion

God speaks of the people of Israel killing the prophets as if their sword were a lion that ate the prophets. Alternate translation: “You have killed the prophets brutally with your sword like a destructive lion” (See: [Metaphor](#))

destructive

capable of causing a very large amount of damage

Jeremiah 2:31

You who belong to this generation! Pay attention to my word, the word of Yahweh

The phrase “this generation” refers to the people who lived when Jeremiah lived. Alternate translation: “You who live today, pay attention to what I, Yahweh, say to you”

Have I been a wilderness to Israel? Or a land of deep darkness?

Here “a wilderness” and “a land of deep darkness” are metaphors for danger. God uses this question to rebuke the Israelites for behaving as though he had been dangerous. Alternate translation: “You act as though I have been like a wilderness or a land of deep darkness to you” (See: [Metaphor](#) and [Rhetorical Question](#))

Why would my people say, ‘Let us wander around, we will not go to you anymore’?

God uses this question to rebuke his people for saying this. Alternate translation: “You my people say ‘We can go where we want to go and not worship Yahweh anymore.’” (See: [Rhetorical Question](#))

wander

move around or go to different places usually without any particular purpose or direction

ULT

³¹ You who belong to this generation!
Pay attention to the word of Yahweh!
Have I been a wilderness to Israel? Or a
land of deep darkness? Why would my
people say, ‘Let us wander around, we
will not go to you anymore’?

Jeremiah 2:32

Will a virgin forget her jewelry, a bride her veils

The words “will” and “forget” are understood to be part of the second phrase also. Alternate translation: “Will a virgin forget her jewelry, and will a bride forget her veils” (See: [Ellipsis](#))

ULT

³² Will a virgin forget her jewelry, a bride her veils? Yet my people have forgotten me for days without number!

Will a virgin forget her jewelry, a bride her veils?

God uses this question to introduce the idea of remembering things that are important to someone. Alternate translation: “You know that a virgin would never forget to put on her jewelry, and a bride would never forget to put on her veils.” (See: [Rhetorical Question](#))

days without number

“a very long time”

Jeremiah 2:33

How well you make your way to look for love

God appears to be praising his people for looking for love, but this is irony. He was showing that he was angry with them for being unfaithful to him. (See: [Irony](#))

ULT

33 How well you make your way to look for love. You have even taught your ways to wicked women.

to look for love

God speaks of his people worshiping other gods as if they were a woman who is unfaithful to her husband and is looking for other men to love her. (See: [Metaphor](#))

You have even taught your ways to wicked women

God speaks of how unfaithful his people are to him as though they were even teaching prostitutes how to be unfaithful to their husbands and find other men to be their lovers. (See: [Irony](#))

Jeremiah 2:34

The blood that was the life of innocent, poor people has been found on your clothes

Blood on their clothes was evidence that they had killed people.

Alternate translation: "The blood of innocent, poor people on your clothes shows that you are guilty of killing them" or "You are guilty of killing poor and innocent people" (See: [Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information](#))

ULT

³⁴ The blood that was the life of innocent, poor people has been found on your clothes. These people were not discovered in acts of burglary.

The blood that was the life

"The blood that represents the life"

These people were not discovered in acts of burglary

If they found people in an act of burglary, this might have been an excuse for killing them. But the people that they murdered were innocent. This can be translated in active form. Alternate translation: "You did not discover these people stealing things" or "But you killed them even though they were not even stealing anything" (See: [Active or Passive](#))

Jeremiah 2:35

surely his anger has turned away from me

Here anger is spoken of as if it were a person that could turn away from Israel. Its turning represents Yahweh's stopping be angry with Israel. Alternate translation: "surely Yahweh has stopped being angry with me" (See: [Personification](#))

I will bring down judgment on you

Here "judgment" represents punishment. Alternate translation: "I will punish you" (See: [Metonymy](#))

ULT

³⁵ Yet you say, 'I am innocent; surely his anger has turned away from me.' But look! I will bring down judgment on you because you say, 'I have not sinned.'

Jeremiah 2:36

Why do you treat so very lightly this change in your ways?

Yahweh is scolding the Israelites because they changed from one kingdom to another for help but did not rely on God for help. (See: [Rhetorical Question](#) and [Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information](#))

ULT

³⁶ Why do you treat so very lightly this change in your ways? You will also be disappointed by Egypt, just as you were by Assyria.

lightly

without care or concern

You will also be disappointed by Egypt

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "Egypt will also disappoint you"

You will also be disappointed by Egypt

The people of Israel will be sad because the army of Egypt will not be able protect them. Alternate translation: "You will be disappointed when Egypt does not protect you" (See: [Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information](#))

just as you were by Assyria

The word "disappointed" is understood from the previous phrase. This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "just as you were disappointed by Assyria" or "just as Assyria disappointed you" (See: [Ellipsis](#))

Jeremiah 2:37

You will also go out from there

“You will go out from Egypt”

with your hands on your head

This is a symbol of shame. (See: [Symbolic Action](#))

so you will not be helped by them

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: “so they will not help you” (See: [Active or Passive](#))

ULT

37 You will also go out from there dejected, with your hands on your head, for Yahweh has rejected the ones whom you trusted, so you will not be helped by them.”

Jeremiah 3

Jeremiah 3 General Notes

Structure and formatting

Some translations set each line of poetry farther to the right than the rest of the text to make it easier to read. The ULT does this with the poetry in 3:1-5, 12-17, 19-25.

The prophecy revealed to Jeremiah is recorded in 2:1-3:5. Despite covering more than one chapter, this should be seen as one unit. The same is true for 3:19-4:3. (See: [prophet](#), [prophecy](#), [prophecy](#), [seer](#), [prophetess](#) and [reveal](#), [revealed](#), [revelation](#))

Special concepts in this chapter

Judah told to repent

If Judah repents, God will bring the people back from the captivity into which he is going to send them. In this book, "Israel" serves as another name Judah because the northern kingdom of Israel no longer exists. The people group formed by these ten tribes had been scattered among the other nations by the Assyrians, who had conquered them. (See: [repent](#), [repentance](#))

Adultery

Judah's faithlessness to God is often pictured as adultery. This is a common image in Scripture. When Judah does not worship God, their nation is spoken of as if it were a woman unfaithful to her husband. (See: [adultery](#), [adulterous](#), [adulterer](#), [adulteress](#))

Jeremiah 3:1

General Information:

Yahweh continues speaking. This is part of the prophecy that he starts revealing to Jeremiah in [Jeremiah 2:1](#).

will he return to her again?

God uses this question to remind the people that a man would never return to his wife if another man marries her. This question can be translated as a statement. Alternate translation: “he would not return to her again.” (See: [Rhetorical Question](#))

ULT

¹ “If a man divorces his wife and she goes from him and becomes another man’s wife, will he return to her again? Would that land not be greatly polluted? You have lived as a prostitute who has many lovers; and would you return to me?—this is Yahweh’s declaration.

Would that land not be greatly polluted?

God uses this question to remind the people that a married man would not return to his wife if she married another man, because he knows that the land would become ceremonially unclean. This question can be translated as a statement. Alternate translation: “He knows that if he did, the land would be greatly polluted.” (See: [Rhetorical Question](#))

greatly polluted

This is a metaphor for being terribly unacceptable to God. Alternate translation: “completely unacceptable to God” (See: [Metaphor](#))

You have lived as a prostitute who has many lovers

God speaks of Israel worshiping many idols as being like a woman having sex with many men. Alternate translation: “You have given your love and trust to idols the way a prostitute gives her body to men who are not her husband” (See: [Simile](#))

this is Yahweh’s declaration

Yahweh speaks of himself by name to express the certainty of what he is declaring. See how you translated this in [Jeremiah 1:8](#). Alternate translation: “this is what Yahweh has declared” or “this is what I, Yahweh, have declared” (See: [First, Second or Third Person](#))

Jeremiah 3:2

Lift up your eyes

Here “your eyes” represents looking at something. Alternate translation: “Look up” (See: [Metonymy](#))

Is there any place where you have not had illicit sex?

God speaks of Israel worshiping idols as if they were a woman who had sex with many different men. He uses this question to tell the Israelites that he knows that they have worshiped idols everywhere. This question can be translated as a statement. Alternate translation: “There is no place where you have not had illicit sex!” or “As a whore sleeps with many men, you have worshiped your idols everywhere!” (See: [Metaphor](#) and [Rhetorical Question](#))

ULT

² Lift up your eyes to the barren heights and look! Is there any place where you have not had illicit sex? By the roadsides you sat waiting for your lovers, as an Arab in the wilderness. You have polluted the land with your prostitution and wickedness.

By the roadsides you sat waiting for your lovers

God speaks of his people being eager to worship any idol as being like a prostitute waiting by the road for any man to come along. Alternate translation: “Like a prostitutes waiting at the roadside for her lovers, you were eager to worship any idol you learned about” (See: [Metaphor](#))

as an Arab in the wilderness

God speaks of his people being eager to worship any idol as being like someone in the wilderness waiting for anyone to come along so he could rob them. Alternate translation: “like an Arab in the wilderness waiting for people he might rob” (See: [Simile](#))

an Arab in the wilderness

An Arab is a person from Arabia. Some Arabs lived as nomads in the desert and would rob others who came near them. Alternate translation: “a nomad in the wilderness” or “a robber in the wilderness” (See: [How to Translate Names](#) and [Translate Unknowns](#))

Jeremiah 3:3

So the showers have been withheld

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: “So I withheld the showers from you” or “So I prevented the rains from falling” (See: [Active or Passive](#))

you have the forehead of a prostitute

The arrogance showing on a person’s face is spoken of as if the face itself were arrogant. Alternate translation: “But the expression on your face shows that you arrogant, like the face of a prostitute” (See: [Metonymy](#))

ULT

³ So the showers have been withheld and the spring rains have not come; yet you have the forehead of a prostitute; you refuse to be ashamed.

Jeremiah 3:4

(There are no notes for this verse.)

ULT

⁴ Have you not just now called to me:
'My father! My closest friend even from
my youth!

Jeremiah 3:5

Connecting Statement:

The rhetorical question that begins with the words “Have you not” in verse 4 ends here.

Will he ... to the end?’

The rhetorical question that begins with the words “Have you not” in verse 4 ends here. God uses this question to rebuke his people for calling out to him and saying these things. This question can be translated as a statement. Alternate translation: “You have just called out to me: ‘My father ... youth! Will he ... to the end?’” (See: [Rhetorical Question](#))

ULT

⁵ Will he always be angry? Will he always keep his wrath to the end?’
Behold! This is what you have said, but you do all the evil you can!”

Will he always be angry? Will he always keep his wrath to the end?

These questions express the people’s hope that God will not be angry with them forever. They can be translated as statements. Alternate translation: “Surely he will not always be angry. Surely he will not always keep his wrath to the end.” (See: [Rhetorical Question](#))

Look!

“pay attention” or “listen”

Jeremiah 3:6

Do you see what faithless Israel has done?

God uses this question to draw Jeremiah's attention to Israel's faithlessness. It can be translated as a command or a statement. Alternate translation: "See how faithless Israel is to me." or "You see how faithless Israel is to me." (See: [Rhetorical Question](#))

She has gone up

The people of Israel are spoken of as if Israel were a woman. Alternate translation: "Israel's people have gone up" or "They have gone up" (See: [Metaphor](#))

every high hill and under every leafy tree

The tops of hills and under shade trees were common places for people to worship idols. The word "every" is used as a generalization to show that the people were worshiping idols in many different places. (See: [Hyperbole](#))

she has acted like a prostitute

God speaks as of Israel worshiping idols as if she were a woman having sex with many men. Alternate translation: (See: [Simile](#))

ULT

⁶ Then Yahweh said to me in the days of Josiah the king, "Do you see what faithless Israel has done? She has gone up every high hill and under every leafy tree, and there she has acted like a prostitute."

Jeremiah 3:7

her faithless sister Judah saw

God speaks of Israel and Judah as if they were sisters. Alternate translation: "the people of Judah, who also did not obey me, saw" (See: [Metaphor](#))

ULT

⁷ I said, 'After she does all these things, she will return to me,' but she did not return. Then her faithless sister Judah saw these things.

Jeremiah 3:8

General Information:

Yahweh continues to speak of Israel and Judah being unfaithful to him as if they were two sisters who were unfaithful wives.

bill of divorce

Something that a man writes to certify that he has divorced his wife.

ULT

⁸ So I saw that, in the same way that faithless Israel had committed adultery and I had sent her away and had given a bill of divorce against her, her faithless sister Judah did not fear; she also went out and acted like a prostitute.

Jeremiah 3:9

Her prostitution was nothing to her

Here prostitution being “nothing” represents Judah not caring about it. Alternate translation: “She did not care about her prostitution” or “She was not ashamed of her prostitution”

ULT

⁹ Her prostitution was nothing to her; she defiled the land, and she committed adultery with stones and trees.

she defiled the land

Here “defiled” represents making the land unacceptable to God. They did this by sinning against him there when they worshiped idols. Alternate translation: “she made my land no good” (See: [Metaphor](#))

she committed adultery with stones and trees

Here “stones” and “trees” represent the stone and wood material that was used to create idols. The people’s idol worship is spoken of as if they were committing adultery. (See: [Metonymy](#) and [Metaphor](#))

Jeremiah 3:10

this is Yahweh's declaration

Yahweh speaks of himself by name to express the certainty of what he is declaring. See how you translated this in [Jeremiah 1:8](#). Alternate translation: "this is what Yahweh has declared" or "this is what I, Yahweh, have declared" (See: [First](#), [Second](#) or [Third Person](#))

ULT

10 Then after all of this, her faithless sister Judah returned to me, not with all her heart, but with a lie—this is Yahweh's declaration."

Jeremiah 3:11

Faithless Israel has been more righteous than faithless Judah!

By calling Israel “more righteous” than Judah, God emphasizes that Judah is very guilty. Alternate translation: “Israel has been unfaithful to me, but Judah is even more guilty than Israel”

ULT

11 Then Yahweh said to me, “Faithless Israel has been more righteous than faithless Judah!”

Jeremiah 3:12

Go and proclaim these words to the north

Here the north represents the people of Israel who had been taken north to Assyria. Alternate translation: "Go and proclaim these words to the people of Israel" (See: [Metonymy](#))

ULT

12 Go and proclaim these words to the north. Say, 'Return, faithless Israel!—this is Yahweh's declaration—I will not always be angry with you. Since I am faithful—this is Yahweh's declaration—I will not stay angry forever.'

Jeremiah 3:13

Acknowledge your iniquity

“Admit how you have sinned.” God was speaking to Israel.

you have shared your ways with strangers under every leafy tree!

The word “strangers” refers to foreign gods. God speaks of Israel worshiping foreign gods as if Israel were a woman who was having sex with strangers. (See: [Metaphor](#))

under every leafy tree

People would worship idols under trees. The word “every” is a generalization used to show that the people of Israel worshiped many gods under many different trees. (See: [Hyperbole](#))

this is Yahweh’s declaration

Yahweh speaks of himself by name to express the certainty of what he is declaring. See how you translated this in [Jeremiah 1:8](#). Alternate translation: “this is what Yahweh has declared” or “this is what I, Yahweh, have declared” (See: [First, Second or Third Person](#))

ULT

13 Acknowledge your iniquity, for you have transgressed against Yahweh your God; you have shared your ways with strangers under every leafy tree! For you have not listened to my voice!—this is Yahweh’s declaration.

Jeremiah 3:14

I am your husband

God speaks of Israel belonging to him as if he were Israel's husband.
Alternate translation: "you belong to me as a wife belongs to her husband" (See: [Metaphor](#))

ULT

14 Return, faithless people!—this is Yawheh's declaration—I am your husband! I will take you, one from a city and two from a family, and I will bring you to Zion!

Jeremiah 3:15

I will give you shepherds ... they will shepherd you

Here God speaks of leaders as if they were shepherds and the people they led were sheep. Alternate translation: "I will give you leaders ... they will lead you" (See: [Metaphor](#))

ULT

¹⁵ I will give you shepherds after my heart, and they will shepherd you with knowledge and insight.

shepherds after my heart

Here "heart" represents Yahweh's desire or will. The phrase "after my heart" is an idiom that describes people who do God's will. Alternate translation: "shepherds who do my will" or "shepherds who do what I want" (See: [Metonymy](#) and [Idiom](#))

Jeremiah 3:16

you will increase and bear fruit

The word “you” refers to the people of Israel. The phrase “bear fruit” is a metaphor for having many descendants. Alternate translation: “you will increase greatly in number” (See: [Metaphor](#) and [Doublet](#))

this is Yahweh’s declaration

Yahweh speaks of himself by name to express the certainty of what he is declaring. See how you translated this in [Jeremiah 1:8](#). Alternate translation: “this is what Yahweh has declared” or “this is what I, Yahweh, have declared” (See: [First, Second or Third Person](#))

ULT

16 Then it will happen that you will increase and bear fruit in the land in those days—this is Yahweh’s declaration—they will no longer say, “The Box of the Covenant of Yahweh!” This matter will no longer come up in their hearts or be remembered; it will not be missed, and another one will not be made.’

This matter will no longer come up in their hearts

Here “come up in their hearts” represents thinking about it. Alternate translation: “They will no longer think of this matter” (See: [Metonymy](#))

Jeremiah 3:17

This is Yahweh's throne

Here "Yahweh's throne" represents the place from where Yahweh rules. Alternate translation: "This is from where Yahweh rules" (See: [Metonymy](#))

They will no longer walk in the stubbornness of their wicked hearts

Yahweh speaks of people's actions as if the people were walking along a path. Here the word "hearts" represents their minds or wills. Alternate translation: "They will no longer stubbornly do the wicked things that they want to do" (See: [Metaphor](#) and [Metonymy](#))

ULT

17 In that time they will proclaim about Jerusalem, 'This is Yahweh's throne,' and all the other nations will gather at Jerusalem in Yahweh's name. They will no longer walk in the stubbornness of their wicked hearts.

Jeremiah 3:18

the house of Judah will walk with the house of Israel

Here “walk with” represents being united. Alternate translation: “the people of Judah will be united with the people of Israel” (See: [Metaphor](#))

the house of Judah

The word “house” is a metonym for the family that lives in the house. In this case it refers to the kingdom of Judah, which included the descendants of Judah and Benjamin. Alternate translation: “Judah” or “the kingdom of Judah” or “the people of Judah” (See: [Metonymy](#))

the house of Israel

The word “house” is a metonym for the family that lives in the house. In this case it refers to the kingdom of Israel. Alternate translation: “Israel” or “the kingdom of Israel” or “the people of Israel” (See: [Metonymy](#))

the land that I gave your ancestors as an inheritance

God speaks of giving them the land to possess forever as if it were an inheritance. Alternate translation: “the land that I gave to your ancestors so that it would belong to their descendants forever” (See: [Metaphor](#))

ULT

¹⁸ In those days, the house of Judah will walk with the house of Israel. They will come together from the land of the north to the land that I gave your ancestors as an inheritance.

Jeremiah 3:19

As for me

the word “me” refers to Yahweh

How I want to treat you as my son ... nation

This is an exclamation that expresses God’s desire. Alternate translation: “I want so much to treat you as my son ... nation” (See: [Exclamations](#))

I want to treat you as my son

God speaks of Israel as if Israel were his son. (See: [Simile](#))

an inheritance more beautiful

God speaks of the land he wanted to give to Israel as if it were an inheritance. (See: [Metaphor](#))

ULT

19 As for me, I said, ‘How I want to treat you as my son and give you a pleasant land, an inheritance more beautiful than what is in any other nation!’ I would have said, ‘You will call me “my father”.’ I would have said that you would not turn from following me.

Jeremiah 3:20

But like a woman faithless to her husband, you have betrayed me

God speaks of Israel being unfaithful to him as if she were an unfaithful wife. (See: [Simile](#))

ULT

²⁰ But like a woman faithless to her husband, you have betrayed me, house of Israel—this is Yahweh's declaration."

house of Israel

The word "house" is a metonym for the family that lives in the house. In this case it refers to the kingdom of Israel. See how you translated this in [Jeremiah 3:18](#). Alternate translation: "Israel" or "kingdom of Israel" or "people of Israel" (See: [Metonymy](#))

this is Yahweh's declaration

Yahweh speaks of himself by name to express the certainty of what he is declaring. See how you translated this in [Jeremiah 1:8](#). Alternate translation: "this is what Yahweh has declared" or "this is what I, Yahweh, have declared" (See: [First, Second or Third Person](#))

Jeremiah 3:21

A voice is heard

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: “People hear a noise” (See: [Active or Passive](#))

the weeping and pleading of the people of Israel

“the people of Israel crying and begging loudly”

they have forgotten Yahweh their God

Here “have forgotten” represents neglecting or ignoring. Alternate translation: “They have ignored Yahweh their God” (See: [Metaphor](#))

ULT

21 A voice is heard on the plains, the weeping and pleading of the people of Israel! For they have changed their ways; they have forgotten Yahweh their God.

Jeremiah 3:22

I will heal you of treachery!

This could mean: (1) “heal you of treachery” represents causing Israel to stop being unfaithful to God. Alternate translation: “I will cause you to stop being unfaithful to me” or (2) “heal you of treachery” represents forgiving Israel for being unfaithful. Alternate translation: “I will forgive your treachery” (See: [Metaphor](#))

ULT

²² “Return, faithless people! I will heal you of treachery!” “Behold! We will come to you, for you are Yahweh our God!”

heal you of treachery

“heal you so you will stop being unfaithful to me”

Behold! We will come to you

It is understood that this is what the people of Israel will say. Alternate translation: “The people will reply, ‘Behold! We will come to you’ or “You will say “Behold! We will come to you” (See: [Ellipsis](#))

Behold

“Pay attention, because what I am about to say is both true and important”

Jeremiah 3:23

Surely lies come from the hills

Here “the hills” represent the people’s worship of false gods on the hills. The people now realize that those false gods could not guide and help them. Alternate translation: “The false gods that we worshiped on the hills could not guide us” (See: [Metonymy](#))

ULT

²³ Surely lies come from the hills, a confusing noise from the mountains; surely Yahweh our God is the salvation of Israel.

a confusing noise from the mountains

People made a lot of noise on the hills and mountains when they worshiped false gods. Alternate translation: “We made a confusing noise on the mountains while we worshiped them, but they did not help us” (See: [Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information](#))

surely Yahweh our God is the salvation of Israel

“surely Yahweh our God is the savior of Israel” or “surely Yahweh our God is the only one who can save Israel”

Jeremiah 3:24

their flocks and cattle, their sons and daughters

This is a list of animals and people that the people of Israel had killed and offered to the idols.

ULT

²⁴ Yet from the time of our youthfulness shameful idols have consumed what our ancestors have worked for— their flocks and cattle, their sons and daughters!

Jeremiah 3:25

Let us lie down in shame. May our shame cover us

These phrases share similar meanings and emphasize that the people are fully aware of their shameful behavior. Alternate translation: "Let us be completely humiliated" (See: [Parallelism](#))

May our shame cover us

Being fully aware of their shame is spoken of as if shame were covering them like a blanket or a garment. (See: [Metaphor](#))

from the time of our youthfulness

This could mean: (1) "the time of our youthfulness" refers to when each person was young. Alternate translation: "from when we were young" or (2) "the time of our youthfulness" is a metaphor that refers to when Israel was first becoming a nation. Alternate translation: "from when we were first becoming a nation" (See: [Metaphor](#))

have not listened to the voice of Yahweh our God

Here "listened" represents obeying, and "the voice of Yahweh" represents what Yahweh has said. Alternate translation: "have not obeyed what Yahweh our God has said" (See: [Metonymy](#))

ULT

²⁵ Let us lie down in shame. May our shame cover us, for we have sinned against Yahweh our God! We ourselves and our ancestors, from the time of our youthfulness to this present day, have not listened to the voice of Yahweh our God!"

Jeremiah 4

Jeremiah 4 General Notes

Structure and formatting

Some translations set each line of poetry farther to the right than the rest of the text to make it easier to read. The ULT does this with the poetry in 4:1-9.

The prophecy revealed to Jeremiah is recorded in 3:19-4:3. Despite covering more than one chapter, this should be seen as one unit. (See: [prophet](#), [prophecy](#), [prophesy](#), [seer](#), [prophetess](#) and [reveal](#), [revealed](#), [revelation](#))

Special concepts in this chapter

Yahweh's punishment

This chapter prophecies Yahweh's punishment on Judah. This should bring Judah to repentance, but it does not. It is also intended to make the nations fear the power of Yahweh and make them desire to worship him. (See: [repent](#), [repentance](#) and [fear](#), [afraid](#), [frighten](#))

Jeremiah 4:1

then it should be to me that you return

This could mean: (1) this is a command that emphasizes who they should return to. Alternate translation: “then come back to me” or “then worship me” (2) this is a repetition of the first phrase, which expresses a condition. Alternate translation: “if you will come back to me” or “if you will start worshiping me again” (See: [Metonymy](#) and [Idiom](#))

ULT

¹ “If you return, Israel—this is Yahweh’s declaration—then it should be to me that you return. If you remove your detestable things from before me and do not wander from me again,

If you remove your detestable things from before me

Here “detestable things” refers to idols, which God hates. Alternate translation: “If you remove your disgusting idols from my presence” (See: [Metonymy](#))

do not wander from me again

Here “wander” is a metaphor for being unfaithful. Alternate translation: “if you remain faithful to me” (See: [Metaphor](#))

Jeremiah 4:2

As Yahweh lives

“As surely as Yahweh is alive.” The people use this expression to show that what they say next is certainly true. This is a way of making a solemn promise. Alternate translation: “I solemnly swear” (See: [Idiom](#))

ULT

² You must be truthful, just, and righteous when you swear, ‘As Yahweh lives.’ Then the nations will bless themselves in him, and in him they will glory.”

the nations will bless themselves in him

Here “the nations” is a metonym for people of other nations. The word “him” refers to Yahweh. Since Yahweh is speaking, it can also be translated as “me.” Alternate translation: “people of other nations will bless themselves in me” (See: [Metonymy](#) and [First, Second or Third Person](#))

the nations will bless themselves in him

Here “bless themselves in him” is a metonym for asking Yahweh to bless them. Alternate translation: “the people of the nations will ask Yahweh to bless them” (See: [Metonymy](#))

in him they will glory

The word “him” refers to Yahweh. Since Yahweh is speaking, “him” can also be translated as “me.” Alternate translation: “they will boast in me” or “they will praise me” (See: [First, Second or Third Person](#))

Jeremiah 4:3

Plow your own ground, and do not sow among thorns

Yahweh tells the people to prepare their lives like a farmer prepares the ground for planting. (See: [Metaphor](#))

ULT

³ For Yahweh says this to each person in Judah and Jerusalem: 'Plow your own ground, and do not sow among thorns.'

Jeremiah 4:4

Circumcise yourselves to Yahweh, and remove the foreskins of your heart

Yahweh describes the people's devotion to him in terms of the physical sign of covenant. Alternate translation: "Dedicate yourselves completely to Yahweh" (See: [Metaphor](#))

Circumcise yourselves ... remove the foreskins of your heart

These two phrases mean basically the same thing. Together they emphasize the command. (See: [Parallelism](#))

my fury will break out like fire, and burn with no one to quench it

Yahweh speaks of becoming extremely angry as if his anger were fire. Alternate translation: "my anger will burn like a fire and no one will be able to stop it" or "I will be extremely angry, and no one will be able to stop me" (See: [Simile](#))

fury

"great anger"

ULT

⁴ Circumcise yourselves to Yahweh, and remove the foreskins of your heart, men of Judah and inhabitants of Jerusalem, or else my fury will break out like fire, and burn with no one to quench it, because of the wickedness of your deeds.

Jeremiah 4:5

Report in Judah and let it be heard in Jerusalem

These phrases mean basically the same thing. Together they emphasize the command. (See: [Parallelism](#))

let it be heard in Jerusalem

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: “cause the people in Jerusalem to hear it” (See: [Active or Passive](#))

Blow the trumpet in the land

The trumpet would warn the people that their enemies were coming to attack them.

Let us go to the fortified cities

They would go to the fortified cities for protection from their enemies.

ULT

⁵ Report in Judah and let it be heard in Jerusalem. Say, “Blow the trumpet in the land.” Proclaim, “Gather together. Let us go to the fortified cities.”

Jeremiah 4:6

disaster ... a great collapse

These words mean basically the same thing. The phrase “a great collapse” defines what the “disaster” will be. (See: [Doublet](#))

for I am bringing disaster from the north and a great collapse

This represents God sending an army from the north to cause disaster and destruction in Judah. Alternate translation: “for I will cause an army from the north to come and destroy you” (See: [Metaphor](#))

from the north

This represents an enemy army that would come from the north. (See: [Metonymy](#))

ULT

⁶ Lift up the signal flag and point it toward Zion, and run for safety! Do not stay, for I am bringing disaster from the north and a great collapse.

Jeremiah 4:7

A lion is coming

God speaks of a powerful army as if it were a fierce lion. Alternate translation: “A powerful and merciless army approaches” (See: [Metaphor](#))

thicket

a set of bushes that grew closely together

someone who will destroy nations

Here “someone” represents a king and his army. (See: [Synecdoche](#))

is setting out

This idiom refers to starting to move. Alternate translation: “is starting to march” (See: [Idiom](#))

to bring horror to your land

This represents destroying the land, which would cause people who see it to be horrified. Alternate translation: “to destroy your land” (See: [Metonymy](#))

ULT

⁷ A lion is coming out from his thicket and someone who will destroy nations is setting out. He is leaving his place to bring horror to your land, to turn your cities into ruins, where no one will live.

Jeremiah 4:8

wrap yourself in sackcloth

People would wear sackcloth to show that they were very sad. In this context it would be to show that they were very sorry for the bad things they had done. Alternate translation: “put on the clothes that show you are mourning” (See: [Symbolic Action](#))

ULT

⁸ Because of this, wrap yourself in sackcloth, lament and wail. For the force of Yahweh’s anger has not turned away from us.

wail

cry loudly

For the force of Yahweh’s anger has not turned away from us

Anger is spoken of as if it were a living thing that could turn away from people. Here “Yahweh’s anger has not turned away from us” means that Yahweh is still very angry with the people. Alternate translation: “For Yahweh is still very angry with us” (See: [Metaphor](#))

Jeremiah 4:9

the hearts of the king and his officials will die

Here “hearts” represent courage. Also “the hearts ... will die” represents losing courage and being afraid. Alternate translation: “the king and his officials will stop being courageous” or “the king and his officials will be terrified” (See: [Metonymy](#) and [Metaphor](#))

ULT

⁹ Then it will happen in that day—this is Yahweh’s declaration—that the hearts of the king and his officials will die. The priests will be appalled, and the prophets will be horrified.”

Jeremiah 4:10

the sword is striking against their life

Here enemies being ready to kill people is spoken of as if the sword was a person striking at people. Alternate translation: "our enemies are ready to slaughter us with their swords" (See: [Personification](#))

ULT

10 So I said, "Ah! Lord Yahweh. Surely you have completely deceived this people and Jerusalem by saying, 'There will be peace for you.' Yet the sword is striking against their life."

Jeremiah 4:11

it will be said

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

burning wind from the plains

Here a “burning wind” represents a fierce and merciless enemy. (See: [Metaphor](#))

will make its way

“will travel” or “will rush”

the daughter of my people

Yahweh shows his love for his people by speaking of them as a daughter. Alternate translation: “my people, who are like a daughter to me” or “my dear people” (See: [Metaphor](#))

It will not winnow or cleanse them

The words “winnow” and “cleanse” refer to blowing away the useless skins from grain. Only a light wind was needed for that. Alternate translation: “It will not be a light wind for blowing the chaff away from the grain” (See: [Doublet](#) and [Metaphor](#))

ULT

11 In that time it will be said of this people and Jerusalem, “A burning wind from the plains of the desert will make its way to the daughter of my people. It will not winnow or cleanse them.”

Jeremiah 4:12

A wind far stronger than that

far stronger than the “burning wind” of verse 11. The wind is a metaphor for a fierce and merciless enemy. (See: [Metaphor](#))

will come at my command

“will come when I command it to come”

at my command

This expression in Hebrew is interpreted by some modern versions as “for me” or “from me.”

pass sentence against them

“announce their punishment”

ULT

¹² A wind far stronger than that will come at my command, and I will now pass sentence against them.

Jeremiah 4:13

See, he is attacking like clouds

The word “he” refers to the enemy king and his army. The great size of the army is spoken of as if they were giant storm clouds. Alternate translation: “See, great armies like giant clouds are gathering to attack” or “See, great armies are gathering to attack” (See: [Simile](#))

ULT

13 See, he is attacking like clouds, and his chariots are like a storm. His horses are faster than eagles. Woe to us, for we will be devastated!

his chariots are like a storm

The enemies’ chariots are spoken of as if they were like a storm. Storms can be noisy, destructive, and fast-moving. Alternate translation: “the roar of their chariots coming is like a fierce storm” (See: [Simile](#))

Woe to us

“This is terrible”

for we will be devastated

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: “for they will devastate us” or “for they will destroy us all” (See: [Active or Passive](#))

Jeremiah 4:14

Cleanse your heart from wickedness, Jerusalem

This is a warning to the people living in Jerusalem to repent.
“Cleanse your heart” is a metaphor for removing evil from their lives.
Alternate translation: “People of Jerusalem, stop being evil” or
“People of Jerusalem, stop living wickedly” (See: [Metaphor](#))

ULT

¹⁴ Cleanse your heart from wickedness,
Jerusalem, so that you might be saved.
How long will your deepest thoughts be
about how to sin?

How long will your deepest thoughts be about how to sin?

This question is used to rebuke the people for always planning how to sin. Alternate translation: “Your deepest thoughts are about how to sin!” or “You are always thinking about how to sin!” (See: [Rhetorical Question](#))

Jeremiah 4:15

a voice is bringing news from Dan

Here “a voice” represents a messenger. Alternate translation: “a messenger comes and tells about what is happening in Dan” (See: [Synecdoche](#))

Dan

This probably refers to the region of Dan, which was west of Jerusalem.

the coming disaster is heard from the mountains of Ephraim

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: “people hear about the disaster that is coming from Ephraim” (See: [Active or Passive](#))

from Dan ... mountains of Ephraim

By hearing that the enemies had gotten to Dan and Ephraim, people in Jerusalem would understand that the enemies were getting closer to them.

ULT

15 For a voice is bringing news from Dan, and the coming disaster is heard from the mountains of Ephraim.

Jeremiah 4:16

besiegers are coming

Besiegers are soldiers who surround a city in order to keep the people in the city from being able to get supplies of food and water.

ULT

16 Make the nations think about this:

See, announce to Jerusalem that
besiegers are coming from a distant
land to shout in battle against the cities
of Judah.

Jeremiah 4:17

They will be like the watchmen of a cultivated field against her all around

Carefully guarding a city to keep people from going in and out is spoken of as if they are carefully watching a field to keep people from stealing from it. Alternate translation: “they will guard Jerusalem carefully like watchmen who carefully guard a cultivated field” (See: [Simile](#))

against her all around

The word “her” refers to Jerusalem. Jerusalem was often spoken of as if it were a woman. (See: [Personification](#))

ULT

¹⁷ They will be like the watchmen of a cultivated field against her all around, since she has been rebellious against me—this is Yahweh’s declaration—

Jeremiah 4:18

your conduct and your deeds have done these things to you

Here “conduct” and “deeds” are spoken of as if they are people that could do things. These abstract nouns can be expressed with the phrase “what you have done.” Alternate translation: “These things are happening to you because of what you have done” (See: [Personification](#) and [Abstract Nouns](#))

ULT

¹⁸ and your conduct and your deeds have done these things to you. This will be your punishment. How terrible it will be! It will strike your very heart.

It will strike your very heart

Here “heart” probably refers to the emotions, and “strike your very heart” probably refers to causing them to suffer terribly. Alternate translation: “It will be as if it strikes your very heart” or “It will cause you to suffer terrible anguish” (See: [Metaphor](#))

Jeremiah 4:19

My heart! My heart!

Here “heart” represents painful emotions, such as grief and fear. The phrase is repeated to express the intensity of the pain. (See: [Metonymy](#))

I am in anguish in my heart

The speaker feels severe emotional pain that causes severe physical pain.

My heart is turbulent within me

“My heart is beating wildly.” Here “heart” refers to the body part. It is turbulent because it is beating much stronger and faster than normal.

turbulent

full of confusion, violence, or disorder; not stable or steady

ULT

19 My heart! My heart! I am in anguish in my heart. My heart is turbulent within me. I cannot keep quiet for I hear the sound of the horn, an alarm for battle.

Jeremiah 4:20

Suddenly my tents are destroyed

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: “Enemies have suddenly destroyed my tents” (See: [Active or Passive](#))

my curtains in a moment

The words “are destroyed” are understood from the previous phrase. Alternate translation: “my curtains are destroyed in a moment” (See: [Ellipsis](#))

my curtains

Curtains are cloths that are hung to separate the rooms in the tents.

ULT

²⁰ Disaster follows after disaster; for all the land lies in ruins. Suddenly my tents are destroyed, my curtains in a moment.

Jeremiah 4:21

How long will I see the standard? Will I hear the sound of the horn?

Jeremiah uses these questions to show his distress about seeing the battle flag and hearing the sound of the horn for such a long time.

He wishes that the battle would end soon. It can be stated as an exclamation. Alternate translation: “Oh, how I wish that the battle would end, and the flag would be lowered, and the sound of the army’s horn would stop” (See: [Rhetorical Question](#))

ULT

²¹ How long will I see the standard? Will I hear the sound of the horn?

the standard

“the battle flag”

the sound of the horn

Someone would blow the horn as a signal for battle.

Jeremiah 4:22

For the foolishness of my people ... do not know to do good.

It can be stated clearly that Yahweh says this. This is probably his reply to Jeremiah, telling why the battle is still happening. Alternate translation: "Yahweh replied, 'It is because of the foolishness of my people ... do not know to do good.'" (See: [Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information](#))

idiotic people

"stupid people"

ULT

²² For the foolishness of my people—they do not know me. They are idiotic people and they have no understanding. They have skill at evil, but do not know to do good.

Jeremiah 4:23

General Information:

Jeremiah describes a vision that God gave him about things that would happen later.

Behold

The word “behold” here alerts us to pay attention to the surprising information that follows.

formless and empty

This vision is a prophecy of what the land of Israel would be like after the people were all taken into captivity.

there was no light for the heavens

“there were no lights in the sky”

ULT

23 I saw the land. Behold! It was formless and empty. For there was no light for the heavens.

Jeremiah 4:24

(There are no notes for this verse.)

ULT

²⁴ I looked at the mountains. Behold, they were trembling, and all the hills were shaking about.

Jeremiah 4:25

(There are no notes for this verse.)

ULT

²⁵ I looked. Behold, there was no one,
and all the birds of the heavens had
fled.

Jeremiah 4:26

all the cities had been pulled down

“all the cities had been destroyed” or “all the cities were a heap of ruins”

before Yahweh, before the fury of his wrath

This indicates that all these things would happen because Yahweh was so angry with the people of Judah.

ULT

²⁶ I looked. Behold, the orchards were a wilderness and all the cities had been pulled down before Yahweh, before the fury of his wrath.”

Jeremiah 4:27

All the land will become a devastation

“All the land of Judah will be devastated” or “all the land of Judah will be ruined”

ULT

²⁷ This is what Yahweh says, “All the land will become a devastation, but I will not completely destroy it.”

Jeremiah 4:28

the land will mourn, and the heavens above will darken

Jeremiah emphasizes Yahweh's judgment by saying that the earth itself expresses great sorrow. (See: [Personification](#))

I will not hold back

"I will not change my mind"

I will not turn from carrying them out

Here "turn" represents deciding not to do what he said he would do. Alternate translation: "I will not change my mind about doing what I said I would do" or "I will not refuse to do what I planned to do" (See: [Metaphor](#))

ULT

²⁸ For this reason, the land will mourn, and the heavens above will darken. For I have declared my intentions; I will not hold back; I will not turn from carrying them out.

Jeremiah 4:29

Every city

Here “city” represents the people living in the city. Alternate translation: “The people of every city” (See: [Metonymy](#))

cavalry

a group of soldiers riding horses

they will run into the forests

They will run away to the forests for safety.

The cities will be abandoned, for there will be no one to inhabit them

These two clauses have similar meanings. The second one strengthens the thought in the first. Alternate translation: “The cities will be empty. There will be no one left to live in them” (See: [Parallelism](#))

ULT

²⁹ Every city will flee from the noise of the cavalry and the archers with a bow; they will run into the forests. Every city will climb up into the rocky places. The cities will be abandoned, for there will be no one to inhabit them.

Jeremiah 4:30

General Information:

Yahweh speaks of the people of Judah as if they were a prostitute because they were unfaithful to him by worshiping other gods.

Connecting Statement:

Yahweh continues speaking to Judah.

Now that you have been devastated, what will you do?

This question is used to tell the people of Judah that there is nothing they can do to help themselves. Alternate translation: "Now that your enemies have devastated you, there is nothing you can do to find help. (See: [Rhetorical Question](#))

you dress in scarlet ... gold jewelry ... eyes ... with paint

God speaks of the people of Judah as if they were a prostitute making herself look beautiful in order to attract men to her. This can be stated clearly. Alternate translation: "Like a prostitute you dress in scarlet ... good jewelry ... eyes ... with paint" (See: [Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information](#))

you dress in scarlet

Here "scarlet" represents expensive, red clothing. Alternate translation: "you wear expensive red clothing" (See: [Metonymy](#))

adorn yourself with gold jewelry

"you put on gold jewelry"

men who lusted for you now reject you

God speaks of the nations that Judah had depended on for wealth and business as if they were men who lusted after Judah. Those nations would reject Judah when they see God's judgment. (See: [Metaphor](#))

they are trying to take away your life

Here "trying to take your life away" represents trying to kill the people of Judah. Alternate translation: "They are trying to kill you" (See: [Metonymy](#))

ULT

³⁰ Now that you have been devastated, what will you do? For though you dress in scarlet, adorn yourself with gold jewelry, and make your eyes look bigger with paint, you are making yourself lovely in vain. The men who lusted for you now reject you. Instead, they are trying to take away your life.

Jeremiah 4:31

distress as in the birth

This simile is used to show how greatly distressed Judah will be.
Alternate translation: "severe distress as in the pain and suffering a woman has while giving birth" (See: [Simile](#))

the daughter of Zion

God shows his love for the people of Jerusalem by speaking of them as a daughter. Alternate translation: "my dear daughter, Zion" (See: [Metaphor](#))

Woe to me

"I am in great danger"

I am fainting

"I am becoming weak"

ULT

31 So I hear the sound of anguish, distress as in the birth of a firstborn child, the sound of the daughter of Zion. She is gasping for breath. She spreads out her hands, "Woe to me! I am fainting because of these murderers."

Jeremiah 5

Jeremiah 5 General Notes

Structure and formatting

Some translations set each line of poetry farther to the right than the rest of the text to make it easier to read. The ULT does this with the poetry in 5:1-31.

Important figures of speech in this chapter

Hyperbole

It is possible that Yahweh is using the word “a” (meaning “even one”) as hyperbole when he states, “If you can find a man or anyone who is acting justly and trying to act faithfully, then I will forgive Jerusalem.” The purpose of this is to show how evil Jerusalem had become. (See: [Hyperbole](#), [just](#), [justice](#), [unjust](#), [injustice](#), [justify](#), [justification](#), [faith](#) and [forgive](#), [forgiven](#), [forgiveness](#), [pardon](#), [pardoned](#) and [evil](#), [wicked](#), [unpleasant](#))

Rhetorical questions

Yahweh asks several rhetorical questions in this chapter. This is intended to show Jeremiah the justness of his actions. (See: [Rhetorical Question](#))

Jeremiah 5:1

General Information:

Jeremiah often wrote prophecy in the form of poetry. Hebrew poetry uses different kinds of parallelism. (See: [Poetry](#) and [Parallelism](#))

Rush about through the streets

“Go quickly through the streets”

Then look and think about this

“look and find out”

city squares

broad and open places in a city where people can gather

who is acting justly

“who does what is just”

ULT

1 “Rush about through the streets of Jerusalem; search in her city squares, too. Then look and think about this: If you can find a man or anyone who is acting justly and trying to act faithfully, then I will forgive Jerusalem.”

Jeremiah 5:2

Although they say

The word “they” refers to the people of Jerusalem.

As Yahweh lives

“as surely as Yahweh is alive.” The people use this expression to show that what they say next is certainly true. This is a way of making a solemn promise. See how you translated this in [Jeremiah 4:2](#). Alternate translation: “I solemnly swear” (See: [Idiom](#))

ULT

² Although they say, ‘As Yahweh lives,’
yet they are swearing falsely.”

Jeremiah 5:3

do your eyes not look for faithfulness?

Jeremiah uses this question to emphasize that what Yahweh really wants is faithfulness. Wanting people to be faithful is spoken of as looking for faithfulness. Alternate translation: “you look for faithfulness.” or “you want people to be faithful.” (See: [Rhetorical Question](#) and [Metaphor](#))

You struck the people, but they do not feel pain.

God punished his people in various ways. Here it is spoken of as if he hit them. Alternate translation: “You punish the people, but they do not pay attention” (See: [Metaphor](#))

they still refuse to receive discipline

Here “to receive discipline” represents learning from discipline to do what is right. Alternate translation: “they still refuse to learn their lesson” (See: [Metaphor](#))

They make their faces harder than rock

Hard faces represents the expression on their faces that shows that they are stubborn. The simile “harder than rock” shows that the people are extremely stubborn. Alternate translation: “They are extremely stubborn” (See: [Metonymy](#) and [Simile](#))

ULT

³ Yahweh, do your eyes not look for faithfulness? You struck the people, but they do not feel pain. You have completely defeated them, but they still refuse to receive discipline. They make their faces harder than rock, for they refuse to return.

Jeremiah 5:4

So I said

Jeremiah is speaking.

ULT

⁴ So I said, "Surely these are only poor people. They are foolish, for they do not know Yahweh's ways, nor their God's decrees.

Jeremiah 5:5

But they all broke their yoke together; they all tore apart the chains that bound them to God.

The yoke and chains represent the law which bind God and his people. (See: [Metaphor](#))

ULT

⁵ I will go to the important people and declare God's messages to them, for they at least know Yahweh's ways, the decrees of their God." But they all broke their yoke together; they all tore apart the chains.

Jeremiah 5:6

So a lion ... A wolf ... A lurking panther

These are dangerous animals that can kill people. This could mean: (1) this really is about wild animals killing people or (2) these wild animals are metaphors for enemy armies. (See: [Metaphor](#))

So a lion ... A wolf ... A lurking panther ... torn apart

One possible meaning is that these are metaphors for enemy armies who will attack Judah. Alternate translation: "Like a lion from the thicket, a wolf from the Arabah, and a lurking panther, enemy armies will come against their cities, attack them, and destroy them. Anyone who goes outside his city will be killed" (See: [Metaphor](#))

thicket

a set of bushes that grew closely together.

wolf

a large wild dangerous dog

lurking

watching for an opportunity to attack

panther

a large wild dangerous cat

For their transgressions increase

The abstract noun "transgressions" can be translated with the verb "sin." Alternate translation: "For they sin much" (See: [Abstract Nouns](#))

Their acts of faithlessness are unlimited

The abstract nouns in "acts of faithlessness" can be translated as "the faithless things they do." Alternate translation: "The faithless things they do are many" or "They do many faithless things" (See: [Abstract Nouns](#))

ULT

⁶ So a lion from a thicket will attack them. A wolf from the Arabah will ruin them. A lurking panther will come against their cities. Anyone who goes outside his city will be torn apart. For their transgressions increase. Their acts of faithlessness are unlimited.

Jeremiah 5:7

Why should I pardon these people?

Yahweh uses this question to emphasize that he has no reason to pardon these people. Alternate translation: “Because of the things that they do, I cannot pardon these people.” (See: [Rhetorical Question](#))

these people

the people of Jerusalem

Your sons

Yahweh is speaking to Jerusalem as though she were a woman who had children. Jerusalem’s “sons” represent the people of Jerusalem. Alternate translation: “The people of Jerusalem” (See: [Personification](#))

I fed them fully

Providing all they needed is spoken of as feeding them. Alternate translation: “I gave them everything they needed” (See: [Metaphor](#))

they committed adultery and walked in great numbers to the houses of prostitutes

This may be a metaphor for being unfaithful to God and worshiping idols, but idol worship also included prostitution. Alternate translation: “they were unfaithful to me and went in large numbers to the houses of prostitutes” (See: [Metaphor](#))

walked in great numbers to the houses of prostitutes

“went in large groups to the houses of prostitutes” or “large groups of them went to the houses of prostitutes”

ULT

⁷ Why should I pardon you? Your sons have abandoned me and have made oaths by what are not gods. I fed them fully, but they committed adultery and walked in great numbers to the houses of prostitutes.

Jeremiah 5:8

They were horses in heat ... neighed to his neighbor's wife

Because the God speaks of them as if they were horses that wanted to mate with other horses. Alternate translation: "They were like horses in heat ... neighed to his neighbor's wife" (See: [Metaphor](#))

ULT

⁸ They were horses in heat. They roamed about wanting to mate. Each man neighed to his neighbor's wife.

in heat

ready to mate

mate

when animals breed to reproduce

Each man neighed to his neighbor's wife

Male horses neigh loudly to female horses when they want to mate with them. Alternate translation: "Like horses who mate with more than one horse, these men wanted to sleep with other men's wives" (See: [Metaphor](#))

Jeremiah 5:9

So should I not punish them ... and should I not avenge myself on a nation that is like this?

Yahweh uses this question to emphasize that the things that they are doing are so bad that he will not have mercy but will punish them.

Alternate translation: "Because they do these things, I will punish them ... I will certainly get revenge for myself against them." (See: [Rhetorical Question](#))

ULT

⁹ So should I not punish them—this is Yahweh's declaration— and should I not avenge myself on a nation that is like this?

this is Yahweh's declaration

Yahweh speaks of himself by name to express the certainty of what he is declaring. See how you translated this in [Jeremiah 1:8](#). Alternate translation: "this is what Yahweh has declared" or "this is what I, Yahweh, have declared" (See: [First, Second or Third Person](#))

Jeremiah 5:10

Connecting Statement:

Yahweh continues to speak. Here he speaks to the enemies of Israel.

Go up onto her vineyards' terraces

In verses 10-13 Yahweh speaks to Israel's enemies. This can be made clear in the quotation. Alternate translation: "You enemies of Israel, go up onto her vineyards' terraces" (See: [Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information](#))

ULT

10 Go up onto her vineyards' terraces and destroy. But do not bring complete destruction to them. Trim their vines, since those vines do not come from Yahweh.

Go up onto her vineyards' terraces and destroy

Yahweh speaks of Israel and Judah as if they were a vineyard and the people there were vines. Alternate translation: "Go up into Israel and Judah, which are like a vineyard to me, and destroy them" (See: [Metaphor](#))

do not bring complete destruction to them

"do not completely destroy them"

Trim their vines, since those vines do not come from Yahweh

The word "their" refers to the vineyards. Yahweh speaks of the people of Israel and Judah as if they were vines. Alternate translation: "like farmers who trim the vines of a vineyard, you must remove many of the people of Israel and Judah, because they do not belong to Yahweh" (See: [Metaphor](#))

Jeremiah 5:11

For the houses of Israel and Judah

The word “house” is a metonym for a person’s descendants. In this case it refers to the people of the kingdoms of Israel and Judah. Alternate translation: “For the people of Israel and Judah” (See: [Metonymy](#))

ULT

11 For the houses of Israel and Judah have completely betrayed me—this is Yahweh’s declaration.

this is Yahweh’s declaration

Yahweh speaks of himself by name to express the certainty of what he is declaring. See how you translated this in [Jeremiah 1:8](#). Alternate translation: “this is what Yahweh has declared” or “this is what I, Yahweh, have declared” (See: [First, Second or Third Person](#))

Jeremiah 5:12

They have spoken falsely about Yahweh and they said

“They have spoken falsely about Yahweh by saying”

no harm will come upon us, and we will not see sword or famine

These two sentences say the same thing, the second is more specific than the first. (See: [Parallelism](#))

no harm will come upon us

The idiom “come upon us” means “happen to us.” Alternate translation: “No harm will happen to us” or “no one will harm us” (See: [Idiom](#))

we will not see sword or famine

Here “see” is a metaphor for experience, and “sword” is a metonym for war. Alternate translation: “we will not experience war or famine” (See: [Metaphor](#) and [Metonymy](#))

ULT

¹² They have spoken falsely about Yahweh and they said, “He will do nothing; no harm will come upon us, and we will not see sword or famine.”

Jeremiah 5:13

The prophets will become wind

Here “prophets” is a metonym that represents what the prophets say, and “wind” is a metaphor for something that does not do anything. Alternate translation: “The prophets words are just noisy wind” or “The prophets make noise like the wind, but what they prophesy will not happen” (See: [Metonymy](#) and [Metaphor](#))

ULT

13 The prophets will become wind, the word is not in them, so let what they say be done to them.”

the word is not in them

Here “the word” refers to God’s message. Alternate translation: “God’s message is not in them” or “the messages that they speak are not from God” (See: [Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information](#))

so let what they say be done to them

It can be stated clearly what kinds of things the prophets were talking about. Alternate translation: “so let the harm that the prophets talk about come to them” or “since the prophets say that bad things will happen to us, let those bad things happen to the prophets” (See: [Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information](#))

Jeremiah 5:14

Because you

The word “you” refers to the people of Israel and Judah.

have said this

See what the people said in [Jeremiah 5:12](#).

see

“look” or “listen” or “pay attention to what I am about to tell you”

I am about to place my word in your mouth

Here “place my word in your mouth” represents causing Jeremiah to speak God’s message. Alternate translation: “I will cause you to speak my message” (See: [Metaphor](#))

It will be like a fire, and this people will be like wood

Yahweh speaks of his message as if it were a fire, and of his people as if they were wood. (See: [Simile](#))

For it will consume them

“For my message will consume them.” Yahweh’s message was about how he would punish his people, so he speaks as if his message would destroy them as a fire destroys wood. Alternate translation: “For when you speak my message, it will destroy the people of Israel as fire destroys wood” (See: [Metaphor](#))

ULT

14 So Yahweh, the God of hosts says this, “Because you have said this, see, I am about to place my word in your mouth. It will be like a fire, and this people will be like wood! For it will consume them.”

Jeremiah 5:15

against you

“to attack you.” The word “you” refers to the people of Israel.

it is a lasting nation, an ancient nation

These phrases mean basically the same thing and emphasize how long the nation has existed. This refers to the nation from far away that Yahweh will bring against Israel. Alternate translation: “it is a very old and enduring nation” (See: [Doublet](#))

a lasting nation

“an enduring nation” or “a very strong nation”

It is a nation whose language you do not know, nor will you understand what they say

These phrases mean the same thing and emphasize that the Israelites do not know the language of those people. It may imply that the Israelites have not had much contact with them. Alternate translation: “It is a nation whose language you will not understand at all” (See: [Parallelism](#))

ULT

15 Behold! I am about to bring a nation against you from far away, house of Israel—this is Yahweh’s declaration— it is a lasting nation, an ancient nation! It is a nation whose language you do not know, nor will you understand what they say.

Jeremiah 5:16

Connecting Statement:

Yahweh continues to speak to the people of Israel.

Its quiver ... They are all soldiers

Here “Its quiver” represents the enemy nation’s army, and the arrows in the quiver represent the soldiers in the army. (See: [Metonymy](#))

quiver

a container for holding arrows

Its quiver is like an open tomb

An open tomb is one that is prepared to have many dead bodies put in it. The enemy army will kill many people. Alternate translation: “That nation’s army will use their arrows and kill many people” or “Because of the arrows of its army, many people will die and be buried” (See: [Simile](#))

ULT

16 Its quiver is like an open tomb. They are all soldiers.

Jeremiah 5:17

So your harvest will be consumed, your sons and daughters also, and your food

This could mean: (1) their harvest and their food that was for their sons and daughters would be consumed. Alternate translation: “So your harvest and your food for your sons and daughters will be consumed” or (2) their harvest, sons and daughters, and food would all be consumed. The idea of the sons and daughters being “consumed” would be a metaphor for killed. Alternate translation: “So your harvest and your food will be consumed, and your sons and daughters will be killed” (See: [Metaphor](#))

ULT

¹⁷ So your harvest will be consumed, your sons and daughters also, and your food. They will eat your flocks and cattle; they will eat the fruit from your vines and fig trees. They will beat down with a sword your fortified cities that you trusted in.

So your harvest will be consumed

This can be translated in active form. Alternate translation: “So the army of that nation will eat the food that you expected to harvest” (See: [Active or Passive](#))

your sons and daughters also, and your food

This could mean: (1) the enemies would eat the food that the sons and daughters should eat, or (2) the enemies will destroy the sons and daughters and eat the food.

They will eat

The word “They” refers to the army of that nation.

They will beat down with a sword your fortified cities

The sword is a synecdoche for all of the different weapons that people use in war. Alternate translation: “They will use their weapons to conquer your strong cities that you trusted to protect you” (See: [Synecdoche](#))

your fortified cities

Fortified cities had a wall around them to protect the people inside from their enemies outside.

that you trusted in

“that you thought were strong enough to keep you safe”

Jeremiah 5:18

Connecting Statement:

Yahweh continues to speak to the people of Israel and Jeremiah.

do not intend to destroy

“will not destroy”

ULT

18 But even in those days—this is Yahweh’s declaration—I do not intend to destroy you completely.

Jeremiah 5:19

done all these things to us

The phrase “these things” refers to sending armies to attack them. Alternate translation: “done all these things to harm us” or “sent foreign armies to attack us” (See: [Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information](#))

Just as you ... served foreign gods in your land, so you must also serve strangers

Here “served foreign gods” represents worshiping foreign gods. God would punish them for serving foreign gods by making them serve foreign people. Alternate translation: “Because you ... worshiped foreign gods in your land, you will have to serve foreigners” (See: [Metaphor](#))

ULT

19 When you, Israel and Judah, say, ‘Why has Yahweh our God done all these things to us?’ then you, Jeremiah, will say to them, ‘Just as you abandoned Yahweh and served foreign gods in your land, so you must also serve strangers in a land that is not your own.’

Jeremiah 5:20

Connecting Statement:

Yahweh continues to speak to the people of Israel.

Report this

“Tell this”

the house of Jacob

The word “house” is a metonym for the family that lives in the house. In this case it refers to Jacob’s descendants. Translate “house of Jacob” as in [Jeremiah 2:4](#). Alternate translation: “descendants of Jacob” (See: [Metonymy](#))

let it be heard in Judah

This can be expressed in active form. Alternate translation: “Let those in Judah hear it” or “announce it in Judah” (See: [Active or Passive](#))

ULT

²⁰ Report this to the house of Jacob and let it be heard in Judah. Say,

Jeremiah 5:21

who have no understanding

“who do not understand” or “who understand nothing”

you cannot see

Here “cannot see” is a metonym for not understanding. Alternate translation: “you do not understand” (See: [Metonymy](#))

you cannot hear

Here “cannot hear” represents not understanding. “Alternate translation: “you do not understand” (See: [Metonymy](#))

ULT

²¹ ‘Hear this, you foolish people who have no understanding; who have eyes but you cannot see, and you have ears but you cannot hear.

Jeremiah 5:22

Do you not fear me ... face?

Yahweh uses this question to emphasize that the people are extremely foolish because they do not fear Yahweh. Alternate translation: "It is foolish that you do not fear me ... face!" (See: [Rhetorical Question](#))

or tremble before my face

The trembling would be because of fear, and being "before my face" represents being aware of who God is. Alternate translation: "or shake with fear because of me" (See: [Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information](#) and [Metonymy](#))

ULT

²² Do you not fear me—this is Yahweh's declaration—or tremble before my face? I have placed a border of sand against the sea, an ongoing decree that it does not violate— even though the sea rises and falls, still it does not violate it. Even though its waves roar, they do not cross it.

I have placed a border of sand against the sea

"I placed the sand as the border for the sea"

an ongoing decree that it does not violate

God speaks of the ocean not going past the border of sand as if the border were a law, and as if the ocean were a person who obeys the law. Alternate translation: "an everlasting limit that it cannot cross" (See: [Metaphor](#))

rises and falls

"moves back and forth"

it does not violate it

"the ocean does not violate my decree." God speaks of ocean not going past the border of sand as if the border were a law, and as if the ocean were a person who obeys the law. Alternate translation: "it does not succeed in going past the border" (See: [Metaphor](#))

Jeremiah 5:23

General Information:

Yahweh continues to speak to the people of Israel.

this people has a stubborn heart. It turns

The people's heart represents their attitude toward God. If Yahweh is speaking to the people, this can also be expressed with the word "you." Alternate translation: "but you people have a stubborn heart. You turn" or "but you people are stubborn. You turn" (See: [Metaphor](#) and [First, Second or Third Person](#))

It turns away in rebellion and goes away

The word "it" refers to the people. Here "goes away" represents disobeying God. Alternate translation: "They rebel and disobey me" (See: [Metaphor](#))

ULT

²³ But this people has a stubborn heart.
It turns away in rebellion and goes
away.

Jeremiah 5:24

they do not say in their hearts

Here “their hearts” represent their thoughts, and “say” represents thinking. Alternate translation: “they do not think” (See: [Metaphor](#))

keeping the fixed weeks of the harvest for us

Here “keeping the fixed weeks of the harvest” represents making sure that those weeks happen at the right time. Alternate translation: “making sure for us that the weeks of harvest happen when they are supposed to” (See: [Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information](#))

ULT

24 For they do not say in their hearts,
“Let us fear Yahweh our God, the one
who brings the rain— the early rain and
the late rains—in their right time,
keeping the fixed weeks of the harvest
for us.”

Jeremiah 5:25

Your iniquities

The word “Your” refers to the descendants of Jacob and the people of Judah.

these things

This refers to the rains and the harvests.

Your sins have stopped good from coming to you

Good things “coming” represents good things happening. “Because of your sins, good things have stopped happening to you” (See: [Metaphor](#))

ULT

25 Your iniquities kept these things from happening. Your sins have stopped good from coming to you.

Jeremiah 5:26

General Information:

Yahweh continues to speak.

For wicked men are found with my people

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "For I have found wicked men among my people" (See: [Active or Passive](#))

ULT

²⁶ For wicked men are found with my people. They watch like someone who crouches to capture birds; they set a trap and catch people.

They watch as someone crouches to capture birds

God speaks of wicked people wanting to harm someone as if they were waiting to capture birds. Alternate translation: "Like someone hiding and waiting to capture birds" (See: [Simile](#))

they set a trap and catch people

God speaks of wicked people intentionally harming others as if they were setting a trap. Alternate translation: "They set things up so that they can take advantage of people" (See: [Metaphor](#))

Jeremiah 5:27

Like a cage full of birds, their houses are full of deceit

Here “deceit” represents the things that were taken by deceit. Alternate translation: Like a cage full of birds that a hunter has caught, wicked people’s houses are full of things that they have taken by deceiving people (See: [Simile](#) and [Metonymy](#))

they grow large and become rich

Here “large” represents powerful. Alternate translation: “these wicked people become powerful and rich” (See: [Metaphor](#))

ULT

²⁷ Like a cage full of birds, their houses are full of deceit. So they grow large and become rich.

Jeremiah 5:28

they shine with well-being

This could mean: (1) their skin shines because of the healthy food they eat, or (2) their body is smooth because of the muscle and fat between their bones and skin. It indicates that they eat well.

They crossed over all bounds of wickedness

Doing all kinds of wicked things is spoken of as if there were a boundary separating some wicked things from things that are even more wicked. Alternate translation: “They do all kinds of wicked things” or “They even do the most wicked things” (See: [Metaphor](#))

They do not plead the cause of the people, or the cause of the orphan

“They do not plead with the rulers to give the people and the orphans what they need” or “They do not plead with the rulers to give justice to the people and the orphans”

they have not given justice to the needy

“they have not helped the needy by doing what is just for them”

ULT

28 They have become fat; they shine with well-being. They crossed over all bounds of wickedness. They do not plead the cause of the people, or the cause of the orphan. They prosper even though they have not given justice to the needy.

Jeremiah 5:29

Should I not punish ... a nation like this?

Yahweh uses this question to emphasize that the things that they are doing are so bad that he will no have mercy but will punish them. See how you translated a similar sentence in [Jeremiah 5:9](#). Alternate translation: "So I will punish them, this is Yahweh's declaration. I will certainly get revenge for myself against them." (See: [Rhetorical Question](#))

ULT

²⁹ Should I not punish them for these things—this is Yahweh's declaration—and will I not take vengeance for myself on a nation like this?

this is Yahweh's declaration

Yahweh speaks of himself by name to express the certainty of what he is declaring. See how you translated this in [Jeremiah 1:8](#). Alternate translation: "this is what Yahweh has declared" or "this is what I, Yahweh, have declared" (See: [First, Second or Third Person](#))

Jeremiah 5:30

General Information:

Yahweh continues to speak.

Atrocities and horrors have occurred

This can be stated more actively. Alternate translation: "People do terrible and horrible things" (See: [Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information](#))

in the land

Here "the land" refers to the land of Israel.' Alternate translation: "in the land of Israel" (See: [Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information](#))

ULT

³⁰ Atrocities and horrors have occurred in the land.

Jeremiah 5:31

The prophets prophesy with deceit, and the priests rule with their own power

These are the atrocities and horrors that are spoken of in verse 30.

The prophets prophesy with deceit

“The prophets prophesy lies” or “The prophets tell lies when they prophesy”

the priests rule with their own power

This could mean: (1) the priests do not submit to God’s authority. Alternate translation: “the priests rule by their own authority” or (2) the priests rule according to the directions of the prophets (See: [Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information](#))

but what will happen in the end?

“but what will you do at the end of all of this?” Yahweh uses this question to emphasize that the people will regret being wicked when he punishes them for it. Alternate translation: “but in the end I will punish you and you will be regret your wicked behavior” (See: [Rhetorical Question](#) and [Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information](#))

ULT

³¹ The prophets prophesy with deceit, and the priests rule with their own power. My people love it this way, but what will happen in the end?”

Jeremiah 6

Jeremiah 6 General Notes

Structure and formatting

Some translations set each line of poetry farther to the right than the rest of the text to make it easier to read. The ULT does this with the poetry in 6:1-30.

Special concepts in this chapter

Gods and battle

In the ancient Near East, it was commonly believed that a nation's gods were responsible for military victory. It may have been believed that a god would not defend an evil city. (See: [god](#), [false god](#), [goddess](#), [idol](#), [idolater](#), [idolatrous](#), [idolatry](#) and [evil](#), [wicked](#), [unpleasant](#))

Jeremiah 6:1

General Information:

Yahweh is speaking.

Find safety ... by leaving Jerusalem

Here “Find safety” represents doing what they can in order to be safe. Alternate translation: “Be safe ... by leaving Jerusalem” or “Leave Jerusalem ... so that you can be safe” (See: [Idiom](#))

ULT

¹ Find safety, people of Benjamin, by leaving Jerusalem. Blow a trumpet in Tekoa. Raise up over Beth Hakkerem a signal, since wickedness is appearing from the north; a great crushing is coming.

people of Benjamin

This is who Yahweh was speaking to.

Blow a trumpet in Tekoa

A trumpet is used as a warning that people will be attacked. Alternate translation: “Blow a trumpet in Tekoa to warn the people that they will be attacked” (See: [Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information](#))

Tekoa

This is the name of a town about 18 kilometers south of Jerusalem. The name means “a horn for blowing.” (See: [How to Translate Names](#))

Raise up over Beth Hakkerem a signal

This could mean: (1) the signal is smoke from a fire. Alternate translation: “Light a fire to send up smoke at Beth Hakkerem to warn people about the enemy coming” or (2) the signal is a flag. Alternate translation: “Raise up a flag over the town of Beth Hakkerem to warn people about the enemy coming”

Beth Hakkerem

the name of a town about 10 kilometers south of Jerusalem. The name means “the place of the vineyard.”

wickedness is appearing from the north

Here “wickedness” represents disaster and the people who will cause it. Alternate translation: “enemies will come from the north and cause disaster to happen to you” or “enemies coming from the north will destroy you” (See: [Metonymy](#))

a great crushing is coming

How the crushing will come can be stated clearly. Alternate translation: “Enemies will come and crush you” or “Enemies will come and destroy you” (See: [Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information](#))

Jeremiah 6:2

The daughter of Zion, the beautiful and delicate woman

Zion is another name for Jerusalem. Yahweh speaks of Jerusalem as though it were a woman. He speaks of it as a daughter to show his love for Jerusalem. Alternate translation: “My dear Zion, which is like a beautiful and delicate woman” or “My dear Zion” (See: [Personification](#))

ULT

² The daughter of Zion, the beautiful and delicate woman, will be destroyed.

Jeremiah 6:3

The shepherds and their flocks will go to them

Kings were often spoken of as shepherds of their people. Alternate translation: "The kings and their soldiers will go to them" (See: [Metaphor](#))

ULT

³ The shepherds and their flocks will go to them; they will set up tents against her all around; each man will shepherd with his own hand.

they will set up tents against her all around

The phrase "against her" means "in order to attack Zion." Alternate translation: "they will set up tents all around Zion in order to attack it" (See: [Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information](#))

each man will shepherd

God speaks of kings leading their armies to destroy the land, as if they were shepherds leading their sheep to eat grass. Alternate translation: "like a shepherd each king will lead his army" or "each king will lead his army" (See: [Metonymy](#))

with his own hand

Here "hand" represents the portion of something someone is assigned to take in his hand. Here it refers to the portion of land the king is assigned to conquer. Alternate translation: "and conquer his portion of the land" (See: [Metaphor](#))

Jeremiah 6:4

General Information:

A king from the attacking army is speaking to the men under his control.

Dedicate yourselves

It can be stated clearly that the kings say this. Alternate translation:

“The kings say to their armies, ‘Dedicate yourselves’” (See: [Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information](#))

ULT

4 “Dedicate yourselves to the gods for the battle. Arise, let us attack at noon. Woe to us for the daylight is fading away, for the evening shadows are falling.

Dedicate yourselves to the gods for the battle

The attacking army tries to ensure that their gods will help them during the war by performing ceremonies and making sacrifices to them. Alternate translation: “Prepare for war by purifying yourselves and sacrificing to the gods” (See: [Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information](#))

Arise, let us attack

To arise or stand up is a metaphor for no longer watching and thinking and instead beginning to act. Alternate translation: “Let us stop thinking and begin to attack” (See: [Metaphor](#))

let us attack at noon

“Let us attack Jerusalem at noon”

It is too bad that the daylight is fading away, that the evening shadows are falling

The kings say this later in the day when they want their army to keep fighting even though it is getting dark.

the daylight is fading away

The end of the day is spoken of in terms of its light becoming dark. Alternate translation: “the day is ending” or “it is beginning to get dark” (See: [Metonymy](#))

are falling

“are stretching out” or “are getting longer”

Jeremiah 6:5

at night

“during the night even though it is dark”

her fortresses

People often spoke of cities as if they were women. Her the word “her” refers to Jerusalem. Alternate translation: “the strong buildings of Jerusalem” (See: [Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information](#))

ULT

⁵ But let us attack at night and destroy her fortresses.”

Jeremiah 6:6

Yahweh of hosts says this

Jeremiah often uses these words to introduce an important message from Yahweh.

Cut her trees

God says this to the army that will attack Jerusalem. The word “her” refers to Jerusalem; cities were often spoken of as if they were women. Alternate translation: “Cut down the trees outside of Jerusalem” (See: [Personification](#))

heap up siegeworks against Jerusalem

Siegeworks are either high mounds of dirt or high ramps made of wood that the enemies build outside the city wall in order go on top of the wall and attack the people inside the city.

because it is filled with oppression

Here “it is filled with oppression” represents people there always oppressing people. Alternate translation: “because its people are always oppressing each other” (See: [Metaphor](#))

ULT

⁶ For Yahweh of hosts says this: Cut her trees, and heap up siegeworks against Jerusalem. This is the right city to attack, because it is filled with oppression.

Jeremiah 6:7

As a well pours out fresh water, so this city keeps producing wickedness

Here “this city keeps producing wickedness” represents people in the city continuing to do wicked things. (See: [Simile](#))

Violence and disorder are heard within her

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: “I hear violence and disorder in her” (See: [Active or Passive](#))

sickness and wounds are continually before my face

These things being “before” God’s face represents him seeing them. Alternate translation: “I constantly see sickness and wounds” (See: [Idiom](#))

ULT

⁷ As a well pours out fresh water, so this city keeps producing wickedness. Violence and disorder are heard within her; sickness and wounds are continually before my face.

Jeremiah 6:8

Accept discipline, Jerusalem ... make you into a ruin, an uninhabited land

Here God speaks to the people of Jerusalem as if he were speaking to the city itself. Alternate translation: "Accept discipline, you people of Jerusalem ... make your land into a ruin, an uninhabited land" (See: [Metonymy](#))

ULT

⁸ Accept discipline, Jerusalem, or I will turn away from you and make you into a ruin, an uninhabited land."

Accept discipline

"Accept discipline" here is a metaphor for learning from discipline. Alternate translation: "Learn from your discipline" or "When I punish you, learn to do what is right" (See: [Metonymy](#))

an uninhabited land

"a land that has no people living in it"

Jeremiah 6:9

They will certainly glean those who are left in Israel like a vineyard

Yahweh speaks of the enemy attacking those who remain as if the enemy were to pick grapes that remain in a vineyard after others have harvested it. Alternate translation: "After destroying Israel, they will certainly come back to attack the people who are still alive" (See: [Metaphor](#))

ULT

⁹ Yahweh of hosts says this, "They will certainly glean those who are left in Israel like a vineyard. Reach out again with your hand to pick grapes from the vines."

They will certainly

The word "They" refers to the enemy that Yahweh sends to destroy Israel.

Reach out again with your hand to pick grapes from the vines

Yahweh commands the enemy to attack those who remain in Israel as if the enemy were pick to grapes that remain in a vineyard after others have harvested it. Alternate translation: "Come back and attack the people of Israel who remain" or "Like people who reach out again to pick grapes from vines that they have already harvested, come back and attack the people who remain" (See: [Metaphor](#))

Jeremiah 6:10

To whom should I declare and warn so they will listen

Yahweh uses this question to emphasize that none of the people of Israel would listen to him even after they survived the attack of their enemies. Alternate translation: “There is no one left for me to speak to and warn who might listen” (See: [Rhetorical Question](#))

Look

“You can see it yourself”

Their ears are uncircumcised

This represents their stubborn unwillingness to listen to God. Alternate translation: “Their ears are closed” or “They refuse to listen” (See: [Metaphor](#))

Their ears

The word “Their” refer to the people of Israel.

The word of Yahweh has come to them

This idiom is used to announce that God gave messages to them. He did this through his prophets. Alternate translation: “Yahweh has sent messages to them” or “Yahweh has spoken to them” (See: [Idiom](#))

they do not want it

“they do not want to listen to the word of Yahweh”

ULT

¹⁰ To whom should I declare and warn so they will listen? Look! Their ears are uncircumcised; they are not able to pay attention! Look! The word of Yahweh has come to them to correct them, but they do not want it.”

Jeremiah 6:11

But I am filled with Yahweh's fury

Jeremiah is speaking. He feels the same anger that Yahweh feels, and he speaks of being extremely angry as if he were filled with anger. Alternate translation: "I am completely angry as Yahweh is" (See: [Idiom](#))

I am tired of holding it in

Jeremiah speaks of not showing Yahweh's anger as if he were holding the anger inside himself. Alternate translation: "I am tired from not expressing this anger" or "I am tired of not doing anything about this anger" (See: [Metaphor](#))

ULT

11 But I am filled with Yahweh's fury. I am tired of holding it in. He said, to me, "Pour it out on the children in the streets and on the groups of young men. For every man will be taken away with his wife; and every old person heavy with years."

Pour it out on the children in the streets and on the groups of young men

God speaks of punishing the people of Israel as if his anger were a liquid that he wanted Jeremiah to pour out on them. Alternate translation: "In anger punish the children in the streets and the groups of young men" (See: [Metaphor](#))

For every man will be taken away with his wife

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "Because enemies will capture every man with his wife" (See: [Active or Passive](#))

every old person heavy with years

The words "will be taken" are understood from the previous phrase. Alternate translation: "every old person heavy with years will be taken" or "they will take every old person heavy with years" (See: [Ellipsis](#))

every old person heavy with years

The phrase "heavy with years" is an idiom that means "very old." It reinforces the phrase "old person." Alternate translation: "every very old person" (See: [Idiom](#))

Jeremiah 6:12

Their houses will be turned over to others

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: “Their houses will become the possession of other people” or “There people will take their houses” (See: [Active or Passive](#))

both their fields and their wives together

The phrase “will be turned over to others” is understood from the previous phrase. Alternate translation: “and their fields and their women will also be turned over to others” (See: [Ellipsis](#))

this is Yahweh’s declaration

Yahweh speaks of himself by name to express the certainty of what he is declaring. See how you translated this in [Jeremiah 1:8](#). Alternate translation: “this is what Yahweh has declared” or “this is what I, Yahweh, have declared” (See: [First, Second or Third Person](#))

ULT

12 Their houses will be turned over to others, both their fields and their wives together. For I will attack the inhabitants of the land with my hand—this is Yahweh’s declaration.

Jeremiah 6:13

that from the least to the greatest, all of them are greedy

The phrase “from the least to the greatest” shows that all the people of Israel are included in the phrase “all of them,” regardless of how important they are. Alternate translation: “all of them, including the least powerful, the most powerful, and every one else, are greedy” (See: [Merism](#))

ULT

¹³ Yahweh declares that from the least to the greatest, all of them are greedy for dishonest gain. From the prophet to the priest, all of them practice deceit.

the least

This refers to the least powerful and least important people. Alternate translation: “the least powerful people” (See: [Nominal Adjectives](#))

the greatest

This refers to the most powerful and most important people. Alternate translation: “the greatest people” or “the most powerful people” (See: [Nominal Adjectives](#))

all of them

“all of the people of Israel”

are greedy for dishonest gain

The abstract noun “gain” can be expressed with the phrases “get more money” or “get more things.” Alternate translation: “want to get more money by lying to people” or “strongly desire to get more things and will even trick people in order to get them” (See: [Abstract Nouns](#))

all of them practice deceit

“all of them deceive people” or “all of them are liars”

Jeremiah 6:14

They have healed the wounds of my people lightly

This could mean: (1) the wounds represent the problems the people have as a result of their sin. Alternate translation: “They act as though my people’s problems are not serious, like small wounds” or (2) the wounds represent the people’s sin. Alternate translation: “They acts as though my people’s sins are not serious, like small wounds” (See: [Metaphor](#))

ULT

¹⁴ They have healed the wounds of my people lightly, saying, ‘Peace, Peace,’ when there is no peace.

They have healed the wounds ... lightly

Here “lightly” represents treating the wounds as if they were not serious, as if they were not difficult. (See: [Metaphor](#))

‘Peace, Peace,’ when there is no peace

“‘All is well, All is well,’ but it is not well”

Jeremiah 6:15

Were they ashamed when they practiced abominations?

God uses this question to show his anger that the people were not ashamed of their sins. Alternate translation: "They committed terrible sins, and they were not ashamed" (See: [Rhetorical Question](#))

they did not know how to blush

When a person is ashamed, his face normally turns red. Alternate translation: "their faces did not even turn red"

they will fall among the fallen

Here "fall" represents being killed. Alternate translation: "they will be killed along with the others who are killed" (See: [Metaphor](#))

they will be brought down when they are punished

Here "will be brought down" represents being destroyed. This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "I will destroy them when I punish them" (See: [Metaphor](#) and [Active or Passive](#))

ULT

¹⁵ Were they ashamed when they practiced abominations? They were not ashamed; they did not even know how to blush! So they will fall among the fallen; they will be brought down when they are punished, says Yahweh.

Jeremiah 6:16

Yahweh says this

It can be stated clearly who Yahweh says this to. Alternate translation: "Yahweh says this to the people of Israel" or "Yahweh says this to his people" (See: [Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information](#))

Stand at the road crossing ... We will not go

The roads and pathways refer to ways that people live their lives. Yahweh wants the people of Israel to ask what is the good way to live their lives and for them to live that way. (See: [Metaphor](#))

the road crossing

This refers to the place where two roads meet.

ask for the ancient pathways

The ancient pathways represent their ancestors's behavior, how their ancestors lived long ago. Alternate translation: "ask about the pathways that your ancestors walked on" or "ask about how your ancestors behaved" (See: [Metaphor](#))

Where is this good way

This could mean: (1) "this good way" represents the good way to live. Alternate translation: "What is the good way to live" or (2) "this good way" represents the way to live that results in blessings. Alternate translation: "Where is the way to what is good" or "What is the way to live that results in blessing" (See: [Metaphor](#))

Then go on it

"Then walk on that path." Going on that path represents living that way. Alternate translation: "Then live that way" (See: [Metaphor](#))

We will not go

This represents not living that way. Alternate translation: "We will not live that way" (See: [Metaphor](#))

ULT

16 Yahweh says this, "Stand at the road crossing and look; ask for the ancient pathways. 'Where is this good way?' Then go on it and find a resting place for yourselves. But the people say, 'We will not go.'"

Jeremiah 6:17

I appointed for you watchmen to listen for the trumpet

Yahweh speaks of his prophets as if they were watchmen who were sent to warn the people of danger. (See: [Metaphor](#))

ULT

¹⁷ I appointed for you watchmen to listen for the sound of the trumpet. But they said, 'We will not listen.'

appointed for you

The word "you" refers to the people of Israel.

to listen for the trumpet

"to listen to the sound of the trumpet." Yahweh speaks of his warning messages to his prophets as if the messages were a trumpet being blown to warn people about the danger that would come. The prophets were to listen to the warning and tell the people about it.

Jeremiah 6:18

Therefore, nations, listen! See, you witnesses, what will happen to them.

These two sentences are telling the people of other nations to witness what Yahweh will do to the rebellious people of Judah.

Alternate translation: "Therefore, you people of other nations, listen! You witnesses, see what will happen to my people" (See: [Metonymy](#) and [Apostrophe](#))

ULT

¹⁸ Therefore, nations, listen! See, you witnesses, what will happen to them.

Therefore, nations, listen!

"Therefore, nations, listen to what I am about to say!"

you witnesses

"you who are witnesses"

will happen to them

The word "them" refers to the people of Israel.

Jeremiah 6:19

Hear, earth

Jeremiah is speaking to the people of nations far away from him as if they could hear him. He is speaking as if to the earth itself. Alternate translation: "Listen, everyone who lives on the earth" (See: [Apostrophe](#) and [Metonymy](#))

I am about to bring disaster to this people

"soon I will punish these people severely"

the fruit of their thoughts

Here the word "fruit" represents results or consequences. Alternate translation: "the consequences of their thoughts" (See: [Metaphor](#))

They paid no attention to my word or law, but they instead rejected it

Here "paid no attention to my word" refers to not listening to what God said, and "rejected it" refers to refusing to obey God's law. Alternate translation: "They did not listen to what I said. Instead they disobeyed my law" (See: [Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information](#))

ULT

19 Hear, earth! See, I am about to bring disaster to this people—the fruit of their thoughts. They paid no attention to my word or law, but instead they rejected it."

Jeremiah 6:20

What does this frankincense going up from Sheba mean to me? Or these sweet smells from a distant land?

God uses these questions to rebuke the people. Alternate translation: "Frankincense from Sheba and sweet smelling cane from a distant land mean nothing to me." or "I do not want your burnt offerings of frankincense from Sheba or sweet smelling cane from a distant land." (See: [Rhetorical Question](#))

these sweet smells

People would burn sweet smelling cane as an offering to God.

are not acceptable to me

"do not please me" or "do not make me happy"

ULT

²⁰ "What does this frankincense going up from Sheba mean to me? Or these sweet smells from a distant land? Your burnt offerings are not acceptable to me, nor are your sacrifices."

Jeremiah 6:21

See, I

“Pay attention, because what I am about to say is both true and important: I”

I am about to place a stumbling block against this people

“I am about to put obstacles in front of this people.” Yahweh speaks of the troubles that he will make happen to the people of Israel as if they were a blocks that people stumble over. (See: [Metaphor](#))

fathers and sons together

The phrase “will stumble” is understood from the previous phrase. Alternate translation: “fathers and sons will both stumble” or “fathers and sons will both be hurt” (See: [Ellipsis](#))

Inhabitants and their neighbors

“Neighbors and their friends”

ULT

²¹ So Yahweh says this, ‘See, I am about to place a stumbling block against this people. They will stumble over it—fathers and sons together. Inhabitants and their neighbors will also perish.’

Jeremiah 6:22

a people is coming

Their purpose can be made clear. Alternate translation: “a people is coming to attack you” or “an army is coming” (See: [Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information](#))

a great nation

Here “nation” represents the army of the nation. Alternate translation: “the army of a great nation” (See: [Synecdoche](#))

is being stirred up from the farthest parts of the earth

Being “stirred up” represents preparing to do something. Alternate translation: “is being prepared to come from a distant land” (See: [Metaphor](#))

ULT

22 Yahweh says this, ‘See, a people is coming from the land of the north, a great nation is being stirred up from the farthest parts of the earth.’

Jeremiah 6:23

They will pick up bows and spears

“The soldiers will carry bows and spears”

Their sound is like the sea roar

The loud noise that the soldiers make is compared to the loud noise of the ocean. Alternate translation: “The sound that they make is very loud, like the sound of the ocean” (See: [Simile](#))

ULT

²³ They will pick up bows and spears. They are cruel and have no compassion. Their sound is like the sea roar, and they are riding on horses, set out in order as men for battle, against you, daughter of Zion.”

they are riding on horses, set out in order as men for battle

The phrase “set out in order” means that they have organized themselves and are riding in rows. The phrase “as men for battle” indicates that they are ready to fight. Alternate translation: “they are riding on horses in their assigned rows, and they are ready to fight against you” (See: [Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information](#))

Jeremiah 6:24

We have heard

The word “We” probably refers to Jeremiah and the people of Judah.

our hands fall limp in distress

“our hands are weak because we are anxious”

Anguish seizes us

Feeling great anguish is spoken of as if the anguish grabs them. Alternate translation: “We feel terrible anguish”
(See: [Metaphor](#))

as a woman giving birth

The anguish that they feel because the enemy coming to attack them is compared to the anguish that a woman feels when she is about to give birth to a baby. Alternate translation: “like a woman who is about to give birth”
(See: [Simile](#))

ULT

24 We have heard the reports about them and our hands fall limp in distress. Anguish seizes us as a woman giving birth.

Jeremiah 6:25

General Information:

Jeremiah speaks to the people of Jerusalem. Some versions interpret this as Yahweh speaking to the people of Jerusalem.

for the swords of the enemy and terror are all around

The phrase “swords of the enemy” represents the enemy with their swords ready to attack. The abstract noun “terror” refers to things that cause people to be frightened and can be translated with an adjective. Alternate translation: “For the enemy is everywhere with their swords and everyone else is terrified” (See: [Metonymy](#) and [Abstract Nouns](#))

ULT

²⁵ Do not go out to the fields, and do not walk on the roads, for the swords of the enemy and terror are all around.

Jeremiah 6:26

Daughter of my people

Jeremiah shows Yahweh's love for his people by speaking to them as a daughter. See how you translated a similar phrase in [Jeremiah 4:11](#). Alternate translation: "My people, you who are like a daughter to me" or "My dear people" (See: [Metaphor](#))

ULT

²⁶ Daughter of my people, put on sackcloth and roll in ashes; mourn with painful sobs as for an only son, for the destroyer will suddenly come upon us.

put on sackcloth and roll in ashes

People do these things to show that they are extremely sad. Alternate translation: "Show how sad you are by wearing sackcloth and rolling in ashes" (See: [Symbolic Action](#))

mourn with painful sobs as for an only son

Jeremiah compares the people's great sadness to the sadness that a mother feels if her only son dies. Alternate translation: "mourn with painful sobs as you would if your only son died" (See: [Simile](#))

for the destroyer will suddenly come upon us

"because the enemy army will suddenly come to attack us"

Jeremiah 6:27

General Information:

Yahweh is speaking to Jeremiah. God speaks of the people of Israel being very sinful as if they were silver that was full of impurities. God speaks of punishing Israel to make them stop sinning as if he were boiling silver and lead in a hot fire in order to remove the impurities from the silver. (See: [Metaphor](#))

ULT

27 "I have made you, Jeremiah, one who tests my people like one would test metal, so you will inspect and test their ways.

one who tests my people like one would test metal

Yahweh compares Jeremiah testing his people to a person who tests metal to see how good it is. (See: [Simile](#))

their ways

"their behavior" or "how they live"

Jeremiah 6:28

who go about slandering others

“and constantly slander other people”

All of them are bronze and iron

Bronze and iron are hard metals. Yahweh speaks of the people being stubborn as if they were hard like bronze and iron. Alternate translation: “All of them are hard like bronze and iron” or “All of them are stubborn, as hard as bronze and iron” (See: [Metaphor](#))

ULT

²⁸ They are all the most stubborn of people, who go about slandering others. All of them are bronze and iron, acting corruptly.

Jeremiah 6:29

The bellows are scorched by the fire that is burning them; the lead is consumed in the flames

God speaks of punishing his people as if they were silver and he was boiling the silver in a very hot fire. These phrases emphasize that the one boiling the metal was working very hard. (See: [Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information](#))

ULT

²⁹ The bellows are scorched by the fire that is burning them; the lead is consumed in the flames. The refining continues among them, but it is useless, because the evil is not removed.

The bellows are scorched by the fire that is burning them

The fire is so hot that it burns the bellows. This can be stated in active form. This very hot fire represents God's judgment. Alternate translation: "The fire is so hot that it scorches the bellows" or "The punishment is so severe that it is like a fire that even burns the bellows" (See: [Metaphor](#) and [Active or Passive](#))

The bellows are scorched

Bellows are a tool used to blow large amounts of air into a burning fire to make the fire hotter. (See: [Translate Unknowns](#))

the lead is consumed in the flames

The silver has so many impurities in it that the lead is used up before it can remove them all. This represents the people of Israel being so full of sin, that they continue to sin even after God punishes them. Alternate translation: "the silver is so full of impurities, that the lead that is used to remove them is used up" or "they are like silver that is so full of impurities that the lead cannot remove them all" (See: [Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information](#) and [Metaphor](#))

The refining continues among them

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "You will continue to refine them" or "You will continue to try to purify them" (See: [Active or Passive](#))

because the evil is not removed

God speaks of Israel continuing to be evil as if they were silver and the impurities remained in the silver. This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "because the evil remains" or "the impurities remain" (See: [Active or Passive](#))

Jeremiah 6:30

They will be called rejected silver, for

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "People will say about the people of Israel, 'They are rejected silver,' for" (See: [Active or Passive](#))

ULT

³⁰ They will be called rejected silver, for Yahweh has rejected them."

Jeremiah 7

Jeremiah 7 General Notes

Structure and formatting

Some translations prefer to set apart quotations. The ULT and many other English translations set the lines of 7:29-34, which is an extended quotation, farther to the right on the page than the rest of the text.

Special concepts in this chapter

Justice in society

Jeremiah commanded the people of Jerusalem to live justly. Without justice, they did not truly have faith in Yahweh. Without this faith in Yahweh, the temple and its rituals were useless. (See: [just](#), [justice](#), [unjust](#), [injustice](#), [justify](#), [justification](#) and [faith](#) and [temple](#), [house](#), [house of God](#))

Other possible translation difficulties in this chapter

“Do not pray for this people”

Yahweh wanted the people to repent. This statement, and the others that follow, may be taken in another way. They are intended to show that it is too late for the people, and their punishment will come regardless of their response. (See: [repent](#), [repentance](#))

Jeremiah 7:1

The word that came to Jeremiah from Yahweh, saying,

This idiom is used to introduce a special message from God. See how you translated a similar phrase in [Jeremiah 1:4](#). Alternate translation: "This is the message that Yahweh gave to Jeremiah. He said," or "This is the message that Yahweh spoke to Jeremiah:" (See: [Idiom](#))

ULT

¹ The word that came to Jeremiah from Yahweh, saying,

Jeremiah 7:2

all you of Judah

“all you people of Judah”

ULT

² “Stand at the gate of Yahweh’s house and proclaim there this word! Say, ‘Hear the word of Yahweh, all you of Judah, you who enter these gates to worship Yahweh.

Jeremiah 7:3

Connecting Statement:

Yahweh continues giving Jeremiah his message to the people of Judah.

Yahweh of hosts ... says this

Jeremiah often uses these words to introduce an important message from Yahweh. See how you translated this in [Jeremiah 6:6](#).

Make your ways and practices good, and I will let you continue

“If you improve your ways and your practices, then I will let you continue”

in this place

This means in the land of Judah, not in the temple.

ULT

³ Yahweh of hosts, God of Israel, says this: Make your ways and practices good, and I will let you continue to live in this place.

Jeremiah 7:4

Do not entrust yourself to deceitful words and say

The reflexive pronoun “yourself” emphasizes the personal risk to the Israelites. Alternate translation: “Do not trust in deceitful words to protect you, saying” (See: [Reflexive Pronouns](#))

ULT

⁴ Do not entrust yourself to deceitful words and say, “Temple of Yahweh! Temple of Yahweh! Temple of Yahweh!”

Temple of Yahweh! Temple of Yahweh! Temple of Yahweh!

It is implied that, since the temple belongs to Yahweh and represents his presence, he will protect it and the people of Judah will be safe. Possible meanings for why **Temple of Yahweh** is repeated three times are (1) it was repeated for emphasis or (2) it was repeated as part of a temple liturgy. Alternate translation: “This is the temple of Yahweh so it is absolutely certain that no one will destroy it and we are safe.” (See: [Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information](#))

Jeremiah 7:5

Connecting Statement:

Yahweh continues giving Jeremiah his message to the people of Judah.

make your ways and practices good

“improve your ways and practices.” See how you translated this in [Jeremiah 7:3](#).

completely execute justice

The abstract noun “justice” can be translated using the verb “judge.” Alternate translation: “judge rightly” (See: [Abstract Nouns](#))

ULT

⁵ For if you actually make your ways and practices good; if you completely execute justice between a man and his neighbor—

Jeremiah 7:6

do not exploit the one

“treat fairly the foreigner”

orphan

child whose parents have died

pour out innocent blood

Here pouring out innocent blood represents killing those not deserving death. Alternate translation: “kill innocent people” (See: [Metonymy](#))

walk after other gods

Here walking after is a metonym for following after with the intent to serve and obey. Alternate translation: “serve other gods” (See: [Metonymy](#))

in this place

Here “this place” refers to the land of Judah.

ULT

⁶ if you do not exploit the one staying in the land, the orphan, or the widow and do not pour out innocent blood in this place, and do not walk after other gods to your own harm—

Jeremiah 7:7

will let you stay

“will let you continue to live”

from ancient times and forever

“from ancient times and continually.” This means Yahweh gave the land to the people of Judah to be their permanent possession.

ULT

⁷ then I will let you stay in this place, in the land that I gave to your ancestors from ancient times and forever.

Jeremiah 7:8

General Information:

The word “you” in these verses refers to the people of Judah.

Connecting Statement:

Yahweh continues giving Jeremiah his message to the people of Judah.

Behold!

The word “Behold” here alerts us to pay attention to the information that follows.

ULT

⁸ Behold! You are trusting in deceitful words that do not help you.

Jeremiah 7:9

Do you steal, kill, and commit adultery? Do you swear ... and walk after other gods whom you have not known?

These questions expect a positive answer to make the point that God knows the sins they are committing. This can be translated as a statement. Alternate translation: "You steal, kill, and commit adultery. You swear ... and walk after other gods whom you have not known." (See: [Rhetorical Question](#))

ULT

⁹ Do you steal, kill, and commit adultery? Do you swear deceitfully and offer incense to Baal and walk after other gods whom you have not known?

swear deceitfully

"lie even in your oaths"

walk after other gods

Here walking after is a metonym for following after with the intent to serve and obey. See how you translated this in [Jeremiah 7:6](#). Alternate translation: "serve other gods" (See: [Metonymy](#))

Jeremiah 7:10

Then do you come and stand ... so you can do all of these abominations?

This question expects a positive answer to make the point that God knows the hypocrisy of their words and actions. This can be translated as a statement. Alternate translation: “Then you come and stand ... so you can do all of these abominations.” (See: [Rhetorical Question](#))

ULT

¹⁰ Then do you come and stand before me in this house that is called by my name and say, “We are saved,” so you can do all of these abominations?

house that is called by my name

This is a metonym for Yahweh’s temple. It can be expressed in active form. Alternate translation: “house that belongs to me” or “temple where you worship me” (See: [Metonymy](#) and [Active or Passive](#))

Jeremiah 7:11

Is this house, which carries my name, a den of bandits in your eyes?

This question expects a positive answer to make the point that God knows what they think about Yahweh's temple. This can be translated as a statement. Alternate translation: "This house, which carries my name, is a den of bandits in your eyes!" or "You act as though you think this house, which is called by my name, should be a place where bandits can go to hide!" (See: [Rhetorical Question](#))

ULT

¹¹ Is this house, which carries my name, a den of bandits in your eyes? But behold, I have seen it—this is Yahweh's declaration.'

this house, which carries my name

Yahweh's temple is spoken of as if it was carrying the name of Yahweh. This has a similar meaning to "this house that is called by my name" in the previous verse. (See: [Idiom](#))

bandits

violent people who steal and destroy

But behold, I have seen it

"But I certainly have seen what you are doing"

this is Yahweh's declaration

Yahweh speaks of himself by name to express the certainty of what he is declaring. See how you translated this in [Jeremiah 1:8](#). Alternate translation: "this is what Yahweh has declared" or "this is what I, Yahweh, have declared" (See: [First, Second or Third Person](#))

Jeremiah 7:12

General Information:

The words “you” and “your” in these verses refer to the people of Judah.

Connecting Statement:

Yahweh continues giving Jeremiah his message to the people of Judah.

ULT

12 ‘So go to my place that was in Shiloh, where I allowed my name to stay there in the beginning, and look at what I did to it because of the wickedness of my people Israel.

my place that was in Shiloh, where I allowed my name to stay there in the beginning

Here “where I allowed my name to stay” is an idiom that means this was a place where Yahweh was worshiped. Alternate translation: “the place in Shiloh where I first allowed my people to worship me” (See: [Idiom](#))

Jeremiah 7:13

time and time again

This hendiadys is also an idiom that means something is done many times. Alternate translation: “repeatedly” or “persistently” (See: [Hendiadys](#) and [Idiom](#))

ULT

13 So now, on account of your doing all of these practices—this is Yahweh’s declaration—I spoke to you time and time again, but you did not listen. I summoned you, but you did not answer.

Jeremiah 7:14

this house that is called by my name

This is a metonym for Yahweh's temple. It can be expressed in active form. See how you translated this in [Jeremiah 7:10](#). Alternate translation: "this house that belongs to me" or "this temple where you worship me" (See: [Metonymy](#) and [Active or Passive](#))

ULT

14 Therefore, what I did to Shiloh, I will also do to this house that is called by my name, the house in which you have trusted, this place that I gave to you and your ancestors.

Jeremiah 7:15

(There are no notes for this verse.)

ULT

15 For I will send you out from before me just as I had sent out all your brothers, all the descendants of Ephraim.'

Jeremiah 7:16

General Information:

Yahweh speaks to Jeremiah about the people of Judah. In these verses, "this people" refers to the people of Judah.

do not pray for this people, and do not lift up a lamenting wail or say a prayer on their behalf, and do not petition me

These four clauses each mean about the same thing and are repeated for emphasis. (See: [Parallelism](#))

lift up a lamenting wail

"cry out with sadness"

on their behalf

"for their benefit" or "for them"

petition me

"plead with me"

ULT

16 As for you, Jeremiah, do not pray for this people, and do not lift up a lamenting wail or say a prayer on their behalf, and do not petition me, for I will not listen to you.

Jeremiah 7:17

Do you not see what they are doing in the cities of Judah and in the streets of Jerusalem?

This question expects a positive answer and is asked to bring these things to Jeremiah's attention. They can be expressed as a statement. Alternate translation: "Look at what they are doing in the cities of Judah and in the streets of Jerusalem!" (See: [Rhetorical Question](#))

ULT

¹⁷ Do you not see what they are doing in the cities of Judah and in the streets of Jerusalem?

Jeremiah 7:18

kindling the fire

“starting the fire”

kneading dough

mixing dough by hand

dough

a thick mixture of flour and liquid used for baking

the queen of the heavens

This was the name of a false god. Alternate translation: “the false god known as ‘the queen of the heavens’” (See: [Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information](#))

will provoke me

“will anger me”

ULT

18 The children are gathering wood and the fathers kindling the fire! The women are kneading dough to make cakes for the queen of the heavens and pour out drink offerings for other gods so that they will provoke me.

Jeremiah 7:19

General Information:

In these verses, “they” and “themselves” refer to the people of Judah.

Connecting Statement:

Yahweh continues to speak to Jeremiah about the people of Judah.

ULT

19 Are they truly provoking me?—this is Yahweh’s declaration—is it not themselves whom they are provoking, so that shame is on them?

is it not themselves whom they are provoking, so that shame is on them?

This question expects a positive answer. It can be expressed as a statement. Alternate translation: “they are provoking themselves, so that shame is on them!” or “they are troubling and bringing shame on themselves!” (See: [Rhetorical Question](#) and [Reflexive Pronouns](#))

shame is on them

The abstract noun “shame” can be translated using the verb “shamed.” Alternate translation: “they are shamed” (See: [Abstract Nouns](#))

Jeremiah 7:20

See

This word is used here to draw someone's attention to what is said next. Alternate translation: "Listen" or "Pay attention to what I am about to tell you"

my anger and wrath will gush out onto this place

Yahweh speaks of his anger as if it were something that could be poured out. Alternate translation: "I will punish this place" (See: [Idiom](#))

anger and wrath

These words mean basically the same thing and emphasize the intensity of Yahweh's anger. (See: [Doublet](#))

gush out

"pour out"

It will burn and never be extinguished

Yahweh speaks of his anger as if it were a fire that could not be put out. Alternate translation: "No one will be able to stop my anger" (See: [Idiom](#))

never be extinguished

"never stop burning"

ULT

20 Therefore the Lord Yahweh says this, 'See, my anger and wrath will gush out onto this place, on both man and beast, on the tree in the fields and the fruit on the ground. It will burn and never be extinguished.'

Jeremiah 7:21

General Information:

In these verses, “you” and “your” refer to the people of Judah.

Connecting Statement:

Yahweh continues giving Jeremiah his message to the people of Judah.

Yahweh of hosts ... says this

Jeremiah often uses these words to introduce an important message from Yahweh. See how you translated this in [Jeremiah 6:6](#).

Add your burnt offerings to your sacrifices and the meat from them

This is an ironic statement emphasizing that none of their sacrifices were acceptable to Yahweh. Alternate translation: “Go ahead and eat the burnt offerings along with your sacrifices and meat from them” (See: [Irony](#))

ULT

²¹ Yahweh of hosts, God of Israel says this, ‘Add your burnt offerings to your sacrifices and eat the meat from them.’

Jeremiah 7:22

(There are no notes for this verse.)

ULT

²² For I did not speak with your ancestors and I gave them no command about matters of burnt offerings and sacrifices, when I brought them out from the land of Egypt.

Jeremiah 7:23

Listen to my voice

Here listening to Yahweh's voice means to both hear his words and obey what he says. Alternate translation: "Hear and obey what I say" (See: [Metonymy](#))

walk in all the ways that I am commanding you

Yahweh speaks of obeying his commands as if one were walking in them, like person would walk along a road. Alternate translation: "do everything that I am commanding you" (See: [Metaphor](#))

ULT

²³ I only gave them this command, "Listen to my voice, and I will be your God and you will be my people. So walk in all the ways that I am commanding you, so that it may go well with you."

Jeremiah 7:24

General Information:

The words “you” and “your” in these verses refer to the people of Judah. “They” refers to the ancestors of the people of Judah.

Connecting Statement:

Yahweh continues giving Jeremiah his message to the people of Judah.

they did not listen or pay attention

These phrases mean about the same thing and are repeated for emphasis. (See: [Doublet](#))

by their own stubborn plans of their wicked hearts

“according to their own plans because they were wicked and stubborn”

they went backwards, not forward

This is a metaphor. This could mean: (1) they refused to pay attention to Yahweh, instead of eagerly obeying him. Alternate translation: “they went away from me instead of drawing closer to me” or (2) they got worse and worse instead of improving. Alternate translation: “they got worse instead of better” (See: [Metaphor](#))

ULT

24 But they did not listen or pay attention. They lived by their own stubborn plans of their wicked hearts, so they went backwards, not forward.

Jeremiah 7:25

Ever since the day when your ancestors went out from the land of Egypt until this day

This is a generalization that means over this entire period of time, not every day during this period of time. Alternate translation: "From the time your ancestors went out from the land of Egypt until now" (See: [Hyperbole](#))

I persisted in sending them

"I sent them again and again" or "I repeatedly sent them"

ULT

²⁵ Ever since the day when your ancestors went out from the land of Egypt until this day, I have sent every one of my servants, my prophets, to you. I persisted in sending them.

Jeremiah 7:26

they hardened their necks

This is an idiom that means they were stubborn. Alternate translation: “they became stubborn” or “they resisted me” (See: [Idiom](#))

They were more wicked

“Each generation was more wicked”

ULT

²⁶ But they did not listen to me. They paid no attention. Instead, they hardened their necks. They were more wicked than their ancestors.’

Jeremiah 7:27

General Information:

The words “them” and “they” in these verses refer to the people of Judah.

Connecting Statement:

Yahweh continues giving Jeremiah his message to the people of Judah.

So proclaim all these words to them, but they will not listen to you. Proclaim these things to them, but they will not answer you.

These two sentences say the same thing. The second emphasizes the message of the first. Alternate translation: “Tell them my message, but they will not listen to you or answer you.” (See: [Parallelism](#))

ULT

27 So proclaim all these words to them, but they will not listen to you. Proclaim these things to them, but they will not answer you.

Jeremiah 7:28

the voice of Yahweh its God

Here “the voice of Yahweh” represents what Yahweh has said. See how you translated this in [Jeremiah 3:25](#). Alternate translation: “what Yahweh its God has said” (See: [Metonymy](#))

Truth is destroyed and cut off from their mouths

Yahweh speaks of truth as if it was something the people could destroy and stop saying. This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: “The people destroy truth and cut it off from their mouths” or “The people tell only lies” (See: [Active or Passive](#) and [Idiom](#))

Truth is destroyed

The abstract noun “truth” can be translated using the adjective “truthful.” Alternate translation: “What is truthful is destroyed” (See: [Abstract Nouns](#))

ULT

28 Say to them: This is a nation that does not listen to the voice of Yahweh its God and does not receive discipline. Truth is destroyed and cut off from their mouths.

Jeremiah 7:29

General Information:

The word “your” in these verses refers to the people of Judah.

Connecting Statement:

Yahweh continues giving Jeremiah his message to the people of Judah.

ULT

29 Cut off your hair and shave yourself, and throw away your hair. Sing a funeral song over the open places. For Yahweh has rejected and abandoned this generation in his rage.

Cut off your hair and shave yourself, and throw away your hair

This would be done as a sign of mourning. (See: [Symbolic Action](#) and [Reflexive Pronouns](#))

rejected and abandoned

These two words have similar meanings and are repeated for emphasis. (See: [Doublet](#))

Jeremiah 7:30

sons of Judah

This refers to the people of Judah. Alternate translation: “people of Judah” (See: [Metonymy](#))

their detestable things

Here “detestable things” refers to idols, which God hates. Alternate translation: “their disgusting idols” (See: [Metonymy](#))

house that is called by my name

This is a metonym for Yahweh’s temple. It can be expressed in active form. See how you translated this in [Jeremiah 7:10](#). Alternate translation: “house that belongs to me” or “temple where they worship me” (See: [Metonymy](#) and [Active or Passive](#))

ULT

30 For the sons of Judah have done evil in my sight—this is Yahweh’s declaration—they have set their detestable things in the house that is called by my name, in order to defile it.

Jeremiah 7:31

General Information:

The words “they” and “their” in these verses refer to the people of Judah.

Connecting Statement:

Yahweh continues to describe the evil things that the people of Judah had done.

ULT

31 Then they built the high place of Topheth that is in the Valley of Ben Hinnom. They did this to burn their sons and daughters in fire—something that I did not command, nor did it enter my mind.

the high place of Topheth

This is the name of a place where the people of Israel sacrificed their children to a false god by burning them with fire. (See: [How to Translate Names](#))

the Valley of Ben Hinnom

This is the name of a valley south of the city of Jerusalem, where people sacrificed to false gods. (See: [How to Translate Names](#))

nor did it enter my mind

Here the word “mind” refers to Yahweh’s thoughts. Alternate translation: “nor did I ever think about it” (See: [Metonymy](#))

Jeremiah 7:32

So see

The word “see” here adds emphasis to what follows. Alternate translation: “Indeed”

days are coming ... when it

Future time is spoken of as if the “days are coming.” Alternate translation: “in the future ... it” or “there will be a time ... when it” (See: [Metaphor](#))

this is Yahweh’s declaration

Yahweh speaks of himself by name to express the certainty of what he is declaring. See how you translated this in [Jeremiah 1:8](#). Alternate translation: “this is what Yahweh has declared” or “this is what I, Yahweh, have declared” (See: [First, Second or Third Person](#))

it will no longer be called

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: “people will no longer call it” (See: [Active or Passive](#))

they will bury bodies

“they will bury dead people”

no room left

“no place remaining”

ULT

³² So see, days are coming—this is Yahweh’s declaration—when it will no longer be called Topheth or Valley of Ben Hinnom. It will be the Valley of Slaughter; they will bury bodies in Topheth until there is no room left.

Jeremiah 7:33

Connecting Statement:

Yahweh continues to speak of his judgment on the people of Judah.

The corpses

“The dead bodies”

this people

“the people of Judah”

the birds of the skies

See how you translated “the birds of the heavens” in [Jeremiah 4:25](#).

the beasts of the earth

“the wild animals of the land”

to frighten them away

“to scare them away”

ULT

33 The corpses of this people will be food for the birds of the skies and the beasts of the earth, and there will be no one to frighten them away.

Jeremiah 7:34

I will put an end to

“I will remove from”

the sound of joy and the sound of gladness

These two phrases mean almost the same thing and are repeated for emphasis. The abstract nouns “joy” and “gladness” can be translated using the verb “rejoicing” and the adjective “glad.”

Alternate translation: “the sounds of people rejoicing and being glad” (See: [Doublet](#) and [Abstract Nouns](#))

ULT

³⁴ I will put an end to, from the cities of Judah and from the streets of Jerusalem, the sound of joy and the sound of gladness, the voice of the groom and the voice of the bride. For the land will become a desolation.”

the sound of the groom and the sound of the bride

This is a metonym for what happens at marriage ceremonies. Alternate translation: “and people celebrating marriage” (See: [Metonymy](#))

will become a desolation

The abstract noun “desolation” can be translated using the adjective “desolate.” Alternate translation: “will become desolate” (See: [Abstract Nouns](#))

Jeremiah 8

Jeremiah 8 General Notes

Structure and formatting

Some translations set each line of poetry farther to the right than the rest of the text to make it easier to read. The ULT does this with the poetry in 8:5-22.

The prophecy revealed to Jeremiah is recorded in 8:5-9:12. Despite covering more than one chapter, this should be seen as one unit. (See: [prophet](#), [prophecy](#), [prophecy](#), [seer](#), [prophetess](#) and [reveal](#), [revealed](#), [revelation](#))

Important figures of speech in this chapter

Hyperbole

The author frequently uses hyperbole in this chapter to describe the complete destruction of Jerusalem. (See: [Hyperbole](#))

Jeremiah 8:1

Connecting Statement:

Yahweh continues to speak of his judgment on the people of Judah.

they will bring

This word “they” here refers to the enemies of the people of Judah.

its officials

“its princes” or “its rulers”

ULT

¹ “At that time—this is Yahweh’s declaration—they will bring out from the graves the bones of the kings of Judah and its officials, the bones of the priests and the prophets, and the bones of the inhabitants of Jerusalem.

Jeremiah 8:2

will spread them out

The word “them” refers to the bones of the people listed in the previous verse.

that they have followed and served, that they have walked after and sought, and that they have worshiped

The word “they” here refers to the people of Judah. These three phrases mean about the same thing and are repeated for emphasis. (See: [Parallelism](#))

walked after

This is a metaphor for serving or worshiping. See how you translated this in [Jeremiah 2:23](#). (See: [Metaphor](#))

The bones will not be gathered or buried again

This can be expressed in active form. Alternate translation: “No one will gather their bones or bury them again” (See: [Active or Passive](#))

They will be like dung on the surface of the earth

The bones are compared to dung on the ground both to emphasize that they will be disgusting and because they will not be buried. (See: [Simile](#))

on the surface of the earth

“all over the ground”

ULT

² Then they will spread them out in the sun and moon and all the stars of the skies; these things in the sky that they have followed and served, that they have walked after and sought, and that they have worshiped. The bones will not be gathered or buried again. They will be like dung on the surface of the earth.

Jeremiah 8:3

where I have driven them

The word “them” refers to the people of Judah.

this is the declaration of Yahweh of hosts

Yahweh speaks of himself by name to express the certainty of what he is declaring. See how similar words are translated in [Jeremiah 1:8](#).

Alternate translation: “this is what Yahweh of hosts has declared” or “this is what I, Yahweh of hosts, have declared” (See: [First, Second or Third Person](#))

ULT

³ In every remaining place where I have driven them, they will choose death instead of life for themselves, all who are still left over from this evil nation—this is the declaration of Yahweh of hosts.

Jeremiah 8:4

General Information:

The words “them” and “they” in these verses refer to the people of Judah.

Connecting Statement:

Yahweh continues to speak of his judgment on the people of Judah.

So say to them

Yahweh is telling Jeremiah what to say to the people of Judah.

Does anyone fall and not get up? Does anyone get lost and not try to return?

These questions make the point that the way that the people of Judah were acting did not make sense. They can be translated as a statement. Alternate translation: “You know that when someone falls, he gets back up, and when someone gets lost, he tries to find his way back.” (See: [Rhetorical Question](#))

ULT

⁴ So say to them, ‘Yahweh says this:
Does anyone fall and not get up? Does
anyone get lost and not try to return?’

Jeremiah 8:5

Why has this people, Jerusalem, turned away in permanent faithlessness?

Yahweh is saying that the way the people of Judah are acting does not make sense. This question can be translated as a statement.

Alternate translation: "It does not make sense that this people, Jerusalem, has turned away in permanent faithlessness." (See:

[Rhetorical Question](#))

ULT

⁵ Why has this people, Jerusalem, turned away in permanent faithlessness? They hold on to treachery and refuse to repent.

Jerusalem

The word "Jerusalem" here is a synecdoche for all the people of Judah. Alternate translation: "Judah" (See: [Synecdoche](#))

hold on to treachery

What the people of Judah were doing is spoken of as if they were clinging to treachery and would not let it go. (See: [Metaphor](#))

They hold on to treachery

The abstract noun "treachery" is spoken of as if it were a physical object that a person could hold on to. It can be translated using the verb "deceive." Holding on to something is a metaphor for loving. Alternate translation: "They refuse to turn away from what deceives them" or "They love the people who deceive them" (See: [Abstract Nouns](#) and [Metaphor](#))

Jeremiah 8:6

General Information:

The words “they” and “them” in these verses refer to the people of Judah.

Connecting Statement:

Yahweh continues giving Jeremiah his message to the people of Judah.

ULT

⁶ I paid attention and listened, but they did not speak right; no one was sorry for his wickedness, no one who says, “What have I done?” All of them go where they wish, like a stallion rushing toward battle.

paid attention and listened

These two things mean about the same thing and are repeated for emphasis. (See: [Doublet](#))

did not speak right

“did not say what is right”

for his wickedness

The abstract noun “wickedness” can be translated using the adjective “wicked.” Alternate translation: “for being wicked” (See: [Abstract Nouns](#))

What have I done?

The implied information is that this is a question that the people of Judah should have been asking. It can be translated as a statement. Alternate translation: “I have done a terrible thing.” (See: [Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information](#) and [Rhetorical Question](#))

go where they wish

“go their own way”

like a stallion rushing toward battle

The eagerness of the people to follow their own evil way is compared to the eagerness of a war horse running toward a battle. (See: [Simile](#))

stallion

adult male horse

Jeremiah 8:7

Even the stork in heaven knows the right times; and the doves, swifts, and cranes

The implied information is that these types of birds know the right times to migrate, which means to fly from one place to another at different times of the year for feeding or breeding. (See: [Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information](#))

ULT

⁷ Even the stork in heaven knows the right times; and the doves, swifts, and cranes. They go on their migrations at the right time, but my people do not know Yahweh's decrees.

stork ... doves, swifts, and cranes

All of these are different types of birds that migrate. (See: [Translate Unknowns](#))

They go on their migrations at the right time, but my people do not know Yahweh's decrees

The implied information is that the people should have naturally known Yahweh's decrees. (See: [Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information](#))

They go on their migrations

The abstract noun "migrations" can be translated using the verb "migrate." Alternate translation: "They migrate" or "They fly from one region to another" (See: [Abstract Nouns](#))

Jeremiah 8:8

Connecting Statement:

Yahweh continues giving Jeremiah his message to the people of Judah.

How can you say, “We are wise, for the law of Yahweh is with us”?

Yahweh asks this question to make the people of Judah think about what they were saying. It can be translated as a statement. Alternate translation: “You think that you are wise because you have the law of Yahweh with you.” (See: [Rhetorical Question](#))

How can you say

The “you” here refers to the people of Judah.

Indeed, see!

These words tell the hearer to pay close attention to what follows.

The deceitful pen of the scribes

The pen represents the words that the scribes write. Alternate translation: “The false things that the scribes write” (See: [Metonymy](#))

has created deceit

“has given you false ideas”

ULT

⁸ How can you say, “We are wise, for the law of Yahweh is with us”? Indeed, see! The deceitful pen of the scribes has created deceit.

Jeremiah 8:9

The wise men will be ashamed

This is irony because the wise men are normally honored for their wisdom. Alternate translation: “Those men who think they are wise will feel ashamed” (See: [Irony](#))

dismayed

terrified or shattered

Behold!

“Pay attention!”

so what use is their wisdom?

This question expects a negative answer and is intended to make the hearers think about how little what they consider wisdom is really worth when they reject Yahweh’s word. Alternate translation: “so what they think is wise does not do them any good.” (See: [Rhetorical Question](#))

ULT

⁹ The wise men will be ashamed. They are dismayed and trapped. Behold! They reject Yahweh’s word, so what use is their wisdom?

Jeremiah 8:10

because from the least to the greatest, all of them are greedy for dishonest gain! From the prophet to the priest, all of them practice deceit

See how you translated this in [Jeremiah 6:13](#).

because from the least to the greatest, all of them are greedy

The phrase “from the least to the greatest” shows that all the people of Judah are included in the phrase “all of them,” regardless of how important they are. Alternate translation: “because all of them, including the least powerful, the most powerful, and everyone else, are greedy” (See: [Merism](#))

the least

This refers to the least powerful and least important people. Alternate translation: “the least powerful people” (See: [Nominal Adjectives](#))

the greatest

This refers to the most powerful and most important people. Alternate translation: “the greatest people” or “the most powerful people” (See: [Nominal Adjectives](#))

all of them

“all of the people of Judah”

are greedy for dishonest gain

The abstract noun “gain” can be expressed with the phrases “get more money” or “get more things.” Alternate translation: “want to get more money by lying to people” or “strongly desire to get more things and will even trick people in order to get them” (See: [Abstract Nouns](#))

all of them practice deceit

“all of them deceive people” or “all of them are liars”

ULT

¹⁰ So I will give their wives to others, and their fields to those who will possess them, because from the least to the greatest, all of them are greedy for dishonest gain! From the prophet to the priest, all of them practice deceit.

Jeremiah 8:11

General Information:

The words “they,” “their” and “them” in these verses refer to the people of Judah.

Connecting Statement:

Yahweh continues giving Jeremiah his message to the people of Judah.

ULT

11 They healed the wounds of the daughter of my people lightly, saying, “Peace, Peace,” when there was no peace.

They healed the wounds of my people lightly

This could mean: (1) the wounds represent the problems the people have as a result of their sin. Alternate translation: “They act as though my people’s problems are not serious, like small wounds” or (2) the wounds represent the people’s sin. Alternate translation: “They act as though my people’s sins are not serious, like small wounds” (See: [Metaphor](#))

They healed the wounds ... lightly

Here “lightly” represents treating the wounds as if they were not serious, as if they were not difficult. (See: [Metaphor](#))

“Peace, Peace,” when there was no peace

“‘All is well, All is well,’ but it was not well”

Jeremiah 8:12

Were they ashamed when they practiced abominations?

God uses this question to show his anger that the people were not ashamed of their sins. Alternate translation: "They committed terrible sins, and they were not ashamed." (See: [Rhetorical Question](#))

they did not know how to blush

"their faces did not even turn red." When a person is ashamed, his face normally turns red.

they will fall among the fallen

Here "fall" represents being killed. Alternate translation: "they will be killed along with the others who are killed" (See: [Metaphor](#))

they will be brought down when they are punished

Here "will be brought down" represents being destroyed. This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "I will destroy them when I punish them" (See: [Metaphor](#) and [Active or Passive](#))

ULT

¹² Were they ashamed when they practiced abominations? They were not ashamed; they did not know how to blush! So they will fall among the fallen; they will be brought down when they are punished, says Yahweh.

Jeremiah 8:13

this is Yahweh's declaration

Yahweh speaks of himself by name to express the certainty of what he is declaring. See how you translated this in [Jeremiah 1:8](#). Alternate translation: "this is what Yahweh has declared" or "this is what I, Yahweh, have declared" (See: [First](#), [Second](#) or [Third Person](#))

the leaf will wither

"the leaf will dry up"

what I have given to them will pass away

The meaning of the original text is uncertain here.

ULT

13 I will remove them completely—this is Yahweh's declaration—there will be no grapes on the vine, nor will there be figs on the fig trees. For the leaf will wither, and what I have given to them will pass away.

Jeremiah 8:14

General Information:

The words “we,” “us” and “our” refer to the people of Judah.

Connecting Statement:

Yahweh continues his message by telling us what the people of Judah will say at the time of their punishment.

ULT

14 Why are we sitting here? Come together; let us go to the fortified cities, and we will become silent there in death. For Yahweh our God will silence us. He will make us drink poison, since we have sinned against him.

Why are we sitting here?

This question is asked to motivate action. It can be translated as a statement. Alternate translation: “We should not stay here.” (See: [Rhetorical Question](#))

Come together; let us go to the fortified cities

The “fortified cities” were cities with high walls and strong defenses. See how you translated the similar phrases in [Jeremiah 4:5](#).

we will become silent there in death

Here “become silent” means to die. Alternate translation: “let us die there” or “let us wait for our enemies to kill us there” (See: [Metaphor](#))

For Yahweh our God will silence us

Here “silence” is a metaphor for condemning to death. Alternate translation: “because Yahweh our God has condemned us to die” (See: [Metaphor](#))

He will make us drink poison

This is an idiom for Yahweh’s judgment on his people. (See: [Idiom](#))

Jeremiah 8:15

but there will be nothing good

“but nothing good will happen”

but see

“but understand”

ULT

¹⁵ We are hoping for peace, but there will be nothing good. We are hoping for a time of healing, but see, there will be terror.

Jeremiah 8:16

General Information:

The words “his” and “they” in these verses refer to the enemies of Judah.

Connecting Statement:

Yahweh continues his message about the punishment coming to Judah.

ULT

16 The snorting of his stallions is heard from Dan. The whole earth shakes at the sound of the neighing of his strong horses. For they will come and consume the land and its wealth, the city and the ones living in it.

The snorting of his stallions is heard from Dan

This can be expressed in active form. Alternate translation: “The people of Dan hear the snorting of his stallions” (See: [Active or Passive](#))

snorting

a loud sound that a horse makes with its nose

stallions

adult male horses

The whole earth shakes

This is an exaggeration that is a metaphor for the people of Judah trembling with fear. Alternate translation: “All the people of the land shake with fear” (See: [Hyperbole](#) and [Metaphor](#))

at the sound of the neighing of his strong horses

“when they hear the sound of the enemy’s strong horses”

neighing

a sound that a horse makes

they will come and consume

Here the word “consume” means to eat up. It is an idiom for how the enemies come and destroy the land and its inhabitants. Alternate translation: “they will come and destroy” (See: [Idiom](#))

Jeremiah 8:17

For see

“Now pay attention”

vipers that you cannot charm

To charm means to sing or make music in order to control snakes.

this is Yahweh’s declaration

Yahweh speaks of himself by name to express the certainty of what he is declaring. See how you translated this in [Jeremiah 1:8](#). Alternate translation: “this is what Yahweh has declared” or “this is what I, Yahweh, have declared” (See: [First](#), [Second](#) or [Third Person](#))

ULT

17 For see, I am sending out snakes among you, vipers that you cannot charm. They will bite you—this is Yahweh’s declaration.’”

Jeremiah 8:18

General Information:

Jeremiah and Yahweh have a conversation about the people of Judah.

ULT

18 My sorrow has no end, and my heart is sick.

My sorrow has no end

The word “my” refers to Jeremiah. The original text is unclear and is interpreted here in different ways by modern versions.

has no end

These words are an exaggeration that express the great extent of Jeremiah’s sorrow. Alternate translation: “is very great” (See: [Hyperbole](#))

my heart is sick

Here “heart” represents Jeremiah, emphasizing his feelings and emotions. Alternate translation: “I feel sick deep down inside me” (See: [Synecdoche](#))

Jeremiah 8:19

Behold!

This alerts the reader to pay attention to what follows. “Pay attention!”

the daughter of my people

Jeremiah is speaking about the people of Judah in a way that shows his affection for them, as if for a daughter. See how you translated this in [Jeremiah 4:11](#). Alternate translation: “my dear people” (See: [Metaphor](#))

from a land far away

This could mean: (1) From exile. Alternate translation: “from exile in a distant land” or (2) From throughout the land of Judah. Alternate translation: “throughout our land”

Is Yahweh not in Zion? Is her king no longer there?

These two questions are similar in meaning. They imply that the people of Judah are wondering why Yahweh is not saving them. Alternate translation: “Why does Yahweh not save us if he is the king in Zion?” (See: [Parallelism](#) and [Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information](#) and [Rhetorical Question](#))

Why then do they provoke me to anger with their carved figures and their worthless foreign idols?

The word “me” refers to Yahweh. This question can be translated as a statement. Alternate translation: “If they want me to save them, then they must not offend me with their carved figures.” (See: [Rhetorical Question](#))

ULT

19 Behold! The screaming voice of the daughter of my people from a land far away! Is Yahweh not in Zion? Is her king no longer there? Why then do they provoke me to anger with their carved figures and their worthless foreign idols?

Jeremiah 8:20

General Information:

The word “we” refers to the people of Judah. The words “I” and “my” refer to Jeremiah.

ULT

²⁰ The harvest has passed on, summer is over. But we have not been saved.

Connecting Statement:

Jeremiah continues talking about the people of Judah.

The harvest has passed on

“Harvest time is over”

But we have not been saved

Jeremiah tells what the people of Judah are saying. This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: “But Yahweh has not saved us” (See: [Active or Passive](#))

Jeremiah 8:21

I am hurt because of the hurt of the daughter of my people. I mourn at the horrible things that have happened to her; I am dismayed

These statements express the same idea in more than one way for emphasis. (See: [Parallelism](#))

ULT

²¹ I am hurt because of the hurt of the daughter of my people. I mourn at the horrible things that have happened to her; I am dismayed.

Jeremiah 8:22

Is there no medicine in Gilead? Is there no healer there? Why will the healing of the daughter of my people not happen?

These questions are asked to make the point that the people of Judah have not been saved. Alternate translation: "There is medicine in Gilead, and there are healers there, so tell me why the healing of my dear people will not happen." (See: [Rhetorical Question](#))

ULT

²² Is there no medicine in Gilead? Is there no healer there? Why will the healing of the daughter of my people not happen?

Jeremiah 9

Jeremiah 9 General Notes

Structure and formatting

Some translations set each line of poetry farther to the right than the rest of the text to make it easier to read. The ULT does this with the poetry in 9:1-12, 17-24.

The prophecy revealed to Jeremiah is recorded in 8:5-9:12. Despite covering more than one chapter, this should be seen as one unit. (See: [prophet](#), [prophecy](#), [prophecy](#), [seer](#), [prophetess](#) and [reveal](#), [revealed](#), [revelation](#))

Special concepts in this chapter

Funeral

This chapter pictures Jerusalem as having a funeral with its typical songs. This is an image used to describe their destruction. It is a time of great sadness.

Circumcision

Circumcision is used here in an unusual way. Since circumcision was intended to be a display of faith, the author uses the term to differentiate between those who have faith in Yahweh and those who don't. This is a type of metaphor. Those who have a circumcised heart have faith in Yahweh while those with an uncircumcised heart do not have faith in Yahweh, regardless of whether they are physically circumcised. (See: [circumcise](#), [circumcised](#), [circumcision](#), [uncircumcised](#), [uncircumcision](#) and [faith](#) and [Metaphor](#))

Jeremiah 9:1

General Information:

Yahweh and Jeremiah continue talking about the people of Judah.

If only my head could produce water, and my eyes be a fountain of tears

This is Jeremiah speaking. These two phrases mean the same thing and emphasize how much Jeremiah is weeping. Alternate translation: "I wish I could make more tears" (See: [Parallelism](#) and [Metaphor](#))

ULT

¹ If only my head could produce water, and my eyes be a fountain of tears! For I wish to weep day and night for those among the daughter of my people who have been killed.

day and night

By mentioning both "day" and "night" this phrase means all the time. Alternate translation: "all the time" or "continually" (See: [Merism](#))

the daughter of my people

Yahweh shows his love for his people by speaking of them as a daughter. Here Jeremiah uses this same phrase for the people that Yahweh uses. See how you translated this in [Jeremiah 4:11](#). Alternate translation: "my people, who are like Yahweh's daughter" or "my dear people" (See: [Metaphor](#))

who have been killed

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

Jeremiah 9:2

If only someone would give me

“I wish someone would give me.” This is still Jeremiah speaking.

a place for travelers in the wilderness to stay

This refers to a building for people traveling in the wilderness, where they can stop and sleep overnight.

abandon my people

“leave my people”

a band of traitors

“a group of people who betray other people”

ULT

² If only someone would give me a place for travelers in the wilderness to stay, where I could go to abandon my people. If only I could leave them, since all of them are adulterers, a band of traitors!

Jeremiah 9:3

Yahweh declares

See how you translated “this is Yahweh’s declaration” in [Jeremiah 1:8](#).

They tread on their bows of lies with their tongues

Telling lies is spoken of as being done by the tongues of the wicked. Also, since a spoken lie cannot be taken back, telling lies is spoken of as if it were shooting arrows. Men who use bows must step on their bows in order to fasten the bowstrings, so liars are referred to here as if they were stringing their bows using their tongues. Alternate translation: “Their lies are like arrows that they shoot with the tongues” (See: [Metaphor](#))

but it is not because of any faithfulness of theirs that they grow strong on the earth

“They do not grow strong on the earth because they are faithful to Yahweh, as they are wicked” and “This means that the people are not faithful to Yahweh, but rather are wicked and have gained their power through wickedness” (See: [Irony](#))

They go from one wicked act to another

Committing one evil action after another is spoken of as if the evildoers were going from one action to another. Alternate translation: “They keep doing evil things” (See: [Metaphor](#))

ULT

³ Yahweh declares, “They tread on their bows of lies with their tongues, but it is not because of any faithfulness of theirs that they grow strong on the earth. They go from one wicked act to another. They do not know me.”

Jeremiah 9:4

General Information:

Yahweh continues speaking with Jeremiah about the people of Judah.

Each of you

The word “you” refers to the people of Judah.

be on guard against your neighbor and do not trust in any brother

“be careful not to trust your fellow Israelites, and do not even trust your own brother”

every neighbor walks in slander

Here “walking” is an idiom for living. Alternate translation: “every neighbor slanders one another” or “every neighbor is a slanderer” (See: [Idiom](#))

ULT

⁴ Each of you, be on guard against your neighbor and do not trust in any brother. For every brother is certainly a deceiver, and every neighbor walks in slander.

Jeremiah 9:5

Each man mocks his neighbor and does not speak the truth

“All of the people mock each other, and they do not tell the truth”

Their tongues teach deceitful things

Here people are represented by their “tongues” to emphasize their speech. Alternate translation: “They teach deceitful things” (See: [Synecdoche](#))

They are exhausted from committing iniquity

“They are tired from committing so much sin”

ULT

⁵ Each man mocks his neighbor and does not speak the truth. Their tongues teach deceitful things. They are exhausted from committing iniquity.

Jeremiah 9:6

Your dwelling is in the midst of deception

Yahweh speaks of living among people who are liars as living in the middle of deception. Alternate translation: “Your dwelling is among the dwellings of liars” or “You dwell in the midst of liars” (See: [Metaphor](#))

in their deceit

“By telling all of these lies”

this is Yahweh’s declaration

Yahweh speaks of himself by name to express the certainty of what he is declaring. See how you translated this in [Jeremiah 1:8](#). Alternate translation: “this is what Yahweh has declared” or “this is what I, Yahweh, have declared” (See: [First, Second or Third Person](#))

ULT

⁶ Your dwelling is in the midst of deception; in their deceit they refuse to acknowledge me—this is Yahweh’s declaration.”

Jeremiah 9:7

General Information:

Yahweh continues to speak about the people of Judah.

See

Yahweh uses this word here to draw Jeremiah's attention to what he says next. Alternate translation: "Listen" (See: [Idiom](#))

ULT

⁷ Therefore, Yahweh of hosts says this, "See, I am about to refine them and test them, for what else can I do, because of what my people have done?"

to refine them

Yahweh speaks of testing the people and dealing with their evil ways, as if they were metal that he were melting in a crucible to remove its impurities. (See: [Metaphor](#))

for what else can I do, because of what my people have done?

Yahweh uses this rhetorical question to state that this is how he needs to deal with his people because of what they have done. This question can be written as a statement. Alternate translation: "for this is how I must deal with my people because of what they have done." (See: [Rhetorical Question](#))

Jeremiah 9:8

Their tongues are sharpened arrows

This speaks of people's tongues as if they were sharpened arrows because of how the people hurt others by what they say. Here their speech is represented by their "tongues." Alternate translation: "Their words are like sharpened arrows that hurt other people" (See: [Metaphor](#) and [Metonymy](#))

ULT

⁸ Their tongues are sharpened arrows; they speak unfaithful things. With their mouths they proclaim peace with their neighbors, but with their hearts they lie in wait for them.

With their mouths they proclaim peace with their neighbors

Here people's speech is represented by their "mouths." Alternate translation: "They speak, saying that they want peace with their neighbors" (See: [Metonymy](#))

but with their hearts they lie in wait for them

Here a people's desires are represented by their "hearts." This speaks of them wanting to hurt their neighbors as if they were an animal crouching and waiting to attack its prey. Alternate translation: "but what they really want is to destroy their neighbors" (See: [Metaphor](#) and [Metonymy](#))

Jeremiah 9:9

Should I not punish them because of these things ... should I not avenge myself on a nation that is like this?

Yahweh uses this question to emphasize that the things that they are doing are so bad that he will not have mercy and stop himself from punishing them. See how you translated similar words in [Jeremiah](#)

[5:9](#). Alternate translation: “Because they do these things, I will punish them ... I will certainly get revenge for myself against them.” (See: [Rhetorical Question](#))

ULT

⁹ Should I not punish them because of these things—this is Yahweh’s declaration— and should I not avenge myself on a nation that is like this?

this is Yahweh’s declaration

Yahweh speaks of himself by name to express the certainty of what he is declaring. See how you translated this in [Jeremiah 1:8](#). Alternate translation: “this is what Yahweh has declared” or “this is what I, Yahweh, have declared” (See: [First, Second or Third Person](#))

Jeremiah 9:10

General Information:

Yahweh continues speaking about the people of Judah. In verse 12, Jeremiah makes a comment.

I will sing a song of mourning ... a funeral song will be sung for the meadows

Yahweh is mourning for the land of Israel as if it were a person who died. (See: [Parallelism](#) and [Personification](#))

a funeral song will be sung

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "I will sing a funeral song" (See: [Active or Passive](#))

the meadows

"the fields of grass that the livestock eats"

For they are burned

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "Because someone has burned the meadows and pastures" (See: [Active or Passive](#))

They will not hear the sound of any cattle

"Nobody will hear the sound of cattle there"

ULT

10 I will sing a song of mourning and wailing for the mountains, and a funeral song will be sung for the oases in the wilderness. For they are burned so no one can pass through them. They will not hear the sound of any cattle. The birds of the skies and the animals have all fled away.

Jeremiah 9:11

a hideout for jackals

“a place for jackals to hide.” Jackals are fierce wild dogs.

places without inhabitants

“places where no people live”

ULT

11 So I will turn Jerusalem into piles of ruins, a hideout for jackals. I will make Judah's cities ruined places without inhabitants.”

Jeremiah 9:12

What man is wise enough to understand this?

Yahweh uses this rhetorical question to emphasize that only a very wise person will understand the things he has said. This question can be written as a statement. Alternate translation: "Only people who are very wise can understand these things." (See: [Rhetorical Question](#))

ULT

12 What man is wise enough to understand this? To whom has the mouth of Yahweh spoken, and he will declare it? Why has the land perished and been destroyed like the wilderness that no one can pass through?

To whom has the mouth of Yahweh spoken, and he will declare it?

Yahweh uses this rhetorical question to emphasize that only the people he has spoken to can declare these things. This question can be written as a statement. Alternate translation: "Only those who have been taught by Yahweh can explain these things to others." (See: [Rhetorical Question](#))

the mouth of Yahweh

Here Yahweh's speech is represented by his "mouth." Alternate translation: "Yahweh" (See: [Synecdoche](#))

Why has the land perished and been destroyed ... pass through?

Yahweh uses this rhetorical question to emphasize that only a wise person could explain why the land has been destroyed. This question can be written as a statement. Alternate translation: "Only a wise person could explain why the land has perished and been destroyed ... pass through." (See: [Rhetorical Question](#))

has the land perished and been destroyed

This can be stated in active form. Both "perished" and "been ruined" describe the land being ruined. Alternate translation: "is the land ruined" (See: [Active or Passive](#) and [Doublet](#))

Jeremiah 9:13

General Information:

Yahweh continues speaking about the people of Judah.

It is because

“These things will happen because”

they have abandoned my law

Yahweh speaks of the people not obeying his law as if it were something that they had walked away from.

Alternate translation: “they have rejected my law” (See: [Metaphor](#))

they do not listen to my voice

Here Yahweh’s “voice” represents what he says. Alternate translation: “they do not pay attention to the things I tell them” (See: [Metonymy](#))

or walk by it

Here “walk” is an idiom for “live.” Alternate translation: “or live the way I tell them to live” (See: [Idiom](#))

ULT

13 Yahweh says, “It is because they have abandoned my law that I set before them, because they do not listen to my voice or walk by it.”

Jeremiah 9:14

they have walked by their stubborn hearts

Here the people's "stubborn hearts" represent their stubborn desires and stubborn will. Also, here "walked" represents living. Alternate translation: "they have been stubborn and lived the way they want to live" (See: [Metonymy](#) and [Idiom](#))

have followed the Baals

"have worshiped the Baals"

ULT

14 It is because they have walked by their stubborn hearts and have followed the Baals as their fathers taught them to do.

Jeremiah 9:15

General Information:

Yahweh continues speaking about the people of Judah.

Yahweh of hosts ... says this

Jeremiah often uses these words to introduce an important message from Yahweh. See how you translated this in [Jeremiah 6:6](#).

See

Yahweh uses this word here to draw the people's attention to what he says next. Alternate translation: "Listen" (See: [Idiom](#))

wormwood

a plant that tastes bitter

ULT

15 Therefore Yahweh of hosts, the God of Israel, says this, 'See, I am about to make this people eat wormwood and drink poisonous water.'

Jeremiah 9:16

Then I will scatter them among the nations

“Then I will force them to leave here and live in many different countries”

neither they nor their ancestors

The understood verb may be supplied. Alternate translation: “that neither they nor their ancestors have known” (See: [Ellipsis](#))

I will send out a sword after them

Here the word “sword” refers to an enemy army. Alternate translation: “I will send an army of soldiers to fight against them” (See: [Metonymy](#))

I have completely destroyed them

This is a metonym for Yahweh causing the people’s enemies to destroy them. Alternate translation: “I have caused their enemies to completely destroy them” (See: [Metonymy](#))

ULT

16 Then I will scatter them among the nations that they have not known, neither they nor their ancestors. I will send out a sword after them until I have completely destroyed them.”

Jeremiah 9:17

General Information:

Yahweh tells the people of Judah to mourn for the coming destruction of the land.

Yahweh of hosts says this

Jeremiah often uses these words to introduce an important message from Yahweh. See how you translated this in [Jeremiah 6:6](#).

ULT

17 Yahweh of hosts says this, "Think about this: Summon funeral singers; let them come. Send out for women skilled at lamenting; let them come."

Summon funeral singers; let them come ... Send out for women skilled at lamenting; let them come

These two phrases have the same meaning. They emphasize that they are to call funeral singers to come. Alternate translation: "Get women who are trained in mourning and bring those women here" (See: [Parallelism](#))

Summon funeral singers

"Call women who are professional singers at funerals"

let them come

This is an idiom. Alternate translation: "tell the women to come" (See: [Idiom](#))

Send out for women skilled at lamenting

The phrase "send out for" is an idiom. Alternate translation: "Send people out to get women who are skilled at mourning" (See: [Metonymy](#))

Jeremiah 9:18

Let them hurry and sing a mournful song ... and our eyelids flow with water

Here Yahweh says what the people of Judah will say when the destruction comes. The words “us” and “our” refer to the people of Judah and does not include Yahweh. This may be written instead as a command from Yahweh to the people. Alternate translation: “Tell them to hurry and sing a song to mourn for you, so your eyes may run with tears and your eyelids flow with water” (See: [Exclusive and Inclusive ‘We’](#))

ULT

¹⁸ Let them hurry and sing a mournful song over us, so our eyes may run with tears and our eyelids flow with water.

so our eyes may run with tears and our eyelids flow with water

This describes the people crying a lot. Alternate translation: “so we will cry very hard with tears flowing from our eyes” (See: [Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information](#))

Jeremiah 9:19

General Information:

Here Yahweh is saying what the people of Judah will say when he destroys the land.

For the sound of wailing is heard in Zion

This refers to the people of Zion wailing loudly and can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "The people of Zion are crying loudly, saying" (See: [Active or Passive](#))

How we are devastated

Yahweh tells what the people of Judah will say when the land is destroyed. Alternate translation: "We are very upset" (See: [Idiom](#))

We are greatly ashamed, for we have abandoned the land since they tore down our houses

"Our shame is great, because enemies destroyed our houses and we had to leave the land of Israel"

ULT

19 For the sound of wailing is heard in Zion, 'How we are devastated. We are greatly ashamed, for we have abandoned the land since they tore down our houses.'

Jeremiah 9:20

hear Yahweh's word; pay attention to the messages that come from his mouth

These two phrases mean the same thing and emphasize the command to listen to what Yahweh says. In the second phrase Yahweh's "mouth" is a metonym for himself. Alternate translation: "listen to what Yahweh says. Pay attention to his words" (See: [Parallelism](#) and [Metonymy](#))

ULT

²⁰ So you women, hear Yahweh's word; pay attention to the messages that come from his mouth. Then teach your daughters a mourning song, and each neighbor woman a funeral song.

each neighbor woman a funeral song

The understood verb may be supplied. Alternate translation: "teach each neighbor woman a funeral song" (See: [Ellipsis](#))

Jeremiah 9:21

General Information:

Here Yahweh is saying what the people of Judah will say when he destroys the land.

For death has come through our windows ... young men in the city squares

The people of Judah will compare death to a person who can climb in windows to attack the people inside and attacks people in the palaces, streets, and city squares. (See: [Personification](#))

palaces

fancy houses where kings live. Death will come to rich and poor alike.

city squares

marketplaces

ULT

21 For death has come through our windows; it goes into our palaces. It destroys children from outside, and young men in the city squares.

Jeremiah 9:22

This is Yahweh's declaration

Yahweh speaks of himself by name to express the certainty of what he is declaring. See how you translated this in [Jeremiah 1:8](#). Alternate translation: "This is what Yahweh has declared" or "This is what I, Yahweh, have declared" (See: [First](#), [Second](#) or [Third Person](#))

the corpses of men will fall like dung ... like grain stalks after the reapers

These two phrases mean the same thing and emphasize the large number dead bodies. Alternate translation: "dead bodies will fall all over the place" (See: [Parallelism](#))

corpses of men will fall like dung in the fields

This describes the great number of people who will die, by comparing their bodies to dung that falls in the fields. Alternate translation: "dead bodies will drop everywhere like animal dung falls all over the fields" (See: [Simile](#))

like grain stalks after the reapers

This describes the great number of people who will die, by comparing their bodies to cut stalks of grain. Alternate translation: "like stalks of grain fall everywhere after the farmers cut them down" (See: [Simile](#))

there will be no one to gather them

"there will be nobody to gather the dead bodies"

ULT

²² Declare this, 'This is Yahweh's declaration—the corpses of men will fall like dung in the fields, and like grain stalks after the reapers, and there will be no one to gather them.'

Jeremiah 9:23

General Information:

These are the words of Yahweh.

Do not let the wise man take pride in his wisdom

“A wise man should not be proud because he is wise”

or the warrior in his might

The understood verb may be supplied. Alternate translation: “or let the warrior take pride in his might” (See: [Ellipsis](#))

Do not let the wealthy man take pride in his riches

“A rich man should not be proud because he is rich”

ULT

²³ Yahweh says this, “Do not let the wise man take pride in his wisdom, or the warrior in his might. Do not let the wealthy man take pride in his riches.

Jeremiah 9:24

has insight and knows me

“understands who I am and knows me.” Both of these phrases have similar meanings. They emphasize people knowing who Yahweh is and understanding who he is. (See: [Parallelism](#))

For I am Yahweh

This refers to people knowing Yahweh and his ways. Alternate translation: “Because people should understand that I am Yahweh” (See: [Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information](#))

For it is in these that I take pleasure

The word “these” refers to covenant loyalty, justice, and righteousness.

this is Yahweh’s declaration

Yahweh speaks of himself by name to express the certainty of what he is declaring. See how you translated this in [Jeremiah 1:8](#). Alternate translation: “this is what Yahweh has declared” or “this is what I, Yahweh, have declared” (See: [First, Second or Third Person](#))

ULT

24 For if a man takes pride in anything, let it be in this, that he has insight and knows me. For I am Yahweh, who acts with covenant faithfulness, justice and righteousness on earth. For it is in these that I take pleasure— this is Yahweh’s declaration.”

Jeremiah 9:25

General Information:

These are the words of Yahweh.

See

Yahweh uses this word here to draw the people's attention to what he says next. Alternate translation: "Listen" or "Indeed" (See: [Idiom](#))

ULT

²⁵ "See, days are coming—this is Yahweh's declaration—when I will punish all the circumcised who are such only in their body.

all the circumcised who are such only in their body

This refers to the people of Israel who have entered into Yahweh's covenant by getting circumcised physically, but who have not changed their inner beings by following his laws. Alternate translation: "all those people who have changed their bodies by circumcising them but who have not changed their inner beings" (See: [Metaphor](#))

Jeremiah 9:26

all the people who cut the hair on their heads very short

This probably refers to people who cut their hair short in order to honor a pagan god. Some modern versions interpret this Hebrew expression as “all the people who live on the edge of the wilderness.”

For all these nations are uncircumcised

The word “nations” refers to the people who live in these places. Foreigners being uncircumcised was a sign that they were not in Yahweh’s covenant. Alternate translation: “For the people of these nations did not enter into a covenant with Yahweh through circumcision” (See: [Metonymy](#) and [Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information](#))

all the house of Israel has an uncircumcised heart

The “heart” represents a person’s will and desires. An “uncircumcised heart” represents the character of a person that does not follow Yahweh and his laws. Also, the “house” of Israel refers to the people of Israel. Alternate translation: “all the people of Israel are only circumcised on the outside and have not changed their hearts” (See: [Metonymy](#) and [Metaphor](#))

ULT

²⁶ I will punish Egypt and Judah, Edom, the people of Ammon, Moab, all the people who cut the hair on their heads very short, and those dwelling in the desert. For all these nations are uncircumcised, and all the house of Israel has an uncircumcised heart.”

Jeremiah 10

Jeremiah 10 General Notes

Structure and formatting

The ULT sets the lines in 10:1-25 farther to the right on the page than the rest of the text because they are a long quotation.

Special concepts in this chapter

Yahweh's power

This chapter contrasts the great power of Yahweh with the powerlessness of any other false god. It is intended to question why the Jews would worship any other god. (See: [god](#), [false god](#), [goddess](#), [idol](#), [idolater](#), [idolatrous](#), [idolatry](#))

Jeremiah 10:1

General Information:

Yahweh has just reminded the people of Judah, as well as Egypt, Edom, Ammon, Moab and all people, that they will be punished.

Hear the word

“Hear the message”

house of Israel

Here the “house” of Israel represents the people of Israel. Alternate translation: “people of Israel” (See: [Metonymy](#))

ULT

¹ “Hear the word that Yahweh is announcing to you, house of Israel.

Jeremiah 10:2

Do not learn the ways of the nations

“Do not act like the other nations act”

dismayed

worried or upset

by the signs in the heavens

“by strange things in the sky”

for the nations are dismayed by these

Here “the nations” refer to the people who live in them. This can be written in active form. Alternate translation: “for the people of the nations are afraid of the strange things they see in the sky” (See: [Active or Passive](#) and [Metonymy](#))

ULT

² Yahweh says this, ‘Do not learn the ways of the nations, and do not be dismayed by the signs in the heavens, for the nations are dismayed by these.’

Jeremiah 10:3

General Information:

Yahweh has just reminded them not to learn the ways of the nations nor be worried by things that happen in the sky.

craftsman

a man skilled in his work

ULT

³ For the religious customs of these people are worthless. They cut down a tree in the forest, and the craftsman carves the wood.

Jeremiah 10:4

(There are no notes for this verse.)

ULT

⁴ Then they decorate it with silver and gold. They strengthen it with hammer and nails so it will not fall over.

Jeremiah 10:5

What they make with their hands is like scarecrows

A scarecrow is a man-like figure made to scare birds and prevent them from eating the crops. Here Yahweh compares the idols to scarecrows because they are not capable of doing anything. (See: [Simile](#))

cucumber

a vegetable that is usually long, with green skin and white flesh that contains much water

they have to be carried

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

ULT

⁵ What they make with their hands is like scarecrows in a cucumber field, because they, too, can say nothing, and they have to be carried because they cannot walk. Do not fear them, for they cannot bring about evil, nor are they able to do anything good.”

Jeremiah 10:6

General Information:

Jeremiah has just been talking about idol worship.

your name is great in power

Here Yahweh's "name" refers to himself and his reputation. Alternate translation: "you are very powerful" (See: [Metonymy](#))

ULT

⁶ There is no one like you, Yahweh. You are great, and your name is great in power.

Jeremiah 10:7

Who does not fear you, king of the nations?

Jeremiah asks this rhetorical question to emphasize that everyone should fear Yahweh. Here he refers to Yahweh as “king of the nations.” This question can be written as a statement. Alternate translation: “Everyone should fear you, king of the nations.” (See: [Rhetorical Question](#))

what you deserve

“what you have earned”

ULT

⁷ Who does not fear you, king of the nations? For this is what you deserve, for there is no one like you among all the wise men of the nations or all their royal kingdoms.

Jeremiah 10:8

They are all the same, they are brutish and stupid, disciples

The words “brutish” and “stupid” mean basically the same thing and emphasize how foolish the people are for worshiping idols. Alternate translation: “They are all very stupid, they are disciples” (See: [Doublet](#))

ULT

⁸ They are all the same, they are brutish and stupid, disciples of idols that are nothing but wood.

disciples of idols that are nothing but wood

“they try to learn from an idol which is only a piece of wood”

Jeremiah 10:9

Tarshish ... Uphaz

places where silver and gold are mined (See: [How to Translate Names](#))

gold from Uphaz made by artificers, the hands of refiners

This can be stated in active form. Also, the refiners are represented here by their “hands” because they do their work with their hands. Alternate translation: “gold from Uphaz that skilled craftsmen and refiners have made” (See: [Active or Passive](#) and [Metonymy](#))

artificers

“skilled craftsmen”

refiners

people who heat gold to remove from it anything that is not gold

Their clothes are blue and purple cloth

“The people dress the idols in blue and purple cloth”

ULT

⁹ They bring hammered silver from Tarshish, and gold from Uphaz made by artificers, the hands of refiners. Their clothes are blue and purple cloth. Their skillful men made all of these things.

Jeremiah 10:10

The earth quakes at his anger

This speaks of the earth shaking as an emotional response to Yahweh's anger, when actually Yahweh causes the earth to quake. Alternate translation: "The earth quakes when he is angry" (See: [Personification](#))

quakes

"shakes"

ULT

10 But Yahweh is the true God. He is the living God and eternal king. The earth quakes at his anger, and the nations cannot endure his anger.

Jeremiah 10:11

General Information:

God is speaking to Jeremiah.

You will speak to them like this

The word “you” refers to the Israelites and the word “them” refers to the people of the other nations.

will perish from the earth

This speaks of the idols disappearing and losing their significance as if they were dying. This emphasizes their lack of power. Alternate translation: “will disappear from the earth” (See: [Metaphor](#))

ULT

11 You will speak to them like this, “The gods that did not make the heavens and earth will perish from the earth and from under these heavens.”

Jeremiah 10:12

stretched out the heavens

This speaks of Yahweh creating the sky as if it were a large sheet that he stretched out. Alternate translation: “created the heavens” or “created the sky” (See: [Metaphor](#))

ULT

12 But it was he who made the earth by his power, and he established the world by his wisdom, and by his understanding he stretched out the heavens.

Jeremiah 10:13

His voice makes the roar of waters in the heavens

Here Yahweh is represented by his “voice” to emphasize his speech. The phrase “the roar of waters” refers to loud storms. Alternate translation: “His voice causes the storms in the sky” (See: [Metonymy](#))

ULT

¹³ His voice makes the roar of waters in the heavens, and he brings up the mists from the ends of the earth. He makes lightning for the rain and sends out wind from his storehouse.

he brings up the mists from the ends of the earth

This means that he causes the mists to evaporate and form clouds. The phrase “the ends of the earth” refers to all of the earth. Alternate translation: “he causes clouds to form over every part of the earth” (See: [Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information](#))

sends out wind from his storehouse

This speaks of Yahweh causing the wind to blow as if the wind were kept in a storehouse and brought out when he desires. (See: [Metaphor](#))

storehouse

a building where things are kept

Jeremiah 10:14

has become ignorant

“is lacking knowledge” or “does not know”

Every metalworker is put to shame by his idols

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: “Every metalworker’s idols put him to shame” or “As for every metalworker, his idols shame him” (See: [Active or Passive](#))

ULT

14 Every man has become ignorant, without knowledge. Every metalworker is put to shame by his idols. For his cast images are frauds; there is no life in them.

Jeremiah 10:15

they will perish at the time of their punishment

This speaks of the final destruction of the idols. Alternate translation: “there will be a time when God will destroy them” (See: [Personification](#))

ULT

¹⁵ They are useless, the work of mockers; they will perish at the time of their punishment.

Jeremiah 10:16

the portion of Jacob

Here “Jacob” represents the people of Israel. God being their “portion” is an idiom that means that they worship him. Alternate translation: “the portion of Israel” or “whom the people of Israel worship” (See: [Metonymy](#) and [Idiom](#))

the molder of all things

“the creator of all things” or “the one who created all things”

Israel is the tribe of his inheritance

This speaks of Israel belonging to Yahweh as if it were something that Yahweh gained through inheritance. Alternate translation: “The tribe of Israel belongs to him” (See: [Metaphor](#))

ULT

16 But God, the portion of Jacob, is not like these, for he is the molder of all things. Israel is the tribe of his inheritance; Yahweh of hosts is his name.

Jeremiah 10:17

Gather your bundle

“Gather your belongings”

who have been living under the siege

“whose city has been surrounded by your enemies’ army” or “who have been living in your city while an enemy army surrounds it”

ULT

17 Gather your bundle and leave the land, you people who have been living under the siege.

Jeremiah 10:18

See

Yahweh uses this word here to draw the peoples' attention to what he says next. Alternate translation: "Listen" (See: [Idiom](#))

I am about to throw the inhabitants of the land out this time

Here Yahweh speaks of causing the people to leave the land as if they were objects that he were throwing out of a container. Alternate translation: "I will cause the people living in the land to leave that land" (See: [Metaphor](#))

inhabitants of the land

"people who live in the land"

distress

great pain or suffering

ULT

18 For Yahweh says this, "See, I am about to throw the inhabitants of the land out this time. I will cause them distress, and they will find it to be so."

Jeremiah 10:19

General Information:

Jeremiah is speaking as if he were the whole tribe of Israel. (See: [Synecdoche](#))

Woe to me! Because of my broken bones, my wound is infected

Jeremiah speaks of the peoples' distress as if they were physically wounded by broken bones and infection. Alternate translation: "Woe to us! It is as though we have broken bones and an infected wound" (See: [Metaphor](#))

but I must bear it

Here Jeremiah represents the whole tribe of Israel. Alternate translation: "but we must bear it" (See: [Synecdoche](#))

ULT

19 Woe to me! Because of my broken bones, my wound is infected. So I said, "Surely this is agony, but I must bear it."

Jeremiah 10:20

My tent is devastated, and all of my tent cords are cut in two

Here Jeremiah speaks of the enemy having destroyed their city as if their tent had been destroyed. Alternate translation: “It is as though our great tent is destroyed; the ropes that held it up have been cut” or “The enemy has completely destroyed our city” (See: [Metaphor](#))

My tent is devastated

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: “My enemy has devastated my tent” or “Our enemy has destroyed our tent” (See: [Active or Passive](#))

They have taken my children away from me

Here Jeremiah represents the whole tribe of Israel. Alternate translation: “Our enemies have taken our children away from us” (See: [Synecdoche](#))

so they no longer exist

The children no longer existing is a metaphor for the parents never seeing them again. Alternate translation: “and it is like they no longer exist” or “and they will never return again” (See: [Metaphor](#))

There is no longer anyone to spread out my tent or to raise up my tent curtains

Here Jeremiah speaks of them not having descendants to rebuild their city as if their city were a tent that needs to be rebuilt. Alternate translation: “There is no one to rebuild our city” (See: [Metaphor](#))

ULT

²⁰ My tent is devastated, and all of my tent cords are cut in two. They have taken my children away from me, so they no longer exist. There is no longer anyone to spread out my tent or to raise up my tent curtains.

Jeremiah 10:21

For the shepherds are stupid ... all their flock has been scattered

Here the leaders of Israel are spoken of as if they were shepherds and the people of Israel are spoken of as if they were flocks of sheep. Alternate translation: "For the shepherds of our people are stupid ... all the people of their flock have been scattered" (See: [Metaphor](#))

all their flock has been scattered

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "and their enemies have scattered all their flock" (See: [Active or Passive](#))

ULT

²¹ For the shepherds are stupid and they do not seek Yahweh; so they have not prospered, and all their flock has been scattered.

Jeremiah 10:22

See! It is coming, a great earthquake is coming

Here the marching enemy armies are spoken of as if they were an earthquake. The word "See!" is used here as an idiom to draw the listener's attention to what is said next. Alternate translation: "Look! The enemy army is coming, they sound like a great earthquake as they are marching" (See: [Metaphor](#) and [Idiom](#))

jackals

a type of fierce wild dog

ULT

²² The report of news has arrived, "See! It is coming, a great earthquake is coming from the land of the north To make the cities of Judah into ruins, hideouts for jackals."

Jeremiah 10:23

General Information:

Jeremiah prays for the people of Israel.

that the way of a man does not come from himself. No person walking directs his own steps

These two phrases mean the same thing. This means that no one has control over the various things that will happen to him during his life. Alternate translation: “that no person controls what will happen to him; no one is able to direct the events that he will experience” (See: [Parallelism](#) and [Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information](#))

ULT

²³ I know, Yahweh, that the way of a man does not come from himself. No person walking directs his own steps.

Jeremiah 10:24

(There are no notes for this verse.)

ULT

²⁴ Discipline me, Yahweh, nevertheless with justice, not in your anger or you would destroy me.

Jeremiah 10:25

Pour your fury on the nations

Here “the nations” refer to the people who live in them. Alternate translation: “In your fury, punish the nations” or “In your anger, punish the nations of the people” (See: [Metaphor](#) and [Metonymy](#))

that do not call on your name

This is an idiom. Alternate translation: “that do not worship you” (See: [Idiom](#))

ULT

25 Pour your fury on the nations that do not know you and on the families that do not call on your name. For they have devoured Jacob and consumed him so as to completely destroy him and demolish his habitation.

For they have devoured Jacob and consumed him so as to completely destroy him

These three phrases have the same meaning. Jeremiah repeats this idea three times to emphasize the utter destruction of Israel. This speaks of the enemy armies attacking the people of Israel as if the armies were a fierce animal attacking and devouring its prey. Alternate translation: “For they have fiercely attacked the people of Israel and consumed them so as to completely destroy them” (See: [Parallelism](#) and [Metaphor](#))

demolish his habitation

“demolish their homes”

Jeremiah 11

Jeremiah 11 General Notes

Structure and formatting

Some translations set each line of poetry farther to the right than the rest of the text to make it easier to read. The ULT does this with the poetry in 11:15-17, 20.

Special concepts in this chapter

The covenant

The covenant Yahweh made with Moses is prominent in this chapter. Because the people disobeyed this covenant, God will not help them. (See: [covenant](#))

Jeremiah 11:1

The word that came to Jeremiah from Yahweh, saying,

This idiom is used to introduce a special message from God. See how you translated a similar phrase in [Jeremiah 7:1](#). Alternate translation: “This is the message that Yahweh gave to Jeremiah. He said,” or “This is the message that Yahweh spoke to Jeremiah:” (See: [Idiom](#))

ULT

¹ The word that came to Jeremiah from Yahweh, saying,

Jeremiah 11:2

the inhabitants of Jerusalem

“the people who live in Jerusalem”

ULT

² “Listen to the words of this covenant,
and declare them to each man in Judah
and to the inhabitants of Jerusalem.

Jeremiah 11:3

Cursed is anyone

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "I will curse anyone" (See: [Active or Passive](#))

ULT

³ Say to them, 'Yahweh, God of Israel says this: Cursed is anyone who does not listen to the words of this covenant.'

Jeremiah 11:4

from the land of Egypt, from the furnace for smelting iron

This speaks of the horrible circumstances and oppression the Israelites were living in Egypt by comparing them to a smelting furnace. Alternate translation: “of Egypt. What happened to them in Egypt was terrible; it was as though they were living in a hot furnace” (See: [Metaphor](#))

smelting

heating iron to liquid form

Listen to my voice

The word “voice” here is a metonym for what the speaker says with the voice, and “listen” is a metonym for “obey.” Alternate translation: “Obey what I say” (See: [Metonymy](#))

ULT

⁴ This is the covenant that I commanded your ancestors to keep the day I brought them out from the land of Egypt, from the furnace for smelting iron. I said, “Listen to my voice and do all of these things just as I have commanded you, for you will be my people and I will be your God.”

Jeremiah 11:5

the land flowing with milk and honey

“the land where milk and honey flow.” God spoke of the land being good for animals and plants as if the milk and honey from those animals and plants were flowing through the land. Alternate translation: “the land that is excellent for raising livestock and growing crops” (See: [Metaphor](#) and [Metonymy](#))

ULT

⁵ So that I may confirm the oath that I swore to your ancestors, the oath that I would give them the land flowing with milk and honey, where you live today.” Then I, Jeremiah, answered and said, “Yes, Yahweh!”

Jeremiah 11:6

the words of this covenant

“the terms of this covenant”

carry them out

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

ULT

⁶ Yahweh said to me, “Proclaim all these things in the cities of Judah and in the streets of Jerusalem. Say, ‘Listen to the words of this covenant and carry them out.

Jeremiah 11:7

solemn

serious and important

Listen to my voice

The word “voice” here is a metonym for what the speaker says with the voice, and “listen” is a metonym for “obey.” Alternate translation: “Obey what I say” (See: [Metonymy](#))

ULT

⁷ For I have been giving solemn commands to your ancestors from the day I brought them up from the land of Egypt until this present time, persistently warning them and saying, “Listen to my voice.”

Jeremiah 11:8

Each person has been walking in the stubbornness of his wicked heart.

Here “walking” is an idiom for the way a person lives. The word “heart” is a metonym for a person’s desires and emotions. Alternate translation: “Each person has refused to change and has been living by his own wicked desires” or “Each person has refused to change and continues to do the evil things that they want to do” (See: [Idiom](#) and [Metonymy](#))

ULT

⁸ But they did not listen or pay attention. Each person has been walking in the stubbornness of his wicked heart. So I brought all the curses in this covenant that I commanded to come against them. But the people still did not obey.”

So I brought all the curses in this covenant that I commanded to come against them

“So I punished them with all the curses that I described in this covenant that I had commanded them to obey”

Jeremiah 11:9

A conspiracy has been discovered

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: “There is a conspiracy” (See: [Active or Passive](#))

conspiracy

a secret plan to do something that is harmful or illegal

the inhabitants of Jerusalem

“the people who live in Jerusalem”

ULT

⁹ Next Yahweh said to me, “A conspiracy has been discovered among the men of Judah and the inhabitants of Jerusalem.”

Jeremiah 11:10

They have turned to the iniquities of their earliest ancestors

The phrase “turned to” is an idiom that means to start doing something. Alternate translation: “They have returned to committing the same iniquities as their earliest ancestors committed” (See: [Active or Passive](#))

walked after

“followed after”

The house of Israel

The word “house” is a metonym for the family that lives in the house. In this case it refers to the kingdom of Israel. See how you translated this in [Jeremiah 3:18](#). Alternate translation: “Israel” or “The kingdom of Israel” (See: [Metonymy](#))

the house of Judah

The word “house” is a metonym for the family that lives in the house. In this case it refers to the kingdom of Judah, which included the descendants of Judah and Benjamin. See how you translated this in [Jeremiah 3:18](#). Alternate translation: “Judah” or “the kingdom of Judah” (See: [Metonymy](#))

ULT

¹⁰ They have turned to the iniquities of their earliest ancestors, who refused to listen to my word, who instead walked after other gods to worship them. The house of Israel and the house of Judah broke my covenant that I established with their ancestors.

Jeremiah 11:11

See

This word is used here to draw someone's attention to what is said next. Alternate translation: "Listen" or "Pay attention to what I am about to tell you"

ULT

11 Therefore Yahweh says this, 'See, I am about to bring disaster on them, disaster from which they will not be able to escape. Then they will call out to me, but I will not listen to them.'

Jeremiah 11:12

The cities of Judah and the inhabitants of Jerusalem

Here the “cities of Judah” represents the people who live in them.
Alternate translation: “The people who live in the cities of Judah and in Jerusalem” (See: [Metonymy](#))

but they will certainly not be saved by them

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: “but their gods will certainly not save them” (See: [Active or Passive](#))

ULT

¹² The cities of Judah and the inhabitants of Jerusalem will go and call out to the gods to which they had given offerings, but they will certainly not be saved by them at the time of their disaster.

Jeremiah 11:13

to equal

“to as many as”

her streets

“the streets in Jerusalem”

ULT

¹³ For you Judah, the number of your gods has increased to equal the number of your cities. You have made the number of shameful altars in Jerusalem, incense altars for Baal, equal to the number of her streets.

Jeremiah 11:14

You must not wail

“You must not make a loud cry of sadness”

ULT

14 So you yourself, Jeremiah, must not pray for this people. You must not wail or pray on their behalf. For I will not be listening when they call on me in their disaster.

Jeremiah 11:15

Why is my beloved one, the one who has had so many wicked intentions, in my house?

Yahweh uses this rhetorical question to emphasize that the people Judah no longer have a right to be in his temple. This question can be written as a statement. Alternate translation: “My beloved one, the one who has had so many wicked intentions, should not be in my house.” (See: [Rhetorical Question](#))

ULT

¹⁵ Why is my beloved one, the one who has had so many wicked intentions, in my house? The meat of your sacrifices cannot help you. You rejoice because of your evil actions.

is my beloved one, the one who has had

The people of Judah are spoken of as if they were a single woman greatly beloved. Alternate translation: “are the people whom I love, those who have had” or “are the people of Judah whom I love, who have had” (See: [Metaphor](#))

Jeremiah 11:16

In the past Yahweh called you a leafy olive tree

In the Old Testament people were often compared to trees or plants. Those who were prosperous and healthy were spoken of as leafy, fruitful tree. Alternate translation: "In the past Yahweh said that you were like a leafy olive tree" (See: [Metaphor](#))

ULT

¹⁶ In the past Yahweh called you a leafy olive tree, beautiful with lovely fruit. But he will light a fire on it that will sound like the roar of a storm; its branches will be broken.

will light a fire on it

This expression continues the metaphor of the tree. The fire stands for the destruction of the people. (See: [Metaphor](#))

that will sound like the roar of a storm

This compares the sound of the raging fire to the sound of a severe storm. (See: [Simile](#))

its branches will be broken

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "it will break off your branches" (See: [Active or Passive](#))

Jeremiah 11:17

the one who planted you

This speaks of Yahweh placing the people of Israel and Judah in the places where they live as if they were a tree that Yahweh had planted. Alternate translation: “who planted you like a farmer plants a tree” or “the one who placed you to live in the land of Israel and Judah” (See: [Metaphor](#))

has decreed disaster against you

“has decreed that disaster will come upon you”

the house of Israel

The word “house” is a metonym for the family that lives in the house. In this case it refers to the kingdom of Israel. See how you translated this in [Jeremiah 3:18](#). Alternate translation: “Israel” or “the kingdom of Israel” (See: [Metonymy](#))

the house of Judah

The word “house” is a metonym for the family that lives in the house. In this case it refers to the kingdom of Judah, which included the descendants of Judah and Benjamin. See how you translated this in [Jeremiah 3:18](#). Alternate translation: “Judah” or “the kingdom of Judah” (See: [Metonymy](#))

ULT

17 For Yahweh of hosts, the one who planted you, has decreed disaster against you because of the wicked acts that the house of Israel and the house of Judah have committed—they have angered me by giving offerings to Baal.”

Jeremiah 11:18

Yahweh made me know these things, so I know them

“You have revealed things to me and so I know them.” The refers to Yahweh revealing to Jeremiah that his enemies were planning to kill him.

ULT

¹⁸ Yahweh made me know these things, so I know them. Yahweh made me see their deeds.

made me see their deeds

The refers to Yahweh revealing to Jeremiah that his enemies were planning to kill him. This is spoken of here as if Jeremiah has already see their actions. Alternate translation: “have revealed to me their evil plans” (See: [Metaphor](#))

Jeremiah 11:19

I was like a gentle lamb being led to a butcher

This speaks of Jeremiah being unaware of his enemies' plans to kill him by comparing him to a lamb who is being led to be slaughtered. (See: [Metaphor](#))

being led to a butcher

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "that my enemies were leading to a butcher" (See: [Active or Passive](#))

Let us destroy the tree with its fruit

Here Jeremiah's enemies speak of killing him as if he were a fruit tree that they were planning to destroy. (See: [Metaphor](#))

Let us cut him off from the land of the living

The phrase "cut him off" means to destroy him. Also, "the living" refers to living people. Alternate translation: "Let us kill him so he is no longer in the land of those who are alive" or "Let us destroy him so that he is no longer among the world of living people" (See: [Idiom](#))

his name will be no longer remembered

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "people will no longer remember his name" (See: [Active or Passive](#))

ULT

19 I was like a gentle lamb being led to a butcher. I did not know that they had formed plans against me, "Let us destroy the tree with its fruit! Let us cut him off from the land of the living so his name will be no longer remembered."

Jeremiah 11:20

the heart and the mind

The heart is a metonym for what a person feels and desires and “the mind” is a metonym for what a person thinks and decides. Alternate translation: “a person’s feelings and thoughts” (See: [Metonymy](#))

I will witness your vengeance

The word “vengeance” here can be expressed as a verb. Alternate translation: “I will watch you take revenge” (See: [Abstract Nouns](#))

ULT

20 Yet Yahweh of hosts is the righteous judge who examines the heart and the mind. I will witness your vengeance against them, for I have presented my case to you.

Jeremiah 11:21

Anathoth

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

seeking your life

This phrase represents wanting or trying to kill someone. Alternate translation: “wanting to kill you” (See: [Metaphor](#))

They say

“They say to me.” The men are speaking to Jeremiah.

you will die by our hand

Here the men refer to their “hand” to emphasize that they plan to kill him themselves. Alternate translation: “we ourselves will kill you” (See: [Synecdoche](#))

ULT

21 Therefore Yahweh says this concerning the people of Anathoth who are seeking your life, “They say, ‘You must not prophesy in the name of Yahweh, or you will die by our hand.’”

Jeremiah 11:22

Yahweh of hosts says this

Jeremiah often uses these words to introduce an important message from Yahweh. See how you translated this in [Jeremiah 6:6](#).

See

This word is used here to draw someone's attention to what is said next. Alternate translation: "Listen"

vigorous young men

men at the strongest time of their lives

will die by the sword

Here the "sword" represents battle. Alternate translation: "will die in battle" (See: [Metonymy](#))

ULT

22 Therefore Yahweh of hosts says this, 'See, I am about to punish them. Their vigorous young men will die by the sword. Their sons and their daughters will die by famine.'

Jeremiah 11:23

None of them will be left

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: “I will leave none of them” (See: [Active or Passive](#))

a year of their punishment

The word “year” here is a idiom that describes a specific period of time that Yahweh decides. Alternate translation: “in the time of their punishment” or “for the time of their punishment is coming” (See: [Idiom](#))

ULT

²³ None of them will be left, because I am bringing disaster against the people of Anathoth, a year of their punishment.”

Jeremiah 12

Jeremiah 12 General Notes

Structure and formatting

Some translations set each line of poetry farther to the right than the rest of the text to make it easier to read. The ULT does this with the poetry in 12:1-13.

Special concepts in this chapter

Jeremiah complains that evil men prosper

Jeremiah complains that evil men prosper. He questions Yahweh's justice. Yahweh's response: if Jeremiah is upset by the people of Anathoth, how will he face enemies in Jerusalem? (See: [evil](#), [wicked](#), [unpleasant](#) and [just](#), [justice](#), [unjust](#), [injustice](#), [justify](#), [justification](#))

Yahweh's grace to the other nations

Yahweh gives a gracious offer to the Gentile nations. If the other nations who have been against Judah leave their idols and worship God, then God will allow them to return to their lands. (See: [grace](#), [gracious](#))

Jeremiah 12:1

General Information:

Jeremiah speaks to Yahweh.

the wicked

This refers to wicked people. Alternate translation: “wicked people” or “those who are wicked” (See: [Nominal Adjectives](#))

ULT

¹ You are righteous, Yahweh, whenever I bring disputes to you. I must certainly tell you of my reason to complain: Why do the ways of the wicked succeed? All the faithless people are successful.

Jeremiah 12:2

You planted them and they took root. They continue to produce fruit

Here Jeremiah speaks of the wicked as if they were fruit trees.
Alternate translation: "They are like fruit trees that you planted, that you allow to prosper and to produce lots of fruit" (See: [Metaphor](#))

ULT

² You planted them and they took root. They continue also to produce fruit. You are near to them in their mouths, but far away from their hearts.

You are near to them in their mouths, but far away from their hearts

Here "mouths" represents what a person says. And, "hearts" represents what a person thinks or feels. Also, being loyal is spoken of as if it were being near a person, and being disloyal is spoken of as if it were being far away from a person. Alternate translation: "They always say good things about you, but they do not love or respect you" (See: [Metonymy](#) and [Metaphor](#))

Jeremiah 12:3

General Information:

Jeremiah continues speaking to Yahweh.

my heart

Here the “heart” represents a person’s thoughts and true feelings.
Alternate translation: “my thoughts” or “my inner feelings” (See: [Metonymy](#))

ULT

³ Yet you, Yahweh, know me. You see me and you test my heart toward you. Take them away like sheep to the slaughter, and set them apart for the day of slaughter!

Take them away like sheep to the slaughter

Here Jeremiah asks Yahweh to prepare to punish the wicked as if they were sheep to be taken away to be slaughtered. Alternate translation: “Take the wicked people away, like sheep for slaughter” or “Prepare to punish those wicked people” (See: [Metaphor](#))

the day of slaughter

“the day they will be destroyed”

Jeremiah 12:4

How long will the land go on drying up ... because of the wickedness of its inhabitants?

Their land is dry and rain has not come as punishment for the peoples' wickedness.

wither

dry up

ULT

⁴ How long will the land go on drying up, and the plants in every field wither because of the wickedness of its inhabitants? The animals and the birds have been taken away. Indeed, the people say, "God will not see what happens to us."

The animals and the birds have been taken away

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "The animals and the birds are gone" or "The animals and the birds have all died" (See: [Active or Passive](#))

God will not see what happens to us

This could mean: (1) The people are saying that God does not know what things will happen to them in their future or (2) God is unaware of their sin. Alternate translation: "God does not see the sinful things that we do"

Jeremiah 12:5

how can you compete against horses?

This rhetorical question implies that he would not be able to run with horses. This question can be written as a statement. Alternate translation: "you will never compete well against horses." (See: [Rhetorical Question](#))

If you fall down

This refers to while the person is running. Alternate translation: "If you fall down while running" (See: [Ellipsis](#))

the safe countryside

This refers to the open countryside, where it is easy to travel quickly, in contrast to the overgrown thickets along the Jordan River, where it is difficult to move.

how will you do in the thickets along the Jordan?

This rhetorical question implies that he would not be able to run through the thickets along the Jordan. This question can be written as a statement. Alternate translation: "you will surely not be able to run in the thickets along the Jordan." (See: [Rhetorical Question](#))

thickets

many bushes or small trees growing close together

ULT

⁵ Yahweh said, "Indeed, if you have run with foot soldiers and they have tired you out, how can you compete against horses? If you fall down in the safe countryside, how will you do in the thickets along the Jordan?"

Jeremiah 12:6

denounced

to have accused someone publicly

ULT

⁶ For even your brothers and your father's family have betrayed you and have loudly denounced you. Do not trust in them, even if they say nice things to you.

Jeremiah 12:7

I have abandoned my house; I have forsaken my inheritance. I have given my beloved into the hands of her enemies.

These three sentences have similar meanings. The first and second one strengthens the thought in the third. (See: [Parallelism](#))

ULT

⁷ I have abandoned my house; I have forsaken my inheritance. I have given my beloved into the hands of her enemies.

I have abandoned my house; I have forsaken my inheritance

The two phrases are metaphors in which Yahweh speaks of his people as if they were his “house” and his “inheritance.” Alternate translation: “I have abandoned my Israelite people, the people whom I chose to belong to me” (See: [Metaphor](#))

into the hands of her enemies

Here the word “hands” represents control. Alternate translation: “to be conquered by her enemies” or “over to the control of her enemies” (See: [Metonymy](#))

of her

Here Yahweh refers to his people as a female by using a feminine pronoun. Alternate translation: “of their” (See: [Personification](#))

Jeremiah 12:8

she sets herself against me with her own voice

This continues to speak of Yahweh's people as a lion. This speaks of the people showing they are against him as if they were roaring at him. Alternate translation: "it is like she roars at me to defy me"

ULT

⁸ My inheritance has become to me like a lion in a thicket; she sets herself against me with her own voice, so I hate her.

she sets herself ... with her ... hate her

Here Yahweh refers to his people as a female by using feminine pronouns. Alternate translation: "they set themselves ... with their ... hate them" (See: [Personification](#))

Jeremiah 12:9

Has not my prized possession become a speckled bird, that other birds of prey go against her all around?

Yahweh uses this rhetorical question to emphasize that his people are surrounded by their enemies. This question can be written as a statement. Alternate translation: "My prized possession has become a speckled bird and other birds of prey go against her all around." (See: [Rhetorical Question](#))

ULT

⁹ Has not my inheritance become a speckled bird, that other birds of prey go against her all around? Go and gather all the wild beasts and bring them to devour her.

Has not my prized possession

Here Yahweh speaks of his people as his "prized possession." Alternate translation: "Have not my people, who are my prized possession" (See: [Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information](#))

become a speckled bird, that other birds of prey go against her all around

Here Yahweh speaks of his people being in danger and surrounded by their enemies as if they were a speckled bird surrounded by birds of prey. Alternate translation: "become like a speckled bird, and her enemies are like birds of prey attacking her on all sides" (See: [Metaphor](#))

a speckled bird

"a strange looking bird." This refers to a bird that was often picked on and eaten by other birds.

birds of prey

birds that attack and eat animals

Go and gather all the wild beasts and bring them to devour her

Yahweh speaks here in the form of a command to strengthen what he says. This command is not directed to a specific person and may be written as a statement. Alternate translation: "Let all the wild beasts in the fields come and eat her" (See: [Apostrophe](#))

Jeremiah 12:10

Many shepherds have destroyed my vineyard

Here Yahweh speaks of his land and his people being destroyed by armies as if they were a vineyard that shepherds had destroyed. Alternate translation: “My people and my land are like a vineyard that many shepherds have destroyed” (See: [Metaphor](#))

Many shepherds have destroyed

Here the word “shepherds” refers to their sheep. Alternate translation: “Many shepherds have allowed their sheep to destroy” (See: [Metonymy](#))

They have stomped all over

“They have crushed under their feet”

my portion of land

“the ground I planted” or “my field”

ULT

10 Many shepherds have destroyed my vineyard. They have stomped all over my portion of land; they turned my delightful portion into a wilderness, a desolation.

Jeremiah 12:11

All the land has been made desolate

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "All the land is desolate" (See: [Active or Passive](#))

takes it to heart

This is an idiom. Alternate translation: "cares" or "pays any attention" (See: [Idiom](#))

ULT

11 They have made her a desolation. I mourn for her; she is desolate. All the land has been made desolate, for there is no one who takes it to heart.

Jeremiah 12:12

Destroyers have come

“Destroying armies have come”

bare places in the wilderness

“places in the wilderness where nothing grows”

for Yahweh’s sword is devouring

Here Yahweh speaks of the armies that he is using to punish his people as being his “sword.” His “sword” is described here as if it were a large animal that attacked and devoured the people. Alternate translation: “for the armies are my sword that I am using to punish you” or “for I am sending the destroying armies to attack you” (See: [Metaphor](#) and [Personification](#))

from one end of the land to the other

This refers to the whole land that belongs to his people.

ULT

¹² Destroyers have come against all the bare places in the wilderness, for Yahweh’s sword is devouring from one end of the land to the other. There is no safety for any living creature.

Jeremiah 12:13

They have sown wheat but harvest thornbushes

“They have sown wheat, but there is nothing to harvest but thornbushes”

They have

“My people have”

thornbushes

a large plant that is covered in sharp points

exhausted

unable to do more, without any more strength

So be ashamed of your gain because of Yahweh’s anger

“So be ashamed of your tiny harvest because Yahweh is angry with you.” Here the word “gain” does not mean a large amount of something, but refers to a small amount.

ULT

¹³ They have sown wheat but harvest thornbushes. They are exhausted from work but have gained nothing. So be ashamed of your gain because of Yahweh’s anger.”

Jeremiah 12:14

strike at the possession

“have been trying to take away the land”

made my people Israel inherit

“gave my people Israel as an inheritance”

See

This word is used here to draw someone’s attention to what is said next. Alternate translation: “Listen” or “Pay attention to what I am about to tell you”

to uproot them from their own ground

God speaks of forcing the people to leave their land as if they were plants that he was pulling out of the ground. See how you translated this concept in [Jeremiah 1:10](#). Alternate translation: “to make them leave their own land” (See: [Metaphor](#))

I will pull up the house of Judah from among them

Here Yahweh speaks of causing the people of Judah to leave the lands of the other nations as if they were plants that he was pulling out of the ground. Alternate translation: “I will cause the house of Judah to leave their lands as well” (See: [Metaphor](#))

pull up

“uproot”

the house of Judah

The word “house” is a metonym for the family that lives in the house. In this case it refers to the kingdom of Judah, which included the descendants of Judah and Benjamin. See how you translated this in [Jeremiah 3:18](#). Alternate translation: “Judah” or “the kingdom of Judah” (See: [Metonymy](#))

ULT

14 Yahweh says this against all my neighbors, the wicked ones who strike at the possession that I made my people Israel inherit, “See, I am the one who is about to uproot them from their own ground, and I will pull up the house of Judah from among them.”

Jeremiah 12:15

I uproot those nations

God speaks of forcing the people to leave their land as if they were plants that he was pulling out of the ground. Alternate translation: “I make those nations leave their lands and move to different places” (See: [Metaphor](#))

ULT

15 Then after I uproot those nations, it will happen that I will have compassion on them and bring them back; I will return them—each man to his inheritance and his land.

Jeremiah 12:16

General Information:

God's word about Judah's neighbors.

It will come about that

"It will happen that"

As Yahweh lives

"As surely as Yahweh is alive." The people use this expression to show that what they say next is certainly true. This is a way of making a solemn promise. Swearing in Yahweh's name instead of in Baal's name indicates that they worship Yahweh instead of Baal. See how you translated this in [Jeremiah 4:2](#). Alternate translation: "I solemnly swear" (See: [Idiom](#))

they will be built up in the midst of my people

This speaks of the people becoming prosperous as if they were a building that was being built. This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "I will build them up in the midst of my people" or "I will make them wealthy and they will live among my people" (See: [Metaphor](#) and [Active or Passive](#))

midst

middle

ULT

16 It will come about that if those nations carefully learn the ways of my people, to swear by my name 'As Yahweh lives' just as they have taught my people to swear by Baal, then they will be built up in the midst of my people.

Jeremiah 12:17

this is Yahweh's declaration

Yahweh speaks of himself by name to express the certainty of what he is declaring. See how you translated this in [Jeremiah 1:8](#). Alternate translation: "this is what Yahweh has declared" or "this is what I, Yahweh, have declared" (See: [First](#), [Second](#) or [Third Person](#))

ULT

17 But if any do not listen, then I will uproot that nation. It will certainly be uprooted and destroyed—this is Yahweh's declaration."

Jeremiah 13

Jeremiah 13 General Notes

Structure and formatting

Some translations set each line of poetry farther to the right than the rest of the text to make it easier to read. The ULT does this with the poetry in 13:15-27.

===Other possible translation difficulties in this chapter ===

Symbolism

The action of hiding the undergarment was intended to be a symbolic event. It was supposed to get the Jews' attention and be a lesson for them to learn. Jeremiah performed the action, but it was not the action itself that was important. (See: [Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information](#))

Jeremiah 13:1

linen

a type of very fine cloth

undergarment

clothing that people wear under their clothes; underwear

waist

the middle part of the body, usually the narrowest, between the hips and chest

do not put it in water first

“do not wash it or get it wet”

ULT

¹ Yahweh said this to me, “Go and buy a linen undergarment and put it on around your waist, but do not put it in water first.”

Jeremiah 13:2

(There are no notes for this verse.)

ULT

² So I bought an undergarment as
Yahweh directed, and I put it on around
my waist.

Jeremiah 13:3

the word of Yahweh came to me a second time, saying,

The idiom “the word of Yahweh came to” is used to introduce a special message from God. See how you translated a similar phrase in [Jeremiah 1:4](#), and make any changes as needed. Alternate translation: “Yahweh gave me a message a second time. He said” or “Yahweh spoke this second message to me:” (See: [Idiom](#))

ULT

³ Then the word of Yahweh came to me a second time, saying,

Jeremiah 13:4

rock crevice

a space between rocks or a crack in a rock, big enough to put something into it

ULT

4 "Take the undergarment that you purchased that is around your waist, get up and go now to Perath. ^[1] Hide it there in a rock crevice."

Jeremiah 13:5

(There are no notes for this verse.)

ULT

⁵ So I went and hid it in Perath, just as
Yahweh had commanded me.

Jeremiah 13:6

(There are no notes for this verse.)

ULT

⁶ After many days, Yahweh said to me,
“Get up and go back to Perath. Take
from there the undergarment that I had
told you to hide.”

Jeremiah 13:7

(There are no notes for this verse.)

ULT

⁷ So I went back to Perath ^[2] and dug out the undergarment from where I had hid it, and behold, it was destroyed and completely useless.

Jeremiah 13:8

the word of Yahweh came to me, saying,

The idiom “the word of Yahweh came to” is used to introduce a special message from God. See how you translated this in [Jeremiah 1:4](#). Alternate translation: “Yahweh gave me a message. He said” or “Yahweh spoke this message to me:” (See: [Idiom](#))

ULT

⁸ Then the word of Yahweh came to me, saying,

Jeremiah 13:9

of Judah and Jerusalem

Here Judah and Jerusalem refer to the people who live there.
 Alternate translation: “of the people of Judah and Jerusalem” (See: [Metonymy](#))

ULT

⁹ “Yahweh says this: In the same way I will destroy the great arrogance of Judah and Jerusalem.

Jeremiah 13:10

to listen to my word

“to obey what I say”

who walk in the hardness of their heart

This is an idiom. Alternate translation: “who are stubborn and only do the things they desire” (See: [Idiom](#))

ULT

¹⁰ This wicked people who refuses to listen to my word, who walk in the hardness of their heart, who go after other gods to worship them and bow down to them—they will be like this undergarment that is good for nothing.

Jeremiah 13:11

clings to ... cling to me

“sticks to ... stick to me” or “stays close to ... stay close to me”

all the house of ... all the house of

“all the people of ... all the people of”

the house of Israel

The word “house” is a metonym for the family that lives in the house. In this case it refers to the kingdom of Israel. See how you translated this in [Jeremiah 3:18](#). Alternate translation: “Israel” or “the kingdom of Israel” or “the people of Israel” (See: [Metonymy](#))

the house of Judah

The word “house” is a metonym for the family that lives in the house. In this case it refers to the kingdom of Judah, which included the descendants of Judah and Benjamin. See how you translated this in [Jeremiah 3:18](#). Alternate translation: “Judah” or “the kingdom of Judah” or “the people of Judah” (See: [Metonymy](#))

this is Yahweh’s declaration

Yahweh speaks of himself by name to express the certainty of what he is declaring. See how you translated this in [Jeremiah 1:8](#). Alternate translation: “this is what Yahweh has declared” or “this is what I, Yahweh, have declared” (See: [First, Second or Third Person](#))

ULT

11 For just as an undergarment clings to someone’s hips, so I have made all the house of Israel and all the house of Judah cling to me—this is Yahweh’s declaration—to be my people, to bring me fame, praise, and honor. But they would not listen to me.

Jeremiah 13:12

Every jar will be filled with wine ... every jar will be filled with wine

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "Every wineskin should be full of wine ... every wineskin should be full of wine" or "Every wine jar should be full of wine ... every wine jar should be full of wine" (See: [Active or Passive](#))

ULT

¹² So you must speak this word to them, 'Yahweh, the God of Israel, says this: Every jar will be filled with wine.' They will say to you, 'Do we not indeed know that every jar will be filled with wine?'

Jeremiah 13:13

See

This word is used here to draw someone's attention to what is said next. Alternate translation: "Listen" or "Pay attention to what I am about to tell you"

fill with drunkenness every inhabitant of this land

"cause all the people of this land to be drunk"

the kings who sit on David's throne

Here the throne that the king of Judah sits on is represented as "David's throne." Alternate translation: "the kings who sit on Judah's throne" or "the kings of the nation of Judah" (See: [Metonymy](#))

ULT

13 So say to them, 'Yahweh says this:
See, I am about to fill with drunkenness
every inhabitant of this land, the kings
who sit on David's throne, the priests,
prophets, and all the inhabitants of
Jerusalem.

Jeremiah 13:14

smash each man against the other, fathers and children together

Here the words “each man” refer to both men and women. Alternate translation: “Then I will cause the people to fight with each other, even parents and children will fight one another” (See: [When Masculine Words Include Women](#))

fathers and children together

The understood information may be supplied. Alternate translation: “I will smash fathers and children together” (See: [Ellipsis](#))

this is Yahweh’s declaration

Yahweh speaks of himself by name to express the certainty of what he is declaring. See how you translated this in [Jeremiah 1:8](#). Alternate translation: “this is what Yahweh has declared” or “this is what I, Yahweh, have declared” (See: [First, Second or Third Person](#))

I will not pity

“I will not feel sorry for”

will not spare them from destruction

“will not withhold punishment from them.” This can be stated in positive form. Alternate translation: “will allow them to be destroyed”

ULT

14 Then I will smash each man against his brother, fathers and children together—this is Yahweh’s declaration—I will not pity them or have compassion, and I will not spare them from destruction.”

Jeremiah 13:15

arrogant

falsely believing oneself to be important

ULT

15 Listen and pay attention. Do not be arrogant, for Yahweh had spoken.

Jeremiah 13:16

he brings darkness

“he causes darkness to come.” Here trouble and despair are spoken of as if they were “darkness.” Alternate translation: “he brings trouble and despair” or “he cause great troubles to come”

before he causes your feet to stumble

Here a person is referred to by his “feet” to emphasize that he is walking. Alternate translation: “before he causes you to trip and fall as you walk” (See: [Synecdoche](#))

twilight

early morning or evening when it is partially dark, when the sun is beginning to rise or when the sun is almost set

For you are hoping for light, but he will turn the place into a deep darkness, into a dark cloud

This speaks of goodness and blessings as “light” and of trouble and despair as “darkness.” Alternate translation: “For you were hoping for light and blessings, but Yahweh will give you darkness and great despair--you will feel like you are surrounded by a dark cloud” (See: [Metaphor](#))

ULT

16 Give honor to Yahweh your God before he brings darkness, and before he causes your feet to stumble on the mountains at twilight. For you are hoping for light, but he will turn the place into a deep darkness, into a dark cloud.

Jeremiah 13:17

for Yahweh's flock has been taken captive

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "for enemies have captured Yahweh's flock" (See: [Active or Passive](#))

for Yahweh's flock has been taken captive

Here Jeremiah speaks of Yahweh's people as Yahweh's "flock" because he cares for them like a shepherd cares for his sheep. This event has not happened yet, but it is written here as if it already has. This can be written in future tense. Alternate translation: "for you who are Yahweh's flock, your enemies will soon capture you" (See: [Metaphor](#) and [Predictive Past](#))

ULT

17 So if you will not listen, I will weep alone because of your arrogance. My eyes will certainly weep and flow with tears, for Yahweh's flock has been taken captive.

Jeremiah 13:18

General Information:

Yahweh is continuing to talk to Jeremiah. He is telling Jeremiah what to say to the king of Judah and the king's mother.

queen mother

the mother of the king

ULT

18 "Say to the king and to the queen,
'Come down from your thrones, for
your splendid crowns have fallen from
your heads.'

for your splendid crowns have fallen from your heads

A king and queen mother wear crowns to represent their royal positions as the king and queen mother. Also, this event has not happened yet, but it is written here as if it already has. This can be written in future tense. Alternate translation: "for you will no longer be the king and queen mother, for your crowns, your pride and glory, will fall off" (See: [Symbolic Action](#) and [Predictive Past](#))

Jeremiah 13:19

The cities in the Negev will be shut up, with no one to open them

This means that the cities will be surrounded by their enemies, who will not allow anyone to go in or come out of the cities. Alternate translation: “The cities in the Negev will be shut up, and no one will be able to go into them or come out of them” (See: [Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information](#))

ULT

¹⁹ The cities in the Negev will be shut up, with no one to open them. All Judah will be taken captive, completely taken captive.

The cities in the Negev will be shut up

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: “Your enemies will shut the cities in the Negev up” (See: [Active or Passive](#))

All Judah will be taken captive, completely taken captive

Here “Judah” represents the people who live there. This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: “The enemies will take all of the people of Judah captive into exile” (See: [Metonymy](#) and [Active or Passive](#))

Jeremiah 13:20

General Information:

Yahweh is talking to the people of Jerusalem.

Lift up your eyes and look at the ones coming from the north

Here the word “look” is an idiom that means to pay attention and be aware of what is happening. Also, “Lift up your eyes” represents looking at something. Alternate translation: “Pay attention and be aware of the ones coming from the north” (See: [Idiom](#) and [Metonymy](#))

ULT

²⁰ Lift up your eyes and look at the ones coming from the north. Where is the flock he gave to you, the flock that was so beautiful to you?

the ones coming from the north

This refers an enemy army that will come from the north. Alternate translation: “the enemy army coming from the north” or “the enemy army marching from the north” (See: [Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information](#))

Where is the flock he gave to you, the flock that was so beautiful to you?

This rhetorical question is asked to emphasize that the people of Judah will be captured by the enemy armies. This question is asked as if the people of Judah had already been captured even though this has not yet happened. The question can be written as a statement and in future tense. Alternate translation: “I gave you the people of Judah to care for, like a beautiful flock of sheep, but the enemy army will capture them.” (See: [Rhetorical Question](#) and [Predictive Past](#))

the flock

This speaks of the people of Judah as a “flock” of sheep to emphasize that the leaders of Judah were supposed to care for them and look after them. (See: [Metaphor](#))

Jeremiah 13:21

What will you say when God sets over you those you had trained to be your special allies?

This rhetorical question is used to emphasize that the people who Judah's leaders thought they were at peace with will conquer them. This question can be written as a statement. Alternate translation: "The people you thought were your friends will conquer you and rule over you." (See: [Rhetorical Question](#))

ULT

²¹ What will you say when God sets over you those you had trained to be your special allies? Are these not the beginnings of the labor pains that will seize you just like a woman in childbirth?

Are these not the beginnings of the labor pains that will seize you just like a woman in childbirth?

Yahweh uses this rhetorical question to tell the people that their capture is just the beginning of the suffering they will go through. This question can be written as a statement. Alternate translation: "These things that you will suffer are like the beginning of the labor pains of a woman in childbirth." (See: [Rhetorical Question](#))

Jeremiah 13:22

General Information:

Yahweh continues to talk to Jeremiah. He is telling Jeremiah what to say to the king of Judah and the king's mother.

that your skirts are raised up and you have been violated

This means that the enemy soldiers will rape the Judean women. This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "that the enemy soldiers will lift up the skirts of your women and rape them" (See: [Euphemism](#) and [Active or Passive](#))

ULT

22 Then you might say in your heart, 'Why are these things happening to me?' It will be for the multitude of your iniquities that your skirts are raised up and you have been violated.

Jeremiah 13:23

Can the people of Cush change their skin color, or a leopard change its spots?

This rhetorical question is used to state an example of something that is impossible. This question can be written as a statement. Also, the understood verb “can” maybe be supplied in the second phrase. Alternate translation: “The people of Cush cannot change their skin color and a leopard cannot change its spots.” (See: [Rhetorical Question](#) and [Ellipsis](#))

ULT

²³ Can the people of Cush change their skin color, or can a leopard change its spots? If so, then you yourself, although accustomed to wickedness, would be able to do good.

If so, then you yourself, although accustomed to wickedness, would be able to do good

This statement is ironic because the examples about the Cushite and the leopard are impossible situations. This states that if those impossible things could happen then they could do good. Alternate translation: “Just like these things are impossible, so it is also impossible for you who always do evil to do good” (See: [Irony](#))

Jeremiah 13:24

I will scatter them like chaff that perishes in the desert wind

"I will scatter them like chaff that is blown away by the wind."

Yahweh is saying He will scatter His people throughout the world just as chaff is scattered by the wind. (See: [Simile](#))

ULT

²⁴ So I will scatter them like chaff that perishes in the desert wind.

Jeremiah 13:25

(There are no notes for this verse.)

ULT

²⁵ This is what I have given to you, the portion I have decreed for you—this is Yahweh's declaration— because you have forgotten me and trusted in deceit.

Jeremiah 13:26

I myself will strip your skirts off you, and your private parts will be seen.

This means that Yahweh will make them feel ashamed. It does not in any way mean that he will rape them. This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "It is as though I myself will strip your skirts off of you so that everyone will see your private parts and you will be ashamed" (See: [Metaphor](#) and [Active or Passive](#))

ULT

²⁶ So also I myself will strip your skirts off you, and your private parts will be seen.

Jeremiah 13:27

neighing

This is the sound of a male horse desiring a female horse. Alternate translation: "lusting" (See: [Metaphor](#))

ULT

27 I have seen your adultery and neighing, the wickedness of your prostitution on the hills and in the fields, these detestable things! Woe to you, Jerusalem! How long until you are made clean again?"

Jeremiah 14

Jeremiah 14 General Notes

Structure and formatting

Some translations set each line of poetry farther to the right than the rest of the text to make it easier to read. The ULT does this with the poetry in 14:1-10, 17-22.

Special concepts in this chapter

False prophets

The false prophets promised there would not be any war or drought. They gave people a false sense of hope, when they needed to repent. Because of this, Yahweh sent a drought and said that the false prophets would die of drought and war. This showed that these were not true prophets of Yahweh. (See: [prophet](#), [prophecy](#), [prophesy](#), [seer](#), [prophetess](#), [promise](#), [promised](#) and [hope](#), [hoped](#) and [repent](#), [repentance](#))

Jeremiah 14:1

General Information:

Yahweh, through the prophet Jeremiah, has just talked about the adultery of the people.

This is the word of Yahweh that came to Jeremiah

This idiom is used to introduce a special message from God. See how you translated a similar phrase in [Jeremiah 1:4](#). Alternate translation: “This is the message that Yahweh gave to Jeremiah” or “This is the message that Yahweh spoke to Jeremiah” (See: [Idiom](#))

ULT

¹ This is the word of Yahweh that came to Jeremiah regarding the drought,

Jeremiah 14:2

Let Judah mourn

Here “Judah” represents the people who live there. Alternate translation: “Let the people of Judah mourn” (See: [Metonymy](#))

let her gates fall apart

Here the word “gates,” which keep enemies out of cities and where people conduct business and government, is a synecdoche for Judah’s cities, and Judah’s cities are a metonym for the people who live in them. Alternate translation: “let her cities fall apart” or “let the people in her cities become unable to defend themselves” (See: [Synecdoche](#) and [Metonymy](#))

fall apart

“fall into pieces”

their cries for Jerusalem are going up

The phrase “going up” is an idiom. Alternate translation: “They are calling out loudly in prayer for Jerusalem” (See: [Idiom](#))

ULT

² “Let Judah mourn; let her gates fall apart. They are wailing for the land; their cries for Jerusalem are going up.”

Jeremiah 14:3

Their mighty ones

“The rich people”

ashamed and dishonored

Both of these words have similar meaning and together emphasize that the servants were ashamed that they were unable to get water. (See: [Doublet](#))

they cover their heads

In biblical times, people would wear a headcovering to show that they were ashamed. (See: [Symbolic Action](#))

ULT

³ Their mighty ones send out their servants for water. When they go to the trenches, they cannot find water. They all return with empty vessels; they cover their heads ashamed and dishonored.

Jeremiah 14:4

General Information:

Yahweh, through the prophet Jeremiah, has continued to tell the people about the drought.

The plowmen are ashamed and cover their heads

In biblical times, people would wear a headcovering to show that they were ashamed. (See: [Symbolic Action](#))

ULT

⁴ Because of this the ground is cracked, for there is no rain in the land. The plowmen are ashamed and cover their heads.

Jeremiah 14:5

the doe leaves her young in the fields and abandons them

These two phrase have the same meaning and emphasize that the doe leaves her young deer because she cannot provide for them. A doe is a female deer. Alternate translation: "the deer leaves her young in the field" (See: [Parallelism](#))

ULT

⁵ For even the doe abandons her young in the fields, for there is no grass.

for there is no grass

This means that there is no grass for the deer to eat. Alternate translation: "for there is no grass for them to eat" (See: [Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information](#))

Jeremiah 14:6

they pant in the wind like jackals

This speaks of the donkeys panting because they are thirsty by saying that they pant like jackals. Jackals are fierce wild dog which pant a lot. Alternate translation: "they pant in the wind like thirsty jackals" (See: [Simile](#))

Their eyes fail to work, for there is no vegetation

"They become blind because there is no grass to eat"

ULT

⁶ The wild donkeys stand on the bare plains and they pant in the wind like jackals. Their eyes fail to work, for there is no vegetation."

Jeremiah 14:7

General Information:

Yahweh, through the prophet Jeremiah, has just told the people about the drought.

our iniquities testify against us

Here their “iniquities” are spoken of as if they were people who testified against them about their wrong doing. Alternate translation: “our iniquities give evidence of our wrongdoing” (See: [Personification](#))

for the sake of your name

Here Yahweh’s “name” refers to his reputation. Alternate translation: “for the sake of your reputation” or “in order that everyone can see that you are very great and keep your promises” (See: [Metonymy](#))

ULT

⁷ Even though our iniquities testify against us, Yahweh, act for the sake of your name. For our faithless actions increase; we have sinned against you.

Jeremiah 14:8

Hope of Israel

This is another name for Yahweh. Alternate translation: “You are the hope of Israel” (See: [Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information](#))

why will you be like a stranger in the land, like a foreign wanderer who stretches out and spends just one night?

ULT

⁸ You are the Hope of Israel, the one who saves him in the time of distress. Why will you be like a stranger in the land, like a foreign wanderer who stretches out and spends just one night?

The people are asking if Yahweh is unconcerned with his people and unable to help them. This can be translated as a statement. Alternate translation: “you should not be like a stranger in the land, like a foreign wanderer who stretches out and spends just one night.” (See: [Parallelism](#))

why will you be like a stranger in the land, like a foreign wanderer ... just one night

This question speaks of the possibility of Yahweh being unconcerned with helping his people as if he were a stranger just travelling through a place unconcerned with those living there. (See: [Simile](#))

Jeremiah 14:9

Why are you like someone who is astounded, or like a warrior who has no power to rescue?

This speaks of the possibility of Yahweh being unable to help his people as if he were a confused warrior who was unable to rescue anyone. This can be translated as a statement. Alternate translation: "You do nothing to help us, like someone who is astounded or like a warrior who has no power to rescue us." (See: [Simile](#))

ULT

⁹ Why are you like someone who is astounded, or like a warrior who has no power to rescue? You are in our midst, Yahweh, and your name is called over us. Do not leave us!

astounded

unable to understand or to think clearly

your name is called over us

This can be stated in active form. This speaks of the people being Yahweh's people by saying that his name is over them. Alternate translation: "we bear your name" or "we are your people" (See: [Active or Passive](#) and [Idiom](#))

Jeremiah 14:10

General Information:

Jeremiah has been praying and asking Yahweh not to leave them alone.

they love to wander

“they love to wander away from me.” This speaks of people being unfaithful to Yahweh and not obey him as if they had wandered from the place where he is. (See: [Metaphor](#))

have not held back their feet

Here the people are referred to by their “feet” to emphasize their walking away from Yahweh. Alternate translation: “have not kept themselves” (See: [Synecdoche](#))

calls to mind

This is an idiom. Alternate translation: “remembers” or “recalls” (See: [Idiom](#))

ULT

10 Yahweh says this to this people:

“Since they love to wander, they have not held back their feet from doing so.”
Yahweh is not pleased with them. Now he calls to mind their iniquity and has punished their sins.

Jeremiah 14:11

on behalf of

“to assist” or “to help”

ULT

11 Yahweh said to me, “Do not pray for good on behalf of this people.”

Jeremiah 14:12

wailing

loudly crying because of sorrow

I will put an end to them

This is a euphemism. Alternate translation: "I will cause them to die" (See: [Euphemism](#))

by sword

Here war is represented by the "sword" which was the common weapon used in battle. Alternate translation: "by war" or "by battle" (See: [Metonymy](#))

ULT

¹² For if they fast, I will not listen to their wailing, and if they offer up burnt offerings and food offerings, I will not take pleasure in them. For I will put an end to them by sword, famine, and plague."

Jeremiah 14:13

General Information:

Yahweh has just told Jeremiah not to pray for the people of Judah.

You will not see the sword

Here “sword” represents war, and to “see” represents experiencing.

Alternate translation: “You will not experience any war” (See:

[Metonymy](#))

I will give you true security

Here “security” is spoken of as if it were an object that someone could give to another person. Alternate translation: “I will allow you to live securely” or “I will allow you to live peacefully” (See: [Metaphor](#))

ULT

13 Then I said, “Oh, Lord Yahweh!

Behold! The prophets are saying to the people, ‘You will not see the sword; there will be no famine for you, for I will give you true security in this place.’”

Jeremiah 14:14

prophecy deceit

The word “deceit” can be expressed as an adjective. Alternate translation: “prophecy deceitfully” (See: [Abstract Nouns](#))

in my name

This phrase refers to speaking with Yahweh’s power and authority or as his representative. (See: [Metonymy](#))

I did not send them out

This means that Yahweh did not send them out with messages to give to the people. Alternate translation: “I did not send them to prophesy to other people” (See: [Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information](#))

coming from their own minds

Here “minds” are spoken of as if they were a place instead of the ability to think of ideas. Alternate translation: “that they think up themselves” (See: [Metaphor](#))

ULT

14 Yahweh said to me, “The prophets prophecy deceit in my name. I did not send them out, nor did I give them any command or speak to them. But deceitful visions and useless, deceitful divination coming from their own minds are what they are prophesying to you.”

Jeremiah 14:15

General Information:

Jeremiah has just been talking to Yahweh about the things the false prophets have been prophesying.

in my name

This phrase refers to speaking with Yahweh's power and authority or as his representative. See how you translated this in [Jeremiah 14:14](#). (See: [Metonymy](#))

there will be no sword ... perish by sword

Here the "sword" represents war. Alternate translation: "there will be no war ... perish by war" (See: [Metonymy](#))

ULT

15 Therefore Yahweh says this, "About the prophets prophesying in my name but whom I did not send out—those who say there will be no sword or famine in this land: These prophets will perish by sword and famine."

Jeremiah 14:16

famine and sword

Here the “sword” represents war. Alternate translation: “famine and war” (See: [Metonymy](#))

Then the people to whom they prophesied will be thrown out in the streets of Jerusalem because of famine and sword

This can be stated in active form. This means that whole families will die and people will throw their bodies into the streets instead of burying them. Alternate translation: “Then the people to whom they prophesied will die by famine and sword and people will throw their bodies into the streets of Jerusalem” (See: [Active or Passive](#))

their wives, their sons, or their daughters

This describes who is referred to by the word “them,” that is, everyone who died by famine and sword.

I will pour out their wickedness on them

Here Yahweh speaks of punishing the people in accordance to their wickedness as if their own wickedness were a liquid that he would pour upon them. Alternate translation: “I will punish them like they deserve to be punished” (See: [Metaphor](#))

ULT

16 Then the people to whom they prophesied will be thrown out in the streets of Jerusalem because of famine and sword, for there will be no one to bury them—they, their wives, their sons, or their daughters—for I will pour out their wickedness on them.

Jeremiah 14:17

night and day

Here two opposite times of the day are given to mean all the time.
Alternate translation: “all the time, both night and day” (See: [Merism](#))

incurable wound

a cut or break in skin that cannot be cured

ULT

17 Say this word to them: ‘Let my eyes flow with tears, night and day. Do not let them stop, for there will be a great collapse of the virgin daughter of my people— a great and incurable wound.’

Jeremiah 14:18

who were killed by the sword

This can be stated in active form. Also, here the “sword” represents war. Alternate translation: “who died by the sword” or “who died in war” (See: [Active or Passive](#) and [Metonymy](#))

there are the diseases that are caused by famine

Here the “diseases” represent the people who have these diseases because of their starvation. Alternate translation: “there are the ones who are sick because of famine” (See: [Metonymy](#))

wander

move around without purpose

they do not know

It may be helpful to state what they do not know. Alternate translation: “they do not know what they are doing” (See: [Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information](#))

ULT

18 If I go out to the field, there are the ones who were killed by the sword! If I come to the city, there are the diseases that are caused by famine. Both the prophet and the priest wander about the land, and they do not know.”

Jeremiah 14:19

for a time of healing

The understood information may be supplied. Alternate translation: “we hoped for a time of healing” (See: [Ellipsis](#))

ULT

19 Have you completely rejected Judah? Do you hate Zion? Why will you afflict us when there is no healing for us? We hoped for peace, but there was nothing good— and for a time of healing, but see, there is only terror.

Jeremiah 14:20

We admit, Yahweh, our offenses, the iniquity of our ancestors

“Yahweh, we admit our wicked offenses and our ancestors’ iniquity”

ULT

²⁰ We admit, Yahweh, our offenses, the iniquity of our ancestors, for we have sinned against you.

Jeremiah 14:21

General Information:

Jeremiah continues his prayer to Yahweh.

For the sake of your name

Here Yahweh's "name" refers to his reputation. Alternate translation: "For the sake of your reputation" or "In order that everyone can see that you are very great and keep your promises" (See: [Metonymy](#))

your glorious throne

Yahweh's "throne" is represented by Zion, that is Jerusalem. His "throne" also represents the place where he rules as king. Alternate translation: "do disgrace Zion where your glorious throne is" or "do not disgrace Zion, where you rule as king" (See: [Metonymy](#))

ULT

²¹ Do not reject us! For the sake of your name, do not make your glorious throne a disgrace. Remember and do not break your covenant with us.

Jeremiah 14:22

can the skies themselves send down showers

“Can the skies decide when they make the rain to fall?”

ULT

²² Do any of the worthless idols of the nations bring rain? Or can the skies themselves send down showers? Are you not the one, Yahweh our God? We wait for you, for you are the one who does all these things.

Jeremiah 15

Jeremiah 15 General Notes

Structure and formatting

Some translations set each line of poetry farther to the right than the rest of the text to make it easier to read. The ULT does this with the poetry in 15:2, 5-21.

Special concepts in this chapter

Do not pray for the people

God told Jeremiah not to pray for the people because God was punishing them. This was meant to be an illustration for Jeremiah. Jeremiah was not to pray because the punishment was already determined. Yahweh also explains that even the great Moses could not help the sinful Jews. (See: [sin](#), [sinful](#), [sinner](#), [sinning](#))

Yahweh uses Gentile nations

Yahweh is going to use the Gentile nations to punish Judah. This would have been very offensive to the Jews. They would have also been surprised to learn that Yahweh was using the Gentile nations to punish his people. (See: [Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information](#))

Jeremiah 15:1

General Information:

Jeremiah has just been praying to Yahweh.

were standing in front of me, I would still not be in favor of this people

This implies that they are pleading for Yahweh to spare the people.

Alternate translation: "were standing in front of me pleading for these people, I would still not be in favor of them"

(See: [Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information](#))

ULT

¹ Then Yahweh said to me, "Even if Moses or Samuel were standing in front of me, I would still not be in favor of this people. Send them out from before me, for them to go away."

Send them out from before me, for them to go away

Yahweh repeats this idea of sending away his people to add emphasis to it. (See: [Parallelism](#))

Jeremiah 15:2

Those who are for

“Those whom I have appointed to go to”

should go to death

This speaks of dying as if death were a place that people can go to.
Alternate translation: “should die” (See: [Metaphor](#))

those who are for the sword should go to the sword

Here the “sword” represents war. To be “for the sword” means that God has appointed them to die in war.
Alternate translation: “those whom I have appointed to die in war should go to die in war” (See: [Metonymy](#) and [Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information](#))

Those who are for famine should go to famine

This means that Yahweh has appointed these to die because of famine, and these words speak of dying by famine as if “famine” were a place that people can go to. Alternate translation: “Those whom I have appointed to die by famine should go and die by famine” (See: [Metaphor](#) and [Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information](#))

should go to captivity

“should go into captivity”

ULT

² It will happen that they will say to you, ‘Where should we go?’ Then you must say to them, ‘Yahweh says this: Those who are for death should go to death; those who are for the sword should go to the sword. Those who are for famine should go to famine; and those who are for captivity should go to captivity.’

Jeremiah 15:3

General Information:

Yahweh has just told them he will send some of them to death, some to die by the sword, some to die by famine, and some to be captives.

the sword

Here the “sword” refers to the enemy soldiers. Alternate translation: “the enemy soldiers” (See: [Metonymy](#))

ULT

³ For I will assign them to four groups—this is Yahweh’s declaration—the sword to slaughter some, the dogs to drag some away, the birds of the skies and the beast of the earth to consume and destroy some.

Jeremiah 15:4

I will make of them

Here the word “them” refers to the people of Judah, not to the four groups listed in the previous verse.

because of what Manasseh ... did in Jerusalem

Manasseh was a very wicked king who did many evil things in Jerusalem. Alternate translation: “because of the wicked things that Manasseh ... did in Jerusalem” (See: [Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information](#))

ULT

⁴ I will make of them a horrifying thing to all the kingdoms of the earth, because of what Manasseh son of Hezekiah, king of Judah, did in Jerusalem.

Jeremiah 15:5

General Information:

Yahweh has just told them he will assign them to four groups to kill them—the sword, dogs, birds, and beasts.

For who will have compassion for you, Jerusalem? Who will grieve for you?

Yahweh uses this rhetorical question to emphasize that no one should mourn for Jerusalem. This question can be written as a statement. Alternate translation: “No one should have compassion on you, Jerusalem. No one should mourn for your destruction.” (See: [Rhetorical Question](#))

for you, Jerusalem

Here “Jerusalem” refers to the people who live there. Alternate translation: “for you people who live in Jerusalem” (See: [Metonymy](#))

ULT

⁵ For who will have compassion for you,
Jerusalem? Who will grieve for you?
Who will turn aside to ask about your
well-being?

Jeremiah 15:6

You have forsaken me ... you have gone back from me

These two phrases mean basically the same thing and emphasize that the people have, indeed, forsaken Yahweh. (See: [Parallelism](#))

this is Yahweh's declaration

Yahweh speaks of himself by name to express the certainty of what he is declaring. See how you translated this in [Jeremiah 1:8](#). Alternate translation: "this is what Yahweh has declared" or "this is what I, Yahweh, have declared" (See: [First, Second or Third Person](#))

gone back from me

"left me" or "gone away from me"

I will strike you with my hand

Here "hand" represents power. Alternate translation: "I will use my power to strike you" (See: [Metonymy](#))

ULT

⁶ You have forsaken me—this is Yahweh's declaration—you have gone back from me. So I will strike you with my hand and destroy you. I am tired of having mercy on you.

Jeremiah 15:7

So I will winnow them with a pitchfork at the gates of the land

Here Yahweh speaks of scattering the people and causing them to leave Jerusalem as if they were winnowed chaff being blown away on the wind. (See: [Metaphor](#))

ULT

⁷ So I will winnow them with a pitchfork at the gates of the land. I will bereave them. I will destroy my people since they will not turn from their ways.

pitchfork

a farm tool with a long handle and sharp metal prongs, used especially for lifting and tossing grain in the air for winnowing

I will bereave them

“I will cause their children to die” or “I will let their enemies kill their children”

Jeremiah 15:8

General Information:

Yahweh has just told them no one will care about them and that he will destroy his people since they would not turn from their wicked ways.

widows

women whose husbands have died

more than the sands of the seashore

“than the grains of sand on the seashore.” This comparison is an exaggeration used to emphasize an uncountable number. Alternate translation: “more than you can count” (See: [Hyperbole](#))

Against the mothers of young men I will send the destroyer at noonday

This means that Yahweh will send an enemy army to kill young men, which will cause their mothers great sorrow. Alternate translation: “At noonday I will send an enemy army to destroy young men and cause their mothers to weep” (See: [Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information](#))

fall on them

This is an idiom. Alternate translation: “happen to them” (See: [Idiom](#))

ULT

⁸ I will make their widows number more than the sands of the seashore. Against the mothers of young men I will send the destroyer at noonday. I will make shock and horror suddenly fall on them.

Jeremiah 15:9

She will be ashamed and embarrassed

The words “ashamed” and “embarrassed” mean basically the same thing and emphasize the intensity of shame. Alternate translation: “She will be completely ashamed” (See: [Doublet](#))

will waste away

This is an idiom. Alternate translation: “will grow faint” (See: [Idiom](#))

Her sun will set while it is still day

This speaks of a woman becoming sorrowful because her children have died, as if her life were a day in which the sun had set early and turned to darkness. Here the darkness represents her sorrow. Alternate translation: “Because of her sorrow, it will be as though the sun has set and her day has turned to darkness” (See: [Metaphor](#))

I will give those who remain to the sword in the presence of their enemies

Here the “sword” represents the enemy soldiers. This means that Yahweh will allow the enemy soldier to kill any of her children that remain. Alternate translation: “I will allow the enemy soldiers to kill those of her children that remain alive” (See: [Metonymy](#) and [Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information](#))

this is Yahweh’s declaration

Yahweh speaks of himself by name to express the certainty of what he is declaring. See how you translated this in [Jeremiah 1:8](#). Alternate translation: “this is what Yahweh has declared” or “this is what I, Yahweh, have declared” (See: [First, Second or Third Person](#))

ULT

⁹ The mother who has borne seven children will waste away. She will gasp. Her sun will set while it is still day. She will be ashamed and embarrassed, for I will give those who remain to the sword in the presence of their enemies— this is Yahweh’s declaration.”

Jeremiah 15:10

General Information:

In these verse, Jeremiah speaks to Yahweh about his suffering, and Yahweh answers him.

Woe to me, my mother

Jeremiah pretends to speak to his mother as a way to emphasize how sad he is. (See: [Apostrophe](#))

a man of controversy and argument

The words “controversy” and “argument” mean basically the same thing. Together they emphasize how much Jeremiah is arguing. Alternate translation: “a man with whom everyone argues all the time” (See: [Doublet](#))

I have not lent, nor has anyone lent to me

This refers to lending money to people. Often lending money causes people to fight with one another. Alternate translation: “I have not lent money to anyone, nor has anyone lent money to me” or “I have not made anyone angry by lending or borrow money and then quarreling about it” (See: [Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information](#))

ULT

10 Woe to me, my mother! For you have borne me, I who am a man of controversy and argument through all the land. I have not lent, nor has anyone lent to me, but they all curse me.

Jeremiah 15:11

Will I not rescue you for good?

The implicit answer to this rhetorical question is “yes.” This question can be written as a statement. Alternate translation: “I will certainly rescue you for good!” (See: [Rhetorical Question](#))

your enemies

Those are the enemies of Jeremiah who disagreed with his prophecies.

in the time of calamity and distress

Here the words “calamity” and “distress” mean basically the same thing. They emphasize the amount or intensity of the calamity. Alternate translation: “in the time of great calamity” (See: [Doublet](#))

ULT

11 Yahweh said: “Will I not rescue you for good? I will certainly make your enemies beg for help in the time of calamity and distress.”

Jeremiah 15:12

Can one smash iron? Especially iron from the north that is mixed with bronze?

In these questions Yahweh speaks of the strength of Judah's enemies as if they were iron mixed with bronze. These rhetorical questions can be written as a statement. Alternate translation: "No one can smash iron, especially if it is as strong as the iron from the north that is mixed with bronze." or "But Judah's enemies, who are as strong as iron or bronze, will attack Judah from the north, no one will be able to stop them" (See: [Rhetorical Question](#) and [Metaphor](#))

ULT

¹² Can one smash iron? Especially iron from the north that is mixed with bronze?

Jeremiah 15:13

General Information:

In these verse, Yahweh speaks to the nation of Israel as if it were one person.

wealth and treasures

The words “wealth” and “treasures” mean the same thing and refer to anything that people consider to be valuable. (See: [Doublet](#))

plunder

things that you steal from a city after conquering it

all your sins committed

This can be written in active form. Alternate translation: “all of the sins you have committed” (See: [Active or Passive](#))

within all your borders

“throughout your country”

ULT

13 I will give to your enemies your wealth and treasures as free plunder. I will do this because of all your sins committed within all your borders.

Jeremiah 15:14

a land that you do not know

“to a land that is strange to you”

for a fire will ignite, kindled in my wrath against you

The wrath of God is spoken of as if it were a destructive fire. Alternate translation: “I will destroy you because I am very angry with you” (See: [Metaphor](#))

for a fire will ignite, kindled in my wrath against you

Here Yahweh speaks of his wrath as if it were a fire. Alternate translation: “for my wrath is like a fire that I will kindle against you” or “for I will come against you in my wrath, and my wrath will be like a burning fire” (See: [Metaphor](#))

kindled

to light a fire

ULT

14 Then I will make you serve your enemies in a land that you do not know, for a fire will ignite, kindled in my wrath against you.” ^[1]

Jeremiah 15:15

General Information:

Jeremiah speaks to Yahweh.

You are patient, but do not allow them to take me away

Jeremiah is asking Yahweh not to be patient with the sins of his enemies. The phrase “take me away” refers to him being killed.

Alternate translation: “Please do not continue to be patient with them and allow them to kill me” (See: [Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information](#) and [Euphemism](#))

ULT

15 Yahweh, you know! Remember me and help me. Bring vengeance for me against those who persecute me. You are patient, but do not allow them to take me away; know that I suffer reproach for your sake.

Jeremiah 15:16

Your words have been found

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "I have heard your message" (See: [Active or Passive](#))

I consumed them

Jeremiah speaks of listening and understanding Yahweh's message as if it were food that he ate. Alternate translation: "I understood your message" (See: [Metaphor](#))

the delight of my heart

Here the "heart" represents a person emotions and feelings. Alternate translation: "what I love most" (See: [Metonymy](#))

I bear your name

"people know that I serve you"

ULT

16 Your words have been found, and I consumed them. Your words became to me a joy and the delight of my heart, for I bear your name, Yahweh, God of hosts.

Jeremiah 15:17

I did not sit in the circle of

This is an idiom. Alternate translation: “I did not spend time with” (See: [Idiom](#))

of your powerful hand

Here Yahweh’s “powerful hand” refers to his control and influence over Jeremiah. Alternate translation: “you powerfully influence me” or “you are the one who controls what I do” (See: [Metaphor](#))

ULT

17 I did not sit in the circle of those who celebrated or rejoiced. I sat in solitude because of your powerful hand, for you filled me with indignation.

Jeremiah 15:18

Why is my pain ongoing and my wound incurable, refusing to be healed?

Jeremiah uses this rhetorical question to emphasize his pain. He speaks of his pain as if it were a physical wound. This question can be written as a statement. Alternate translation: "My pain is ongoing, it is like a wound that will not heal." (See: [Rhetorical Question](#) and [Metaphor](#))

ULT

¹⁸ Why is my pain ongoing and my wound incurable, refusing to be healed? Will you be like deceitful waters to me, waters that dry up?

refusing to be healed

This speaks of Jeremiah's wound as if it were a person that refuses to be healed. This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "that will not heal" (See: [Personification](#) and [Active or Passive](#))

Will you be like deceitful waters to me, waters that dry up?

Jeremiah uses this rhetorical question to emphasize that he feels like he cannot depend on Yahweh. He speaks of this as if Yahweh were a stream that dries up. Alternate translation: "It feels like you are undependable to me, like a stream I go to for a drink only to find it dried up." (See: [Rhetorical Question](#) and [Simile](#))

Jeremiah 15:19

you will be like my mouth

Jeremiah is compared to the mouth of Yahweh because he will be used to speak Yahweh's message. Alternate translation: "you will speak for me" (See: [Simile](#))

you yourself

The pronoun, "yourself", is used here to emphasis the command was specifically for Jeremiah. (See: [Reflexive Pronouns](#))

ULT

19 Therefore Yahweh said this, "If you repent, then I will restore you, and you will stand before me. For if you separate the foolish things from the precious things, you will be like my mouth. The people will come back to you, but you yourself must not go back to them."

Jeremiah 15:20

like an impenetrable bronze wall to this people

Yahweh compares Jeremiah to a wall because the people will not be able to defeat him. Alternate translation: “I will make you strong, like a bronze wall” (See: [Simile](#))

they will wage war against you

This speaks of the people fighting with Jeremiah as if he were an army that they waged war against. Alternate translation: “they will fight against you” or “they will oppose you” (See: [Metaphor](#))

save and rescue

The words “save” and “rescue” mean the same thing and emphasize the safety that God promises. (See: [Doublet](#))

ULT

²⁰ I will make you like an impenetrable bronze wall to this people, and they will wage war against you. But they will not defeat you, for I am with you to save and rescue you—this is Yahweh’s declaration—

Jeremiah 15:21

rescue you from ... and redeem you from

These phrases have similar meanings and are used together to emphasize the safety that God provides. (See: [Parallelism](#))

the hand of the wicked ... the hand of the tyrant

Here the word “hand” represents control. Alternate translation: “the control of the wicked ... the control of the tyrant” (See: [Metonymy](#))

the wicked

This refers to wicked people. Alternate translation: “wicked people” or “those who are wicked” (See: [Nominal Adjectives](#))

tyrant

a ruler who demands absolute obedience and is not friendly for the people under his rule

ULT

21 for I will rescue you from the hand of the wicked and redeem you from the hand of the tyrant.”

Jeremiah 16

Jeremiah 16 General Notes

Structure and formatting

Some translations set each line of poetry farther to the right than the rest of the text to make it easier to read. The ULT does this with the poetry in 16:19-21. This poem also continues in chapter 17, and these should be seen as one section.

Special concepts in this chapter

Coming punishment

The punishment that is prophesied in this chapter will happen quickly. The author gives many illustrations which describe how quickly this punishment will come. (See: [prophet](#), [prophecy](#), [prophesy](#), [seer](#), [prophetess](#))

Israel restored

God will bring his people back from captivity. Even though the punishment of Judah will be great, Yahweh promised a future restoration. (See: [promise](#), [promised](#) and [restore](#), [restoration](#))

Jeremiah 16:1

the word of Yahweh came to me, saying,

This idiom is used to introduce a special message from God. See how you translated it in [Jeremiah 1:4](#). Alternate translation: “Yahweh gave me a message. He said,” or “Yahweh spoke this message to me:” (See: [Idiom](#))

ULT

¹ Then the word of Yahweh came to me, saying,

Jeremiah 16:2

(There are no notes for this verse.)

ULT

² “Do not take a wife for yourself, and do not have sons or daughters for yourself in this place.

Jeremiah 16:3

(There are no notes for this verse.)

ULT

³ For Yahweh says this to the sons and daughters who are born in this place, to the mothers who bear them, and to the fathers who caused them to be born in this land,

Jeremiah 16:4

They will die diseased deaths

“They will die from deadly diseases”

They will not be mourned or buried

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: “No one will mourn for them or bury them” (See: [Active or Passive](#))

They will be like dung on the ground

The sons and daughters born in the land are compared to dung on the ground to emphasize that they will be disgusting and that no one will bury them. See how you translated a similar phrase in [Jeremiah 8:2](#). (See: [Simile](#))

they will come to an end by sword and famine

The phrase “come to an end” is a mild way to say that they will die. The word “sword” represents an army whose soldiers fight with swords. The phrase represents dying in battle. Alternate translation: “they will die in battle or from famine” (See: [Euphemism](#) and [Metonymy](#))

ULT

⁴ ‘They will die diseased deaths. They will not be mourned or buried. They will be like dung on the ground. For they will come to an end by sword and famine, and their corpses will be food for the birds of the skies and the beasts of the earth.’

Jeremiah 16:5

the word of Yahweh came to me, saying, 'Do

This idiom is used to introduce a special message from God. See how you translated it in [Jeremiah 1:4](#). Alternate translation: "Yahweh gave me a message. He said, 'Do' or "Yahweh spoke this message to me: 'Do" (See: [Idiom](#))

where there is mourning

The word "mourning" can be translated with a verbal phrase.
Alternate translation: "where people are mourning" (See: [Abstract Nouns](#))

I have taken away my peace from this people ... and my steadfast love and mercy

Yahweh speaks of no longer acting towards the people with peace, steadfast love, and mercy as if these were items that he has taken away from them. Alternate translation: "I will no longer act towards them with peace ... or with steadfast love and mercy" (See: [Metaphor](#))

this is Yahweh's declaration

Yahweh speaks of himself by name to express the certainty of what he is declaring. See how you translated this in [Jeremiah 1:8](#). Alternate translation: "this is what Yahweh has declared" or "this is what I, Yahweh, have declared" (See: [First, Second or Third Person](#))

ULT

⁵ For this says Yahweh, 'Do not enter a house where there is mourning. Do not go to mourn or to show sympathy for them, for I have taken away my peace from this people—this is Yahweh's declaration—and my covenant faithfulness and mercy.

Jeremiah 16:6

Both the great and the small will

This refers to all kinds of people and uses size to refer to how important they are. Alternate translation: “Both the important and the unimportant” or “Many people, regardless of how important they are, will” (See: [Merism](#))

They will not be buried

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: “No one will bury them” (See: [Active or Passive](#))

no one will ... cut themselves or shave their heads for them

Cutting oneself and shaving one’s head were symbolic actions that expressed strong grief, especially when a loved one died. (See: [Symbolic Action](#))

ULT

⁶ Both the great and the small will die in this land. They will not be buried, and no one will mourn for them or cut themselves or shave their heads for them.

Jeremiah 16:7

No one must share any food in mourning to comfort them because of the deaths ... none must give a comforting cup to his father or his mother

These two clauses have a similar meaning. God said basically the same thing twice for emphasis. It was customary to take food or wine to people whose relative had died. Yahweh has removed all comfort from the people because of their sin. (See: [Parallelism](#))

ULT

⁷ No one must share any food in mourning to comfort them because of the deaths, and none must give a comforting cup to his father or his mother.

none must give a comforting cup

Here the word “cup” represents the drink that the cup holds. Alternate translation: “none must give a comforting drink” (See: [Metonymy](#))

Jeremiah 16:8

a banquet house

“a house where people are feasting”

ULT

⁸ You must not go to a banquet house
to sit with them in order to eat or drink.'

Jeremiah 16:9

Yahweh of hosts ... says this

Jeremiah often uses these words to introduce an important message from Yahweh. See how you translated this in [Jeremiah 6:6](#).

See

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

before your eyes

Here the word “your” is plural and refers to the people of Israel. The idiom means that Yahweh will do this where they can see. Alternate translation: “in front of you” or “where you can see” (See: [Forms of You](#) and [Idiom](#))

in your days

This idiom means during their lifetime. Alternate translation: “during your lifetime” (See: [Idiom](#))

the sound of joy and the sound of gladness, the sound of the groom and the sound of the bride

See how you translated this in [Jeremiah 7:34](#).

ULT

⁹ For Yahweh of hosts, God of Israel, says this, ‘See, before your eyes, in your days and in this place, I am about to put an end to the sound of joy and the sound of gladness, the sound of the groom and the sound of the bride.’

Jeremiah 16:10

(There are no notes for this verse.)

ULT

10 Then it will happen that you will report all these words to this people, and they will say to you, 'Why has Yahweh decreed all this great disaster against us? What is our iniquity and sin that we sinned against Yahweh our God?'

Jeremiah 16:11

worshiped and bowed down to them

The words “bowed down to” mean basically the same thing as “worshiped” and describe the posture that people used in worship. God said essentially the same thing twice for emphasis. (See: [Parallelism](#))

ULT

11 So say to them, ‘Because your ancestors abandoned me—this is Yahweh’s declaration—and they went after other gods and worshiped and bowed down to them. They abandoned me and have not kept my law.

Jeremiah 16:12

ancestors, for see, each person

“ancestors. Look at these people and you will see that each person”

walking by the stubbornness of his wicked heart

Yahweh speaks of a person’s actions as if the person were walking along a path. Here the word “heart” represents the mind or will. See how you translated a similar phrase in [Jeremiah 11:8](#). Alternate translation: “stubbornly doing the wicked things that he wants to do” (See: [Metaphor](#) and [Metonymy](#))

who listens to me

“who does what I tell him to do”

ULT

12 But you yourselves have brought about more wickedness than your ancestors, for see, each person is walking by the stubbornness of his wicked heart; there is no one who listens to me.

Jeremiah 16:13

throw you from this land

Yahweh speaks of forcefully removing the people from the land as if he were throwing them from the land. Alternate translation: “force you to leave this land and go” (See: [Metaphor](#))

by day and night

The mention of both “day” and “night” means all the time. Alternate translation: “all the time” or “continually” (See: [Merism](#))

ULT

13 So I will throw you from this land to a land that you have not known, neither you nor your ancestors, and you will worship other gods there by day and night, for I will not give any favor to you.’

Jeremiah 16:14

behold

The word “behold” here alerts us to pay attention to the surprising information that follows.

when it will no longer be said

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: “when people will no longer say” (See: [Active or Passive](#))

As Yahweh lives

“As surely as Yahweh is alive.” The people use this expression to show that what they say next is certainly true. This is a way of making a solemn promise. See how you translated this in [Jeremiah 4:2](#). Alternate translation: “I solemnly swear” (See: [Idiom](#))

ULT

14 Therefore, behold, the days are coming—this is Yahweh’s declaration—when it will no longer be said, ‘As Yahweh lives, the one who brought up the people of Israel from the land of Egypt.’

Jeremiah 16:15

(There are no notes for this verse.)

ULT

¹⁵ but, 'As Yahweh lives, the one who brought up the people of Israel from the land of the north and from the lands where he had scattered them.' For I will bring them back to the land that I gave to their ancestors.

Jeremiah 16:16

I will send for many fishermen ... so they will fish the people out

Yahweh speaks of enemy armies who will attack and kill the people as if they were fishermen who are catching fish. (See: [Metaphor](#))

this is Yahweh's declaration

Yahweh speaks of himself by name to express the certainty of what he is declaring. See how you translated this in [Jeremiah 1:8](#). Alternate translation: "this is what Yahweh has declared" or "this is what I, Yahweh, have declared" (See: [First](#), [Second](#) or [Third Person](#))

I will send for many hunters so they will hunt for them among

Yahweh speaks of enemy armies who will attack and kill the people as if they were hunters who are hunting animals. (See: [Metaphor](#))

ULT

16 Behold! I will send for many fishermen—this is Yahweh's declaration—so they will fish the people out. After this I will send for many hunters so they will hunt for them among all the mountains and hills, and in rock crevices.

Jeremiah 16:17

my eye is on all their ways

Here the word “eye” represents Yahweh who sees all that they do. Alternate translation: “I am watching everything they do” (See: [Synecdoche](#))

they cannot be hidden from before me

Here the word “they” may refer either to the people or to their actions. This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: “they cannot hide from me” or “they cannot hide their ways from me” (See: [Active or Passive](#))

Their iniquity cannot be concealed from before my eyes

Here the word “eyes” represents Yahweh who sees. This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: “They cannot conceal their iniquity from me” (See: [Synecdoche](#) and [Active or Passive](#))

ULT

17 For my eye is on all their ways; they cannot be hidden from before me. Their iniquity cannot be concealed from before my eyes.

Jeremiah 16:18

for their polluting of my land

Yahweh speaks of causing the land to be unacceptable to him as if the people had polluted the land. The words “their polluting” can be translated with a verbal phrase. Alternate translation: “because they have polluted my land” (See: [Metaphor](#) and [Abstract Nouns](#))

for their filling my inheritance with their disgusting idols

The idiom “to fill” means that they have placed many idols in the land. The words “their filling” can be translated with a verbal phrase. Alternate translation: “because they have filled my inheritance with their disgusting idols” or “because their disgusting idols are everywhere in my inheritance” (See: [Idiom](#) and [Abstract Nouns](#))

my inheritance

Yahweh speaks of the land as if it were his inheritance that he has claimed as a permanent possession. Alternate translation: “the land that is my inheritance” (See: [Metaphor](#))

ULT

18 I will first pay back double for their iniquity and sin for their polluting of my land with their disgusting idol figures, and for their filling my inheritance with their disgusting idols.”

Jeremiah 16:19

Yahweh, you are my stronghold

Here Jeremiah begins speaking to Yahweh.

my stronghold and my refuge, my place of safety

Jeremiah speaks of Yahweh as a place where enemies cannot attack him. He repeats the same idea three times. (See: [Metaphor](#) and [Doublet](#))

ULT

¹⁹ Yahweh, you are my stronghold and my refuge, my place of safety in the day of distress. The nations will go to you from the ends of the earth and say, "Surely our ancestors inherited deceit. They are empty; there is no profit in them."

The nations will go to you

Here the word "nations" represents the people from the nations. Alternate translation: "The people from the nations will go to you" or "The people of the nations will come to you" (See: [Metonymy](#) and [Go and Come](#))

the ends of the earth

This is an idiom that means the farthest places on the earth. By referencing both ends, it refers to everywhere in between. Alternate translation: "the farthest places on the earth" or "everywhere on earth" (See: [Idiom](#) and [Merism](#))

our ancestors inherited deceit

Here the word "deceit" refers to false gods. Alternate translation: "our ancestors inherited nothing but false gods" (See: [Metonymy](#))

They are empty; there is no profit in them

Here the words "They" and "them" refer to the false gods that the ancestors taught them to believe in. The two phrases mean basically the same thing, with the second explaining how they "are empty." (See: [Parallelism](#))

Jeremiah 16:20

Do people make gods for themselves? But they are not gods

The people ask this rhetorical question to emphasize that people cannot make gods for themselves. It can be translated as a statement. Alternate translation: "People cannot make gods for themselves. The things that they make are not gods" (See: [Rhetorical Question](#))

ULT

²⁰ Do people make gods for themselves? But they are not gods."

Jeremiah 16:21

Therefore see

“Therefore, indeed.” Here Yahweh begins speaking. The word “see” adds emphasis to what follows.

I will cause them to know

Here the word “them” refers to the people from the nations. Yahweh repeats this phrase for emphasis.

my hand and my power

Here the word “hand” refers to power and authority. The two phrases mean basically the same thing and emphasize Yahweh’s great power. Alternate translation: “my great power” (See: [Metonymy](#) and [Doublet](#))

they will know that Yahweh is my name

Here the word “name” refers to Yahweh’s entire person. Alternate translation: “they will know that I am Yahweh, the true God” (See: [Metonymy](#))

ULT

21 Therefore see! I will cause them to know in this time, I will cause them to know my hand and my power, so they will know that Yahweh is my name.

Jeremiah 17

Jeremiah 17 General Notes

Structure and formatting

Some translations set each line of poetry farther to the right than the rest of the text to make it easier to read. The ULT does this with the poetry in 17:1-18. This poem is a continuation of 16:19-21, and these should be seen as one section.

Special concepts in this chapter

Trusting God or humans

Trust is an important part of this chapter. Those who trust in human wisdom will not prosper. Those who trust in God will have all of their needs met. (See: [trust](#), [trusted](#), [trustworthy](#), [trustworthiness](#) and [wise](#), [wisdom](#))

Important figures of speech in this chapter

Simile

The person who depends on the power of other people is compared to a bush in the desert which always has to struggle for life. But the person who trusts in God is like a tree growing by a stream and has all his needs supplied. (See: [Simile](#))

Jeremiah 17:1

General Information:

Jeremiah often wrote prophecy in the form of poetry. Hebrew poetry uses different kinds of parallelism. (See: [Poetry](#) and [Parallelism](#))

The sin of Judah is written ... on the horns of your altars

Yahweh speaks of Judah's sins being so great that they cannot stop committing them as if someone had engraved their sin permanently. (See: [Metaphor](#))

The sin of Judah is written

Here the word "Judah" represents the people of Judah. This may be expressed in active form. Alternate translation: "Someone has written the sin of Judah" (See: [Active or Passive](#))

It is engraved

This may be expressed in active form. Alternate translation: "Someone has engraved it" (See: [Active or Passive](#))

engraved on the tablet of their hearts

The sinful habits of the people are spoken of as if their sins had been engraved on their own hearts. The word "hearts" refers to the whole person: their thoughts, emotions, and actions. Alternate translation: "engraved in their very beings" (See: [Synecdoche](#))

on the horns of your altars

The word "horns" refers to the projections on the corners of the altars.

ULT

¹ "The sin of Judah is written with an iron stylus having a diamond point. It is engraved on the tablet of their hearts and on the horns of your altars."

Jeremiah 17:2

(There are no notes for this verse.)

ULT

² Even their children remember their altars and their Asherah poles that were beside the spreading trees and on the high hills.

Jeremiah 17:3

your wealth and all your treasures

The words “wealth” and “treasures” mean the same thing and refer to anything that they consider valuable. (See: [Doublet](#))

plunder

This refers to things that people steal or take by force.

ULT

³ My mountain in the open country, and your wealth and all your treasures I will give away as plunder, together with your high places, because of the sin you committed in all your territories.

Jeremiah 17:4

You will lose the inheritance that I gave to you

Yahweh speaks of the land as if it were an inheritance that he had given to the people of Judah as a permanent possession. Alternate translation: "You will lose the land that I have given to you as an inheritance" (See: [Metaphor](#))

ULT

⁴ You will lose the inheritance that I gave to you. I will enslave you to your enemies in a land that you do not know, for you have ignited a fire in my wrath, which will burn forever."

you have ignited a fire in my wrath, which will burn forever

Yahweh speaks of the fierceness of his anger as if his anger were a fire that burns those with whom he is angry. Alternate translation: "you have made me so angry that my anger will be like a fire that will burn forever" (See: [Metaphor](#))

Jeremiah 17:5

The person who trusts in mankind is accursed

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "I will curse any person who trusts in mankind" (See: [Active or Passive](#))

he makes flesh his strength

Here the word "flesh" represents humans. Alternate translation: "he depends on mere humans for strength" (See: [Metonymy](#))

turns his heart away from Yahweh

Here the word "heart" refers to the thoughts and emotions. Alternate translation: "turns his devotion away from Yahweh" (See: [Metonymy](#))

ULT

⁵ Yahweh says, "The person who trusts in mankind is accursed; he makes flesh his strength but turns his heart away from Yahweh."

Jeremiah 17:6

like a small bush

The person who trusts in man instead of Yahweh will be like a plant that struggles to survive in an infertile land. (See: [Simile](#))

the wilderness, barren land without inhabitants

The phrase “barren land without inhabitants” describes and means basically the same thing as “wilderness.” Alternate translation: “the barren wilderness where no person lives” (See: [Doublet](#))

ULT

6 For he will be like a small bush in the Arabah and will not see anything good coming. He will stay in the arid places in the wilderness, barren land without inhabitants.

Jeremiah 17:7

(There are no notes for this verse.)

ULT

⁷ But the person who trusts in Yahweh is blessed, for Yahweh is his reason for confidence.

Jeremiah 17:8

he will be like a tree planted by water

The person who trusts in Yahweh will always prosper, just like a tree does when it is planted by a river. It is not affected when there is no rain. This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: “he will be like a tree that someone has planted by water” (See: [Simile](#) and [Active or Passive](#))

It will not fear the heat when it comes ... It is not anxious in a year of drought

Yahweh speaks of a tree that draws its water from a stream being unaffected by heat and drought as if the tree were unafraid of these things. Alternate translation: “The heat will not affect it when it comes ... No harm is caused to it in a year of drought” (See: [Personification](#))

ULT

⁸ For he will be like a tree planted by water, its roots will spread out by the stream. It will not fear the heat when it comes, for its leaves are always green. It is not anxious in a year of drought, and it will not stop producing fruit.

Jeremiah 17:9

The heart is more deceitful

Here the word “heart” refers to the minds and thoughts of people. Alternate translation: “The human mind is more deceitful” (See: [Metonymy](#))

who can understand it?

The speaker uses this rhetorical question to emphasize that no one can understand the human heart. It can be translated as a statement. Alternate translation: “no one can understand it.” (See: [Rhetorical Question](#))

ULT

⁹ The heart is more deceitful than anything else. It is sick; who can understand it?

Jeremiah 17:10

who tests the hearts

Here the word “hearts” represents the emotions. Alternate translation: “who tests the emotions” (See: [Metonymy](#))

according to his ways

Here a person’s behavior is spoken of as if it were the paths along which he walks. Alternate translation: “according to how he lives” (See: [Metaphor](#))

the fruit of his deeds

Here the results of a person’s actions are spoken of as if they were fruit. Alternate translation: “what he has done” (See: [Metaphor](#))

ULT

10 I am Yahweh, the one who searches through the mind, who tests the hearts. I give to each person according to his ways, according to the fruit of his deeds.

Jeremiah 17:11

A partridge hatches an egg ... become rich unjustly

This analogy of a bird that hatches another bird's eggs is meant to illustrate a rich man who makes his money by robbing others.

when half his days are over

Here the word "days" stands for someone's entire life. Alternate translation: "when he has lived only half of his life" (See: [Idiom](#))

those riches will abandon him

The riches are spoken of as if they were servants who would abandon their owner. Alternate translation: "he will lose his wealth" (See: [Personification](#))

in the end

"at the end of his life"

ULT

11 A partridge hatches an egg that she did not lay. Someone may become rich unjustly, but when half his days are over, those riches will abandon him, and in the end he will be a fool."

Jeremiah 17:12

The place of our temple is a glorious throne

Jeremiah speaks of the temple being a “glorious throne” because it is there that Yahweh dwells and rules. (See: [Metaphor](#))

The place of our temple

This refers to Mount Zion in Jerusalem.

ULT

12 “The place of our temple is a glorious throne, elevated from the beginning.

Jeremiah 17:13

All who abandon you

Here the word “you” refers to Yahweh.

those in the land who turn away from you will be written in the earth

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: “you will write in the dust those in the land who turn away from you” (See: [Active or Passive](#))

will be written in the earth

This could mean: (1) this is a metaphor in which Yahweh speaks of people dying and being forgotten as if someone writes their names in the dust, and those names quickly disappear. Alternate translation: “will disappear like names that someone writes in the dust” or (2) the word “earth” is a metonym for the place of the dead. The phrase is a metaphor in which Yahweh speaks of people going to the place of the dead as if someone enrolled their names in the records of those who have died. Alternate translation: “will join those in the place of the dead” (See: [Metaphor](#) and [Metonymy](#))

Yahweh, the fountain of living waters

Jeremiah speaks of Yahweh being the source of life as if he were a fountain of living waters. Alternate translation: “Yahweh, who is like a fountain of living waters” (See: [Metaphor](#))

the fountain of living waters

Jeremiah speaks of fresh, running water as if it were living water. Alternate translation: “the fountain of fresh, running water” (See: [Metaphor](#))

ULT

13 Yahweh is the hope of Israel. All who abandon you will be put to shame; those who turn away from you will be written in the earth, for they have forsaken Yahweh, the fountain of living waters.

Jeremiah 17:14

I will be healed ... I will be rescued

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: “you really will have healed me ... you really will have rescued me” (See: [Active or Passive](#))

For you are my song of praise

This could mean: (1) “For you are the one whom I praise” or (2) “For you are the reason I sing praise.”

ULT

14 Heal me, Yahweh, and I will be healed! Rescue me, and I will be rescued. For you are my song of praise.

Jeremiah 17:15

See

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

they are saying to me

Here the word “me” refers to Jeremiah and the word “they” to his enemies.

ULT

¹⁵ See, they are saying to me, ‘Where is the word of Yahweh? Let it come!’

Where is the word of Yahweh?

The people use this question to ridicule Jeremiah because the things that he said had not yet happened. It can also be translated as a statement. Alternate translation: “Where are the things that Yahweh told you would happen?” or “The things that Yahweh told you would happen have not happened.” (See: [Rhetorical Question](#) and [Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information](#))

Let it come

“Let what Yahweh has said happen”

Jeremiah 17:16

I did not run from being a shepherd following you

Jeremiah speaks of leading and caring for the people as if he were a shepherd caring for sheep. He speaks of his abandoning that work as if he were running away from it. (See: [Metaphor](#))

I did not long for

"I did not desire"

the proclamations that came from my lips

Here the word "lips" represents Jeremiah who spoke. The word "proclamations" can be translated with a verbal phrase. Alternate translation: "the proclamations that I spoke" or "the things that I proclaimed" (See: [Synecdoche](#) and [Abstract Nouns](#))

They were made

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

ULT

¹⁶ As for me, I did not run from being a shepherd following you. I did not long for the day of disaster. You know the proclamations that came from my lips. They were made in your presence.

Jeremiah 17:17

You are my refuge

Jeremiah speaks of Yahweh as a place where enemies cannot attack him. (See: [Metaphor](#))

on the day of calamity

“in times of calamity”

ULT

17 Do not be a terror to me. You are my refuge on the day of disaster.

Jeremiah 17:18

May my pursuers be ashamed, but do not let me be ashamed

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: “Bring shame on my pursuers, but do not bring shame on me” (See: [Active or Passive](#))

May they be dismayed, but do not let me be dismayed

This phrase means basically the same thing as the previous one and adds emphasis to Jeremiah’s prayer. This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: “Make them very afraid, but do not make me afraid” (See: [Parallelism](#) and [Active or Passive](#))

shatter them with a double share of destruction

Jeremiah speaks of Yahweh destroying his enemies as if they were objects that Yahweh would shatter. The idiom “a double share” means to give twice as much. Alternate translation: “shatter them with complete destruction” or “destroy them twice as much” (See: [Metaphor](#) and [Idiom](#))

ULT

18 May my pursuers be ashamed, but do not let me be ashamed. May they be dismayed, but do not let me be dismayed. Send the day of disaster against them and shatter them with a double share of destruction.”

Jeremiah 17:19

then in all the other gates of Jerusalem

The verb may be supplied from the previous phrase. Alternate translation: "then go and stand in all the other gates of Jerusalem" (See: [Ellipsis](#))

ULT

19 Yahweh said this to me: "Go and stand in the gate of the people where the kings of Judah enter and where they exit, then in all the other gates of Jerusalem."

Jeremiah 17:20

(There are no notes for this verse.)

ULT

²⁰ Say to them, 'Hear the word of Yahweh, kings of Judah and all you people of Judah, and every resident of Jerusalem who comes in through these gates.

Jeremiah 17:21

for the sake of your lives

“to protect your lives”

ULT

²¹ Yahweh says this: “Be careful for the sake of your lives and do not carry a burden on the Sabbath day to bring it to the gates of Jerusalem.”

Jeremiah 17:22

(There are no notes for this verse.)

ULT

²² Do not bring a load out from your house on the Sabbath day. Do not do any work, but set apart the Sabbath day, just as I commanded your ancestors to do.”

Jeremiah 17:23

They did not listen or pay attention

These two phrases mean basically the same thing and emphasize that the people refused to listen. Alternate translation: "They refused to listen" or "They refused to obey" (See: [Doublet](#))

ULT

²³ They did not listen or pay attention, but stiffened their neck so they would not hear me nor accept discipline.

stiffened their neck

Jeremiah speaks of the people being stubborn as if they had made their necks stiff and unmovable. Alternate translation: "became stubborn" (See: [Metaphor](#))

Jeremiah 17:24

(There are no notes for this verse.)

ULT

²⁴ It will happen that if you truly listen to me—this is Yahweh’s declaration—and do not bring a load to the gates of this city on the Sabbath day but instead set apart the Sabbath day to Yahweh and not do any work on it,

Jeremiah 17:25

those who sit on David's throne

Here the throne that the king of Judah sits on is represented as "David's throne." See how you translated this in [Jeremiah 13:13](#). Alternate translation: "those who sit on Judah's throne" or "the kings of the nation of Judah" (See: [Metonymy](#))

this city will be inhabited forever

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "people will inhabit this city forever" (See: [Active or Passive](#))

ULT

²⁵ then kings, princes, and those who sit on David's throne will come to the gates of this city in chariots and with horses, they and their leaders, men of Judah and inhabitants of Jerusalem, and this city will be inhabited forever.

Jeremiah 17:26

(There are no notes for this verse.)

ULT

²⁶ They will come from the cities of Judah and from all around Jerusalem, from the land of Benjamin and the lowlands, from the mountains, and from the Negev, bringing burnt offerings and sacrifices, grain offerings and frankincense, thank offerings to the house of Yahweh.

Jeremiah 17:27

I will light a fire in its gates

“I will set the gates of Jerusalem on fire”

it cannot be put out

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: “people cannot put it out” (See: [Active or Passive](#))

ULT

27 But if you do not listen to me—to set apart the Sabbath day and to not carry heavy loads and to not enter the gates of Jerusalem on the Sabbath day—then I will light a fire in its gates, and it will consume the fortresses of Jerusalem, and it cannot be put out.”

Jeremiah 18

Jeremiah 18 General Notes

Structure and formatting

Some translations set each line of poetry farther to the right than the rest of the text to make it easier to read. The ULT does this with the poetry in 18:13-17, 19-23.

Special concepts in this chapter

Attacking Jeremiah

Things were so bad in Judah, they even attacked Jeremiah. To attack Yahweh's prophet was to attack Yahweh himself. (See: [prophet](#), [prophecy](#), [prophesy](#), [seer](#), [prophetess](#))

Important figures of speech in this chapter

Simile

Like a potter can change what he is making from one type of pot to another, God can change his plans and not punish people if they repent. The image of God as a potter and mankind as clay is an important one in Scripture. (See: [repent](#), [repentance](#) and [Simile](#))

Jeremiah 18:1

The word that came to Jeremiah from Yahweh, saying,

This idiom is used to introduce a special message from God. See how you translated a similar phrase in [Jeremiah 7:1](#). Alternate translation:

“This is the message that Yahweh gave to Jeremiah. He said, ‘Arise” or “This is the message that Yahweh spoke to Jeremiah: ‘Arise” (See: [Idiom](#))

ULT

¹ The word that came to Jeremiah from Yahweh, saying,

Jeremiah 18:2

the potter's house

“the workshop of the potter.” A potter is someone who makes pots from clay.

ULT

² “Arise and go out to the potter's house, for I will have you hear my word there.”

Jeremiah 18:3

behold!

The word “behold” alerts us to a new person in the story. Your language may have a way of doing this.

on the potter’s wheel

The potter’s wheel is a small table that spins. A potter uses it to make pots.

ULT

³ So I went out to the potter’s house,
and behold! The potter was working on
the potter’s wheel.

Jeremiah 18:4

the pot he was making from the clay was spoiled in the potter's hand

The word "spoiled" means that something about the pot made the potter unhappy. This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "the pot that the potter was making with his hands was not good" (See: [Active or Passive](#))

ULT

⁴ But the pot he was making from the clay was spoiled in the potter's hand, so he returned the clay and formed it into another pot, and he made it into an object that was pleasing in his eyes.

was making

"was forming" or "was shaping"

he returned the clay and formed it into another pot

He stopped making the pot, crushed the clay back into a lump, and then used that lump of clay to make another pot.

that was pleasing in his eyes

Here the word "eyes" represents sight and sight represents one's opinion. Alternate translation: "that he thought was good" (See: [Metonymy](#))

Jeremiah 18:5

the word of Yahweh came to me, saying,

This idiom is used to introduce a special message from God. See how you translated it in [Jeremiah 1:4](#). Alternate translation: “Yahweh gave me a message. He said,” or “Yahweh spoke this message to me:” (See: [Idiom](#))

ULT

⁵ Then the word of Yahweh came to me, saying,

Jeremiah 18:6

Should I not be able to act like this potter with you, house of Israel?

With this question, Yahweh emphasizes his authority to do as he pleases with Israel. Alternate translation: “I am allowed to act toward you, house of Israel, like the potter acts toward the clay.” (See: [Rhetorical Question](#))

ULT

⁶ “Should I not be able to act like this potter with you, house of Israel?—this is Yahweh’s declaration. Behold! Like clay in a potter’s hand—that is how you are in my hand, house of Israel.

house of Israel

The word “house” is a metonym for the family that lives in the house. In this case it refers to the kingdom of Israel. See how you translated this in [Jeremiah 3:18](#). Alternate translation: “Israel” or “kingdom of Israel” or “people of Israel” (See: [Metonymy](#))

this is Yahweh’s declaration

Yahweh speaks of himself by name to express the certainty of what he is declaring. See how you translated this in [Jeremiah 1:8](#). Alternate translation: “this is what Yahweh has declared” or “this is what I, Yahweh, have declared” (See: [First, Second or Third Person](#))

Behold

“Pay attention, because what I am about to say is both true and important”

Like clay in a potter’s hand—that is how you are in my hand

Yahweh compares his being able to remake Israel as he see fit to the way that the potter is able to remake a lump of clay as he sees fit. (See: [Simile](#))

Jeremiah 18:7

tear it down, or destroy it

These two expressions basically mean the same thing. In the first expression, Yahweh speaks of destroying a kingdom as if the kingdom were a plant or a building that he tears down. (See: [Doublet](#) and [Metaphor](#))

ULT

⁷ At one moment, I may proclaim something about a nation or a kingdom, that I will drive it out, tear it down, or destroy it.

Jeremiah 18:8

relent from

“withhold” or “not bring”

ULT

⁸ But if the nation about which I have made that proclamation turns from its evil, then I will relent from the disaster that I was planning to bring upon it.

Jeremiah 18:9

build it up or plant it

These two phrases mean basically the same thing. Yahweh speaks of strengthening kingdoms as if they were buildings that he would build, and as if they were plants that he would plant. (See: [Doublet](#) and [Metaphor](#))

ULT

⁹ At another moment, I may proclaim something about a nation or a kingdom, that I will build it up or plant it.

Jeremiah 18:10

if it does evil in my eyes

Here the word “it” refers to a nation or kingdom, which is a metonym for the people in that nation or kingdom. The word “eyes” represents seeing, and seeing represents thoughts or judgment. Alternate translation: “if the people of that nation do things that I consider to be evil” (See: [Metonymy](#) and [Metaphor](#))

ULT

10 But if it does evil in my eyes by not listening to my voice, then I will stop the good that I had said I would do for them.

not listening to my voice

Here the word “voice” represents the words that Yahweh speaks. Here, “not listening” is an idiom that means that they do not obey. Alternate translation: “not obeying what I say” (See: [Metonymy](#) and [Idiom](#))

Jeremiah 18:11

See

This tells the reader to pay special attention to what follows.
Alternate translation: "Look" or "Listen" or "Pay attention to what I am about to tell you"

I am about to form disaster against you. I am about to devise a plan against you

Yahweh speaks of planning disaster as if disaster were an object that he forms, like the potter would form clay. The second sentence repeats the same idea as the first using different words. Alternate translation: "I am about to devise a plan to bring disaster against you" (See: [Metaphor](#) and [Parallelism](#))

devise a plan

"make a plan"

his wicked way

Yahweh speaks of a person's lifestyle as if it were a "way" or path along which the person walks. Alternate translation: "his wicked way of living" (See: [Metaphor](#))

so your ways and your practices will bring good to you

The words "ways" and "practices" both refer to a person's actions and general lifestyle. Alternate translation: "so your actions will result in good happening to you" (See: [Doublet](#))

ULT

11 So now, speak to the men of Judah and the inhabitants of Jerusalem and say, 'Yahweh says this: See, I am about to form disaster against you. I am about to devise a plan against you. Repent, each person from his wicked way, so your ways and your practices will bring good to you.'

Jeremiah 18:12

But they will say

The word “they” refers to the inhabitants of Judah and Jerusalem.

This is no use

Here, this idiom could mean: (1) the people do not care about what Jeremiah will say to them. Alternate translation: “We do not care what you say” or (2) The people do not think that anything good will come of what Jeremiah tells them to do. Alternate translation: “What you are saying will not work” (See: [Idiom](#))

ULT

12 But they will say, ‘This is no use. We will act according to our own plans. Each one of us will do what his evil, stubborn heart desires.’

what his evil, stubborn heart desires

Here the word “heart” represents the person’s mind or will. Alternate translation: “what his evil, stubborn mind desires” or “whatever evil things that we stubbornly want to do” (See: [Metonymy](#))

Jeremiah 18:13

Ask the nations, who has ever heard of such a thing as this?

Here the word “nations” represents the people in the nations. Yahweh asks this question to scold the people of Judah. Alternate translation: “Ask the nations if any of them have ever heard of such a thing as this.” or “Nowhere on earth has anyone ever heard of such a thing like this.” (See: [Rhetorical Question](#))

ULT

¹³ Therefore Yahweh says this, ‘Ask the nations, who has ever heard of such a thing as this? The virgin Israel has committed a horrible act.’

The virgin Israel has committed a horrible act

It was common to refer to nations as if they were women. Yahweh speaks of Israel being pure and faithful towards him as if she were a virgin and of Israel being unfaithful to him as if she had “committed a horrible act.” Alternate translation: “Israel, who is like a virgin, has done something horrible” (See: [Personification](#) and [Metaphor](#))

Jeremiah 18:14

Does the snow in Lebanon ever leave the rocky hills on its sides?

Yahweh asks this rhetorical question to emphasize that the snow on the mountains never melts. Alternate translation: "The snow in Lebanon never leaves the rocky hills on its sides." (See: [Rhetorical Question](#))

ULT

¹⁴ Does the snow in Lebanon ever leave the rocky hills on its sides? Are the mountain streams coming from far away ever destroyed, those cold streams?

the rocky hills on its sides

"the sides of the rocky hills"

Are the mountain streams coming from far away ever destroyed, those cold streams?

Yahweh asks this rhetorical question to emphasize that the mountain streams never cease to flow. He speaks of the streams drying up as if they were destroyed. Alternate translation: "Those cold mountain streams that come from far away never cease to flow." (See: [Rhetorical Question](#) and [Metaphor](#))

Jeremiah 18:15

been made to stumble in their paths

Yahweh speaks of a person's lifestyle as if it were a path along which he walks, and of living unfaithfully to him as if the person stumbled along the path. This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "this caused them to stumble in their paths" or "it is like they stumbled while walking on a path" (See: [Metaphor](#) and [Active or Passive](#))

ULT

15 Yet my people have forgotten me. They have made offerings to useless idols and been made to stumble in their paths; they have left the ancient paths to walk lesser paths.

they have left the ancient paths to walk lesser paths

Yahweh speaks of a person's lifestyle as if it were a path along which he walks. Here, "the ancient paths" represents the way that Yahweh had told their ancestors to live and "lesser paths" represents living unfaithfully to Yahweh. (See: [Metaphor](#))

Jeremiah 18:16

will become a horror

The word “horror” may be translated with a verbal phrase. Alternate translation: “will become something that horrifies people” (See: [Abstract Nouns](#))

an object of everlasting hissing

The word “hissing” refers to a sound that shows strong disapproval and can be translated with a verbal phrase. Alternate translation: “an object at which people will always hiss”

passes by her

Here the word “her” refers to “Their land.”

ULT

16 Their land will become a horror, an object of everlasting hissing. Everyone who passes by her will shudder and shake his head.

Jeremiah 18:17

I will scatter them before their enemies like an eastern wind

Yahweh speaks of causing the people to flee before their enemies as if he were an eastern wind that scatters dust and debris. Alternate translation: "I will be like an eastern wind and scatter them before their enemies" or "I will scatter them before their enemies like an eastern wind scatters dust and debris" (See: [Metaphor](#))

ULT

¹⁷ I will scatter them before their enemies like an eastern wind. I will show them my back, and not my face, on the day of their disaster."

will scatter them

Here the word "them" refers to "my people."

I will show them my back, and not my face

"I will turn my back toward them, and not my face." Turning one's back towards someone is a symbolic action that represents rejection and turning one's face towards someone is a symbolic action that represents favor. Alternate translation: "I will reject them and not act favorably towards them" (See: [Symbolic Action](#))

Jeremiah 18:18

let us make plots against Jeremiah

“let us make plans to harm Jeremiah”

the law will never perish from the priests, or advice from the wise men, or words from the prophets

The words “will never perish” can be supplied to each of these phrases. This can also be expressed in positive terms. Alternate translation: “the law will never perish from the priests, and advice will never perish from the wise men, and words will never perish from the prophets” or “the priests will always have the law, the wise men will always give advice, and the prophets will always speak” (See: [Ellipsis](#))

words from the prophets

Here “words” represents messages that the prophets speak from Yahweh. Alternate translation: “words of Yahweh from the prophets” (See: [Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information](#))

attack him with our words

The people speak of speaking harmful words against Jeremiah as if their words were weapons with which they attack him. Alternate translation: “say things that will harm him” (See: [Metaphor](#))

ULT

18 So the people said, “Come, let us make plots against Jeremiah, since the law will never perish from the priests, or advice from the wise men, or words from the prophets. Come, let us attack him with our words and no longer pay attention to anything he proclaims.”

Jeremiah 18:19

Pay attention to me

Here Jeremiah begins speaking to Yahweh.

ULT

¹⁹ Pay attention to me, Yahweh, and listen to the voice of my enemies.

Jeremiah 18:20

Will disaster from them really be my reward for being good to them?

Jeremiah asks this question to emphasize that good actions should not be repaid with bad things. Alternate translation: “Disaster from them should not be my reward for being good to them.” (See: [Rhetorical Question](#))

they have dug a pit for me

Jeremiah speaks of his enemies planning to kill him as if they had dug a pit in which to trap him. (See: [Metaphor](#))

to cause your fury to turn away from them

Here the word “fury” represents the punishment that Yahweh intended to inflict upon them. Jeremiah speaks of Yahweh not punishing them as if he were turning his fury away from them. Alternate translation: “so that you would not punish them in your anger” (See: [Metonymy](#) and [Metaphor](#))

ULT

²⁰ Will disaster from them really be my reward for being good to them? For they have dug a pit for me. Remember how I stood before you to speak for their welfare, to cause your fury to turn away from them.

Jeremiah 18:21

give their children over to famine

The idiom “give over” means to place a person in the power of another person. Jeremiah speaks of “famine” as if it were a person who could have power over others. Alternate translation: “cause their children to die from famine” (See: [Idiom](#) and [Personification](#))

give them to the hands of those who use the sword

Here the word “hands” represents power. Alternate translation: “cause those who use the sword to have power over them” or “cause them to die in battle” (See: [Metonymy](#))

let their women become bereaved and widows

“let the children and husbands of their women die.” The word “bereaved” refers to a woman whose children have all died.

their men be killed

The verb may be supplied from the previous phrase. This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: “let people kill their men” (See: [Ellipsis](#) and [Active or Passive](#))

their young men killed by the sword in battle

The verb may be supplied from the previous phrase. This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: “let people kill their young men with swords in battle” (See: [Ellipsis](#) and [Active or Passive](#))

ULT

21 Therefore give their children over to famine, and give them to the hands of those who use the sword. So let their women become bereaved and widows, and their men be killed, and their young men killed by the sword in battle.

Jeremiah 18:22

Let a distressed shout be heard

The phrase “a distressed shout” can be translated with a verbal phrase. This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: “Let people hear a distressed shout” or “Let people hear others shout in distress” (See: [Active or Passive](#))

For they have dug a pit to capture me and have hidden traps for my feet

These two phrases share similar meanings. Jeremiah speaks of his enemies planning to kill him as if they had dug a pit for him to fall into and set traps in which to capture him. (See: [Parallelism](#) and [Metaphor](#))

they have dug a pit

See how you translated this in [Jeremiah 18:20](#).

have hidden traps for my feet

Here the word “feet” represents Jeremiah. Alternate translation: “have hidden traps for me” or “have hidden traps for me to step on” (See: [Synecdoche](#))

ULT

²² Let a distressed shout be heard from their houses, as you suddenly bring raiders against them. For they have dug a pit to capture me and have hidden traps for my feet.

Jeremiah 18:23

Do not wipe their sins away from you

Jeremiah speaks of Yahweh forgiving his enemies' sins as if someone had written their sins down and Yahweh would erase them. This phrase means the same thing as the previous phrase. Alternate translation: "Do not pardon their sins" (See: [Parallelism](#))

let them be overthrown before you

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "let people overthrow them in your presence" (See: [Active or Passive](#))

in the time of your wrath

The word "wrath" can be translated with a verb. Alternate translation: "when you are still angry with them" (See: [Abstract Nouns](#))

ULT

23 But you, Yahweh, you know all of their plans against me to kill me. Do not forgive their iniquities and sins. Do not wipe their sins away from you. Instead, let them be overthrown before you. Act against them in the time of your wrath.

Jeremiah 19

Jeremiah 19 General Notes

Special concepts in this chapter

People horrified

The destruction of Jerusalem will be so complete that it will leave dead bodies everywhere and horrify people who see it.

Jeremiah 19:1

(There are no notes for this verse.)

ULT

¹ Yahweh said this, “Go and purchase a potter’s clay flask while you are with the elders of the people and the priests.

Jeremiah 19:2

Valley of Ben Hinnom

This is the name of a valley south of the city of Jerusalem, where people sacrificed to false gods. See how you translated this in [Jeremiah 7:31](#).

ULT

² Then go out to the Valley of Ben Hinnom at the entry of the Broken Pottery Gate, and there proclaim the words that I will tell you.

Jeremiah 19:3

Yahweh of hosts ... says this

Jeremiah often uses these words to introduce an important message from Yahweh. See how you translated this in [Jeremiah 6:6](#).

See

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

the ears of everyone who hears of it will tingle

Here “ears ... will tingle” is an idiom that means everyone will be shocked by what they hear. Alternate translation: “it will shock everyone who hears of it” (See: [Idiom](#))

will tingle

This could mean: (1) “will ring” or (2) “will quiver.”

ULT

³ Say, ‘Hear the word of Yahweh, kings of Judah and inhabitants of Jerusalem! Yahweh of hosts, God of Israel, says this, “See, I am about to bring disaster on this place, and the ears of everyone who hears of it will tingle.”

Jeremiah 19:4

they have abandoned me

Here the word “they” refers to the people of Judah.

filled this place with innocent blood

Here “innocent blood” represents the murder of innocent people. Yahweh speaks of murdering many people as filling a place with blood. Alternate translation: “murdered many innocent people in this place” (See: [Metonymy](#) and [Metaphor](#))

ULT

⁴ I will do this because they have abandoned me and profaned this place. In this place they offer sacrifices to other gods that they did not know. They, their ancestors, and the kings of Judah have also filled this place with innocent blood.

Jeremiah 19:5

nor did it enter my mind

Here the word “mind” refers to Yahweh’s thoughts. See how you translated this in [Jeremiah 7:31](#). Alternate translation: “nor did I ever think about it” (See: [Metonymy](#))

ULT

⁵ They built the high places of Baal to burn their sons in the fire as burnt offerings to him—something that I did not command or mention, nor did it enter my mind.

Jeremiah 19:6

see

“look” or “listen” or “pay attention to what I am about to tell you”

this place will no longer be called

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: “people will no longer call this place” (See: [Active or Passive](#))

ULT

⁶ Therefore, see, the days are coming—this is Yahweh’s declaration—when this place will no longer be called Topheth, the Valley of Ben Hinnom, for it will be the Valley of Slaughter.

Topheth ... the Valley of Ben Hinnom ... the Valley of Slaughter

See how you translated the names of these places in [Jeremiah 7:31](#).

Jeremiah 19:7

I will make them to fall by the sword before their enemies

The idiom “to fall by the sword” means to die in battle. This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: “I will enable their enemies to kill them with swords” (See: [Idiom](#) and [Active or Passive](#))

I will make them

The word “them” refers to the people of Judah and Jerusalem.

by the hand of the ones seeking their lives

The verb may be supplied from the previous phrase. The idiom “fall ... by the hand of” means to be killed by someone, with the word “hand” representing the whole person. Alternate translation: “I will enable those who want to kill them to kill them” (See: [Ellipsis](#) and [Synecdoche](#) and [Idiom](#))

ULT

⁷ In this place I will make the plans of Judah and Jerusalem useless. I will make them to fall by the sword before their enemies and by the hand of the ones seeking their lives. Then I will give their corpses as food to the birds of the heavens and the beasts of the earth.

Jeremiah 19:8

the object of hissing

The word “hissing” refers to a sound that shows strong disapproval and can be translated with a verbal phrase. Alternate translation: “an object at which people hiss” (See: [Abstract Nouns](#))

ULT

⁸ Then I will make this city a ruin and the object of hissing, for everyone passing by it will shudder and hiss regarding all of its plagues.

Jeremiah 19:9

I will make them eat

"I will make the people who live in Jerusalem eat"

in the siege

"because of the siege"

and in the anguish brought on them by their enemies and the ones seeking their lives

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "because their enemies and those who are seeking their lives have brought anguish upon them" (See: [Active or Passive](#))

ULT

⁹ I will make them eat the flesh of their sons and daughters; each man will consume the flesh of his neighbor in the siege and in the anguish brought on them by their enemies and the ones seeking their lives."

Jeremiah 19:10

in the sight of the men who went with you

The abstract noun “sight” can be expressed with the verb “watching.” Alternate translation: “while the men who went with you are watching” (See: [Abstract Nouns](#))

ULT

10 Then you will break the clay flask in the sight of the men who went with you.

Jeremiah 19:11

Yahweh of hosts says this

Jeremiah often uses these words to introduce an important message from Yahweh. See how you translated this in [Jeremiah 6:6](#).

it could not be repaired again

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

ULT

11 You will say to them, ‘Yahweh of hosts says this: I will do this same thing to this people and this city just as Jeremiah shattered the clay flask so that it could not be repaired again. People will bury the dead in Topheth until there is no place left for any more dead.’

Jeremiah 19:12

(There are no notes for this verse.)

ULT

¹² This is what I will do to this place and its inhabitants when I make this city like Topheth—this is Yahweh's declaration—

Jeremiah 19:13

of the kings of Judah

The words “the houses” may be supplied here. Alternate translation: “the houses of the kings of Judah” (See: [Ellipsis](#))

the unclean people

People who are not acceptable for God’s purposes are spoken of as if they were physically unclean. (See: [Metaphor](#))

ULT

13 so the houses of Jerusalem and of the kings of Judah will become like Topheth —all the houses on whose rooftops the unclean people worship all the stars of the heavens and pour out drink offerings to other gods.”

Jeremiah 19:14

(There are no notes for this verse.)

ULT

14 Then Jeremiah went from Topheth, where Yahweh had sent him to prophesy. He stood in the courtyard of Yahweh's house and he said to all the people,

Jeremiah 19:15

Yahweh of hosts ... says this

Jeremiah often uses these words to introduce an important message from Yahweh. See how you translated this in [Jeremiah 6:6](#).

See

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

stiffened their neck and refused to listen

These two phrases both speak of the people being stubborn. In the first phrase, Yahweh speaks of the people being stubborn as if they had made their necks stiff. Alternate translation: “stubbornly refused to listen” (See: [Parallelism](#))

ULT

15 “Yahweh of hosts, God of Israel, says this, ‘See, I am about to bring to this city and to all of its towns all the disaster that I have proclaimed against it, since they stiffened their neck and refused to listen to my words.’”

Jeremiah 20

Jeremiah 20 General Notes

Structure and formatting

Some translations set each line of poetry farther to the right than the rest of the text to make it easier to read. The ULT does this with the poetry in 20:7-18.

Special concepts in this chapter

Pashhur

This chapter prophesied punishment against a specific leader named Pashhur. He was in charge of protecting the temple and had Jeremiah beaten and arrested. (See: [prophet](#), [prophecy](#), [prophesy](#), [seer](#), [prophetess](#) and [temple](#), [house](#), [house of God](#))

Jeremiah's reaction

Jeremiah's reaction contrasts with the reaction of the Jews in general. Although Jeremiah was not happy with Yahweh's actions, he still trusted in Yahweh. On the other hand, the Jews were not happy with the prophecies Yahweh gave to Jeremiah, so they beat the prophet. (See: [Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information](#) and [trust](#), [trusted](#), [trustworthy](#), [trustworthiness](#))

Jeremiah 20:1

General Information:

Jeremiah often wrote prophecy in the form of poetry. Hebrew poetry uses different kinds of parallelism. (See: [Poetry](#) and [Parallelism](#))

Pashhur ... Immer

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

ULT

¹ Pashhur son of Immer the priest—he was a leading officer—heard Jeremiah prophesying these words before Yahweh’s house.

Jeremiah 20:2

Pashhur beat Jeremiah

This could mean: (1) that Pashhur himself beat Jeremiah or (2) that Pashhur ordered other men to beat Jeremiah. (See: [Metonymy](#))

stocks

Stocks are a wooden frame with holes in it that people use to lock up a prisoner's hands, feet, and head.

Upper Gate of Benjamin

This gate is different from the gate in the city wall that shared the same name.

ULT

² So Pashhur beat Jeremiah the prophet and then placed him in the stocks that were at the Upper Gate of Benjamin in Yahweh's house.

Jeremiah 20:3

It happened

This phrase is used here to mark where the action starts. If your language has a way for doing this, you could consider using it here.

you are Magor Missabib

This name means “terror on every side” or “surrounded by terror.”
(See: [How to Translate Names](#))

ULT

³ It happened on the next day that Pashhur brought Jeremiah out of the stocks. Then Jeremiah said to him, “Yahweh has not called your name Pashhur, but you are Magor Missabib.

Jeremiah 20:4

Look,

This word adds emphasis to what is said next. Alternate translation: "Pay attention to what I am about to tell you."

they will fall by the sword of their enemies

The idiom "fall by the sword" means that they will die in battle. This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "their enemies will kill them with swords" or "their enemies will kill them in battle" (See: [Idiom](#) and [Active or Passive](#))

your eyes will see it

Here the word "eyes" represents Pashhur. Alternate translation: "you will see it" (See: [Synecdoche](#))

I will give all of Judah into the hand of the king of Babylon

Here the word "hand" refers to power. Alternate translation: "I will enable the king of Babylon to conquer all of Judah" (See: [Metonymy](#))

ULT

⁴ For Yahweh says this, 'Look, I will make you an object of horror, you and all of your loved ones, for they will fall by the sword of their enemies and your eyes will see it. I will give all of Judah into the hand of the king of Babylon. He will make them captives in Babylon or attack them with the sword.'

Jeremiah 20:5

I will give him

Here the word “him” refers to the king of Babylon.

all the wealth ... all of its riches, all of its precious items and all the treasures

Yahweh repeats the same basic idea four times for emphasis. Babylon will take away all the wealth of Israel, including the king's possessions. (See: [Parallelism](#))

ULT

⁵ I will give him all the wealth of this city and all of its riches, all of its precious items and all the treasures of the kings of Judah. I will place these things in the hand of your enemies, and they will seize them. They will take them and bring them to Babylon.

I will place these things in the hand of your enemies

Placing things in people's hands represents giving thing to the people or allowing the people to take the things. Alternate translation: “I will give these things to your enemies” or “I will allow your enemies to take possession of these things” (See: [Metonymy](#))

Jeremiah 20:6

You and all of your loved ones to whom you prophesied deceitful things will be buried there

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "There, people will bury you and all of your loved ones to whom you prophesied deceitful things" (See: [Active or Passive](#))

ULT

⁶ But you, Pashhur, and all the inhabitants of your house will go into captivity. You will go to Babylon and die there. You and all of your loved ones to whom you prophesied deceitful things will be buried there."

Jeremiah 20:7

General Information:

Jeremiah speaks to Yahweh.

Yahweh, you deceived me, and I was deceived

Some modern versions interpret these Hebrew expressions as “Yahweh, you persuaded me, and I was indeed persuaded.”

ULT

⁷ “Yahweh, you deceived me, and I was deceived. You are stronger than I, and you overpowered me. I have become a laughingstock all day long; everyone mocks me.

I was deceived

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

I have become a laughingstock all day long; everyone mocks me

These two phrases mean basically the same thing and emphasize the way others mock him. (See: [Parallelism](#))

laughingstock

This is a person whom others laugh at and make fun of.

Jeremiah 20:8

called out and proclaimed

These two phrases mean basically the same thing and emphasize that he proclaimed Yahweh's message boldly. Alternate translation: "openly proclaimed" or "proclaimed loudly" (See: [Doublet](#))

Yahweh's word has become for me reproach and mocking every day

Here "word" refers to the message of Yahweh. The words "reproach" and "mocking" can be translated with verbal phrases. Alternate translation: "people reproach and mock me every day because I proclaim Yahweh's message" (See: [Metonymy](#) and [Abstract Nouns](#))

for me reproach and mocking

The words "reproach" and "mocking" mean basically the same thing and emphasize that people have ridiculed Jeremiah for proclaiming Yahweh's message. Alternate translation: "a reason for people to ridicule me" (See: [Doublet](#))

ULT

⁸ For whenever I have spoken, I have called out and proclaimed, 'Violence and destruction.' Then Yahweh's word has become for me reproach and mocking every day.

Jeremiah 20:9

I will not speak any longer in his name

This could mean: (1) “I will never mention Yahweh or say anything about him” or (2) the word “name” represents authority. Alternate translation: “I will no longer speak as his messenger” (See: [Metonymy](#))

it is like a fire in my heart, held within my bones

Here the words “heart” and “bones” represent Jeremiah’s innermost being. Jeremiah speaks of being unable to not speak Yahweh’s message as if Yahweh’s message were a fire that burns within him. Alternate translation: “Yahweh’s word is like a fire that burns deep within me” (See: [Synecdoche](#) and [Metaphor](#))

ULT

⁹ If I say, ‘I will not think about Yahweh anymore. I will not speak any longer in his name.’ Then it is like a consuming fire in my heart, held within my bones. So I struggle to contain it but I cannot.

Jeremiah 20:10

Report! We must report it

Jeremiah's enemies say these words.

watch to see if I will fall

Jeremiah speaks of his enemies waiting for him to do something wrong for which they might accuse him as if they were watching for him to fall down. (See: [Metaphor](#))

ULT

¹⁰ I have heard rumors of terror from many people all around. 'Report! We must report it!' Those who are close to me watch to see if I will fall. 'Perhaps he can be tricked. If so, we can overpower him and take our revenge on him.'

Perhaps he can be tricked ... take our revenge on him

Jeremiah's enemies say these words.

Perhaps he can be tricked

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "Perhaps we can trick him" (See: [Active or Passive](#))

Jeremiah 20:11

Yahweh is with me like a powerful warrior

Jeremiah compares Yahweh helping him and defending him against his enemies to a powerful warrior. (See: [Simile](#))

so the ones pursuing me will stagger

Jeremiah speaks of his enemies trying to harm him as if they were chasing after him and of their failing to harm him as if they were to stagger. (See: [Metaphor](#))

They will be greatly ashamed

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: “Yahweh will bring great shame upon them” (See: [Active or Passive](#))

it will never be forgotten

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: “people will never forget it” (See: [Active or Passive](#))

ULT

11 But Yahweh is with me like a powerful warrior, so the ones pursuing me will stagger. They will not defeat me. They will be greatly ashamed, because they will not succeed. They will have unending shame, it will never be forgotten.

Jeremiah 20:12

see the mind and the heart

The word “mind” is a metonym for what a person thinks and decides, and the word “heart” is a metonym for what a person feels and desires. Alternate translation: “know every person’s thoughts and feelings” (See: [Metonymy](#))

ULT

12 But Yahweh of hosts, you examine the righteous and see the mind and the heart. Let me see your vengeance on them for I have committed my cause to you.

Jeremiah 20:13

those who are oppressed from the hand of evildoers

Here the word “hand” represents power. This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: “those whom evildoers oppress with their power” (See: [Metonymy](#) and [Active or Passive](#))

ULT

¹³ Sing to Yahweh! Praise Yahweh! For he has rescued the lives of those who are oppressed from the hand of evildoers.

Jeremiah 20:14

General Information:

Jeremiah continues speaking to Yahweh.

Let the day when I was born be cursed

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: “Curse the day I was born” or “Let people curse the day when I was born” (See: [Active or Passive](#))

Do not let the day that my mother bore me be blessed

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: “Do not bless the day that my mother bore me” or “Do not let people bless the day that my mother bore me” (See: [Active or Passive](#))

ULT

14 Let the day when I was born be cursed. Do not let the day that my mother bore me be blessed.

Jeremiah 20:15

Let the man who informed my father be cursed

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: “Curse the man who informed my father” or “Let people curse the man who informed my father” (See: [Active or Passive](#))

ULT

¹⁵ Let the man who informed my father be cursed, the one who said, ‘A male child has been born to you,’ causing great joy.

Jeremiah 20:16

that man

This refers to the man who informed Jeremiah's father of Jeremiah's birth.

the cities that Yahweh overthrew

This refers to Sodom and Gomorrah.

he did not have compassion

Here the word "he" refers to Yahweh.

Let him hear a cry for help

Here the word "him" refers to "that man."

ULT

16 Let that man be like the cities that Yahweh overthrew and he did not have compassion on them. Let him hear a cry for help in the dawn, a battle cry at noontime,

Jeremiah 20:17

making my mother to be my tomb

Jeremiah speaks of his dying while his mother was still pregnant with him as if his mother's womb were his tomb. (See: [Metaphor](#))

a womb that was pregnant forever

Jeremiah speaks of his pregnant mother never giving birth to the baby in her womb as if she had been pregnant forever. (See: [Metaphor](#))

ULT

17 because he did not kill me in the womb, making my mother to be my tomb, a womb that was pregnant forever.

Jeremiah 20:18

Why is it that I came out from the womb to see troubles and agony ... shame?

Jeremiah uses this rhetorical question to complain that there was no good reason for him to be born. It can be translated as a statement. Alternate translation: "There was no reason for me to be born only to see troubles and agony ... shame." (See: [Rhetorical Question](#))

ULT

¹⁸ Why is it that I came out from the womb to see troubles and agony, so that my days are filled with shame?"

to see troubles and agony

The words "troubles" and "agony" mean basically the same thing and emphasize the amount and severity of suffering. Alternate translation: "to experience so much suffering" (See: [Doublet](#))

my days are filled with shame

Here the word "days" represents all the days of Jeremiah's life. Alternate translation: "my life is filled with shame" (See: [Synecdoche](#))

Jeremiah 21

Jeremiah 21 General Notes

Structure and formatting

Some translations set each line of poetry farther to the right than the rest of the text to make it easier to read. The ULT does this with the poetry in 21:12-14.

Special concepts in this chapter

Jerusalem doomed

God will fight against Jerusalem and will use the nation of Babylon to fight his battle. If the Jews wanted to live, they needed to surrender to Babylon. Most of the Jews would have rather died than to surrender to Babylon. Usually, fighting against a Gentile nation was a sign of trust in Yahweh's power. In this instance, it was a sign of trust in Yahweh to surrender. (See: [sign](#), [proof](#), [reminder](#) and [trust](#), [trusted](#), [trustworthy](#), [trustworthiness](#))

Jeremiah 21:1

The word came to Jeremiah from Yahweh

This idiom is used to introduce a special message from God. See how you translated this in [Jeremiah 7:1](#), and make any changes as needed. Alternate translation: “Yahweh gave a message to Jeremiah” or “Yahweh spoke a message to Jeremiah” (See: [Idiom](#))

Pashhur

This is not the same Pashhur that was mentioned in [Jeremiah 20:1](#).

Pashhur ... Malkijah ... Maaseiah

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

and they said

“Pashhur and Zephaniah said to Jeremiah”

ULT

¹ The word came to Jeremiah from Yahweh when King Zedekiah sent Pashhur son of Malkijah and Zephaniah son of Maaseiah the priest to him, and they said,

Jeremiah 21:2

Seek advice from Yahweh on our behalf ... making war on us

This was a polite, but urgent request. Alternate translation: "Please speak to Yahweh for us ... attacking us"

as in times past

"as he did in the past"

will make him withdraw from us

"will make him go away"

ULT

² "Please seek advice from Yahweh on our behalf, for Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon is making war on us. Perhaps Yahweh will do miracles for us, as in times past, and will make him withdraw from us."

Jeremiah 21:3

(There are no notes for this verse.)

ULT

³ So Jeremiah said to them, "This is what you must say to Zedekiah,

Jeremiah 21:4

See

This tells the hearer to pay special attention to what follows.

turn back

This could mean: (1) to make useless or (2) to send back into the city.

the instruments of war that are in your hand

This could mean: (1) the instruments of war refers to the soldiers who carry them and “hand” represents control. Alternate translation: “the soldiers that you command” or (2) the instruments of war are literal weapons and “your hand” represent both the king and his soldiers. Alternate translation: “the weapons that you and your soldiers carry” (See: [Metonymy](#) and [Synecdoche](#))

ULT

⁴ ‘Yahweh, God of Israel, says this: See, I am about to turn back the instruments of war that are in your hand, with which you are fighting against the king of Babylon and the Chaldeans who are closing you in from outside the walls! For I will gather them in the middle of this city.

Chaldeans

This term here is another name for the Babylonians.

closing you in

“coming close to you”

I will gather them

This could mean: (1) Yahweh will allow the Babylonians to enter the city or (2) Yahweh will cause the Israelites to bring their weapons back into the center of the city.

Jeremiah 21:5

Then I myself

This is emphatic and stresses that Yahweh is the one who will do this. (See: [Reflexive Pronouns](#))

with a raised hand and a strong arm

Both of these phrases are idiomatic expressions that refer to great power. Alternate translation: “with very great power” (See: [Idiom](#) and [Doublet](#))

with wrath, fury, and great anger

These words all mean basically the same thing. Together they emphasize the great intensity of his anger. Alternate translation: “with extremely great anger” (See: [Doublet](#))

ULT

⁵ Then I myself will fight against you with a raised hand and a strong arm, and with wrath, fury, and great anger.

Jeremiah 21:6

inhabitants of this city

“those who live in Jerusalem”

ULT

⁶ For I will attack the inhabitants of this city, both man and beast. They will die in a severe plague.

Jeremiah 21:7

the sword

Here this refers to the battle in which swords are used. Alternate translation: “the war” (See: [Metonymy](#))

into the hand

Here “hand” refers to the power of their enemies over them. Alternate translation: “into the power” (See: [Metonymy](#))

Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon ... their enemies ... those seeking their life

All of these phrases refer to Nebuchadnezzar and his army. (See: [Parallelism](#))

seeking their life

“wanting to kill them”

with the edge of the sword

This could mean: (1) this is a metonym for death in battle. Alternate translation: “in battle” or (2) they will be killed by literal swords. (See: [Metonymy](#))

He will not pity them, spare them, or have compassion

These three phrases have the same meaning and emphasize that Nebuchadnezzar will deal severely with them. Alternate translation: “He will not show them any mercy or compassion at all” (See: [Doublet](#))

ULT

⁷ After this—this is Yahweh’s declaration—Zedekiah king of Judah, his servants, the people, and whoever remains in this city after the plague, the sword, and the famine, I will give them all into the hand of Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon, and into the hand of their enemies, and into the hand of those seeking their life. Then he will kill them with the edge of the sword. He will not pity them, spare them, or have compassion.’

Jeremiah 21:8

this people

“the people of Jerusalem”

I am about to place before you the way of life and the way of death

Yahweh is offering the people of Jerusalem a choice that will determine whether they live or die.

ULT

⁸ Then to this people you must say,
'Yahweh says this: See, I am about to
place before you the way of life and the
way of death.

Jeremiah 21:9

by the sword, famine, and plague

Death by the sword refers to death in battle. Alternate translation: “in battle and by famine and plague” (See: [Metonymy](#))

falling on his knees before

This symbolic act represents surrender. Alternate translation: “surrendering to” (See: [Symbolic Action](#))

closed in against you

“attacked you from all sides”

He will escape with his life

The one who surrenders to the Babylonians will escape with his life, even though he will lose all his possessions.

ULT

⁹ Anyone staying in this city will die by the sword, famine, and plague; but anyone going out and falling on his knees before the Chaldeans who have closed in against you will live. He will escape with his life.

Jeremiah 21:10

I have set my face against this city

This idiom means he “firmly decided.” Alternate translation: “I have made up my mind to oppose this city” (See: [Idiom](#))

have set my face against

“am staring angrily at”

this is Yahweh’s declaration

Yahweh speaks of himself by name to express the certainty of what he is declaring. See how you translated this in [Jeremiah 1:8](#). Alternate translation: “this is what Yahweh has declared” or “this is what I, Yahweh, have declared” (See: [First, Second or Third Person](#))

It has been given

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

into the hand of the king

Here “hand” represents the power of the king to destroy the city. Alternate translation: “into the power of the king” (See: [Metonymy](#))

ULT

10 For I have set my face against this city in order to bring disaster and not to bring good—this is Yahweh’s declaration. It has been given into the hand of the king of Babylon and he will burn it.’

Jeremiah 21:11

Concerning the house of the king of Judah, listen to the word of Yahweh

This may serve as a title for 21:12 - 23:8. Alternate translation: "Listen to what Yahweh says about the king of Judah, his family, and his servants"

ULT

¹¹ Concerning the house of the king of Judah, listen to the word of Yahweh.

the house of the king of Judah

The word "house" is a metonym for the family that lives in the house. In this case it refers to king and his family. Alternate translation: "the king of Judah and his family" (See: [Metonymy](#))

Jeremiah 21:12

House of David

This refers to the same people as “the house of the king of Judah.” All of the kings of Judah were descendants of David. Alternate translation: “Descendants of David” (See: [Metonymy](#))

Bring about justice in the morning

The abstract noun “justice” can be stated as an action. Alternate translation: “Always treat the people whom you rule over fairly” (See: [Abstract Nouns](#))

the hand of the oppressor

Here “hand” refers to power. Alternate translation: “the power of the one who oppresses them” (See: [Metonymy](#))

my fury will go out like fire and burn

Here Yahweh’s punishment is spoken of as if it was a fire that would burn up those who did evil. Alternate translation: “I will punish and destroy you in my anger quickly and completely” (See: [Metaphor](#))

there is no one who can quench it

Jeremiah continues the simile of Yahweh’s punishment as a fire that was so hot that no one could put it out with water. (See: [Metaphor](#))

ULT

12 House of David, Yahweh says, ‘Bring about justice in the morning. Rescue the one who has been robbed by the hand of the oppressor, or my fury will go out like fire and burn, and there is no one who can quench it, because of your evil deeds.’

Jeremiah 21:13

See

This alerts whoever is hearing to pay special attention to what follows. Alternate translation: “Pay attention”

inhabitant of the valley

This could mean: (1) this may refer to Jerusalem, which was located above a valley, because “inhabitant” is singular and feminine, as is Jerusalem or (2) this is directed to another city or group of people. Most versions leave the original form rather than specifying the city.

ULT

13 See, inhabitant of the valley! I am against you, rock of the plain—this is Yahweh’s declaration— I am against anyone who is saying, “Who will come down to attack us?” or “Who will enter our houses?”

I am against

“I oppose” or “I am going to punish”

Who will come down to attack us?...Who will enter our houses?

These questions are used to state their confidence that they can resist attack. Alternate translation: “No one will attack us!...No one will enter our houses!” (See: [Rhetorical Question](#))

Jeremiah 21:14

I have assigned the fruit of your practices to come against you

The result of their evil deeds is spoken of as fruit which grew from those practices. Alternate translation: "I will punish you as you deserve because of the things you have done" (See: [Metaphor](#))

in the thickets

This could mean: (1) this is a metaphor for the columns of wood that supported the palace or (2) these are literal patches of brush. (See: [Metaphor](#))

ULT

¹⁴ I have assigned the fruit of your practices to come against you—this is Yahweh's declaration— and I will light a fire in the thickets, and it will consume everything around it."

Jeremiah 22

Jeremiah 22 General Notes

Structure and formatting

Some translations set each line of poetry farther to the right than the rest of the text to make it easier to read. The ULT does this with the poetry in 22:6-10, 13-28, 28-30.

Special concepts in this chapter

Luxury and oppression

Because the king lived in luxury and oppressed the poor, God was sending him and his mother into captivity unless he repented. The king lacked justice. (See: [oppress](#), [oppressed](#), [oppression](#), [oppressor](#), [dominate](#) and [repent](#), [repentance](#) and [just](#), [justice](#), [unjust](#), [injustice](#), [justify](#), [justification](#))

Jeremiah 22:1

the house of the king of Judah

“the palace of the king of Judah.” The word “house” has a range of possible meanings. In this case it refers to the royal palace where the king lived.

proclaim this word

“proclaim this message”

ULT

¹ This is what Yahweh says, “Go down to the house of the king of Judah and proclaim this word there.”

Jeremiah 22:2

your people who come through these gates

These gates are the gates of the king's palace. Alternate translation: "your people who come to visit the king" (See: [Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information](#))

ULT

² Say, 'King of Judah, listen to the word of Yahweh—you who sit on David's throne—you, and your servants, and your people who come through these gates.

Jeremiah 22:3

Perform justice and righteousness

The abstract nouns “justice” and “righteousness” can be stated as actions. Alternate translation: “Act fairly and justly” (See: [Abstract Nouns](#))

anyone who has been robbed—rescue him from the hand of the oppressor

“rescue anyone who has been robbed from the hand of the oppressor”

the hand of the oppressor

Here “the hand” refers to power or control. Alternate translation: “the power of the oppressor” or “the one who would harm him” (See: [Metonymy](#))

Do not mistreat

“Do not treat badly”

orphan

a child who does not have parents

Do not ... pour out innocent blood

Here “pour out ... blood” is associated with murder, and “blood” refers to the murdered people. Alternate translation: “Do not ... murder innocent people” (See: [Idiom](#) and [Synecdoche](#))

in this place

This could mean: (1) Jerusalem or (2) the whole country of Judah. This does not imply that it is good to murder people in other places.

ULT

³ Yahweh says this, “Perform justice and righteousness, and anyone who has been robbed—rescue him from the hand of the oppressor. Do not mistreat any foreigner in your land, or any orphan or widow. Do not commit violence or pour out innocent blood in this place.”

Jeremiah 22:4

kings sitting on David's throne

The metonym "throne" refers to kingly authority like David had. Alternate translation: "kings, ruling like David before them" (See: [Metonymy](#))

the gates of this house

This refers to the gates to the courtyard of the palace.

riding in a chariot and on horses

This phrase is a metonym that describes the kings as powerful and wealthy. (See: [Metonymy](#))

he, his servants, and his people

This sentence lists all who will be powerful and wealthy. This can be stated clearly. Alternate translation: "he, his servants, and his people will ride into the palace on chariots and horses" (See: [Ellipsis](#))

ULT

⁴ For if you truly do these things, then kings sitting on David's throne will enter the gates of this house riding in a chariot and on horses, he, his servants, and his people!

Jeremiah 22:5

if you do not listen to

“if you refuse to pay attention to” or “if you do not obey”

this royal house

This phrase here appears to refer specifically to the royal palace.

ULT

⁵ But if you do not listen to these words from me that I have announced—this is Yahweh’s declaration—then this royal house will become a ruin.”

Jeremiah 22:6

the house of the king of Judah

This could mean: (1) this refers to the royal palace where the king lived or (2) "house" is a metonym for the family that lives in the house, who were the royal line of the kings of Judah. Alternate translation: "the royal dynasty of Judah" (See: [Metonymy](#))

You are like Gilead, or like the summit of Lebanon

This could mean: (1) "You are as beautiful as Gilead or the summit of Lebanon" or (2) "You give me as much pleasure as Gilead or the summit of Lebanon." (See: [Simile](#))

turn you into a wilderness

What was formerly beautiful is said to become bare and deserted. Alternate translation: "cause you to become empty like the desert" (See: [Metaphor](#))

ULT

⁶ For Yahweh says this concerning the house of the king of Judah, 'You are like Gilead, or like the summit of Lebanon to me. Yet I will turn you into a wilderness, into cities with no inhabitants.

Jeremiah 22:7

I have designated destroyers to come against you

“I have chosen an army to attack you”

the best of your cedars

This could mean: (1) the beams of the palace or (2) the leading men of the royal family. (See: [Metaphor](#))

fall into the fire

This could mean: (1) a literal fire that will burn the palace beams or (2) the destruction of the royal family is spoken of as if they were burned in a fire. (See: [Metaphor](#))

ULT

⁷ For I have designated destroyers to come against you! Men with their weapons will cut off the best of your cedars and let them fall into the fire.

Jeremiah 22:8

Then many nations will pass by this city

Here “nations” refers to the people from those nations that pass by. Alternate translation: “Then many people from various nations will pass by this city” (See: [Synecdoche](#))

ULT

8 Then many nations will pass by this city. Each person will say to the next, “Why has Yahweh acted in this way toward this great city?”

Jeremiah 22:9

bowed down to other gods and worshiped them

These two phrases mean the same thing. The phrase “bowed down” describes the posture that people used in worship. Alternate translation: “they worshiped other gods” (See: [Doublet](#) and [Symbolic Action](#))

ULT

⁹ Then the other will answer, “Because they abandoned the covenant of Yahweh their God and bowed down to other gods and worshiped them.”

Jeremiah 22:10

General Information:

Yahweh has shifted from addressing the King of Judah and is now speaking to a general audience.

the one who is dead

This is singular, and refers to King Josiah who had been killed.

him who is about to go away

This refers to King Jehoahaz who was taken into exile in Egypt.

never return and see his native land

“never come back and see the land of Israel again” or “never see his homeland again”

ULT

10 Do not weep for the one who is dead or mourn for him; but weep bitterly for him who is about to go away, because he will never return and see his native land again.'

Jeremiah 22:11

Jehoahaz

The name in Hebrew is “Shallum,” but he is better known as Jehoahaz. (See: [How to Translate Names](#))

who served as king instead of Josiah his father

“who became king when his father, Josiah, died”

ULT

11 For Yahweh says this about Jehoahaz son of Josiah king of Judah, who served as king instead of Josiah his father, ‘He has gone from this place and will not come back.

Jeremiah 22:12

(There are no notes for this verse.)

ULT

¹² He will die there in the place to where they have exiled him, and he will never again see this land.'

Jeremiah 22:13

him who builds ... his upper rooms ... who makes ... for him ... he does not give

The words “him” and “his” and “who” and “he” refer to King Jehoahaz (verse 11).

builds his house by unrighteousness, his upper rooms by injustice

The abstract nouns “unrighteousness” and “injustice” have similar meanings, are repeated for emphasis, and can be stated as actions. Alternate translation: “unjustly forced men to build his house and his upper rooms” (See: [Doublet](#) and [Abstract Nouns](#))

his house

The word “house” is a metonym for the family that lives in the house. In this case it refers to Jehoahaz (verse 11) and his family. (See: [Metonymy](#))

him his wages

This refers to any of the neighbors of King Jehoahaz (verse 11) whom the king forces to work.

ULT

¹³ Woe to him who builds his house by unrighteousness, his upper rooms by injustice, who makes his neighbor work for him for nothing, and he does not give him his wages;

Jeremiah 22:14

he says ... he cuts ... he panels ... he paints

These refer to King Jehoahaz (verse 11).

**a large house with spacious upper rooms ...
large windows ... cedar ... red**

These characteristics all describe a very expensive house.

ULT

14 he says, 'I will build for myself a large house with spacious upper rooms.' So he cuts out large windows for it, and he panels it with cedar, and he paints it red.

Jeremiah 22:15

Is this what makes you a good king, that you wanted to have boards of cedar?

Yahweh asks this rhetorical question to rebuke Jehoiakim for his expensive palace. Alternate translation: "Having a cedar palace does not make you a good king." (See: [Rhetorical Question](#))

Did not your father also eat and drink, yet do ... righteousness?

Yahweh asks this rhetorical question to remind Jehoiakim about the example of his father, King Josiah. Alternate translation: "Your father King Josiah enjoyed his life, yet did ... righteousness." (See: [Rhetorical Question](#))

do justice and righteousness

These abstract nouns have similar meanings, are repeated for emphasis and can be stated as actions. Alternate translation: "act justly and fairly" (See: [Doublet](#) and [Abstract Nouns](#))

ULT

¹⁵ Is this what makes you a good king, that you wanted to have boards of cedar? Did not your father also eat and drink, yet do justice and righteousness? Then things went well for him.

Jeremiah 22:16

It was good then

“Things went well for him”

Is this not what it means to know me?

Yahweh asks this rhetorical question to rebuke Jehoiakim for not following the example of his father, King Josiah. Alternate translation: “This is what it means to know me.” (See: [Rhetorical Question](#))

this is Yahweh’s declaration

Yahweh speaks of himself by name to express the certainty of what he is declaring. See how you translated this in [Jeremiah 1:8](#). Alternate translation: “this is what Yahweh has declared” or “this is what I, Yahweh, have declared” (See: [First, Second or Third Person](#))

ULT

¹⁶ He judged in favor of the poor and needy. It was good then. Is this not what it means to know me?—this is Yahweh’s declaration.

Jeremiah 22:17

there is nothing in your eyes and heart except worry ... crushing of others

Here “eyes” is a metonym for seeing and “heart” is a metonym for thinking. Alternate translation: “you never look for or think about anything except ... crushing of others” or “you only look for and think about ways to cheat others and pour out innocent blood, and to oppress and crush others” (See: [Metonymy](#))

ULT

¹⁷ But there is nothing in your eyes and heart except worry for your unjust profit and for pouring out innocent blood, for producing oppression and crushing of others.

unjust profit

This is getting money by cheating or by using unfair means.

pouring out innocent blood

Here “pouring out ... blood” is associated with murder, and “blood” refers to the murdered people. Alternate translation: “murdering innocent people” (See: [Idiom](#) and [Synecdoche](#))

crushing of others

“doing violence to others in order to get money”

Jeremiah 22:18

They will not lament for him

In verse 18, Yahweh stops speaking directly to Jehoiakim and begins to speak to other people. Here “lament” refers to grieving at Jehoiakim’s death. Alternate translation: “They will not lament for Jehoiakim when he dies” (See: [Ellipsis](#))

Woe, my brother!...Woe, my sister!...Woe, master!...Woe, majesty!

Yahweh uses the word “Woe” several times for emphasis. He addresses the various people who would normally show great sadness when someone dies. (See: [Parallelism](#))

ULT

18 Therefore this is what Yahweh says about Jehoiakim son of Josiah, king of Judah: They will not lament for him, saying, ‘Woe, my brother!’ or ‘Woe, my sister!’ They will not lament for him, saying, ‘Woe, master!’ or ‘Woe, majesty!’

Jeremiah 22:19

He will be buried with a donkey's burial, dragged away and thrown out

The burial of Jehoiakim is spoken of as being the same as the manner in which people would bury a donkey. This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "They will bury his dead body the way they would bury a dead donkey; they will drag it away and throw it out" (See: [Metaphor](#) and [Active or Passive](#))

ULT

¹⁹ He will be buried with a donkey's burial, dragged away and thrown out beyond the gates of Jerusalem.

Jeremiah 22:20

General Information:

It appears that Yahweh is here speaking to the people of Jerusalem, telling them that they will be destroyed.

Lift your voice

This idiom refers to shouting. In this case, they are crying out in grief. Alternate translation: “Cry out” (See: [Idiom](#))

Abarim mountains

a mountain range that was southeast of Jerusalem (See: [How to Translate Names](#))

ULT

20 Go up Lebanon's mountains and shout. Lift your voice in Bashan. Shout from the Abarim mountains, for all of your friends will be destroyed.

Jeremiah 22:21

I spoke to you when you were safe

"I spoke to you when you were doing well"

This was your custom

"This was your way of life"

you have not listened to my voice

Listening is a metonym for obeying. Alternate translation: "you have not obeyed me" (See: [Metonymy](#))

ULT

²¹ I spoke to you when you were safe, but you said, 'I will not listen.' This was your custom since your youth, for you have not listened to my voice.

Jeremiah 22:22

The wind will shepherd away all your shepherds

This is a wordplay—Yahweh uses the idea of “shepherd” in two different ways. Here “shepherds” is a metaphor for the leaders of Jerusalem, and the wind “leads” them away. The wind represents Yahweh. Alternate translation: “I will take your leaders away as if the wind had blown them away” (See: [Metaphor](#))

go into captivity

“become captives” or “go into exile”

ULT

²² The wind will shepherd away all your shepherds, and your friends will go into captivity. Then you will certainly be ashamed and humiliated by all of your evil deeds.

Jeremiah 22:23

You who live in 'Lebanon,' who is nestled in cedar buildings

Yahweh speaks of the royal palace as "Lebanon" and "cedar buildings" because it was constructed with a lot of cedar. Alternate translation: "You who live in a palace made from the cedars of Lebanon" (See: [Metaphor](#))

ULT

²³ You who live in 'Lebanon,' who is nestled in cedar buildings, how you will be pitied when the labor pains come upon you, pain like that of a woman in labor!"

You who live

This "You" is singular and refers to the king. (See: [Forms of You](#))

how you will be pitied

The meaning of the Hebrew is not clear. This can be stated in active form. This could mean: (1) "they will greatly pity you" or (2) "you will groan greatly." (See: [Active or Passive](#))

when the labor pains come upon you, pain like that of a woman in labor

The pain that the king will feel when his enemies defeat him will be as intense as the pain a woman feels in childbirth. Alternate translation: "when you experience pain as intense as the pain of a woman in childbirth" (See: [Simile](#))

Jeremiah 22:24

even if you ... were the signet on my right hand

Yahweh speaks to Jehoiachin as if it were possible for him to be the ring on Yahweh's hand. (See: [Hypothetical Situations](#))

the signet on my right hand

A signet ring was used by a king to place his seal of authority on documents. The signet ring therefore represents authority to rule. The right hand also represents authority to rule. Alternate translation: "the signet ring on my right hand that represented my authority to be king" (See: [Metonymy](#))

I would tear you off

"I would tear you off from my hand" or "I would quickly pull you off of my hand"

ULT

²⁴ "As I live—this is Yahweh's declaration—even if you, Jehoiachin son of Jehoiakim, king of Judah, were the signet on my right hand, I would tear you off."

Jeremiah 22:25

I have given you to the hand of the ones seeking your life

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: “I have made it possible for the ones seeking your life to capture you” (See: [Active or Passive](#))

to the hand of

Here the metonym “hand” represents power and control. (See: [Metonymy](#))

seeking your life

This phrase represents wanting or trying to kill someone. See how this phrase is translated in [Jeremiah 11:21](#). Alternate translation: “trying to kill you” (See: [Metaphor](#))

ULT

²⁵ For I have given you to the hand of the ones seeking your life and to the hand of those before whom you are afraid, even to the hand of Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon and the Chaldeans.

Jeremiah 22:26

(There are no notes for this verse.)

ULT

²⁶ I will throw you and your mother who bore you into another land, a country where you were not born, and there you will die.

Jeremiah 22:27

this land to which they will want to return

This refers to the land of Judah.

ULT

²⁷ About this land to which they will want to return, they will not come back here.

Jeremiah 22:28

Is this a despised and shattered vessel?...did not know?

It is not clear who is speaking in verse 28.

Is this a despised and shattered vessel? Is this man Jehoiachin a pot that pleases no one?

Jehoiachin is spoken of as a pot that was completely worthless and not liked by anyone. The questions emphasize that he has no value or friends. Alternate translation: "Jehoiachin is as useless as a broken vessel and no one is happy with him." (See: [Metaphor](#) and [Rhetorical Question](#))

ULT

²⁸ Is this a despised and shattered vessel? Is this man Jehoiachin a pot that pleases no one? Why have they thrown him and his descendants out, and have poured them out into a land that they did not know?

Why have they thrown him and his descendants out, and have poured them out into a land that they did not know?

This rhetorical question explains what will happen to the worthless Jehoiachin. Alternate translation: "Therefore the enemy will remove Jehoiachin and his family from the land and take them to a foreign land." (See: [Rhetorical Question](#))

have poured them out

Jehoiachin and his descendants are spoke of as if they had been poured out in another country like garbage from a vessel. (See: [Metaphor](#))

Jeremiah 22:29

Land, Land, Land

Yahweh speaks his message to all the people of the land by calling out to the land where they live. The title is repeated to call attention to the message. (See: [Apostrophe](#))

ULT

²⁹ Land, Land, Land! Hear the word of Yahweh!

Jeremiah 22:30

He will be childless

Jehoiachin has several sons. This phrase, then, means it is as if he was childless. His children will not succeed him as king. Alternate translation: "It will be as if he did not have any children" (See: [Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information](#))

sit on David's throne

Sitting on a throne is a metonym for ruling as king. Alternate translation: "become king" (See: [Metonymy](#))

ULT

30 Yahweh says this, 'Write about this man Jehoiachin: He will be childless. He will not prosper during his days, and no one among his descendants will achieve success or ever again sit on David's throne and rule over Judah.'"

Jeremiah 23

Jeremiah 23 General Notes

Structure and formatting

Some translations set each line of poetry farther to the right than the rest of the text to make it easier to read. The ULT does this with the poetry in 23:5-6, 9-24.

Special concepts in this chapter

Prophesying lies

The false prophets had encouraged people to continue sinning by saying everything will be alright. (See: [prophet](#), [prophecy](#), [prophesy](#), [seer](#), [prophetess](#) and [sin](#), [sinful](#), [sinner](#), [sinning](#))

Other possible translation difficulties in this chapter

Wordplay

In Hebrew, the word for “message” can also mean “burden.” In translations that are using footnotes, you may want to explain the wordplay in a footnote. In translations that are not using footnotes or which will primarily be distributed in an oral form, you may need a sentence like “What message has the Lord burdened you with now?” or “You (plural) call God’s message a heavy burden on you.”

Jeremiah 23:1

General Information:

In verses 1-4, Yahweh refers to Israel as his pasture, the people of Israel as his sheep, and the leaders of Israel as the shepherds. Shepherds have a duty to protect the sheep, but the leaders were not doing that. (See: [Metaphor](#))

ULT

1 “Woe to the shepherds who destroy and scatter the sheep of my pasture—this is Yahweh’s declaration.”

this is Yahweh’s declaration

Yahweh speaks of himself by name to express the certainty of what he is declaring. See how you translated this in [Jeremiah 1:8](#). Alternate translation: “this is what Yahweh has declared” or “this is what I, Yahweh, have declared” (See: [First](#), [Second](#) or [Third Person](#))

Jeremiah 23:2

You have scattered my flock and have driven them away

These two phrases have similar meanings. The second one strengthens the thought in the first. (See: [Doublet](#))

ULT

² Therefore Yahweh, the God of Israel, says this concerning the shepherds who are shepherding his people, “You have scattered my flock and have driven them away. You have not cared for them. So I am about to punish you for the evil you have done—this is Yahweh’s declaration.

Jeremiah 23:3

General Information:

Yahweh continues to speak about the people of Israel as if they were his sheep and the leaders of Israel as if they were his shepherds.

(See: [Metaphor](#))

to a grazing place

Yahweh refers to the land of Israel as if it were good pasture for his people. This good pasture is a metonym for provision for their needs. Alternate translation: “to good pasture” or “to where all their needs will be supplied”

(See: [Metaphor](#) and [Metonymy](#))

they will be fruitful and increase

The word “increase” explains how they will be “fruitful.” Alternate translation: “they will increase greatly in number” (See: [Doublet](#))

ULT

³ I myself will gather the remnant of my flock from all of the lands where I have driven them, and I will return them to a grazing place, where they will be fruitful and increase.

Jeremiah 23:4

I will raise up

“I will appoint”

they will no longer fear or be shattered

The words “be shattered” mean that someone has caused them to be afraid and mean basically the same thing as “fear.” This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: “no one will make them afraid anymore” (See: [Doublet](#) and [Active or Passive](#))

None of them

“None of my people”

this is Yahweh’s declaration

Yahweh speaks of himself by name to express the certainty of what he is declaring. See how you translated this in [Jeremiah 1:8](#). Alternate translation: “this is what Yahweh has declared” or “this is what I, Yahweh, have declared” (See: [First, Second or Third Person](#))

ULT

⁴ Then I will raise up shepherds over them who will shepherd them so they will no longer fear or be shattered. None of them will go missing—this is Yahweh’s declaration.

Jeremiah 23:5

See

This word alerts us to pay attention to the surprising information that follows.

I will raise up

This idiom means he will appoint a successor. (See: [Idiom](#))

a righteous branch

This future king descended from David is spoken of as if he were a branch grown on a tree. Alternate translation: “a righteous descendant” (See: [Metaphor](#))

a righteous branch

Some modern versions translate this as “a legitimate successor to the throne.”

cause justice and righteousness in the land

The abstract nouns “justice” and “righteousness” can be stated as actions. Alternate translation: “cause people to act justly and rightly” (See: [Abstract Nouns](#))

in the land

Here “land” refers to the people who live in the land. Alternate translation: “for all the people in the nation” (See: [Metonymy](#))

ULT

⁵ See, the days are coming—this is Yahweh’s declaration—when I will raise up for David a righteous branch. He will reign as king; he will act wisely and cause justice and righteousness in the land.

Jeremiah 23:6

Judah will be rescued

Here “Judah” refers to the people of Judah. Alternate translation: “the people of Judah will be rescued” (See: [Metonymy](#))

Judah will be rescued

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: “He will rescue Judah from their enemies” (See: [Active or Passive](#) and [Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information](#))

Israel will live in security

Here “Israel” refers to the people of Israel. Alternate translation: “the people of Israel will live in security” (See: [Metonymy](#))

he will be called

this refers to the king

Yahweh is our righteousness

The abstract noun “righteousness” can be stated as an action. Alternate translation: “Yahweh, the one who does what is right for us” (See: [Abstract Nouns](#))

ULT

⁶ In his days Judah will be rescued, and Israel will live in security. Then this is the name by which he will be called: Yahweh is our righteousness.

Jeremiah 23:7

General Information:

This verse is very similar to [Jeremiah 16:14](#), although not exactly the same. Compare how you translated that verse.

see

The word “see” here alerts the reader to pay attention to the important information that follows.

As Yahweh lives

“as surely as Yahweh is alive.” The people use this expression to show that what they say next is certainly true. This is a way of making a solemn promise. See how you translated this in [Jeremiah 4:2](#). Alternate translation: “I solemnly swear” (See: [Idiom](#))

ULT

⁷ Therefore see, days are coming—this is Yahweh’s declaration—when they will no longer say, ‘As Yahweh lives, who brought the people of Israel up from the land of Egypt.’

Jeremiah 23:8

General Information:

This verse is very similar to [Jeremiah 16:15](#), although not exactly the same. Compare how you translated that verse.

who brought up and who led back

These two phrases mean the same thing and can be combined.
Alternate translation: “who brought back” (See: [Doublet](#))

the house of Israel

The word “house” is a metonym for the family that lives in the house. In this case it refers to the kingdom of Israel. See how you translated this in [Jeremiah 3:18](#). Alternate translation: “Israel” or “the kingdom of Israel” (See: [Metonymy](#))

the northern land and all the lands where they had been driven

This refers to the way the northern ten tribes of Israel were captured and spread out among the surrounding countries.

Then they will live in their own land

This refers to Israel, from where they were scattered. This can be stated explicitly. Alternate translation: “Then they will live in their own land again” (See: [Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information](#))

ULT

⁸ Instead they will say, ‘As Yahweh lives, who brought up and who led back the descendants of the house of Israel from the northern land and all the lands where they had been driven.’ Then they will live in their own land.”

Jeremiah 23:9

General Information:

In verses 9-32 Jeremiah delivers Yahweh's message to the false prophets and the priests. Jeremiah is speaking in verse 9, but it is not clear if verse 10 are the words of Jeremiah or of Yahweh.

Regarding the prophets, my heart is broken in me, and all of my bones tremble

The prophet speaks of his heart being broken and his bones trembling because he is afraid of the judgment that will result from the lies of the false prophets. Alternate translation: "I have great fear for what will happen because of the false prophets" (See: [Metonymy](#))

my heart is broken in me

This idiom refers to deep sadness. Alternate translation: "I am very sad" (See: [Idiom](#))

all of my bones tremble

Here trembling is associated with fear. Alternate translation: "I am very afraid" (See: [Metonymy](#))

I have become like a drunk man, like a man whom wine has overpowered

People who are drunk are not able to control themselves. Likewise, Jeremiah has lost control of himself out of fear of Yahweh's punishment. Alternate translation: "I am like a drunk man; I cannot control myself" (See: [Simile](#))

ULT

⁹ Regarding the prophets, my heart is broken in me, and all of my bones tremble. I have become like a drunk man, like a man whom wine has overpowered, because of Yahweh and his holy words.

Jeremiah 23:10

the land is full of adulterers

The land is spoken of as if it were a container and the adulterers were objects that filled the container completely. That is, everyone in the land is an adulterer, which in turn is an exaggeration for very many people being adulterers. (See: [Hyperbole](#))

adulterers

This word here probably has two senses. It has the literal meaning that the men in the nation had committed adultery against their own wives, and it also has the figurative meaning that they had abandoned Yahweh in order to worship idols. (See: [Metaphor](#))

the land is dried up

Some modern versions interpret this Hebrew phrase as “the land mourns.”

These prophets’ paths are wicked

The wicked actions of the false prophets are spoken of as if they were walking on an evil path. Alternate translation: “These prophets are doing things that are wicked” (See: [Metaphor](#))

ULT

10 For the land is full of adulterers.
Because of these the land is dried up.
The meadows in the wilderness dry up.
These prophets’ paths are wicked; their
power is not used in a right manner.

Jeremiah 23:11

Connecting Statement:

Jeremiah continues to deliver Yahweh's message about the false prophets and priests that he began in [Jeremiah 23:9](#).

the prophets and the priests are polluted

The prophets and priests are defiled by sin in the same way that water can be polluted by filth. Alternate translation: "the prophets and the priests are sinful" (See: [Metaphor](#))

ULT

11 "For both the prophets and the priests are polluted. I even found their wickedness in my house!—this is Yahweh's declaration—

Jeremiah 23:12

their way will be like a slippery place in the darkness

The danger of their actions is spoken of as if they were about to fall off the slippery edge of a cliff in the dark and injure themselves. Alternate translation: “their actions are unstable and dangerous, like walking on a slippery place in the darkness” (See: [Simile](#))

I will send disaster against them

Yahweh speaks of disaster as an enemy that he will send to attack the priests and false prophets. Alternate translation: “I will cause them to experience disaster” (See: [Metaphor](#))

ULT

¹² therefore their way will be like a slippery place in the darkness. They will be pushed down. They will fall in it. For I will send disaster against them in the year of their punishment—this is Yahweh’s declaration.

Jeremiah 23:13

Connecting Statement:

Jeremiah continues to deliver Yahweh's message about the false prophets and priests that he began in [Jeremiah 23:9](#).

led my people Israel astray

The deception of the people by the false prophets is spoken of as leading them down the wrong path. Alternate translation: "deceived my people, the Israelites" (See: [Metaphor](#))

ULT

13 For I have seen the prophets in Samaria doing what is repulsive: They prophesied by Baal and led my people Israel astray.

Jeremiah 23:14

They commit adultery

This could mean: (1) they were literally unfaithful to their wives or (2) their worship of other gods is spoken of as spiritual adultery.

walk in deceit

This idiom means they lived a life of deceit. Alternate translation: “live in dishonesty” (See: [Idiom](#))

They strengthen the hands of evildoers

Here “hands” refers to the whole person. Alternate translation: “They strengthen those who do evil” or “They encourage people who do evil” (See: [Synecdoche](#))

no one turns back from his evildoing

This can be state in positive form. Alternate translation: “everyone continues in their sin”

All of them have become like Sodom ... like Gomorrah

Sodom and Gomorrah were cities that were so wicked that God destroyed them with fire from heaven. Alternate translation: “They all became as evil as Sodom ... as wicked as Gomorrah” (See: [Simile](#))

ULT

14 Among the prophets in Jerusalem I have seen horrible things: They commit adultery and walk in deceit. They strengthen the hands of evildoers; no one turns back from his evildoing. All of them have become like Sodom to me and its inhabitants like Gomorrah!”

Jeremiah 23:15

Yahweh of hosts says this

Jeremiah often uses these words to introduce an important message from Yahweh. See how you translated this in [Jeremiah 6:6](#).

Look

The word “look” here alerts the reader to pay attention to the important information that follows.

ULT

15 Therefore Yahweh of hosts says this concerning the prophets, “Look, I am about to make them eat wormwood and drink poisonous water, for pollution has gone out from the prophets of Jerusalem to all the land.”

I am about to make them eat wormwood and drink poisonous water

Wormwood is a plant that is very bitter and unpleasant to eat. This phrase describes the punishment that Yahweh was going to bring about on the evil prophets. In the same way wormwood was bitter and the water was poisonous, so would Yahweh’s judgment be on the evil prophets. (See: [Metaphor](#))

I am about to

“I will soon”

pollution has gone out from the prophets

Here the evil teaching of the priests and false prophets is spoken of as if it were something filthy that ruined the land. Alternate translation: “evil has come from the prophets” (See: [Metaphor](#))

pollution

dirty and unsafe things that spoil the air, water, or land where they are found

Jeremiah 23:16

Connecting Statement:

Jeremiah continues to deliver Yahweh's message about the false prophets and priests that he began in [Jeremiah 23:9](#).

Yahweh of hosts says this

Jeremiah often uses these words to introduce an important message from Yahweh. See how you translated this in [Jeremiah 6:6](#).

ULT

16 Yahweh of hosts says this, "Do not listen to the words of the prophets who prophesy to you. They have deluded you! They are announcing visions from their own minds, not from Yahweh's mouth."

They have deluded you!

"The prophets have caused you to believe something that is not true!"

visions from their own minds

Here "minds" refers to the thoughts of the false prophets. Alternate translation: "visions that they imagined" (See: [Metonymy](#))

not from Yahweh's mouth

Here "mouth" refers to what Yahweh said. Alternate translation: "not what Yahweh said" (See: [Metonymy](#))

Jeremiah 23:17

They are constantly saying

The word “constantly” is an exaggeration to emphasize that this is what they normally say. (See: [Hyperbole](#))

everyone walking in the stubbornness of his own heart says

Here “heart” refers to their desires. To follow those desires is spoken of as walking in them. Alternate translation: “everyone stubbornly does whatever they desire to do” (See: [Metaphor](#) and [Metonymy](#))

Disaster will not come upon you

“Nothing bad will happen to you”

ULT

17 They are constantly saying to those who dishonor me, ‘Yahweh declares there will be peace for you.’ For everyone walking in the stubbornness of his own heart says, ‘Disaster will not come upon you.’

Jeremiah 23:18

Yet who has stood in Yahweh's council meeting? Who sees and hears his word? Who pays attention to his word and listens?

These questions are used to rebuke the priests and false prophets for not obeying Yahweh. Alternate translation: "No one advises Yahweh. No one understands what Yahweh says. No one obeys Yahweh's commands." (See: [Rhetorical Question](#))

pays attention to his word and listens

These two phrases mean the same thing. They can be combined in one phrase. Alternate translation: "obeys his word at all"

ULT

¹⁸ Yet who has stood in Yahweh's council meeting? Who sees and hears his word? Who pays attention to his word and listens?

Jeremiah 23:19

Connecting Statement:

Jeremiah continues to deliver Yahweh's message about the false prophets and priests that he began in [Jeremiah 23:9](#).

**there is a storm coming from Yahweh ... His
fury is going out ... a tempest is whirling
about**

These three phrases all refer to a great storm that is a metaphor for Yahweh's anger. This can be stated as a simile. Alternate translation: "Yahweh's anger is coming like a great storm, going out with fury and whirling like a tempest" (See: [Metaphor](#) and [Simile](#))

a tempest

a violent windstorm

It is whirling around the heads of the wicked

Yahweh's anger is spoken of as if it were a windstorm whirling around the wicked. Alternate translation: "It is coming upon the wicked like a windstorm" (See: [Metaphor](#) and [Simile](#))

ULT

¹⁹ See, there is a storm coming from Yahweh! His fury is going out, and a tempest is whirling about. It is whirling around the heads of the wicked.

Jeremiah 23:20

Yahweh's wrath will not return until it

Yahweh's wrath is spoken of as if it were alive and could act on its own. Alternate translation: "Yahweh will not stop being angry until he" (See: [Personification](#))

carried out and brought into being his heart's intentions

Here "heart's intentions" refers to the things that Yahweh wanted to happen. Alternate translation: "completed and accomplished all the punishment that he had planned" (See: [Metonymy](#))

the final days

"the future"

ULT

20 Yahweh's wrath will not return until it has carried out and brought into being his heart's intentions. In the final days, you will understand it.

Jeremiah 23:21

General Information:

Yahweh is the speaker in verses 21-40.

Connecting Statement:

Jeremiah continues to deliver Yahweh's message about the false prophets and priests that he began in [Jeremiah 23:9](#).

they have still prophesied

It is understood that they are prophesying falsely. This can be made explicit. Alternate translation: "they have prophesied falsely anyway" (See: [Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information](#))

ULT

²¹ I did not send out these prophets. They just appeared. I did not proclaim anything to them, but they have still prophesied.

Jeremiah 23:22

if they had stood in my council meeting

Yahweh states what would have happened if the priests and false prophets had participated in Yahweh's council meeting in heaven. This hypothetical situation is impossible. Alternate translation: "if they had truly listened to me" (See: [Hypothetical Situations](#))

my council meeting

In ancient times, God was thought to hold meetings with the angels in heaven. Yahweh is referring to this kind of meeting, which humans could not attend. See how you translated this in [Jeremiah 23:18](#).

to turn from

This idiom means they would stop doing these things. (See: [Idiom](#))

ULT

²² For if they had stood in my council meeting, they would have caused my people to hear my word; they would have caused them to turn from their wicked words and corrupt practices.

Jeremiah 23:23

Connecting Statement:

Yahweh continues to deliver his message about the false prophets and priests that he began in [Jeremiah 23:9](#) and completes in [Jeremiah 23:40](#).

ULT

23 Am I only a God nearby—this is Yahweh’s declaration—and not also a God far away?

Am I only a God nearby ... and not also a God far away?

Yahweh uses this question to rebuke the priests and false prophets for thinking that he did not rule everywhere. Alternate translation: “I am not only a God who is here in Jerusalem ... but I am everywhere!” (See: [Rhetorical Question](#))

this is Yahweh’s declaration

Yahweh speaks of himself by name to express the certainty of what he is declaring. See how you translated this in [Jeremiah 1:8](#). Alternate translation: “this is what Yahweh has declared” or “this is what I, Yahweh, have declared” (See: [First, Second or Third Person](#))

Jeremiah 23:24

Can anyone hide in a secret place so I cannot see him?

Yahweh uses this question to rebuke the priests and false prophets for thinking that he did not see the evil that they were doing.

Alternate translation: "No one can hide in a secret place so I cannot see him." (See: [Rhetorical Question](#))

ULT

²⁴ Can anyone hide in a secret place so I cannot see him?—this is Yahweh's declaration— and do I not fill the heavens and the earth?—this is Yahweh's declaration.

do I not fill the heavens and the earth?

Yahweh uses this question to emphasize that he is everywhere in heaven and on earth. Alternate translation: "I am everywhere, both in the heavens and on the earth." (See: [Rhetorical Question](#))

Jeremiah 23:25

Connecting Statement:

Yahweh continues to deliver his message about the false prophets and priests that he began in [Jeremiah 23:9](#) and completes in [Jeremiah 23:40](#).

prophesying deceit

The word “deceit” can be expressed as an adjective or an adverb. Alternate translation: “prophesying deceit things” or “prophesying deceitfully” (See: [Abstract Nouns](#))

in my name

This phrase refers to speaking with Yahweh’s power and authority or as his representative. See how you translated this phrase in [Jeremiah 14:14](#). (See: [Metonymy](#))

I had a dream!

They meant that this dream was from God. This can be made explicit. Alternate translation: “I had a dream from Yahweh” (See: [Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information](#))

ULT

²⁵ I have heard what the prophets have said, those who were prophesying deceit in my name. They said, ‘I had a dream! I had a dream!’

Jeremiah 23:26

**How long will this go on, prophets who
prophecy lies from their minds, and who
prophecy from the deceit in their hearts?**

Yahweh asks this question to emphasize that this is something that should not continue. Alternate translation: "This should not continue, prophets declaring lies which they themselves have made up." (See: [Rhetorical Question](#))

ULT

²⁶ How long will this go on, prophets who prophecy lies from their minds, and who prophecy from the deceit in their hearts?

prophecy lies from their minds ... prophecy from the deceit in their hearts

These two phrases mean the same thing and emphasize that the false prophets made up their prophecies. Alternate translation: "prophecy things that come only from their own minds" (See: [Doublet](#))

Jeremiah 23:27

forget my name ... forgot my name

Here the word “name” refers to the whole being of Yahweh.
Alternate translation: “forget me ... forgot me” or “forget who I am ... forgot who I am” (See: [Metonymy](#))

in favor of Baal’s name

Here “Baal’s name” refers to the god Baal. Alternate translation: “leading my people to worship Baal instead of me” (See: [Metonymy](#))

ULT

²⁷ They are planning on making my people forget my name with the dreams that they report, each one to his neighbor, just as their ancestors forgot my name in favor of Baal’s name.

Jeremiah 23:28

Connecting Statement:

Yahweh continues to deliver his message about the false prophets and priests that he began in [Jeremiah 23:9](#) and completes in [Jeremiah 23:40](#).

this is Yahweh's declaration

Yahweh speaks of himself by name to express the certainty of what he is declaring. See how you translated this in [Jeremiah 1:8](#). Alternate translation: “this is what Yahweh has declared” or “this is what I, Yahweh, have declared” (See: [First](#), [Second](#) or [Third Person](#))

ULT

28 The prophet who has a dream, let him report the dream. But the one to whom I have declared something, let him declare my word truthfully. What does straw have to do with grain?—this is Yahweh's declaration—

Jeremiah 23:29

Is not my word like fire?...and like a hammer that shatters a rock into pieces?

Yahweh uses these questions to emphasize that his word is much more powerful than the words of mere men. In that way, his word is like fire or a hammer. Alternate translation: “My word is powerful like fire ... and powerful like a hammer that shatters a rock into pieces.” (See: [Rhetorical Question](#) and [Simile](#))

ULT

²⁹ Is not my word like fire?—this is Yahweh’s declaration—and like a hammer that shatters a rock into pieces?

Jeremiah 23:30

I am against

"I am opposed to"

steals words from another person

This implies that the false prophets are thieves. They are so evil that they take each other's messages without permission rather than make up their own false messages.

ULT

³⁰ So see, I am against the prophets—this is Yahweh's declaration—anyone who steals words from another person and says they come from me.

Jeremiah 23:31

Connecting Statement:

Yahweh continues to deliver his message about the false prophets and priests that he began in [Jeremiah 23:9](#) and completes in [Jeremiah 23:40](#).

ULT

³¹ See, I am against the prophets—this is Yahweh’s declaration—who use their tongues to prophesy proclamations.

See

This alerts the reader to pay special attention to what follows. Alternate translation: “Pay attention”

who use their tongues

Here “tongues” is a metonym for the ability to speak. (See: [Metonymy](#))

Jeremiah 23:32

(There are no notes for this verse.)

ULT

³² See, I am against the prophets who dream deceitfully—this is Yahweh’s declaration—and then proclaim them and in this way mislead my people with their deceit and boasting. I am against them, for I have not sent them out nor given them commands. So they will certainly not help this people—this is Yahweh’s declaration.

Jeremiah 23:33

General Information:

In verses 33-40 there is a wordplay with the word “burden.” Sometimes it means “a message” and other times it means “a heavy load to carry.” This wordplay should be retained if possible.

Connecting Statement:

Yahweh continues to deliver his message about the false prophets and priests that he began in [Jeremiah 23:9](#) and completes in [Jeremiah 23:40](#).

ULT

³³ When these people, or a prophet, or a priest asks you, ‘What is the burden of Yahweh?’ you will say to them, ‘You are the burden, and I will cast you off’—this is Yahweh’s declaration.

asks you ... you will say

These two instances of “you” are singular and refer to Jeremiah. (See: [Forms of You](#))

What is the burden of Yahweh?

Here “burden” means a message or prophecy from Yahweh.

You are the burden ... cast you off

These two instances of “you” are plural and refer to the false prophets and the priests. (See: [Forms of You](#))

You are the burden

Here “burden” means a heavy load. This is a metaphor that means they annoy Yahweh and he no longer wants to put up with them. Alternate translation: “You are a burden that I am tired of carrying” (See: [Metaphor](#))

this is Yahweh’s declaration

Yahweh speaks of himself by name to express the certainty of what he is declaring. See how you translated this in [Jeremiah 1:8](#). Alternate translation: “this is what Yahweh has declared” or “this is what I, Yahweh, have declared” (See: [First, Second or Third Person](#))

Jeremiah 23:34

This is the burden of Yahweh

Here “burden” means a message or prophecy from Yahweh.

his house

Here “house” is a metonym for the family that lives inside it.
Alternate translation: “his family” (See: [Metonymy](#))

ULT

³⁴ As for the prophets, priests, and people who are saying, ‘This is the burden of Yahweh’ I will punish that man and his house.

Jeremiah 23:35

General Information:

In verses 33-40 there is a wordplay with the word “burden.” Sometimes it means “a message” and other times it means “a heavy load to carry.” This wordplay should be retained if possible.

Connecting Statement:

Yahweh continues to deliver his message about the false prophets and priests that he began in [Jeremiah 23:9](#) and completes in [Jeremiah 23:40](#).

You continue to say...‘What did Yahweh declare?’

It may be helpful to reorder this sentence. Alternate translation: “Each person continues to ask his neighbor and his brother, ‘What did Yahweh answer?’ and ‘What did Yahweh declare?’”

ULT

³⁵ You continue to say, each person to his neighbor and each man to his brother, ‘What did Yahweh answer?’ and ‘What did Yahweh declare?’

Jeremiah 23:36

**But you must no longer talk about the
'burden of Yahweh,' for the burden is every
man's own word, and**

This could mean: (1) both instances of "burden" mean "message."

Alternate translation: "You must no longer call your visions the 'burden of Yahweh' because they are really only every man's own words, and" or (2) the first 'burden' means "message" and the

second means "heavy load." Alternate translation: "You must no longer talk about the 'message of Yahweh' because the words that each of you speak are what is a 'heavy load.' In this way"

ULT

³⁶ But you must no longer talk about the 'burden of Yahweh,' for the burden is every man's own word, and you have perverted the words of the living God, Yahweh of hosts, our God.

you have perverted the words ... our God

To "pervert" something is to twist or distort it. Alternate translation: "you have changed the message of the living God, Yahweh of hosts, our God, to say what you want it to say and not what God said"

Jeremiah 23:37

General Information:

In verses 33-40 there is a wordplay with the word “burden.” Sometimes it means “a message” and other times it means “a heavy load to carry.” This wordplay should be retained if possible.

ULT

³⁷ This is what you will say to the prophet, ‘What answer did Yahweh give you?’ or ‘What did Yahweh say?’

Connecting Statement:

Yahweh completes his message about the false prophets and priests that he began in [Jeremiah 23:9](#).

This is what you will say

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

Jeremiah 23:38

But if you say ... Because you have said ... when I sent to you ... You will not say

All of these instances of “you” are plural and refer to the priests and false prophets. (See: [Forms of You](#))

ULT

³⁸ But if you say, ‘The burden of Yahweh’, this is what Yahweh says: ‘Because you have said these words, ‘The burden of Yahweh,’ when I sent to you, saying, ‘You will not say, “The burden of Yahweh,”’

Jeremiah 23:39

therefore, behold

“therefore, pay attention.” This alerts the reader to pay special attention to what follows.

I am about to pick you up and throw you away from me

Yahweh speaks of sending these priests and false prophets into exile as if they were an object that he was going to throw far away. Alternate translation: “I am about to drive you away from me” (See: [Metaphor](#))

pick you up ... throw you ... I gave you

All of these instances of “you” are plural and refer to the priests and false prophets. (See: [Forms of You](#))

the city that I gave you

This refers to Jerusalem.

ULT

³⁹ therefore, behold, I am about to pick you up and throw you away from me, along with the city that I gave you and your ancestors.

Jeremiah 23:40

insult on you

This instance of “you” is plural and refers to the priests and false prophets. (See: [Forms of You](#))

I will put everlasting shame and insult on you that will not be forgotten

“I will cover you with shame that will last forever and insult that you will never forget” or “I will cause people to make fun of you forever. People will never forget that you were disgraced.” Yahweh speaks of the humiliation of the priests and false prophets as if he would put shame and insult on them like clothing.

that will not be forgotten

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: “that will last forever” (See: [Active or Passive](#))

ULT

40 Then I will put everlasting shame and insult on you that will not be forgotten.”

Jeremiah 24

Jeremiah 24 General Notes

Special concepts in this chapter

The exiles are blessed and the others punished

God will bless the people who were taken away into Babylon but punish the people left in the land because they still did not repent and turn to him. (See: [bless](#), [blessed](#), [blessing](#) and [repent](#), [repentance](#))

Jeremiah 24:1

me

All instances of this pronoun refer to Jeremiah.

Behold

The word “Behold” here shows that Jeremiah saw something interesting.

This vision happened ... them to Babylon

This part of the story is used to provide historical information to show when the events of the happened. (See: [Background Information](#))

craftsmen

people skilled at building things

metalworkers

people skilled at creating things out of metal

ULT

¹ Yahweh showed me something.

Behold, two baskets of figs were placed before Yahweh’s temple. (This vision happened after Nebuchadnezzar, king of Babylon, took into exile Jehoiachin son of Jehoiakim, king of Judah, the officials of Judah, the craftsmen and the metalworkers from Jerusalem and brought them to Babylon.)

Jeremiah 24:2

they could not be eaten

These can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: “no one could eat them” (See: [Active or Passive](#))

ULT

² One basket of figs was very good, like first ripe figs, but the other basket of figs was so very bad that they could not be eaten.

Jeremiah 24:3

they cannot be eaten

These can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: “no one could eat them ... no one can eat them” (See: [Active or Passive](#))

ULT

³ Yahweh said to me, “What do you see, Jeremiah?” I said, “Figs. Figs that are very good and figs that are so very bad they cannot be eaten.”

Jeremiah 24:4

the word of Yahweh came to me, saying,

This idiom is used to introduce a special message from God. See how you translated it in [Jeremiah 1:4](#). Alternate translation: “Yahweh gave me a message. He said,” or “Yahweh spoke this message to me:” (See: [Idiom](#))

ULT

⁴ Then the word of Yahweh came to me, saying,

Jeremiah 24:5

I will look on the exiles of Judah for their benefit

Here “look on” is an idiom that means Yahweh will take care of them. Alternate translation: “I will take good care of the exiles of Judah” (See: [Idiom](#))

just like these good figs

The good figs represent those Judean exiles sent to the land of Chaldea. (See: [Simile](#))

ULT

⁵ “Yahweh, God of Israel, says this: I will look on the exiles of Judah for their benefit, just like these good figs, the exiles whom I have sent out from this place to the land of Chaldea.

Jeremiah 24:6

I will set my eyes on them for good

Here “set my eyes” means he will see them. Seeing them is a metonym for caring for them. Alternate translation: “I will bless them” (See: [Metonymy](#))

I will build them up, and not tear them down. I will plant them, and not uproot them

These two metaphors have similar meanings. The second one strengthens the thought in the first. Alternate translation: “I will help them to prosper in Chaldea” (See: [Parallelism](#))

I will build them up, and not tear them down

Yahweh speak of the exiles as a building which Yahweh will build and not tear down. Alternate translation: “I will help them flourish in the land, and not ruin them” (See: [Metaphor](#))

I will plant them, and not uproot them

Yahweh speak of the exiles as plants which Yahweh will plant in good soil and not pull out. Alternate translation: “I will establish them in the land, and not remove them” (See: [Metaphor](#))

ULT

⁶ I will set my eyes on them for good and restore them to this land. I will build them up, and not tear them down. I will plant them, and not uproot them.

Jeremiah 24:7

(There are no notes for this verse.)

ULT

⁷ Then I will give them a heart to know me, for I am Yahweh. They will be my people and I will be their God, so they will turn to me with all their heart.

Jeremiah 24:8

(There are no notes for this verse.)

ULT

⁸ But like the bad figs that are too bad to be eaten—this is what Yahweh says—I will act in this way with Zedekiah, king of Judah, with his officials, and with the rest of Jerusalem who remain in this land or go to stay in the land of Egypt.

Jeremiah 24:9

I will turn them into a frightening thing, a disaster ... a disgrace and a subject for proverbs, taunts, and curses

These phrases mean the same thing and emphasize how thoroughly Yahweh will judge the people of Jerusalem. They will become something that will frighten other people when they see it. (See: [Doublet](#) and [Metaphor](#))

ULT

⁹ I will turn them into a frightening thing, a disaster, in the sight of all the kingdoms on earth, a disgrace and a subject for proverbs, taunts, and curses in every place where I will have driven them.

Jeremiah 24:10

I will send out sword, famine, and plague against them

“I will kill them with war, famine and sicknesses”

I will send out sword

Here “sword” refers to war or enemy armies. Alternate translation: “I will send enemy armies” or “I will send out war” (See: [Metonymy](#))

sword, famine, and plague

These things are spoken of as if they were living things that could attack the people of Jerusalem. (See: [Personification](#))

they are destroyed from the land

“none of them remain in the land”

ULT

¹⁰ I will send out sword, famine, and plague against them, until they are destroyed from the land that I gave them and their ancestors.”

Jeremiah 25

Jeremiah 25 General Notes

Structure and formatting

Some translations set each line of poetry farther to the right than the rest of the text to make it easier to read. The ULT does this with the poetry in 25:30-38.

Special concepts in this chapter

Seventy years

Babylon will rule over Judah for seventy years. Because Yahweh is just, he will soon punish Babylon for their evil actions. (See: [just, justice, unjust, injustice, justify, justification](#) and [evil, wicked, unpleasant](#))

Important figures of speech in this chapter

Idiom

Jeremiah uses the idiom of drinking the cup of wine of God's punishment to say that Babylon will destroy all the surrounding nations and then be destroyed. (See: [Idiom](#))

Jeremiah 25:1

This is the word that came to Jeremiah

It is implied that the word that came to Jeremiah was from Yahweh. This idiom is used to introduce a special message from God. See how you translated a similar phrase in [Jeremiah 7:1](#). Alternate translation: “This is the message that Yahweh gave to Jeremiah” or “This is the message that Yahweh spoke to Jeremiah” (See: [Idiom](#))

the fourth ... the first

(See: [Ordinal Numbers](#))

ULT

¹ This is the word that came to Jeremiah about all the people of Judah. It came in the fourth year of Jehoiakim son of Josiah, king of Judah. That was the first year of Nebuchadnezzar, king of Babylon.

Jeremiah 25:2

(There are no notes for this verse.)

ULT

² Jeremiah the prophet proclaimed this to all the people of Judah and all the inhabitants of Jerusalem.

Jeremiah 25:3

Amon

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

ULT

³ He said, "For twenty-three years, from the thirteenth year of Josiah son of Amon, king of Judah until this day, Yahweh's words have been coming to me and I have spoken to you again and again, but you have not listened.

Jeremiah 25:4

(There are no notes for this verse.)

ULT

⁴ Yahweh sent out all his servants the prophets to you again and again, but you have not listened or paid any attention.

Jeremiah 25:5

Let each man turn from his wicked way and the corruption of his practices

Jeremiah speaks of people who stop committing an action as if those people were turning away from that action. (See: [Metaphor](#))

his wicked way and the corruption of his practices

The terms “wicked way” and “corruption of his practices” mean the same thing and refer to every sinful thing that they do. (See: [Doublet](#))

the corruption of his practices

“his corrupt practices”

ULT

⁵ These prophets said, ‘Let each man turn from his wicked way and the corruption of his practices and return to the land that Yahweh gave in ancient times to your ancestors and to you, as a permanent gift.’

Jeremiah 25:6

do not walk after other gods

Jeremiah speaks of a person being devoted to a god as if the person were walking behind the god. Alternate translation: “do not become devoted to other gods” (See: [Metaphor](#))

do not provoke him with the work of your hands

The word “him” refers to Yahweh. Here, the phrase **the work of your hands** could mean: (1) it is a reference to the idols that the people have made with their hands. Alternate translation: “do not provoke Yahweh with the idols that you have made” or (2) It is an idiom that refers to the actions of a person, with the word “hands” being a synecdoche that represents the person who does those actions. Alternate translation: “do not provoke Yahweh by the things that you do” (See: [Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information](#) and [Synecdoche](#) and [Idiom](#))

ULT

6 So do not walk after other gods to worship them or bow down to them, and do not provoke him with the work of your hands so that he does you harm.'

Jeremiah 25:7

you have provoked me with the work of your hands to do harm to you

See how you translated a similar phrase in [Jeremiah 25:6](#). Here, the phrase **the work of your hands** could mean: (1) it is a reference to the idols that the people have made with their hands. Alternate translation: “you have provoked me to harm you because of the idols that you have made with your hands” or (2) It is an idiom that refers to the actions of a person, with the word “hands” being a synecdoche that represents the person who does those actions. Alternate translation: “you have provoked me to harm you because of the things that you do” (See: [Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information](#) and [Synecdoche](#) and [Idiom](#))

ULT

⁷ But you have not listened to me—this is Yahweh’s declaration—so you have provoked me with the work of your hands to do harm to you.

to do harm to you

“so that I do harm to you”

Jeremiah 25:8

Yahweh of hosts says this

Jeremiah often uses these words to introduce an important message from Yahweh. See how you translated this in [Jeremiah 6:6](#).

ULT

⁸ So Yahweh of hosts says this, 'Because you did not listen to my words,

Jeremiah 25:9

see

“look” or “listen” or “pay attention to what i am about to tell you”

bring them against this land

The idiom to “bring ... against this land” means that they will attack the people who live in the land. Alternate translation: “bring them to attack this land” (See: [Idiom](#))

I will set them apart for destruction

The idiom “set ... apart for destruction” means to destroy something completely. Alternate translation: “I will destroy them completely” (See: [Idiom](#))

I will turn them into a horror

The word “horror” may be translated with a verbal phrase. Alternate translation: “I will turn them into something that horrifies people” (See: [Abstract Nouns](#))

an object for hissing

The word “hissing” refers to a sound that shows strong disapproval and can be translated with a verbal phrase. Alternate translation: “an object at which people will hiss”

ULT

⁹ see, I am about to send out a command to gather all the peoples of the north—this is Yahweh’s declaration—with Nebuchadnezzar my servant, king of Babylon, and bring them against this land and its inhabitants, and against all the nations around you. For I will set them apart for destruction. I will turn them into a horror, an object for hissing, and an unending desolation.

Jeremiah 25:10

millstones

These are two large, round stones used to grind grain.

the sound of joy and sound of gladness, the sound of the groom and the sound of the bride

See how you translated this in [Jeremiah 7:34](#).

ULT

10 I will put an end to the sound of joy and sound of gladness, the sound of the groom and the sound of the bride, the sound of the millstones and the light of the lamp.

Jeremiah 25:11

all of this land will become a desolation and a horror

The words “desolation” and “horror” can be translated with a verbal phrase. Alternate translation: “I will cause this land to be desolate and something that horrifies people” (See: [Abstract Nouns](#))

ULT

11 Then all of this land will become a desolation and a horror, and these nations will serve the king of Babylon for seventy years.

Jeremiah 25:12

when seventy years have been completed

“after seventy years” or “after seventy years have passed”

an unending desolation

The noun “desolation” can be translated as an adjective. Alternate translation: “desolate forever” (See: [Abstract Nouns](#))

ULT

¹² Then it will happen when seventy years have been completed, that I will punish the king of Babylon and that nation, the land of the Chaldeans—this is Yahweh’s declaration—for their iniquity and make it an unending desolation.

Jeremiah 25:13

everything written in this book

This can be translated in active form. Alternate translation: “everything that Jeremiah has written in this book” or “everything that one has written in this book” (See: [Active or Passive](#))

ULT

13 Then I will carry out against that land all the words that I had spoken, and everything written in this book that Jeremiah has prophesied against all the nations.

Jeremiah 25:14

I will repay them for their deeds and the works of their hands

Yahweh speaks of punishing the people of the nations for what they have done as if he were paying them back. (See: [Metaphor](#))

their deeds and the works of their hands

These two phrases mean basically the same thing. The idiom “the works of their hands” refers to the actions of a person, with the word “hands” being a synecdoche that represents the person who does those actions. Alternate translation: “everything that they have done” (See: [Doublet](#) and [Idiom](#) and [Synecdoche](#))

ULT

¹⁴ For also many other nations and great kings will make slaves out of these nations. I will repay them for their deeds and the works of their hands.’”

Jeremiah 25:15

Take this cup of the wine of fury

Yahweh speaks of his extreme anger as if it were wine that fills a cup. Alternate translation: "Take this cup of wine that represents my fury" (See: [Metaphor](#))

make all the nations ... drink it

The word "nations" represents the people of the nations. Yahweh speaks of people experiencing his fury as if they were to drink the wine that is in the cup. Alternate translation: "make all the people of the nations ... drink the wine" (See: [Metonymy](#) and [Metaphor](#))

ULT

15 For Yahweh, God of Israel, said this to me, "Take this cup of the wine of fury from my hand and make all the nations to which I am sending you drink it."

Jeremiah 25:16

they will drink and then stagger about and rant madly

Yahweh speaks of the people being terrified about his fury as if they were drunk from drinking the wine from the cup. (See: [Metaphor](#))

ULT

¹⁶ For they will drink and then stagger about and rant madly before the sword that I am sending out among them."

before the sword that I am sending out among them

Here the word "sword" represents war. Alternate translation: "because of the wars that I am causing to happen among them" (See: [Metonymy](#))

Jeremiah 25:17

This passage continues the metaphor of Yahweh's extreme anger as wine that he causes the people of the nations to drink from a cup.
(See: [Metaphor](#))

I made all the nations ... drink it

The word "nations" represents the people of the nations. Alternate translation: "I made all the people of the nations ... drink the wine from the cup" (See: [Metonymy](#))

ULT

17 So I took the cup from Yahweh's hand, and I made all the nations to which Yahweh had sent me drink it:

Jeremiah 25:18

something terrifying

The adjective “terrifying” can be translated with a verbal phrase.
Alternate translation: “something that terrifies people”

an object for hissing and cursing

The word “hissing” refers to a sound that shows strong disapproval.
Both “hissing” and “cursing” can be translated with a verbal phrase. Alternate translation: “an object at which people hiss and which they curse”

they are at this present day

Here, this phrase could mean: (1) refers to the time when the book of Jeremiah was written and some time after Jeremiah had proclaimed this prophecy or (2) means that the things about which Jeremiah prophesies here have already started to happen.

ULT

18 Jerusalem, the cities of Judah and her kings and officials—to turn them into ruins and something terrifying, and into an object for hissing and cursing, as they are at this present day.

Jeremiah 25:19

This passage continues the metaphor of Yahweh's extreme anger as wine that he causes the people of the nations to drink from a cup.
(See: [Metaphor](#))

Other nations also had to drink it

The word "nations" represents the people of the nations. Alternate translation: "People from other nations also had to drink the wine from the cup" (See: [Metonymy](#))

ULT

¹⁹ Other nations also had to drink it:
Pharaoh king of Egypt and his servants;
his officials and all his people;

Jeremiah 25:20

people of mixed heritage

This could mean: (1) people whose ancestors were from different people groups or (2) foreigners who lived in Egypt.

Uz

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

ULT

²⁰ all people of mixed heritage and all the kings of the land of Uz; all the kings of the land of Philistia—Ashkelon, Gaza, Ekron, and the remnant of Ashdod;

Jeremiah 25:21

(There are no notes for this verse.)

ULT

²¹ Edom and Moab and the people of Ammon.

Jeremiah 25:22

This passage continues the metaphor of Yahweh's extreme anger as wine that he causes the people of the nations to drink from a cup.
(See: [Metaphor](#))

the sea

This is a reference to the Mediterranean Sea.

ULT

²² The kings of Tyre and Sidon, the kings of the coasts on the other side of the sea,

Jeremiah 25:23

Dedan, Tema, and Buz

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

all the ones who cut the hair on the sides of their heads

This probably refers to people who cut their hair short in order to honor a pagan god. Some modern versions interpret this Hebrew expression as “all the people who live on the edge of the wilderness.” See how you translated a similar phrase in [Jeremiah 9:26](#).

they also had to drink it

“they also had to drink the wine from the cup”

ULT

²³ Dedan, Tema, and Buz with all the ones who cut the hair on the sides of their heads, they also had to drink it.

Jeremiah 25:24

This passage continues the metaphor of Yahweh's extreme anger as wine that he causes the people of the nations to drink from a cup.
(See: [Metaphor](#))

ULT

²⁴ All the kings of Arabia and all the kings of people of mixed heritage who live in the wilderness;

Jeremiah 25:25

Zimri

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

ULT

²⁵ all the kings of Zimri, all the kings of
Elam, and all the kings of the Medes;

Jeremiah 25:26

everyone with his brother

This is an idiom that means every person, one after another.
Alternate translation: "one after another" (See: [Idiom](#))

all of them had to drink the cup from Yahweh's hand

Here "the cup" is a metonym for the wine that it contains. Alternate translation: "all of these people had to drink the wine from the cup in Yahweh's hand" (See: [Metonymy](#))

ULT

²⁶ all the kings of the north, the ones close by and the ones far away— everyone with his brother and all the kingdoms of the world that are on the surface of the earth, all of them had to drink the cup from Yahweh's hand. Finally, the king of Babylon will also drink from that cup.

Jeremiah 25:27

This passage continues the metaphor of Yahweh's extreme anger as wine that he causes the people of the nations to drink from a cup. (See: [Metaphor](#))

Yahweh of hosts ... says this

Jeremiah often uses these words to introduce an important message from Yahweh. See how you translated this in [Jeremiah 6:6](#).

before the sword that I am sending among you

Here the word "sword" represents war. Alternate translation: "before the wars that I am causing to happen among you" (See: [Metonymy](#))

ULT

²⁷ Yahweh said to me, "Now you must say to them, 'Yahweh of hosts, God of Israel, says this: Drink and become drunk, then vomit, fall down, and do not rise before the sword that I am sending among you.'

Jeremiah 25:28

(There are no notes for this verse.)

ULT

²⁸ Then it will happen that if they refuse to take the cup from your hand to drink, you will say to them, 'Yahweh of hosts says this: You must certainly drink it.'

Jeremiah 25:29

the city that is called by my name

This refers to Jerusalem and can be translated in active form.
Alternate translation: “the city that I have called by my name” or “Jerusalem, which I have called by my name” (See: [Metonymy](#))

and should you yourselves be free from punishment?

Yahweh asks this question to rebuke the people and to emphasize that he will certainly punish them. Alternate translation: “so do not think that you yourselves will be free from punishment.” (See: [Rhetorical Question](#))

I am calling a sword against all the inhabitants of the land

Here the word “sword” represents war. Yahweh speaks of declaring war against the people as if he were calling a sword against them. Alternate translation: “I am declaring war against all the inhabitants of the land” or “I am bringing war against all the inhabitants of the land” (See: [Metonymy](#) and [Metaphor](#))

ULT

²⁹ For see, I am about to bring disaster on the city that is called by my name, and should you yourselves be free from punishment? You will not be free, for I am calling a sword against all the inhabitants of the land!—this is the declaration of Yahweh of hosts.’

Jeremiah 25:30

Yahweh will roar

Jeremiah speaks of Yahweh shouting very loudly as if he were roaring like a lion. (See: [Metaphor](#))

from the heights

This phrase is a metonym for heaven. Alternate translation: “from heaven” (See: [Metonymy](#))

he will roar mightily against his fold

Jeremiah speaks of Yahweh as if he were a lion and his people were a flock of sheep. The people will be helpless when Yahweh comes to punish them, as sheep are helpless when a lion attacks. (See: [Metaphor](#))

those who tread the grapes

This refers to people who crush grapes in a winepress with their feet in order to make wine.

ULT

30 You must prophesy all these words against them, and say to them, ‘Yahweh will roar from the heights and he will shout with his voice from his holy dwelling, and he will roar mightily against his fold; and he will shout, like those who tread the grapes against all those who live on the earth.

Jeremiah 25:31

to the ends of the earth

This is an idiom that means the farthest places on the earth. By referencing both ends, it refers to everywhere in between. Alternate translation: “to the farthest places on the earth” or “to everywhere on earth” (See: [Idiom](#) and [Merism](#))

on all flesh

Here the word “flesh” represents humanity. Alternate translation: “on all mankind” or “on all people” (See: [Metonymy](#))

this is Yahweh’s declaration

Yahweh speaks of himself by name to express the certainty of what he is declaring. See how you translated this in [Jeremiah 1:8](#). Alternate translation: “this is what Yahweh has declared” or “this is what I, Yahweh, have declared” (See: [First, Second or Third Person](#))

ULT

31 The sound of battle will resound to the ends of the earth, for Yahweh brings charges against the nations, and he brings judgment on all flesh, and the wicked ones he will put to the sword—this is Yahweh’s declaration.’

Jeremiah 25:32

Yahweh of hosts says this

Jeremiah often uses these words to introduce an important message from Yahweh. See how you translated this in [Jeremiah 6:6](#).

See

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

disaster is going out from nation to nation

Yahweh speaks of great disasters happening in each nation as if “disaster” were a person who goes from nation to nation. Alternate translation: “great disasters are going to happen in one nation after another” (See: [Personification](#))

a great storm is beginning from the farthest parts of the earth

Here, this metaphor could mean: (1) Yahweh speaks of Babylonian army and the destruction that it will cause as if it were a great storm or (2) Yahweh speaks of his great anger as if it were a great storm that causes much destruction. (See: [Metaphor](#))

ULT

³² Yahweh of hosts says this, ‘See, disaster is going out from nation to nation, and a great storm is beginning from the farthest parts of the earth.’

Jeremiah 25:33

those killed by Yahweh

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

will on that day extend from one end of the earth to the other

By mentioning both ends of the earth, this phrase represents everywhere in between those ends. Alternate translation: “will on that day cover the entire earth” (See: [Merism](#))

they will not be mourned, gathered, or buried

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: “no one will mourn them, gather them, or bury them” (See: [Active or Passive](#))

They will be like dung on the ground

The bodies are compared to dung on the ground to emphasize that they will be disgusting and that no one will bury them. See how you translated a similar phrase in [Jeremiah 16:4](#). (See: [Simile](#))

ULT

33 Then those killed by Yahweh will on that day extend from one end of the earth to the other; they will not be mourned, gathered, or buried. They will be like dung on the ground.

Jeremiah 25:34

shepherds

Yahweh speaks of the leaders of Israel as if they were shepherds who are responsible for protecting and caring for the people, who, implicitly, are spoken of as if they are the sheep. (See: [Metaphor](#))

Roll about in the dust

This is a sign of sorrow, mourning or distress. (See: [Symbolic Action](#))

you leaders of the flock

This phrase also refers to the leaders of Israel who are responsible to care for the people, who are spoken of as if they were a flock of sheep. Alternate translation: “you leaders of the people” (See: [Metaphor](#))

for the days of your slaughter have come

Usually it is the sheep that are slaughtered, but here Yahweh says that he will slaughter the shepherds. The word “slaughter” can be translated with a verbal phrase. Alternate translation: “for the time has come for me to slaughter you” (See: [Irony](#) and [Abstract Nouns](#))

you will be scattered when you fall like fine pottery

Yahweh speaks of the leaders of Israel being destroyed as if they are pieces of pottery that shatter when they fall to the ground. This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: “you will fall like fine pottery and your shattered pieces will scatter on the ground” (See: [Metaphor](#) and [Active or Passive](#))

ULT

³⁴ Wail, shepherds, and shout for help!
Roll about in the dust, you leaders of
the flock, for the days of your slaughter
have come; you will be scattered when
you fall like fine pottery.

Jeremiah 25:35

(There are no notes for this verse.)

ULT

³⁵ There is no refuge for the shepherds,
there will be no escape for the leaders
of the flock.

Jeremiah 25:36

Yahweh is destroying their pastures

Yahweh speaks of the nation in which the leaders think that they live peacefully as if it were the “pastures” in which they care for the sheep (See: [Metaphor](#))

ULT

³⁶ Hear the cries of the shepherds and the wails of the leaders of the flock, for Yahweh is destroying their pastures.

Jeremiah 25:37

So the peaceful pastures will be devastated

Yahweh continues to speak of the leaders of Israel as if they were shepherds. Here he speaks of the nation as the “pastures” in which they think they live peacefully. (See: [Metaphor](#))

the peaceful pastures will be devastated because of Yahweh’s fierce anger

This can be put into active form. Alternate translation: “Yahweh will devastate the peaceful pastures because of he extremely angry” (See: [Active or Passive](#))

ULT

³⁷ So the peaceful pastures will be devastated because of Yahweh’s fierce anger.

Jeremiah 25:38

Like a young lion, he has left his den

Yahweh punishing his people in his extreme wrath is spoken of as if Yahweh were a lion who leaves his den in search of prey. (See: [Metaphor](#))

their land will become a horror

The word “horror” may be translated with a verbal phrase. Alternate translation: “their land will become something that horrifies people” (See: [Abstract Nouns](#))

the oppressor’s anger

This refers to the anger of Israel’s enemies.

ULT

38 Like a young lion, he has left his den, for their land will become a horror because of the oppressor’s anger, because of his angry wrath.” ^[1]

Jeremiah 26

Jeremiah 26 General Notes

Special concepts in this chapter

The people want to kill Jeremiah

The people wanted to kill Jeremiah but other people intervened and said that they should listen to Jeremiah and repent. They represent the remnant of the faithful Jews. (See: [repent](#), [repentance](#) and [remnant](#) and [faithful](#), [faithfulness](#), [trustworthy](#))

Jeremiah 26:1

this word came from Yahweh, saying

This idiom is used to introduce a special message from God. See how you translated a similar phrase in [Jeremiah 18:1](#), and make any changes as needed. Alternate translation: “This message came from Yahweh. He said” or “Yahweh spoke this message” (See: [Idiom](#))

ULT

¹ In the beginning of the reign of Jehoiakim son of Josiah, this word came from Yahweh, saying,

this word came from Yahweh, saying

It can be stated clearly who Yahweh gave this message to. Alternate translation: “this word came to Jeremiah from Yahweh, saying” or “Yahweh spoke this message to Jeremiah” (See: [Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information](#))

Jeremiah 26:2

cities of Judah

The word “cities” is a metonym for the people who live in the city.
Alternate translation: “people from the cities of Judah” (See: [Metaphor](#))

Do not cut short any word!

“Do not leave anything out from what I have told you!”

ULT

2 “Yahweh says this: Stand in the courtyard of my house and speak about all the cities of Judah who come to worship at my house. Proclaim all the words that I have commanded you to say to them. Do not cut short any word!”

Jeremiah 26:3

each man will turn from his wicked ways

Yahweh speaks of a person's lifestyle as if it were a "way" or path along which the person walks. Alternate translation: "each man will stop his wicked way of living" (See: [Metaphor](#))

so I will relent concerning the disaster

This is conditional destruction. If Judah repents, God will not destroy but heal them.

the wickedness of their practices

"the wicked way that they live" or "the wicked things that they do"

ULT

³ It may be that they will listen, that each man will turn from his wicked ways, so I will relent concerning the disaster that I am planning to bring on them because of the wickedness of their practices.

Jeremiah 26:4

(There are no notes for this verse.)

ULT

⁴ So you must say to them, ‘Yahweh says this: If you do not listen to me so as to walk in my law that I have placed before you—

Jeremiah 26:5

(There are no notes for this verse.)

ULT

⁵ if you do not listen to the words of my servants the prophets whom I am persistently sending to you—but you have not listened!—

Jeremiah 26:6

then I will make this house like Shiloh

Yahweh had destroyed a place of worship at Shiloh, and he was threatening to destroy this place of worship. (See: [Simile](#))

I will turn this city into a curse

What Yahweh would turn the city into is a metonym for what people would use the city for. Alternate translation: "I will make this city so that people will ask me to destroy others the way I have destroyed this city" (See: [Metonymy](#))

in the sight of all the nations on earth

"so that all the nations on earth can see me do it"

ULT

⁶ then I will make this house like Shiloh;
I will turn this city into a curse in the
sight of all the nations on earth."

Jeremiah 26:7

Yahweh's house

the temple

ULT

⁷ The priests, the prophets, and all the people heard Jeremiah announcing these words in Yahweh's house.

Jeremiah 26:8

all the people seized him and said, “You will certainly die!”

This could mean: (1) The people chose to believe the lie of false peace and did not want to be confronted with the truth, or (2) the people believed the other prophets proclaiming peace and saw Jeremiah as a false prophet who should be stoned for leading the people astray.

ULT

⁸ So it happened that when Jeremiah had finished announcing all that Yahweh commanded him to say to all the people, the priests, prophets, and all the people seized him and said, “You will certainly die!”

Jeremiah 26:9

Why have you prophesied ... inhabitant?

This rebuke can be translated as a statement. Alternate translation: "You should not have prophesied ... inhabitant." (See: [Rhetorical Question](#))

ULT

⁹ Why have you prophesied in Yahweh's name and said that this house will become like Shiloh and this city will become desolate, with no inhabitant?" For all the people had formed a mob against Jeremiah in Yahweh's house.

Jeremiah 26:10

the New Gate

the name of the gate through which people went into the temple

ULT

10 Then the officials of Judah heard these words and went up from the king's house to Yahweh's house. They sat in the gateway at the New Gate of Yahweh's house.

Jeremiah 26:11

you heard with your own ears

“you heard”

ULT

11 The priests and the prophets spoke to the officials and to all the people. They said, “It is right for this man to die, for he prophesied against this city, just as you heard with your own ears!”

Jeremiah 26:12

this house and this city

“the people who worship in Yahweh’s temple and those who live in the city of Jerusalem”

ULT

12 So Jeremiah spoke to all the officials and all the people and said, “Yahweh has sent me out to prophesy against this house and this city, to say all the words that you have heard.

Jeremiah 26:13

your ways ... your practices

These two phrases mean almost the same thing. Alternate translation: "the things you do" (See: [Doublet](#))

listen to the voice of Yahweh

The voice is a synecdoche for the person, and the same word can be translated "listen" or "obey." Alternate translation: "obey Yahweh" (See: [Synecdoche](#))

ULT

13 So now, improve your ways and your practices, and listen to the voice of Yahweh your God so that he will relent concerning the disaster that he has proclaimed against you.

Jeremiah 26:14

Do to me what is good and right in your eyes

The words “good” and “right” mean the same thing. The eye is a metonym for the person’s thoughts. Alternate translation: “Do to me whatever you think is the right thing to do” (See: [Doublet](#) and [Idiom](#))

ULT

14 I myself—look at me!—am in your hand. Do to me what is good and right in your eyes.

Jeremiah 26:15

you are bringing innocent blood on yourselves and on this city and its inhabitants

Blood is a metonym for violent death, and to bring blood on someone is to make them guilty of violent death. Alternate translation: “you are making yourselves and this city and its inhabitants guilty of the violent death of an innocent person” (See: [Metonymy](#))

ULT

¹⁵ But you must surely know that if you kill me, then you are bringing innocent blood on yourselves and on this city and its inhabitants, for Yahweh has truly sent me to you to proclaim all these words for your ears.”

this city and its inhabitants

These are two ways of speaking of the same people, perhaps first as a group and then as individuals. The city is a metonym for the people in the city. Alternate translation: “all the people in the city and every one of the people who live here” (See: [Doublet](#))

for your ears

The ear is a metonym for what the ear hears. Alternate translation: “for you to hear” (See: [Metonymy](#))

Jeremiah 26:16

in the name of Yahweh our God

The person's name is a metonym for his authority. Alternate translation: "with the authority of Yahweh our God" (See: [Metonymy](#))

ULT

16 Then the officials and all the people said to the priests and prophets, "It is not right for this man to die, for he has proclaimed things to us in the name of Yahweh our God."

Jeremiah 26:17

(There are no notes for this verse.)

ULT

17 Then men from the elders of the land rose up and spoke to the entire assembly of the people.

Jeremiah 26:18

General Information:

See: [How to Translate Names](#)

Morashite

a person from the town or region of Moresheth

Yahweh of hosts says this

Jeremiah often uses these words to introduce an important message from Yahweh. See how you translated this in [Jeremiah 6:6](#).

Zion will become a plowed field ... and the hill of the temple will become a thicket

“Zion” and “the hill of the temple” refer to the same place. When a farmer plows a field, he turns over all the dirt and uproots all the plants that are growing there. A thicket is so full of bushes that no one can use it for anything. These two metaphors cannot be literally true at the same time, but they emphasize that Yahweh will allow the invaders to completely destroy the temple area. (See: [Metaphor](#))

ULT

¹⁸ They said, “Micah the Morashite was prophesying in the days of Hezekiah king of Judah. He spoke to all the people of Judah and said, ‘Yahweh of hosts says this: Zion will become a plowed field, Jerusalem will become a heap of rubble, and the hill of the temple will become a thicket.’”

Jeremiah 26:19

Did Hezekiah ... put him to death?

The speakers are trying to get the hearers to agree with what they are saying. Alternate translation: "You know very well that Hezekiah ... did not put him to death." (See: [Rhetorical Question](#))

all of Judah

The land is a metonym for the people who live there. Alternate translation: "all the people of Judah" (See: [Metonymy](#))

ULT

¹⁹ Did Hezekiah king of Judah and all of Judah put him to death? Did he not fear Yahweh and appease the face of Yahweh so that Yahweh would relent concerning the disaster that he proclaimed to them? So will we do greater evil against our own lives?"

Did he not fear Yahweh and appease the face of Yahweh ... them?

The speakers are trying to get the hearers to agree with what they are saying. Alternate translation: "You know very well that he feared Yahweh and appeased the face of Yahweh so that Yahweh ... them."

appease the face of Yahweh

The face is a synecdoche for the whole person. Alternate translation: "cause Yahweh to be less angry" (See: [Synecdoche](#))

So will we do greater evil against our own lives?

The speakers are trying to get the hearers to agree with what they are saying. The word "lives" is a metonym for the people. Alternate translation: "If we kill Jeremiah, we will do greater evil against our own lives." or "We do not want to do worse things to ourselves." (See: [Rhetorical Question](#))

Jeremiah 26:20

Connecting Statement:

Jeremiah stops telling about his own life and begins telling about what happened to another prophet.

Meanwhile there was

“While what I was just telling you about was happening, there was”

prophesied against this city and this land

The words “city” and “land” are metonyms for the people who live there. Alternate translation: “prophesied that bad things would happen to the people who lived in this city and this land” (See: [Metonymy](#))

ULT

20 Meanwhile there was another man who prophesied in the name of Yahweh—Uriah son of Shemaiah from Kiriath Jearim—he also prophesied against this city and this land, agreeing with all of Jeremiah’s words.

Jeremiah 26:21

heard his word

“heard what he said”

ULT

²¹ But when King Jehoiakim and all his soldiers and officials heard his word, then the king tried to put him to death, but Uriah heard and was afraid, so he ran away and went to Egypt.

Jeremiah 26:22

Connecting Statement:

This is the end of the story of Uriah.

Elnathan ... Akbor

men's names (See: [How to Translate Names](#))

ULT

²² Then King Jehoiakim sent out men to go to Egypt—Elnathan son of Akbor and men to go into Egypt after Uriah.

Jeremiah 26:23

corpse

dead body

ULT

²³ They took Uriah out from Egypt and brought him to King Jehoiakim. Then Jehoiakim killed him with a sword and sent his corpse out to the graves of the ordinary people.

Jeremiah 26:24

the hand of Ahikam ... was with Jeremiah

The hand is a metonym for the power that the hand exercises. Ahikam was not a soldier, so he probably was able to talk to people and change their minds. Alternate translation: “Ahikam ... was able to help Jeremiah” or “Ahikam ... was able to keep the people from harming Jeremiah” (See: [Metonymy](#))

ULT

²⁴ But the hand of Ahikam son of Shaphan was with Jeremiah, so he was not given into the hand of the people to be put to death.

Ahikam ... Shaphan

men's names (See: [How to Translate Names](#))

he was not given into the hand of the people to be put to death

The hand is a metonym for the power that the hand exercises. This can be translated in active form. Alternate translation: “Ahikam did not allow the people to have the power to put Jeremiah to death” or “the people could not kill Jeremiah because Ahikam did not give them the power to” (See: [Metonymy](#) and [Active or Passive](#))

Jeremiah 27

Jeremiah 27 General Notes

Special concepts in this chapter

The nations should serve Babylon

Jeremiah told the king of Judah, and all the surrounding nations, to serve the Babylonians and live in their land. If they refused, Babylon would take them as captives to another land.

Jeremiah 27:1

(There are no notes for this verse.)

ULT

¹ In the beginning of the reign of Zedekiah son of Josiah, king of Judah, this word came to Jeremiah from Yahweh. ^[1]

Jeremiah 27:2

fetters

things that keep a person from moving freely

ULT

² This is what Yahweh said to me, "Make fetters and a yoke for yourself. Place them on your neck.

Jeremiah 27:3

Then send them out

This seems to mean that Jeremiah was to send a set of fetters and yoke to each king listed. But some versions of the Bible translate this as “Then send out messages.”

Send them by the hand of those kings’ ambassadors who ... Judah

The hand is a synecdoche for the person. Alternate translation: “Have those kings’ ambassadors, who ... Judah, take them” (See: [Synecdoche](#))

ULT

³ Then send them out to the king of Edom, the king of Moab, the king of the people of Ammon, the king of Tyre, and to the king of Sidon. Send them by the hand of those kings’ ambassadors who have come to Jerusalem to Zedekiah king of Judah.

Jeremiah 27:4

Give commands to them for their masters

Jeremiah was instructed to give a set of chains and yoke to each ambassador and a message for each king regarding the chains and yoke.

Yahweh of hosts ... says this

Jeremiah often uses these words to introduce an important message from Yahweh. See how you translated this in [Jeremiah 6:6](#).

ULT

⁴ Give commands to them for their masters and say, 'Yahweh of hosts, God of Israel, says this: This is what you must say to your masters,

Jeremiah 27:5

by my great strength and my raised arm

The phrase “raised arm” refers to great power and intensifies the first phrase. Alternate translation: “by my very great power” (See: [Idiom](#) and [Doublet](#))

I give it to anyone who is right in my eyes

Another possible meaning is “I give it to anyone I want to.”

ULT

⁵ “I myself made the earth by my great strength and my raised arm. I also made the people and animals on the earth, and I give it to anyone who is right in my eyes.

Jeremiah 27:6

I ... am giving all these lands into the hand of Nebuchadnezzar ... servant

The hand is a metonym for the power that the hand exercises, and the word “lands” is a metonym for the people who live in those lands. Alternate translation: “I ... am putting the people who live in all these lands under the power of Nebuchadnezzar ... servant” (See: [Metonymy](#))

ULT

⁶ So now, I myself am giving all these lands into the hand of Nebuchadnezzar, king of Babylon, my servant. Also, I am giving the living things in the fields to him to serve him.

Jeremiah 27:7

the time for his land comes

You may need to make explicit the nature of the time. Alternate translation: "the time for me to destroy his land" (See: [Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information](#))

subdue him

Here "him" refers to Nebuchadnezzar who represents the kingdom of Babylon. Alternate translation: "will defeat Babylon" (See: [Metonymy](#))

ULT

⁷ For all the nations will serve him, his son, and his grandson until the time for his land comes. Then many nations and great kings will subdue him.

Jeremiah 27:8

that does not put its neck under the yoke of the king

Being the king's slave is spoken of as being an animal on to the shoulders of which the king puts a yoke so it can do heavy work. Alternate translation: "and whose people do not willingly become slaves of the king" (See: [Metaphor](#))

I have destroyed it by his hand

The hand here could be a metonym for Nebuchadnezzar's power, or it could be a metonym for Nebuchadnezzar's armies. Alternate translation: "I have used Nebuchadnezzar's power to destroy it" or "I have enabled Nebuchadnezzar's armies to destroy it" (See: [Metonymy](#))

ULT

⁸ So the nation and the kingdom that does not serve Nebuchadnezzar, king of Babylon, and that does not put its neck under the yoke of the king of Babylon—I will punish that nation with the sword, with famine, and with the plague—this is Yahweh's declaration—until I have destroyed it by his hand.

Jeremiah 27:9

General Information:

Yahweh continues to speak through Jeremiah to the people of Judah

soothsayers

people who say what will happen in the future

ULT

⁹ So do not listen to your prophets, your diviners, your seers, your soothsayers, and sorcerers, who have been speaking to you and saying, 'Do not serve the king of Babylon.'

Jeremiah 27:10

(There are no notes for this verse.)

ULT

10 For they are prophesying deceit to you in order to send you far away from your lands, for I will drive you away, and you will die.

Jeremiah 27:11

the nation that places its neck under the yoke of the king

Being the king's slave is spoken of as being an animal onto the shoulders of which the king puts a yoke so it can do heavy work. See how similar words are translated in [Jeremiah 27:8](#). Alternate translation: "the nation whose people willingly becomes slaves of the king" (See: [Metaphor](#))

ULT

¹¹ But the nation that places its neck under the yoke of the king of Babylon and serves him, I will allow it to rest in its land—this is Yahweh's declaration—and they will cultivate it and make their homes in it.'""

the nation that places

The nation here is a metonym for the people of that nation. Alternate translation: "the nation of people who place"

cultivate

This means to prepare and use land to grow food crops

make their homes in it

"make their homes in their own land"

Jeremiah 27:12

General Information:

Yahweh continues to speak through Jeremiah to the king of Judah.

Place your necks under the yoke of the king of Babylon

Being the king's slave is spoken of as being an animal onto the shoulders of which the king puts a yoke so it can do heavy work. See how similar words were translated in [Jeremiah 27:8](#).

Place your necks

The word "your" refers to Zedekiah and the people of Judah and so is plural. (See: [Forms of You](#))

ULT

12 So I spoke to Zedekiah king of Judah and gave him this message, "Place your necks under the yoke of the king of Babylon and serve him and his people, and you will live."

Jeremiah 27:13

Why will you die ... king of Babylon?

Jeremiah uses this question to warn the king that his actions will lead to his death. Alternate translation: "For if you do not do this, you will surely die ... king." (See: [Rhetorical Question](#))

ULT

13 Why will you die—you and your people—by the sword, famine, and plague, just as I have declared about the nation that refuses to serve the king of Babylon?

Jeremiah 27:14

General Information:

Yahweh continues to speak through Jeremiah to the king and people of Judah.

Do not listen to the words

Yahweh is warning the people about all the false prophets that he did not send and that are lying to them.

ULT

14 Do not listen to the words of the prophets who speak to you and say, 'Do not serve the king of Babylon,' for they are prophesying lies to you.

Jeremiah 27:15

they are prophesying deceit in my name

The phrase “in my name” represents speaking with Yahweh’s power and authority or as his representative. Here these prophets claim that they received their message from Yahweh, but that had not. The abstract noun “deceit” can be translated as the verb “deceiving.” Alternate translation: “they say they are speaking for me when they prophesy, but they are deceiving you” (See: [Metonymy](#) and [Abstract Nouns](#))

I will drive you out

“I will force you to leave your home country”

ULT

15 ‘For I have not sent them out—this is Yahweh’s declaration—for they are prophesying deceit in my name so that I will drive you out and you will perish, both you and the prophets who are prophesying to you.’”

Jeremiah 27:16

General Information:

Jeremiah continues to speak the words of Yahweh.

The objects belonging to Yahweh's house are being returned from Babylon now!

This can be translated in active form. Alternate translation: "People are bringing back all the gold items that they took from Yahweh's temple!" (See: [Active or Passive](#))

ULT

16 I proclaimed this to the priests and all the people and said, "Yahweh says this: Do not listen to the words of your prophets who prophesy to you and say, 'Look! The objects belonging to Yahweh's house are being returned from Babylon now!' They are prophesying lies to you."

Jeremiah 27:17

Why should this city become a ruin?

Yahweh uses a question to warn the people. Alternate translation: "You can keep this city from becoming a ruin if you do what Yahweh wants you to do." (See: [Rhetorical Question](#))

ULT

17 Do not listen to them. You should serve the king of Babylon and live. Why should this city become a ruin?

Jeremiah 27:18

If they are prophets, and if the word of Yahweh has truly come to them, let them beg

This is a hypothetical situation that Yahweh knows is not true.
Alternate translation: "If they were prophets, and if the word of Yahweh had truly come to them, they would beg" or "Because they are not prophets and the word of Yahweh has not truly come to them, they will not beg" (See: [Hypothetical Situations](#))

ULT

¹⁸ If they are prophets, and if the word of Yahweh has truly come to them, let them beg Yahweh of hosts not to send to Babylon the objects that remain in his house, the house of the king of Judah, and Jerusalem.

if the word of Yahweh has truly come to them

The phrase "word of Yahweh" refers to messages from God. Alternate translation: "if Yahweh has truly given them messages" or "if Yahweh truly spoke messages to them"

the word of Yahweh ... beg Yahweh of hosts not

Yahweh is speaking of himself in third person. Alternate translation: "my word ... be me, Yahweh of hosts, not" (See: [First, Second or Third Person](#))

the house of the king of Judah

The word "house" has a range of possible meanings. In this case it refers to the royal palace where the king lived. Alternate translation: "the palace of the king of Judah"

Jeremiah 27:19

General Information:

Jeremiah continues to bring the message of Yahweh.

Yahweh of hosts says this

Jeremiah often uses these words to introduce an important message from Yahweh. See how you translated this in [Jeremiah 6:6](#).

ULT

19 Yahweh of hosts says this about the pillars, the large basin known as “The Sea” and its base, and the rest of the objects that remain in this city—

the pillars, the large basin known as “The Sea” and its base

These were objects that were in the temple. “The Sea” was a large bronze bowl.

Jeremiah 27:20

Jehoiachin

The Hebrew text has “Jeconiah,” which is a variation of the name “Jehoiachin.” Many modern versions have “Jehoiachin” in order to make it clear that the same king is being referred to.

ULT

20 the objects that Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon did not take when he carried Jehoiachin son of Jehoiakim, the king of Judah, into captivity from Jerusalem to Babylon with all the nobles of Judah and Jerusalem.

Jeremiah 27:21

General Information:

Jeremiah continues to speak the words of Yahweh.

Yahweh of hosts ... says this

Jeremiah often uses these words to introduce an important message from Yahweh. See how you translated this in [Jeremiah 6:6](#).

the house of the king of Judah

The word “house” has a range of possible meanings. In this case it refers to the royal palace there the king lived.
Alternate translation: “the palace of the king of Judah”

ULT

²¹ Yahweh of hosts, God of Israel, says this about the objects that remain in the house of Yahweh, the house of the king of Judah, and Jerusalem,

Jeremiah 27:22

They will be brought to Babylon

This can be translated in active form. Alternate translation: “People will bring them to Babylon” or “I will bring them to Babylon” (See: [Active or Passive](#))

this is Yahweh’s declaration

Yahweh speaks of himself by name to express the certainty of what he is declaring. See how you translated this in [Jeremiah 1:8](#). Alternate translation: “this is what Yahweh has declared” or “this is what I, Yahweh, have declared” (See: [First, Second or Third Person](#))

I will bring them up

The reader should understand that Yahweh will have people carry them up.

ULT

22 ‘They will be brought to Babylon, and they will remain there until the day I have set to come for them—this is Yahweh’s declaration—then I will bring them up and restore them to this place.’”

Jeremiah 28

Jeremiah 28 General Notes

Special concepts in this chapter

False prophecies continue

A false prophet prophesied that the captives would return from Babylon with all the temple vessels. Jeremiah told the false prophet that he would die that year for prophesying lies, and he did die. (See: [prophet](#), [prophecy](#), [prophesy](#), [seer](#), [prophetess](#) and [temple](#), [house](#), [house of God](#))

Jeremiah 28:1

General Information:

Hananiah claims to speak for God.

in the fourth year and the fifth month

This is the fifth month of the Hebrew calendar. It is during the dry season. It is during the last part of July and the first part of August on Western calendars. This was after Zedekiah had been king for three years. (See: [Hebrew Months](#) and [Ordinal Numbers](#))

Azzur

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

ULT

¹ It happened in that year, in the beginning of the reign of Zedekiah king of Judah, in the fourth year and the fifth month, Hananiah son of Azzur the prophet, who was from Gibeon, spoke to me in Yahweh's house in front of the priests and all the people. He said,

Jeremiah 28:2

Yahweh of hosts ... says this

Jeremiah often uses these words to introduce an important message from Yahweh. See how you translated this in [Jeremiah 6:6](#).

I have broken the yoke imposed by the king of Babylon

Hananiah speaks of the people being in slavery as if they were oxen on which the Babylonians had put yokes to make them do heavy work. Alternate translation: “I have made it so you are no longer slaves of the king of Babylon” or “I have set you free from slavery to the king of Babylon” (See: [Metaphor](#))

ULT

2 “Yahweh of hosts, God of Israel, says this: I have broken the yoke imposed by the king of Babylon.

Jeremiah 28:3

General Information:

Hananiah continues to speak.

ULT

³ Within two years I will bring back to this place all the objects belonging to Yahweh's house that Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon took from this place and transported to Babylon.

Jeremiah 28:4

Jehoiachin

The Hebrew text has “Jeconiah,” which is a variation of the name “Jehoiachin.” Many modern versions have “Jehoiachin” in order to make it clear that the same king is being referred to.

who were sent

This can be translated in active form. Alternate translation: “whom I sent” (See: [Active or Passive](#))

ULT

⁴ Then I will bring back to this place Jehoiachin son of Jehoiakim, king of Judah, and all the captives of Judah who were sent to Babylon—this is Yahweh’s declaration—for I will break the yoke of the king of Babylon.”

Jeremiah 28:5

(There are no notes for this verse.)

ULT

⁵ So Jeremiah the prophet spoke to Hananiah the prophet in front of the priests and to all the people who stood in Yahweh's house.

Jeremiah 28:6

May Yahweh confirm the words that you prophesied

“May Yahweh prove you have prophesied truly”

ULT

⁶ Jeremiah the prophet said, “May Yahweh do this! May Yahweh confirm the words that you prophesied and bring back to this place the objects belonging to Yahweh’s house, and all the captives from Babylon.”

Jeremiah 28:7

(There are no notes for this verse.)

ULT

⁷ However, listen to the word that I am proclaiming in your hearing and in the hearing of all the people.

Jeremiah 28:8

The prophets who existed before me and you from long ago

“The prophets who lived long ago before you and I”

ULT

⁸ The prophets who existed before me and you from long ago also prophesied about many nations and against great kingdoms, about war, famine ^[1], and plague.

Jeremiah 28:9

then it will be known that he is indeed a prophet sent out by Yahweh

This can be translated in active form. Alternate translation: “then you will know that he is indeed a true prophet and that Yahweh has sent him out” (See: [Active or Passive](#))

ULT

⁹ So the prophet who prophesies that there will be peace—if his word comes true, then it will be known that he is indeed a prophet sent out by Yahweh.”

Jeremiah 28:10

(There are no notes for this verse.)

ULT

¹⁰ But Hananiah the prophet took the yoke from the neck of Jeremiah the prophet and broke it.

Jeremiah 28:11

Just like this

“Just as Hananiah has taken the yoke off Jeremiah’s neck”

I will break from off the neck of every nation the yoke imposed by Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon

Hananiah speaks of the people being in slavery as if they were oxen on which the Babylonians had put yokes to make them do heavy work. Alternate translation: “I will make it so all nations are no longer slaves of Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon” or “I will set every nation free from slavery to Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon” (See: [Metaphor](#))

ULT

11 Then Hananiah spoke in front of all the people and said, “Yahweh says this: Just like this, within two years I will break from off the neck of every nation the yoke imposed by Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon.” Then Jeremiah the prophet went on his way.

every nation

The word “nation” is a metonym for the people of that nation. Alternate translation: “the people of every nation” (See: [Metonymy](#))

the yoke imposed by Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon

This can be translated in active form. Alternate translation: “the yoke that Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon has imposed” (See: [Active or Passive](#))

imposed

put on people

Jeremiah 28:12

the word of Yahweh came to Jeremiah, saying,

This idiom is used to introduce a special message from God. See how you translated a similar phrase in [Jeremiah 1:4](#). Alternate translation: “Yahweh gave a message to Jeremiah. He said,” or “Yahweh spoke this message to Jeremiah.” (See: [Idiom](#))

ULT

¹² After Hananiah the prophet had broken the yoke from the neck of Jeremiah the prophet, the word of Yahweh came to Jeremiah, saying,

Jeremiah 28:13

You broke a yoke of wood, but I will make instead a yoke of iron

"You broke a weak yoke, but I will replace it with a yoke that you cannot break"

ULT

¹³ "Go and speak to Hananiah and say, 'Yahweh says this: You broke a yoke of wood, but I will make instead a yoke of iron.'

Jeremiah 28:14

Yahweh of hosts ... says this

Jeremiah often uses these words to introduce an important message from Yahweh. See how you translated this in [Jeremiah 6:6](#).

I have placed a yoke of iron on the neck of all of these nations to serve Nebuchadnezzar

Yahweh speaks of making nations to be slaves of Nebuchadnezzar as if he were putting yokes on oxen to make them do heavy work.

Alternate translation: "I have made all of these nations slaves, and they will have to serve Nebuchadnezzar" (See: [Metaphor](#))

ULT

14 For Yahweh of hosts, God of Israel, says this: I have placed a yoke of iron on the neck of all of these nations to serve Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon, and they will serve him. I have also given him the wild beasts in the fields to rule over."

Jeremiah 28:15

(There are no notes for this verse.)

ULT

15 Next Jeremiah the prophet said to Hananiah the prophet, “Listen Hananiah! Yahweh has not sent you, but you yourself have caused this people to believe in lies.

Jeremiah 28:16

you proclaimed rebellion against Yahweh

It is not clear why Yahweh speaks of himself by name. Alternate translation: "you urged people to rebel against me" (See: [First](#), [Second](#) or [Third Person](#))

ULT

16 So Yahweh says this: Look, I am about to send you out from the earth. You will die this year, since you proclaimed rebellion against Yahweh."

Jeremiah 28:17

In the seventh month

This is the seventh month of the Hebrew calendar. It is during the last part of September and the first part of October on Western calendars. (See: [Hebrew Months](#) and [Ordinal Numbers](#))

ULT

17 In the seventh month of that same year, Hananiah the prophet died.

Jeremiah 29

Jeremiah 29 General Notes

Special concepts in this chapter

Two letters

Jeremiah sent a letter to Babylon telling the exiles to prepare for a long stay. A false prophet in Babylon wrote back to the chief priest telling him to punish Jeremiah. Even though Jeremiah had prophesied the exile, the Jews still did not believe him. (See: [prophet](#), [prophecy](#), [prophesy](#), [seer](#), [prophetess](#) and [believe](#), [believer](#), [belief](#), [unbeliever](#), [unbelief](#))

Jeremiah 29:1

sent out from Jerusalem

“proclaimed from Jerusalem”

remaining elders

“elders who were still alive”

ULT

¹ These are the words in the scroll that Jeremiah the prophet sent out from Jerusalem to the remaining elders among the captives and to the priests, prophets, and all the people that Nebuchadnezzar exiled from Jerusalem to Babylon.

Jeremiah 29:2

Jehoiachin

The Hebrew text has “Jeconiah,” which is a variation of the name “Jehoiachin.” Many modern versions have “Jehoiachin” in order to make it clear that the same king is being referred to.

the queen mother

the king’s mother

high officials

“very important officials”

ULT

² This was after Jehoiachin the king, the queen mother, and the high officials, the leaders of Judah and Jerusalem, and the craftsmen had been sent away from Jerusalem.

Jeremiah 29:3

by the hand of Elasah

Jeremiah gave the scroll to Elasah so that Elasah could take it to Babylon. The reader should understand that Elasah probably put the scroll in a container to keep it safe as he traveled. (See: [Synecdoche](#))

Elasah ... Shapan ... Gemariah ... Hilkiyah

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

ULT

³ He sent this scroll by the hand of Elasah son of Shapan and Gemariah son of Hilkiyah whom Zedekiah, king of Judah, had sent to Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon.

Jeremiah 29:4

Yahweh of hosts, God of Israel, says this to all the captives

When people wrote letters in that society, they would write their name first, then the name of the person to whom they were writing, and then the main part of the letter. Yahweh speaks of himself by name as if he were writing the letter himself.

ULT

⁴ The scroll said, "Yahweh of hosts, God of Israel, says this to all the captives whom I caused to be exiled from Jerusalem to Babylon,

Yahweh of hosts ... says this

Jeremiah often uses these words to introduce an important message from Yahweh. See how you translated this in [Jeremiah 6:6](#).

Jeremiah 29:5

Build houses and live in them. Plant gardens and eat their fruit

Yahweh is telling them they will be there for a long time. (See: [Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information](#))

ULT

⁵ 'Build houses and live in them. Plant gardens and eat their fruit.

Jeremiah 29:6

take wives for your sons, and give your daughters to husbands

Parents commonly arranged their children's marriages.

ULT

⁶ Take wives and give birth to sons and daughters. Then take wives for your sons, and give your daughters to husbands. Let them give birth to sons and daughters and increase there so you do not become too few.

Jeremiah 29:7

Seek the peace of the city

The peace of the city is a metonym for the people living in peace.
Alternate translation: "Do everything you can so the people of the city live in peace" (See: [Metonymy](#))

the city ... its behalf ... it is at peace

These words refer to the city of Babylon.

ULT

⁷ Seek the peace of the city where I have caused you to be exiled, and intercede with me on its behalf since there will be peace for you if it is at peace.'

Jeremiah 29:8

General Information:

Yahweh continues speaking to the captive Israelites.

Yahweh of hosts ... says this

Jeremiah often uses these words to introduce an important message from Yahweh. See how you translated this in [Jeremiah 6:6](#).

you yourselves are having

Another possible meaning is “you are encouraging the prophets to have for you.”

ULT

⁸ For Yahweh of hosts, God of Israel, says this, ‘Do not let your prophets who are in your midst and your diviners deceive you, and do not listen to the dreams that you yourselves are having.’

Jeremiah 29:9

they are prophesying deceitfully ... I did not send them

This could mean: (1) these words refer to the prophets and diviners, not to the dreams or (2) “they are prophesying deceitfully” refers to the dreams, and “I did not send them” refers to the prophets and diviners.

ULT

⁹ For they are prophesying deceitfully to you in my name. I did not send them—this is Yahweh’s declaration.’

this is Yahweh’s declaration

Yahweh speaks of himself by name to express the certainty of what he is declaring. See how you translated this in [Jeremiah 1:8](#). Alternate translation: “this is what Yahweh has declared” or “this is what I, Yahweh, have declared” (See: [First](#), [Second](#) or [Third Person](#))

Jeremiah 29:10

General Information:

Yahweh continues speaking about what will happen to the captives of Israel.

you

the captive Israelites

seventy years

“70 years” (See: [Numbers](#))

ULT

10 For Yahweh says this, ‘When Babylon has ruled you for seventy years, I will help you and carry out my good word for you to bring you back to this place.

Jeremiah 29:11

(There are no notes for this verse.)

ULT

11 For I myself know the plans that I have for you—this is Yahweh’s declaration—plans for peace and not for disaster, to give you a future and a hope.

Jeremiah 29:12

General Information:

Yahweh continues speaking about what will happen to the captives of Israel.

ULT

12 Then you will call to me, and go and pray to me, and I will listen to you.

you will call to me

Praying is spoken of as calling out with a loud voice. (See: [Metonymy](#))

I will listen to you

This implies that Yahweh will give them what they want. (See: [Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information](#))

Jeremiah 29:13

you will seek me

Wanting to know what Yahweh requires is spoken of as trying to find where Yahweh is. Alternate translation: “you will want to do what I require you to do” (See: [Metonymy](#))

you will seek me with all your heart

“you will be completely sincere when you seek me”

ULT

13 For you will seek me and find me, since you will seek me with all your heart.

Jeremiah 29:14

I will bring back your fortunes

“I will cause things to go well for you again” or “I will cause you to live well again”

I caused you to be exiled

This can be translated in active form. Alternate translation: “I sent you into exile” or “I sent you to be exiles” (See: [Active or Passive](#))

ULT

14 Then I will be found by you—this is Yahweh’s declaration—and I will bring back your fortunes; I will gather you from all the nations and places where I scattered you—this is Yahweh’s declaration—for I will bring you back to the place from where I caused you to be exiled.’

Jeremiah 29:15

General Information:

Jeremiah speaks to the captive Israelites.

ULT

¹⁵ Since you said that Yahweh has raised up prophets for us in Babylon,

Jeremiah 29:16

the king who sits on the throne of David

Sitting on the throne is a metonym for ruling as king. Alternate translation: “the king who rules the Israelites as David did” (See: [Metonymy](#))

ULT

16 Yahweh says this to the king who sits on the throne of David and to all the people who are staying in that city, your brothers who have not gone out with you into captivity—

Jeremiah 29:17

Yahweh of hosts says this

Jeremiah often uses these words to introduce an important message from Yahweh. See how you translated this in [Jeremiah 6:6](#).

See

This alerts the reader to pay attention to what follows. Alternate translation: “Look” or “Listen” or “Pay attention”

ULT

17 Yahweh of hosts says this, ‘See, I am about to send sword, famine, and disease on them. For I will make them like rotten figs that are too bad to be eaten.’

I am about to send sword, famine, and disease on them

The word “sword” is a metonym for war. The sword, famine, and disease are spoken of as people who can obey Yahweh’s command to harm the Israelites. Alternate translation: “I am going to punish them by having them die in war, from hunger, and from illness” (See: [Metonymy](#) and [Personification](#))

For I will make them like rotten figs that are too bad to be eaten

Rotten figs are useless because they cannot be eaten, and Yahweh sees no use for the people of Israel. (See: [Simile](#))

Jeremiah 29:18

Connecting Statement:

Yahweh continues speaking about what will happen to Israel.

a horror, an object of curses and hissing, and a shameful thing

These words all share similar meanings and describe how the people of other nations will react when they see what Yahweh has done to the people of Judah.

hissing

the sound people make when they disapprove of something

ULT

18 Then I will pursue them with sword, famine, and plague and make them a horrible sight to all the kingdoms on earth—a horror, an object of curses and hissing, and a shameful thing among all the nations where I scattered her.

Jeremiah 29:19

this is Yahweh's declaration

Yahweh speaks of himself by name to express the certainty of what he is declaring. See how you translated this in [Jeremiah 1:8](#). Alternate translation: "this is what Yahweh has declared" or "this is what I, Yahweh, have declared" (See: [First](#), [Second](#) or [Third Person](#))

ULT

19 This is because they did not listen to my word—this is Yahweh's declaration—that I sent out to them through my servants the prophets. I repeatedly sent them, but you would not listen—this is Yahweh's declaration.'

Jeremiah 29:20

So you yourselves listen

Yahweh is now about to issue a command and wants them to pay attention. Alternate translation: “But as for you, listen carefully”

ULT

²⁰ So you yourselves listen to the word of Yahweh, all you exiles whom he has sent out from Jerusalem to Babylon,

Jeremiah 29:21

Kolaiah ... Maaseiah

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

who prophesy falsely to you in my name

Here “name” is a metonym for the person. Alternate translation: “liars who tell you that they are speaking my words to you” (See: [Metonymy](#))

See

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

I am about to put them into the hand of Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon

Here “hand” is a metonym for the power that the hand exercises. Alternate translation: “I will allow Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon to conquer them” (See: [Metonymy](#))

before your eyes

“where you can see him do it”

ULT

²¹ ‘Yahweh of hosts, God of Israel, says this about Ahab son of Kolaiah and Zedekiah son of Maaseiah, who prophesy falsely to you in my name: See, I am about to put them into the hand of Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon. He will kill them before your eyes.

Jeremiah 29:22

a curse will be spoken about these persons by all the captives of Judah in Babylon

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: “the captives of Judah in Babylon will say a curse about these persons” (See: [Active or Passive](#))

roasted

This word usually refers to cooking food over an open fire or in a pan, not to burning completely. This could mean: (1) this is a euphemism. Alternate translation: “burned to death” or (2) the king’s men attached them to poles over the fire close enough that the fire would slowly kill them but far enough away that it would not totally consume their bodies. (See: [Euphemism](#))

ULT

²² Then a curse will be spoken about these persons by all the captives of Judah in Babylon. The curse will say: May Yahweh make you like Zedekiah and Ahab, whom the king of Babylon roasted in fire.

Jeremiah 29:23

this is Yahweh's declaration

Yahweh speaks of himself by name to express the certainty of what he is declaring. See how you translated this in [Jeremiah 1:8](#). Alternate translation: "this is what Yahweh has declared" or "this is what I, Yahweh, have declared" (See: [First](#), [Second](#) or [Third Person](#))

ULT

23 This will happen because of the shameful things they did in Israel when they committed adultery with their neighbor's wives and declared false words in my name, things that I never commanded them to say. For I am the one who knows; I am the witness—this is Yahweh's declaration.'"

Jeremiah 29:24

Shemaiah

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

Nehelamite

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

ULT

²⁴ "About Shemaiah the Nehelamite,
say this:

Jeremiah 29:25

Yahweh of hosts ... says this

Jeremiah often uses these words to introduce an important message from Yahweh. See how you translated this in [Jeremiah 6:6](#).

in your own name

The word “name” refers to a person’s authority and reputation.
Alternate translation: “based on your own authority and reputation”
(See: [Metonymy](#))

Maaseiah

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

ULT

25 ‘Yahweh of hosts, God of Israel, says this: Because you sent out letters in your own name to all the people in Jerusalem, to Zephaniah son of Maaseiah the priest, and to all the priests, and said,

Jeremiah 29:26

Jehoiada

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

stocks

a wooden frame that holds the feet, hands, or head of a person whom someone is punishing

ULT

26 “Yahweh has made you priest instead of Jehoiada the priest, for you to be in charge of Yahweh's house. You are in control of all the people who rave and make themselves into prophets. You should put them in stocks and chains.

Jeremiah 29:27

General Information:

This finishes the letter by Shemaiah that he sent out to the people in Jerusalem.

why have you not rebuked Jeremiah of Anathoth ... against you?

Shemaiah uses a rhetorical question to scold the people of Jerusalem for not rebuking Jeremiah. This can be translated as a statement. Alternate translation: "I want you to rebuke Jeremiah of Anathoth ... against you." (See: [Rhetorical Question](#))

ULT

27 So now, why have you not rebuked Jeremiah of Anathoth, who makes himself into a prophet against you?

Jeremiah 29:28

he has sent to us

You may need to make explicit what it was that Jeremiah sent.
Alternate translation: "he has sent a message to us" (See: [Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information](#))

Build houses and live in them, and plant gardens and eat their fruit

See how you translated similar words in [Jeremiah 29:5](#).

ULT

28 For he has sent to us in Babylon and said, 'It will be a long time. Build houses and live in them, and plant gardens and eat their fruit.'"

Jeremiah 29:29

in the hearing of Jeremiah the prophet

“so that Jeremiah the prophet could hear him read it.” See how you translated similar words in [Jeremiah 2:2](#).

ULT

²⁹ Zephaniah the priest read this letter
in the hearing of Jeremiah the prophet.

Jeremiah 29:30

the word of Yahweh came to Jeremiah, saying,

This idiom is used to introduce a special message from God. See how you translated a similar phrase in [Jeremiah 1:4](#). Alternate translation: “Yahweh gave a message to Jeremiah. He said,” or “Yahweh spoke this message to Jeremiah.” (See: [Idiom](#))

ULT

³⁰ Then the word of Yahweh came to Jeremiah, saying,

Jeremiah 29:31

Shemaiah the Nehelamite

See how you translated this man's name in [Jeremiah 29:24](#).

ULT

31 "Send word to all the exiles and say, 'Yahweh says this about Shemaiah the Nehelamite: Because Shemaiah has prophesied to you when I myself did not send him, and he has led you to believe lies,

Jeremiah 29:32

the good

This can be translated as a noun phrase. Alternate translation: “the good things” (See: [Nominal Adjectives](#))

this is Yahweh’s declaration

Yahweh speaks of himself by name to express the certainty of what he is declaring. See how you translated this in [Jeremiah 1:8](#). Alternate translation: “this is what Yahweh has declared” or “this is what I, Yahweh, have declared” (See: [First, Second or Third Person](#))

he has proclaimed rebellion against Yahweh

It is not clear why Yahweh speaks of himself by name. Alternate translation: “he has urged people to rebel against me” (See: [First, Second or Third Person](#))

ULT

³² therefore Yahweh says this: Look, I am about to punish Shemaiah the Nehelamite and his descendants. There will not be a man for him to stay among this people. He will not see the good that I will do for my people—this is Yahweh’s declaration—for he has proclaimed rebellion against Yahweh.”

Jeremiah 30

Jeremiah 30 General Notes

Structure and formatting

Some translations set each line of poetry farther to the right than the rest of the text to make it easier to read. The ULT does this with the poetry in 3:5-24.

Special concepts in this chapter

God promises restoration

Despite the prophesied punishment in this chapter, Yahweh promises to restore Judah. In addition to this, he also declares that he will ultimately restore Israel. (See: [prophet](#), [prophecy](#), [prophesy](#), [seer](#), [prophetess](#), [promise](#), [promised](#) and [restore](#), [restoration](#))

Other possible translation difficulties in this chapter

The author uses the term “Israel” in two different ways. He uses it in reference to the nation of Israel. He also uses it in reference to the people who used to inhabit the northern kingdom of Israel, namely the people group of Israel.

Jeremiah 30:1

The word that came to Jeremiah from Yahweh, saying,

This idiom is used to introduce a special message from God. See how you translated a similar phrase in [Jeremiah 1:4](#), and make any changes as needed. Alternate translation: “This is the message that Yahweh gave to Jeremiah. He said” or “Yahweh spoke this message to Jeremiah:” (See: [Idiom](#))

ULT

¹ The word that came to Jeremiah from Yahweh, saying,

Jeremiah 30:2

(There are no notes for this verse.)

ULT

² “This is what Yahweh, God of Israel, says, ‘Write in a scroll all the words that I have spoken to you.’

Jeremiah 30:3

For look

“For listen carefully.” This phrase brings attention to what Yahweh is going to say next.

days are coming ... when I will restore the fortunes

Future time is spoken of as if the “days are coming.” See how you translated this metaphor in [Jeremiah 7:32](#). Alternate translation: “in the future ... I will restore the fortunes” or “there will be a time ... when I will restore the fortunes” (See: [Metaphor](#))

ULT

³ For look, days are coming—this is Yahweh’s declaration—when I will restore the fortunes of my people, Israel and Judah. I, Yahweh, have said it. For I will bring them back to the land that I gave their ancestors, and they will possess it.”

this is Yahweh’s declaration

Yahweh speaks of himself by name to express the certainty of what he is declaring. See how you translated this in [Jeremiah 1:8](#). Alternate translation: “this is what Yahweh has declared” or “this is what I, Yahweh, have declared” (See: [First, Second or Third Person](#))

I will restore the fortunes of my people, Israel and Judah

“I will cause things to go well for my people, Israel and Judah, again” or “I will cause my people, Israel and Judah, to live well again.” See how you translated similar words in [Jeremiah 29:14](#).

Jeremiah 30:4

General Information:

Jeremiah often wrote prophecy in the form of poetry. Hebrew poetry uses different kinds of parallelism. (See: [Poetry](#) and [Parallelism](#))

ULT

⁴ These are the words that Yahweh declared concerning Israel and Judah,

Jeremiah 30:5

We have heard

This could mean: (1) that these are the words of Yahweh referring to himself as “we.” Alternate translation: “I have heard” or (2) that these are the words of the people of Jerusalem. Alternate translation: “You people of Jerusalem say, ‘We have heard’”

ULT

⁵ “For Yahweh says this, ‘We have heard a trembling voice of dread and not of peace.’

a trembling voice of dread and not of peace

This could mean: (1) “people cry out in dread because there is no peace” or (2) “you cry out in dread because there is no peace.”

Jeremiah 30:6

Ask and see if a man bears a child

“You know that no man has ever given birth to a child”

**Why do I see every young man with his hand
on his loins like a woman bearing a child?
Why have all their faces become pale?**

ULT

⁶ Ask and see if a man bears a child.
Why do I see every young man with his
hand on his loins like a woman bearing
a child? Why have all their faces become
pale?

A woman about to give birth is in great pain and unable to do anything. The young men are so frightened that their bodies hurt, and they are unable to fight. Alternate translation: “The young men are holding their bellies like a woman giving birth; they all look sick because they are so afraid.” (See: [Simile](#) and [Rhetorical Question](#))

Jeremiah 30:7

for Jacob, but he will be rescued from it

The name Jacob is a metonym for the man's descendants. This can be translated in active form. Alternate translation: "for the descendants of Jacob, but I will rescue them from it" (See: [Metonymy](#) and [Active or Passive](#))

ULT

⁷ Woe! For that day will be great, with none like it. It will be a time of anxiety for Jacob, but he will be rescued from it.

Jeremiah 30:8

General Information:

Yahweh continues to speak to the Israelites.

I will break the yoke off your neck, and I will shatter your chains

Being a slave is spoken of as wearing a yoke like an animal and wearing chains like a prisoner. (See: [Metaphor](#))

ULT

⁸ For it will be in that day—this is the declaration of Yahweh of hosts—that I will break the yoke off your neck, and I will shatter your chains, so foreigners will no longer enslave you.

Jeremiah 30:9

they will worship Yahweh their God ... their king ... over them

Yahweh continues speaking about the descendants of Jacob.
Alternate translation: "you will worship Yahweh your God ... your king ... over you" (See: [First, Second or Third Person](#))

ULT

⁹ But they will worship Yahweh their God and serve David their king, whom I will make king over them.

David their king

This is a metonym for one of David's descendants. Alternate translation: "a man descended from their King David" (See: [Metonymy](#))

Jeremiah 30:10

General Information:

Yahweh continues speaking to the people of Israel.

my servant Jacob ... Israel

“Jacob” and “Israel” are the two names of the ancestor of the Israelites, and these names are metonyms for the Israelites. Alternate translation: “descendants of Jacob ... you Israelite people” (See: [Metonymy](#))

ULT

¹⁰ So you, my servant Jacob, do not fear —this is Yahweh’s declaration—and do not be dismayed, Israel. For see, I am about to bring you back from far away, and your descendants from the land of captivity. Jacob will return and be at peace; he will be secure, and there will be no more terror.

this is Yahweh’s declaration

Yahweh speaks of himself by name to express the certainty of what he is declaring. See how you translated this in [Jeremiah 1:8](#). Alternate translation: “this is what Yahweh has declared” or “this is what I, Yahweh, have declared” (See: [First, Second or Third Person](#))

do not be dismayed

“do not be discouraged”

For see, I am

“Listen carefully while I tell you why: I am”

from the land of captivity

The abstract noun “captivity” can be translated using the noun “captive.” Alternate translation: “from the place where they were captives” (See: [Abstract Nouns](#))

Jacob will return ... he will be secure

Jacob’s name is a metonym for his descendants. Yahweh speaks to Jacob as if he were speaking to another person. You may need to make explicit to where Jacob will return. Alternate translation: “Jacob will return to his own land ... he will be secure” or “The descendants of Jacob will return ... they will be secure” or “You descendants of Jacob will return ... you will be secure” (See: [Metonymy](#) and [Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information](#))

secure

“safe”

Jeremiah 30:11

where I have scattered you

“where I have sent you”

But I will certainly not put an end to you

“But I will not completely destroy you” (See: [Euphemism](#))

will certainly not leave you unpunished

This can be translated in active form. Alternate translation: “will certainly punish you” (See: [Double Negatives](#))

ULT

11 For I am with you—this is Yahweh’s declaration—to save you. Then I will bring a complete end to all the nations where I have scattered you. But I will certainly not put an end to you, though I discipline you justly and will certainly not leave you unpunished.’

Jeremiah 30:12

General Information:

Yahweh continues speaking to the people of Israel.

Your injury is incurable; your wound is infected

This means that Yahweh has punished them so severely that there is no one who can help them. (See: [Metaphor](#))

ULT

¹² For Yahweh says this, 'Your injury is incurable; your wound is infected.'

Jeremiah 30:13

There is no one to plead your case

“There is no one who asks me to show you mercy”

no one to plead your case ... no remedy for your wound

Yahweh has punished them so severely that there is no one who can help them. (See: [Metaphor](#))

ULT

¹³ There is no one to plead your case;
there is no remedy for your wound to
heal you.

Jeremiah 30:14

General Information:

Yahweh continues speaking to the people of Israel.

All of your lovers

Yahweh describes the people of Israel as an unfaithful wife who takes lovers other than her husband. Here “lovers” refers to other nations. The Israelites allied with them and worshiped their gods instead of relying on Yahweh. (See: [Metaphor](#))

They will not look for you

“They no longer want to be your friends”

I have wounded you with the wound of an enemy

Yahweh has treated his people like he would treat his enemy. (See: [Metaphor](#))

the discipline of a cruel master

Yahweh has treated his people like a cruel master would treat a rebellious slave. (See: [Metaphor](#))

your innumerable sins

“your sins, which are too many to count”

ULT

14 All of your lovers have forgotten you. They will not look for you, for I have wounded you with the wound of an enemy and the discipline of a cruel master because of your many iniquities and your innumerable sins.

Jeremiah 30:15

Why do you call for help for your injury?

Yahweh asks a question here to make the people think about why they are asking him for help now. Alternate translation: “You are calling for help for your injury because you have disobeyed me.” or “Do not call for help for your injury.” (See: [Rhetorical Question](#))

ULT

15 Why do you call for help for your injury? Your pain is incurable. Because of your many iniquities, your innumerable sins, I have done these things to you.

Jeremiah 30:16

So everyone who consumes you will be consumed

Destroying the nation is spoken of as consuming or eating it. This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: “So those who destroy you, their enemies will destroy them” or “So I will destroy everyone who destroys you” (See: [Metaphor](#) and [Active or Passive](#))

have plundered ... plunder

To plunder is to steal from peaceful people using violence, and plunder is what people steal.

despoiling ... spoil

To despoil here is to take items from an enemy one has defeated, and the items one takes are the spoil.

ULT

¹⁶ So everyone who consumes you will be consumed, and all of your adversaries will go into captivity. For the ones who have plundered you will become plunder, and I will make all of the ones despoiling you a spoil.

Jeremiah 30:17

healing ... wounds

See how you translated these words in [Jeremiah 30:12](#).

this is Yahweh's declaration

Yahweh speaks of himself by name to express the certainty of what he is declaring. See how you translated this in [Jeremiah 1:8](#). Alternate translation: "this is what Yahweh has declared" or "this is what I, Yahweh, have declared" (See: [First](#), [Second](#) or [Third Person](#))

ULT

17 For I will bring healing on you; I will heal you of your wounds—this is Yahweh's declaration— I will do this because they called you: Outcast. No one cares for this Zion.'"

they called you: Outcast

An outcast is a person whom other people do not accept or allow to associate with them. Alternate translation: "they called you: Rejected" or "they said, 'Nobody wants you'"

No one cares for this Zion

The place name "Zion" is a metonym for the people who live in Zion. Alternate translation: "No one cares about the people of Zion" (See: [Metonymy](#))

Jeremiah 30:18

General Information:

Yahweh continues speaking to the people of Israel.

See

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

I am about to bring back the fortunes of Jacob’s tents and have compassion on his homes

The places where people live are metonyms for the people who live in those places. Alternate translation: “I am about bring back the fortunes of the descendants of Jacob, and I will have compassion on them” (See: [Metonymy](#))

I am about to bring back the fortunes of Jacob’s tents

“I will cause things to go well for the people in Jacob’s tents again” or “I will cause the people in Jacob’s tents to live well again.” See how you translated similar words in [Jeremiah 29:14](#).

Then a city will be built on the heap of ruins

This can be translated in active form. You may need to make explicit that the city they will build will be Jerusalem. Alternate translation: “Then they will rebuild Jerusalem on its ruins” (See: [Active or Passive](#))

ULT

18 Yahweh says this, “See, I am about to bring back the fortunes of Jacob’s tents and have compassion on his homes. Then a city will be built on the heap of ruins, and a stronghold will exist again where it used to be.”

Jeremiah 30:19

Then a song of praise and a sound of merriment will go out from them

“Then they will sing songs of praise and joy”

for I will increase them and not diminish them

“I will cause them to increase in number, not to become fewer”

so they will not be humbled

This can be translated in active form. Alternate translation: “so that no one will humble them” (See: [Active or Passive](#))

ULT

¹⁹ Then a song of praise and a sound of merriment will go out from them, for I will increase them and not diminish them; I will honor them so they will not be humbled.

Jeremiah 30:20

General Information:

Yahweh continues speaking to the people of Israel.

their assembly will be established before me

This can be translated in active form. Alternate translation: "I will establish them as a people before me" (See: [Active or Passive](#))

ULT

²⁰ Then their people will be like before, and their assembly will be established before me when I punish all the ones who are now tormenting them.

Jeremiah 30:21

this is Yahweh's declaration

Yahweh speaks of himself by name to express the certainty of what he is declaring. See how you translates this in [Jeremiah 1:8](#). Alternate translation: "this is what Yahweh has declared" or "this is what I, Yahweh, have declared" (See: [First](#), [Second](#) or [Third Person](#))

ULT

21 Their leader will come from among them. He will emerge from their midst when I draw him near and when he approaches me. If I do not do this, who would dare come close to me?—this is Yahweh's declaration.

Jeremiah 30:22

(There are no notes for this verse.)

ULT

²² Then you will be my people, and I will be your God.

Jeremiah 30:23

See, the tempest of Yahweh, his fury, has gone out

This speaks of God's anger and punishment as if it were a storm. This emphasizes his power and ability to destroy wicked people. (See: [Metaphor](#))

ULT

²³ See, the tempest of Yahweh, his fury, has gone out. It is a continual tempest. It will whirl on the heads of the wicked people.

Jeremiah 30:24

his heart's intentions

The abstract noun “intentions” can be translated using the verb “intends.” The heart is a synecdoche for the whole person. Alternate translation: “what he intends to do” (See: [Abstract Nouns](#) and [Synecdoche](#))

ULT

24 Yahweh's wrath will not return until it has carried out and brought into being his heart's intentions. In the final days, you will understand it.”

Jeremiah 31

Jeremiah 31 General Notes

Structure and formatting

Some translations set each line of poetry farther to the right than the rest of the text to make it easier to read. The ULT does this with the poetry in 31:1-6, 8-22, 35-37.

The ULT sets 31:29 farther to the right on the page than the rest of the text because it is an important quotation.

This chapter begins with a transition from the previous chapter. "At that time" is a reference to the day of restoration mentioned in Jeremiah 30:24. (See: [restore](#), [restoration](#))

Special concepts in this chapter

The new covenant

This chapter is an important teaching regarding the new covenant. God will make a new covenant that will bring forgiveness of sins and a desire to obey God. Scholars disagree about whether this new covenant has begun. (See: [covenant](#) and [forgive](#), [forgiven](#), [forgiveness](#), [pardon](#), [pardoned](#) and [sin](#), [sinful](#), [sinner](#), [sinning](#))

Other possible translation difficulties in this chapter

Israel

In this chapter, Jeremiah uses the term "Israel" in reference to the nation of Israel as a whole. He also uses it in reference to the northern kingdom of Israel and their people group.

Jeremiah 31:1

General Information:

Jeremiah often wrote prophecy in the form of poetry. Hebrew poetry uses different kinds of parallelism. (See: [Poetry](#) and [Parallelism](#))

ULT

1 “At that time—this is Yahweh’s declaration—I will be the God of all the clans of Israel, and they will be my people.”

Jeremiah 31:2

The people who have survived the sword have found favor in the wilderness

The phrase “found favor” is an idiom. Alternate translation: “While the people who have survived the sword have been in the wilderness, I have had grace on them” (See: [Idiom](#))

ULT

² Yahweh says this, “The people who have survived the sword have found favor in the wilderness; I will go out to give rest to Israel.”

who have survived the sword

The word “sword” is a metonym for war. Alternate translation: “who have survived the war” (See: [Metonymy](#))

wilderness; I will go out to give rest to Israel

Another possible meaning is “wilderness, where Israel went out to find rest.”

Jeremiah 31:3

Yahweh appeared to me

Jeremiah speaks of himself as if he were the people of Israel. (See: [Metonymy](#))

I have drawn you toward myself with covenant faithfulness

The abstract noun “faithfulness” can be stated as “faithful” or “faithfully.” Alternate translation: “I have been faithful to my covenant and brought you near to me” or “I have faithfully loved you and brought you near to me” (See: [Abstract Nouns](#))

ULT

³ Yahweh appeared to me in the past and said, “I have loved you, Israel, with everlasting love. So I have drawn you toward myself with covenant faithfulness.

Jeremiah 31:4

General Information:

Yahweh continues speaking to the people of Israel.

I will build you up again so you will be built

Yahweh purposefully repeats the idea that he will build Israel to emphasize it. If your language can only use active verbs and has some other way to emphasize the idea, you may want to use it here. Alternate translation: "I will build you up again. Remember this: I will build you" (See: [Active or Passive](#) and [Parallelism](#))

ULT

⁴ I will build you up again so you will be built, virgin Israel. You will again pick up your tambourines and go out with happy dances.

virgin Israel

It was common to refer to nations as if they were women. However, "virgin" makes a person think about a young woman who has never married and so has never had the opportunity to be faithless to her husband. Therefore, calling Israel a virgin is an ironic use of language. See how you translated this in [Jeremiah 18:13](#). Alternate translation: "Israel, who falsely pretends to be fully devoted to me" or "my faithless people Israel" (See: [Personification](#) and [Irony](#))

tambourines

musical instruments with heads like a drum that can be hit and with pieces of metal around their sides that sound when the instruments are shaken (See: [Translate Unknowns](#))

Jeremiah 31:5

(There are no notes for this verse.)

ULT

⁵ You will plant vineyards again on the mountains of Samaria; the farmers will plant and put the fruit to good use.

Jeremiah 31:6

(There are no notes for this verse.)

ULT

⁶ For a day will come when the watchmen in the mountains of Ephraim will proclaim, 'Arise, let us go up to Zion to Yahweh our God.'

Jeremiah 31:7

Shout ... Shout ... Let praise be heard ... Say

Yahweh is speaking in an apostrophe to all people of the world, so these verbs are plural. (See: [Apostrophe](#) and [Pronouns](#))

the chief people of the nations

“the most important people group of all the nations” or “the people group that is more important than any other”

Let praise be heard

This can be translated in active form. Alternate translation: “Cause everyone to hear your praise” (See: [Active or Passive](#))

ULT

⁷ For Yahweh says this, “Shout for joy over Jacob! Shout in gladness for the chief people of the nations! Let praise be heard. Say, ‘Yahweh has rescued his people, the remnant of Israel.’”

Jeremiah 31:8

General Information:

Yahweh continues speaking about how he will bring the Israelite people back from being captives in Babylon.

See

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

to bring them

“to bring the Israelite people”

ULT

⁸ See, I am about to bring them from the northern lands. I will gather them from the farthest parts of the earth. The blind and lame will be among them; pregnant women and those who are about to give birth will be with them. A great assembly will return here.

Jeremiah 31:9

I will lead them as they make their pleas

Yahweh will lead them and they will be praying to Yahweh. Some ancient versions read, "Yahweh will lead them and will comfort them."

I will be a father to Israel, and Ephraim will be my firstborn

Here "Ephraim" is another name for "Israel." Alternate translation: "I will be like a father to the people of Israel, and they will be like my firstborn child" (See: [Metaphor](#) and [Metonymy](#))

my firstborn

The firstborn had special honor and responsibility.

ULT

⁹ They will come weeping; I will lead them as they make their pleas. I will have them journey to streams of water on a straight road. They will not stumble on it, for I will be a father to Israel, and Ephraim will be my firstborn."

Jeremiah 31:10

General Information:

Yahweh continues speaking about how he will bring the Israelite people back from being captives in Babylon.

Hear ... Report

Yahweh is speaking to the nations, so these verbs are plural. (See: [Pronouns](#))

ULT

10 "Hear the word of Yahweh, nations.
Report along the coasts in the distance.
You nations must say, 'The one who
scattered Israel is gathering her up and
keeping her as a shepherd keeps his
sheep.'

The one who scattered Israel is gathering her up and keeping her

Yahweh speaks of himself as if he were someone else, and he speaks of the people of Israel as if they were a helpless woman. Alternate translation: "I caused my people Israel to be scattered among the nations, but now I am bringing them home and keeping them" (See: [Pronouns](#) and [Metaphor](#))

as a shepherd keeps his sheep

A shepherd cares for and protects his sheep, and Yahweh is promising to care for and protect the Israelites. (See: [Simile](#))

Jeremiah 31:11

For Yahweh has ransomed Jacob and has redeemed him from the hand that was too strong for him

These two phrases mean basically the same thing and emphasize that it is Yahweh who has rescued the people of Israel. Alternate translation: "For Yahweh has rescued the people of Israel from their enemy who was too strong for them" (See: [Parallelism](#) and [Metonymy](#))

ULT

¹¹ For Yahweh has ransomed Jacob and has redeemed him from the hand that was too strong for him.

Jeremiah 31:12

on the heights of Zion

“on Zion, the high place” or “on Mount Zion.” Being on top of a hill is a metaphor for being happy. If your language associates mountain tops with sadness, it would be best to leave out the metaphor. (See: [Metaphor](#))

like a watered garden

This means they will be strong and healthy, and they will prosper. (See: [Simile](#))

they will never again feel any more sorrow

The word “never” is a generalization. The Israelites will almost always feel joy. (See: [Hyperbole](#))

ULT

12 Then they will come and rejoice on the heights of Zion. Their faces will shine because of Yahweh's goodness, over the corn and the new wine, over the oil and the offspring of the flocks and herds. For their lives will become like a watered garden, and they will never again feel any more sorrow.

Jeremiah 31:13

I will change their mourning into celebration

The abstract nouns “mourning” and “celebration” can be translated as verbs. Alternate translation: “I will cause them to mourn no longer but instead to celebrate” or “I will make it so they are no longer sad but happy”

I will change

“Yahweh will change”

ULT

13 Then virgins will rejoice with dancing, and young and old men will be together. For I will change their mourning into celebration. I will have compassion on them and cause them to rejoice instead of sorrowing.

Jeremiah 31:14

I will saturate the lives of the priests in abundance

The abstract noun “abundance” can be translated as “many good things.” The lives of the priests are spoken of as if they were a field that would become completely wet when much rain falls on it. Life is a metonym for the person. Alternate translation: “I will give the priests all the good things they would like” or “I will satisfy the priests with good things” (See: [Abstract Nouns](#) and [Metaphor](#) and [Metonymy](#))

ULT

14 Then I will saturate the lives of the priests in abundance. My people will fill themselves with my goodness—this is Yahweh’s declaration.”

this is Yahweh’s declaration

Yahweh speaks of himself by name to express the certainty of what he is declaring. See how you translated this in [Jeremiah 1:8](#). Alternate translation: “this is what Yahweh has declared” or “this is what I, Yahweh, have declared” (See: [First, Second or Third Person](#))

Jeremiah 31:15

A voice is heard in Ramah

This can be translated in active form. Alternate translation: "I hear a voice in Ramah" (See: [Active or Passive](#))

It is Rachel weeping for her children

Rachel was the wife of Jacob/Israel and was the mother of the tribes of Joseph and Benjamin. Her name is a metonym for the women of Israel who are crying because the Babylonians have killed their children or taken them away. (See: [Metonymy](#))

ULT

15 Yahweh says this: "A voice is heard in Ramah, wailing and bitter weeping. It is Rachel weeping for her children. She refuses to be comforted over them, for they live no longer."

She refuses to be comforted over them, for they live no longer

This can be translated in active form. Alternate translation: "She will not let anyone comfort her, for her children are dead" (See: [Active or Passive](#) and [Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information](#))

Jeremiah 31:16

Hold your voice back from weeping and your eyes from tears

The voice and eyes are spoken of as if they were people whom Rachel needed to keep from moving. Alternate translation: “Stop weeping aloud and stop crying tears” (See: [Personification](#))

Hold your voice ... your eyes ... your work ... your children

Yahweh is speaking to the Israelites as if he were speaking to Rachel ([Jeremiah 31:15](#)), so all instances of “your” and the commands are singular. (See: [Forms of You](#) and [Apostrophe](#))

this is Yahweh’s declaration

In both instances of this phrase, Yahweh speaks of himself by name to express the certainty of what he is declaring. See how you translated this in [Jeremiah 1:8](#). Alternate translation: “this is what Yahweh has declared” or “this is what I, Yahweh, have declared” (See: [First, Second or Third Person](#))

ULT

¹⁶ Yahweh says this, “Hold your voice back from weeping and your eyes from tears; there is a reward for your work—this is Yahweh’s declaration—your children will return from the land of the enemy.”

Jeremiah 31:17

your future ... your descendants

Yahweh is speaking to the Israelites as if he were speaking to Rachel ([Jeremiah 31:15](#)), so all instances of “your” and the commands are singular. (See: [Forms of You](#) and [Apostrophe](#))

ULT

17 There is hope for your future—this is Yahweh’s declaration—your descendants will return inside their borders.”

Jeremiah 31:18

I have certainly heard Ephraim sorrowing

Ephraim was the ancestor of the largest tribe in Israel. His name is a metonym for the people of Israel. Alternate translation: “I have certainly heard the descendants of Ephraim sorrowing” or “I have certainly heard the people of Israel sorrowing” (See: [Metonymy](#))

You punished me, and I have been punished

The speaker repeats the phrase to show either that Yahweh punished him severely or that Ephraim learned what Yahweh wanted to teach him through punishing him. The words “I have been punished” can be translated in active form. Alternate translation: “You punished me. Yes, you punished me severely” or “You punished me, and I learned from you when you punished me” (See: [Parallelism](#) and [Active or Passive](#))

I have been punished like an untrained calf

When people train calves, they strike them and otherwise cause them to suffer. Yahweh had caused the people of Israel to suffer. (See: [Simile](#))

punished

Another possible meaning is “disciplined.”

ULT

18 “I have certainly heard Ephraim sorrowing, ‘You punished me, and I have been punished like an untrained calf. Bring me back and I will be brought back, for you are Yahweh my God.

Jeremiah 31:19

I slapped my thigh

in grief. If people use a different phrase or action in your language to show that they are very sad, you may want to use it here. Alternate translation: "I rubbed my brow" (See: [Idiom](#) and [Symbolic Action](#))

I was ashamed and humiliated

The words "ashamed" and "humiliated" mean basically the same thing and intensify the idea of shame. Alternate translation: "I was completely ashamed" (See: [Doublet](#))

ULT

19 For after I turned back to you, I was sorry; after I was trained, I slapped my thigh. I was ashamed and humiliated, for I have borne the guilt of my youth.'

Jeremiah 31:20

Is not Ephraim my precious child? Is he not my dear, delightful son?

Yahweh is speaking tenderly, trying to comfort the people. These questions can be translated as statements. Alternate translation: “Ephraim is my precious child. He is my dear, delightful son. (See: [Rhetorical Question](#))

this is Yahweh’s declaration

Yahweh speaks of himself by name to express the certainty of what he is declaring. See how you translated this in [Jeremiah 1:8](#). Alternate translation: “this is what Yahweh has declared” or “this is what I, Yahweh, have declared” (See: [First, Second or Third Person](#))

ULT

²⁰ Is not Ephraim my precious child? Is he not my dear, delightful son? For whenever I speak against him, I certainly still call him to my loving mind. In this way my heart longs for him. I will certainly have compassion on him—this is Yahweh’s declaration.”

Jeremiah 31:21

General Information:

God continues to speak from verse 7.

Place road signs for yourself ... Set up guideposts for yourself ... Set your mind ... you should take ... Come back

These commands and instances of “yourself” and “your” and “you” are addressed to “virgin Israel” and so are singular. (See: [Pronouns](#))

Come back, virgin Israel!

God is referring to a changed Israel. (See: [Metaphor](#))

ULT

²¹ Place road signs for yourself. Set up guideposts for yourself. Set your mind on the right path, the way you should take. Come back, virgin Israel! Come back to these cities of yours.

Jeremiah 31:22

How long will you waver, faithless daughter?

Yahweh is telling his people that he is becoming impatient with them because they are not obeying him. Alternate translation: “Do not hesitate to start obeying me.” (See: [Rhetorical Question](#))

waver

This could mean: (1) be unable to decide what to do or (2) often go off the correct path, a metaphor for disobeying Yahweh. (See: [Metaphor](#))

ULT

²² How long will you waver, faithless daughter? For Yahweh has created something new on earth—a woman surrounds a strong man.

new on earth—a woman surrounds a strong man

This could mean: (1) the people will be so safe that women will not need anyone to protect them or (2) this is an idiom for something no one would ever expect. Alternate translation: “new on earth—something as strange as a woman protecting a man” (See: [Idiom](#))

Jeremiah 31:23

Yahweh of hosts ... says this

Jeremiah often uses these words to introduce an important message from Yahweh. See how you translated this in [Jeremiah 6:6](#).

the people

Here this refers to the people of Judah. (See: [Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information](#))

May Yahweh bless you, you righteous place where he lives, you holy mountain

Jerusalem is on the top of a hill, and the temple was built at the highest point in Jerusalem. AT; "May Yahweh bless those who live in Jerusalem with Yahweh, where his temple is" (See: [Apostrophe](#) and [Metonymy](#))

you holy mountain

Mount Zion, where the temple had stood

ULT

23 Yahweh of hosts, the God of Israel, says this, "When I bring back the people to their land, they will say this in the land of Judah and its cities, 'May Yahweh bless you, you righteous place where he lives, you holy mountain.'

Jeremiah 31:24

Judah and all its cities will live together there

The name of the man Judah is a metonym for the land on which his descendants, the people of the tribe of Judah, live, and the cities of Judah are spoken of as if they were the family of the man Judah, all of them living “there,” in the land of Judah. Alternate translation: “it will be as if the land were a house in which Judah lived with his family” (See: [Metonymy](#) and [Metaphor](#))

ULT

²⁴ For Judah and all its cities will live together there, as will farmers and those who set out with flocks.

as will farmers and those who set out with flocks

“and farmers and those who set out with flocks will also live there”

those who set out with flocks

people who take care of sheep and goats

Jeremiah 31:25

(There are no notes for this verse.)

ULT

²⁵ For I will cause those who are weary to drink, and I fill up those who are faint."

Jeremiah 31:26

had been refreshing

“had refreshed me”

ULT

²⁶ After this I awoke, and I realized that my sleep had been refreshing.

Jeremiah 31:27

Look

“Pay attention” or “Listen”

days are coming ... when I will sow

Future time is spoken of as if the “days are coming.” See how you translated this metaphor in [Jeremiah 7:32](#). Alternate translation: “in the future ... I will sow” or “there will be a time ... when I will sow” (See: [Metaphor](#))

ULT

²⁷ “Look, the days are coming—this is Yahweh’s declaration—when I will sow the houses of Israel and Judah with the descendants of man and beast.

this is Yahweh’s declaration

Yahweh speaks of himself by name to express the certainty of what he is declaring. See how you translated this in [Jeremiah 1:8](#). Alternate translation: “this is what Yahweh has declared” or “this is what I, Yahweh, have declared” (See: [First, Second or Third Person](#))

I will sow the houses of Israel and Judah with the descendants of man and beast

The word “house” is a metonym for the family that lives in the house, in this case the people of Israel and the people of Judah. The house in turn is spoken of as if it were a field in which Yahweh would sow seed, and the people and the animals they raise for food, milk, and skins are spoken of as if they are that seed. Alternate translation: “I will cause the people of Israel and Judah to become many people with many animals” (See: [Metonymy](#) and [Metaphor](#))

Jeremiah 31:28

I kept them under surveillance in order to uproot them

“looked for ways to uproot them”

uproot ... tear them down ... overthrow ... destroy

See how you translated these ideas in [Jeremiah 1:9](#).

in order to build them up and to plant them

Yahweh speaks of the Israelites as if they were a house or a food crop. Alternate translation: “in order to make them strong and many” (See: [Metaphor](#))

ULT

²⁸ In the past, I kept them under surveillance in order to uproot them and to tear them down, to overthrow, destroy, and bring them harm. But in the coming days, I will watch over them, in order to build them up and to plant them—this is Yahweh’s declaration.

Jeremiah 31:29

Fathers have eaten sour grapes, but the children's teeth are dulled

These words are a proverb that Jeremiah heard people say when they were complaining that Yahweh was punishing children for the sins of their fathers. (See: [Proverbs](#))

ULT

²⁹ In those days no one will say any longer, 'Fathers have eaten sour grapes, but the children's teeth are dulled.'

sour grapes

This could mean: (1) grapes with too much acid in them or (2) grapes that are not ripe. If grapes are not part of your culture, you may want to use a general word for fruit.

teeth are dulled

Use the common words in your language for how people's mouths feel when they eat sour or unripe fruit.

Jeremiah 31:30

For each man will die in his own iniquity

“For each man will die because of his own sins”

everyone who eats sour grapes, his teeth will be dulled

Jeremiah restates the proverb so that it now means people will suffer as a consequence of their own behaviors.
(See: [Proverbs](#))

ULT

³⁰ For each man will die in his own iniquity; everyone who eats sour grapes, his teeth will be dulled.

Jeremiah 31:31

Look

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

days are coming ... when I will establish

Future time is spoken of as if the “days are coming.” See how you translated this metaphor in [Jeremiah 7:32](#). Alternate translation: “in the future ... I will establish” or “there will be a time ... when I will establish” (See: [Metaphor](#))

this is Yahweh’s declaration

Yahweh speaks of himself by name to express the certainty of what he is declaring. See how you translated this in [Jeremiah 1:8](#). Alternate translation: “this is what Yahweh has declared” or “this is what I, Yahweh, have declared” (See: [First, Second or Third Person](#))

the house of Israel

The word “house” is a metonym for the family that lives in the house. In this case it refers to the kingdom of Israel. See how you translated this in [Jeremiah 3:18](#). Alternate translation: “Israel” or “the kingdom of Israel” or “the people of Israel” (See: [Metonymy](#))

the house of Judah

The word “house” is a metonym for the family that lives in the house. In this case it refers to the kingdom of Judah, which included the descendants of Judah and Benjamin. See how you translated this in [Jeremiah 3:18](#). Alternate translation: “Judah” or “the kingdom of Judah” or “the people of Judah” (See: [Metonymy](#))

ULT

³¹ Look, the days are coming— this is Yahweh’s declaration— when I will establish a new covenant with the house of Israel and the house of Judah.

Jeremiah 31:32

I took them by their hand

as a loving husband would hold the hand of his wife as they walk
(See: [Metaphor](#))

ULT

³² It will not be like the covenant that I established with their fathers in the days when I took them by their hand to bring them out from the land of Egypt, because they broke my covenant, although I was a husband for them— this is Yahweh's declaration.

Jeremiah 31:33

the house of Israel

The word “house” is a metonym for the family that lives in the house. In this case it refers to the kingdom of Israel. See how you translated this in [Jeremiah 3:18](#). Alternate translation: “Israel” or “the kingdom of Israel” or “the people of Israel” (See: [Metonymy](#))

this is Yahweh’s declaration

Yahweh speaks of himself by name to express the certainty of what he is declaring. See how you translated this in [Jeremiah 1:8](#). Alternate translation: “this is what Yahweh has declared” or “this is what I, Yahweh, have declared” (See: [First, Second or Third Person](#))

I will place my law within them and will write it on their heart

These two phrases have similar meanings and emphasize that Yahweh’s law will become a part of them, rather than merely written on stone. Here “heart” represents “emotions” or “mind.” Alternate translation: “My law will be part of their thoughts and emotions” (See: [Parallelism](#) and [Metonymy](#))

ULT

33 This is the covenant that I will establish with the house of Israel after these days —this is Yahweh’s declaration. I will place my law within them and will write it on their heart, for I will be their God, and they will be my people.

Jeremiah 31:34

from the smallest of them to the greatest

This phrase refers to every person, from the least important to the most important. Alternate translation: “every single one of them” (See: [Merism](#))

ULT

³⁴ Then each man will no longer teach his neighbor, or a man teach his brother and say, ‘Know Yahweh!’ For all of them will know me, from the smallest of them to the greatest —this is Yahweh’s declaration— for I will forgive their iniquity and will no longer call their sins to mind.”

Jeremiah 31:35

(There are no notes for this verse.)

ULT

³⁵ Yahweh says this, it is he who makes the sun to shine by day and fixes the moon and stars to shine by night. He is the one who sets the sea in motion so that its waves roar— Yahweh of hosts is his name.

Jeremiah 31:36

Only if these permanent things vanish ... will Israel's descendants ever stop from forever being a nation

This is a hypothetical situation that Yahweh never expects to truly happen. Alternate translation: "These permanent things will never vanish ... and Israel's descendants will never stop from forever being a nation" (See: [Hypothetical Situations](#))

ULT

³⁶ "Only if these permanent things vanish from my sight—this is Yahweh's declaration— will Israel's descendants ever stop from forever being a nation before me."

this is Yahweh's declaration

Yahweh speaks of himself by name to express the certainty of what he is declaring. See how you translated this in [Jeremiah 1:8](#). Alternate translation: "this is what Yahweh has declared" or "this is what I, Yahweh, have declared" (See: [First, Second or Third Person](#))

Jeremiah 31:37

Only if the highest heavens can be measured, and only if the earth's foundation below can be discovered, will I reject all of Israel's descendants

This is a hypothetical situation that Yahweh never expects to truly happen. Alternate translation: "The highest heavens can never be measured, and the earth's foundation below can never be discovered, and I will never reject all of Israel's descendants" (See: [Hypothetical Situations](#))

ULT

³⁷ Yahweh says this, "Only if the highest heavens can be measured, and only if the earth's foundation below can be discovered, will I reject all of Israel's descendants because of all that they have done—this is Yahweh's declaration."

the highest heavens ... earth's foundation

These phrases refer to the whole of creation. (See: [Merism](#))

the earth's foundation below can be discovered

This can be translated in active form. Alternate translation: "someone can dig all the way down to the earth's foundation" (See: [Active or Passive](#))

foundation below

"deepest part." The "foundation" is the part of a house on which every other part rests.

reject

throw away or refuse to take

this is Yahweh's declaration

Yahweh speaks of himself by name to express the certainty of what he is declaring. See how you translated this in [Jeremiah 1:8](#). Alternate translation: "this is what Yahweh has declared" or "this is what I, Yahweh, have declared" (See: [First, Second or Third Person](#))

Jeremiah 31:38

days are coming ... when the city will be rebuilt

Future time is spoken of as if the “days are coming.” See how you translated this metaphor in [Jeremiah 7:32](#). Alternate translation: “in the future ... the city will be rebuilt” or “there will be a time ... when the city will be rebuilt” (See: [Metaphor](#))

ULT

³⁸ “Look, the days are coming—this is Yahweh’s declaration—when the city will be rebuilt for me, from the Tower of Hananel to the Corner Gate.

this is Yahweh’s declaration

Yahweh speaks of himself by name to express the certainty of what he is declaring. See how you translated this in [Jeremiah 1:8](#). Alternate translation: “this is what Yahweh has declared” or “this is what I, Yahweh, have declared” (See: [First, Second or Third Person](#))

the city will be rebuilt for me

This can be translated in active form. Alternate translation: “they will rebuild the city for me” or “I will have them rebuild the city” (See: [Active or Passive](#))

Tower of Hananel ... Corner Gate

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

Jeremiah 31:39

hill of Gareb ... Goah

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

ULT

³⁹ Then the measuring line will go out again farther, to the hill of Gareb and around Goah.

Jeremiah 31:40

The whole valley ... will be set apart for Yahweh

This can be translated in active form. Alternate translation: “They will set apart the whole valley ... for me” or “I will have them make the whole valley ... holy for me” (See: [Active or Passive](#))

Kidron Valley ... Horse Gate

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

set apart

“made holy”

The city will not be pulled up or overthrown again

The city is spoken of as if it were a plant that someone could pull out of the ground or a building that someone could break down. This can be translated in active form. Alternate translation: “I will not allow anyone to pull up or overthrow the city again” or “No one will tear the city down or destroy it again” (See: [Metaphor](#) and [Active or Passive](#))

ULT

⁴⁰ The whole valley of the dead bodies and the ashes, and all the terraced fields going out to the Kidron Valley as far as the corner of the Horse Gate on the east, will be set apart for Yahweh. The city will not be pulled up or overthrown again, forever.”

Jeremiah 32

Jeremiah 32 General Notes

Special concepts in this chapter

The king should have listened to the prophet Jeremiah and repented of his sin. Instead, he objected to his message. Yahweh punished him because of this. (See: [prophet](#), [prophecy](#), [prophesy](#), [seer](#), [prophetess](#) and [repent](#), [repentance](#) and [sin](#), [sinful](#), [sinner](#), [sinning](#))

Other possible translation difficulties in this chapter

Israel

The term "Israel" is used exclusively in reference to the nation of Israel as a whole in this chapter.

Jeremiah 32:1

This is the word that came to Jeremiah from Yahweh

This idiom is used to announce that God gave messages to Jeremiah. See how you translated a similar phrase in [Jeremiah 1:2](#) Alternate translation: “Yahweh gave messages to Jeremiah” or “Yahweh spoke to Jeremiah” (See: [Idiom](#))

ULT

¹ This is the word that came to Jeremiah from Yahweh in the tenth year of Zedekiah king of Judah, the eighteenth year of Nebuchadnezzar.

in the tenth year of Zedekiah king of Judah, the eighteenth year of Nebuchadnezzar

“after Zedekiah had been king of Judah for more than nine years and Nebuchadnezzar had been king for more than seventeen years”

Jeremiah 32:2

Jeremiah the prophet was imprisoned

This can be translated in active form. Alternate translation: “they were keeping Jeremiah as a prisoner” (See: [Active or Passive](#))

Jeremiah the prophet was imprisoned

It is not clear why Jeremiah is referring to himself by name here. You may translate using first person, as the UST does. (See: [First, Second or Third Person](#))

ULT

² At that time, the army of the king of Babylon was besieging Jerusalem, and Jeremiah the prophet was imprisoned in the courtyard of the guard at the house of the king of Judah.

the courtyard of the guard at the house of the king of Judah

This was an open area attached to the king’s palace that was surrounded by buildings and in which they kept prisoners.

Jeremiah 32:3

Zedekiah king of Judah had imprisoned him

It might be best to translate so that the reader understands that other people helped Zedekiah do this. (See: [Metonymy](#))

had imprisoned him

Here “him” refers to Jeremiah. It is not clear why Jeremiah is referring to himself by name here. You may translate using first person, as the UST does. (See: [First, Second or Third Person](#))

ULT

³ Zedekiah king of Judah had imprisoned him and said, “Why do you prophesy and say, ‘Yahweh says this: Look, I am about to give over this city into the hand of the king of Babylon, and he will capture it.

Why do you prophesy and say

Zekekiah uses a question to rebuke Jeremiah. Alternate translation: “It is wrong for you to continue prophesying and saying” (See: [Rhetorical Question](#))

I am about to give over this city into the hand of the king of Babylon

Yahweh speaks of the city as if it were a small object that one person could give to another. The word “hand” is a metonym for the power or control that the hand exercises. Alternate translation: “I am about to put this city under the control of the king of Babylon” or “I am about to allow the king of Babylon to do whatever he wants with this city” (See: [Metaphor](#) and [Metonymy](#))

he will capture it

It might be best to translate so that the reader understands that other people would help the king of Babylon take control of the city.

Jeremiah 32:4

he will certainly be given into the hand of the king of Babylon

The word “hand” is a metonym for the power or control that the hand exercises. This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: “I will certainly put him under the control of the king of Babylon” or “I will certainly allow the king of Babylon to do whatever he wants with him” (See: [Metonymy](#) and [Active or Passive](#))

ULT

⁴ Zedekiah king of Judah will not escape from the hand of the Chaldeans, for he will certainly be given into the hand of the king of Babylon. His mouth will speak to the king’s mouth, and his eyes will see the king’s eyes.

His mouth will speak to the king’s mouth, and his eyes will see the king’s eyes

Here “mouth” and “eyes” represent the whole person. Alternate translation: “Zedekiah himself will see and directly speak with Nebuchadnezzar” (See: [Synecdoche](#))

Jeremiah 32:5

this is Yahweh's declaration

Yahweh speaks of himself by name to express the certainty of what he is declaring. See how you translated this in [Jeremiah 1:8](#). Alternate translation: "this is what Yahweh has declared" or "this is what I, Yahweh, have declared" (See: [First](#), [Second](#) or [Third Person](#))

you fight

Here "you" is plural and refers to the people in Jerusalem. (See: [Forms of You](#))

ULT

⁵ He will take Zekediah to Babylon, and he will remain there until I have dealt with him—this is Yahweh's declaration. Though you fight against the Chaldeans, you will not succeed.'"

Jeremiah 32:6

Jeremiah said

It is not clear why Jeremiah is referring to himself by name here. You may translate using first person, as the UST does. (See: [First](#), [Second](#) or [Third Person](#))

ULT

⁶ Jeremiah said, "The word of Yahweh came to me, saying,

The word of Yahweh came to me, saying,

This idiom is used to introduce a special message from God. See how you translated it in [Jeremiah 1:4](#). Alternate translation: "Yahweh gave me a message. He said, 'Look'" or "Yahweh spoke this message to me: 'Look'" (See: [Idiom](#))

Jeremiah 32:7

‘Look, Hanamel son of Shallum your uncle is coming to you and will say, “Buy my field that is in Anathoth for yourself, for the right to buy it belongs to you.”’

The long quotation that begins with the words “The word of Yahweh” in verse 6 ends here. You may translate this as indirect speech. Alternate translation: “Jeremiah said that the word of Yahweh had come to him and told him that Hanamel son of Shallum his uncle was coming to him and would tell him to buy his uncle’s field that was in Anathoth for himself, for the right to buy it belonged to Jeremiah.” (See: [Direct and Indirect Quotations](#))

ULT

⁷ ‘Look, Hanamel son of Shallum your uncle is coming to you and will say, “Buy my field that is in Anathoth for yourself, for the right to buy it belongs to you.”’

Hanamel ... Shallum

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

Anathoth

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

Jeremiah 32:8

General Information:

Jeremiah continues speaking, but he begins to speak of himself in first person. (See: [First, Second or Third Person](#))

the courtyard of the guard

This was an open area attached to the king's palace that was surrounded by buildings and in which they kept prisoners. See how you translated this in [Jeremiah 32:2](#).

ULT

⁸ Then, as Yahweh had declared, Hanamel, the son of my uncle, came to me in the courtyard of the guard, and he said to me, "Buy my field that is in Anathoth in the land of Benjamin, for the right of inheritance is yours, and the right to buy it belongs to you. Buy it for yourself." Then I knew that this was Yahweh's word.

Jeremiah 32:9

seventeen shekels

A shekel is 11 grams. Alternate translation: “17 shekels” or “187 grams” (See: [Biblical Money](#) and [Numbers](#))

ULT

⁹ So I bought the field in Anathoth from Hanamel, the son of my uncle, and I weighed out for him the silver, seventeen shekels in weight.

Jeremiah 32:10

General Information:

Jeremiah continues speaking.

in a scroll and sealed it, and had witnesses witness it

This refers to the deed that a person would sign to purchase land. Other people would be witnesses to confirm that Jeremiah had purchased this land.

had witnesses witness it

“had people watch me purchase the land so they could tell others that I had purchased the land”

ULT

10 Then I wrote in a scroll and sealed it, and had witnesses witness it. Then I weighed the silver in the scales.

Jeremiah 32:11

that was sealed

This can be translated in active form. Alternate translation: “that I sealed” (See: [Active or Passive](#))

unsealed deed

“opened copy” or “the deed that did not have a seal on it”

ULT

11 Next I took the deed of purchase that was sealed, following the command and the statutes, as well as the unsealed deed.

Jeremiah 32:12

Baruch ... Neriah ... Mahseiah

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

the courtyard of the guard

The open area attached to the king's palace that was surrounded by buildings and in which they kept prisoners. See how you translated this in [Jeremiah 32:2](#).

ULT

¹² I gave the sealed scroll to Baruch son of Neriah son of Mahseiah in front of Hanamel, the son of my uncle, and the witnesses who had written in the sealed scroll, and in front of all the Judeans who sat in the courtyard of the guard.

Jeremiah 32:13

General Information:

Jeremiah continues speaking.

before them

Here “them” refers to Hanamel, the witnesses, and the Judeans.

ULT

13 So I gave a command to Baruch before them. I said,

Jeremiah 32:14

Yahweh of hosts ... says this

Jeremiah often uses these words to introduce an important message from Yahweh. See how you translated this in [Jeremiah 6:6](#).

ULT

14 “Yahweh of hosts, God of Israel, says this: Take these documents, both this receipt of purchase that is sealed and the unsealed copies of the deed of purchase, and put them in a clay jar so they will last for a long time.

Jeremiah 32:15

Houses, fields, and vineyards will again be bought in this land

This can be translated in active form. Alternate translation: "The people of Israel will buy houses, vineyards and fields again in this land" (See: [Active or Passive](#))

ULT

¹⁵ For Yahweh of hosts, God of Israel, says this: Houses, fields, and vineyards will again be bought in this land."

Jeremiah 32:16

General Information:

Jeremiah continues speaking. He begins a long prayer, a lament with a long introduction of praise.

the receipt of purchase

This means the sealed scroll and the unsealed scroll.

ULT

16 After I gave the receipt of purchase to Baruch son of Neriah, I prayed to Yahweh and said,

Jeremiah 32:17

Woe, Lord Yahweh! Look!

The word “woe” here indicates that in this prayer Jeremiah is sad, complaining or lamenting. The word “look” here indicates that the next words are an introduction or background for the most important part of the prayer. (See: [Background Information](#))

by your great strength and with your raised arm

The phrase “raised arm” is a metonym for the strength of the arm, so the words “your great strength” and “your raised arm” form a doublet. Alternate translation: “by your great power” (See: [Metonymy](#) and [Doublet](#))

ULT

17 “Woe, Lord Yahweh! Look! You alone have made the heavens and the earth by your great strength and with your raised arm. Nothing you say is too difficult for you to do.”

Jeremiah 32:18

You show covenant faithfulness to thousands

The abstract noun “faithfulness” can be stated as “faithful” or “faithfully.” Alternate translation: “You are faithful to your covenant towards thousands” or “You keep your promise and faithfully love thousands” (See: [Abstract Nouns](#))

pour the guilt of men into the laps of their children after them

The word “guilt” is a metonym for Yahweh punishing people because they are guilty of doing evil things. Yahweh punishing people is spoken of as if he were pouring a large container full of liquid or small objects into people’s laps as they sit. Alternate translation: “you punish children for the sins of their parents” (See: [Metonymy](#) and [Metaphor](#))

ULT

18 You show covenant faithfulness to thousands and pour the guilt of men into the laps of their children after them. You are the great and mighty God; Yahweh of hosts is your name.

Jeremiah 32:19

General Information:

Jeremiah continues praying the introduction to his lament to Yahweh.

for your eyes are open to all the ways of people

Open eyes are a metonym for what the person sees. How a person lives is spoken of as if he were walking on a path. Alternate translation: "You see everything that people do" (See: [Metonymy](#) and [Metaphor](#))

to give to each man what his conduct and deeds deserve

The abstract nouns "conduct" and "deeds," which are similar in meaning, can be translated as verbs. Alternate translation: "and will reward everyone according to how good or evil the things they do are" (See: [Abstract Nouns](#) and [Doublet](#))

ULT

19 You are great in wisdom and mighty in deeds, for your eyes are open to all the ways of people, to give to each man what his conduct and deeds deserve.

Jeremiah 32:20

You did signs and wonders in the land of Egypt

This refers to an event in the past when God used his power to free the people of Israel from slavery in Egypt.

To this present day

“To this day”

among all mankind

“among all people”

you have made your name famous

Here “name” refers to God’s reputation. Alternate translation: “you have made yourself famous” (See: [Metonymy](#))

ULT

²⁰ You did signs and wonders in the land of Egypt. To this present day here in Israel and among all mankind, you have made your name famous.

Jeremiah 32:21

with a strong hand, with a raised arm

The phrase “strong hand” is a metonym for strength, and the phrase “raised arm” is a metonym for the strength of the arm, so the phrases “strong hand” and “raised arm” form a doublet. Alternate translation: “by your great strength” (See: [Metonymy](#) and [Doublet](#))

ULT

21 For you brought your people Israel out from the land of Egypt with signs and wonders, with a strong hand, with a raised arm, and with great terror.

Jeremiah 32:22

General Information:

Jeremiah continues praying to Yahweh. He ends the introduction to his lament (“Woe,” [Jeremiah 32:17](#)) with the words “took possession of it” and begins the lament with “but they did not obey.”

gave them

“gave the people of Israel”

land flowing with milk and honey

“land where milk and honey flow.” God spoke of the land being good for animals and plants as if the milk and honey from those animals and plants were flowing through the land. See how you translated this in [Jeremiah 11:5](#). Alternate translation: “land that is excellent for raising livestock and growing crops” (See: [Metaphor](#) and [Metonymy](#))

ULT

22 Then you gave them this land—which you had sworn to their ancestors to give to them—a land flowing with milk and honey.

Jeremiah 32:23

But they did not obey your voice

The voice is a metonym for the message the speaker gives. Alternate translation: "But they did not obey what you said" (See: [Metonymy](#))

ULT

23 So they entered and took possession of it. But they did not obey your voice or live in obedience to your law. They did nothing of what you had commanded them to do, so you brought all this disaster on them.

Jeremiah 32:24

General Information:

Jeremiah continues praying to Yahweh.

The siege mounds have reached up to the city to capture it

The large piles of dirt and rocks that the enemy built around the city so they could stand on them and attack it are spoken of as if they were the attackers themselves reaching out to capture the city.

Alternate translation: "The enemy's siege mounds are so close to the city that the enemy will be able to capture the city" (See: [Metaphor](#))

ULT

24 Look! The siege mounds have reached up to the city to capture it. For because of sword, famine, and plague, the city has been given into the hand of the Chaldeans who are fighting against it. For what you have said would happen is happening, and see, you are watching.

because of sword

The word "sword" is a metonym for war, where soldiers use swords. Alternate translation: "because soldiers will attack" (See: [Metonymy](#))

famine, and plague

These abstract nouns can be translated with verbal phrases. Alternate translation: "people have no food to eat, and everyone is weak from being ill" (See: [Abstract Nouns](#))

the city has been given into the hand of the Chaldeans

Here "hand" means power or control. This can be translated in active form. Alternate translation: "you have given Jerusalem to the Chaldean army" (See: [Metonymy](#) and [Active or Passive](#))

happening, and see, you are watching

"happening, as you can see very well"

Jeremiah 32:25

have witnesses witness it

“have people watch you purchase the land so they can tell others that you have purchased the land”

this city is being given

This can be translated in active form. Alternate translation: “I am giving this city” (See: [Active or Passive](#))

ULT

²⁵ Then you yourself said to me,
“Purchase a field for yourself with silver
and have witnesses witness it, even
though this city is being given into the
hand of the Chaldeans.”

Jeremiah 32:26

The word of Yahweh came to Jeremiah, saying,

This idiom is used to introduce a special message from God. See how you translated a similar phrase in [Jeremiah 1:4](#). Alternate translation: “Yahweh gave a message to Jeremiah. He said,” or “Yahweh spoke this message to Jeremiah:” (See: [Idiom](#))

ULT

²⁶ The word of Yahweh came to Jeremiah, saying,

came to Jeremiah

It is not clear why Jeremiah is referring to himself by name here. You may translate using first person, as the UST does. (See: [First, Second or Third Person](#))

Jeremiah 32:27

Is anything too difficult for me to do?

Yahweh uses a question to emphasize that he can do anything. This question can be translated as a statement. Alternate translation: "Nothing is too difficult for me to do." (See: [Rhetorical Question](#))

ULT

27 "Look! I am Yahweh, God of all mankind. Is anything too difficult for me to do?"

Jeremiah 32:28

See, I am about to give

“Listen carefully! I am the one who will give”

give this city into the hand of the Chaldeans

Yahweh speaks of the city as if it were a small object that he could put into a person’s hand. The word “hand” is a metonym for the power that the hand puts into action. Alternate translation: “put this city under the power of the Chaldeans” (See: [Metonymy](#))

ULT

²⁸ Therefore Yahweh says this, ‘See, I am about to give this city into the hand of the Chaldeans and Nebuchadnezzar, king of Babylon. He will capture it.’

Jeremiah 32:29

General Information:

Yahweh continues speaking to Jeremiah.

in order to provoke me

“so that I would become very angry”

ULT

²⁹ The Chaldeans who are fighting against this city will come and set fire to this city and burn it, along with the houses on the roofs of which the people worshiped Baal and poured out drink offerings to other gods in order to provoke me.

Jeremiah 32:30

doing evil before my eyes

Here the metonym “eyes” represents what God sees. This could mean: (1) “doing what I consider evil” or (2) “doing evil knowing that I am watching” (See: [Metonymy](#))

since their youth

A person being young is a metaphor for the people of Israel first becoming a nation. Alternate translation: “from the time they were young” or “from the time that they became a nation” (See: [Metaphor](#))

this is Yahweh’s declaration

Yahweh speaks of himself by name to express the certainty of what he is declaring. See how you translated this in [Jeremiah 1:8](#). Alternate translation: “this is what Yahweh has declared” or “this is what I, Yahweh, have declared” (See: [First, Second or Third Person](#))

ULT

³⁰ For the people of Israel and Judah have certainly been people who have been doing evil before my eyes since their youth. The people of Israel have certainly offended me with the practices of their hands—this is Yahweh’s declaration.

Jeremiah 32:31

Connecting Statement:

Yahweh continues speaking to Jeremiah.

this city has been a provocation of my wrath and fury since the day that they built it

Here “city” is a metonym for the people that live there. The words “wrath” and “fury” mean basically the same thing and emphasize how very angry he is. Alternate translation: “the people of Jerusalem have made me very angry since the day they built their city” (See: [Metonymy](#) and [Doublet](#))

ULT

³¹ Yahweh declares that this city has been a provocation of my wrath and fury since the day that they built it. It has been that right up to this present day. So I will remove it from before my face

has been a provocation of

The abstract noun “provocation” can be translated as a verb. Alternate translation: “has been something that has provoked” (See: [Abstract Nouns](#))

It has been that right up to this present day

“They continue to make me angry even now”

from before my face

The face is a metonym for the person’s presence. Alternate translation: “from my presence” or “completely” (See: [Personification](#) and [Metonymy](#))

Jeremiah 32:32

(There are no notes for this verse.)

ULT

³² because of all the wickedness of the people of Israel and Judah, the things that they have done to provoke me—they, their kings, princes, priests, prophets, and every person in Judah and inhabitant of Jerusalem.

Jeremiah 32:33

General Information:

Yahweh continues speaking to Jeremiah about what the people of Israel had done.

They turned their backs to me instead of their faces

One turns one's face to someone to show that one is listening, and one's back to show that one refuses to listen. Alternate translation: "Instead of listening carefully to me, they refused to listen at all" or "They refused to listen" (See: [Symbolic Action](#))

to receive correction

"to learn how to act correctly"

ULT

33 They turned their backs to me instead of their faces, though I had eagerly taught them. I tried to teach them, but not one of them listened in order to receive correction.

Jeremiah 32:34

their abominable idols

“their idols which I hate”

the house that is called by my name

Here “name” represents Yahweh. This can be translated in active form. Alternate translation: “the house that belongs to me” or “the building in which they worship me” (See: [Active or Passive](#) and [Metonymy](#))

ULT

³⁴ They set up their abominable idols in the house that is called by my name, to defile it.

Jeremiah 32:35

Valley of Ben Hinnom

See how you translated this in [Jeremiah 7:31](#).

It never entered my mind

Here “mind” refers to Yahweh’s thoughts. Alternate translation: “I never thought at all” (See: [Metonymy](#))

ULT

³⁵ They built high places for Baal in the Valley of Ben Hinnom in order to put their sons and daughters in the fire for Molech. I did not command them. It never entered my mind that they should do this detestable thing and so cause Judah to sin.’

Jeremiah 32:36

which you are saying

Here “you” is plural. This could mean: (1) this refers to Jeremiah and those with him, or (2) it refers to all the people. (See: [Forms of You](#))

It is given into the hand of the king of Babylon

Here “hand” means power or control. This can be translated in active form. Alternate translation: “Yahweh has given it to the king of Babylon” or “Yahweh has given the king of Babylon the power to rule it” (See: [Metonymy](#) and [Active or Passive](#))

ULT

³⁶ So now therefore, I, Yahweh, the God of Israel, say this concerning this city, the city about which you are saying, ‘It is given into the hand of the king of Babylon by sword, famine, and plague.’

Jeremiah 32:37

to gather them

“to gather my people”

wrath, fury, and great anger

All three words mean the same thing and emphasize how very angry he is. Alternate translation: “extreme anger” (See: [Doublet](#))

in security

“where they are safe”

ULT

³⁷ See, I am about to gather them from every land where I had driven them in my wrath, fury, and great anger. I am about to bring them back to this place and enable them to live in security.

Jeremiah 32:38

General Information:

Yahweh continues speaking.

ULT

³⁸ Then they will be my people, and I will be their God.

Jeremiah 32:39

one heart and one way to honor me

The people of Israel will want to work together to honor Yahweh.
(See: [Metonymy](#))

ULT

³⁹ I will give them one heart and one way to honor me every day so it will be good for them and their descendants after them.

Jeremiah 32:40

an everlasting covenant

“eternal agreement”

will not turn away from doing good

“stop doing good”

I will set honor for me in their hearts

Honor is spoken of as if it were a solid object put in a container from which no one can remove it. Alternate translation: “I will cause them to always honor me” (See: [Metaphor](#))

so that they will never turn away from me

“so that they will never stop obeying and worshiping me”

ULT

40 Then I will make with them an everlasting covenant, that I will not turn away from doing good to them. I will set honor for me in their hearts, so that they will never turn away from me.

Jeremiah 32:41

General Information:

Yahweh continues speaking.

doing good to them

Here “them” refers to the people of Israel.

I will faithfully plant them in this land

Yahweh speaks of having his people live in the land forever as if he were planting plants in a garden. Alternate translation: “I will permanently settle the Israelites in this land” (See: [Metaphor](#))

with all my heart and all my life

Together, these two phrases form an idiomatic expression that refers to a person’s entire being. Alternate translation: “with all that I am” or “wholeheartedly” (See: [Doublet](#) and [Idiom](#))

ULT

⁴¹ Then I will rejoice in doing good to them. I will faithfully plant them in this land with all my heart and all my life.

Jeremiah 32:42

I have brought all this great disaster on this people, so I will bring on them all the good things

“I have caused all these bad things to happen to this people, and now I will cause the good things to happen to them”

ULT

⁴² For Yahweh says this, ‘Just as I have brought all this great disaster on this people, so I will bring on them all the good things that I have said I would do for them.’

Jeremiah 32:43

Then fields will be bought in this land

This can be translated in active form. Alternate translation: “Then people will buy fields in this land” (See: [Active or Passive](#))

you are saying

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

It has been given into the hand of the Chaldeans

Here “hand” is a metonym for power or control. This can be translated in active form. Alternate translation: “Yahweh has given it to the Chaldeans” or “Yahweh has given the Chaldeans power over it” (See: [Metonymy](#) and [Active or Passive](#))

ULT

43 Then fields will be bought in this land, about which you are saying, “This is a ruined land, which has neither man nor beast. It has been given into the hand of the Chaldeans.”

Jeremiah 32:44

write in sealed scrolls. They will assemble witnesses

The “sealed scrolls” are the deeds that a person would sign to purchase land. Other people would be witnesses to confirm the purchase.

this is Yahweh’s declaration

Yahweh speaks of himself by name to express the certainty of what he is declaring. See how you translated this in [Jeremiah 1:8](#). Alternate translation: “this is what Yahweh has declared” or “this is what I, Yahweh, have declared” (See: [First](#), [Second](#) or [Third Person](#))

ULT

⁴⁴ They will buy fields with silver and write in sealed scrolls. They will assemble witnesses in the land of Benjamin, all around Jerusalem and the cities of Judah, in the cities in the hill country and in the lowlands, and in the cities of the Negev. For I will bring back their fortunes—this is Yahweh’s declaration.”

Jeremiah 33

Jeremiah 33 General Notes

Structure and formatting

Covenant faithfulness

Despite the great punishment Judah is facing and Israel has undergone, there is hope. This hope is based in the covenant faithfulness of Yahweh. Ultimately, he will restore his people. (See: [covenant faithfulness](#), [covenant loyalty](#), [covenant love](#), [hope](#), [hoped](#) and [restore](#), [restoration](#) and [people of God](#))

Jeremiah 33:1

General Information:

See: [Poetry](#) and [Parallelism](#)

the word of Yahweh came to Jeremiah a second time, while he was ... guard, saying,

ULT

¹ Then the word of Yahweh came to Jeremiah a second time, while he was still shut within the courtyard of the guard, saying,

The idiom “the word of Yahweh came to” is used to introduce a special message from God. See how you translated a similar phrase in [Jeremiah 1:13](#). Alternate translation: “Yahweh gave a message to Jeremiah a second time, while Jeremiah was ... guard. He said,” or “While Jeremiah was ... guard, Yahweh spoke this second message to Jeremiah:” (See: [Idiom](#))

came to Jeremiah

It is not clear why Jeremiah is referring to himself by name here. There is no need to translate using first person. (See: [First, Second or Third Person](#))

he was still shut within

“he was still a prisoner in”

the courtyard of the guard

This was an open area attached to the king’s palace that was surrounded by buildings and in which they kept prisoners. See how you translated this in [Jeremiah 32:2](#).

Jeremiah 33:2

who forms in order to establish

who creates things so he can make them exist forever

ULT

² “Yahweh the maker, says this—
Yahweh, who forms in order to establish
—Yahweh is his name,

Jeremiah 33:3

(There are no notes for this verse.)

ULT

³ 'Call to me, and I will answer you. I will demonstrate great things to you, mysteries that you do not understand.'

Jeremiah 33:4

that are torn down because of the siege ramps and the sword

This can be translated in active form. This could mean: (1) the people tore the houses down to make walls to defend against the Chaldeans. Alternate translation: "that the people have torn down to defend against the siege ramps and the sword" or (2) Alternate translation: "the houses that the Chaldeans have torn down to make siege ramps so they can make war" (See: [Active or Passive](#))

ULT

⁴ For Yahweh, God of Israel, says this concerning the houses in this city and the houses of the kings of Judah that are torn down because of the siege ramps and the sword,

the sword

This is a metonym for people dying violently when soldiers kill with swords. (See: [Metonymy](#))

Jeremiah 33:5

in my wrath and fury

The words “wrath” and “fury” mean basically the same thing and emphasize the intensity of his wrath. Alternate translation: “in my extreme wrath” (See: [Doublet](#))

I hide my face

Yahweh is represented by his “face.” This phrase shows Yahweh’s displeasure with the city. Alternate translation: “I have turned away from you” or “I am no longer concerned with you” (See: [Synecdoche](#))

ULT

⁵ ‘The Chaldeans are coming to fight and to fill the houses with corpses of people whom I will kill in my wrath and fury, when I hide my face from this city because of all their wickedness.

Jeremiah 33:6

(There are no notes for this verse.)

ULT

⁶ But see, I am about to bring healing and a cure, for I will heal them and will bring to them abundance, peace, and faithfulness.

Jeremiah 33:7

I will bring back the fortunes of Judah and Israel

“I will cause things to go well for Judah and Israel again” or “I will cause Judah and Israel to live well again.” See how similar words are translated in [Jeremiah 29:14](#).

ULT

⁷ For I will bring back the fortunes of Judah and Israel; I will build them up as in the beginning.

Jeremiah 33:8

(There are no notes for this verse.)

ULT

⁸ Then I will purify them from all the iniquity that they have committed against me. I will pardon all the iniquities that they have done against me, and all the ways that they rebelled against me.

Jeremiah 33:9

this city ... do for it ... give to it

The city is a metonym for the people who live in the city. Alternate translation: "the people who live in this city ... do for the people who live there ... give to the people who live there" (See: [Metonymy](#))

a song of praise and honor for all the nations of the earth

The word "song" is a metonym for the object about which people will sing the song. Alternate translation: "something about which all the people groups of the earth will sing songs of praise and honor to me, Yahweh" (See: [Metonymy](#))

they will fear and tremble

The hendiadys "fear and tremble" can be translated by a single verb. Alternate translation: "they will tremble with fear" (See: [Hendiadys](#))

fear

Another possible meaning is "awe."

because of all the good things and the peace that I will give to it

The abstract noun "peace" can be translated as an adjective. Alternate translation: "because of all the good things that I will give to it and because I will cause it to be peaceful" (See: [Abstract Nouns](#))

ULT

⁹ For this city will become for me an object of joy, a song of praise and honor for all the nations of the earth who will hear of all the good things that I am going to do for it. Then they will fear and tremble because of all the good things and the peace that I will give to it.'

Jeremiah 33:10

It is desolate, a place with neither man nor beast," in the cities of Judah, and in the streets of Jerusalem that are desolate having neither man nor beast

These two phrases share similar meanings and emphasize that Judah has become desolate. (See: [Parallelism](#))

ULT

¹⁰ Yahweh says this, 'In this place about which you are now saying, "It is desolate, a place with neither man nor beast," in the cities of Judah, and in the streets of Jerusalem that are desolate having neither man nor beast, there will be heard again

Jeremiah 33:11

the house of Yahweh

the temple in Jerusalem

I will restore the fortunes of the land

The word “land” is a metonym for the people who live on the land. Alternate translation: “I will again cause things to go well for the people who live on the land” or “I will cause the people who live on the land to live well again” See how similar words are translated in [Jeremiah 29:14](#). (See: [Metonymy](#))

to what they were before

This refers to the time before the exile to Babylon. This can be made explicit. Alternate translation: “to what they were before I sent the Israelites into exile in Babylon” (See: [Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information](#))

ULT

11 the sound of joy and the sound of gladness, the sound of the groom and the sound of the bride, the sound of those who say, while they bring thank offerings to the house of Yahweh, “Give thanks to Yahweh of hosts, for Yahweh is good, and his unfailing love lasts forever!” For I will restore the fortunes of the land to what they were before,’ says Yahweh.

Jeremiah 33:12

Yahweh of hosts says this

Jeremiah often uses these words to introduce an important message from Yahweh. See how you translated this in [Jeremiah 6:6](#).

ULT

12 Yahweh of hosts says this: 'In this desolate place, where now there is neither man nor beast—in all its cities there will again be pastures where shepherds can rest their flocks.'

Jeremiah 33:13

the flocks will again pass under the hands of the ones counting them

This refers to the practice of a shepherd counting and inspecting his sheep as the sheep walked under his hand. Alternate translation: “shepherds will again count their sheep as the sheep walk by” (See: [Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information](#))

ULT

¹³ In the cities in the hill country, the lowlands, and the Negev, in the land of Benjamin and all around Jerusalem, and in the cities of Judah, the flocks will again pass under the hands of the ones counting them,’ says Yahweh.

Jeremiah 33:14

Look

“Listen carefully”

Days are coming ... when I will do

Future time is spoken of as if the “Days are coming.” See how you translated this metaphor in [Jeremiah 7:32](#). Alternate translation: “In the future ... I will do” or “There will be a time ... when I will do” (See: [Metaphor](#))

this is Yahweh’s declaration

Yahweh speaks of himself by name to express the certainty of what he is declaring. See how you translated this in [Jeremiah 1:8](#). Alternate translation: “this is what Yahweh has declared” or “this is what I, Yahweh, have declared” (See: [First, Second or Third Person](#))

the house of Israel

The word “house” is a metonym for the family that lives in the house. In this case it refers to the kingdom of Israel. See how you translated this in [Jeremiah 3:18](#). Alternate translation: “Israel” or “the kingdom of Israel” (See: [Metonymy](#))

the house of Judah

The word “house” is a metonym for the family that lives in the house. In this case it refers to the kingdom of Judah, which included the descendants of Judah and Benjamin. See how you translated this in [Jeremiah 3:18](#). Alternate translation: “Judah” or “the kingdom of Judah” (See: [Metonymy](#))

Judah

This is a metonym for the people who live in Judah. Alternate translation: “the people of Judah” (See: [Metonymy](#))

ULT

14 ‘Look! Days are coming—this is Yahweh’s declaration—when I will do what I have promised for the house of Israel and the house of Judah.

Jeremiah 33:15

In those days and in that time

The phrase “in that time” means the same thing as, and intensifies the phrase “In those days.” Alternate translation: “In those very days” or “At that very time” (See: [Doublet](#))

I will make a righteous branch to grow for David

Yahweh speaks of a descendant of David as if he were a branch off of a tree trunk. Alternate translation: “I will cause a righteous man to come from and bring glory to the line of David” (See: [Metaphor](#))

the land

the nation of Israel (See: [Metonymy](#))

ULT

15 In those days and in that time I will make a righteous branch to grow for David, and he will carry out justice and righteousness in the land.

Jeremiah 33:16

Judah ... Jerusalem

These towns' names are metonyms for the people who live in the towns. Alternate translation: "the people of Judah ... the people of Jerusalem" (See: [Metonymy](#))

Judah will be saved

This can be translated in active form. Alternate translation: "I will save Judah" (See: [Active or Passive](#))

Jerusalem will live in security

"the people of Judah will be safe from their enemies"

this is what she will be called

Yahweh speaks of Jerusalem as if the town were a woman. This can be translated in active form. Alternate translation: "this is what they will call her" or "this is what I will call the town" (See: [Metaphor](#) and [Active or Passive](#))

ULT

16 In those days Judah will be saved, and Jerusalem will live in security, for this is what she will be called, "Yahweh is our righteousness."

Jeremiah 33:17

A man from David's line will never be lacking

"There will always be a man from David's line"

A man from David's line

a male descendant of King David

to sit on the throne of the house of Israel

The throne is a metonym for the king. Alternate translation: "to be king over the house of Israel" (See: [Metonymy](#))

the house of Israel

The word "house" is a metonym for the family that lives in the house. In this case it refers to the kingdom of Israel. See how you translated this in [Jeremiah 3:18](#). Alternate translation: "Israel" or "the kingdom of Israel" (See: [Metonymy](#))

ULT

¹⁷ For Yahweh says this: 'A man from David's line will never be lacking to sit on the throne of the house of Israel,

Jeremiah 33:18

nor will a man from the Levitical priests be lacking before me to raise burnt offerings

“and there will always be a man from the Levitical priests to raise burnt offerings”

raise burnt offerings

“offer burnt offerings”

ULT

¹⁸ nor will a man from the Levitical priests be lacking before me to raise burnt offerings, to burn food offerings, and to perform grain offerings all the time.”

Jeremiah 33:19

The word of Yahweh came to Jeremiah, saying,

This idiom is used to introduce a special message from God. See how you translated a similar phrase in [Jeremiah 1:4](#). Alternate translation: “Yahweh gave a message to Jeremiah. He said,” or “Yahweh spoke this message to Jeremiah:” (See: [Idiom](#))

ULT

¹⁹ The word of Yahweh came to Jeremiah, saying,

to Jeremiah

It is not clear why Jeremiah is referring to himself by name here. There is no need to translate using first person. (See: [First, Second or Third Person](#))

Jeremiah 33:20

Yahweh says

Yahweh is speaking of himself here. Alternate translation: "I say"
(See: [First, Second or Third Person](#))

If you can break ... proper times

These words begin a hypothetical statement that describe a situation that will never occur. (See: [Hypothetical Situations](#))

ULT

20 "Yahweh says this: 'If you can break my covenant with day and night so that there will no longer be day or night at their proper times,

Jeremiah 33:21

then you will be able to break my covenant with David my servant

The hypothetical statement that begins with the words “If you can break my covenant ... times,” in verse 20 ends here. No one can change day and night, and no one can change God’s covenant with David. Alternate translation: “You know that you cannot break my covenant ... times, so you know that you will never be able to break my covenant with David my servant” (See: [Hypothetical Situations](#))

to sit on his throne

The throne is a metonym for the king who sits on the throne. Alternate translation: “to rule the kingdom I have given to him” (See: [Metonymy](#))

ULT

²¹ then you will be able to break my covenant with David my servant, so that he will no longer have a son to sit on his throne, and my covenant with the Levitical priests, my servants.

Jeremiah 33:22

**As the hosts of heaven cannot be counted,
and as the sand of the seashores cannot be
measured, so I will increase the descendants
of David my servant and the Levites who
serve before me**

No one can count the stars in the sky or the sand on the seashore, and no one will be able to count the descendants of David and Levi who serve Yahweh. (See: [Simile](#))

ULT

²² As the hosts of heaven cannot be counted, and as the sand of the seashores cannot be measured, so I will increase the descendants of David my servant and the Levites who serve before me.”

Jeremiah 33:23

The word of Yahweh came to Jeremiah, saying,

This idiom is used to introduce a special message from God. See how you translated a similar phrase in [Jeremiah 1:4](#). Alternate translation: “Yahweh gave a message to Jeremiah. He said,” or “Yahweh spoke this message to Jeremiah:” (See: [Idiom](#))

ULT

²³ The word of Yahweh came to Jeremiah, saying,

to Jeremiah

It is not clear why Jeremiah is referring to himself by name here. There is no need to translate using first person. (See: [First, Second or Third Person](#))

Jeremiah 33:24

Have you not considered what this people has declared when they said, 'The ... them'?

Yahweh wants Jeremiah to think deeply about what the people have said. This rhetorical question can be translated as a statement. Alternate translation: "You should have noticed what this people are really saying when they said, 'The ... them.'" (See: [Rhetorical Question](#))

ULT

²⁴ "Have you not considered what this people has declared when they said, 'The two families that Yahweh chose, now he has rejected them'? In this way they despise my people, saying that they are no longer a nation in their sight.

In this way they despise my people, saying ... sight

"What they are really saying is that my people are worthless and that my people will never again be a nation."

my people ... are no longer a nation in their sight

Sight is a metonym for thinking. Alternate translation: "they no longer think of my people as a nation" (See: [Metonymy](#))

Jeremiah 33:25

If I have not established ... and if I have not fixed

This is the beginning of a hypothetical statement that describes a situation that Yahweh never expects to be true. (See: [Hypothetical Situations](#))

ULT

²⁵ I, Yahweh, say this, 'If I have not established the covenant of day and night, and if I have not fixed the laws of heaven and earth,

Jeremiah 33:26

The hypothetical statement that begins with the words “If I have not established the covenant” in verse 25 ends here. (See: [Hypothetical Situations](#))

then I will reject ... and not bring

The hypothetical statement that begins with the words “If I have not established the covenant” in verse 25 ends here. This is a situation that Yahweh never expects to be true. Alternate translation: “I have established the covenant ... so I will never reject ... and I will bring” (See: [Hypothetical Situations](#))

I will restore their fortunes

“I will cause things to go well for them again” or “I will cause them to live well again” See how similar words are translated in [Jeremiah 29:14](#).

show mercy to

Translate as “have compassion on” is translated in ([Jeremiah 30:18](#)).

ULT

²⁶ then I will reject the descendants of Jacob and David my servant, and not bring from them a person to rule over the descendants of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. For I will restore their fortunes and show mercy to them.”

Jeremiah 34

Jeremiah 34 General Notes

Special concepts in this chapter

Law of Moses

According to the law of Moses, the people were required to free their indebted slaves after a period of time. The king led them in freeing their fellow Israelites whom they held as slaves, but later they changed their minds and enslaved them again. (See: [law](#), [law of Moses](#), [law of Yahweh](#), [law of God](#) and [sin](#), [sinful](#), [sinner](#), [sinning](#))

Other possible translation difficulties in this chapter

Actions with cultural meaning

When the people of Israel made a sacred promise to God, they cut a calf in two and passed between its parts. It was a very serious sin not to do what one had promised. (See: [promise](#), [promised](#) and [sin](#), [sinful](#), [sinner](#), [sinning](#) and [Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information](#))

Jeremiah 34:1

The word that came to Jeremiah from Yahweh, when Nebuchadnezzar ... her cities, saying:

This idiom “The word that came to Jeremiah from Yahweh” is used to introduce a special message from God. See how you translated a similar phrase in [Jeremiah 7:1](#), and make any changes as needed. Alternate translation: “This is the message that Yahweh gave to Jeremiah when Nebuchadnezzar ... her cities. He said,” or “When Nebuchadnezzar ... her cities, Yahweh spoke this message to Jeremiah:” (See: [Idiom](#))

to Jeremiah

It is not clear why Jeremiah is referring to himself by name in this chapter. There is no need to translate using first person. (See: [First, Second or Third Person](#))

waging war

“fighting”

all of her cities

This refers to all the towns around Jerusalem. (See: [Metonymy](#))

ULT

¹ The word that came to Jeremiah from Yahweh, when Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon and all of his army, together with all the kingdoms of the earth, the domains under his power, and all their people were waging war against Jerusalem and all of her cities, saying:

Jeremiah 34:2

to give this city

See how you translated this in [Jeremiah 32:28](#)

into the hand of the king of Babylon

Here the word “hand” is a metonym for the control that the hand exercises. Alternate translation: “under the control of the king of Babylon” (See: [Metonymy](#))

ULT

² “Yahweh, God of Israel, says this: Go and speak to Zedekiah king of Judah and say to him, ‘Yahweh says this: Look, I am about to give this city into the hand of the king of Babylon. He will burn it.

Jeremiah 34:3

You will not escape from his hand

Here the word “hand” is a metonym for the control that the hand exercises. Alternate translation: “You will not escape from his control” (See: [Metonymy](#))

you will certainly be seized and given

This can be translated in active form. Alternate translation: “the Babylonians will certainly seize you and give you” (See: [Active or Passive](#))

ULT

³ You will not escape from his hand, for you will certainly be seized and given into his hand. Your eyes will look at the eyes of the king of Babylon; he will speak directly to you as you go to Babylon.’

Jeremiah 34:4

You will not die by the sword.

The word “sword” is a metonym for dying in war. Alternate translation: “You will not die in battle” (See: [Metonymy](#))

ULT

⁴ Listen to the word of Yahweh, Zedekiah king of Judah! Yahweh says this concerning you, ‘You will not die by the sword.

Jeremiah 34:5

the funeral burning of your ancestors

The people would burn spices in honor of people who had recently died. They did not burn the dead people's bodies.

this is Yahweh's declaration

Yahweh speaks of himself by name to express the certainty of what he is declaring. See how you translated this in [Jeremiah 1:8](#). Alternate translation: "this is what Yahweh has declared" or "this is what I, Yahweh, have declared" (See: [First](#), [Second](#) or [Third Person](#))

ULT

⁵ You will die in peace. As in the funeral burning of your ancestors, the kings who were before you, they will burn your body. They will say, "Woe, master!" They will lament for you. Now I have spoken—this is Yahweh's declaration."

Jeremiah 34:6

(There are no notes for this verse.)

ULT

⁶ So Jeremiah the prophet proclaimed to Zedekiah king of Judah all these words in Jerusalem.

Jeremiah 34:7

Lachish and Azekah

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

These cities of Judah remained as fortified cities

“the only fortified cities of Judah that the Babylonians had not yet captured”

ULT

⁷ The army of the king of Babylon made war against Jerusalem and all the remaining cities of Judah: Lachish and Azekah. These cities of Judah remained as fortified cities.

Jeremiah 34:8

The word came to Jeremiah from Yahweh

This idiom is used to introduce a special message from God. However, the actual message does not begin until [Jeremiah 34:12](#). See how you translated a similar phrase in [Jeremiah 7:1](#). Alternate translation: “Yahweh gave a message to Jeremiah” or “Yahweh spoke a message to Jeremiah” (See: [Idiom](#))

word

message

ULT

⁸ The word came to Jeremiah from Yahweh after King Zedekiah had made a covenant with all the people in Jerusalem, to proclaim freedom to them,

after King Zedekiah had made a covenant ... freedom to them

These words begin to provide background information to events that will be described later. (See: [Background Information](#))

Jeremiah 34:9

that each man ... his brother

The background information that begins with the words “after King Zedekiah had made a covenant” in verse 8 ends here. (See:

[Background Information](#))

ULT

⁹ that each man must free his Hebrew slaves, both male and female, so one was to make a slave of a Jew, who was his brother.

Jeremiah 34:10

Connecting Statement:

Jeremiah continues giving the background information that began in [Jeremiah 34:8](#).

ULT

10 So all the leaders and people entered into the covenant that each person would free his male and female slaves so that they would not be enslaved any longer. They obeyed and set them free.

Jeremiah 34:11

(There are no notes for this verse.)

ULT

11 But after this they changed their minds. They brought back the slaves whom they had freed. They forced them to become slaves again.

Jeremiah 34:12

Connecting Statement:

Jeremiah resumes the story from [Jeremiah 34:8](#) after the background information of [Jeremiah 34:8-Jeremiah 11](#).

ULT

¹² So the word of Yahweh came to Jeremiah, saying,

the word of Yahweh came to Jeremiah, saying,

This idiom is used to introduce a special message from God. See how you translated a similar phrase in [Jeremiah 1:4](#). Alternate translation: “Yahweh gave a message to Jeremiah. He said, ‘Yahweh’ or “Yahweh spoke this message to Jeremiah: ‘Yahweh’” (See: [Idiom](#))

Jeremiah 34:13

house of slavery

This is an idiom. "place where you were slaves" (See: [Idiom](#))

ULT

13 "Yahweh, God of Israel, says this, 'I myself made a covenant with your ancestors on the day that I brought them out from the land of Egypt, out from the house of slavery. That was when I said,

Jeremiah 34:14

each man must send away his brother, his fellow Hebrew who had sold himself to you and served you

“each of you must free any fellow Hebrews who sold themselves to you and have been your slaves”

Send him away in freedom

“You must let them be free from serving you”

did not ... incline their ears to me

To incline the ear, to lean the head toward the speaker so as to hear better, is a metonym for paying attention to what the speaker is saying. Alternate translation: “did not ... pay attention to what I said” (See: [Metonymy](#))

ULT

¹⁴ “At the end of every seven years, each man must send away his brother, his fellow Hebrew who had sold himself to you and served you for six years. Send him away in freedom.” But your ancestors did not listen to me or incline their ears to me.

Jeremiah 34:15

Now you yourselves repented

Here the word “now” is used to draw attention to the important point that follows.

right in my eyes

“Eyes” here is a metonym for someone’s opinion or idea. Alternate translation: “what I consider to be right” (See: [Metonymy](#))

the house that is called by my name

This can be translated in active form. Alternate translation: “the house that belongs to me” or “the building in which they worship me” (See: [Active or Passive Metonymy](#))

ULT

15 Now you yourselves repented and began to do what is right in my eyes. You proclaimed freedom, each man to his neighbor, and you made a covenant before me in the house that is called by my name.

Jeremiah 34:16

turned and polluted my name

A person's name is a metonym for what people think of him.
Alternate translation: "stopped doing what was right and did evil things that have made people think that I am evil" (See: [Metonymy](#))

ULT

16 But then you turned and polluted my name; you caused each man to bring back his male and female slaves, the ones whom you had sent out to go where they wished. You forced them to become your slaves again.'

Jeremiah 34:17

So look!

“Listen!” or “Pay attention to the important thing I am going to tell you!”

I am about to proclaim freedom to you ... freedom for the sword, the plague, and famine

Jeremiah uses irony to say that the “freedom” the people will enjoy will actually be suffering. Alternate translation: “I will proclaim misery to you ... misery from the sword, the plague, and famine” (See: [Irony](#))

proclaim freedom to you

“proclaim that you are free”

this is Yahweh’s declaration

Yahweh speaks of himself by name to express the certainty of what he is declaring. See how you translated this in [Jeremiah 1:8](#). Alternate translation: “this is what Yahweh has declared” or “this is what I, Yahweh, have declared” (See: [First](#), [Second](#) or [Third Person](#))

sword

This is a metonym for soldiers who carry swords. Alternate translation: “enemy soldiers to kill you” (See: [Metonymy](#))

am going to make you a horrible thing in the sight of every kingdom on earth

Here “sight” represents judgment or evaluation. The word “kingdom” is a metonym for the people who live in the kingdom. Alternate translation: “I am going to make the people in every kingdom on earth think that you are horrible” (See: [Metaphor](#) and [Metonymy](#))

ULT

17 Therefore Yahweh says this, ‘You yourselves have not listened to me. You should have proclaimed freedom, every one of you, to your brothers and fellow Israelites. So look! I am about to proclaim freedom to you—this is Yahweh’s declaration—freedom for the sword, the plague, and famine, for I am going to make you a horrible thing in the sight of every kingdom on earth.’

Jeremiah 34:18

when they cut a bull ... walked between its parts

These words begin to describe how the people established the covenant. (See: [Background Information](#))

established before me

“agreed to with me” or “established while I was watching”

ULT

18 Then I will deal with the people who have broken my covenant, who did not keep the words of the covenant that they established before me when they cut a bull in two and walked between its parts,

Jeremiah 34:19

and then the leaders ... walked between the parts of the bull

The description of how the people established the covenant that began with the words “when they cut” in verse 18 ends here. (See: [Background Information](#))

ULT

¹⁹ and then the leaders of Judah and Jerusalem, the eunuchs and the priests, and all the people of the land walked between the parts of the bull.

Jeremiah 34:20

I will give them into the hand of their enemies

The word “hand” here is a metonym for the power or control that the enemies will exercise using their hands. AT; “I will allow their enemies to have complete control over them” (See: [Metonymy](#))

seeking their lives

This is a polite way to say that they wanted to kill them. Alternate translation: “seeking to kill them” (See: [Euphemism](#))

into the hand of their enemies

Here the word “hands” represents control. Alternate translation: “to be conquered by their enemies” or “over to the control of their enemies” (See: [Metonymy](#))

ULT

20 I will give them into the hand of their enemies and into the hand of those who are seeking their lives. Their bodies will be food for the birds of the skies and the beasts on the earth.

Jeremiah 34:21

risen up

“come to fight”

ULT

²¹ So I will give Zedekiah king of Judah and his leaders into the hand of their enemies and into the hand of those who are seeking their life, and into the hand of the army of the king of Babylon that has risen up against you.

Jeremiah 34:22

bring them

bring the Babylonian armies

ULT

²² Look, I am about to give a command —this is Yahweh’s declaration—and will bring them back to this city to wage war against it and take it, and to burn it. For I will turn the cities of Judah into ruined places in which there will be no inhabitants.”

Jeremiah 35

Jeremiah 35 General Notes

Special concepts in this chapter

The Rechabites

The actions of the Rechabites contrasted with the actions of the Jews. The Rechabites obeyed the commands their ancestor had give while living in Canaan, but Judah did not obey Yahweh's commands. Because the Rechabites were obedient, Yahweh preserved their clan. The Rechabites' history is found in the book of Judges.

Jeremiah 35:1

The word that came to Jeremiah from Yahweh in the days ... of Judah, saying,

The idiom “The word that came to Jeremiah from Yahweh” is used to introduce a special message from God. See how you translated a similar phrase in [Jeremiah 1:4](#). Alternate translation: “Yahweh gave a message to Jeremiah in the days ... of Judah. He said,” or “In the days ... of Judah, Yahweh spoke this message to Jeremiah:” (See: [Idiom](#))

ULT

¹ The word that came to Jeremiah from Yahweh in the days of Jehoiakim son of Josiah king of Judah, saying,

to Jeremiah

It is not clear why Jeremiah is referring to himself by name here. You may translate using first person, as the UST does. (See: [First, Second or Third Person](#))

Jeremiah 35:2

Rekabites

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

my house

the temple

ULT

² “Go to the family of the Rekabites and speak with them. Then bring them to my house, into one of the rooms there, and give them wine to drink.”

Jeremiah 35:3

Jaazaniah ... Habazziniah

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

ULT

³ So I took Jaazaniah son of Jeremiah son of Habazziniah and his brothers, all his sons, and all the family of the Rekabites.

Jeremiah 35:4

Hanan ... Igdaliah ... Maaseiah ... Shallum

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

ULT

⁴ I took them to the house of Yahweh, into the rooms of the sons of Hanan son of Igdaliah, the man of God. These rooms were beside the room of the leaders, which was above the room of Maaseiah son of Shallum, the gatekeeper.

Jeremiah 35:5

Rekabites

See how you translated this in [Jeremiah 35:2](#).

ULT

⁵ Then I placed bowls and cups full of wine in front of the Rekabites and said to them, "Drink some wine."

Jeremiah 35:6

Jonadab ... Rekab

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

ULT

⁶ But they said, “We will not drink any wine, for our ancestor, Jonadab son of Rekab, commanded us, ‘Do not drink any wine, neither you nor your descendants, forever.’

Jeremiah 35:7

live many days in the land

“live many years in the land.” “Days” refers to the span of time.

ULT

⁷ Also, do not build any houses, sow any seeds, or plant any vineyards; this is not for you. For you must live in tents all your days, so that you might live many days in the land where you are staying as foreigners.’

Jeremiah 35:8

the voice of Jonadab

The word “voice” is a metonym for the command that Jonadab spoke. Alternate translation: “the command of Jonadab” (See: [Metonymy](#))

all of our days

“as long as we live.” “Days” refers to the span of time.

ULT

⁸ We have obeyed the voice of Jonadab son of Rekab, our ancestor, in all that he commanded us, to never drink wine all of our days, we, our wives, our sons, and our daughters.

Jeremiah 35:9

(There are no notes for this verse.)

ULT

⁹ We will never build houses to live in,
and there will be no vineyard, field, or
seed in our possession.

Jeremiah 35:10

(There are no notes for this verse.)

ULT

¹⁰ We have lived in tents and we have obeyed and done all that Jonadab our ancestor commanded us.

Jeremiah 35:11

(There are no notes for this verse.)

ULT

11 But when Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon attacked the land, we said, 'Come, we must go to Jerusalem to escape from the Chaldean and Aramean armies.' So we are living in Jerusalem."

Jeremiah 35:12

the word of Yahweh came to Jeremiah, saying,

This idiom is used to introduce a special message from God. See how you translated a similar phrase in [Jeremiah 1:4](#). Alternate translation: “Yahweh gave a message to Jeremiah. He said, “Yahweh” or “Yahweh spoke this message to Jeremiah: “Yahweh” (See: [Idiom](#))

ULT

¹² Then the word of Yahweh came to Jeremiah, saying,

to Jeremiah

It is not clear why Jeremiah is referring to himself by name here. You may translate using first person, as the UST does. (See: [First](#), [Second](#) or [Third Person](#))

Jeremiah 35:13

Yahweh of hosts ... says this

Jeremiah often uses these words to introduce an important message from Yahweh. See how you translated this in [Jeremiah 6:6](#).

Will you not receive correction and listen to my words?

Yahweh is telling Israel to listen carefully to his rebuke. Alternate translation: "You must certainly receive this correction and listen to my words." (See: [Rhetorical Question](#))

this is Yahweh's declaration

Yahweh speaks of himself by name to express the certainty of what he is declaring. See how you translated this in [Jeremiah 1:8](#). Alternate translation: "this is what Yahweh has declared" or "this is what I, Yahweh, have declared" (See: [First, Second or Third Person](#))

ULT

13 "Yahweh of hosts, God of Israel, says this, 'Go and say to the men of Judah and the inhabitants of Jerusalem, "Will you not receive correction and listen to my words? —this is Yahweh's declaration.

Jeremiah 35:14

The words of Jonadab son of Rekab that he gave to his sons as a command, not to drink any wine, have been observed

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: “The sons of Jonadab son of Rekab have observed their father’s command to not drink wine” (See: [Active or Passive](#))

Jonadab ... Rekab

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

ULT

¹⁴ The words of Jonadab son of Rekab that he gave to his sons as a command, not to drink any wine, have been observed to this very day. They have obeyed their ancestor’s command. But as for me, I myself have been making persistent proclamations to you, but you do not listen to me.

Jeremiah 35:15

let no one walk any longer after other gods

Walking after a god is a metaphor for obeying the laws of that god.
(See: [Metaphor](#))

ULT

15 I sent out to you all my servants, the prophets. I was persistent in sending them to say, 'Let each person turn from his wicked way and do good deeds; let no one walk any longer after other gods and worship them. Instead, come back to the land that I gave to you and your ancestors.' Yet you will not listen to me or pay attention to me.

Jeremiah 35:16

(There are no notes for this verse.)

ULT

16 For the descendants of Jonadab son of Rekab have observed the commands of their ancestor that he gave them, but this people refuses to listen to me.””

Jeremiah 35:17

Look

This word tells the reader to pay special attention to what follows.

ULT

17 So Yahweh, God of hosts and God of Israel, says this, 'Look, I am bringing upon Judah and on everyone living in Jerusalem, all the disasters I pronounced against them because I spoke to them, but they did not listen; I called to them, but they did not answer.'"

Jeremiah 35:18

Jeremiah said

It is not clear why Jeremiah is referring to himself by name here. You may translate using first person, as the UST does. (See: [First, Second or Third Person](#))

Rekabites

This is the name of the people group. See how you translated this in [Jeremiah 35:2](#).

Yahweh of hosts ... says this

Jeremiah often uses these words to introduce an important message from Yahweh. See how you translated this in [Jeremiah 6:6](#).

Jonadab

a man's name. See how you translated it in [Jeremiah 35:5](#).

ULT

18 Jeremiah said to the family of the Rekabites, "Yahweh of hosts, God of Israel, says this: You have listened to the commands of Jonadab your ancestor and have kept them all—you have obeyed all that he commanded you to do—

Jeremiah 35:19

Jonadab ... Rekab

These are the names of men. See how you translated these in [Jeremiah 35:5](#).

ULT

19 so Yahweh of hosts, God of Israel, says this, 'There will always be someone descended from Jonadab son of Rekab to serve me.'"

Jeremiah 36

Jeremiah 36 General Notes

Special concepts in this chapter

Opposition to Jeremiah

Jeremiah wrote God's prophecies on a scroll but the king burned it. It is possible that this action was intended to be understood as representing the definitiveness of these prophecies. (See: [prophet](#), [prophecy](#), [prophesy](#), [seer](#), [prophetess](#))

Jeremiah 36:1

General Information:

See: [Poetry](#) and [Parallelism](#)

It came about

“It happened.” This phrase is used here to mark the beginning of a new part of the story. If your language has a way for doing this, you could consider using it here.

in the fourth year of Jehoiakim ... king of Judah

Jehoiakim had been king of Judah for more than three years. See how you translated this in [Jeremiah 25:1](#). (See: [Ordinal Numbers](#))

that this word

The phrase “this word” refers to the message that follows.

to Jeremiah

It is not clear why Jeremiah is referring to himself by name here. You may translate using first person, as the UST does. (See: [First, Second or Third Person](#))

he said

“Yahweh said”

ULT

¹ It came about in the fourth year of Jehoiakim son of Josiah king of Judah, that this word came to Jeremiah from Yahweh, and he said,

Jeremiah 36:2

every nation

“all of the nations”

I have told from

“I have told you from”

from the days of Josiah until this very day

“from the time Josiah was king until today”

ULT

² “Take a scroll for yourself and write on it all the words that I have told you concerning Israel and Judah, and every nation. Do this for everything I have told from the days of Josiah until this very day.

Jeremiah 36:3

Perhaps the people

“It is possible that the people”

to bring on them

“to cause to happen to them”

his wicked way

Yahweh speaks of a person’s lifestyle as if it were a “way” or path along which the person walks. See how you translated this in [Jeremiah 18:11](#). Alternate translation: “his wicked way of living” (See: [Metaphor](#))

forgive their iniquity and their sin

The words “iniquity” and “sin” are metonyms for the persons who commit iniquity and sin. Alternate translation: “forgive them for their iniquity and their sin” (See: [Metonymy](#))

ULT

³ Perhaps the people of Judah will listen to all the disasters that I intend to bring on them. Perhaps everyone will turn away from his wicked way, so I can forgive their iniquity and their sin.”

Jeremiah 36:4

Jeremiah called ... at Jeremiah's dictation ... to him

It is not clear why Jeremiah is referring to himself by name here. You may translate using first person, as the UST does. Alternate translation: "I called ... at my dictation ... to me ... I gave ... I said" (See: [First](#), [Second](#) or [Third Person](#))

ULT

⁴ Then Jeremiah called Baruch son of Neriah, and Baruch wrote in a scroll, at Jeremiah's dictation, all the words of Yahweh spoken to him.

Baruch wrote in a scroll, at Jeremiah's dictation, all the words of Yahweh spoken to him

"while Jeremiah was speaking, Baruch wrote in a scroll all of Yahweh's words that Yahweh had spoken to Jeremiah"

Jeremiah 36:5

Jeremiah gave ... He said

It is not clear why Jeremiah is referring to himself by name here. You may translate using first person, as the UST does. Alternate translation: "I called ... at my dictation ... to me ... I gave ... I said" (See: [First, Second or Third Person](#))

ULT

⁵ Next Jeremiah gave a command to Baruch. He said, "I am in prison and cannot go to Yahweh's house."

Jeremiah 36:6

read from the scroll

“read out loud from the scroll” or “proclaim from the scroll”

must read

“must read out loud” or “must proclaim”

in the hearing of the people in his house

“so that the people in Yahweh’s house can hear them.” See how similar words are translated in [Jeremiah 2:2](#).

in the hearing of all of Judah who have come from their cities

“so all the people of Judah who have come from their cities can hear them.” See how similar words are translated in [Jeremiah 2:2](#).

ULT

⁶ So you must go and read from the scroll that you wrote at my dictation. On the day of the fast, you must read Yahweh’s words in the hearing of the people in his house, and also in the hearing of all of Judah who have come from their cities. Proclaim these words to them.

Jeremiah 36:7

General Information:

Jeremiah continues to give instructions to Baruch.

Perhaps their pleas

“It is possible that their pleas”

their pleas for mercy will come before Yahweh

“Yahweh will hear them plead for mercy and do as they ask”

their pleas for mercy

The word “their” refers to the people in the house of Yahweh and the people of Judah who had come to the house of Yahweh from their cities.

from his wicked way

Yahweh speaks of a person’s lifestyle as if it were a “way” or path along which the person walks. See how you translated this in [Jeremiah 18:11](#). Alternate translation: “his wicked way of living” (See: [Metaphor](#))

the wrath and fury

“the anger and rage”

ULT

⁷ Perhaps their pleas for mercy will come before Yahweh. Perhaps each person will turn from his wicked way, since the wrath and fury that Yahweh has proclaimed against this people are severe.”

Jeremiah 36:8

(There are no notes for this verse.)

ULT

⁸ So Baruch son of Neriah did everything that Jeremiah the prophet had commanded him to do. He read aloud the words of Yahweh in the house of Yahweh.

Jeremiah 36:9

It came about

See how you translated this phrase in [Jeremiah 36:1](#).

in the fifth year and ninth month of Jehoiakim ... king of Judah

This is the ninth month of the Hebrew calendar. It is during the last part of November and the first part of December on Western calendars. “after Jehoiakim ... had been king of Judah for more than four years, during the ninth month” (See: [Hebrew Months](#) and [Ordinal Numbers](#))

of Jehoiakim son of Josiah, king of Judah

See how you translated this phrase in [Jeremiah 25:1](#).

proclaimed a fast

“told everyone that they were going to fast”

ULT

⁹ It came about in the fifth year and ninth month of Jehoiakim son of Josiah, king of Judah, that all the people in Jerusalem and the people who came to Jerusalem from the cities of Judah proclaimed a fast before Yahweh.

Jeremiah 36:10

Jeremiah's words

It is not clear why Jeremiah is referring to himself by name here.
(See: [First, Second or Third Person](#))

Gemariah son of Shaphan

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

the scribe

“who was a scribe”

by the gate of the entrance to the house of Yahweh

“in the entrance of the new gate of the house of Yahweh”

He did this

He read aloud Jeremiah's words.

in the hearing of all the people

“where all the people could hear him.” See how similar words are translated in [Jeremiah 2:2](#).

ULT

10 Baruch read aloud Jeremiah's words in the house of Yahweh, from the room of Gemariah son of Shaphan the scribe, in the upper courtyard, by the gate of the entrance to the house of Yahweh. He did this in the hearing of all the people.

Jeremiah 36:11

Now

Here the word “now” is used to draw attention to the important point that follows.

Micaiah son of Gemariah son of Shaphan

“Micaiah who was the son of Gemariah, who was the son of Shaphan”

Micaiah

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

Gemariah son of Shaphan

See how you translated this in [Jeremiah 36:10](#). (See: [How to Translate Names](#))

ULT

11 Now Micaiah son of Gemariah son of Shaphan heard all of Yahweh’s words in the scroll.

Jeremiah 36:12

Look

“Pay attention to what I am going to say”

Elishama ... Delaiah

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

Shemaiah

See how you translated this in [Jeremiah 26:20](#). (See: [How to Translate Names](#))

Elnathan son of Akbor

See how you translated this in [Jeremiah 26:22](#). (See: [How to Translate Names](#))

Zedekiah

See how you translated this in [Jeremiah 1:3](#). (See: [How to Translate Names](#))

Hananiah

See how you translated this in [Jeremiah 28:1](#). (See: [How to Translate Names](#))

all the officials

“all of the other officials”

ULT

¹² He went down to the house of the king, to the secretary's room. Look, all the officials were sitting there: Elishama the secretary, Delaiah son of Shemaiah, Elnathan son of Akbor, Gemariah son of Shaphan, and Zedekiah son of Hananiah, and all the officials.

Jeremiah 36:13

Micaiah

See how you translated this man's name in [Jeremiah 36:11](#).

reported to them

The word "them" refers to officials in [Jeremiah 36:12](#).

in the hearing of the people

"so that the people could hear" See how similar words are translated in [Jeremiah 2:2](#).

ULT

13 Then Micaiah reported to them all the words that he had heard that Baruch read aloud in the hearing of the people.

Jeremiah 36:14

Jehudi ... Nethaniah ... Shelemiah ... Cushi

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

ULT

14 So all the officials sent Jehudi son of Nethaniah son of Shelemiah son of Cushi, to Baruch. Jehudi said to Baruch, "Take the scroll in your hand, the scroll from which you were reading in the hearing of the people, and come." So Baruch son of Neriah took the scroll in his hand and went to the officials.

Jeremiah 36:15

in our hearing

“so we can hear you read it” See how similar words are translated in [Jeremiah 2:2](#).

read the scroll

“read the scroll aloud”

ULT

15 Then they said to him, “Sit down and read this in our hearing.” So Baruch read the scroll.

Jeremiah 36:16

It happened 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.

when they heard

The word “they” refers to the officials.

all these words

the words that Baruch read aloud from the scroll

ULT

16 It happened that when they heard all these words, each man turned in fear to the one next to him and said to Baruch, “We must certainly report all of these words to the king.”

Jeremiah 36:17

how did you come to write

“how did you write”

at Jeremiah’s dictation

See how you translated this in [Jeremiah 36:4](#).

ULT

17 Then they asked Baruch, “Tell us, how did you come to write all these words at Jeremiah’s dictation?”

Jeremiah 36:18

dictated

Jeremiah spoke out loud so that Baruch could write down his words.

wrote them in ink

“used ink to write them”

ink

a dark liquid that is used for writing

ULT

18 Baruch said to them, “He dictated all these words to me, and I wrote them in ink on this scroll.”

Jeremiah 36:19

Jeremiah, too

You may need to make this a complete sentence. Alternate translation: "Jeremiah should hide himself, too" (See: [Ellipsis](#))

where you are

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

ULT

19 Then the officials said to Baruch, "Go, hide yourself, and Jeremiah, too. Do not let anyone know where you are."

Jeremiah 36:20

So they

“Then the officials”

put the scroll in the room of Elishama

“put the scroll in the room of Elishama so it would be safe”

Elishama the secretary

See how you translated “Elishama the scribe” in [Jeremiah 36:12](#).

in the hearing of the king

“where the king could hear him” See how similar words are translated in [Jeremiah 2:2](#).

ULT

²⁰ So they put the scroll in the room of Elishama the secretary, and they went to the king in the courtyard and they reported everything in the hearing of the king.

Jeremiah 36:21

Jehudi

See how you translated this man's name in [Jeremiah 36:14](#).

ULT

21 Then the king sent Jehudi to get the scroll. Jehudi took it from the room of Elishama the secretary. Then he read it in the hearing of the king and all the officials who were standing beside him.

Jeremiah 36:22

Now

This word is used here to mark a break in the main story line. Here Jeremiah starts to tell a new part of the story.

in the ninth month

This is the ninth month of the Hebrew calendar. This is at the end of the sowing season and the beginning of the cold season. It is during the last part November and the first part of December on Western calendars. (See: [Hebrew Months](#) and [Ordinal Numbers](#))

a brazier was burning in front of him

“the brazier was in front of him with a blazing fire”

a brazier

a fireplace that people can move

ULT

²² Now the king was staying in the winter house in the ninth month, and a brazier was burning in front of him.

Jeremiah 36:23

It happened 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.

Jehudi

See how you translated this in [Jeremiah 36:14](#).

columns

these are columns of words on the scroll

would cut it off

“would cut that part of the scroll off”

with a knife

“using a scribe’s knife” or “using the kind of knife that scribes use”

brazier

See how you translated this in [Jeremiah 36:22](#).

until all of the scroll was destroyed

“until the scroll was completely gone”

ULT

23 It happened that as Jehudi read three or four columns, the king would cut it off with a knife and throw it into the fire in the brazier until all of the scroll was destroyed.

Jeremiah 36:24

all these words

the words from the scroll that Baruch wrote as Jeremiah dictated

nor did they tear their clothes

People tore their cloths when they were extremely sad. Alternate translation: “nor did they mourn by tearing their clothes” (See: [Symbolic Action](#))

ULT

24 But neither the king nor any of his servants who heard all these words were frightened, nor did they tear their clothes.

Jeremiah 36:25

Elnathan, Delaiah, and Gemariah

See how you translated these names in [Jeremiah 36:12](#).

urged the king

“pleaded with the king”

ULT

²⁵ Elnathan, Delaiah, and Gemariah had even urged the king not to burn the scroll, but he did not listen to them.

Jeremiah 36:26

Jerahmeel ... Seraiah ... Azriel ... Shelemiah ... Abdeel

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

a relative

“a relative of the king”

Jeremiah the prophet ... hidden them

It is not clear why Jeremiah is referring to himself by name here. You may translate using first person, as the UST does. (See: [First, Second or Third Person](#))

ULT

²⁶ Then the king commanded Jerahmeel, a relative, Seraiah son of Azriel, and Shelemiah son of Abdeel to arrest Baruch the scribe and Jeremiah the prophet, but Yahweh had hidden them.

Jeremiah 36:27

Then the word of Yahweh came to Jeremiah after ... dictation, saying,

The idiom “The word of Yahweh came” is used to introduce a special message from God. See how you translated a similar phrase in [Jeremiah 1:4](#). Alternate translation: “Then Yahweh gave a message to Jeremiah after ... dictation. He said,” or “After ... dictation, Yahweh spoke this message to Jeremiah:” (See: [Idiom](#))

ULT

²⁷ Then the word of Yahweh came to Jeremiah after the king had burned the scroll and the words that Baruch had written at Jeremiah’s dictation, saying,

to Jeremiah ... Jeremiah’s dictation

It is not clear why Jeremiah is referring to himself by name here. You may translate using first person, as the UST does. (See: [First, Second or Third Person](#))

at Jeremiah’s dictation

See how you translated similar words in [Jeremiah 36:4](#).

Jeremiah 36:28

Go back, take another scroll for yourself

“Take another scroll for yourself again”

the original scroll

“the first scroll”

ULT

²⁸ “Go back, take another scroll for yourself, and write in it all the words that were on the original scroll, the one that Jehoiakim king of Judah burned.

Jeremiah 36:29

Why have you written on it ... beast in it'?

Jehoiakim uses this question to emphasize that Jeremiah should not have written that the king of Babylon would come and attack.

Alternate translation: "You should not have written ... beast in it!" or "You were wrong to write ... beast in it'!" (See: [Rhetorical Question](#))

for he will destroy

"and he will destroy"

ULT

29 Then you must say this to Jehoiakim king of Judah: 'You burned that scroll, saying, "Why have you written on it, 'The king of Babylon will certainly come and destroy this land, for he will destroy both man and beast in it'?"'"

Jeremiah 36:30

will ever sit on the throne of David

Sitting on the throne is a metonym for ruling as king. See how you translated “sits on the throne of David” in [Jeremiah 29:16](#). Alternate translation: “will ever rule the Israelites as David did” (See: [Metonymy](#))

your corpse will be thrown out

This can be translated in active form. Alternate translation: “people will throw your dead body outside” (See: [Active or Passive](#))

your corpse

“your dead body”

into the heat of day

“so that it is exposed to the dry heat of the daytime”

frost

ice that forms on grass during cold nights

ULT

30 Therefore Yahweh says this concerning you, Jehoiakim king of Judah: “No descendant of yours will ever sit on the throne of David. As for you, your corpse will be thrown out into the heat of day and the frost of night.”

Jeremiah 36:31

of you all

“of all of you”

ULT

³¹ For I will punish you, your descendants, and your servants for the iniquity of you all. I will bring on you, on all the inhabitants of Jerusalem, and on every person in Judah all the disasters with which I have threatened you with, but to which you paid no attention.”

Jeremiah 36:32

Jeremiah took ... Jeremiah's dictation

Jeremiah speaks of himself by name for reasons that are not clear.
(See: [First, Second or Third Person](#))

Baruch wrote on it at Jeremiah's dictation

The abstract noun "dictation" can be translated as a verb. See how similar words are translated in [Jeremiah 36:4](#). Alternate translation: "while Jeremiah was speaking, Baruch wrote on it" (See: [Abstract Nouns](#))

burned by Jehoiakim king of Judah

"that Jehoiakim king of Judah had burned in the fire"

Furthermore, many other similar words were added to this scroll

This can be translated in active form. Alternate translation: "Furthermore, Jeremiah and Baruch added to this scroll many more words which were similar to the words that had been in the first scroll" (See: [Active or Passive](#))

ULT

³² So Jeremiah took another scroll and gave it to Baruch son of Neriah the scribe. Baruch wrote on it at Jeremiah's dictation all the words that had been in the scroll burned by Jehoiakim king of Judah. Furthermore, many other similar words were added to this scroll.

Jeremiah 37

Jeremiah 37 General Notes

Important figures of speech in this chapter

Ironical situation

Jeremiah was thrown into prison and beaten for prophesying the word of God. Then the king asked him, "Is there any word from Yahweh?" This is a type of irony. The king simply did not agree with God's original word. (See: [prophet](#), [prophecy](#), [prophesy](#), [seer](#), [prophetess](#) and [word of God](#), [word of Yahweh](#), [word of the Lord](#), [word of truth](#), [scripture](#))

Jeremiah 37:1

Jehoiachin

The Hebrew text has “Coniah,” which is a variation of the name “Jehoiachin.” Many modern versions have “Jehoiachin” in order to make it clear that the same king is being referred to.

ULT

¹ Now Zedekiah son of Josiah reigned as king instead of Jehoiachin son of Jehoiakim. Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon had made Zedekiah king over the land of Judah.

Jeremiah 37:2

of the land

“of the land of Judah”

he proclaimed by the hand of Jeremiah the prophet

The hand is a synecdoche for the person. Alternate translation: “he had Jeremiah the prophet proclaim” (See: [Synecdoche](#))

he proclaimed

“Yahweh proclaimed”

Jeremiah the prophet

Jeremiah refers to himself by name for reasons that are not clear.

ULT

² But Zedekiah, his servants, and the people of the land did not listen to the words of Yahweh that he proclaimed by the hand of Jeremiah the prophet.

Jeremiah 37:3

Jehukal

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

Shelemiah

See how you translated this man's name in [Jeremiah 36:14](#). (See: [How to Translate Names](#))

Zephaniah son of Maaseiah the priest

See how you translated these men's names in [Jeremiah 21:1](#).

on our behalf

"for us" or "for our sake." The word "our" refers to King Zedekiah and the rest of the people of Judah.

ULT

³ So King Zedekiah, Jehukal son of Shelemiah, and Zephaniah son of Maaseiah the priest sent a message to Jeremiah the prophet. They said, "Pray on our behalf to Yahweh our God."

Jeremiah 37:4

Now

This word is used here to mark a break in the main story line. The narrator tells background information about what Jeremiah had been doing before Zedekiah sent the message. (See: [Background Information](#))

ULT

⁴ Now Jeremiah was coming and going among the people, for he had not yet been put in prison.

Jeremiah was coming and going among the people

Here “coming and going” is an idiom that means he was free to move about. Alternate translation: “Jeremiah was able to go wherever he wanted with everybody else” (See: [Idiom](#))

for he had not yet been put in prison

This can be translated in active form. Alternate translation: “because no one had put him in prison” (See: [Active or Passive](#))

Jeremiah 37:5

came out

“had set out”

besieging

See how you translated this in [Jeremiah 32:2](#).

ULT

⁵ Pharaoh's army came out from Egypt, and the Chaldeans who were besieging Jerusalem heard the news about them and left Jerusalem.

Jeremiah 37:6

the word of Yahweh came to Jeremiah the prophet, saying,

The idiom “the word of Yahweh came to” is used to introduce a special message from God. See how you translated a similar phrase in [Jeremiah 1:4](#). Alternate translation: “Yahweh gave a message to Jeremiah the prophet. He said,” or “Yahweh spoke this message to Jeremiah the prophet:” (See: [Idiom](#))

ULT

⁶ Then the word of Yahweh came to Jeremiah the prophet, saying,

Jeremiah 37:7

you will say

The word “you” refers to the two men that king Zedekiah had sent to Jeremiah, Jehukal son of Shelemiah, and Zephaniah son of Maaseiah the priest. (See: [Forms of You](#))

to seek advice from me

The word “me” refers to Yahweh.

See

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

ULT

7 “Yahweh, God of Israel, says this: This is what you will say to the king of Judah, because he has sent you to seek advice from me, ‘See, Pharaoh’s army, which came to help you, is about to go back to Egypt, its own land.

Jeremiah 37:8

They will fight against this city, capture it, and burn it

Compare how you translated “to wage war against it and take it, and to burn it” in [Jeremiah 34:22](#).

ULT

⁸ The Chaldeans will return. They will fight against this city, capture it, and burn it.'

Jeremiah 37:9

Do not deceive yourselves

The word “yourselves” refers to King Zedekiah and the rest of the people of Judah.

Surely the Chaldeans are leaving us

The people of Judah think that they will be safe because the Chaldeans had left. Alternate translation: “Surely we are safe because the Chaldeans are leaving us” (See: [Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information](#))

ULT

⁹ Yahweh says this: Do not deceive yourselves by saying, ‘Surely the Chaldeans are leaving us,’ for they will not leave.

Jeremiah 37:10

they would get up

“the wounded men would get up”

ULT

¹⁰ Even if you had defeated the entire Chaldean army that is fighting you so that only wounded men were left in their tents, they would get up and burn this city.”

Jeremiah 37:11

So it was

“It came about that.” This phrase is used here to mark the beginning of a new part of the story. If your language has a way for doing this, you could consider using it here.

ULT

11 So it was when the Chaldean army had left Jerusalem as Pharaoh’s army was coming,

Jeremiah 37:12

a tract of land

“a piece of land” or “some land”

among his people

“among his relatives.” Jeremiah was from the town of Anathoth in the land of Benjamin ([Jeremiah 1:1](#)).

ULT

¹² then Jeremiah went out from Jerusalem to go to the land of Benjamin. He wanted to take possession of a tract of land there among his people.

Jeremiah 37:13

Benjamin Gate

This is the name of the gate.

Irijah

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

Shelemiah

See how you translated this man's name in [Jeremiah 36:14](#). (See: [How to Translate Names](#))

Hananiah

See how you translated this man's name in [Jeremiah 28:1](#). (See: [How to Translate Names](#))

deserting

escaping trouble and leaving people who need help

ULT

13 As he was in the Benjamin Gate, a chief guard was there. His name was Irijah son of Shelemiah son of Hananiah. He grabbed hold of Jeremiah the prophet and said, "You are deserting to the Chaldeans."

Jeremiah 37:14

deserting

This means escaping trouble and leaving people who need help.

Irijah

See how you translated this man's name in [Jeremiah 37:13](#). (See: [How to Translate Names](#))

officials

See how you translated this in [Jeremiah 1:18](#).

ULT

14 But Jeremiah said, "That is not true. I am not deserting to the Chaldeans." But Irijah did not listen to him. He took Jeremiah and brought him to the officials.

Jeremiah 37:15

Jonathan the scribe

“Jonathan, who was a scribe.” This is a man’s name. (See: [Numbers](#))

ULT

15 The officials were angry with Jeremiah. They beat him and put him in prison, which had been the house of Jonathan the scribe, for they had turned it into a prison.

Jeremiah 37:16

Jeremiah was put into an underground cell

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: “the officials put Jeremiah into a room that was under the ground” (See: [Active or Passive](#))

ULT

16 So Jeremiah was put into an underground cell, where he stayed for many days.

Jeremiah 37:17

brought him

“brought Jeremiah”

his house

the palace of King Zedekiah

You will be given into the hand of the king of Babylon

The word “hand” is a metonym for the power or control that the hand exercises. This can be translated in active form. See how you translated similar words in [Jeremiah 32:4](#). Alternate translation: “I will certainly put you under the control of the king of Babylon” or “I will certainly allow the king of Babylon to do whatever he wants with you” (See: [Metonymy](#) and [Active or Passive](#))

ULT

17 Then King Zedekiah sent someone who brought him to the palace. In his house, the king asked him privately, “Is there any word from Yahweh?” Jeremiah answered, “There is a word: You will be given into the hand of the king of Babylon.”

Jeremiah 37:18

How have I sinned against you ... prison?

Jeremiah uses this question to emphasize that he has not done anything wrong. Alternate translation: "I have not done anything wrong to you ... prison." (See: [Rhetorical Question](#))

this people

the people of the kingdom of Judah

have placed

"have put"

ULT

18 Then Jeremiah said to King Zedekiah, "How have I sinned against you, your servants, or this people so that you have placed me in prison?"

Jeremiah 37:19

Where are your prophets, the ones who prophesied ... against this land?

Jeremiah uses this question to emphasize that the other prophets were lying but that he had done nothing wrong because he had told the truth. Alternate translation: "Your prophets who prophesied ... against this land were obviously wrong, but now it is clear that I was telling you the truth." (See: [Rhetorical Question](#) and [Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information](#))

ULT

¹⁹ Where are your prophets, the ones who prophesied for you and said the king of Babylon will not come against you or against this land?

your prophets

The word "your" refers to King Zedekiah and the other people of the kingdom of Judah.

will not come against you or against this land

"will not attack you or attack this land"

Jeremiah 37:20

Let my pleas come before you

“Hear me plead for mercy and do as I ask.” See how you translated “their pleas for mercy will come before Yahweh” in [Jeremiah 36:7](#).

the house of Jonathan the scribe

“the house of Jonathan, who is a scribe.” See how you translated this in [Jeremiah 37:15](#).

ULT

20 But now listen, my master the king!
Let my pleas come before you. Do not
return me to the house of Jonathan the
scribe, or I will die there.”

Jeremiah 37:21

the courtyard of the guard

This was an open area attached to the king's palace that was surrounded by buildings and in which they kept prisoners. See how you translated this in [Jeremiah 32:2](#).

A loaf of bread was given him

This can be translated in active form. Alternate translation: "His servants also gave Jeremiah a loaf of bread" (See: [Active or Passive](#))

from the street of the bakers

"from the street where the bakers worked"

ULT

21 So King Zedekiah gave an order. His servants confined Jeremiah in the courtyard of the guard. A loaf of bread was given him every day from the street of the bakers, until all the bread in the city was gone. So Jeremiah stayed in the courtyard of the guard.

Jeremiah 38

Jeremiah 38 General Notes

Special concepts in this chapter

Surrender and live

If the king obeyed God and surrendered to the Babylonians, he would be allowed to live and the city would not be burned. But if he refused, he would be captured and the city burned. This took faith that Yahweh was using this ungodly, Gentile nation. (See: [faith](#) and [godly](#), [godliness](#), [ungodly](#), [godless](#), [ungodliness](#), [godlessness](#))

Jeremiah 38:1

**Shephatiah ... Mattan, Gedaliah ... Pashhur,
Jehukal ... Shelemiah ... Pashhur ... Malkijah**

men's names (See: [How to Translate Names](#))

ULT

¹ Shephatiah son of Mattan, Gedaliah son of Pashhur, Jehukal son of Shelemiah, and Pashhur son of Malkijah heard the words that Jeremiah was declaring to all the people. He was saying,

Jeremiah 38:2

Anyone staying in this city will be killed by sword, famine, and plague

This can be translated in active form. Alternate translation: “Anyone staying in this city will die by sword, famine, and plague” or “I will kill anyone staying in this city with sword, famine, and plague” (See: [Active or Passive](#))

ULT

² “Yahweh says this: Anyone staying in this city will be killed by sword, famine, and plague. But anyone who goes out to the Chaldeans will survive. He will escape with his own life, and live.

He will escape with his own life

The one who surrenders to the Babylonians will escape alive, even though he will lose all his possessions. See how you translated a similar phrase in [Jeremiah 21:9](#).

Jeremiah 38:3

This city will be given into the hand of the army of the king of Babylon

The word “hand” is a metonym for the power or control that the hand exercises. This can be translated in active form. Alternate translation: “I will allow the army of the king of Babylon to conquer Jerusalem” (See: [Metonymy](#) and [Active or Passive](#))

ULT

³ Yahweh says this: This city will be given into the hand of the army of the king of Babylon, and he will capture it.”

he will capture it

The reader should understand that others will help the king of Babylon capture the city. “his army will capture it”

Jeremiah 38:4

Let this man die

“Order someone to kill this man”

he is weakening the hands of the fighting men who remain in this city, and the hands of all the people

Weak hands are a metonym for a person who is afraid. Alternate translation: “he is causing the soldiers and all the people in the city to lose courage” (See: [Metonymy](#))

ULT

⁴ So the officials said to the king, “Let this man die, for in this way he is weakening the hands of the fighting men who remain in this city, and the hands of all the people. He is proclaiming these words, for this man is not working for safety for this people, but disaster.”

for this man is not working for safety for this people, but disaster

“for Jeremiah is not working to help this people be safe, but he is working for bad things to happen to this people”

Jeremiah 38:5

Look

“Listen carefully”

he is in your hand

The hand is a metonym for the power that the hand has. Alternate translation: “you are able do whatever you want with him” (See: [Metonymy](#))

ULT

⁵ So King Zedekiah said, “Look, he is in your hand since there is no king able to resist you.”

Jeremiah 38:6

they ... threw him into the cistern

They literally “lowered Jeremiah down on ropes,” but the word “threw” is an exaggeration to say that they treated him roughly. Your language may have another way of saying this. Alternate translation: “they ... roughly pushed him into the cistern” (See: [Hyperbole](#))

cistern

a deep hole in the ground where people collect and store rain water

the courtyard of the guard

This was an open area attached to the king’s palace that was surrounded by buildings and in which they kept prisoners. See how you translated this in [Jeremiah 32:2](#).

They lowered Jeremiah down on ropes

This tells how “they threw him into the cistern.”

ULT

⁶ Then they took Jeremiah and threw him into the cistern of Malkijah, son of the king. The cistern was in the courtyard of the guard. They lowered Jeremiah down on ropes. There was no water in the cistern, but it was muddy, and he sank down into the mud.

Jeremiah 38:7

Now Ebed-Melek

The word “now” is used here to mark a break in the main story line. Here the narrator starts to tell a new part of the story.

Ebed-Melek the Cushite

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

Now the king

Here the word “now” marks a break in the main story line where the narrator tells background information about what the king was doing. (See: [Background Information](#))

sitting at the Benjamin Gate

King Zedekiah was probably hearing and judging legal cases. (See: [Idiom](#))

Benjamin Gate

This is an entrance into the city of Jerusalem that people named after Benjamin, Jacob’s son.

ULT

⁷ Now Ebed-Melek the Cushite was one of the eunuchs in the king’s house. He heard that they had placed Jeremiah in the cistern. Now the king was sitting at the Benjamin Gate.

Jeremiah 38:8

(There are no notes for this verse.)

ULT

⁸ So Ebed-Melek went from the king's house and spoke with the king. He said,

Jeremiah 38:9

(There are no notes for this verse.)

ULT

⁹ “My master the king, these men have done evil with the way they have treated Jeremiah the prophet. They threw him into a cistern for him to die in it from hunger, since there is no more food in the city.”

Jeremiah 38:10

thirty men

“30 men” (See: [Numbers](#))

ULT

10 Then the king gave a command to Ebed-Melek the Cushite. He said, “Take command of thirty men from here and take Jeremiah the prophet out of the cistern before he dies.”

Jeremiah 38:11

let them down by ropes

“used ropes to lower them down”

ULT

11 So Ebed-Melek took command of those men and went to the king's house, to a storeroom for clothing under the house. From there he took rags and worn-out clothing and then let them down by ropes to Jeremiah in the cistern.

Jeremiah 38:12

under your arms and on top of the ropes

“between your arms and the ropes”

ULT

¹² Ebed-Melek the Cushite said to Jeremiah, “Put the rags and worn-out clothing under your arms and on top of the ropes.” So Jeremiah did so.

Jeremiah 38:13

they pulled Jeremiah

Here the word “they” refers to some of the thirty men who were with Ebed-Melech.

the courtyard of the guard

This was an open area attached to the king’s palace that was surrounded by buildings and in which they kept prisoners. See how you translated this in [Jeremiah 32:2](#).

ULT

13 Then they pulled Jeremiah by the ropes. In this way they brought him up from the cistern. So Jeremiah stayed in the courtyard of the guard.

Jeremiah 38:14

(There are no notes for this verse.)

ULT

14 Then King Zedekiah sent word and brought Jeremiah the prophet to himself, to the third entrance in Yahweh's house. The king said to Jeremiah, "I want to ask you something. Do not keep the answer from me."

Jeremiah 38:15

If I answer you, will you not certainly kill me?

Jeremiah uses this question to express his belief that the king will kill him if he answers truthfully. Alternate translation: "If I tell you the truth, you will certainly kill me" (See: [Rhetorical Question](#))

ULT

15 Jeremiah said to Zedekiah, "If I answer you, will you not certainly kill me? But if I give you advice, you will not listen to me."

Jeremiah 38:16

As Yahweh lives, the one who made us

“as surely as Yahweh, the one who made us, is alive.” This is a way of making a solemn promise. The king says it to emphasize that what he is about to say next is true. See how you translated “As Yahweh lives” in [Jeremiah 4:2](#). Alternate translation: “I solemnly swear by Yahweh, the one who made us” (See: [Idiom](#))

ULT

16 But King Zedekiah swore to Jeremiah in private and said, “As Yahweh lives, the one who made us, I will not kill you or give you into the hand of those men who are seeking your life.”

I will not ... give you into the hand of those men

Here the word “hand” refers to the men’s control or power. Alternate translation: “I will not ... allow those men to capture you” (See: [Metonymy](#))

seeking your life

This phrase represents wanting or trying to kill someone. See how this phrase is translated in [Jeremiah 11:21](#). Alternate translation: “trying to kill you” (See: [Metaphor](#))

Jeremiah 38:17

God of Israel

The name of the people group is metonym for the people of that group. Alternate translation: "God of the people of Israel" (See: [Metonymy](#))

this city will not be burned

This can be translated in active form. Alternate translation: "the Babylonian army will not burn this city" (See: [Active or Passive](#))

ULT

17 So Jeremiah said to Zedekiah, "Yahweh, God of hosts, God of Israel, says this: If you indeed go out to the officials of the king of Babylon then you will live, and this city will not be burned. You and your family will live."

Jeremiah 38:18

this city will be given into the hand of the Chaldeans

The word “hand” is a metonym for the power or control that the hand exercises. This can be translated in active form. See how similar words are translated in [Jeremiah 38:2](#). Alternate translation: “I will allow the Chaldeans to conquer this city” or “I will allow the Chaldeans to do whatever they want with this city” (See: [Active or Passive](#))

ULT

¹⁸ But if you do not go out to the officials of the king of Babylon, then this city will be given into the hand of the Chaldeans. They will burn it, and you will not escape from their hand.”

you will not escape from their hand

The word “hand” is a metonym for the power or control that the hand exercises. Alternate translation: “you will not escape from their power” (See: [Metonymy](#))

Jeremiah 38:19

deserted

escaped trouble and left people who needed help. See how you translated this in [Jeremiah 37:13](#).

I might be given over into their hand

The word “hand” is a metonym for the power or control that the hand exercises. This can be translated in active form. Alternate translation: “the Chaldeans might put me under the control of the people of Judah who have deserted” or “the Chaldeans might allow the people of Judah who have deserted to do whatever they want with me” (See: [Active or Passive](#) and [Metonymy](#))

for them to treat me badly

Here the word “them” refers to the people of Judah who have deserted.

ULT

19 King Zedekiah said to Jeremiah, “But I am afraid of the people of Judah who have deserted to the Chaldeans, because I might be given over into their hand, for them to treat me badly.”

Jeremiah 38:20

They will not give you over to them

“The Chaldeans will not give you over to the Judeans.” Here “you” refers to Zedekiah. (See: [Forms of You](#))

ULT

²⁰ Jeremiah said, “They will not give you over to them. Obey the message from Yahweh that I am telling you, so that things will go well for you, and so that you will live.”

Jeremiah 38:21

this is what Yahweh has shown me

Here the word “this” refers to what Jeremiah will say next.

ULT

²¹ But if you refuse to go out, this is what Yahweh has shown me.

Jeremiah 38:22

General Information:

Jeremiah continues speaking with King Zedekiah.

All the women who are left ... will be brought out to the officials of the king of Babylon

The reader should understand that the officials will take these women as slaves. Alternate translation: "Soldiers will bring all the women who are left ... out to the officials of the king of Babylon" (See: [Active or Passive](#))

ULT

²² Look! All the women who are left in your house, king of Judah, will be brought out to the officials of the king of Babylon. These women will say to you, 'You have been deceived by your friends; they have ruined you. Your feet are now sunk into the mud, and your friends will run away.'

You have been deceived by your friends

This can be translated in active form. Alternate translation: "Your friends have deceived you" (See: [Active or Passive](#))

Your feet are now sunk into the mud

The king is now helpless. (See: [Metaphor](#))

Jeremiah 38:23

For all of your wives and children will be brought out to the Chaldeans

The reader should understand that the officials will take these people as slaves. Alternate translation: "Soldiers will bring your wives and children out to the Chaldeans" (See: [Active or Passive](#))

will not escape from their hand

The word "hand" is a metonym for the power or control that the hand exercises. Alternate translation: "will not escape from their power" (See: [Metonymy](#))

You will be captured by the hand of the king of Babylon, and this city will be burned

The word "hand" is a metonym for the power or control that the hand exercises. This can be translated in active form. The reader should probably understand that many people will help the king do this. Alternate translation: "The army of the king of Babylon will capture you and will burn the city" (See: [Metonymy](#) and [Active or Passive](#))

ULT

²³ For all of your wives and children will be brought out to the Chaldeans, and you yourself will not escape from their hand. You will be captured by the hand of the king of Babylon, and this city will be burned."

Jeremiah 38:24

(There are no notes for this verse.)

ULT

²⁴ Then Zedekiah said to Jeremiah, “Do not inform anyone about these words, so that you do not die.

Jeremiah 38:25

(There are no notes for this verse.)

ULT

²⁵ If the officials hear that I have talked with you, and if they come and say to you, 'Tell us what you said to the king and do not hide it from us, or we will kill you,'

Jeremiah 38:26

Jonathan

See how you translated this man's name in [Jeremiah 37:15](#).

ULT

²⁶ then you must say to them, 'I made a humble plea before the king that he would not return me to the house of Jonathan to die there.'"

Jeremiah 38:27

the conversation between Jeremiah and the king

The abstract noun “conversation” can be translated as a verb.
Alternate translation: “what Jeremiah and the king said to each other” (See: [Abstract Nouns](#))

ULT

²⁷ Then all the officials came to Jeremiah and questioned him, so he answered them as the king had instructed him. So they stopped talking with him, because they had not heard the conversation between Jeremiah and the king.

Jeremiah 38:28

the courtyard of the guard

This was an open area attached to the king's palace that was surrounded by buildings and in which they kept prisoners. See how you translated this in [Jeremiah 32:2](#).

ULT

²⁸ So Jeremiah remained in the courtyard of the guard until the day Jerusalem was captured.

until the day Jerusalem was captured

This can be translated in active form. Alternate translation: "until the day that the Babylonian army captured Jerusalem" (See: [Active or Passive](#))

Jeremiah 39

Jeremiah 39 General Notes

Structure and formatting

The prophesied destruction of Jerusalem is over and the actual conquering of the Promised Land by Babylon begins in this chapter. (See: [prophet](#), [prophecy](#), [prophesy](#), [seer](#), [prophetess](#) and [Promised Land](#))

Jeremiah 39:1

came ... against Jerusalem

“came to attack Jerusalem”

In the ninth year and tenth month of Zedekiah king of Judah

This is after Zedekiah had been king of Judah for eight years, in the tenth month of the Hebrew calendar. It is during the last part of December and the first part of January on Western calendars. Alternate translation: “In the tenth month of the ninth year that Zedekiah was king of Judah” (See: [Hebrew Months](#))

ninth ... tenth

See: [Ordinal Numbers](#)

ULT

¹ In the ninth year and tenth month of Zedekiah king of Judah, Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon came with all his army against Jerusalem and besieged it.

Jeremiah 39:2

In the eleventh year and fourth month of Zedekiah, on the ninth day of the month

This is after Zedekiah had been king of Judah for more than ten years, in the fourth month of the Hebrew calendar. The eleventh day is near the beginning of July on Western calendars. Alternate translation: "On the ninth day of the fourth month of the eleventh year that Zedekiah was king" (See: [Hebrew Months](#))

ULT

² In the eleventh year and fourth month of Zedekiah, on the ninth day of the month, the city was broken into.

eleventh ... fourth

See: [Ordinal Numbers](#)

Jeremiah 39:3

Nebo-Sarsekim, Samgar Nebo, and Sarsechim

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

in the middle gate

“in the middle entrance to the city.” It was common for leaders to sit at the gate of the city to discuss important matters.

ULT

³ Then all the officials of the king of Babylon came and sat in the middle gate: Nebo-Sarsekim, Samgar Nebo, and Sarsechim, an important official. Nebo-Sarsekim was a high official and all the rest were the officials of the king of Babylon.

Jeremiah 39:4

They went out at night from the city by the king's garden path

"They left the city at night going out on a path in the king's garden"

ULT

⁴ It happened that when Zedekiah, king of Judah, and all his fighting men saw them, they fled. They went out at night from the city by the king's garden path, through the gate between the two walls. The king went out in the direction of the Arabah.

Jeremiah 39:5

the plains of the Jordan River valley

This is the flat land at the southern end of the valley.

at Riblah in the land of Hamath

Riblah was a town in the territory of Hamath, which is in Syria. (See: [How to Translate Names](#))

pursued them and overtook

“followed them and caught”

passed sentence on him

“decided how to punish him”

ULT

⁵ But the army of Chaldeans pursued them and overtook Zedekiah in the plains of the Jordan River valley near Jericho. Then they captured him and brought him up to Nebuchadnezzar, king of Babylon, at Riblah in the land of Hamath, where Nebuchadnezzar passed sentence on him.

Jeremiah 39:6

slaughtered Zedekiah's sons before his own eyes

The eyes are a synecdoche for the whole person. The reader should also understand that others probably helped the king of Babylon kill Zedekiah's sons. Alternate translation: "forced Zedekiah to watch as the king's soldiers killed Zedekiah's sons" (See: [Synecdoche](#))

ULT

⁶ The king of Babylon slaughtered Zedekiah's sons before his own eyes at Riblah. He also slaughtered all the noblemen of Judah.

Jeremiah 39:7

he put out Zedekiah's eyes

"the king's men made Zedekiah blind." Use the common words for making a person blind. It is not clear that the king of Babylon took Zedekiah's eyes out of his head. The reader should also understand that others probably helped the king of Babylon make Zedekiah blind.

ULT

⁷ Then he put out Zedekiah's eyes and bound him in bronze chains in order to take him to Babylon.

Jeremiah 39:8

the king's house

Zedekiah's house

the people's houses

the houses that had belonged to the people of Jerusalem

ULT

⁸ Then the Chaldeans burned the king's house and the people's houses. They also tore down the walls of Jerusalem.

Jeremiah 39:9

Nebuzaradan

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

the king's bodyguards

"Nebuchadnezzar's guards"

the rest of the people who were left in the city

This is probably a generalization. Alternate translation: "the people who were still living in the city" (See: [Hyperbole](#))

ULT

⁹ Nebuzaradan, the commander of the king's bodyguards, took into exile the rest of the people who were left in the city. This included the people who had deserted to the Chaldeans and the rest of the people who were left in the city.

Jeremiah 39:10

who had nothing for themselves

The word “nothing” is probably an exaggeration. Alternate translation: “who owned nothing of great value” (See: [Hyperbole](#))

ULT

10 But Nebuzaradan the commander of the king’s bodyguards allowed the poorest people who had nothing for themselves to remain in the land of Judah. He gave them vineyards and fields on that same day.

Jeremiah 39:11

(There are no notes for this verse.)

ULT

11 Nebuchadnezzar the king of Babylon had given an order about Jeremiah to Nebuzaradan the commander of the king's bodyguards. He had said,

Jeremiah 39:12

(There are no notes for this verse.)

ULT

¹² "Take him and care for him. Do not harm him. Do for him anything he tells you."

Jeremiah 39:13

Nebushazban

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

sent men out

They sent them out to get Jeremiah. This can be stated explicitly.

Alternate translation: "sent men out to get Jeremiah" (See: [Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information](#))

ULT

13 So Nebuzaradan the commander of the king's bodyguards, Nebushazban the high eunuch, Nergal-Sharezer the high official, and all the most important officials of the king of Babylon sent men out.

Jeremiah 39:14

Gedaliah ... Ahikam ... Shaphan

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

the courtyard of the guard

This was an open area attached to the king's palace that was surrounded by buildings and in which they kept prisoners. See how you translated this in [Jeremiah 32:2](#).

among the people

You may need to make explicit which people the speaker is speaking of. Alternate translation: "among the people who remained in Judah" (See: [Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information](#))

ULT

14 Their men took Jeremiah from the courtyard of the guard and entrusted him to Gedaliah son of Ahikam son of Shaphan, to take him home, so Jeremiah stayed among the people.

Jeremiah 39:15

General Information:

This story happened before the events in the first part of the chapter.

Now

This word is used here to mark a return to the story line, as the narrator tells what Yahweh had said to Jeremiah after Nebuchadnezzar gave the orders about Jeremiah ([Jeremiah 39:12-14](#)). (See: [Background Information](#) and [Order of Events](#))

ULT

15 Now the word of Yahweh came to Jeremiah while he was under arrest in the courtyard of the guard, saying,

the word of Yahweh came to Jeremiah while he was ... guard, saying,

The idiom “the word of Yahweh came to” is used to introduce a special message from God. See how you translated a similar phrase in [Jeremiah 1:4](#). Alternate translation: “Yahweh gave a message to Jeremiah while he was ... guard. He said,” or “while Jeremiah was ... guard, Yahweh spoke this message to him:” (See: [Idiom](#))

the courtyard of the guard

This was an open area attached to the king’s palace that was surrounded by buildings and in which they kept prisoners. See how you translated this in [Jeremiah 32:2](#).

Jeremiah 39:16

Ebed-Melek the Cushite

See how you translated this man's name in [Jeremiah 38:7](#).

Yahweh of hosts ... says this

Jeremiah often uses these words to introduce an important message from Yahweh. See how you translated this in [Jeremiah 6:6](#).

ULT

16 "Speak to Ebed-Melek the Cushite and say, 'Yahweh of hosts, God of Israel, says this: See, I am about to carry out my words against this city for disaster and not for good. For they will all come true before you on that day.'

I am about to carry out my words against this city for disaster and not for good

"I am bringing disaster, not good, against this city, just as I said I would"

For they will all come true before you on that day

"For you will see it all happen on that day"

Jeremiah 39:17

General Information:

Yahweh continues speaking to Jeremiah.

**you will not be given into the hand of the men
whom you fear**

Here “hand” refers to power or control. This can be translated in active form. Alternate translation: “the men you fear will not harm you” or “I will not allow anyone to put you under the control of the people whom you fear” (See: [Metonymy](#) and [Active or Passive](#))

ULT

17 But I will rescue you on that day—this is Yahweh’s declaration—and you will not be given into the hand of the men whom you fear.

Jeremiah 39:18

You will not fall by the sword

The sword is a metonym for dying in war. Alternate translation: “No one will kill you with their sword” or “You will not die in war” (See: [Euphemism](#) and [Metonymy](#))

with your life

“alive”

ULT

18 For I will certainly rescue you. You will not fall by the sword. You will escape with your life, since you trust in me—this was Yahweh’s declaration.”

Jeremiah 40

Jeremiah 40 General Notes

Structure and formatting

Peace in Judah

After Babylon conquered Jerusalem, this chapter reveals an unfolding peace in the area. Ammon, who was supposed to be Judah's ally against Babylon, probably sought to distract Babylon from attacking them by ruining the peace in the region of Judah. (See: [reveal](#), [revealed](#), [revelation](#) and [Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information](#))

Jeremiah 40:1

The word came to Jeremiah from Yahweh

This idiom is used to announce that God gave messages to Jeremiah. See how you translated this in [Jeremiah 32:1](#) Alternate translation: “Yahweh gave messages to Jeremiah” or “Yahweh spoke to Jeremiah” (See: [Idiom](#))

Nebuzaradan

This is the name of a man. See how you translated this in [Jeremiah 39:9](#). (See: [How to Translate Names](#))

who were being carried into exile to Babylon

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: “whom the soldiers were about to take to Babylon as exiles” (See: [Active or Passive](#))

ULT

¹ The word came to Jeremiah from Yahweh after Nebuzaradan the commander of the king’s bodyguards had released him at Ramah. He had found Jeremiah bound with chains among all the captives of Jerusalem and Judah who were being carried into exile to Babylon.

Jeremiah 40:2

(There are no notes for this verse.)

ULT

² The chief guard took Jeremiah and said to him, "Yahweh your God decreed this disaster for this place.

Jeremiah 40:3

this thing

“this disaster”

ULT

³ So Yahweh brought it about. He did just as he had decreed, since you people sinned against him and did not obey his voice. That is why this thing has happened to you people.

Jeremiah 40:4

But now look!

Nebuzaradan says this to bring Jeremiah's attention to the present moment.

it is good in your eyes

"Eyes" here is a metonym for what the person thinks. Alternate translation: "it is what you consider to be right" (See: [Metonymy](#))

ULT

⁴ But now look! I have released you today from the chains that were on your hands. If it is good in your eyes to come with me to Babylon, come, and I will take care of you. But if it is not good in your eyes to come with me to Babylon, then do not do so. Look at all the land before you. Go where it is good and right in your eyes to go."

Jeremiah 40:5

Gedaliah ... Ahikam ... Shaphan

These are the names of men. See how you translated this in [Jeremiah 39:14](#).

among the people

“among the Judeans”

it is good in your eyes

“Eyes” here is a metonym for what the person thinks. Alternate translation: “it is what you consider to be right” (See: [Metonymy](#))

ULT

⁵ When Jeremiah did not reply, Nebuzaradan said, “Go to Gedaliah son of Ahikam son of Shaphan, whom the king of Babylon has put in charge of the cities of Judah. Stay with him among the people or go wherever it is good in your eyes to go.” The commander of the king’s bodyguards gave him food and a gift, and then sent him away.

Jeremiah 40:6

who were left behind in the land

“who stayed in Judah”

ULT

⁶ So Jeremiah went to Gedaliah son of Ahikam, at Mizpah. He stayed with him among the people who were left behind in the land.

Jeremiah 40:7

Now

This marks a new part of the story.

those who had not been exiled to Babylon

This can be translated in active form. Alternate translation: “those whom the enemy soldiers had not sent to Babylon” (See: [Active or Passive](#))

ULT

⁷ Now some commanders of Judean soldiers who were still in the countryside—they and their men—heard that the king of Babylon had made Gedaliah son of Ahikam governor over the land. They also heard that he had put him in charge of the men, women, and children who were the poorest people in the land, those who had not been exiled to Babylon.

Jeremiah 40:8

Ishmael ... Nethaniah ... Johanan ... Jonathan ... Kareah ... Seraiah ... Tanhumeth ... Ephai ... Jaazaniah

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

Netophathite ... Maakathite

people from the regions of Netophah and Maakah

ULT

⁸ So they went to Gedaliah at Mizpah. These men were Ishmael son of Nethaniah; Johanan and Jonathan, sons of Kareah; Seraiah son of Tanhumeth; the sons of Ephai the Netophathite; and Jaazaniah son of the Maakathite—they and their men.

Jeremiah 40:9

took an oath to them

“swore to the Judean commanders”

ULT

⁹ Gedaliah son of Ahikam son of Shaphan took an oath to them and to their men and said to them, “Do not be afraid to serve the Chaldean officials. Live in the land and serve the king of Babylon, and it will go well with you.”

Jeremiah 40:10

Look

"Listen carefully" or "Pay attention"

summer fruit

"fruit that becomes ripe during the summer"

you have occupied

"you have taken over." "Occupy" here is a military term. Gedaliah was talking to soldiers ([Jeremiah 40:7](#)) who may have conquered or otherwise taken control of cities.

ULT

10 Look, I am living in Mizpah to meet with the Chaldeans who came to us. So harvest wine, summer fruit, and oil and store them in your containers. Live in the cities that you have occupied."

Jeremiah 40:11

remnant of Judah

“remnant of the people of Judah”

had appointed ... over them

“had put ... in charge of them”

Gedaliah son of Ahikam son of Shaphan

See how you translated this in [Jeremiah 39:14](#).

over them

“over the people of Judah”

ULT

11 Then all the Judeans in Moab, among the people of Ammon, and in Edom, and in every land heard that the king of Babylon had allowed a remnant of Judah to stay, that he had appointed Gedaliah son of Ahikam son of Shaphan over them.

Jeremiah 40:12

where they had been scattered

This can be translated in active form. Alternate translation: “where the Babylonians had driven them” (See: [Active or Passive](#))

wine and summer fruit in great abundance

“a huge amount of grapes and summer fruit”

summer fruit

“fruit that becomes ripe during the summer.” See how you translated this in [Jeremiah 40:10](#).

ULT

12 So all the Judeans returned from every place where they had been scattered. They came back to the land of Judah, to Gedaliah at Mizpah. They harvested wine and summer fruit in great abundance.

Jeremiah 40:13

Johanan ... Kareah

See how you translated these names in [Jeremiah 40:8](#). (See: [How to Translate Names](#))

Gedaliah

See how you translated this man's name in [Jeremiah 39:14](#). (See: [How to Translate Names](#))

ULT

13 Johanan son of Kareah and all the army commanders in the countryside came to Gedaliah at Mizpah.

Jeremiah 40:14

Do you realize that Baalis king of the people of Ammon sent Ishmael son of Nethaniah to murder you?

Johanan and the commanders use a rhetorical question to warn Gedaliah. It can be translated as a statement. Alternate translation: “You need to understand that Baalis king of the people of Ammon sent Ishmael son of Nethaniah to murder you!” (See: [Rhetorical Question](#))

ULT

¹⁴ They said to him, “Do you realize that Baalis king of the people of Ammon sent Ishmael son of Nethaniah to murder you?” But Gedaliah son of Ahikim did not believe them.

Baalis

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

Ishmael ... Nethaniah

Translate these names as in [Jeremiah 40:8](#). (See: [How to Translate Names](#))

Ahikim

See how you translated this name in [Jeremiah 26:24](#). (See: [How to Translate Names](#))

Jeremiah 40:15

Johanan ... Kareah

See how you translated these men's names in [Jeremiah 40:8](#). (See: [How to Translate Names](#))

Gedaliah

See how you translated this name in [Jeremiah 39:14](#).

Ishmael ... Nethaniah

See how you translated these men's names in [Jeremiah 40:8](#).

No one will suspect me

"No one will think that I did it"

Why should he kill you?

Johanan uses a rhetorical question to try to change Gedaliah's thinking. It can be translated as a statement. Alternate translation: "You should not allow him to kill you." (See: [Rhetorical Question](#))

Why allow all of Judah that has been gathered to you to be scattered and the remnant of Judah destroyed?

Johanan uses a rhetorical question to try to get Gedaliah to think about what will happen if Gedaliah does what Gedaliah is planning to do. Alternate translation: "If you do this, all of Judah that has been gathered to you will be scattered and the remnant of Judah will be destroyed." (See: [Rhetorical Question](#))

all of Judah

The word "all" is a generalization. Alternate translation: "many of the people of Judah" (See: [Hyperbole](#))

that has been gathered to you

This can be translated in active form. Alternate translation: "who have come to you" or "whom Yahweh has brought to you" (See: [Active or Passive](#))

to be scattered

This can be translated in active form. Alternate translation: "to have the Chaldeans scatter them" or "to flee away to many different lands" (See: [Active or Passive](#))

ULT

15 So Johanan son of Kareah spoke privately to Gedaliah in Mizpah and said, "Allow me to go kill Ishmael son of Nethaniah. No one will suspect me. Why should he kill you? Why allow all of Judah that has been gathered to you to be scattered and the remnant of Judah destroyed?"

the remnant of Judah destroyed

This can be translated in active form. Alternate translation: “allow the Chaldeans to destroy the remnant of Judah” or “and allow the remnant of Judah to perish” (See: [Active or Passive](#) and [Ellipsis](#))

remnant of Judah

“remnant of the people of Judah.” See how you translated this in [Jeremiah 40:11](#).

Jeremiah 40:16

Ahikam

See how you translated this name in [Jeremiah 26:24](#).

ULT

16 But Gedaliah son of Ahikam said to Johanan son of Kareah, "Do not do this thing, for you are telling lies about Ishmael."

Jeremiah 41

Jeremiah 41 General Notes

Special concepts in this chapter

Life in Judah

This chapter explains what life was like in Judah after the Babylonian conquest. It was a difficult and dangerous time, but some of the faithful remained in the Promised Land. (See: [faithful](#), [faithfulness](#), [trustworthy](#) and [Promised Land](#))

Jeremiah 41:1

it happened that

This phrase is used here to mark the beginning of a new part of the story. If your language has a way for doing this, you could consider using it here.

in the seventh month

This is the seventh month of the Hebrew calendar. It is during the last part of September and the first part of October on Western calendars. (See: [Hebrew Months](#) and [Ordinal Numbers](#))

Ishmael son of Nethaniah

See how you translated these men's names in [Jeremiah 40:8](#). (See: [How to Translate Names](#))

Elishama

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

ULT

¹ But it happened that in the seventh month Ishmael son of Nethaniah son of Elishama, from the royal family, and some officers of the king, came—ten men were with him—to Gedaliah son of Ahikam, at Mizpah. They ate food together there in Mizpah.

Jeremiah 41:2

Gedaliah son of Ahikam son of Shaphan

See how you translated these men's names in [Jeremiah 39:14](#). (See: [How to Translate Names](#))

in charge of the land

Here "land" represents the people. Alternate translation: "in charge of the people of Judah" (See: [Metonymy](#))

ULT

² But Ishmael son of Nethaniah, and the ten men who were with him rose up and attacked Gedaliah son of Ahikam son of Shaphan, with the sword. Ishmael killed Gedaliah, whom the king of Babylon had put in charge of the land.

Jeremiah 41:3

Then Ishmael killed

Here “Ishmael” represents himself and the ten men with him.
Alternate translation: “Then Ishmael and the ten men with him killed” (See: [Synecdoche](#))

the Chaldean fighting men found there

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: “also the Chaldean soldiers there” (See: [Active or Passive](#))

ULT

³ Then Ishmael killed all the Judeans who were with Gedaliah in Mizpah and the Chaldean fighting men found there.

Jeremiah 41:4

the second day after

The word “second” is the ordinal form of the number 2. This could mean: (1) “the day after” or (2) “two days after” (See: [Ordinal Numbers](#))

ULT

⁴ Then it was the second day after the killing of Gedaliah, but no one knew.

Jeremiah 41:5

eighty men

“80 men” (See: [Numbers](#))

in their hands

Having things in the hands here is probably a metaphor for carrying those things or having them in their possession. Alternate translation: “in their possession” (See: [Metonymy](#))

to go to Yahweh’s house

“to go worship Yahweh at his temple”

ULT

⁵ Some men came from Shechem, from Shiloh, and from Samaria—eighty men who had shaved their beard, torn their clothes, and cut themselves—with food offerings and frankincense in their hands to go to Yahweh’s house.

Jeremiah 41:6

to meet them

“to meet the 80 men”

Then it happened

This phrase is used here to mark where the action starts. If your language has a way for doing this, you could consider using it here.

ULT

⁶ So Ishmael son of Nethaniah went out from Mizpah to meet them as they went, walking and weeping. Then it happened that as he encountered them, he said to them, “Come to Gedaliah son of Ahikam!”

Jeremiah 41:7

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.

Ishmael son of Nethaniah slaughtered them and threw them into a pit, he and the men who were with him

It is stated it in [Jeremiah 41:8](#) that Ishmael and his men did not kill all 80 men. You can state here that they killed most of the 80 men. Alternate translation: "Ishmael son of Nethaniah, and the men who were with him, killed most of the 80 men and threw them into a pit"

ULT

⁷ It came about that when they came into the city, Ishmael son of Nethaniah slaughtered them and threw them into a pit, he and the men who were with him.

Jeremiah 41:8

ten men among them

The word “them” refers to the 80 men.

for there are provisions of ours in a field

It is implied that they would give their provisions to Ishmael and his men. Alternate translation: “for we will give you our provisions that we have hidden in a field” (See: [Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information](#))

provisions

supplies to be used to provide for future needs

ULT

⁸ But there were ten men among them who said to Ishmael, “Do not kill us, for there are provisions of ours in a field: Wheat and barley, oil and honey.” So he did not kill them with their other companions.

Jeremiah 41:9

The cistern where Ishmael ... against King Baasha of Israel

This is background information about the cistern that Ishmael used. King Asa had his men dig the cistern so his people would have a water supply when King Baasha attacked them. (See: [Background Information](#))

that King Asa dug

Here King Asa represents his men. Alternate translation: “that King Asa ordered his men to dig” (See: [Metonymy](#))

against King Baasha of Israel

Here King Baasha represents himself and his army. Alternate translation: “against Baasha, king of Israel, and his army” (See: [Synecdoche](#))

Ishmael son of Nethaniah filled it

Here Ishmael represents himself and all of his men. Alternate translation: “Ishmael and his men filled it” (See: [Synecdoche](#))

with the dead

This nominal adjective can be stated as an adjective. Alternate translation: “with those who were dead” or “with those they had killed” (See: [Nominal Adjectives](#))

ULT

⁹ The cistern where Ishmael threw all the dead bodies that he had killed, was a large cistern that King Asa dug to make a defense against King Baasha of Israel. Ishmael son of Nethaniah filled it in with the dead.

Jeremiah 41:10

Ishmael captured

Here Ishmael represents himself and his men. Alternate translation: "Ishmael and his men captured" (See: [Synecdoche](#))

Nebuzaradan

See how you translated this man's name in [Jeremiah 39:9](#). (See: [How to Translate Names](#))

went to cross over to the people of Ammon

"traveled towards the land of the Ammonites"

ULT

10 Next Ishmael captured all the other people who were in Mizpah, the king's daughters and all the people who were left in Mizpah whom Nebuzaradan the chief guard had assigned to Gedaliah son of Ahikam. So Ishmael son of Nethaniah captured them and went to cross over to the people of Ammon.

Jeremiah 41:11

Ishmael son of Nethaniah

Here "Ishmael" represents himself and all of his men. Alternate translation: "Ishmael and his men" (See: [Synecdoche](#))

ULT

11 But Johanan son of Kareah and all the army commanders with him heard of all the harm that Ishmael son of Nethaniah had done.

Jeremiah 41:12

Ishmael son of Nethaniah ... found him

Here "Ishmael" represents himself and all of his men. Alternate translation: "Ishmael and his men ... found them" (See: [Synecdoche](#))

ULT

¹² So they took all their men and went to fight against Ishmael son of Nethaniah. They found him at the great pool of Gibeon.

Jeremiah 41:13

Then it happened 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.

when all the people who were with Ishmael

Here “people” refers to those whom Ishmael and his men had captured.

ULT

13 Then it happened that when all the people who were with Ishmael saw Johanan son of Kareah and all the army commanders who were with him, they were very happy.

Jeremiah 41:14

whom Ishmael had captured

Here "Ishmael" represents himself and all of his men. Alternate translation: "whom Ishmael and his men had captured" (See: [Synecdoche](#))

ULT

14 So all the people whom Ishmael had captured at Mizpah turned around and went to Johanan son of Kareah.

Jeremiah 41:15

He went to the people of Ammon

“He” refers to Ishmael who represents himself and the eight men with him. Alternate translation: “They went to the people of Ammon” (See: [Synecdoche](#))

ULT

15 But Ishmael son of Nethaniah fled with eight men from Johanan. He went to the people of Ammon.

Jeremiah 41:16

who had been rescued

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

This was after Ishmael had killed Gedaliah son of Ahikam

The author stops the story to refer to a previous event so that the order of events are understood. (See: [Background Information](#))

the strong men, the fighting men

These both refer to soldiers. Alternate translation: “the soldiers”

who had been rescued at Gibeon

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: “whom they had rescued at Gibeon” (See: [Active or Passive](#))

ULT

16 Johanan son of Kareah and all the army commanders with him took from Mizpah all the people who had been rescued from Ishmael son of Nethaniah. This was after Ishmael had killed Gedaliah son of Ahikam. Johanan and his companions took the strong men, the fighting men, the women and children, and the eunuchs who had been rescued at Gibeon.

Jeremiah 41:17

they went

“Johanan, his companions, and all the people they rescued went”

Geruth Kimham

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

ULT

17 Then they went and stayed for a while in Geruth Kimham, which is near Bethlehem. They were going to go to Egypt

Jeremiah 41:18

because of the Chaldeans

It is implied that they were afraid that the Chaldeans would attack them. Alternate translation: “because they thought the Chaldeans may attack them” (See: [Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information](#))

in charge of the land

Here “land” represents the people. Alternate translation: “in charge of the people of Judah” (See: [Metonymy](#))

ULT

18 because of the Chaldeans. They were afraid of them since Ishmael son of Nethaniah had killed Gedaliah son of Ahikam, whom the king of Babylon had put in charge of the land.

Jeremiah 42

Jeremiah 42 General Notes

Special concepts in this chapter

Life in Babylon

The remaining army commanders, who scattered after the Babylonian victory, asked Jeremiah to ask Yahweh about where they should go. Yahweh encouraged them to go to Babylon because they would soon return to the Promised Land. They would be punished if they went to Egypt or anywhere else. (See: [Promised Land](#))

Jeremiah 42:1

Johanan ... Kareah

See how you translated these men's names in [Jeremiah 40:13](#). (See: [How to Translate Names](#))

Jezaniah ... Hoshaiiah

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

ULT

¹ Then all the army commanders and Johanan son of Kareah, Jezaniah son of Hoshaiiah, and all the people from the least to the greatest approached Jeremiah the prophet.

all the people from the least to the greatest

This is a way to refer to people from every social status. Here “least” and “greatest” represent those who are least important and those who are most important. Alternate translation: “all the people from every social status” or “all the people, including the least important and the most important people” (See: [Merism](#))

all the people

Most likely not every individual in the town went. The word “all” is a generalization that means very many people went. Alternate translation: “many other people” (See: [Hyperbole](#))

Jeremiah 42:2

Let our pleas come before you

“Let us present our urgent request to you.” The abstract noun “pleas” can be stated as a verb. Alternate translation: “Listen as we plead with you” (See: [Abstract Nouns](#))

ULT

² They said to him, “Let our pleas come before you. Pray for us to Yahweh your God for these people who remain since we are so few in number, as you see.

Jeremiah 42:3

(There are no notes for this verse.)

ULT

³ Ask Yahweh your God to tell us the way we should go and what we should do.”

Jeremiah 42:4

Look

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

I will keep nothing back from you

The phrase “keep nothing back from you” is an idiom that means to tell someone everything. This can be stated in positive form.

Alternate translation: “I will tell you everything the Lord tells me”
(See: [Idiom](#) and [Active or Passive](#))

ULT

⁴ So Jeremiah the prophet said to them, “I have heard you. Look, I will pray to Yahweh your God as you have requested. Whatever Yahweh answers, I will tell you. I will keep nothing back from you.”

Jeremiah 42:5

May Yahweh be

This is a way of beginning an oath. Alternate translation: “We ask Yahweh to be” or “Yahweh will be”

true and faithful

Here these words share similar meanings. They describe Yahweh as a witness whom no one will be able to contradict. Alternate translation: “trustworthy” (See: [Doublet](#))

ULT

⁵ They said to Jeremiah, “May Yahweh be a true and faithful witness against us, if we do not do everything that Yahweh your God tells us to do.”

Jeremiah 42:6

Whether it is good or if it is bad

The people mention both extremes to emphasize that they will obey no matter what Yahweh's answer is. Alternate translation: "Whatever he answers" (See: [Merism](#))

the voice of Yahweh our God

Here "voice" represents what Yahweh says. Alternate translation: "what Yahweh our God says" or "we will obey Yahweh our God" (See: [Metonymy](#))

ULT

⁶ Whether it is good or if it is bad, we will obey the voice of Yahweh our God, to whom we are sending you, so that it may be well with us when we obey the voice of Yahweh our God."

Jeremiah 42:7

the word of Yahweh came to Jeremiah

This idiom is used to announce that God gave messages to Jeremiah. See how you translated a similar phrase in [Jeremiah 1:2](#). Alternate translation: “Yahweh gave messages to Jeremiah” or “Yahweh spoke to Jeremiah” (See: [Idiom](#))

ULT

⁷ At the end of ten days, the word of Yahweh came to Jeremiah.

Jeremiah 42:8

to all the people from the least to the greatest

This is a way to refer to people from every social status. Here “least” and “greatest” represent those who are least important and those who are most important. See how you translated this in [Jeremiah 42:1](#). Alternate translation: “to all the people from every social status” or “to all the people, including the least important and the most important people” (See: [Merism](#))

ULT

⁸ So Jeremiah called to Johanan son of Kareah and all the army commanders with him, and to all the people from the least to the greatest.

to all the people

Most likely not every individual in the town went. The word “all” is a generalization that means very many people went. Alternate translation: “to many other people” (See: [Hyperbole](#))

Jeremiah 42:9

(There are no notes for this verse.)

ULT

⁹ Then he said to them, “This is what Yahweh, the God of Israel—to whom you sent me so I might lay your pleas before him—says,

Jeremiah 42:10

I will build you and not tear you down

Yahweh refers to the people of Israel like a wall that can be built or torn down. Alternate translation: "I will cause you to prosper and I will not destroy you" (See: [Metaphor](#))

I will plant you and not pull you up

Yahweh uses another example to express how he will cause the people of Israel to prosper and not be destroyed. He refers to them like a plant in the same way he referred to them as a wall. (See: [Metaphor](#) and [Parallelism](#))

I will turn back the disaster that I have brought on you

A disaster is here spoken of as something that a person can put onto someone else. Alternate translation: "I will prevent the disaster that I have caused to happen to you" (See: [Metaphor](#))

ULT

10 'If you go back and live in this land, then I will build you and not tear you down; I will plant you and not pull you up, for I will turn back the disaster that I have brought on you.

Jeremiah 42:11

to save you and rescue you

The words “save” and “rescue” mean the same thing and emphasize that Yahweh will, indeed, save. Alternate translation: “to save you completely” (See: [Doublet](#))

rescue you from his hand

Here the word “hand” refers to power and authority. Alternate translation: “rescue you from his power” or “rescue you from him” (See: [Metonymy](#))

ULT

11 Do not fear the king of Babylon, whom you are fearing. Do not fear him —this is Yahweh’s declaration—since I am with you to save you and rescue you from his hand.

Jeremiah 42:12

(There are no notes for this verse.)

ULT

¹² For I will give you mercy. I will have compassion on you, and I will bring you back to your land.

Jeremiah 42:13

if you do not listen to my voice, the voice of Yahweh your God

Here “voice” represents a command. To not obey is like the people did not hear Yahweh’s command. Alternate translation: “if you do not obey my commands, even though I am Yahweh, your God” (See: [Metonymy](#))

ULT

¹³ But suppose that you say, “We will not stay in this land”—if you do not listen to my voice, the voice of Yahweh your God.

Jeremiah 42:14

where we will not see any war, where we will not hear the sound of the trumpet

Both of these phrases describe being at war by the ability to see or hear it. Alternate translation: “where we will not experience the hardships of war” (See: [Parallelism](#))

we will not go hungry for food

Being hungry for food is used to describe famine. (See: [Metonymy](#))

ULT

¹⁴ Suppose that you say, “No! We will go to the land of Egypt, where we will not see any war, where we will not hear the sound of the trumpet, and we will not go hungry for food. We will live there.”

Jeremiah 42:15

Now

The word “now” does not mean “at this moment,” but is used to draw attention to the important point that follows.

to this word of Yahweh

“to Yahweh’s message”

Yahweh of hosts ... says this

Jeremiah often uses these words to introduce an important message from Yahweh. See how you translated this in [Jeremiah 6:6](#).

set out to go to

“depart for” or “leave for”

ULT

15 Now listen to this word of Yahweh, you remnant of Judah. Yahweh of hosts, God of Israel, says this, ‘If you actually set out to go to Egypt, to go and live there,

Jeremiah 42:16

the sword that you fear will overtake you

Here “the sword” represents war. The Israelites experiencing war even if they go to Egypt is spoken of as if the sword would chase after the people catch up with them. Alternate translation: “you will experience the terrible results of war” (See: [Metonymy](#) and [Personification](#))

The famine that you are worrying about will pursue you to Egypt

The Israelites experiencing famine even in Egypt is spoken of as if famine would chase after them. Alternate translation: “You worry about famine in Israel but if you go to Egypt you will suffer from famine there” (See: [Personification](#))

ULT

16 then the sword that you fear will overtake you there in the land of Egypt. The famine that you are worrying about will pursue you to Egypt, and you will die there.

Jeremiah 42:17

all the men who set out

The men are used to refer to all the people because they are the leaders in their families. Alternate translation: “anyone who sets out” (See: [Synecdoche](#) and [When Masculine Words Include Women](#))

the disaster that I will bring on them

Causing a disaster is spoken of as if disaster were an object that is brought to a person. Alternate translation: “the disaster that I will cause to happen to them” (See: [Metaphor](#))

ULT

17 So it will happen that all the men who set out to go to Egypt to live there will die by sword, famine, or plague. There will be no survivor of them, no one to escape the disaster that I will bring on them.

Jeremiah 42:18

Yahweh of hosts ... says this

Jeremiah often uses these words to introduce an important message from Yahweh. See how you translated this in [Jeremiah 6:6](#).

my wrath and my fury were poured out on the inhabitants of Jerusalem

Yahweh punishing people because he is very angry is spoken of as if wrath and fury were liquids that he poured out on the people. This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "I became very angry and punished the people of Jerusalem" (See: [Metaphor](#) and [Active or Passive](#))

my wrath and my fury

The words "wrath" and "fury" mean basically the same thing. Together they emphasize the intensity of his wrath. Alternate translation: "my terrible wrath" (See: [Doublet](#))

in the same way my fury will be poured out on you

Yahweh punishing people because he is very angry is spoken of as if fury were a liquid that he pours out on the people. This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "I will become very angry and punish you" (See: [Metaphor](#) and [Active or Passive](#))

You will become an object of cursing and a horror, an object for speaking curses, and something dishonorable

All of these statements mean basically the same thing and emphasize how badly the nations will treat the people of Judah after Yahweh punishes them. Alternate translation: "People will be terrified when they see what has happened to you. They will curse and mock you" (See: [Parallelism](#))

ULT

18 For Yahweh of hosts, God of Israel, says this: Just as my wrath and my fury were poured out on the inhabitants of Jerusalem, in the same way my fury will be poured out on you if you go to Egypt. You will become an object of cursing and a horror, an object for speaking curses, and something dishonorable, and you will not see this place again."

Jeremiah 42:19

I have been a witness against you

The phrase “been a witness against” is an idiom that means to give a warning. Alternate translation: “I have warned you” (See: [Idiom](#))

ULT

19 Then Jeremiah said, “Yahweh has spoken concerning you—the remnant of Judah. Do not go to Egypt! You certainly know that I have been a witness against you today.”

Jeremiah 42:20

we will carry it out

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

ULT

20 For you fatally deceived yourselves when you sent me to Yahweh your God and said, ‘Pray to Yahweh our God for us. Everything that Yahweh our God says, tell us, and we will carry it out.’

Jeremiah 42:21

you have not listened

“you have not paid attention”

to the voice of Yahweh your God

Here “voice” represents what Yahweh commanded. Alternate translation: “to what Yahweh your God commanded” (See: [Metonymy](#))

ULT

²¹ For I have reported to you today, but you have not listened to the voice of Yahweh your God or to anything about which he sent me to you.

Jeremiah 42:22

now

The word “now” does not mean “at this moment,” but is used to draw attention to the important point that follows.

you will die by sword

Here “sword” represents war. Alternate translation: “you will die in warfare” (See: [Metonymy](#))

in the place where you desired to go to live

They desired to live in Egypt. This can be stated explicitly. Alternate translation: “in Egypt, where you thought you would be safe” (See: [Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information](#))

ULT

22 So now, you should certainly know that you will die by sword, famine, and plague in the place where you desired to go to live.”

Jeremiah 43

Jeremiah 43 General Notes

Special concepts in this chapter

They did not believe Jeremiah

After Jeremiah prophesied the destruction of Judah, the people did not believe him. Judah was conquered and destroyed. Even after this, the people did not believe they would be safe in Babylon as Jeremiah prophesied. This is shocking. (See: [prophet](#), [prophecy](#), [prophesy](#), [seer](#), [prophetess](#) and [believe](#), [believer](#), [belief](#), [unbeliever](#), [unbelief](#))

Babylon invades Egypt

Babylon is described as invading part of Egypt. This would have been unthinkable for the people. It would have gotten their attention.

Other possible translation issues in this chapter

Symbolic actions

Jeremiah's burial of the stones was intended to be a symbolic action for the people. This was supposed to teach the people a lesson. (See: [Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information](#))

Jeremiah 43:1

It happened that

This phrase is used here to mark the beginning of a new part of the story. If your language has a way for doing this, you could consider using it here.

ULT

¹ It happened that Jeremiah finished proclaiming to all the people all the words of Yahweh their God that Yahweh their God had told him to say.

Jeremiah 43:2

Azariah

This could mean: (1) this is another name for Jezaniah in [Jeremiah 42:1](#) or (2) this is a different son of Hoshaiiah. (See: [How to Translate Names](#))

Hoshaiiah

See how you translated this man's name in [Jeremiah 42:1](#). (See: [How to Translate Names](#))

Johanan ... Kareah

See how you translated these men's names in [Jeremiah 40:13](#). (See: [How to Translate Names](#))

ULT

² Azariah son of Hoshaiiah, Johanan son of Kareah, and all the arrogant men said to Jeremiah, "You are telling lies. Yahweh our God has not sent you to say, 'Do not go to Egypt to live there.'"

Jeremiah 43:3

inciting

to cause someone to act in a harmful or violent way

to deliver us into the hand of the Chaldeans

Here “hand” represents power or control. Alternate translation: “to give us over to the Chaldeans” (See: [Metonymy](#))

ULT

³ For Baruch son of Neriah is inciting you against us to deliver us into the hand of the Chaldeans, for you to cause our death and to make us captives in Babylon.”

for you to cause our death and to make us captives in Babylon

The abstract noun “death” can be stated as “to kill.” Alternate translation: “for you to cause the Chaldeans to either kill us or to take us as captives to Babylon” (See: [Abstract Nouns](#))

Jeremiah 43:4

all the people

This probably did not include every individual there. The word “all” is a generalization that means many people. Alternate translation: “many of the people” (See: [Hyperbole](#))

refused to listen to Yahweh’s voice

Here “voice” represents commands. And here “to listen” means “to obey.” Alternate translation: “would not obey Yahweh’s command” (See: [Metonymy](#))

ULT

⁴ So Johanan son of Kareah, all the princes of the army, and all the people refused to listen to Yahweh’s voice to live in the land of Judah.

Jeremiah 43:5

where they had been scattered

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: “where Yahweh had scattered them” (See: [Active or Passive](#))

ULT

⁵ Johanan son of Kareah and all the army commanders took away all the remnant of Judah who had returned from all the nations where they had been scattered to live in the land of Judah.

Jeremiah 43:6

Nebuzaradan

See how you translated this man's name in [Jeremiah 39:9](#). (See: [How to Translate Names](#))

Gedaliah ... Ahikam ... Shaphan

See how you translated these men's names in [Jeremiah 39:14](#). (See: [How to Translate Names](#))

ULT

6 They took the men and women, the children and the king's daughters, and every person whom Nebuzaradan, the commander of the king's bodyguards, had let remain with Gedaliah son of Ahikam son of Shaphan. They also took Jeremiah the prophet and Baruch son of Neriah.

Jeremiah 43:7

Tahpanhes

See how you translated the name of this city in [Jeremiah 2:16](#). (See: [How to Translate Names](#))

ULT

⁷ They went to the land of Egypt, to Tahpanhes, because they did not listen to Yahweh's voice.

Jeremiah 43:8

the word of Yahweh came to Jeremiah in Tahpanhes, saying,

The idiom “the word of Yahweh came to” is used to introduce a special message from God. See how you translated a similar phrase in [Jeremiah 1:4](#). Alternate translation: “Yahweh gave a message to Jeremiah in Tahpanhes. He said,” or “Yahweh spoke this message to Jeremiah in Tahpanehs:” (See: [Idiom](#))

ULT

⁸ So the word of Yahweh came to Jeremiah in Tahpanhes, saying,

Jeremiah 43:9

in the sight of the people of Judah

The abstract noun “sight” can be expressed with the verb “watching.” Alternate translation: “while the people of Judah are watching” (See: [Abstract Nouns](#))

mortar

a substance used to hold bricks together

to Pharaoh’s house

“to Pharaoh’s royal building”

ULT

⁹ “Take some large stones in your hand, and, in the sight of the people of Judah, hide them in the mortar in the pavement at the entrance to Pharaoh’s house in Tahpanhes.”

Jeremiah 43:10

Yahweh of hosts ... says this

Jeremiah often uses these words to introduce an important message from Yahweh. See how you translated this in [Jeremiah 6:6](#).

I will place his throne over these stones that you, Jeremiah, have buried. Nebuchadnezzar will place his pavilion over them

Both the king's "throne" and "pavilion" are used to refer to his royal authority. Alternate translation: "I will cause him to rule as king over the people of Egypt. He will place his throne and pavilion over these stones you have buried" (See: [Metonymy](#))

pavilion

a very large tent

ULT

10 Then say to them, "Yahweh of hosts, God of Israel, says this, 'See, I am about to send messengers to take Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon as my servant. I will place his throne over these stones that you, Jeremiah, have buried. Nebuchadnezzar will place his pavilion over them.'

Jeremiah 43:11

General Information:

Yahweh continues telling his message.

he will come

Here “he” refers to Nebuchadnezzar who represents his whole army.
Alternate translation: “Nebuchadnezzar’s army will come” (See: [Metonymy](#))

ULT

11 For he will come and attack the land of Egypt. Anyone who is assigned to death will be given to death. Anyone who is assigned to captivity will be taken captive. Anyone who is assigned to the sword will be given to the sword.

Anyone who is assigned to death will be given to death

The abstract noun “death” can be stated as “die.” This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: “Everyone will die whom I have decided must die” (See: [Active or Passive](#))

Anyone who is assigned to captivity will be taken captive

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: “The Babylonians will take everyone captive whom I have decided must go into captivity” (See: [Active or Passive](#))

Anyone who is assigned to the sword will be given to the sword

Here “sword” represents battle. This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: “Everyone will die in battle whom I have decided will die in battle” (See: [Metonymy](#) and [Active or Passive](#))

Jeremiah 43:12

Then I will light a fire

Here “I” refers to Yahweh. This represents Yahweh sending the Babylonian army to light a fire. Alternate translation: “Then I will cause the Babylonian army to light a fire” (See: [Metonymy](#))

Nebuchadnezzar will ... He will

Here Nebuchadnezzar represents his army. Alternate translation: “Nebuchadnezzar’s army will ... They will” (See: [Metonymy](#))

burn them or capture them

“burn the Egyptian idols or take them”

He will clean out the land of Egypt just as shepherds clean vermin off their clothes

Taking or destroying everything in Egypt is compared to how a shepherd carefully cleans off his clothes. Alternate translation: “He will take or destroy everything valuable in Egypt just as a shepherd is careful to get every insect off of his clothes” (See: [Simile](#))

ULT

12 Then I will light a fire in the temples of Egypt’s gods. Nebuchadnezzar will burn them or capture them. He will clean out the land of Egypt just as shepherds clean vermin off their clothes. He will go out from that place in victory. ^[1]

Jeremiah 43:13

Heliopolis

This is the name of a city. The name means “city of the sun.” In this city was a temple where they worshiped a sun god. (See: [How to Translate Names](#) and [Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information](#))

ULT

13 He will break the stone pillars at Heliopolis in the land of Egypt. He will burn the temples of Egypt's gods.’”

Jeremiah 44

Jeremiah 44 General Notes

Important figures of speech in this chapter

Idiom

The people called Ashtoreth the goddess of the Canaanites, "the queen of heaven." (See: [Idiom](#) and [prophet, prophecy, prophesy, seer, prophetess](#))

Jeremiah 44:1

The word came to Jeremiah

It is implied that the word that came to Jeremiah was from Yahweh. This idiom is used to introduce a special message from God. See how you translated a similar phrase in [Jeremiah 7:1](#). Alternate translation: “This is the message that Yahweh gave to Jeremiah” or “This is the message that Yahweh spoke to Jeremiah” (See: [Idiom](#))

ULT

¹ The word came to Jeremiah concerning all the Judeans who lived in the land of Egypt, the ones staying in Migdol, Tahpanhes, Memphis, and in Upper Egypt:

Migdol

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

Tahpanhes ... Memphis

Translate the names of these cities as you did in [Jeremiah 2:16](#). (See: [How to Translate Names](#))

in Upper Egypt

This refers to the southern region of Egypt. It is sometime called “Pathros.”

Jeremiah 44:2

Yahweh of hosts ... says

Jeremiah often uses these words to introduce an important message from Yahweh. See how you translated a similar phrase in [Jeremiah 6:6](#).

You yourselves have seen

The word “yourselves” is used for emphasis to specify the people of Judea who live in the land of Egypt. (See: [Reflexive Pronouns](#))

ULT

2 “Yahweh of hosts, God of Israel, says, ‘You yourselves have seen all the disasters that I brought on Jerusalem and all the cities of Judah. See, they are ruins today. There is no one to live in them.’

all the disasters that I brought on Jerusalem and all the cities of Judah

Causing disasters is spoken of as if disasters were an object that can be put on something. Alternate translation: “all the disaster that I caused to happen to Jerusalem and all the cities of Judah” (See: [Metaphor](#))

See

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

Jeremiah 44:3

they did to offend me

“the people of Jerusalem and all the cities of Judah did to offend me”

they themselves

The word “themselves” is used for emphasis to specify the people of Jerusalem and the other cities of Judah. Alternate translation: “the people from the ruined cities” (See: [Reflexive Pronouns](#))

ULT

³ This is because of the wicked things they did to offend me by going to burn incense and to worship other gods. These were gods that neither they themselves, nor you, nor your ancestors knew.’

Jeremiah 44:4

So I repeatedly sent

The word "I" refers to Yahweh.

ULT

⁴ So I repeatedly sent all of my servants the prophets to them. I sent them to say, 'Stop doing these abominable things that I hate.'

Jeremiah 44:5

or turn from their wickedness in burning incense to other gods

To stop doing something is spoken of as if it were physically turning away from something. Alternate translation: “or to stop behaving wickedly by burning incense to other gods” (See: [Metaphor](#))

ULT

⁵ But they did not listen. They refused to pay attention or turn from their wickedness in burning incense to other gods.

Jeremiah 44:6

my fury and my wrath were poured out

Becoming angry and punishing people is spoken of as if fury and wrath were liquids there could be poured on people. This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "I became very angry and punished them" (See: [Metaphor](#) and [Active or Passive](#))

my fury and my wrath

The words "fury" and "wrath" mean basically the same thing and emphasize the intensity of his wrath. Alternate translation: "my terrible wrath" (See: [Doublet](#))

kindled a fire

Yahweh becoming angry and punishing the people of Judah is spoken of as his fury and wrath were a fire. Alternate translation: "my fury and wrath were like a fire" or "my punishment was like a fire" (See: [Metaphor](#))

they became ruins and devastations

The words "ruins" and "devastations" mean basically the same thing. Together they emphasize the complete devastation of Judah and Jerusalem. Alternate translation: "they became completely devastated" (See: [Doublet](#))

as at this present day

This refers to the current time at which Yahweh was speaking this message.

ULT

⁶ So my fury and my wrath were poured out and kindled a fire in the cities of Judah and the streets of Jerusalem. So they became ruins and devastations, as at this present day.'

Jeremiah 44:7

Why are you doing ... yourselves? Why are you causing ... and babies?

Yahweh uses these questions to rebuke the people for doing things that cause him to punish them. Alternate translation: "You are doing ... yourselves. You are causing ... and babies." (See: [Rhetorical Question](#))

Why are you doing great wickedness against yourselves?

The abstract noun "wickedness" can be stated as "wicked." Alternate translation: "Why are you doing these wicked things that harm yourselves?" or "You are doing wicked things that cause terrible things to happen to you." (See: [Abstract Nouns](#))

Why are you causing yourselves to be cut off from among Judah ... and babies?

Being separated from the people of Judah is spoken of as if the people are cut off from Judah the way a person may cut off a branch from a vine or cut off a piece of cloth. This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "Why are you causing me to remove you from the people of Judah ... and babies?" or "You are causing me to remove you from the people of Judah ... and babies." (See: [Metaphor](#) and [Active or Passive](#))

ULT

⁷ So now Yahweh, the God of hosts and the God of Israel, says this, 'Why are you doing great wickedness against yourselves? Why are you causing yourselves to be cut off from among Judah—men and women, children and babies? No remnant of you will be left.'

Jeremiah 44:8

By your wickedness you have offended me with the deeds of your hands

The abstract noun “wickedness” represents actions that are “wicked.” Here “hand” represents the whole person. Alternate translation: “You have offended me with the wicked things you have done” (See: [Abstract Nouns](#) and [Synecdoche](#))

You have gone there so that ... so that

“The result of going to Egypt is that ... and that”

you will be destroyed

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: “you will cause me to destroy you” or “you will destroy yourselves” (See: [Active or Passive](#))

you will be a curse and a reproach among all the nations of the earth

Here “nations” represent the people. Alternate translation: “all the people of all the nations of the earth will curse you and hate you” (See: [Metonymy](#))

ULT

⁸ By your wickedness you have offended me with the deeds of your hands, by burning incense to other gods in the land of Egypt, where you have gone to live. You have gone there so that you will be destroyed, so that you will be a curse and a reproach among all the nations of the earth.

Jeremiah 44:9

Have you forgotten the wickedness committed by your ancestors and the wickedness committed by the kings of Judah and their wives?

Yahweh rebukes the people for not thinking about the wicked behavior of their ancestors and how Yahweh punished them. This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "Think about what happened to your ancestors and the kings of Judah and their wives when they did wicked things." (See: [Rhetorical Question](#) and [Active or Passive](#))

ULT

⁹ Have you forgotten the wickedness committed by your ancestors and the wickedness committed by the kings of Judah and their wives? Have you forgotten the evil committed by yourselves and your wives in the land of Judah and the streets of Jerusalem?

Have you forgotten the evil committed by yourselves and your wives in the land of Judah and the streets of Jerusalem?

Yahweh rebukes the people for not thinking about their own wicked behavior and how Yahweh punished them. This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "Think about what happened to you and your wives when you did evil things in the land Judah and the streets of Jerusalem." (See: [Rhetorical Question](#) and [Active or Passive](#))

the streets of Jerusalem

Jerusalem is referred to by the part of the city where people walk. This means the people did evil things in public places. Alternate translation: "Jerusalem" or "the public places of Jerusalem" (See: [Synecdoche](#))

Jeremiah 44:10

they still are not humbled

“the people of Judah are still not humble.” Yahweh is still speaking to the people of Judah, so this can be stated in second person.

Alternate translation: “you are still not humble” (See: [First, Second or Third Person](#))

nor do they walk in them

Obedying the laws is spoken of as if it were walking in the laws. Alternate translation: “nor do they obey them” or “nor do you obey them” (See: [Metaphor](#))

ULT

10 To this day, they still are not humbled. They do not honor my law or decrees that I placed before them and their ancestors, nor do they walk in them.'

Jeremiah 44:11

Yahweh of hosts ... says this

Jeremiah often uses these words to introduce an important message from Yahweh. See how you translated this in [Jeremiah 6:6](#).

I am about to set my face against you

This idiom means he “firmly decided.” See how you translated a similar phrase in [Jeremiah 21:10](#). Alternate translation: “I have made up my mind to oppose you” (See: [Idiom](#))

set my face against

“stare angrily at”

to bring disaster to you

Causing disaster to happen is spoken of as if disaster were an object that can be brought to someone. Alternate translation: “to cause disaster to happen to you” (See: [Metaphor](#))

ULT

11 Therefore Yahweh of hosts, God of Israel, says this, ‘See, I am about to set my face against you to bring disaster to you and to destroy all of Judah.’

Jeremiah 44:12

They will fall by sword and famine

Here “fall” means to die. And “sword” represents the enemies carrying weapons. Alternate translation: “Enemies will kill some of them and others will die of hunger” (See: [Idiom](#) and [Metonymy](#))

From the least to the greatest

This is a way to refer to people from every social status. Here “least” and “greatest” represent those who are least important and those who are most important. Alternate translation: “all the people from every social status” or “all the people, including the least important and the most important people” (See: [Merism](#))

ULT

12 For I will take the remnant of Judah that has set out to go to the land of Egypt to live there. I will do this so that they will all perish in the land of Egypt. They will fall by sword and famine. From the least to the greatest they will perish by sword and famine. They will die and will become an object of swearing, cursing, reproaching, and a horrible thing.

will become an object of swearing, cursing, reproaching, and a horrible thing

“people will be horrified because of what happened to the people of Judah, and people will mock and curse them”

Jeremiah 44:13

I punished Jerusalem

Here “Jerusalem” represents the people. Alternate translation: “I punished the people of Jerusalem” (See: [Metonymy](#))

with the sword, with famine, and with the plague

Here “sword” represents enemies carrying weapons. Alternate translation: “by causing enemies to kill some of them, others to starve to death, and others to die because of disease” (See: [Metonymy](#))

ULT

13 For I will punish the people inhabiting the land of Egypt just as I punished Jerusalem with the sword, with famine, and with the plague,

Jeremiah 44:14

(There are no notes for this verse.)

ULT

¹⁴ so that none of the remnant of Judah who have gone to live in the land of Egypt will escape or survive or return to the land of Judah, to which they desire to return and live; and none of them will return except a few who escaped from there.'"

Jeremiah 44:15

in the great assembly

“in the large crowd”

Lower ... Egypt

“Lower Egypt” refers to the northern region of Egypt.

Upper Egypt

This refers to the southern region of Egypt. It is sometime called “Pathros.”

ULT

15 Then all the men who knew that their wives were burning incense to other gods, and all the women who were in the great assembly, and all the people who were living in Lower and Upper Egypt, answered Jeremiah.

Jeremiah 44:16

About the word that you have told us in Yahweh's name—we will not listen to you

Here “in Yahweh’s name” means “in Yahweh’s authority” or “as Yahweh’s representative.” Alternate translation: “We will not obey this message that you say Yahweh told you to tell us” (See: [Metonymy](#))

ULT

¹⁶ They said, “About the word that you have told us in Yahweh’s name—we will not listen to you.”

Jeremiah 44:17

queen of heaven

This a title of a false goddess that the people of Judah worshiped. This goddess is also called “Asherah.” (See: [Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information](#))

the streets of Jerusalem

Here “streets” represent the public places in Jerusalem. Alternate translation: “in the public places of Jerusalem” or “in Jerusalem” (See: [Synecdoche](#))

ULT

17 For we will certainly do all the things that we said we would do—burn incense to the queen of heaven and pour out drink offerings to her just as we, our ancestors, our kings, and our leaders did in the cities of Judah and the streets of Jerusalem. Then we will be filled with food and will prosper, without experiencing any disaster.

Then we will be filled with food and will prosper, without experiencing any disaster

The people of Judah thought they would prosper because the queen of heaven would bless them if they worshiped her. (See: [Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information](#))

Then we will be filled with food

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: “Then we will have plenty of food” (See: [Active or Passive](#))

Jeremiah 44:18

General Information:

The remnant of the people living in Egypt continue to speak. Beginning in 44:19, the women address Jeremiah.

were dying by sword and famine

Here “sword” represents enemies carrying weapons. Alternate translation: “enemy soldiers were killing some of us and some of us were dying of hunger” (See: [Metonymy](#))

ULT

18 When we refrained from doing these things, not offering incense to the queen of heaven and not pouring out drink offerings to her, we were all suffering poverty and were dying by sword and famine.”

Jeremiah 44:19

was it against our husbands that we did these things ... to her?

The women were claiming to be innocent because their husband approved of what they were doing. Alternate translation: "our husbands knew what we were doing ... to her." (See: [Rhetorical Question](#))

cakes in her image

These were probably small cakes shaped like stars or the crescent moon.

ULT

¹⁹ The women said, "When we were making incense offerings before the queen of heaven and pouring out drink offerings to her, was it against our husbands that we did these things, making cakes in her image and pouring out drink offerings to her?"

Jeremiah 44:20

(There are no notes for this verse.)

ULT

²⁰ Then Jeremiah said to all the people
—to the men and women, and all the
people who answered him—he
proclaimed and said,

Jeremiah 44:21

Did not Yahweh remember ... of the land?

Jeremiah uses a question to scold the people. Alternate translation: "Yahweh certainly knew about ... of the land." (See: [Rhetorical Question](#))

For Yahweh calls this to mind; it comes to his thoughts

Both of these phrases mean the same thing. They emphasize that Yahweh knows that the people were worshiping false gods. Alternate translation: "Yes, Yahweh knows what you were doing, and he does not forget" (See: [Parallelism](#))

ULT

21 "Did not Yahweh remember the incense that you burned in the cities of Judah and the streets of Jerusalem—you and your ancestors, your kings and leaders, and the people of the land? For Yahweh calls this to mind; it comes to his thoughts.

Jeremiah 44:22

was no longer able to bear it

“was no longer able to tolerate it”

because of the abominations that you did

The abstract noun “abominations” can be stated as “things he hated.” Alternate translation: “because you did things that he hated” (See: [Abstract Nouns](#))

ULT

²² Then he was no longer able to bear it because of your wicked practices, because of the abominations that you did. Then your land became a desolation, a horror, and a curse so there was no longer an inhabitant as at this present day.

Then your land became a desolation, a horror, and a curse so there was no longer an inhabitant as at this present day

This can be restated to remove the abstract nouns “a desolation,” “a horror,” and “a curse.” Alternate translation: “Then Yahweh caused it so that no one lives in the land. He made it a desolate and horrifying place. People use its name to curse others. And this is how it is even to this day” (See: [Abstract Nouns](#))

Jeremiah 44:23

burned incense

Why people burn incense can be stated clearly. Alternate translation: “burned incense to false gods” (See: [Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information](#))

you would not listen to his voice

Here “voice” refers to Yahweh’s commands. Alternate translation: “you would not obey his commands” (See: [Metonymy](#))

ULT

23 Because you burned incense and sinned against Yahweh, and because you would not listen to his voice, his law, his statutes, or his covenant decrees, this disaster against you has happened as at this present day.”

Jeremiah 44:24

all of Judah

Here “Judah” represents the people. Alternate translation: “all the people of Judah” (See: [Metonymy](#))

ULT

24 Then Jeremiah said to all the people and all the women, “Hear the word of Yahweh, all of Judah who are in the land of Egypt.

Jeremiah 44:25

Yahweh of hosts ... says this

Jeremiah often uses these words to introduce an important message from Yahweh. See how you translated this in [Jeremiah 6:6](#).

have said with your mouths and carried out with your hands what you said

Here “mouths” and “hands” represent the whole person. Alternate translation: “have done what you promised to do when you said” (See: [Synecdoche](#))

carry out the vows

“fulfill the vows” or “complete the vows”

Now fulfill your vows; carry them out

This is an ironic statement. Yahweh does not really want them to fulfill their vow to a false goddess. Yahweh knows they will not listen to him so he tells them to go ahead and do what they want. Alternate translation: “Very well! If that is what you want to do, then go fulfill your vows and do what you promised to do” (See: [Irony](#))

Now

The word “now” does not mean “at this moment,” but is used to draw attention to the important point that follows.

ULT

²⁵ Yahweh of hosts, God of Israel, says this, ‘You and your wives both have said with your mouths and carried out with your hands what you said, “We will certainly carry out the vows that we made to worship the queen of heaven, to pour out drink offerings to her.” Now fulfill your vows; carry them out.’

Jeremiah 44:26

all of Judah

Here “Judah” represents the people. Alternate translation: “all the people of Judah” (See: [Metonymy](#))

My name will no longer be called upon by the mouths of any of the men of Judah in all the land of Egypt

Here “name” represents the whole being of Yahweh. And, “mouth” represents the whole person. This can be stated in active form.

Alternate translation: “No person of Judah living in the land of Egypt will ever call upon me again” (See: [Metonymy](#) and [Synecdoche](#) and [Active or Passive](#))

As the Lord Yahweh lives

“as surely as the Lord Yahweh is alive.” The people use this expression to show that what they say next is certainly true. This is a way of making a solemn promise. See how you translated “As Yahweh lives” [Jeremiah 4:2](#). Alternate translation: “I solemnly swear” or “I solemnly swear by the Lord Yahweh” (See: [Idiom](#))

ULT

26 So then, hear the word of Yahweh, all of Judah who are staying in the land of Egypt, ‘See, I have sworn by my great name—says Yahweh. My name will no longer be called upon by the mouths of any of the men of Judah in all the land of Egypt, you who now say, “As the Lord Yahweh lives.”’

Jeremiah 44:27

Every person of Judah in the land of Egypt will perish by sword and famine until they are all finished

Here “Every person” is a generalization that means “very many people.” Also, “sword” represents enemies carrying weapons. Alternate translation: “Nearly every person of Judah in the land of Egypt will die. Enemies will kill many of them and many of them will starve to death until there is very few of them left” (See: [Hyperbole](#) and [Metonymy](#))

ULT

²⁷ See, I am watching over them for disaster and not for good. Every person of Judah in the land of Egypt will perish by sword and famine until they are all finished.

Jeremiah 44:28

Then the survivors of the sword

Here “sword” represents enemies carrying weapons. Alternate translation: “Then those whom the enemies do not kill” (See: [Metonymy](#))

ULT

28 Then the survivors of the sword will return from the land of Egypt to the land of Judah, only a small number of them. So all the remnant of Judah who went to the land of Egypt to live there will know whose word will stand—mine or theirs.

Jeremiah 44:29

I am setting against you

This is an idiom. Alternate translation: “I am opposed to you” (See: [Idiom](#))

my words will certainly attack you with disaster

Yahweh causing disaster on the people as he promised is spoken of as if his word would attack them. Alternate translation: “what I have said will happen and you will have a disaster” (See: [Personification](#))

ULT

²⁹ This will be the sign for you—this is Yahweh’s declaration—that I am setting against you in this place, so that you will know that my words will certainly attack you with disaster.’

Jeremiah 44:30

Look

“Listen” or “Pay attention”

I am about to give Pharaoh Hophra king of Egypt into the hand of his enemies and into the hand of those who seek to kill him

Here “hand” represents power or control. Alternate translation: “I will allow the enemies who want to kill Pharaoh Hophra, the king of Egypt, to defeat him” (See: [Metonymy](#))

Hophra

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

when I gave Zedekiah king of Judah into the hand of Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon, his enemy who sought his life

Here “hand” represents power or control. And, Nebuchadnezzar represents his whole army. The phrase “sought his life” is an idiom that means to want to kill someone. Alternate translation: “when I allowed the army of Nebuchadnezzar to defeat Zedekiah king of Judah” (See: [Metonymy](#) and [Idiom](#))

ULT

³⁰ Yahweh says this, ‘Look, I am about to give Pharaoh Hophra king of Egypt into the hand of his enemies and into the hand of those who seek to kill him. It will be the same as when I gave Zedekiah king of Judah into the hand of Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon, his enemy who sought his life.’”

Jeremiah 45

Jeremiah 45 General Notes

Structure and formatting

This chapter forms a break in the narrative sequence. It records prophecies that have already occurred. (See: [prophet](#), [prophecy](#), [prophesy](#), [seer](#), [prophetess](#))

Jeremiah 45:1

this was in the fourth year of Jehoiakim son of Josiah

This information can be placed at the beginning of 45:1 as in the UST.

in the fourth year of Jehoiakim

The words “of the rule” are understood. Alternate translation: “in the fourth year of the rule of Jehoiakim” (See: [Ellipsis](#))

fourth year

The word “fourth” is the ordinal form of the number four. (See: [Ordinal Numbers](#))

he said

“Jeremiah said to Baruch”

ULT

¹ This is the word that Jeremiah the prophet told Baruch son of Neriah. This happened when he wrote in a scroll these words at Jeremiah’s dictation—this was in the fourth year of Jehoiakim son of Josiah, king of Judah, and he said,

Jeremiah 45:2

(There are no notes for this verse.)

ULT

² “Yahweh, God of Israel, says this to you, Baruch:

Jeremiah 45:3

for Yahweh has added agony to my pain

“for I was already suffering and now Yahweh causes me to be sad as well”

My groaning has wearied me

The abstract noun “groaning” can be stated as “cry.” Alternate translation: “I am tired because I cry so much” (See: [Abstract Nouns](#))

ULT

³ You have said, ‘Woe is me, for Yahweh has added agony to my pain. My groaning has wearied me; I find no rest.’

Jeremiah 45:4

This is what you must say to him

Yahweh is telling Jeremiah what to say to Baruch.

ULT

⁴ This is what you must say to him:

‘Yahweh says this: See, what I built, I am now tearing down. What I planted, I am now pulling up—I will do this throughout all the earth.

Jeremiah 45:5

But are you hoping for great things for yourself?

Yahweh uses a question to state that he knows Baruch is hoping for others to treat him in a special way. Alternate translation: “I know you hope for great things for yourself.” or “I know you hope others will honor you.” (See: [Rhetorical Question](#))

For see

“For understand” or “Be aware”

your life as your plunder everywhere you will go

Allowing Baruch to escape and remain alive is spoken of as if his life were plunder that he would take after a battle. Alternate translation: “but wherever you go, I will protect you and allow you to live” (See: [Metaphor](#))

plunder

things stolen from a place by force

ULT

⁵ But are you hoping for great things for yourself? Do not hope for that. For see, disaster is coming on all humanity—this is Yahweh’s declaration—but I am giving you your life as your plunder everywhere you will go.”

Jeremiah 46

Jeremiah 46 General Notes

Structure and formatting

Some translations set each line of poetry farther to the right than the rest of the text to make it easier to read. The ULT does this with the poetry in 46:3-12, 14-24.

This begins a section where Jeremiah prophesies about other nations. (See: [prophet](#), [prophecy](#), [prophesy](#), [seer](#), [prophetess](#))

Special concepts in this chapter

Justice

Much of Jeremiah is concerned with Yahweh's punishment of Judah. Yahweh used Egypt to punish Judah. Because Yahweh is just, he is going to punish Egypt for their evil deeds as well. (See: [just](#), [justice](#), [unjust](#), [injustice](#), [justify](#), [justification](#) and [evil](#), [wicked](#), [unpleasant](#) and [work](#), [works](#), [deeds](#))

Other possible translation difficulties in this chapter

Battle preparations

Jeremiah commands the Egyptian army to prepare for battle, even though they will not be able to defend themselves. Their punishment has already been determined by Yahweh.

Jeremiah 46:1

General Information:

Jeremiah often wrote prophecy in the form of poetry. Hebrew poetry uses different kinds of parallelism. (See: [Poetry](#) and [Parallelism](#))

This is the word of Yahweh that came to Jeremiah

This idiom is used to introduce a special message from God. See how you translated this in [Jeremiah 14:1](#), and make any changes as needed. Alternate translation: “This is the message that Yahweh gave to Jeremiah” or “This is the message that Yahweh spoke to Jeremiah” (See: [Idiom](#))

ULT

¹ This is the word of Yahweh that came to Jeremiah the prophet concerning the nations.

Jeremiah 46:2

For Egypt

This phrase indicates this message is intended for the nation of Egypt.

Necho

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

Carchemish

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

that Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon

Here Nebuchadnezzar represents his army. Alternate translation: “that the army of Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon” (See: [Metonymy](#))

in the fourth year of Jehoiakim

This refers to the fourth year of Jehoiakim’s reign. This can be stated clearly. Alternate translation: “in the fourth year of the reign of Jehoiakim” (See: [Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information](#))

the fourth year

The word “fourth” is the ordinal form of “four.” (See: [Ordinal Numbers](#))

ULT

² For Egypt: “This is about the army of Pharaoh Necho, king of Egypt that was at Carchemish by the Euphrates river. This was the army that Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon defeated in the fourth year of Jehoiakim son of Josiah, king of Judah:

Jeremiah 46:3

(There are no notes for this verse.)

ULT

³ Get the small shields and the large shields ready, and go forward to fight.

Jeremiah 46:4

Put the harness on the horses; mount up on the horses

A “harness” is a set of straps placed on a horse so that it can pull a chariot. Here “mount up on the horses” means that the soldiers rode in the chariots that the horses were pulling.

helmets

A helmet is armor which protects the head in battle.

polish the spears

This phrase means to “sharpen” the spear.

ULT

⁴ Put the harness on the horses; mount up on the horses and take your stand with your helmets on; polish the spears and put on your armor.

Jeremiah 46:5

General Information:

Jeremiah's vision for Egypt continues.

What am I seeing here?

The word "I" here refer to Yahweh. Yahweh uses a question to introduce the vision and to draw attention to what he says next. This question can be translated as a statement. Alternate translation: "Look at what is happening here" (See: [Rhetorical Question](#))

ULT

⁵ What am I seeing here? They are filled with terror and are running away, for their soldiers are defeated. They are running for safety and are not looking back. Terror is all around—this is Yahweh's declaration—

They are filled with terror

The abstract noun "terror" can be stated as "terrified." Alternate translation: "The Egyptian soldiers are terrified" (See: [Abstract Nouns](#))

Jeremiah 46:6

the swift cannot run away, and the soldiers cannot escape

These two phrases share similar meanings and emphasize that no one, not even the strongest and fastest, can escape. The nominal adjective “the swift” can be stated as an adjective. Alternate translation: “even the swiftest soldier cannot escape” (See: [Doublet](#) and [Nominal Adjectives](#))

ULT

⁶ the swift cannot run away, and the soldiers cannot escape. They stumble in the north and fall beside the Euphrates River.

They stumble in the north and fall beside the Euphrates River

Both statements mean the same thing. Being and dying in battle is spoken of as if the soldiers stumble and fall. Alternate translation: “The Egyptian soldiers suffer defeat and die in the north by the Euphrates River” (See: [Parallelism](#) and [Metaphor](#))

Jeremiah 46:7

General Information:

Jeremiah continues quoting Yahweh's declaration to the nation of Egypt.

Who is this who rises like the Nile ... the rivers?

Yahweh uses a question to draw attention to what he is about to say concerning Egypt. This can be translated as a statement. Alternate translation: "Look at who rises like the Nile ... the rivers." (See: [Rhetorical Question](#))

ULT

⁷ Who is this who rises like the Nile,
whose waters toss up and down like the
rivers?

Jeremiah 46:8

Egypt rises like the Nile

The Nile river floods its banks once a year, covering the surrounding area with water. Yahweh compares the kingdom of Egypt to the Nile because the Egyptian people think they are mighty enough to destroy cities in all the lands. (See: [Simile](#))

ULT

⁸ Egypt rises like the Nile, like rivers of water that rise and fall. Egypt says, 'I will go up and I will cover the earth. I will destroy cities and their inhabitants.'

Egypt rises ... Egypt says ... I will

Here "Egypt" represents all the people of Egypt. Alternate translation: "The Egyptians rise ... The Egyptians say ... We will" (See: [Metonymy](#))

Jeremiah 46:9

Go up, horses. Be angry, you chariots

Here “horses” and “chariots” represent the soldiers who use horses and chariots in battle. The leaders of Egypt are ordering their soldiers to start the battle. Alternate translation: “Go up to battle, you soldiers on horses. Fight furiously, you soldiers in chariots” (See: [Metonymy](#))

ULT

⁹ Go up, horses. Be angry, you chariots. Let the soldiers go out, Cush and Put, men skillful with a shield, and Ludim, men skillful at bending their bows.'

Let the soldiers go out, Cush and Put, men skillful with a shield

This command can be addressed directly to the soldiers. What they were to go out for can be stated clearly. Alternate translation: “You soldiers from Cush and Put, who are skillful with your shields, go out to battle” (See: [Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information](#))

Cush ... Put

These are biblical names for the countries of Ethiopia and Libya. (See: [How to Translate Names](#))

Ludim, men skillful at bending their bows

The ideas of soldiers and going out to battle are understood from earlier in the sentence. They can be repeated. This command can also be addressed directly to the soldiers. Alternate translation: “you soldiers from Lud, who are skillful at bending your bows, go out to battle” (See: [Ellipsis](#))

Ludim

This is the name of the people group from the nation of Lud. Lud is the biblical name for Lydia. (See: [How to Translate Names](#))

skillful at bending their bows

The phrase “bend the bow” means to pull the string of the bow back with an arrow in order to shoot the arrow. Alternate translation: “skillful at shooting arrows from their bows” or “skillful with the bow and arrow” (See: [Idiom](#))

Jeremiah 46:10

General Information:

Jeremiah's quotation of Yahweh's declaration to the nation of Egypt continues.

That day

This phrase refers to the day the Egyptians lose the battle to the Babylonians.

for the Lord Yahweh of hosts, and he will avenge himself on his foes

Yahweh speaks of himself in third person. This can be stated in first person. Alternate translation: "for me, Lord Yahweh of hosts, and I will avenge myself on my foes" (See: [First, Second or Third Person](#))

The sword will devour and be satisfied. It will drink its fill of their blood

This speaks of Yahweh's sword as if it were devouring people and drinking blood. Both these phrases are saying similar thing and are combined to emphasize that there will be complete destruction. Alternate translation: "I will completely destroy my enemy. It will be like my sword devours them and gets drunk on their blood" (See: [Parallelism](#) and [Personification](#))

The sword will devour

Yahweh punishing and killing his enemies is spoken of as if he would use a sword to kill them. (See: [Metaphor](#))

For there will be a sacrifice

Yahweh avenging himself by causing the Egyptians to lose in battle against the Babylonians is spoken of as if the Egyptian army would be a sacrifice to Yahweh. Alternate translation: "For the Egyptians will be like a sacrifice" (See: [Metaphor](#))

ULT

10 That day will be the day of vengeance for the Lord Yahweh of hosts, and he will avenge himself on his foes. The sword will devour and be satisfied. It will drink its fill of their blood. For there will be a sacrifice to the Yahweh Lord of hosts in the northern land by the Euphrates River.

Jeremiah 46:11

General Information:

Yahweh finishes his declaration to Egypt.

Go up to Gilead and obtain medicine

Gilead was a region famous for having people skillful with medicine.

Yahweh is mocking the Egyptians by telling them to go get medicine, but he knows it will not help them. (See: [Irony](#))

virgin daughter of Egypt

The people of Egypt are spoken of as if they were the virgin daughter of Egypt. Alternate translation: “people of Egypt” (See: [Metaphor](#))

ULT

11 Go up to Gilead and obtain medicine, virgin daughter of Egypt. It is useless that you put much medicine on yourself. There is no cure for you.

Jeremiah 46:12

disgrace

This word means a condition of feeling ashamed or the loss of respect.

The earth is filled with your laments

Here “earth” is a metonym for the people of the earth and a generalization for the people who know what has happened to Egypt. All the people of the earth hearing the Egyptians crying is spoken of as if their laments filled the earth. Alternate translation: “All the people of the earth hear you crying” (See: [Metonymy](#) and [Hyperbole](#) and [Metaphor](#))

ULT

12 The nations have heard of your disgrace. The earth is filled with your laments, for soldier stumbles against soldier; both of them fall together.”

for soldier stumbles against soldier; both of them fall together

Soldiers dying in battle is spoken of as if they were stumbling and falling down. Alternate translation: “for your soldiers die in battle” (See: [Metaphor](#))

Jeremiah 46:13

when Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon

Here Nebuchadnezzar represents his army. Alternate translation: “when the army of Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon” (See: [Metonymy](#))

the land of Egypt

Here “land” represents the people. Alternate translation: “the people of Egypt” or “the Egyptians” (See: [Metonymy](#))

ULT

13 This is the word that Yahweh told Jeremiah the prophet when Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon came and attacked the land of Egypt:

Jeremiah 46:14

Migdol

Translate the name of this city as you did in [Jeremiah 44:1](#). (See: [How to Translate Names](#))

Memphis ... Tahpanhes

Translate the names of these cities as you did in [Jeremiah 2:16](#). (See: [How to Translate Names](#))

the sword will devour those around you

The word “sword” here represents soldiers carrying weapons. The enemy soldiers killing people is spoken of as if their swords were devouring people. Alternate translation: “your enemies will kill people all around you” (See: [Metonymy](#) and [Personification](#))

ULT

14 “Announce in Egypt, and proclaim it in Migdol, Memphis, and Tahpanhes. ‘Take your station and prepare yourself, for the sword will devour those around you.’

Jeremiah 46:15

Why are your mighty ones face-down on the ground? They will not stand

Some Bibles translate this as “Why has Apis fled? Why did your bull not stand?” Apis was an Egyptian god that was represented by the form of a bull. The bull is often a symbol for strength. That is why the ULT and other versions of the Bible translate this as “strong ones” or “mighty ones,” which refers to soldiers.

ULT

¹⁵ Why are your mighty ones face-down on the ground? They will not stand, because I, Yahweh, have pushed them to the ground.

Why are your mighty ones face-down on the ground? They will not stand

Yahweh uses a question to mock the strength of the Egyptian soldiers. This question can be translated as a statement. Alternate translation: “Your soldiers are face-down on the ground and will not stand” (See: [Rhetorical Question](#))

Jeremiah 46:16

He increases the numbers of those who stumble

“Yahweh causes more and more of your soldiers to stumble”

Let us leave this sword that is beating us down

Here “sword” represents the enemy soldiers who are carrying weapons. Alternate translation: “Let us run away from our enemies because they are killing us” (See: [Metonymy](#))

ULT

¹⁶ He increases the numbers of those who stumble. Each soldier falls against the next one. They are saying, ‘Get up. Let us go home. Let us go back to our own people, to our native land. Let us leave this sword that is beating us down.’

Jeremiah 46:17

They proclaimed there

This could mean: (1) “they” refers to people in general who are in Egypt or (2) “they” refers to the foreign soldiers who are fleeing to their native lands of Cush, Put, and Lud.

ULT

17 They proclaimed there, ‘Pharaoh the king of Egypt is only a noise, one who has let his opportunity slip away.’

Pharaoh the king of Egypt is only a noise, one who has let his opportunity slip away

These two phrases are saying that the nation of Egypt has become of little importance. The phrase “only a noise” is an idiom that means a person says he will do something but he does not do it. Alternate translation: “Pharaoh brags much but cannot do what he brags he will” (See: [Idiom](#))

Jeremiah 46:18

declares the King

Here “King” refers to Yahweh. This can be stated in first person.
Alternate translation: “this is what I, the King, declare” (See: [First, Second or Third Person](#))

someone will come like Mount Tabor and Mount Carmel by the sea

This refers to the nation of Babylon who will be as overwhelming to the nation of Egypt as the these two mountains are to the plains that surround them. (See: [Simile](#))

Mount Tabor

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

ULT

18 As I live—declares the King, whose name is Yahweh of hosts— someone will come like Mount Tabor and Mount Carmel by the sea.

Jeremiah 46:19

Pack for yourselves baggage to carry into exile

“Prepare to go into exile”

ULT

¹⁹ Pack for yourselves baggage to carry into exile, you who live in Egypt. For Memphis will become a waste, it will lie in ruins and no one will live there.

Jeremiah 46:20

Egypt is a very beautiful young cow

The nation of Egypt, which was very strong and prosperous, is spoken of as if it were a beautiful young cow. Alternate translation: "Egypt is like a very beautiful heifer" (See: [Metaphor](#))

but a stinging insect

The enemy army coming to attack the Egyptians is spoken of as if the army were an insect that stings. Alternate translation: "but a powerful army like a stinging insect" (See: [Metaphor](#))

ULT

²⁰ Egypt is a very beautiful young cow, but a stinging insect is coming from the north. It is coming.

Jeremiah 46:21

soldiers in her midst are like a fattened bull

The writer compares soldiers to “fattened bulls” because the soldiers are well cared for by the Egyptians just as a farmer takes care of a bull and makes it fat. (See: [Simile](#))

They will not stand together

To “stand together” is an idiom meaning to remain united. The writer is saying that the soldiers will not fight as a unit but will run away thinking only of saving themselves. (See: [Idiom](#))

the day of their disaster is coming against them

This speaks of a day as if it travels and arrives in a location. Alternate translation: “they will experience disaster on that day” (See: [Metaphor](#))

ULT

21 The hired soldiers in her midst are like a fattened bull, but they will also turn away and run away. They will not stand together, for the day of their disaster is coming against them, the time of their punishment.

Jeremiah 46:22

Egypt hisses like a snake and crawls away

The inability of the Egyptians to do anything to stop their enemy is spoken of as if they were snakes that can only hiss and crawl away. (See: [Simile](#))

They are going toward her like woodcutters with axes

The enemies coming with the weapons to destroy the Egyptians is spoken of as if they were woodcutters with axes preparing to cut down a tree. (See: [Simile](#))

ULT

²² Egypt hisses like a snake and crawls away, for her enemies are marching against her. They are going toward her like woodcutters with axes.

Jeremiah 46:23

They will cut down the forests ... although it is very dense

This continues speaking of the enemy army attacking the Egyptians as if the army were woodcutters cutting down trees. Alternate translation: "The enemy army will kill many Egyptians like woodcutters cutting down a forest ... even though there are very many trees" (See: [Metaphor](#))

ULT

²³ They will cut down the forests—this is Yahweh's declaration—although it is very dense. For the enemies will be more numerous than locusts, unable to be counted.

this is Yahweh's declaration

Yahweh speaks of himself by name to express the certainty of what he is declaring. See how you translated this in [Jeremiah 1:8](#). Alternate translation: "this is what Yahweh has declared" or "this is what I, Yahweh, have declared" (See: [First, Second or Third Person](#))

locusts

This is a type of insect that travels in very large groups and can cause great destruction by eating crops.

unable to be counted

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "no one will be able to count them" (See: [Active or Passive](#))

Jeremiah 46:24

The daughter of Egypt will be made ashamed

The people of Egypt are spoken of as if they were the daughter of Egypt. This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "The enemy army will humiliate the people of Egypt" (See: [Metaphor](#) and [Active or Passive](#))

ULT

²⁴ The daughter of Egypt will be made ashamed. She will be given into the hand of people from the north."

She will be given into the hand of people from the north

Here "hand" represents power or control. This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "I, Yahweh, will allow the people from the north to defeat the Egyptians" (See: [Metonymy](#) and [Active or Passive](#))

Jeremiah 46:25

Amon of Thebes

“Amon” is the king of the Egyptian gods. “Thebes” is the capital of the northern part of Egypt, and here it represents the people of Thebes. Alternate translation: “Amon, god of Thebes” or “Amon, god of the people of Thebes” (See: [How to Translate Names](#) and [Metonymy](#))

Egypt and her gods

Here “Egypt” represents the people. Alternate translation: “all the people of Egypt and the gods they worship” (See: [Metonymy](#))

ULT

25 Yahweh of hosts, the God of Israel, says, “See, I am about to punish Amon of Thebes, Pharaoh, Egypt and her gods, her kings the Pharaohs, and those who trust in them.”

Jeremiah 46:26

I am giving them into the hand of the ones seeking their lives

Here “hand” represents power or control. The phrase “seeking their lives” is an idiom that mean to want to kill someone. Alternate translation: “I will allow those who are wanting to kill them to defeat them” (See: [Metonymy](#) and [Idiom](#))

and into the hand of Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon and his servants

Here “hand” represents power or control. “Nebuchadnezzar ... his servants” names specifically “the ones seeking their lives.” Alternate translation: “that is, I will allow Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon and his servants to defeat the Egyptians” (See: [Metonymy](#))

Then after this Egypt will be inhabited

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: “Then after this, people will live in Egypt again” (See: [Active or Passive](#))

ULT

²⁶ I am giving them into the hand of the ones seeking their lives, and into the hand of Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon and his servants. Then after this Egypt will be inhabited as in previous days—this is Yahweh’s declaration.

Jeremiah 46:27

my servant Jacob, do not fear. Do not be dismayed, Israel

These two phrases mean the same thing. Here “Jacob” and “Israel” represent the people of Israel. Yahweh is emphasizing that the people should not be afraid. Alternate translation: “people of Israel, my servants, do not be afraid” (See: [Parallelism](#) and [Metonymy](#))

from the land of their captivity

“from the land where they are captives”

ULT

²⁷ But you, my servant Jacob, do not fear. Do not be dismayed, Israel, for see, I am about to bring you back from far away, and your offspring from the land of their captivity. Then Jacob will return, find peace, and be secure, and there will be no one to terrify him.

Jeremiah 46:28

I will bring complete destruction against all the nations

The abstract noun “destruction” can be stated using the verb “destroy.” Alternate translation: “I will completely destroy all the nations” (See: [Abstract Nouns](#))

will certainly not leave you unpunished

This can be stated in positive form. Alternate translation: “will certainly punish you” (See: [Double Negatives](#))

ULT

²⁸ You, my servant Jacob, do not fear—this is Yahweh’s declaration—for I am with you, so I will bring complete destruction against all the nations where I scattered you. But I will not destroy you completely. Yet I will discipline you justly and will certainly not leave you unpunished.”

Jeremiah 47

Jeremiah 47 General Notes

Structure and formatting

Some translations set each line of poetry farther to the right than the rest of the text to make it easier to read. The ULT does this with the poetry in 47:2-7.

Jeremiah's prophecies about other nations continue in this chapter. (See: [prophet](#), [prophecy](#), [prophecy](#), [seer](#), [prophetess](#))

Important figures of speech in this chapter

Flood waters

This chapter uses the imagery of a flood to describe the enemies who conquer the Philistines. Their destruction will be swift and complete. (See: [Metaphor](#))

Jeremiah 47:1

This is the word of Yahweh that came to Jeremiah

The idiom “the word of Yahweh that came to” is used to introduce a special message from God. See how you translated this in [Jeremiah 14:1](#), and make any changes as needed. Alternate translation: “This is the message that Yahweh gave to Jeremiah” or “This is the message that Yahweh spoke to Jeremiah” (See: [Idiom](#))

ULT

¹ This is the word of Yahweh that came to Jeremiah the prophet concerning the Philistines. This word came to him before Pharaoh attacked Gaza.

This word came to him

The idiom “this word came to” is used to introduce a special message from God. Alternate translation: “Yahweh gave this message to Jeremiah” or “Yahweh spoke this message to Jeremiah” (See: [Idiom](#))

before Pharaoh

Here “Pharaoh” represents the Egyptians army. Alternate translation: “before Pharaoh’s army” (See: [Metonymy](#))

Jeremiah 47:2

See

The word “see” alerts us to pay attention to what is about to be said.

floods of water are rising in the north. They will be like an overflowing river!

The two phrases have a similar meaning. The enemy army is spoken of as if it were a flood. Alternate translation: “an army in the north will come like a flood. They will be powerful like an overflowing river” (See: [Parallelism](#) and [Metaphor](#))

they will overflow the land

This continues speaking of the army from the north as an overflowing river. Alternate translation: “like an overflowing river, the army from the north will destroy the land” (See: [Metaphor](#))

ULT

2 “Yahweh says this: See, floods of water are rising in the north. They will be like an overflowing river! Then they will overflow the land and everything in it, its cities and its inhabitants! So everyone will shout for help, and all the inhabitants of the land will lament.

Jeremiah 47:3

At the sound of the stamping of their strong horses' hooves, at the roar of their chariots and the noise of their wheels

Together these represent the sounds of an oncoming army. (See: [Parallelism](#))

at the roar of their chariots and the noise of their wheels

These two phrase have similar meanings and they are combined to emphasize the loud noise they will make. Alternate translation: "at the very loud sound of the wheels of the chariots" (See: [Doublet](#))

ULT

³ At the sound of the stamping of their strong horses' hooves, at the roar of their chariots and the noise of their wheels, fathers will not help their children because of their own weakness.

Jeremiah 47:4

For the day is coming that will devastate all of the Philistines, to cut off from Tyre

This speaks of a day as if it were something that travels and arrives in a place. Alternate translation: “For on that day, the enemy army will devastate all of the Philistines and cut off from Tyre” (See: [Metaphor](#))

to cut off from Tyre and Sidon every survivor who wants to help them

Removing someone is spoken of as if they were cut off the way a person may cut a branch from a tree or a piece of cloth from a garment. Alternate translation: “to remove anyone who may want to help Tyre and Sidon” (See: [Metaphor](#))

Caphtor

This is the name of an island of the northern region of the Philistines. (See: [How to Translate Names](#))

ULT

⁴ For the day is coming that will devastate all of the Philistines, to cut off from Tyre and Sidon every survivor who wants to help them. For Yahweh is devastating the Philistines, those who remain from the island of Caphtor.

Jeremiah 47:5

Baldness will come upon Gaza

The abstract noun “baldness” can be stated as “bald.” “Gaza” represents the people. Alternate translation: “The people of Gaza will shave their heads bald” (See: [Abstract Nouns](#) and [Metonymy](#))

Baldness

The shaving of the entire head or portions of the head is a sign of great sorrow practiced by idol worshipers in nations such as Philistia. (See: [Symbolic Action](#))

the people ... will be made silent

This could mean: (1) the people will be silent because they are mourning or (2) this is a euphemism that means the enemy soldiers will kill them. (See: [Euphemism](#))

How long will you cut yourself in mourning?

Yahweh uses a question to emphasize that the people of Ashkelon will never stop mourning. Yahweh speaks to the people as if he were speaking to one woman, who is a metaphor for the city itself. This question can be translated as a statement. Alternate translation: “You will forever cut yourselves in mourning.” (See: [Rhetorical Question](#) and [Metaphor](#) and [Apostrophe](#))

cut yourself in mourning

The cutting of one’s skin was another practice done by the idol worshipers when they mourn the dead. (See: [Symbolic Action](#))

ULT

⁵ Baldness will come upon Gaza. As for Ashkelon, the people who are left in their valley will be made silent. How long will you cut yourself in mourning?

Jeremiah 47:6

sword of Yahweh! How long will it be until you become silent? Go back to your scabbard! Stop and be silent.

The Philistines speak to the sword of Yahweh as if it were a person who could hear them. Alternate translation: "Yahweh, you who are holding your sword! When will you stop striking us with your sword? Stop your sword and put it back in its scabbard!" (See: [Personification](#))

ULT

⁶ Woe, sword of Yahweh! How long will it be until you become silent? Go back to your scabbard! Stop and be silent.

sword of Yahweh

Yahweh punishing the Philistines by sending the army from the north is spoken of as if Yahweh were striking them with a sword. (See: [Metaphor](#))

How long will it be until you become silent?

The people of the Philistines use this question to express their deep frustration about the devastation caused by their enemies. This may be translated as a statement. Alternate translation: "Please be silent!" or "Please, Yahweh, stop striking us with your sword!" (See: [Rhetorical Question](#))

you become silent

A sword makes a noise as it slashes back and forth. Asking the sword to be silent means to ask it to stop slashing and killing. Alternate translation: "you rest" or "you stop slashing" (See: [Idiom](#))

scabbard

This is the case used to protect the blade of a sword.

Jeremiah 47:7

How can it rest ... along the sea?

Here Jeremiah is speaking. He continues speaking of the sword of Yahweh as if it were a person who could rest. Yahweh punishing the Philistines by sending the army of the north is spoken of as if Yahweh were striking the people with a sword. This can be translated as a statement. Alternate translation: "It cannot rest ... along the sea." (See: [Personification](#) and [Metaphor](#))

ULT

⁷ How can it rest when Yahweh has commanded it, when he has ordered it to attack Ashkelon and the coastlands along the sea?"

How can it rest when Yahweh has commanded it, when he has ordered ... the sea?

Jeremiah uses a question to mean that the sword cannot stop since Yahweh has commanded it to continue killing. This question can be translated as a statement. Alternate translation: "It cannot stop, for Yahweh has commanded it. He has ordered ... the sea." (See: [Rhetorical Question](#))

Jeremiah 48

Jeremiah 48 General Notes

Structure and formatting

Some translations set each line of poetry farther to the right than the rest of the text to make it easier to read. The ULT does this with the poetry in 48:1-25, 28-33, 39-47.

Jeremiah's prophesies about other nations continue in this chapter. (See: [prophet](#), [prophecy](#), [prophesy](#), [seer](#), [prophetess](#))

Special concepts in this chapter

Obeying Yahweh

Moab worshiped and served other gods. Despite this, Yahweh expected every nation to worship and serve him and him alone. They were punished because of it. (See: [god](#), [false god](#), [goddess](#), [idol](#), [idolater](#), [idolatrous](#), [idolatry](#))

Jeremiah 48:1

General Information:

Jeremiah often wrote prophecy in the form of poetry. Hebrew poetry uses different kinds of parallelism. (See: [Poetry](#) and [Parallelism](#))

To Moab

Here “Moab” represents the people. Alternate translation: “To the people of Moab” (See: [Metonymy](#))

Yahweh of hosts ... says this

Jeremiah often uses these words to introduce an important message from Yahweh. See how you translated this in [Jeremiah 6:6](#).

Woe to Nebo, for it has been devastated

Here “Nebo” represents the people. Alternate translation: “How terrible it is for the people of Nebo, for their city is devastated” (See: [Metonymy](#))

Nebo

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

Kiriathaim has been humiliated

Here “Kiriathaim has been humiliated” represents the people being humiliated. This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: “The enemy has captured the city of Kiriathaim and humiliated the people who live there” (See: [Metonymy](#) and [Active or Passive](#))

Kiriathaim

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

Her fortress has been disgraced

Here “fortress has been disgraced” represents the people being disgraced. This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: “The enemy has destroyed the fortress in Kiriathaim and disgraced its people” (See: [Metonymy](#) and [Active or Passive](#))

ULT

¹ To Moab, Yahweh of hosts, God of Israel, says this, “Woe to Nebo, for it has been devastated. Kiriathaim has been humiliated and captured. Her fortress has been disgraced and crushed.”

Jeremiah 48:2

The honor of Moab is no more

“People no longer honor Moab” or “People no longer praise Moab”

Heshbon

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

Madmen will also perish

“Madmen” here is a town in Moab. The name of the city has nothing to do with the English word “madmen.” Alternate translation: “Their enemies will destroy the city of Madmen” (See: [How to Translate Names](#))

a sword will go after you

Here “sword” represents the enemy army carrying weapons. Alternate translation: “your enemies will chase after you and kill you” (See: [Metonymy](#))

ULT

² The honor of Moab is no more. Their enemies in Heshbon plotted disaster against her. They said, ‘Come and let us destroy her as a nation. Madmen will also perish—a sword will go after you.’

Jeremiah 48:3

General Information:

Jeremiah continues to tell of the destruction of Moab.

Horonaim

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

ruin and great destruction

These two terms mean the same thing. Together they emphasize complete destruction. (See: [Doublet](#))

ULT

³ Listen! A sound of screaming is coming from Horonaim, where there is ruin and great destruction.

Jeremiah 48:4

Moab has been destroyed

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: “The enemy army has destroyed Moab” (See: [Active or Passive](#))

ULT

⁴ Moab has been destroyed. Her children have made their cries heard.

Her children

This could mean: (1) the children who lived in Moab or (2) “children” is a metonym that represents the people of Moab in general. Alternate translation: “The people of Moab” (See: [Metonymy](#))

Jeremiah 48:5

Luhith

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

because of the destruction

The abstract noun “destruction” can be stated as “destroyed.”

Alternate translation: “because their town is destroyed” (See: [Abstract Nouns](#))

ULT

⁵ They go up the hill of Luhith weeping,
for on the way down to Horonaim,
screams are heard because of the
destruction.

Jeremiah 48:6

Save your lives

The word “your” refers to the people of Moab.

become like a juniper bush in the wilderness

The people fleeing from their cities into the desert is compared to a bush or shrub that grows in the desert.

Alternate translation: “become like a shrub that grows in the wilderness” (See: [Simile](#) and [Translate Unknowns](#))

ULT

⁶ Flee! Save your lives and become like a juniper bush in the wilderness.

Jeremiah 48:7

because of your trust

The abstract noun “trust” can be stated as a verb. Alternate translation: “because you trusted” (See: [Abstract Nouns](#))

in your practices

“in your own efforts” or “in your own work”

you also will be captured

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: “the enemy army will also capture you” (See: [Active or Passive](#))

Then Chemosh will go away into captivity

“Chemosh” is the chief god of the Moabites. This means the enemy army will take the idol of Chemosh that the people made to worship. Alternate translation: “The enemy army will take your god Chemosh as a captive” (See: [How to Translate Names](#) and [Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information](#))

ULT

⁷ For because of your trust in your practices and your wealth, you also will be captured. Then Chemosh will go away into captivity, together with his priests and leaders.

Jeremiah 48:8

For the destroyer will come to every city

Here “the destroyer” represents the enemy army. Alternate translation: “For the enemy army will come to every city and destroy it” (See: [Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information](#))

no city will escape

Here “city” represents the people. Alternate translation: “no people from any city will escape” (See: [Metonymy](#))

So the valley will perish and the plain will be devastated

Here “valley” and “plain” represent the cities and the people in those places. Alternate translation: “So the enemy army will destroy everything in the valleys and on the plains” (See: [Metonymy](#))

ULT

⁸ For the destroyer will come to every city; no city will escape. So the valley will perish and the plain will be devastated, as Yahweh has said.

Jeremiah 48:9

Give wings to Moab, for she must certainly fly away

Helping the people is spoken of as if they would put wings on the people so that could fly away. Alternate translation: "Help the people of Moab to escape as if you were giving them wings to fly away" (See: [Metaphor](#))

ULT

⁹ Give wings to Moab, for she must certainly fly away. Her cities will become a wasteland, where there is no one to live in them.

Give wings to Moab, for she must certainly fly away

The translation of the original language is uncertain. Some Bibles translate this as "Set up a tombstone for Moab, for the enemy will certainly destroy it." Other Bibles translate it as "Put salt on the cities of Moab, for the enemy will completely destroy it." Enemies through salt on ruins to keep thing from ever growing there again.

Jeremiah 48:10

from shedding blood

Here “blood” represents a person’s life. And “shedding blood” is an idiom that means to kill. Alternate translation: “from killing people” (See: [Metonymy](#) and [Idiom](#))

ULT

10 May anyone who is lazy in doing Yahweh’s work be cursed! May anyone who keeps his sword back from shedding blood be cursed!

Jeremiah 48:11

Moab has felt secure since he was young ... He is ... his wine ... He has never gone ... he tastes ... his flavor

Here Yahweh speaks of Moab as if it were a man. Here it represents the people of Moab. All occurrences of "he" and "his" can be stated as "they," "their," or "them." Alternate translation: "Even from their earliest times, the people of Moab have felt secure ... They are ... their wine ... They have never gone ... they tastes ... their flavor" (See: [Personification](#))

ULT

¹¹ Moab has felt secure since he was young. He is like his wine that has never been poured from pot to pot. He has never gone into captivity. Therefore he tastes as good as ever; his flavor remains unchanged.

He is like his wine that has never been poured from pot to pot

For wine to taste good, it has to be left undisturbed for a long time and not poured from one pot to another. Yahweh compares the people of Moab, who are prosperous because no one has ever conquered them and taken them as captives, to wine that is undisturbed and has a good flavor. (See: [Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information](#) and [Simile](#))

Jeremiah 48:12

So see, the days are coming

“Listen carefully because there will be a time”

this is Yahweh’s declaration

Yahweh speaks of himself by name to express the certainty of what he is declaring. See how you translated this in [Jeremiah 1:8](#). Alternate translation: “this is what Yahweh has declared” or “this is what I, Yahweh, have declared” (See: [First, Second or Third Person](#))

ULT

¹² So see, the days are coming—this is Yahweh’s declaration—when I will send him those who will tip him over and pour out all his pots and shatter his jars.

I will send him those who will tip him over and pour out all his pots and shatter his jars

The enemy army defeating the people of Moab and taking them as captives is spoken of as if the people of Moab are wine and someone will come and pour them out and break the wine jars. Alternate translation: “I will send an army that will destroy them as if they were pouring out wine and breaking the jars” (See: [Metaphor](#))

send him ... tip him over ... his pots ... his jars

Here Yahweh speaks of Moab as if it were a man. Here it represents the people of Moab. All occurrences of “he,” “his,” and “him” in 48:11-12 can be stated as “they,” “their,” or “them.” Alternate translation: “send them ... tip them over ... their pots ... their jars” (See: [Personification](#))

Jeremiah 48:13

Then Moab

Here “Moab” represents the people. Alternate translation: “Then the people of Moab” (See: [Metonymy](#))

Chemosh

Chemosh is the chief god of the Moabites. See how you translated this name in [Jeremiah 48:7](#). (See: [How to Translate Names](#))

the house of Israel

The word “house” is a metonym for the family that lives in the house. In this case it refers to Israel’s descendants. See how you translated this in [Jeremiah 2:4](#). Alternate translation: “the Israelites” or “the Israelite people group” (See: [Metonymy](#))

Bethel

This could mean: (1) this refers to the city of Bethel where the Israelites worshiped a golden calf or (2) Bethel is the name of a false god the Israelites worshiped.

ULT

13 Then Moab will be ashamed of Chemosh just as the house of Israel was ashamed of Bethel, their object of trust.

Jeremiah 48:14

How can you say, 'We are soldiers, powerful fighting men'?

Here Yahweh is speaking to the soldiers of Moab. Yahweh uses a question to rebuke the soldiers. Alternate translation: "No longer can you say, 'We are soldiers, powerful fighting men.'" (See: [Rhetorical Question](#))

ULT

¹⁴ How can you say, 'We are soldiers, powerful fighting men'?

Jeremiah 48:15

Moab will be devastated and its cities attacked

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: “The enemy army will devastate Moab and attack its cities” (See: [Active or Passive](#))

its finest young men have gone down to the place of slaughter

The best men of Moab going to battle and being killed is spoken of as if they were animals taken to a place to be slaughtered. Alternate translation: “their fine young men will all be slaughtered” or “the enemy army will kill all of the finest men of Moab” (See: [Metaphor](#))

This is the king’s declaration

Here “king” refers to Yahweh. This can be stated in first person. See how you translated this in [Jeremiah 46:18](#). Alternate translation: “This is what I, the king, declare” (See: [First, Second or Third Person](#))

ULT

¹⁵ Moab will be devastated and its cities attacked. For its finest young men have gone down to the place of slaughter. This is the king’s declaration! Yahweh of hosts is his name.

Jeremiah 48:16

Moab's disaster is soon to happen; calamity is hurrying quickly

These two sentences mean basically the same thing and emphasize that Moab's destruction will happen very soon. Alternate translation: "Moab's enemies will destroy her very soon" (See: [Parallelism](#))

ULT

¹⁶ Moab's disaster is soon to happen; calamity is hurrying quickly.

calamity is hurrying quickly

Something terrible happening soon is spoken of as if calamity were something that could move quickly to a place. Alternate translation: "terrible things will happen very soon" (See: [Metaphor](#))

Jeremiah 48:17

the strong staff, the honored rod, has been broken

Here the words “staff” and “rod” represent the power and political support that Moab provided to other nations. This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: “Moab’s enemies have ended her great power” (See: [Metonymy](#) and [Doublet](#) and [Active or Passive](#))

ULT

17 All you who are around Moab, wail; and all you who know its fame, shout this, ‘Woe, the strong staff, the honored rod, has been broken.’

Jeremiah 48:18

you daughter living in Dibon

The people of Dibon are spoken of as if they were the daughter of Dibon. Alternate translation: “you people living in Dibon” (See: [Metaphor](#))

Dibon

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

the one who will destroy Moab

“the enemy army that will destroy Moab”

ULT

18 Come down from your honored place and sit on the dry ground, you daughter living in Dibon. For the one who will destroy Moab is attacking you, the one who will destroy your strongholds.

Jeremiah 48:19

Aroer

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

Ask the ones

“Ask the people” or “Ask the men and women”

ULT

19 Stand on the road and watch, you people who live in Aroer. Ask the ones who are fleeing and escaping. Say, ‘What has happened?’

Jeremiah 48:20

Moab has been shamed, for it has been shattered

Here “Moab” represents the people. This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: “The people are disgraced, for the enemy army has destroyed Moab” (See: [Metonymy](#) and [Active or Passive](#))

ULT

²⁰ Moab has been shamed, for it has been shattered. Howl and lament; shout for help. Tell it to people by the Arnon River that Moab has been devastated.

Howl and lament

“Cry loudly in pain and anger”

that Moab has been devastated

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: “that the enemy army has devastated Moab” (See: [Active or Passive](#))

Jeremiah 48:21

punishment has come to the hill country, to Holon ... Mephaath

Yahweh punishing the people of the hill country and cities of Moab is spoken of as if punishment were something that could travel and arrive in a place. Alternate translation: “Yahweh will punish the people of the hill country, of Holon ... Mephaath” (See: [Active or Passive](#))

ULT

²¹ Now punishment has come to the hill country, to Holon, Jahzah, and Mephaath,

Holon, Jahzah, and Mephaath

These are cities in Moab. (See: [How to Translate Names](#))

Jeremiah 48:22

(There are no notes for this verse.)

ULT

²² to Dibon, Nebo, and Beth Diblathaim,

Jeremiah 48:23

(There are no notes for this verse.)

ULT

²³ to Kiriathaim, Beth Gamul, and Beth Meon,

Jeremiah 48:24

Bozrah

a city in Moab (See: [How to Translate Names](#))

ULT

²⁴ To Kerioth and Bozrah, and to all the cities in the land of Moab— the farthest and the closest cities.

Jeremiah 48:25

The horn of Moab has been hacked off; its arm has been broken

Both of these statements mean the same thing. Here “horn” and “arm” represent power. To have these hacked off or broken means to lose one’s power. This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: “Moab has become weak; the people are not able to fight anymore” (See: [Parallelism](#) and [Metonymy](#) and [Active or Passive](#))

ULT

²⁵ The horn of Moab has been hacked off; its arm has been broken—this is Yahweh’s declaration.

this is Yahweh’s declaration

Yahweh speaks of himself by name to express the certainty of what he is declaring. See how you translated this in [Jeremiah 1:8](#). Alternate translation: “this is what Yahweh has declared” or “this is what I, Yahweh, have declared” (See: [First, Second or Third Person](#))

Jeremiah 48:26

Make him drunk, because he acted proudly against Yahweh

Yahweh is speaking. The command “Make him drunk” indicates what Yahweh will cause to happen. Here “him” and “he” refers to Moab which represents the people of Moab. Alternate translation: “I, Yahweh, will cause the people of Moab to be drunk, for they acted proudly against me” (See: [Imperatives — Other Uses](#) and [Metonymy](#))

ULT

²⁶ Make him drunk, because he acted proudly against Yahweh. Let Moab wallow in his vomit, and let him be an object of ridicule.

Make him drunk

Here people experiencing Yahweh’s punishment is spoken of as if they were drunk on wine, acting foolishly so that people laugh at them. Alternate translation: “I will cause you to be like a drunk person” (See: [Metaphor](#))

Let Moab wallow in his vomit ... an object of ridicule

Yahweh continues speaking of the people of Moab as if they were a drunk person. Alternate translation: “Now the people of Moab will be like a person who wallows in his vomit ... an object of ridicule (See: [Metaphor](#))

let him be an object of ridicule

“so that people will laugh at him”

Jeremiah 48:27

For did not Israel become an object for laughter to you?

Yahweh uses a question to remind the people of Moab how they treated the people of Israel. Alternate translation: "For you used to mock and laugh at the people of Israel." (See: [Rhetorical Question](#))

ULT

²⁷ For did not Israel become an object for laughter to you? Was he found among thieves, so that you shook your head at him as often as you spoke about him?

Israel ... Was he found ... at him ... about him

Here "Israel" represents the people of Israel. Alternate translation: "the people of Israel ... Were they found ... at them ... about them" (See: [Metonymy](#))

Was he found among thieves, so that you shook your head ... about him?

Here Yahweh uses a question to rebuke the people of Moab for treating the people of Israel with shame though they did nothing wrong. Alternate translation: "Although they were not thieves, you still shook your head ... about him." (See: [Rhetorical Question](#))

shook your head at him

This is a symbolic action that shows feeling of scorn or disgust towards someone. (See: [Symbolic Action](#))

Jeremiah 48:28

cliffs

A cliff is a steep side of a mountain.

Become like a dove ... in the rocks

This simile emphasizes the people should leave their cities and live in the rocky cliffs to hide from their enemies. (See: [Simile](#))

the mouth of a hole in the rocks

Here “mouth of a hole” is an idiom that means the entrance to a cave. Alternate translation: “the entrance to caves” or “an opening in the rocks” (See: [Idiom](#))

ULT

²⁸ Abandon the cities and camp on the cliffs, inhabitants of Moab. Become like a dove that is nesting over the mouth of a hole in the rocks.

Jeremiah 48:29

We have heard

Here “We” refers generally to all the people in the surrounding area.

**arrogance ... haughtiness ... pride ... self-glory
... conceit in his heart**

ULT

29 We have heard of Moab’s pride—his arrogance, his haughtiness, his pride, his self-glory and the conceit in his heart.

All of these words have similar meanings. They are used together to emphasize the extreme pride of the people of Moab.

the conceit in his heart

Here “heart” represents a person’s inner being. Alternate translation: “his conceit” (See: [Metonymy](#))

Jeremiah 48:30

I myself know his defiant speech

The word “myself” is used to emphasize that Yahweh was the one who knew about Moab’s defiant speech. (See: [Reflexive Pronouns](#))

his defiant speech ... like his deeds

Here “his” refers to Moab which represents the people of Moab. Alternate translation: “their defiant speech ... like their deeds” (See: [Metonymy](#))

his defiant speech

The abstract noun “speech” can be stated as a verb. Alternate translation: “that he has spoken pridefully” or “that he has spoken arrogant words” (See: [Abstract Nouns](#))

ULT

³⁰ This is Yahweh’s declaration—I myself know his defiant speech, which amounts to nothing, like his deeds.

Jeremiah 48:31

I will howl a lament for Moab, and I will shout in sorrow for all of Moab

Both of these statements mean the same thing. Alternate translation: "I will cry loudly for the people of Moab" (See: [Parallelism](#))

ULT

³¹ So I will howl a lament for Moab, and I will shout in sorrow for all of Moab. I will lament for the people of Kir Hareseth.

I will howl

This could mean: (1) "I" refers to Jeremiah or (2) "I" refers to Yahweh.

howl

a sad and loud cry that a person makes when he is in pain or deep sorrow

Kir Hareseth

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

Jeremiah 48:32

Jazer ... Sibmah

These are the names of two towns in Moab. (See: [How to Translate Names](#))

vine of Sibmah! Your branches passed ... your wine

The town of Sibmah had many vineyards. Here, Yahweh speaks to the people of Sibmah as if there were a grapevine. Alternate translation: “people of Sibmah, who are like a grapevine with branches that passed ... your wine” (See: [Metaphor](#))

The destroyers have attacked your summer fruit and your wine

Yahweh continues speaking of the people of Sibmah as if they were a grapevine. Alternate translation: “The destroyers have attacked you and have taken the fruit from your vineyards and your wine” (See: [Metaphor](#))

The destroyers have

“The enemy army has”

ULT

³² I will weep for you more than I did for Jazer, vine of Sibmah! Your branches passed across the Salt Sea and reached as far as Jazer. The destroyers have attacked your summer fruit and your wine.

Jeremiah 48:33

So celebration and rejoicing have been taken away from the fruit trees and the land of Moab

The abstract nouns “celebration” and “rejoicing” can be stated as verbs. The phrase “have been taken away” can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: “The people of Moab will no longer celebrate and rejoice because of their fruit trees” (See: [Abstract Nouns](#) and [Active or Passive](#))

ULT

³³ So celebration and rejoicing have been taken away from the fruit trees and the land of Moab. I have put an end to the wine from their winepresses. They will not tread with joyful shouts. Any shouts will not be shouts of joy.

I have put an end to the wine from their winepresses

“I have stopped the wine from their winepresses” or “I have stopped the people from making wine”

I have put an end

Here “I” refers to Yahweh.

They will not tread

The wine makers would stomp on the grapes to squeeze out the juice. Alternate translation: “The wine makers will not stomp the grapes” (See: [Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information](#))

Jeremiah 48:34

Heshbon

Translate the name of this city as you did in [Jeremiah 48:2](#). (See: [How to Translate Names](#))

Elealeh ... Jahaz ... Zoar ... Horonaim ... Eglath Shelishiyah

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

Nimrim

This is the name of a stream or river near the Dead Sea. (See: [How to Translate Names](#))

ULT

³⁴ From the shouts at Heshbon as far as Elealeh, their sound is heard at Jahaz, from Zoar to Horonaim and Eglath Shelishiyah, since even the waters of Nimrim have dried up.

Jeremiah 48:35

this is Yahweh's declaration

Yahweh speaks of himself by name to express the certainty of what he is declaring. See how you translated this in [Jeremiah 1:8](#). Alternate translation: “this is what Yahweh has declared” or “this is what I, Yahweh, have declared” (See: [First](#), [Second](#) or [Third Person](#))

ULT

³⁵ For I will put an end to anyone in Moab who makes sacrifices on the high places and burns incense to his gods—this is Yahweh's declaration.

Jeremiah 48:36

my heart is lamenting for Moab like a flute

Here “heart” represents the whole person. The person’s sad crying is compared to the sad music played on a flute at a funeral. Alternate translation: “I cry sadly for Moab. My cries are like the sad music a person plays on a flute at a funeral” (See: [Synecdoche](#) and [Simile](#))

ULT

³⁶ So my heart is lamenting for Moab like a flute. My heart is lamenting like flutes for the people of Kir Hareseth. The riches they gained are gone.

my heart

This could mean: (1) “my” refers to Jeremiah or (2) “my” refers to Yahweh.

Kir Hareseth

Kir Hareseth was an ancient capital of Moab. See how you translated this name in [Jeremiah 48:31](#). (See: [How to Translate Names](#))

Jeremiah 48:37

For every head is bald and every beard shaved. Incisions are on every hand, and sackcloth is around their waists

These are all things that the people of Moab did when they were mourning or expressing deep sorrow. (See: [Symbolic Action](#))

Incisions

cuts made on the skin

ULT

³⁷ For every head is bald and every beard shaved. Incisions are on every hand, and sackcloth is around their waists.

Jeremiah 48:38

There is mourning everywhere

The abstract noun “mourning” can be stated as a verb. Alternate translation: “There are people mourning everywhere” (See: [Abstract Nouns](#))

every flat roof

“every housetop”

plazas

open public areas, such as open marketplaces

For I have destroyed

The word “I” refers to Yahweh

this is Yahweh’s declaration

Yahweh speaks of himself by name to express the certainty of what he is declaring. See how you translated this in [Jeremiah 1:8](#). Alternate translation: “this is what Yahweh has declared” or “this is what I, Yahweh, have declared” (See: [First, Second or Third Person](#))

ULT

38 There is mourning everywhere, on every flat roof of Moab and in Moab’s plazas. For I have destroyed Moab like pots that no one wants—this is Yahweh’s declaration.

Jeremiah 48:39

How it has been shattered! How they howl in their lamenting!

Here “How” begins exclamations. The phrase “has been shattered” can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: “I have completely shattered them! They shout loudly and weep!” (See: [Exclamations](#) and [Active or Passive](#))

ULT

³⁹ How it has been shattered! How they howl in their lamenting! Moab turns its back in shame! So Moab will become an object of derision and a terror to all those who are around him.”

howl

a sad and loud cry that a person makes when he is in pain

Moab turns its back in shame

Here Moab represents the people. To turn one’s back is a sign of feeling ashamed. Alternate translation: “The people of Moab turn their backs in shame” or “The people of Moab are ashamed and will not show their faces” (See: [Metonymy](#) and [Symbolic Action](#))

So Moab will become an object of derision and a terror to all those who are around him

This can be restated to remove the abstract nouns “derision” and “terror.” Alternate translation: “So all the people nearby will be terrified at what happened to the people of Moab and they will mock them” (See: [Abstract Nouns](#))

Jeremiah 48:40

**the enemy will come flying like an eagle,
spreading out his wings**

These phrases compare how a powerful army will descend on Moab and conquer it to the way an eagle swoops down to capture its prey.
(See: [Simile](#))

ULT

⁴⁰ For Yahweh says this, “See, the enemy will come flying like an eagle, spreading out his wings over Moab.

Jeremiah 48:41

Kerioth has been captured, and its strongholds have been seized

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: “The enemy has captured Kerioth and seized its strongholds” (See: [Active or Passive](#))

Kerioth

This is a city in Moab. See how you translated this name in [Jeremiah 48:24](#). (See: [How to Translate Names](#))

in that day the hearts of Moab’s soldiers ... women in birth labor

This phrase compares the fear that will overwhelm the soldiers of Moab to the fear a woman may feel when she is about to give birth to her child. (See: [Simile](#))

the hearts of Moab’s soldiers will be like the hearts of women in birth labor

Here “hearts” represent a person’s emotions. Alternate translation: “Moab’s soldiers will be afraid like a woman about to give birth” (See: [Metonymy](#))

ULT

⁴¹ Kerioth has been captured, and its strongholds have been seized. For in that day the hearts of Moab’s soldiers will be like the hearts of women in birth labor.

Jeremiah 48:42

So Moab will be destroyed

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: “So the enemy will destroy the people of Moab” (See: [Active or Passive](#))

ULT

⁴² So Moab will be destroyed and be no longer a people, because he made himself to be great against Yahweh.

Jeremiah 48:43

Terror and the pit, and a trap are coming on you

Here “coming on you” is an idiom that means “to experience” something. Alternate translation: “You will experience the terror, the pit, and a trap” or “You will be terrified, and you will fall into pits and traps” (See: [Idiom](#))

ULT

⁴³ Terror and the pit, and a trap are coming on you, inhabitant of Moab—this is Yahweh’s declaration.

this is Yahweh’s declaration

Yahweh speaks of himself by name to express the certainty of what he is declaring. See how you translated this in [Jeremiah 1:8](#). Alternate translation: “this is what Yahweh has declared” or “this is what I, Yahweh, have declared” (See: [First](#), [Second](#) or [Third Person](#))

Jeremiah 48:44

fall into the pit ... caught in the trap

Here “the pit” and “the trap” represent all the different bad things that will happen to the people. People will run away to escape one bad thing but they will just experience another bad thing. (See: [Synecdoche](#))

in the year of

Here, “year” could be translated as “time” or “season” or “time period.”

ULT

44 Anyone who flees because of terror will fall into the pit, and anyone who climbs out of the pit will be caught in the trap, for I will bring this on them in the year of my vengeance against them —this is Yahweh’s declaration.

Jeremiah 48:45

The ones who flee

This refers to the people who were able to run away during the destruction of Moab.

will stand in the shadow of Heshbon

Here “in the shadow” represents protection or shelter. Alternate translation: “will hide in Heshbon for protection” or “will go to Heshbon for shelter” (See: [Metonymy](#))

ULT

⁴⁵ The ones who flee will stand in the shadow of Heshbon without any strength, for fire will go out from Heshbon, flame from the middle of Sihon. It will devour the forehead of Moab and the top of the heads of the boastful people.

for fire will go out from Heshbon, flame from the middle of Sihon

These two phrases have similar meanings and emphasize that Moab’s destruction will begin and spread out from Heshbon, where King Sihon once lived. Alternate translation: because a fire will burn in Heshbon, which is the city where King Sihon lived long ago (See: [Parallelism](#) and [Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information](#))

Heshbon

Translate the name of this city as you did in [Jeremiah 48:2](#). (See: [How to Translate Names](#))

Sihon

This is the name of an Amorite king who once ruled over Heshbon. (See: [How to Translate Names](#))

It will devour the forehead of Moab and the top of the heads of the boastful people

Here “forehead” and “top of the heads” represent the people of Moab as a whole. Alternate translation: “It will burn up all the people in Moab who noisily boasted very much” (See: [Synecdoche](#))

forehead

the part of the face that is above the eyes, but below the hairline

Jeremiah 48:46

Chemosh's people are destroyed

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "The enemy army has destroyed the people who worship Chemosh" (See: [Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information](#) and [Active or Passive](#))

Chemosh

This is the chief god of the Moabites. See how you translated this in [Jeremiah 48:7](#).

your sons are taken as captives and your daughters into captivity

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "the enemy army has taken your sons and daughters as captives" (See: [Active or Passive](#))

ULT

46 Woe to you, Moab! Chemosh's people are destroyed, For your sons are taken as captives and your daughters into captivity.

Jeremiah 48:47

I will restore the fortunes of Moab

“I will cause things to go well for Moab again” or “I will cause Moab to live well again.” See how similar words are translated in [Jeremiah 29:14](#).

this is Yahweh’s declaration

Yahweh speaks of himself by name to express the certainty of what he is declaring. See how you translated this in [Jeremiah 1:8](#). Alternate translation: “this is what Yahweh has declared” or “this is what I, Yahweh, have declared” (See: [First](#), [Second](#) or [Third Person](#))

The judgment on Moab ends here

“That is the end of what Jeremiah prophesied about Moab”

ULT

47 But I will restore the fortunes of Moab in later days—this is Yahweh’s declaration.” The judgment on Moab ends here.

Jeremiah 49

Jeremiah 49 General Notes

Structure and formatting

The ULT sets the lines in 49:1-11, 14-27, 29-33, 37-39 farther to the right on the page than the rest of the text because they are part of a long quotation.

Jeremiah's prophecies about other nations conclude in this chapter. (See: [prophet](#), [prophecy](#), [prophecy](#), [seer](#), [prophetess](#))

Special concepts in this chapter

Covenant with Abraham

Ammon is destroyed because it drove the people of the tribe of Gad from their homeland. This is in line with the promises of the covenant Yahweh made with Abraham to curse those who curse Abraham's descendants. (See: [promise](#), [promised](#) and [covenant](#) and [curse](#), [cursed](#), [cursing](#))

Important figures of speech in this chapter

Rhetorical questions

There are many rhetorical questions in this chapter. The purpose of these rhetorical questions is to convict those Yahweh addresses. (See: [Rhetorical Question](#))

Jeremiah 49:1

General Information:

See: [Poetry](#) and [Parallelism](#)

Yahweh says this

Jeremiah often uses these words to introduce an important message from Yahweh. See how you translated a similar phrase in [Jeremiah 6:6](#).

ULT

¹ About the people of Ammon, Yahweh says this, "Does Israel have no children? Is there no one to inherit anything in Israel? Why does Molech occupy Gad, and his people live in its cities?" ^[1]

Does Israel have no children? Is there no one to inherit anything in Israel? Why does Molech occupy Gad, and his people live in its cities?

Yahweh uses a question to express that the people of Israel should be living in Gad rather than those who worship Molech. This question can be translated as a statement. Alternate translation: "There are plenty of Israelites to inherit the land of Israel. The people who worship the false idol, Molech, should not live in Gad." (See: [Rhetorical Question](#))

Why does Molech

Here "Molech" represents the people who worship Molech. Alternate translation: "Why do the people who worship Molech" (See: [Metonymy](#))

Jeremiah 49:2

So look

This adds emphasis to what follows. Alternate translation: “Look and listen”

days are coming ... when I will

Future time is spoken of as if the “days are coming.” See how you translated this in [Jeremiah 7:32](#). Alternate translation: “in the future ... I will” or “there will be a time ... when I will” (See: [Metaphor](#))

ULT

² So look, the days are coming—this is Yahweh’s declaration—when I will sound the signal for battle against Rabbah among the people of Ammon, so it will become a deserted heap and its villages will be set on fire. For Israel will possess those who possessed him,” says Yahweh.

this is Yahweh’s declaration

Yahweh speaks of himself by name to express the certainty of what he is declaring. See how you translated this in [Jeremiah 1:8](#). Alternate translation: “this is what Yahweh has declared” or “this is what I, Yahweh, have declared” (See: [First, Second or Third Person](#))

when I will sound the signal for battle

Yahweh causing an army to attack is spoken of as if he would sound the signal for the battle to start. Alternate translation: “when I will cause the enemy army to sound the signal for battle” (See: [Metaphor](#))

its villages will be set on fire

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: “the enemy army will burn their villages”

For Israel will possess those who possessed him

Here “Israel” represents the people of Israel. “Those” refers to people of Ammon, who represent the land that they took from Israel. Alternate translation: “Then the people of Israel will again possess the land that the people of Ammon took away from them” (See: [Metonymy](#))

Jeremiah 49:3

Howl in lament

“Cry loudly and weep”

Heshbon

Translate the name of this city as you did in [Jeremiah 48:2](#). Here “Heshbon” represents the people. Alternate translation: “people of Heshbon” (See: [How to Translate Names](#) and [Metonymy](#))

ULT

³ “Howl in lament, Heshbon, for Ai will be devastated! Shout out, daughters of Rabbah! Put on sackcloth. Lament and run about in futility, for Molech is going into captivity, together with his priests and leaders.

for Ai will be devastated

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: “for your enemies will devastate Ai” (See: [Active or Passive](#))

daughters of Rabbah

This could mean: (1) “daughters” represent the women who live in Rabbah. Alternate translation: “women of Rabbah” or (2) all the people in general are spoken of as if they are the daughters of Rabbah. Alternate translation: “people of Rabbah” (See: [Metaphor](#))

for Molech is going into captivity

“for your enemies will take your god Molech captive.” This means the enemies will take the idol that represents Molech back to their land.

Jeremiah 49:4

Why do you brag about your valleys ... daughter?

Yahweh uses a question to scold the people for bragging about the large amount of fruit that grows in their valleys. This rhetorical question can be translated as a statement. Alternate translation: "Do not be proud of your valleys ... daughter." (See: [Rhetorical Question](#))

ULT

⁴ Why do you brag about your valleys, your valleys that are so fruitful, faithless daughter? you who trust in your wealth and say, 'Who will come against me?'

Why do you brag about your valleys, your valleys that are so fruitful

Some versions of the Bible read, "Why do you brag about your strength, your strength which is ebbing away"

faithless daughter

Here, the people of Ammon are spoken of as if they were a daughter. Alternate translation: "faithless people" or "rebellious people" (See: [Metaphor](#))

say, 'Who will come against me?'

The Ammonites use this question to state that they do not believe anyone can defeat them. It can be reworded as an indirect statement. Alternate translation: "falsely think that no one can defeat you." (See: [Rhetorical Question](#) and [Direct and Indirect Quotations](#))

Jeremiah 49:5

you

The word “you” refers to the people of Ammon.

this terror will come from all those who surround you. Each one of you will be scattered before it

The abstract noun “terror” can be stated as the verb “terrify.” The phrase “will be scattered” can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: “I will cause all those around you to terrify you. Each one of you flee to different directions” (See: [Abstract Nouns](#) and [Active or Passive](#))

ULT

⁵ See, I am about to bring terror on you —this is the declaration of Lord Yahweh of hosts— this terror will come from all those who surround you. Each one of you will be scattered before it. There will be no one to gather those running away.

Jeremiah 49:6

(There are no notes for this verse.)

ULT

⁶ But after this I will restore the fortunes of the people of Ammon—this is Yahweh’s declaration.”

Jeremiah 49:7

Yahweh of hosts says this

Jeremiah often uses these words to introduce an important message from Yahweh. See how you translated this in [Jeremiah 6:6](#).

Is there no longer any wisdom to be found in Teman?

Yahweh uses a question to scold the people of Teman for not acting wisely. This can be translated as a statement. Alternate translation: "It seems that there are no longer any wise people in Teman!" (See: [Rhetorical Question](#))

Teman

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

Has good advice ... understanding? Has their wisdom become corrupted?

The same idea is expressed in two different ways. (See: [Parallelism](#))

Has good advice disappeared from those who have understanding?

Yahweh uses this question to scold the people. It can be translated as a statement. Alternate translation: "It seems that there are no longer any wise people in Teman district in Edom!" (See: [Rhetorical Question](#))

Has their wisdom become corrupted?

Yahweh uses this question to scold the people. This question may be translated as a statement. Alternate translation: "Their advice is no longer wise." (See: [Rhetorical Question](#))

ULT

⁷ About Edom, Yahweh of hosts says this, "Is there no longer any wisdom to be found in Teman? Has good advice disappeared from those who have understanding? Has their wisdom become corrupted?"

Jeremiah 49:8

Dedan

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

I am bringing the disaster of Esau on him at the time that I punish him

Here “Esau” represents the people of Edom. The Edomites were descendants of Esau. Alternate translation: “I will cause the people of Edom to experience disaster when I punish them” (See: [Metonymy](#))

on him ... I punish him

Yahweh is speaking to the people of Edom. This can be stated in second person. Alternate translation: “on you ... I punish you” (See: [First, Second or Third Person](#))

ULT

⁸ Flee! Turn back! Stay in holes in the ground, inhabitants of Dedan. For I am bringing the disaster of Esau on him at the time that I punish him.

Jeremiah 49:9

General Information:

Yahweh continues speaking about what will happen to Edom.

If grape harvesters ... would they not leave a little bit behind?

Yahweh uses a question to cause the people to think about how grape harvesters leave some grapes behind. This can be translated as a statement. Alternate translation: "If grape harvesters ... they would certainly leave some grapes behind." (See: [Rhetorical Question](#))

ULT

⁹ If grape harvesters came to you, would they not leave a little bit behind? If thieves came in the night, would they not steal only as much as they wanted?

If thieves ... would they not steal only as much as they wanted?

Yahweh uses a question to cause the people to think about how thieves only take what they want. This question can be translated as a statement. Alternate translation: "If thieves ... they would only take as much as they wanted." (See: [Rhetorical Question](#))

Jeremiah 49:10

But I have stripped Esau bare

Yahweh causing an enemy army to come and take everything is spoken of as if Yahweh stripped all the clothes off of Esau. Alternate translation: "But I have sent an army to take everything away from Esau" (See: [Metaphor](#))

Esau ... his hiding ... he will not ... hide himself ... His children ... he is gone

Here "Esau" represents the people of Edom. Alternate translation: "the people of Edom ... their hiding ... they will not ... hide themselves ... Their children ... they are gone" (See: [Metonymy](#))

I have revealed his hiding places

"I have made known to the enemy soldiers where the people of Edom hide"

ULT

10 But I have stripped Esau bare. I have revealed his hiding places. So he will not be able to hide himself. His children, his brothers, and his neighbors are destroyed, and he is gone.

Jeremiah 49:11

(There are no notes for this verse.)

ULT

11 Leave your orphans behind. I will take care of their lives, and your widows can trust in me.”

Jeremiah 49:12

General Information:

Yahweh continues speaking about what will happen to Edom.

See

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

ULT

¹² For Yahweh says this, “See, those who did not deserve it must certainly drink some of the cup. Do you yourself think you will go without punishment? You will not, for you will certainly drink.”

must certainly drink some of the cup ... for you will certainly drink

Here “the cup” is a metonym that represents the contents in the cup that the people must drink. The people experiencing Yahweh’s punishment is spoken of as if Yahweh’s punishment were liquid in a cup and the people must drink it. Alternate translation: “must certainly experience my punishment ... for you will certainly experience my punishment” or “I will certainly still punish ... for I will certainly punish you” (See: [Metonymy](#) and [Metaphor](#))

Do you yourself think you will go without punishment?

Yahweh uses a question to emphasize the people of Edom have sinned and will certainly be punished. This question can be translated as a statement. Alternate translation: “Certainly, you must be aware that you will personally experience my punishment for your sins.” (See: [Rhetorical Question](#))

you yourself

The words “you” and “yourself” refer to Edom, which represents the people of Edom. The word “yourself” is used to draw attention to the people of Edom. Alternate translation: “you yourselves” (See: [Forms of You](#) and [Metonymy](#) and [Reflexive Pronouns](#))

Jeremiah 49:13

this is Yahweh's declaration

Yahweh speaks of himself by name to express the certainty of what he is declaring. See how you translated this in [Jeremiah 1:8](#). Alternate translation: "this is what Yahweh has declared" or "this is what I, Yahweh, have declared" (See: [First, Second or Third Person](#))

Bozrah will become a horror, a disgrace, a devastation, and an object for cursing

The abstract nouns "a horror," "a disgrace," and "a devastation" can be translated as verbs. Alternate translation: "People will be horrified when they see that the city of Bozrah is devastated. And they will mock the city and use its name when they curse others" (See: [Abstract Nouns](#))

Bozrah

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

All of its cities

"All of Edom's cities"

ULT

13 For I have sworn by myself—this is Yahweh's declaration—that Bozrah will become a horror, a disgrace, a devastation, and an object for cursing. All of its cities will become devastations forever.

Jeremiah 49:14

General Information:

Jeremiah is now speaking to the people of Edom.

I have heard

The word "I" refers to Jeremiah.

a messenger has been sent out

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "Yahweh has sent out a messenger" (See: [Active or Passive](#))

to the nations, 'Gather together ... for battle.'

It is understood "Gather together" is the beginning of the messenger's message. Alternate translation: "to tell the nations, 'Gather together ... for battle.'" or "to the nations, and he will tell them, 'Gather together ... for battle.'" (See: [Ellipsis](#))

attack her

The word "her" refers to Edom.

ULT

14 I have heard news from Yahweh, and a messenger has been sent out to the nations, 'Gather together and attack her. Get ready for battle.'

Jeremiah 49:15

I have made you

The word “I” refers to Yahweh. Here “you” refers to the nation of Edom.

made you small

Here “small” represents having the least political importance. Alternate translation: “made you least important” (See: [Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information](#))

despised by people

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: “and people despise you” (See: [Active or Passive](#))

ULT

15 “For see, I have made you small compared to the other nations, despised by people.”

Jeremiah 49:16

General Information:

Yahweh continues speaking about what will happen to Edom.

As for your fearsomeness

Here the abstract noun “fearsomeness” can be translated with either an adjective or a verb. Alternate translation: “As for how terrifying you think you are” or “Although you think you scare other people” (See: [Abstract Nouns](#))

ULT

16 As for your fearsomeness, your heart's pride has deceived you, inhabitants of places on the cliff, you who have occupied the highest hills so that you may make your nest high like an eagle. I will bring you down from there—this is Yahweh's declaration.

your heart's pride has deceived you

Here “heart” represents the whole person. People deceiving themselves is spoken of as if their pride deceived them. Alternate translation: “you have become prideful, but you have deceived yourselves” (See: [Metonymy](#) and [Metaphor](#))

so that you may make your nest high like an eagle

It is implied that the people made homes in high places to remain safe from enemies. Alternate translation: “live in safety like an eagle in the heights of the mountains” (See: [Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information](#) and [Simile](#))

eagle

This is a very large, powerful bird of prey. See how you translated this in [Jeremiah 4:13](#).

this is Yahweh's declaration

Yahweh speaks of himself by name to express the certainty of what he is declaring. See how you translated this in [Jeremiah 1:8](#). Alternate translation: “this is what Yahweh has declared” or “this is what I, Yahweh, have declared” (See: [First, Second or Third Person](#))

Jeremiah 49:17

General Information:

Yahweh continues speaking to the people of Edom.

Edom will become a horror to everyone passing by it

The abstract noun “horror” can be stated using the verb “horrified.” Alternate translation: “The people passing by will be horrified when they what happened to Edom” (See: [Abstract Nouns](#))

tremble and hiss

The word “hiss” refers to a sound that shows horror or awe. Alternate translation: “shake from fear and gasp” (See: [Symbolic Action](#))

ULT

¹⁷ Edom will become a horror to everyone passing by it. Every such person will tremble and hiss because all of its disasters.

Jeremiah 49:18

no one will live there; no person will stay there

Yahweh says the same thing twice to emphasize that Edom will be completely uninhabited. (See: [Parallelism](#))

ULT

¹⁸ Like the overthrow of Sodom and Gomorrah and their neighbors," says Yahweh, "no one will live there; no person will stay there.

Jeremiah 49:19

General Information:

Yahweh continues speaking about what will happen to Edom.

See

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

he will go up like a lion from the forests of the Jordan to the green pasturelands

This simile means that when Yahweh punishes the people of Edom, it will be fierce and unexpected like when a lion attacks sheep. This can be stated in first person. Alternate translation: “When I punish the people of Edom, it will be fierce and unexpected like when a lion comes out of forest and attacks sheep in the pasture” (See: [Simile](#) and [First, Second or Third Person](#))

pasturelands

This is land covered with grass where animals feed on the grass.

Edom run from it

Here “Edom” represents the people. “It” refers to the land. Alternate translation: “the people of Edom will run from their land” (See: [Metonymy](#))

who will be chosen

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: “whom I will choose” (See: [Active or Passive](#))

For who is like me, and who will summon me?

Yahweh uses the question to emphasize that no one is like him. This question can be translated as a statement. Alternate translation: “For no one is like me, no one can summon me.” (See: [Rhetorical Question](#))

who will summon me

“who will challenge me” or “who will call me to account”

What shepherd is able to resist me?

Yahweh uses the question to show no one can defeat him. Here “shepherd” is a metaphor for “king” or “ruler.” This question can be translated as a statement. Alternate translation: “No king is able to resist me!” (See: [Rhetorical Question](#) and [Metaphor](#))

ULT

¹⁹ See, he will go up like a lion from the forests of the Jordan to the green pasturelands. For I will quickly make Edom run from it, and I will put someone who will be chosen in charge of it. For who is like me, and who will summon me? What shepherd is able to resist me?”

Jeremiah 49:20

the inhabitants of Teman

“the people who live in Teman”

Teman

Translate the name of this city as you did in [Jeremiah 49:7](#).

They will certainly be dragged away, even the smallest flock

This continues speaking of Yahweh punishing the people of Edom as if he would come like a lion and attack the sheep. This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: “He will drag them away, even the smallest flock” (See: [Metaphor](#) and [Active or Passive](#))

even the smallest flock

Here the youngest and weakest people of Edom are spoken of as if they are the smallest flock of sheep. Alternate translation: “even the weakest and the smallest people” (See: [Metaphor](#))

Their pasturelands will be turned into ruined places

Here the land of Edom is spoken of as if it were pasturelands for flocks. This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: “He will turn their pasturelands into ruined places” or “He will completely get rid of the people who live there” (See: [Metaphor](#) and [Active or Passive](#))

ULT

²⁰ “So listen to the plans that Yahweh has decided against Edom, the plans that he has formed against the inhabitants of Teman. They will certainly be dragged away, even the smallest flock. Their pasturelands will be turned into ruined places.”

Jeremiah 49:21

At the sound of their falling the earth shakes

The loud sound of Edom being destroyed is spoken of as if Edom were a large object that shakes the earth when it falls. Alternate translation: "When enemies come and destroy Edom, the noise will be extremely loud, with the result that the earth will shake" (See: [Metaphor](#))

ULT

²¹ At the sound of their falling the earth shakes. The sound of distressed shouts is heard at the Sea of Reeds.

The sound of distressed shouts is heard at the Sea of Reeds

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "People at the Sea of Reeds will hear the people of Edom crying" (See: [Active or Passive](#))

Jeremiah 49:22

See

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

someone will attack like an eagle, and swoop down and spread his wings

This simile means that when the enemy army attacks it will be vicious and unexpected. (See: [Simile](#))

ULT

²² See, someone will attack like an eagle, and swoop down and spread his wings over Bozrah. Then on that day, the hearts of Edom’s soldiers will become like the heart of a woman in birth labor.”

Bozrah

Translate the name of this city as you did in [Jeremiah 48:24](#). (See: [How to Translate Names](#))

the hearts of Edom’s soldiers will become like the heart of a woman in birth labor

Here “hearts” represent a person’s emotions. See how you translated a similar phrase in [Jeremiah 48:41](#). Alternate translation: “Edom’s soldiers will be afraid like a woman about to give birth” (See: [Metonymy](#))

Jeremiah 49:23

General Information:

Yahweh tells what will happen to the people of Damascus.

Hamath and Arpad will be ashamed

Here “Hamath” and “Arpad” represent the people who live there.
Alternate translation: “The people who live in Hamath and Arpad will be ashamed” (See: [Metonymy](#))

Hamath and Arpad

These are cities in Syria. (See: [How to Translate Names](#))

They melt away

A person being afraid is spoken of as if the person were melting. Alternate translation: “They are very afraid” (See: [Metaphor](#))

They become as troubled as the sea, which cannot stay calm

The water of the sea is always moving and is never still. This is compared to the people who cannot rest because they are so anxious about the bad news they heard. (See: [Simile](#))

ULT

²³ About Damascus: “Hamath and Arpad will be ashamed, for they have heard news of disaster. They melt away! They become as troubled as the sea, which cannot stay calm.”

Jeremiah 49:24

Damascus has become very weak. It turns ... seizes it

Here “Damascus” represents the people who live there. Alternate translation: “The people of Damascus have become very weak. They turn ... seizes them” (See: [Metonymy](#))

ULT

²⁴ Damascus has become very weak. It turns away to flee; terror seizes it. Distress and pain seize it, like the pain of a woman giving birth.

terror seizes it

The abstract noun “terror” can be stated as the verb “terrified.” Alternate translation: “Damascus is terrified” or “The people of Damascus are terrified”

Distress and pain seize it, like the pain of a woman giving birth

This can be restated to remove the abstract nouns “distress” and “pain.” The people are compared to a woman giving birth to emphasize their pain and fear. Alternate translation: “The people are afraid and suffering like a woman giving birth” (See: [Abstract Nouns](#) and [Simile](#))

Jeremiah 49:25

How has the city of praise not been forsaken, the town of my joy?

Yahweh uses a question to express that the people should have left the city. It can be translated as a statement. Alternate translation:

"This famous city once caused me to rejoice, but now the people should leave it." (See: [Rhetorical Question](#))

ULT

²⁵ How has the city of praise not been forsaken, the town of my joy?

How has the city of praise not been forsaken, the town of my joy?

Some Bibles translate this with the people of Damascus speaking. Alternate translation: "The people of Damascus say, 'The famous city, which once made us rejoice, is now empty.'"

Jeremiah 49:26

General Information:

Yahweh continues speaking about what will happen to Damascus.

its

The word “its” refers to Damascus and its people.

its young men will fall in its plazas

They young men being killed is spoken of as if they will fall. Alternate translation: “enemies will kill the young men of Damascus in its plazas” (See: [Metaphor](#))

this is the declaration of Yahweh of hosts

Yahweh speaks of himself by name to express the certainty of what he is declaring. See how similar words are translated in [Jeremiah 1:8](#). Alternate translation: “this is what Yahweh of hosts has declared” or “this is what I, Yahweh of hosts, have declared” (See: [First](#), [Second](#) or [Third Person](#))

ULT

²⁶ Therefore its young men will fall in its plazas, and all the fighting men will perish on that day—this is the declaration of Yahweh of hosts.”

Jeremiah 49:27

I will light a fire

Causing the enemy army to light a fire is spoken of as if Yahweh will light the fire. Alternate translation: "I will cause the enemy army to light a fire" (See: [Metonymy](#))

it will devour

"the fire will completely burn up"

Ben Hadad

This the name or title of the king of Damascus. (See: [How to Translate Names](#))

ULT

27 "For I will light a fire on the wall of Damascus, and it will devour the strongholds of Ben Hadad."

Jeremiah 49:28

General Information:

Jeremiah speaks about what will happen to Kedar.

Kedar

This is the name of a land far to the east of Israel. See how you translated this in [Jeremiah 2:10](#). (See: [How to Translate Names](#))

Hazor

This is the name of kingdom or district far to the east of Israel. (See: [How to Translate Names](#))

now Nebuchadnezzar

Here “now” introduces background information about Nebuchadnezzar. (See: [Background Information](#))

Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon was going to attack

Here “Nebuchadnezzar” represents his army. Alternate translation: “the army of Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon was going to attack” (See: [Metonymy](#))

ULT

²⁸ About Kedar and the kingdoms of Hazor, Yahweh says this to Nebuchadnezzar (now Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon was going to attack these places): “Arise and attack Kedar and destroy those people of the east.”

Jeremiah 49:29

**Their tents and their flocks will be taken,
along with their tent curtains and all of their
equipment**

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "Your soldiers will take their flocks, tent curtains, and all of their equipment" (See: [Active or Passive](#))

ULT

²⁹ Their tents and their flocks will be taken, along with their tent curtains and all of their equipment; their camels will be led away from them, and men will shout to them, "Terror is on every side!"

their camels will be led away from them

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "your soldiers will take their camels from them" (See: [Active or Passive](#))

men will shout to them, "Terror is on every side!"

This could mean: (1) these are men being attacked by the enemy. Alternate translation: "men will shout, 'We are terrified because terrible things are happening all around us!'" or (2) these are soldiers in the invading army. Alternate translation: "soldiers will shout at them, 'Be afraid because we are all around you!'"

Jeremiah 49:30

General Information:

Yahweh continues speaking about what will happen to Kedar and the kingdoms of Hazor.

Flee! Wander ... Turn back!

Here Yahweh is speaking to the people of Kedar.

inhabitants of Hazor

“people who live in Hazor”

this is Yahweh’s declaration

Yahweh speaks of himself by name to express the certainty of what he is declaring. See how you translated this in [Jeremiah 1:8](#). Alternate translation: “this is what Yahweh has declared” or “this is what I, Yahweh, have declared” (See: [First](#), [Second](#) or [Third Person](#))

devised a plan

“made a plan”

ULT

30 Flee! Wander far away! Stay in holes in the ground, inhabitants of Hazor— this is Yahweh’s declaration— for Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon has devised a plan against you. Flee! Turn back!

Jeremiah 49:31

Arise! Attack ... themselves

Here Yahweh is speaking to Nebuchadnezzar as if he was there listening to him. (See: [Apostrophe](#))

Attack the nation at ease, that lives in safety

Here “nation” represents the people living there. Alternate translation: “Attack this nation, whose people feel safe and secure” (See: [Metonymy](#))

They ... them

The words “They” and “them” refer to the people who feel safe and secure.

ULT

31 Arise! Attack the nation at ease, that lives in safety,” says Yahweh. “They have no gates or bars in them, and its people live by themselves.

Jeremiah 49:32

General Information:

Yahweh continues telling Nebuchadnezzar to attack the people of Kedar and the kingdom of Hazor.

For their camels will become plunder, and the abundance of their property will become war plunder

Yahweh is still speaking to Nebuchadnezzar as if he were there listening to him. This can be stated in second person. Alternate translation: “For your soldiers will take their camels and all of their property” (See: [Apostrophe](#) and [First, Second or Third Person](#))

Then I will scatter to every wind

Here “every wind” represents the nations. Alternate translation: “Then I will send to nations in all different directions” (See: [Metaphor](#))

those who cut the corners of their hair

This probably refers to people who cut their hair short in order to honor a pagan god. Some modern versions interpret this Hebrew expression as “those who live on the edge of the wilderness.” See how you translated a similar phrase in [Jeremiah 9:26](#).

this is Yahweh’s declaration

Yahweh speaks of himself by name to express the certainty of what he is declaring. See how you translated this in [Jeremiah 1:8](#). Alternate translation: “this is what Yahweh has declared” or “this is what I, Yahweh, have declared” (See: [First, Second or Third Person](#))

ULT

³² For their camels will become plunder, and the abundance of their property will become war plunder. Then I will scatter to every wind those who cut the corners of their hair, and I will bring disaster on them from every side—this is Yahweh’s declaration.

Jeremiah 49:33

a lair of jackals

“a place where jackals live.” Jackals are fierce wild dogs. See how you translated “jackals” in [Jeremiah 9:11](#).

No one will live there; no human being will stay there

These two lines mean basically the same thing and emphasize that Hazor will be completely uninhabited. (See: [Parallelism](#))

ULT

33 Hazor will become a lair of jackals, a permanent wasteland. No one will live there; no human being will stay there.”

Jeremiah 49:34

General Information:

Yahweh is speaking about what will happen to Elam.

This is the word of Yahweh that came to Jeremiah

This idiom is used to introduce a special message from God. See how you translated this in [Jeremiah 14:1](#), and make any changes as needed. Alternate translation: “This is the message that Yahweh gave to Jeremiah” or “This is the message that Yahweh spoke to Jeremiah” (See: [Idiom](#))

ULT

³⁴ This is the word of Yahweh that came to Jeremiah the prophet about Elam. This happened at the beginning of the reign of Zedekiah king of Judah, and he said,

Jeremiah 49:35

Yahweh of hosts says this

Jeremiah often uses these words to introduce an important message from Yahweh. See how you translated this in [Jeremiah 6:6](#).

I am about to break the bowmen of Elam, the main part of their power

“The archers made Elam very powerful, but I will stop them”

bowmen

men who are skilled with a bow and arrows

ULT

35 “Yahweh of hosts says this: See, I am about to break the bowmen of Elam, the main part of their power.

Jeremiah 49:36

I will bring the four winds from the four corners of the heavens

Here “four winds from the four corners” is an idiom that represents wind blowing from every direction. Alternate translation: “I will cause the winds to blow from every direction” (See: [Idiom](#))

I will bring the four winds from the four corners of the heavens

Here “winds” represents nations. And the nations are a synecdoche representing the armies from those nations. Causing armies to come from all directions is spoken of as if Yahweh will cause wind to blow from all directions. Alternate translation: “I will bring your enemies from every direction to attack you” (See: [Metaphor](#) and [Synecdoche](#))

to all of those winds

Here “winds” represents “nations.” Alternate translation: “to all those nations” (See: [Metaphor](#))

There is no nation to which those scattered from Elam will not go

This can be stated in positive form. Alternate translation: “I will scatter the people of Elam to every nation on earth” (See: [Double Negatives](#))

ULT

³⁶ For I will bring the four winds from the four corners of the heavens, and I will scatter the people of Elam to all of those winds. There is no nation to which those scattered from Elam will not go.

Jeremiah 49:37

General Information:

Yahweh continues speaking about what will happen to Elam.

I will shatter Elam

These words are a metonym for Yahweh causing enemies to destroy Elam. Alternate translation: “I will cause Elam’s enemies to destroy Elam” (See: [Metonymy](#))

Elam

the people of Elam (See: [Metonymy](#))

those who seek their lives

Seeking a person’s life represents wanting or desiring to kill someone. Alternate translation: “those who want to kill them” (See: [Metaphor](#))

I will bring disaster against them

Yahweh causing people to experience disaster is spoken of as if he would bring disaster against them. Alternate translation: “I will cause them to experience disaster” or “I will cause terrible things to happen to them” (See: [Metaphor](#))

the sword after them

Here “sword” represents the enemy army carrying their weapons. Alternate translation: “the enemy army to pursue and kill them” (See: [Metonymy](#))

ULT

37 So I will shatter Elam before their enemies and before those who seek their lives. for I will bring disaster against them, the fury of my wrath— this is Yahweh’s declaration— and I will send the sword after them until I have annihilated them.

Jeremiah 49:38

I will put my throne in Elam

Here “throne” represents Yahweh’s right to rule and judge as the king. Alternate translation: “I will judge the people of Elam” (See: [Metonymy](#))

ULT

38 Then I will put my throne in Elam and will destroy its king and leaders from there—this is Yahweh’s declaration—

Jeremiah 49:39

in later days

“in the future”

ULT

³⁹ and it will happen in later days that I will bring back the fortunes of Elam—this is Yahweh’s declaration.”

Jeremiah 50

Jeremiah 50 General Notes

Structure and formatting

Some translations set each line of poetry farther to the right than the rest of the text to make it easier to read. The ULT does this with the poetry in 50:1-5, 6-46.

Special concepts in this chapter

Babylon destroyed

Babylon will be conquered and the Jews will return to their homeland. At this time, Babylon controlled almost the entire Near East. The fulfillment of this prophecy would have been unthinkable. (See: [fulfill](#), [fulfilled](#), [carried out](#) and [prophet](#), [prophecy](#), [prophesy](#), [seer](#), [prophetess](#))

Other possible translation difficulties in this chapter

Israel

The author sometimes uses the term “Israel” to refer to the people of the old northern kingdom of Israel, and at other times to the nation of Israel as a whole. He switches between these uses several times without warning the reader. (See: [Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information](#))

Jeremiah 50:1

General Information:

God gives Jeremiah a message about Babylon. See: [Poetry](#) and [Parallelism](#)

This is the word that Yahweh declared

This idiom is used to introduce a special message from God. Alternate translation: “This is the message that Yahweh gave” or “This is the message that Yahweh spoke” (See: [Idiom](#))

by the hand of Jeremiah the prophet

The hand is a synecdoche for the person. See how you translated this in [Jeremiah 37:2](#). Alternate translation: “through Jeremiah, who was a prophet” (See: [Synecdoche](#))

ULT

¹ This is the word that Yahweh declared about Babylon, the land of the Chaldeans, by the hand of Jeremiah the prophet,

Jeremiah 50:2

cause them to listen ... cause them to listen

This phrase is repeated to emphasize the importance of the command. (See: [Parallelism](#))

Lift up a signal

“Put up a sign”

Babylon is taken

“Babylon is conquered”

Bel is made ashamed. Marduk is dismayed. Its idols are put to shame; its images are dismayed

These lines mean the same thing and emphasize that Yahweh has disgraced the gods of Babylon. (See: [Parallelism](#) and [Active or Passive](#))

Bel ... Marduk

These are two names for the chief god of Babylon. (See: [How to Translate Names](#))

ULT

² “Report to the nations and cause them to listen. Lift up a signal and cause them to listen. Do not conceal it. Say, ‘Babylon is taken. Bel is made ashamed. Marduk is dismayed. Its idols are put to shame; its images are dismayed.’”

Jeremiah 50:3

arise against it ... live in it

Here “it” refers to Babylon in both phrases.

her land

The word “her” refers to Babylon.

make her land a desolation

The abstract noun “desolation” can be translated as a verb. Alternate translation: “destroy her land” (See: [Abstract Nouns](#))

ULT

³ A nation from the north will arise against it, and make her land a desolation. No one will live in it; both man and beast will flee away.

Jeremiah 50:4

In those days and at that time

These phrases mean the same thing and emphasize the importance of that future time. See how you translated this in [Jeremiah 33:15](#). (See: [Doublet](#))

this is Yahweh's declaration

Yahweh speaks of himself by name to express the certainty of what he is declaring. See how you translated this in [Jeremiah 1:8](#). Alternate translation: "this is what Yahweh declares" or "this is what I, Yahweh, declare" (See: [First, Second or Third Person](#))

seek Yahweh their God

Seeking **Yahweh their God** represents either: (1) asking God for help or (2) thinking about God and obeying him. (See: [Metaphor](#))

ULT

⁴ In those days and at that time—this is Yahweh's declaration—the people of Israel and the people of Judah will come together to go with weeping and seek Yahweh their God.

Jeremiah 50:5

They will ask

The word “They” refers to the people of Israel or the people of Judah who are returning from Babylon to Jerusalem.

join ourselves to Yahweh

This is figurative language used to explain a spiritual connection to Yahweh. (See: [Idiom](#))

that will not be forgotten

This states that the covenant will be obeyed forever. It can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: “that no one will forget” (See: [Active or Passive](#))

ULT

⁵ They will ask the way to Zion and will set off toward it, saying, We will go and join ourselves to Yahweh in an everlasting covenant that will not be forgotten.”

Jeremiah 50:6

My people have been a lost flock

The people of Israel are spoken of as if they were a group of sheep that was lost. This can be stated as a simile. Alternate translation: "My people have been like a lost flock of sheep" (See: [Metaphor](#) and [Simile](#))

Their shepherds

The leaders of Israel are spoken of as if they were the shepherds of people. This can be stated as a simile. Alternate translation: "Their leaders were like shepherds who" (See: [Metaphor](#) and [Simile](#))

turned them around from hill to hill

"lead them around to many different places"

ULT

⁶ My people have been a lost flock. Their shepherds have led them astray in the mountains; they have turned them around from hill to hill. They went, they forgot the place where they had lived.

Jeremiah 50:7

devoured them

Attacking the people of Israel is spoken of as if a wild animal ate them. This can be stated as a simile. Alternate translation: “devoured them like a wild animal would eat its prey” (See: [Metaphor](#) and [Simile](#))

they sinned

The word “they” refers to the people of Israel.

Yahweh, the hope of their ancestors

Yahweh is spoken of as the source of their trust. The abstract noun “hope” can be stated as an action. Alternate translation: “the one whom their ancestors confidently expected to help them” (See: [Metaphor](#) and [Abstract Nouns](#))

ULT

⁷ Everyone who went out to them devoured them. Their adversaries said, ‘We are not guilty, because they sinned against Yahweh, their true home—Yahweh, the hope of their ancestors.’

Jeremiah 50:8

General Information:

Yahweh is speaking to his people in captivity in Babylon.

Leave from the midst of Babylon

This command is addressed to the people of Israel who were in exile in Babylon.

be like male goats that leave

Male goats tend to be more independent than the rest of the flock. This could mean: (1) they should be the first to leave Babylon or (2) they should lead the rest of the Israelites away from Babylon. (See: [Simile](#))

ULT

⁸ Leave from the midst of Babylon; go out from the land of the Chaldeans; be like male goats that leave before the rest of the flock does.

Jeremiah 50:9

For see

The word “see” alerts the reader to pay attention to what follows.
Alternate translation: “Pay attention, because”

set in motion

“stir up”

Babylon will be captured from there

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: “These nations will capture Babylon” (See: [Active or Passive](#))

from there

This could mean: (1) “from the north” or (2) “from their battle positions.”

Their arrows are like a skilled warrior who does not return empty-handed

The effectiveness of the arrows of the attacking nations are spoken of as if they were soldiers that always accomplish their mission. The idiom “empty-handed” means “without success.” Alternate translation: Each of their arrows are like skilled soldiers that always hit their target” (See: [Simile](#) and [Idiom](#))

ULT

⁹ For see, I am about to set in motion and raise up a group of great nations from the north against Babylon. They will arrange themselves against her. Babylon will be captured from there. Their arrows are like a skilled warrior who does not return empty-handed.

Jeremiah 50:10

this is Yahweh's declaration

Yahweh speaks of himself by name to express the certainty of what he is declaring. See how you translated this in [Jeremiah 1:8](#). Alternate translation: "this is what Yahweh declares" or "this is what I, Yahweh, declare" (See: [First, Second or Third Person](#))

ULT

¹⁰ Chaldea will become plunder. All those who plunder it will be satisfied—this is Yahweh's declaration.

Chaldea will become plunder

"They will plunder Chaldea"

Jeremiah 50:11

General Information:

Yahweh is speaking to the people of Babylon.

You rejoice, you celebrate

These terms mean the same thing and are used to emphasize how happy they were to conquer Israel. Alternate translation: “You people of Babylon rejoice, celebrate” (See: [Doublet](#) and [Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information](#))

ULT

11 You rejoice, you celebrate the plundering of my inheritance; you jump around like a calf stamping in its pasture; you neigh like a powerful horse.

You rejoice ... you jump ... you neigh

Each instance of “You” or “you” is plural and refers to the people of Babylon. (See: [Pronouns](#))

you jump around like a calf stamping in its pasture

The joy of the people of Babylon is compared to a calf who runs around joyfully in a pasture. (See: [Simile](#))

stamping

the action a calf makes when kicking the ground

you neigh like a powerful horse

The people of Babylon are compared to stallions that are making loud noises because they are excited. (See: [Simile](#))

Jeremiah 50:12

bore you

The word “you” is plural and refers to the people of Babylon. (See: [Pronouns](#))

So your mother will be greatly ashamed; the one who bore you will be embarrassed

These two phrases mean basically the same thing and emphasize the intensity of her embarrassment. The words “mother” and “the one who bore you” refer either to Babylonia or to the city of Babylon. (See: [Doublet](#) and [Metaphor](#))

the least of nations

“the most unimportant nation”

a wilderness, a dry land, and a desert

These words have basically the same meaning and emphasize the complete barrenness of the land. This could mean: (1) this is a metaphor for an uninhabited place or (2) this refers to Babylon literally becoming a barren wilderness. (See: [Doublet](#) and [Metaphor](#))

ULT

12 So your mother will be greatly ashamed; the one who bore you will be embarrassed. See, she will be the least of nations, a wilderness, a dry land, and a desert.

Jeremiah 50:13

a complete devastation

The abstract noun “devastation” can be stated as a verb. Alternate translation: “completely destroyed” (See: [Abstract Nouns](#))

shudder

shake violently due to fear

hiss

make a sound like a snake that means great disapproval

ULT

13 Because of Yahweh’s anger, Babylon will not be inhabited, but will be a complete devastation. Everyone who passes by will shudder because of Babylon and will hiss because all of its wounds.

Jeremiah 50:14

General Information:

Yahweh tells the other nations to attack Babylon.

Arrange yourselves against Babylon

Yahweh is speaking to the enemies of Babylon. Alternate translation: "You enemies of Babylon arrange yourselves against her" (See: [Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information](#))

ULT

14 Arrange yourselves against Babylon all around her. Everyone who bends a bow must shoot at her. Do not keep back any of your arrows, for she has sinned against Yahweh.

Arrange yourselves

"Line up in military formation" or "Form battle lines"

Everyone who bends a bow

This refers to the soldiers who use bows and arrows to fight.

shoot at her

Jeremiah speaks of the people who live in the city of Babylon as if they were the city itself, and he speaks of the city as if it were a woman. Alternate translation: "shoot at the people in the city" (See: [Personification](#))

Do not keep back any of your arrows

This emphasizes that they should shoot all their arrows. Alternate translation: "Shoot every one of your arrows at her"

she has sinned

Jeremiah speaks of the people who live in the city of Babylon as if they were the city itself, and he speaks of the city as if it were a woman. Alternate translation: "the people of the city" (See: [Personification](#) and [Metonymy](#))

Jeremiah 50:15

She has surrendered ... she has done

Jeremiah speaks of the people who live in the city of Babylon as if they were the city itself, and he speaks of the city as if it were a woman. Alternate translation: "The people of Babylon have surrendered ... they have done" (See: [Metonymy](#))

her towers ... her walls

Jeremiah speaks of the city of Babylon as if it were a woman. Alternate translation: "the towers of the city ... the walls of the city" (See: [Personification](#))

her walls are torn down

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "the nations have torn down her walls" (See: [Active or Passive](#))

ULT

15 Raise a shout against her all around!
She has surrendered; her towers have
fallen; her walls are torn down, for this
is Yahweh's vengeance. Take vengeance
on her! Do to her just as she has done!

Jeremiah 50:16

General Information:

Yahweh continues to tell the other nations to attack Babylon.

the farmer who sows seed and the one who uses a sickle

These people collectively represent all the farmers and harvesters of Babylon.

ULT

16 Destroy both the farmer who sows seed and the one who uses a sickle at the time of harvest in Babylon. Let each person turn back to his own people from the oppressor's sword; let them flee to their own land.

the one who uses a sickle at the time of harvest

A "sickle" is a farm tool that people use to harvest grain. Together with the previous phrase, Yahweh is saying that all planting and harvesting will stop in Babylon.

Let each person turn back to his own people ... let them flee to their own land

These two phrases mean basically the same thing. Together they strengthen the command for foreigners to flee from Babylon back to their own countries. (See: [Doublet](#))

from the oppressor's sword

Here the word "sword" refers to the armies that will attack Babylon. (See: [Metonymy](#))

Jeremiah 50:17

General Information:

Yahweh speaks to Jeremiah about Israel.

Israel is a sheep scattered and driven away by lions

Yahweh speaks of Israel as if it were a sheep that was trying to escape from hungry lions. This metaphor can be stated as a simile and in active form. Alternate translation: "Israel is like a sheep that lions scattered and drove away" (See: [Metaphor](#) and [Simile](#) and [Active or Passive](#))

ULT

17 Israel is a sheep scattered and driven away by lions. First the king of Assyria devoured him; then after this, Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon broke his bones.

Israel

This refers collectively to all the people of Israel. (See: [Metonymy](#))

the king of Assyria

This refers to the army of the king of Assyria. (See: [Metonymy](#))

devoured him

The destruction of Israel by Assyria is spoken of as if Israel were a sheep that Assyria ate. (See: [Metaphor](#))

Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon

This refers to the army of Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon. (See: [Metonymy](#))

broke his bones

The destruction of Israel by Nebuchadnezzar is spoken of as if it were a sheep which had its bones crushed by a lion. Alternate translation: "destroyed Israel" (See: [Metaphor](#))

Jeremiah 50:18

Yahweh of hosts ... says this

Jeremiah often uses these words to introduce an important message from Yahweh. See how you translated this in [Jeremiah 6:6](#).

See, I am about to

The word “See” means to pay special attention to what follows.

his land

Here “land” is a metonym for the people who live in the land of Babylon. Alternate translation: “the Babylonian people” (See: [Metonymy](#))

ULT

18 Therefore Yahweh of hosts, the God of Israel, says this: See, I am about to punish the king of Babylon and his land, just as I punished the king of Assyria.

Jeremiah 50:19

General Information:

Yahweh continues speaking to Jeremiah about Israel.

I will restore

The word “I” refers to Yahweh.

Israel to his homeland ... he will be satisfied

This refers collectively to all the people of Israel. Alternate translation: “the people of Israel to their homeland ... they will be satisfied” (See: [Metonymy](#))

he will graze on Carmel and Bashan

Israel is spoken of as if they were sheep that eat grass. Alternate translation: “they will eat food that grows in Carmel and Bashan” (See: [Metaphor](#))

ULT

19 I will restore Israel to his homeland;
he will graze on Carmel and Bashan.
Then he will be satisfied in the hill
country of Ephraim and Gilead.

Jeremiah 50:20

In those days and at that time

These two phrases mean the same thing and emphasize that future time. See how you translated this in as [Jeremiah 33:15](#). (See: [Doublet](#))

iniquity will be looked for in Israel, but none will be found. I will inquire about the sins of Judah, but none will be found

These two lines mean basically the same thing. Together they emphasize that Yahweh will completely forgive the sins of the people of Israel. (See: [Parallelism](#))

iniquity will be looked for in Israel, but none will be found

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: “Yahweh will look for iniquity in the people of Israel, but will not find any” (See: [Active or Passive](#))

that I spare

They will escape the destruction of Babylon. This can be stated explicitly. Alternate translation: “that I allow to escape the destruction of Babylon” (See: [Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information](#))

ULT

20 In those days and at that time, says Yahweh, iniquity will be looked for in Israel, but none will be found. I will inquire about the sins of Judah, but none will be found, for I will forgive the remnant that I spare.”

Jeremiah 50:21

General Information:

Yahweh speaks to Jeremiah about the enemies of Babylon.

Arise against the land

Yahweh is speaking to the enemies of Babylon. Alternate translation: “You enemies of Babylon, arise against the land” (See: [Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information](#))

ULT

21 “Arise against the land of Merathaim, against it and the ones inhabiting Pekod. Put them to the sword and set them apart for destruction—this is Yahweh’s declaration—do everything that I am commanding you.

Merathaim

This is another name for Babylon. This is a name that means “double rebellion.” (See: [How to Translate Names](#))

Pekod

This is another name for the Chaldeans. This is a name that means “visitation.” (See: [How to Translate Names](#))

Put them to the sword

This refers to having a sword come down on people to kill them. Alternate translation: “Kill them” (See: [Metonymy](#))

Put them to the sword

Here the word “sword” represents war. Yahweh speaks of Babylon’s enemies killing them in battle as if he were placing those people under the sword’s power. Alternate translation: “Kill them in battle” (See: [Metonymy](#) and [Metaphor](#))

Jeremiah 50:22

The sounds of battle and enormous destruction are in the land

These sounds are heard during battle and great destruction. They are spoken of in the present tense to indicate that this will certainly happen soon. Alternate translation: "The sounds of fierce battle and terrible destruction are going to happen soon in the land" (See: [Metonymy](#))

ULT

²² The sounds of battle and enormous destruction are in the land.

Jeremiah 50:23

General Information:

Yahweh speaks to the people of Babylon.

How the hammer of all the lands has been cut apart and destroyed

The army of Babylon is spoken of as if it were a hammer. The destruction of this army is spoken of as if the hammer was to be cut up and destroyed. This can be stated as a simile. Alternate translation: "The mighty army of Babylon that conquered all the nations is like a hammer that will be broken into pieces and destroyed" (See: [Metaphor](#) and [Simile](#))

ULT

²³ How the hammer of all the lands has been cut apart and destroyed. How Babylon has become a destroyed place among the nations.

How Babylon has become a destroyed place among the nations

Babylon was a nation like the other nations, but it will become a complete ruin, totally destroyed.

Jeremiah 50:24

I have set a trap for you and you were taken

The destruction of Babylon is spoken of as if Yahweh had caught them in a trap like an animal. Alternate translation: "I set a trap and caught you in it as a hunter catches an animal" or "You people of Babylon, I have set a trap for you" (See: [Metaphor](#))

you were taken ... You were found and captured

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "I have captured you ... I found you and captured you" (See: [Active or Passive](#))

ULT

²⁴ I have set a trap for you and you were taken, Babylon, and you did not know it! You were found and captured, because you opposed Yahweh.

Jeremiah 50:25

Yahweh has opened his armory and is bringing out the weapons for carrying out his anger

Yahweh's anger that causes him to send enemies against Babylon is spoken of as if Yahweh had an armory and weapons. To open an armory is a metonym for preparing for battle. Alternate translation: "Yahweh has prepared for war and is sending the nations to attack Babylon in his anger" (See: [Metonymy](#))

armory

this is a building or room where weapons of war are stored

ULT

²⁵ Yahweh has opened his armory and is bringing out the weapons for carrying out his anger. There is work for the Lord Yahweh of hosts in the land of the Chaldeans.

Jeremiah 50:26

Attack her from far away

Yahweh speaks to the enemies of Babylon. Alternate translation: "You enemies of Babylon, attack her from far away"

Open her granaries

Here "granaries" represent where Babylon stored its treasures. Alternate translation: "Raid the places where her treasures are stored" (See: [Metaphor](#))

granaries

buildings where grain is stored

pile her up like heaps of grain

This could mean: (1) reduce the city to piles of rubble that look like stacks of grain or (2) stack up the plunder from the city like piles of grain. (See: [Simile](#))

Set her apart for destruction

This idiom means to destroy something completely. See how you translated a similar phrase in [Jeremiah 25:9](#). Alternate translation: "destroy her completely" (See: [Idiom](#))

Leave no remnant of her

This is stated in a negative way to emphasize the completeness of the destruction. Alternate translation: "Kill every person in her"

ULT

²⁶ Attack her from far away. Open her granaries and pile her up like heaps of grain. Set her apart for destruction. Leave no remnant of her.

Jeremiah 50:27

General Information:

Yahweh continues telling how to destroy the people of Babylon and Chaldea.

Kill all her bulls. Send them down to the place of slaughter

Here, the word **bulls** could mean: (1) soldiers or (2) strong young men. Killing them is spoken of as taking them to a place of slaughter. (See: [Metaphor](#))

Kill all her bulls

Yahweh speaks this to the enemies of Babylon. This can be made clear. Alternate translation: “You enemies of Babylon, kill all her bulls” (See: [Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information](#))

her bulls

The word “her” refers to Babylon.

them ... their

The word “them” and “their” refer to the people of Babylon.

their day has come—the time for their punishment

The phrases “their day” and “the time” mean the same thing and can be combined. Alternate translation: “the time for their punishment has come” (See: [Doublet](#))

ULT

27 Kill all her bulls. Send them down to the place of slaughter. Woe to them, for their day has come—the time for their punishment.

Jeremiah 50:28

There is the sound of those fleeing

“Listen and you will hear those who are fleeing”

those ... those ... These

The words “those” and “These” refer to the survivors from Babylon who will tell others about Yahweh’s vengeance.

ULT

28 There is the sound of those fleeing, of those who are survivors, from the land of Babylon. These will report the vengeance of Yahweh our God for Zion, and vengeance for his temple.”

the vengeance of Yahweh our God for Zion, and vengeance for his temple

The abstract noun “vengeance” can be stated as an action. Alternate translation: “Yahweh our God has taken revenge for what they did to Zion and to his temple in Jerusalem” (See: [Abstract Nouns](#))

Jeremiah 50:29

General Information:

Yahweh continues telling how to destroy the people of Babylon and Chaldea.

the archers ... those who bend their bows

These phrases refer to the same people and are repeated for poetic effect. (See: [Doublet](#))

her ... her ... she

The words “her” and “she” refer to Babylon.

let no one escape

This can be stated in positive form. Alternate translation: “capture or kill every person”

Do to her by the measure she has used

The evil things the Babylonians did to Israel are spoken of as if Babylon measured them. Alternate translation: “Measure out punishment for her with the same amount she used to punish Israel” (See: [Metaphor](#))

ULT

29 “Summon the archers against Babylon—all those who bend their bows. Camp against her, and let no one escape. Repay her for what she has done. Do to her by the measure she has used. For she had defied Yahweh, the Holy One of Israel.

Jeremiah 50:30

her young men will fall

“they will kill her young men”

all her fighting men will be destroyed

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: “I will destroy all her fighting men” (See: [Active or Passive](#))

this is Yahweh’s declaration

Yahweh speaks of himself by name to express the certainty of what he is declaring. See how you translated this in [Jeremiah 1:8](#). Alternate translation: “this is what Yahweh declares” or “this is what I, Yahweh, declare” (See: [First, Second or Third Person](#))

ULT

³⁰ So her young men will fall in the city squares, and all her fighting men will be destroyed on that day— this is Yahweh’s declaration.”

Jeremiah 50:31

See, I am against you

Yahweh speaks this to the people of Babylon. This can be made clear.
 Alternate translation: "See, I am against you, people of Babylon"
 (See: [Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information](#))

See

This alerts the reader to pay special attention to what follows.

proud one

This is Yahweh's description of Babylon.

for your day has come ... the time when I will punish you

These two phrases mean the same thing. The second phrase defines the "day" that the first phrase mentions.
 Alternate translation: "for the day when I will punish you has come" (See: [Doublet](#))

your day

"your time." This refers to the entire span of time during which the horrible judgment will come upon Babylon.

ULT

31 "See, I am against you, proud one—
 this is the declaration of the Lord
 Yahweh of hosts— for your day has
 come, proud one, the time when I will
 punish you.

Jeremiah 50:32

the proud ones will stumble and fall

Here “stumble and fall” are idioms that refer to defeat and death. Alternate translation: “I will cause enemies to defeat and kill the proud ones” (See: [Idiom](#))

it will devour everything around him

Fire burning the cities of Babylon is spoken of as if the fire were an animal that ate them. (See: [Metaphor](#))

around him

Here “him” refers to the “proud one” which describes Babylon.

ULT

³² So the proud ones will stumble and fall. No one will raise them up. I will light a fire in their cities; it will devour everything around him.

Jeremiah 50:33

General Information:

Yahweh now speaks through Jeremiah about Israel and Judah.

Yahweh of hosts says this

Jeremiah often uses these words to introduce an important message from Yahweh. See how you translated this in [Jeremiah 6:6](#).

ULT

33 Yahweh of hosts says this: The people of Israel are oppressed, together with the people of Judah. All the ones who captured them still hold them; they refuse to let them go.

The people of Israel are oppressed, together with the people of Judah

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: “The Babylonians are oppressing the people of Israel and Judah” (See: [Active or Passive](#))

captured them

The word “them” refers to the people of Israel and Judah who were captured and taken into exile.

Jeremiah 50:34

He will truly plead their case

Yahweh is spoken of as if he were a lawyer who represents the people of Israel in court. (See: [Metaphor](#))

in order to bring rest to the land

Here “the land” is a metonym for the people who live in the land.

Alternate translation: “in order that the people who live in Israel might live in peace” (See: [Metonymy](#))

bring rest ... bring strife

These two terms represent opposite ideas and bring a strong contrast to how Yahweh will treat Israel and Babylon.

bring rest

“give peace”

ULT

³⁴ The one who rescues them is strong. Yahweh of hosts is his name. He will truly plead their case, in order to bring rest to the land, and to bring strife to the ones inhabiting Babylon.

Jeremiah 50:35

A sword is against ... and against

Here “sword” represents war. Alternate translation: “War will soon happen to ... and to” (See: [Metonymy](#))

this is Yahweh’s declaration

Yahweh speaks of himself by name to express the certainty of what he is declaring. See how you translated this in [Jeremiah 1:8](#). Alternate translation: “this is what Yahweh has declared” or “this is what I, Yahweh, have declared” (See: [First](#), [Second](#) or [Third Person](#))

ULT

³⁵ A sword is against the Chaldeans— this is Yahweh’s declaration— and against the inhabitants of Babylon, her leaders, and her wise men.

Jeremiah 50:36

A sword against

Here “sword” represents war. Alternate translation: “War will soon happen to” (See: [Metonymy](#))

They will become fools

“Their actions are foolish, and everyone will see that they are fools”

They will be filled with terror

“they will be terrified”

ULT

36 A sword against those who say empty words! They will become fools! A sword against her soldiers! They will be filled with terror.

Jeremiah 50:37

A sword is coming against

Here “sword” represents war. Alternate translation: “War will soon happen to” (See: [Metonymy](#))

they will become like women

The weakness of the Babylonian soldiers is spoken of as if they were women. This can be stated clearly. Alternate translation: “they will all become as weak as women” (See: [Simile](#))

storerooms

A storeroom is a place where supplies or valuables are kept.

they will be plundered

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

ULT

37 A sword is coming against their horses, their chariots and all of the people who are in the midst of Babylon, so they will become like women. A sword is coming against her storerooms, and they will be plundered.

Jeremiah 50:38

A drought is coming on her waters

“A drought will soon happen that will affect all her waters”

her waters

Here “waters” represent all the sources of water for the Babylonians, especially the river that went through the city.

ULT

³⁸ A drought is coming on her waters, so they will become dry. For she is a land of worthless idols, and they act like people made insane by their dreadful idols.

Jeremiah 50:39

desert beasts with the jackals

This could mean: (1) “wild animals and hyenas” or (2) “wild demons and evil spirits.”

jackals

A jackal is a wild dog found in Asia and Africa.

ostriches

very large African birds that run fast but cannot fly. Some versions translate this as “owl.”

will live in her

The word “her” refers to Babylon.

For all time, she will no longer be inhabited. From generation to generation, she will not be lived in

These two phrases mean the same thing and emphasize that Babylon will be completely uninhabited. Alternate translation: “People will never live there again; it will be uninhabited forever” (See: [Doublet](#))

she will not be lived in

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

ULT

39 So desert beasts with the jackals will inhabit there, and the young of ostriches will live in her. For all time, she will no longer be inhabited. From generation to generation, she will not be lived in.

Jeremiah 50:40

no one will live there; no person will stay in her

These two phrases mean the same thing and emphasize that Babylon will be completely uninhabited. They can be combined. Alternate translation: “no one will ever live there again” (See: [Doublet](#))

ULT

⁴⁰ Just as God overthrew Sodom and Gomorrah and their neighbors—this is Yahweh’s declaration— no one will live there; no person will stay in her.”

Jeremiah 50:41

General Information:

These verses are almost identical to [Jeremiah 6:22](#) and [Jeremiah 6:23](#). See how you translated those verses.

See, a people is coming

Yahweh speaks to the people of Babylon. This can be made clear. Alternate translation: “See, people of Babylon, a people is coming” (See: [Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information](#))

See, a people

“Pay attention, because what I am about to say is both true and important: a people”

a great nation and many kings

This phrase refers to the time when the Medes and Persians conquered Babylon in 539 BC. Here “nation” represents their armies. Alternate translation: “the armies of a great nation and many kings” (See: [Synecdoche](#))

are being stirred up from the farthest parts of the earth

Being “stirred up” represents being urged to take action. Alternate translation: “are preparing to come from the most distant places on earth” (See: [Metaphor](#) and [Active or Passive](#))

ULT

41 “See, a people is coming from the north; a great nation and many kings are being stirred up from the farthest parts of the earth.

Jeremiah 50:42

They will pick up bows and spears

“The soldiers will carry bows and spears”

Their sound is like the sea roar

The loud noise that the soldiers make is compared to the loud noise of the sea. Alternate translation: “The sound that they make is very loud, like the sound of the sea” (See: [Simile](#))

ULT

⁴² They will pick up bows and spears. They are cruel and have no compassion. Their sound is like the sea roar, and they are riding on horses, set out in order as men for battle, against you, daughter of Babylon.

they are riding on horses, set out in order as men for battle

The phrase “set out in order” means that they have organized themselves and are riding in rows. The phrase “as men for battle” indicates that they are ready to fight. Alternate translation: “they are riding on horses in their assigned rows, and they are ready to fight”

daughter of Babylon

This phrase refers to the Babylonian people. (See: [Metonymy](#))

Jeremiah 50:43

General Information:

This verse is almost identical to [Jeremiah 6:24](#). See how you translated that verse.

his hands fell limp in distress

“his hands were weak because he was anxious”

Anguish seized him

Feeling great anguish is spoken of as if anguish grabs the king of Babylon. Alternate translation: “He felt terrible anguish” (See: [Metaphor](#))

Anguish

suffering and grief that would bring a person to tears

like a woman giving birth

The anguish that they feel because the enemy coming to attack them is compared to the anguish that a woman feels when she is about to give birth to a baby. Alternate translation: “like a woman who is about to give birth” (See: [Simile](#))

ULT

⁴³ The king of Babylon heard the reports about them and his hands fell limp in distress. Anguish seized him like a woman giving birth.

Jeremiah 50:44

General Information:

This verse is almost identical to [Jeremiah 49:19](#). See how you translated that verse.

Behold!

The word “Behold” here tells the reader to pay attention to what follows. Alternate translation: “Pay attention!”

He goes up like a lion from the heights of the Jordan to the enduring grazing place

This simile means that when Yahweh punishes the people of Babylon, it will be fierce and unexpected like when a lion attacks sheep. This can be stated in the first person. Alternate translation: “When I punish the people of Babylon, it will be fierce and unexpected like when a lion comes out of mountains and attacks sheep in the pasture” (See: [Simile](#) and [First, Second or Third Person](#))

the enduring grazing place

This is land covered with grass where animals feed on the grass.

I will quickly cause them to run from it

Here “them” refers to the Babylonian people; the word “it” refers to the invasion.

who will be chosen

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: “whom I will choose” (See: [Active or Passive](#))

For who is like me, and who will summon me?

Yahweh uses this question to emphasize that no one is like him. Alternate translation: “For no one is like me, no one can summon me.” (See: [Rhetorical Question](#))

who will summon me

“who will challenge me” or “who will call me to account”

What shepherd is able to resist me?

Yahweh uses this question to show no one can defeat him. Here “shepherd” is a metaphor for “king” or “ruler.” Alternate translation: “No king is able to resist me.” (See: [Rhetorical Question](#) and [Metaphor](#))

ULT

44 Behold! He goes up like a lion from the heights of the Jordan to the enduring grazing place For I will quickly cause them to run from it, and I will put someone who will be chosen in charge of it. For who is like me, and who will summon me? What shepherd is able to resist me?

Jeremiah 50:45

General Information:

These verses are almost identical to [Jeremiah 49:20](#) and [Jeremiah 49:21](#). See how you translated those verses.

the plans that Yahweh has decided against Babylon, the plans that he has planned against the land of the Chaldeans

These two phrases have the same meaning and are used together for emphasis. Alternate translation: “the plans that Yahweh has decided for the people of Babylon and the Chaldeans” (See: [Parallelism](#))

ULT

⁴⁵ So listen to the plans that Yahweh has decided against Babylon, the plans that he has planned against the land of the Chaldeans. They will certainly be dragged away, even the smallest flock. Their pasturelands will be turned into ruined places.

They will certainly be dragged away, even the smallest flock

This continues speaking of Yahweh punishing the people of Babylon as if he would come like a lion and attack the sheep. This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: “He will drag them away, even the smallest flock” (See: [Metaphor](#) and [Active or Passive](#))

even the smallest flock

Here the youngest and weakest people of Babylon are spoken of as if they were the smallest flock of sheep. Alternate translation: “even the youngest and weakest” (See: [Metaphor](#))

Their pasturelands will be turned into ruined places

Here the land of Babylonia is spoken of as if it were pasturelands for flocks. This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: “He will turn their pasturelands into ruined places” or “He will completely destroy the people who live there” (See: [Metaphor](#) and [Active or Passive](#))

Jeremiah 50:46

At the sound of conquered Babylon the earth shakes

This phrase compares the fall of the once powerful nation of Babylon to the extremely loud noise of an earthquake. Alternate translation: "The fall of Babylon will sound like a mighty earthquake" (See: [Metaphor](#))

distress

pain or unhappiness

their shout of distress

"their shout of pain"

ULT

⁴⁶ At the sound of conquered Babylon the earth shakes, and their shout of distress is heard among the nations."

Jeremiah 51

Jeremiah 51 General Notes

Structure and formatting

Some translations set each line of poetry farther to the right than the rest of the text to make it easier to read. The ULT does this with the poetry in 51:1-64.

The prophesied destruction of Babylon continues in this chapter. (See: [prophet](#), [prophecy](#), [prophecy](#), [seer](#), [prophetess](#))

Special concepts in this chapter

Babylon destroyed

Babylon will be conquered and the Jews will return to their homeland. At this time, Babylon controlled almost the entire Near East. The fulfillment of this prophecy would have been unthinkable. (See: [fulfill](#), [fulfilled](#), [carried out](#))

Covenant with Abraham

Babylon is destroyed because it drove the people of Judah from their homeland. This is in line with the promises of the covenant Yahweh made with Abraham to curse those who curse Abraham's descendants. (See: [promise](#), [promised](#) and [covenant](#) and [curse](#), [cursed](#), [cursing](#))

Jeremiah 51:1

General Information:

Jeremiah often wrote prophecy in the form of poetry. Hebrew poetry uses different kinds of parallelism. (See: [Poetry](#) and [Parallelism](#))

See

This draws attention to what is said next. Alternate translation: “Listen carefully” or “Pay attention”

a wind of destruction

This could mean: (1) “a wind that destroys” or (2) “the spirit of a destroyer.” This would mean that Yahweh would cause or inspire the enemy army to go and attack Babylon.

Leb Kamai

This is code name for Chaldea, a region of Babylonia. It is not clear why Jeremiah uses this name here, so you may want to translate as “Chaldea” or “Babylonia.” (See: [How to Translate Names](#))

ULT

1 “Yahweh says this: See, I am about to stir up a wind of destruction against Babylon and against those who live in Leb Kamai.

Jeremiah 51:2

scatter her and devastate her land ... they will come against her

The word “her,” a metaphor that refers to Babylon as if it were a woman, is also a metonym for the people who live in Babylon. Alternate translation: “separate the people who live there from each other, send them in different directions, and make their land empty ... foreigners will attack the people of Babylon” (See: [Metaphor](#) and [Metonymy](#))

ULT

² I will send foreigners to Babylon. They will scatter her and devastate her land, for they will come against her from all around on the day of disaster.

on the day of disaster

The phrase “day of” is a Hebrew idiom for “when.” Alternate translation: “when I destroy Babylon” (See: [Idiom](#))

Jeremiah 51:3

Do not let ... do not let

Yahweh wants the attack to be so sudden that the archers have no time to prepare for battle.

ULT

³ Do not let the archers bend their bows; do not let them put on armor. Do not spare her young men; set her whole army apart for destruction.

Jeremiah 51:4

those who are killed

This can be translated in active form. Alternate translation: “those whom the attackers kill” (See: [Active or Passive](#))

ULT

⁴ For the wounded people will fall in the land of the Chaldeans; those who are killed will fall in her streets.

Jeremiah 51:5

Israel and Judah are not forsaken by their God, by Yahweh of hosts

The words “Israel” and “Judah” are metonyms for the people of Israel and Judah. This can be translated in active form. Alternate translation: “Yahweh of hosts, the God of the people of Israel and Judah, has not forsaken them” (See: [Metonymy](#) and [Active or Passive](#))

ULT

⁵ For Israel and Judah are not forsaken by their God, by Yahweh of hosts, although their land is filled with offenses committed against the Holy One of Israel.

their land is filled with offenses committed against the Holy One of Israel

The land in which they live is spoken of as if it were a container and their offenses as if they were solid objects that could fill the container. The abstract noun “offenses” can be translated as a verb. Alternate translation: “they have offended the Holy One of Israel everywhere throughout the land” (See: [Metaphor](#) and [Abstract Nouns](#))

Jeremiah 51:6

in her iniquity

Babylon is spoken of as if it were a woman. The word “iniquity” is a metonym for God punishing the people for their iniquity. Alternate translation: “when Yahweh punishes Babylon” (See: [Metaphor](#) and [Metonymy](#))

will repay all of it to her

Babylon is spoken of as if it were a woman, and the iniquity of the people is spoken of as if Yahweh needed to pay back a debt. The word “her,” meaning Babylon, is a metonym for the people of Babylon. Alternate translation: “will punish the Babylonians as much as they deserve” (See: [Metaphor](#) and [Metonymy](#))

ULT

⁶ Flee from the midst of Babylon; let each man save himself. Do not perish in her iniquity. For it is the time of Yahweh's vengeance. He will repay all of it to her.

Jeremiah 51:7

Babylon was a golden cup in the hand of Yahweh that made all the world drunk

The word “world” is a metonym for the people living in the nations surrounding Babylon. This could mean: (1) Making those people drunk could be a metaphor for Yahweh punishing those nations by allowing Babylon to conquer them. Alternate translation: “Babylon was a strong nation that Yahweh used to punish all the people of the surrounding nations severely” or (2) It could be a metaphor for those nations joining Babylon in worshiping idols and being violent. Alternate translation: “Babylon was a rich and powerful nation, and other nations wanted to become sinful just like it” (See: [Metaphor](#) and [Metonymy](#))

ULT

⁷ Babylon was a golden cup in the hand of Yahweh that made all the world drunk; nations drank her wine and became insane.

Babylon was a golden cup in the hand of Yahweh

Babylon being a powerful nation that Yahweh used for his own purposes is spoken of as if Babylon were a golden cup in his hand. Here “hand” represents Yahweh’s power. (See: [Metaphor](#) and [Metonymy](#))

nations drank her wine and became insane

This could mean: (1) “Babylon defeated and destroyed other nations” or (2) “nations enjoyed her riches and power and became evil.” (See: [Metaphor](#))

insane

unable to think clearly

Jeremiah 51:8

Babylon will ... be destroyed

This can be translated in active form. Alternate translation: “Yahweh will destroy Babylon” (See: [Active or Passive](#))

Wail

to make a long, loud cry that shows that the person is sad

perhaps she can be healed

This can be translated in active form. Alternate translation: “perhaps Yahweh can heal her” (See: [Active or Passive](#))

ULT

⁸ Babylon will fall suddenly and be destroyed. Wail for her! Give her medicine for her pain; perhaps she can be healed.

Jeremiah 51:9

General Information:

Yahweh used Babylon to punish Judah and the nation. It is either the people of Judah or the people of the nations who are speaking the words in this quotation.

Babylon ... she is not healed ... leave her ... her guilt

The name of the city is a metonym for the people who live there, and the city is spoken of as if it were a woman. Alternate translation: “the people of Babylon ... they are not healed ... leave them ... their guilt” (See: [Metonymy](#) and [Metaphor](#))

she is not healed

This can be translated in active form. Alternate translation: “we have not been able to heal her” (See: [Active or Passive](#))

For her guilt reaches up to the heavens; it is piled up to the clouds

Guilt is spoken of as if it were an object that could be made into a pile. The words “to the heavens” and “to the clouds” are an exaggeration for something that is very high. Alternate translation: “For Babylon is so very guilty” (See: [Metaphor](#) and [Hyperbole](#))

ULT

⁹ ‘We wished to heal Babylon, but she is not healed. Let us all leave her and go away, to our own land. For her guilt reaches up to the heavens; it is piled up to the clouds.

Jeremiah 51:10

Yahweh has declared our innocence

Yahweh had punished the Israelites for their sins, but now has let them return to him.

ULT

10 Yahweh has declared our innocence.
Come, let us tell in Zion the deeds of
Yahweh our God.'

Jeremiah 51:11

General Information:

Jeremiah is speaking to the people of Jerusalem as if he were speaking to the people of Babylon and their enemies, who cannot hear him, telling them that Yahweh will destroy Babylon before the Babylonians can prepare to defend themselves. (See: [Apostrophe](#))

ULT

11 Sharpen the arrows and take up the shields. Yahweh is stirring up the spirit of the king of the Medes in a plan to destroy Babylon. This is for Yahweh's vengeance, vengeance for the destruction of his temple.

Jeremiah 51:12

Lift up a banner over Babylon's walls

"Give a signal to attack Babylon's walls"

make the watch strong

"make sure the guards are strong and have good weapons"

set up watchmen

"make sure there are enough men watching the city"

prepare the ambushes

This was done in order to catch anyone running from the city.

ULT

12 Lift up a banner over Babylon's walls; make the watch strong; set up watchmen; prepare the ambushes; for the LORD will do what he has said concerning the inhabitants of Babylon.

Jeremiah 51:13

General Information:

Jeremiah continues to speak to the people of Jerusalem as if he were speaking to the people of Babylon, who cannot hear him. (See: [Apostrophe](#))

The thread of your life is now cut short

The people's lives are spoken of as if they were threads that God could cut. This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "Your lives will be ended quickly" (See: [Metaphor](#) and [Idiom](#) and [Active or Passive](#))

ULT

13 You people who live by many streams of water, you people who are rich with treasures, your end has come. The thread of your life is now cut short.

Jeremiah 51:14

like a swarm of locusts

The large number of enemy soldiers is spoken of as if they were a mass of locusts invading the city. Alternate translation: “with a large number of soldiers” (See: [Simile](#))

battle cry

This is a shout that a soldier makes in battle.

ULT

14 Yahweh of hosts has sworn by his own life, ‘I will fill you with men, like a swarm of locusts, and they will raise a battle cry against you.’

Jeremiah 51:15

(There are no notes for this verse.)

ULT

¹⁵ He has made the earth by his power;
he set in place the world by his wisdom.
By his understanding he stretched out
the heavens.

Jeremiah 51:16

When he thunders, there is the roar of waters in the heavens

These phrases compare the voice of Yahweh to the loud sound made by thunder and rain. (See: [Metaphor](#))

storehouses

A storehouse is a building where people keep things they might want to use in the future.

ULT

¹⁶ When he thunders, there is the roar of waters in the heavens, for he brings up the mist from the ends of the earth. He makes lightning for rain and sends out wind from his storehouses.

Jeremiah 51:17

General Information:

Translate many of the words in this verse as in [Jeremiah 10:14](#).

has become ignorant

“is lacking knowledge” or “does not know”

ULT

17 Every man has become ignorant, without knowledge. Every metalworker is put to shame by his idols. For his cast images are frauds, and there is no life in them.

Every metalworker is put to shame by his idols

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: “Every metalworker’s idols put him to shame” or “As for every metalworker, his idols shame him” (See: [Active or Passive](#))

Jeremiah 51:18

General Information:

Translate many of the words in this verse as in [Jeremiah 10:15](#).

they will perish at the time of their punishment

This speaks of the final destruction of the idols. Alternate translation: “there will be a time when God will destroy them” (See: [Personification](#))

ULT

18 They are useless, the work of mockers; they will perish at the time of their punishment.

Jeremiah 51:19

General Information:

Translate many of the words in this verse as in [Jeremiah 10:16](#).

the portion of Jacob

Here “Jacob” represents the people of Israel. God being their “portion” is an idiom that means that they worship him. Alternate translation: “the portion of Israel” or “whom the people of Israel worship” (See: [Metonymy](#) and [Idiom](#))

the molder of all things

“the creator of all things” or “the one who created all things”

Israel is the tribe of his inheritance

This speaks of Israel belonging to Yahweh as if it were something that Yahweh gained through inheritance. Alternate translation: “The tribe of Israel belongs to him” (See: [Metaphor](#))

ULT

19 But God, the portion of Jacob, is not like these, for he is the molder of all things. Israel is the tribe of his inheritance; Yahweh of hosts is his name.

Jeremiah 51:20

You are

“You, the Babylonian army, are”

With you I will smash

Yahweh speaks of punishing people as if he were smashing them with a hammer. Alternate translation: “With you I will punish” (See: [Metaphor](#))

With you I will

“I will use you to”

ULT

²⁰ You are my war hammer, my weapon for battle. With you I will smash nations and destroy kingdoms.

Jeremiah 51:21

(There are no notes for this verse.)

ULT

²¹ With you I will smash horses and their riders; with you I will smash chariots and their drivers.

Jeremiah 51:22

With you I will smash

Yahweh speaks of punishing people as if he were smashing them with a hammer. See how you translated this in [Jeremiah 51:20](#).
Alternate translation: "With you I will punish" (See: [Metaphor](#))

With you I will

"I will use you to." See how you translated this in [Jeremiah 51:20](#).

ULT

22 With you I will smash each man and woman; with you I will smash the old and the young. With you I will smash the young men and the virgin girls.

Jeremiah 51:23

(There are no notes for this verse.)

ULT

²³ With you I will smash the shepherds and their flocks; with you I will smash the plowmen and their teams. With you I will smash the governors and officials.

Jeremiah 51:24

in your sight I will pay

The abstract noun “sight” can be expressed with the verb “see.”
Alternate translation: “you will see it when I pay” (See: [Abstract Nouns](#))

this is Yahweh’s declaration

Yahweh speaks of himself by name to express the certainty of what he is declaring. See how you translated this in [Jeremiah 1:8](#). Alternate translation: “this is what Yahweh has declared” or “this is what I, Yahweh, have declared” (See: [First, Second or Third Person](#))

ULT

24 For in your sight I will pay Babylon and all the inhabitants of Chaldea for all of the evil that they did in Zion—this is Yahweh’s declaration.

Jeremiah 51:25

General Information:

Yahweh speaks to the people of Jerusalem, who could hear him, as if he were speaking to the people of Babylon, who could not hear him. He speaks to the city of Babylon as if he were speaking to the people of Babylon itself. He speaks of the city as if it were a mountain. (See: [Apostrophe](#) and [Metonymy](#) and [Metaphor](#))

I will stretch out my hand against you

The word “hand” is a metonym for the power that the hand exercises. See how “I will attack the inhabitants of the land with my hand” is translated in [Jeremiah 6:12](#). Alternate translation: “I will use my strength to attack you” (See: [Metonymy](#))

I will ... roll you down from the cliffs

Yahweh stops speaking of Babylon as a mountain and speaks of it as a building that he is breaking down and throwing away. (See: [Metaphor](#))

cliffs

A cliff is the steep side of a mountain or hill.

I will ... make you a burned-out mountain

Yahweh speaks of Babylon as no longer being the great “mountain of destruction” but now a mountain that he has destroyed. Alternate translation: “I will ... make you a pile of useless rocks” (See: [Metaphor](#))

this is Yahweh’s declaration

Yahweh speaks of himself by name to express the certainty of what he is declaring. See how you translated this in [Jeremiah 1:8](#). Alternate translation: “this is what Yahweh has declared” or “this is what I, Yahweh, have declared” (See: [First, Second or Third Person](#))

ULT

²⁵ See, I am against you, mountain of destruction—this is Yahweh’s declaration—which destroys the whole earth. I will stretch out my hand against you, and roll you down from the cliffs, and make you a burned-out mountain.

Jeremiah 51:26

you will become an everlasting devastation

The abstract noun “devastation” can be translated as a verb “devastate.” Alternate translation: “I will devastate you and no one will ever rebuild you” or “I will turn you into an empty place where no one will ever live” (See: [Abstract Nouns](#))

ULT

²⁶ So they will not take from you any stone to construct a building’s corner or foundation; for you will become an everlasting devastation—this is Yahweh’s declaration.

Jeremiah 51:27

Lift up a banner ... Blow the trumpet ... Call ... to attack

Lifting a banner and blowing a trumpet are both ways of calling people to attack. (See: [Parallelism](#))

banner

“battle flag.” This is large flag for the soldiers to follow in battle.

attack her

The city of Babylon is a metonym for the people of Babylon, and it is spoken of as if it were a woman. Alternate translation: “attack the people of Babylon” (See: [Metonymy](#) and [Metaphor](#))

Ararat ... Minni ... Ashkenaz

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

bring up horses like swarming locusts

Yahweh compares a great number of horses to a swarm of locusts. Alternate translation: “bring many horses with soldiers quickly” (See: [Simile](#))

ULT

²⁷ Lift up a banner over the earth. Blow the trumpet over the nations. Call the nations to attack her: Ararat, Minni, and Ashkenaz. Appoint a commander to attack her; bring up horses like swarming locusts.

Jeremiah 51:28

governors ... officials

See how you translated these words in [Jeremiah 51:23](#).

ULT

28 Prepare the nations to attack her: The kings of the Medes and his governors, all of his officials and all the lands under his rule.

Jeremiah 51:29

the land will shake and be in anguish

The land is a metonym for the people who live on the land. Shaking and being in anguish are metonyms for being very afraid. Alternate translation: “the people who live in Babylon will shake with fear and be in anguish” (See: [Metonymy](#))

anguish

suffering and grief that would bring a person to tears

against Babylon

The city of Babylon is a metonym for the people of Babylon. Alternate translation: “against the people of Babylon” (See: [Metonymy](#))

there is no inhabitant

“no one lives”

ULT

²⁹ For the land will shake and be in anguish, since Yahweh’s plans continue against Babylon, to make the land of Babylon a wasteland where there is no inhabitant.

Jeremiah 51:30

General Information:

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

**her homes are on fire, the bars of her gates
are broken**

The city is spoken of as if it were a woman. Alternate translation: “the homes in the city are on fire, the bars of the city gates are broken” (See: [Metaphor](#))

ULT

30 The soldiers in Babylon have stopped fighting; they stay in their strongholds. Their strength has failed; they have become women—her homes are on fire, the bars of her gates are broken.

Jeremiah 51:31

his city has been taken

This can be translated in active form. Alternate translation: “the enemies have overcome the whole city” (See: [Active or Passive](#))

ULT

31 A messenger runs to proclaim to another messenger, and a runner tells another runner to report to the king of Babylon that his city has been taken from end to end.

Jeremiah 51:32

the fords over the river are seized

This can be translated in active form. Alternate translation: “the enemies have taken control of all the fords over the river” (See: [Active or Passive](#))

fords

shallow parts of a river where people can walk across

marshes

places with shallow water and grasses growing in deep mud

confused

unable to think clearly

ULT

³² So the fords over the river are seized; the enemy is burning the reed marshes, and Babylon’s fighting men are confused.

Jeremiah 51:33

Yahweh of hosts ... says this

Jeremiah often uses these words to introduce an important message from Yahweh. See how you translated this in [Jeremiah 6:6](#).

The daughter of Babylon

“Daughter of Babylon” here is another name for the people who live in Babylon. (See: [Metonymy](#))

is like a threshing floor

People thresh grain by trampling it on a threshing floor, and Yahweh speaks of people punishing the daughter of Babylon as if they were threshing grain. (See: [Simile](#))

It is time to trample her down

Yahweh punishing the daughter of Babylon is spoken of as if he were trampling and threshing grain on a threshing floor. Alternate translation: “It is time to punish her” (See: [Metaphor](#))

the time of harvest will come to her

The harvest is a metaphor for the result of the actions that the people did before. Babylon will experience the result of its people’s sins. Alternate translation: “God will punish her for her sins” (See: [Metaphor](#))

ULT

33 For Yahweh of hosts, God of Israel, says this: The daughter of Babylon is like a threshing floor. It is time to trample her down. In a little while the time of harvest will come to her.

Jeremiah 51:34

General Information:

The speaker speaks as if he were a woman. The woman is a metaphor for the city of Jerusalem, which in turn is a metonym for the people of Jerusalem. (See: [Metaphor](#) and [Metonymy](#))

he has driven me into confusion

This could mean: (1) “he has caused me to be unable to think clearly” or (2) “he has crushed me.”

has made me an empty pot

Babylon has taken everything from Israel. (See: [Metaphor](#))

Like a monster

Here Babylon is compared to a monster. (See: [Simile](#))

he has swallowed me

Jerusalem compares its destruction to being swallowed. (See: [Metaphor](#))

he has filled his stomach with my delicious foods

This continues to speak of Babylon as if it were a monster. This states in another way the previous idea that Babylon has taken everything from Israel. Here “foods” represents all the good things that were there before. (See: [Metaphor](#) and [Metonymy](#))

he has spit me out

Nebuchadnezzar took what he wanted and spit out what he did not want. Alternate translation: “he has vomited me up” (See: [Metaphor](#))

ULT

³⁴ ‘Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon has devoured me, he has driven me into confusion and has made me an empty pot. Like a monster he has swallowed me, he has filled his stomach with my delicious foods, and then he has spit me out.’

Jeremiah 51:35

The one who lives in Zion

“She who lives in Zion”

The one ... to me and my flesh ... my blood

All of these phrases refer to a woman.

inhabitants of Chaldea

“people who live in Chaldea”

ULT

³⁵ The one who lives in Zion will say,
'May the violence done to me and my
flesh be on Babylon.' Jerusalem will say,
'May my blood be on the inhabitants of
Chaldea.'

Jeremiah 51:36

General Information:

This begins Yahweh's reply to Jerusalem's request in verses 34 and 35.

I am about to plead your case and bring about vengeance

Yahweh defending his people is spoken of as if he were a lawyer pleading their case in court. Alternate translation: "I will be like your lawyer to defend you and I will bring about vengeance" (See: [Metaphor](#))

ULT

36 Therefore Yahweh says this: See, I am about to plead your case and bring about vengeance for you. For I will dry up Babylon's waters and make her springs run dry.

Jeremiah 51:37

heaps of rubble

buildings that have become piles of rock

den of jackals

home for wild dogs

a horror

something that terrifies everyone who looks at it

hissing

a sound people make to show that they dislike something very much

there are no inhabitants

“no one lives”

ULT

³⁷ Babylon will become heaps of rubble, a den of jackals, a horror, an object of hissing, where there are no inhabitants.

Jeremiah 51:38

roar

loud sound made by a lion

growl

a sound animals make to frighten other animals

ULT

³⁸ The Babylonians will roar together like young lions. They will growl like lion cubs.

Jeremiah 51:39

become happy

As a soldier is happy when he defeats a strong enemy. Another possible meaning is “are very drunk” .

ULT

³⁹ When they become hot with greed, I will make a feast for them; I will make them drunk so they become happy, and then sleep an unending sleep and not wake up—this is Yahweh’s declaration
—

Jeremiah 51:40

like lambs ... male goats

Lambs and goats do not know before it happens that people are going to slaughter them, and the Babylonians will not know before it happens that Yahweh is going to destroy them. (See: [Simile](#))

ULT

40 I will send them down like lambs to the slaughter, like rams with male goats.

Jeremiah 51:41

How Babylon has been captured ... How Babylon has become a ruined place

The word “how” here shows that something that people thought was impossible has happened. This can be stated in active form.

Alternate translation: “We never thought that enemies could capture Babylon, but they have captured her ... We never thought that Babylon could become a ruined place, but it has become a ruined place” (See: [Active or Passive](#))

ULT

⁴¹ How Babylon has been captured! So the praise of all the earth is seized. How Babylon has become a ruined place among the nations.

the praise of all the earth is seized

The word “praise” is a metonym for the thing that people praised, and the word “earth” is a metonym for the people living on the earth. This can be translated in active form. Alternate translation: “enemies have seized Babylon, the nation that everyone on earth praised” (See: [Metonymy](#) and [Active or Passive](#))

Jeremiah 51:42

The sea ... roaring waves

Babylon's enemies have overcome her. "Waves" represent many people groups overcoming Babylon. The words "sea" and "water" often represent the nations. (See: [Metaphor](#))

ULT

42 The sea has come up over Babylon!
She is covered with its roaring waves.

She is covered with its roaring waves

This can be translated in active form. Alternate translation: "Its roaring waves have covered her" (See: [Active or Passive](#))

Jeremiah 51:43

Her cities

“Babylon’s cities”

ULT

⁴³ Her cities have become a desolation, a dry land and a wilderness, a land that no one inhabits, and no human being passes through.

Jeremiah 51:44

I will punish Bel

Bel was the main god of the Babylonians and represents the whole country and the people that worshiped it. (See: [Metonymy](#))

out from his mouth what he swallowed

Yahweh compares all the sacrifices and offerings to Bel to things he ate. (See: [Personification](#))

the nations will no longer flow

The many nations that come to Babylon to sacrifice to Bel is spoken of as a river that moves along. Alternate translation: “the people of other nations will no longer come in large groups” (See: [Metaphor](#))

ULT

44 So I will punish Bel in Babylon; I will bring out from his mouth what he swallowed, and the nations will no longer flow to him with their offerings. The walls of Babylon will fall.

Jeremiah 51:45

(There are no notes for this verse.)

ULT

⁴⁵ Go out from her midst, my people.
Let each of you save his own life from
the fury of my wrath.

Jeremiah 51:46

the news that is heard in the land

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: “when you hear the news that is in the land” (See: [Active or Passive](#))

Ruler will be against ruler

The ruler is a metonym for the nations under his control. Alternate translation: “Nations will fight against other nations” (See: [Metonymy](#))

ULT

46 Do not let your hearts be timid or fear the news that is heard in the land, for the news will come one year. After it in the next year there will be news, and violence will be in the land. Ruler will be against ruler.

Jeremiah 51:47

see

“look” or “listen” or “pay attention to what i am about to tell you”

days are coming ... when I will punish

Future time is spoken of as if the “days are coming.” See how you translated this metaphor in [Jeremiah 7:32](#). Alternate translation: “in the future ... I will punish” or “there will be a time ... when I will punish” (See: [Metaphor](#))

ULT

47 Therefore, see, days are coming when I will punish the carved idols of Babylon. All of her land will be ashamed, and all of her slaughtered ones will fall in her midst.

I will punish the carved idols of Babylon

Removing the idols of Babylon is spoken of as if Yahweh would punish the idols. Alternate translation: “I will remove the carved idols of Babylon” (See: [Metaphor](#))

Babylon ... her land ... her slaughtered ones ... her midst

The people of Babylon are spoken of as if they were the city itself, and the city is spoken of as if it were a woman. Alternate translation: “the people of Babylon ... their land ... their slaughtered ones ... their midst” (See: [Metonymy](#) and [Metaphor](#))

Jeremiah 51:48

over Babylon ... come for her

The people of Babylon are spoken of as if they were the city itself, and the city is spoken of as if it were a woman. Alternate translation: “over the Babylonians ... come for them ... the Babylonians have made ... their land” (See: [Metonymy](#) and [Metaphor](#))

the heavens and the earth

Heaven and earth are viewed as if they were people. (See: [Personification](#))

this is Yahweh’s declaration

Yahweh speaks of himself by name to express the certainty of what he is declaring. See how you translated this in [Jeremiah 1:8](#). Alternate translation: “this is what Yahweh has declared” or “this is what I, Yahweh, have declared” (See: [First, Second or Third Person](#))

ULT

48 Then the heavens and the earth, and all that is in them will rejoice over Babylon. For destroyers will come for her from the north—this is Yahweh’s declaration.

Jeremiah 51:49

Babylon has made ... her land

The people of Babylon are spoken of as if they were the city itself, and the city is spoken of as if it were a woman. Alternate translation: “the people of Babylon ... their land ... their slaughtered ones ... their midst ... over the Babylonians ... come for them ... the Babylonians have made ... their land” (See: [Metonymy](#) and [Metaphor](#))

ULT

⁴⁹ As Babylon has made the killed of Israel fall, so the killed of all her land will fall in Babylon.

the killed of all her land

“those whom the Babylonians’ enemies have killed in the land”

Jeremiah 51:50

General Information:

Jeremiah speaks to the Israelite people in verse 50.

Survivors of the sword

The sword is a metonym for war, in which soldiers use swords. Alternate translation: “You who have survived the war” (See: [Metonymy](#))

ULT

50 Survivors of the sword, go away! Do not stay still. Call Yahweh to mind from far away; let Jerusalem come to mind.

Call Yahweh to mind from far away; let Jerusalem come to mind

The phrases “Call ... to mind” and “come to mind” are idioms that mean to think about or remember. Alternate translation: “Though you are far away, think about Yahweh; think about Jerusalem” (See: [Idiom](#))

Jeremiah 51:51

insults

words that one person uses to offend another

reproach has covered our faces

The speakers' reaction to people expressing disapproval of them is spoken of as if it were a cover placed over the speakers' faces. Alternate translation: "our faces show that we are hurt because others disapprove of us" or "we cover our faces in shame because others disapprove of us" (See: [Metaphor](#))

ULT

51 We are ashamed, for we have heard insults; reproach has covered our faces, for foreigners have entered the holy places of Yahweh's house.

Jeremiah 51:52

see

“look” or “listen” or “pay attention to what i am about to tell you”

days are coming ... when I will punish

Future time is spoken of as if the “days are coming.” See how you translated this metaphor in [Jeremiah 7:32](#). Alternate translation: “in the future ... I will punish” or “there will be a time ... when I will punish” (See: [Metaphor](#))

ULT

⁵² Therefore, see, days are coming—this is Yahweh’s declaration—when I will punish her carved idols, and the wounded people will groan in all of her land.

this is Yahweh’s declaration

Yahweh speaks of himself by name to express the certainty of what he is declaring. See how you translated this in [Jeremiah 1:8](#). Alternate translation: “this is what Yahweh has declared” or “this is what I, Yahweh, have declared” (See: [First, Second or Third Person](#))

I will punish her carved idols

Removing or destroying idols is spoken of as if Yahweh would punish the idols. Alternate translation: “I will destroy her carved idols” or “I will remove her carved idols” (See: [Metaphor](#))

her carved idols ... her land

The people of Babylon are spoken of as if they were the city itself, and the city is spoken of as if it were a woman. Alternate translation: “their carved idols ... their land ... the Babylonians ... their highest fortresses ... to them” (See: [Metonymy](#) and [Metaphor](#))

groan

to cry out because of pain or sadness

Jeremiah 51:53

her highest fortresses ... to her

The people of Babylon are spoken of as if they were the city itself, and the city is spoken of as if it were a woman. Alternate translation: “their highest fortresses ... to them” (See: [Metonymy](#) and [Metaphor](#))

if Babylon went up ... or fortified ... destroyers would come from me

This is a hypothetical situation that Yahweh does not expect to happen. Alternate translation: “Babylon will not go up ... or fortify ... destroyers will surely come from me” (See: [Hypothetical Situations](#))

ULT

⁵³ For even if Babylon went up to the heavens or fortified her highest fortresses, destroyers would come from me to her—this is Yahweh’s declaration.

Jeremiah 51:54

A shout of distress came from Babylon, a great collapse from the land of the Chaldeans

The same thought is expressed in two different ways for emphasis.
(See: [Parallelism](#))

ULT

⁵⁴ A shout of distress came from Babylon, a great collapse from the land of the Chaldeans.

Jeremiah 51:55

destroying Babylon ... her loud voice

The people of Babylon are spoken of as if they were the city itself, and the city is spoken of as if it were a woman. Alternate translation: “destroying the people of Babylon ... their loud voices” (See: [Metonymy](#) and [Metaphor](#))

Their enemies ... their noise

“The enemies of the people of Babylon ... the noise of the enemies”

enemies roar like the waves of many waters

The waves of the ocean and of flooding rivers make a loud sound, and the enemies will make a very loud sound as they come. (See: [Simile](#))

ULT

⁵⁵ For Yahweh is destroying Babylon. He is causing her loud voice to perish. Their enemies roar like the waves of many waters; their noise becomes very strong.

Jeremiah 51:56

against her—against Babylon!—and her warriors

The people of Babylon are spoken of as if they were the city itself, and the city is spoken of as if it were a woman. Alternate translation: “against the people of Babylon—yes, against Babylon!—and their warriors” (See: [Metonymy](#) and [Metaphor](#))

her warriors have been captured

This phrase can be changed to have an active verb. Alternate translation: “her enemies have captured her warriors” (See: [Active or Passive](#))

ULT

⁵⁶ For the destroyers have come against her—against Babylon!—and her warriors have been captured. Their bows are broken, for Yahweh is the God of vengeance; he will surely carry out this repayment.

Jeremiah 51:57

her princes, her sages, her officials, and her soldiers

The people of Babylon are spoken of as if they were the city itself, and the city is spoken of as if it were a woman. Alternate translation: “their princes, their sages, their officials, and their soldiers ... their high gates ... their aid ... for them” (See: [Metonymy](#) and [Metaphor](#))

they will sleep in an unending sleep and never wake up

They will be dead. See how you translated this in [Jeremiah 51:39](#). (See: [Euphemism](#))

ULT

⁵⁷ For I will make her princes, her sages, her officials, and her soldiers drunk, and they will sleep in an unending sleep and never wake up— this is the King’s declaration: Yahweh of hosts is his name.

Jeremiah 51:58

Yahweh of hosts says this

Jeremiah often uses these words to introduce an important message from Yahweh. See how you translated this in [Jeremiah 6:6](#).

The thick walls of Babylon will be completely demolished

This can be translated in active form. Alternate translation: “The invaders will completely demolish the thick walls of Babylon” (See: [Active or Passive](#))

her high gates ... her aid ... for her

The city of Babylon is spoken of as if it were a woman. Alternate translation: “their high gates ... their aid ... for them” (See: [Metonymy](#) and [Metaphor](#))

her high gates will be burned

This can be translated in active form. Alternate translation: “they will burn her high gates” (See: [Active or Passive](#))

everything ... will be burned up

This can be translated in active form. Alternate translation: “they will burn up everything that the nations try to do for her” (See: [Active or Passive](#))

ULT

58 Yahweh of hosts says this: The thick walls of Babylon will be completely demolished, and her high gates will be burned. Then the peoples coming to her aid will labor uselessly; everything that the nations try to do for her will be burned up.”

Jeremiah 51:59

Seraiah ... Neriah ... Mahseiah

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

in the fourth year of his reign

“after he had been king for three years.” This “fourth” is the ordinal number for four. (See: [Ordinal Numbers](#))

ULT

⁵⁹ This is the word that Jeremiah the prophet commanded Seraiah son of Neriah son of Mahseiah when he went with Zedekiah king of Judah to Babylon in the fourth year of his reign. Now Seraiah was a chief officer.

Jeremiah 51:60

that were written about Babylon

This can be translated in active form. Alternate translation: “that he had written about Babylon”

ULT

60 For Jeremiah had written in a scroll about all the disaster that was going to come on Babylon—all these words that were written about Babylon.

Jeremiah 51:61

(There are no notes for this verse.)

ULT

⁶¹ Jeremiah said to Seraiah, "When you go to Babylon, then you will see and you will read these words aloud."

Jeremiah 51:62

animal

If your language has a word for animals that normally live with people, you might want to use it here, because [Jeremiah 51:37](#) states that Babylon will be inhabited by wild animals.

ULT

62 Then you will say, 'Yahweh, you yourself have declared that you would destroy this place, and that no man or animal will live in it, and it will be desolate forever.'

Jeremiah 51:63

(There are no notes for this verse.)

ULT

63 Then when you have finished reading this scroll, tie a stone to it and throw it into the middle of the Euphrates.

Jeremiah 51:64

Babylon will sink like this

The stone and scroll will disappear in the water, the water will destroy the scroll, and Babylon will no longer look like a city or have buildings for people to live in. (See: [Simile](#))

will not arise

“will never again be a city”

they will fall

This means the Babylonians will fall because they are exhausted. Many translations do not include these words.

ULT

⁶⁴ Say, ‘Babylon will sink like this. It will not arise because of the disaster that I am sending against it, and they will fall.’” Jeremiah’s words end here.

Jeremiah 52

Jeremiah 52 General Notes

Structure and formatting

The chapter returns to a previous sequence of events and records Babylon's conquering of Judah. It also records the destruction of the temple in Jerusalem. (See: [temple](#), [house](#), [house of God](#))

Jeremiah 52:1

General Information:

Because of the words “Jeremiah’s words end here” in [Jeremiah 51:64](#) and because the words here appear in other books of the Bible, many scholars believe that this chapter was written by someone other than Jeremiah and attached to the scroll that Jeremiah and Baruch wrote.

ULT

¹ Zedekiah was twenty-one years old when he began to reign; he reigned eleven years in Jerusalem. His mother’s name was Hamutal; she was the daughter of Jeremiah from Libnah.

Hamutal

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

Libnah

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

Jeremiah

This refers to another man named Jeremiah, not the prophet Jeremiah who wrote this book. (See: [How to Translate Names](#))

Jeremiah 52:2

what was evil in the sight of Yahweh

The sight of Yahweh represents Yahweh's judgment or evaluation.
 Alternate translation: "what was evil in Yahweh's judgment" or
 "what Yahweh considers to be evil" (See: [Metaphor](#))

ULT

² He did what was evil in the sight of Yahweh; he did everything that Jehoiakim had done.

Jeremiah 52:3

(There are no notes for this verse.)

ULT

³ Through Yahweh's anger, all these events happened in Jerusalem and Judah, until he drove them from before himself. Then Zedekiah rebelled against the king of Babylon.

Jeremiah 52:4

It happened

This phrase is used here to mark the beginning of a new part of the story.

in the ninth year of the reign of King Zedekiah, in the tenth month, and on the tenth day of the month

after Zedekiah had been king for eight years, in the tenth calendar month, on the tenth day of the month (See: [Ordinal Numbers](#))

in the ninth year

“in year nine” (See: [Ordinal Numbers](#))

in the tenth month, and on the tenth day of the month

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

They camped opposite it

“Nebuchadnezzar’s army camped opposite Jerusalem”

ULT

⁴ It happened that in the ninth year of the reign of King Zedekiah, in the tenth month, and on the tenth day of the month, Nebuchadnezzar, king of Babylon, came with all his army against Jerusalem. They camped opposite it, and they built a siege wall around it.

Jeremiah 52:5

until the eleventh year of King Zedekiah's reign

until Zedekiah had been king for more than ten years (See: [Ordinal Numbers](#))

ULT

⁵ So the city was besieged until the eleventh year of King Zedekiah's reign.

eleventh year

"year eleven" (See: [Ordinal Numbers](#))

So the city was besieged

This can be translated in active form. Alternate translation: "So they besieged the city" (See: [Active or Passive](#))

Jeremiah 52:6

By the ninth day of the fourth month

This is the fourth month of the Hebrew calendar. It is during the dry season. The ninth day is near the beginning of July on Western calendars. Zedekiah had been king for ten years, three months, and eight days. (See: [Hebrew Months](#) and [Ordinal Numbers](#))

city

This refers to Jerusalem.

ULT

⁶ By the ninth day of the fourth month the famine was so severe in the city that there was no food for the people of the land.

Jeremiah 52:7

the city was broken into

This can be translated in active form. Alternate translation: “the Babylonians broke through the wall around the city” (See: [Active or Passive](#))

the two walls

the wall of the king’s garden and the wall of the city

ULT

⁷ Then the city was broken into, and all the fighting men fled and went out of the city at night by the way of the gate that was between the two walls, by the king’s garden, although the Chaldeans were all around the city. So they went in the direction of the Arabah.

Jeremiah 52:8

plains

flat land

All his army was scattered

This can be translated in active form. This could mean: (1) “the Chaldeans scattered his entire army” or (2) “all of his soldiers ran away in different directions.” (See: [Active or Passive](#))

ULT

⁸ But the army of Chaldeans pursued the king and overtook Zedekiah in the plains of the Jordan River valley near Jericho. All his army was scattered away from him.

Jeremiah 52:9

at Riblah in the land of Hamath

Riblah was a town in the territory of Hamath. (See: [How to Translate Names](#))

passed sentence on him

“decided how to punish him”

ULT

⁹ They captured the king and brought him up to the king of Babylon at Riblah in the land of Hamath, where he passed sentence on him.

Jeremiah 52:10

slaughtered Zedekiah's sons before his own eyes

The eyes are a synecdoche for the whole person. The reader should also understand that others probably helped the king of Babylon kill Zedekiah's sons. Alternate translation: "forced Zedekiah to watch as the king of Babylon slaughtered Zedekiah's sons" (See: [Synecdoche](#))

ULT

¹⁰ The king of Babylon slaughtered Zedekiah's sons before his own eyes, and at Riblah he also slaughtered all the leaders of Judah.

Jeremiah 52:11

he put out Zedekiah's eyes

"the king's men made Zedekiah blind." Use the common words for making a person blind. It is not clear that the king of Babylon took Zedekiah's eyes out of his head. The reader should also understand that others probably helped the king of Babylon make Zedekiah blind.

the day of his death

the day of Zedekiah's death

ULT

11 Then he put out Zedekiah's eyes, bound him in bronze chains, and brought him to Babylon. The king of Babylon put him in prison until the day of his death.

Jeremiah 52:12

in the fifth month, on the tenth day of the month, which was the nineteenth year of the reign of King Nebuchadnezzar

Nebuchadnezzar had been king for eighteen years, four months, and nine days. This is the fifth month of the Hebrew calendar. It is during the dry season. The tenth day is near the beginning of August on Western calendars. (See: [Hebrew Months](#) and [Ordinal Numbers](#))

the nineteenth year

“during year nineteen” (See: [Ordinal Numbers](#))

Nebuzaradan

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

bodyguards

people whose job is to protect someone

ULT

¹² Now in the fifth month, on the tenth day of the month, which was the nineteenth year of the reign of King Nebuchadnezzar, king of Babylon, Nebuzaradan came to Jerusalem. He was the commander of the king's bodyguards and a servant of the king of Babylon.

Jeremiah 52:13

(There are no notes for this verse.)

ULT

¹³ He burned the house of Yahweh, the king's palace, and all the houses of Jerusalem; also every important building in the city he burned.

Jeremiah 52:14

(There are no notes for this verse.)

ULT

14 As for the walls around Jerusalem, all the army of the Babylonians who were with the commander of the bodyguards destroyed them.

Jeremiah 52:15

Nebuzaradan

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

ULT

15 As for the poorest people, the rest of the people who were left in the city, those who had deserted to the king of Babylon, and the rest of the craftsmen — Nebuzaradan, the commander of the bodyguards, took some of them away into exile.

Jeremiah 52:16

the poorest of the land

“the poorest people who lived on the land”

ULT

16 But Nebuzaradan, the commander of the bodyguards, left some of the poorest of the land to work the vineyards and fields.

Jeremiah 52:17

The Sea

This is a basin of water used in the worship of Yahweh.

ULT

17 As for the bronze pillars that belonged to the house of Yahweh, and the stands, and the large bronze basin called “The Sea” that were in the house of Yahweh, the Chaldeans broke them into pieces and carried all the bronze back to Babylon.

Jeremiah 52:18

(There are no notes for this verse.)

ULT

18 The pots, shovels, lamp trimmers, bowls, and all the utensils of bronze with which the priests had served in the temple—the Chaldeans took them all away.

Jeremiah 52:19

(There are no notes for this verse.)

ULT

¹⁹ The basins and the incense burners, the bowls, pots, lampstands, pans, and basins that were made of gold, and those made of silver—the commander of the king’s guard took them away as well.

Jeremiah 52:20

(There are no notes for this verse.)

ULT

²⁰ The two pillars, the large bronze basin known as “The Sea,” and the twelve bronze bulls that were under the stands, things that Solomon had made for the house of Yahweh, contained more bronze than could be weighed.

Jeremiah 52:21

eighteen cubits ... twelve cubits

A cubit was about 46 centimeters long. Alternate translation: “18 cubits...12 cubits” or “about 8.3 meters ... about 5.5 meters” (See: [Biblical Distance](#))

hollow

The pillars had empty space inside them.

ULT

21 The pillars were eighteen cubits high each, and a line around each one measured twelve cubits. Each was four fingers thick and hollow.

Jeremiah 52:22

capital

This is the top part of each pillar.

five cubits

A cubit was about 46 centimeters long. Alternate translation: “5 cubits” or “about 2.3 meters” (See: [Biblical Distance](#))

ULT

²² A capital of bronze was on top of it. The capital was five cubits high, with latticework and pomegranates all around. It was all made of bronze. The other pillar and its pomegranates were the same as the first.

Jeremiah 52:23

(There are no notes for this verse.)

ULT

²³ So there were ninety-six
pomegranates on the capital's sides,
and one hundred pomegranates above
the surrounding latticework.

Jeremiah 52:24

Seraiah

See how you translated this man's name in [Jeremiah 36:26](#).

gatekeepers

people who guard the gate of a city

ULT

²⁴ The commander of the bodyguards took prisoner Seraiah, the high priest, together with Zephaniah, the second priest, and the three gatekeepers.

Jeremiah 52:25

drafting men into the army

“forcing men to fight in the army”

ULT

²⁵ From the city he took prisoner an officer who was in charge of soldiers, and seven men of those who advised the king, who were still in the city. He also took prisoner the king's army officer responsible for drafting men into the army, along with sixty important men from the land who were in the city.

Jeremiah 52:26

Nebuzaradan

See how you translated this man's name in [Jeremiah 39:9](#). (See: [How to Translate Names](#))

Riblah

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

ULT

26 Then Nebuzaradan, the commander of the bodyguards, took them and brought them to the king of Babylon at Riblah.

Jeremiah 52:27

(There are no notes for this verse.)

ULT

²⁷ The king of Babylon put them to death at Riblah in the land of Hamath. In this way, Judah went out of its land into exile.

Jeremiah 52:28

seventh

(See: [Ordinal Numbers](#))

3023

“three thousand and twenty-three” (See: [Numbers](#))

ULT

²⁸ These were the people who Nebuchadnezzar exiled: In the seventh year, 3,023 Judeans.

Jeremiah 52:29

eighteenth

(See: [Ordinal Numbers](#))

832

“teight hundred and thirty-two” (See: [Numbers](#))

ULT

²⁹ In the eighteenth year of
Nebuchadnezzar he took 832 people
from Jerusalem.

Jeremiah 52:30

twenty-third

(See: [Ordinal Numbers](#))

Nebuzaradan

See how you translated this man's name in [Jeremiah 39:9](#).

745...4,600

"seven hundred and forty-five ... four thousand six hundred" (See: [Numbers](#))

ULT

³⁰ In the twenty-third year of Nebuchadnezzar, Nebuzaradan, the commander of the king's bodyguards, exiled 745 Judean people. All the exiled people totaled 4,600.

Jeremiah 52:31

in the thirty-seventh year of the exile of Jehoiachin

after Jehoiachin had been an exile for more than 36 years (See: [Ordinal Numbers](#))

in the twelfth month, on the twenty-fifth day of the month

This is the twelfth and last month of the Hebrew calendar. The twenty-fifth day is near the middle of March on Western calendars. (See: [Hebrew Months](#) and [Ordinal Numbers](#))

It happened

This phrase is used here to mark the beginning of a new part of the story.

Awel-Marduk

He became the king of Babylon after Nebuchadnezzar. (See: [How to Translate Names](#))

ULT

³¹ It happened later in the thirty-seventh year of the exile of Jehoiachin, king of Judah, in the twelfth month, on the twenty-fifth day of the month, that Awel-Marduk, king of Babylon released Jehoiachin king of Judah from prison. This happened in the year that Awel-Marduk began to reign.

Jeremiah 52:32

He spoke kindly to him

“Awel-Marduk spoke kindly to Jehoiachin”

a seat more honorable

“a seat at the table that was closer to where Awel-Marduk sat”

ULT

³² He spoke kindly to him and gave him a seat more honorable than that of the other kings who were with him in Babylon.

Jeremiah 52:33

removed Jehoiachin's prison clothes

The reader should understand that removing his prison clothes represents making him a free man. (See: [Metonymy](#))

ULT

³³ Awel-Marduk removed Jehoiachin's prison clothes, and Jehoiachin ate regularly at the king's table for the rest of his life,

Jeremiah 52:34

(There are no notes for this verse.)

ULT

³⁴ and a regular food allowance was given to him every day for the rest of his life until his death.



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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: [Jeremiah 2:2](#); [4:18](#); [5:6](#); [6:13](#); [6:25](#); [7:5](#); [7:19](#); [7:28](#); [7:34](#); [8:5](#); [8:6](#); [8:7](#); [8:10](#); [11:20](#); [14:14](#); [16:5](#); [16:18](#); [17:16](#); [18:16](#); [18:23](#); [19:8](#); [19:10](#); [20:8](#); [21:12](#); [22:3](#); [22:13](#); [22:15](#); [23:5](#); [23:6](#); [23:25](#); [25:9](#); [25:11](#); [25:12](#); [25:34](#); [25:38](#); [27:15](#); [30:10](#); [30:24](#); [31:3](#); [31:14](#); [32:18](#); [32:19](#); [32:24](#); [32:31](#); [33:9](#); [36:32](#); [38:27](#); [42:2](#); [43:3](#); [43:9](#); [44:7](#); [44:8](#); [44:22](#); [45:3](#); [46:5](#); [46:28](#); [47:5](#); [48:5](#); [48:7](#); [48:30](#); [48:33](#); [48:38](#); [48:39](#); [49:5](#); [49:13](#); [49:16](#); [49:17](#); [49:24](#); [50:3](#); [50:7](#); [50:13](#); [50:28](#); [51:5](#); [51:24](#); [51:26](#))

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: [Jeremiah 1:3](#); [2:2](#); [2:15](#); [2:26](#); [2:34](#); [2:37](#); [3:3](#); [3:21](#); [4:5](#); [4:11](#); [4:13](#); [4:15](#); [4:20](#); [5:17](#); [5:20](#); [5:26](#); [6:7](#); [6:11](#); [6:12](#); [6:15](#); [6:29](#); [6:30](#); [7:10](#); [7:14](#); [7:28](#); [7:30](#); [7:32](#); [8:2](#); [8:12](#); [8:16](#); [8:20](#); [9:1](#); [9:10](#); [9:12](#); [9:19](#); [10:2](#); [10:5](#); [10:9](#); [10:14](#); [10:20](#); [10:21](#); [11:3](#); [11:9](#); [11:10](#); [11:12](#); [11:16](#); [11:19](#); [11:23](#); [12:4](#); [12:11](#); [12:16](#); [13:12](#); [13:17](#); [13:19](#); [13:22](#); [13:26](#); [14:9](#); [14:16](#); [14:18](#); [15:13](#); [15:16](#); [15:18](#); [16:4](#); [16:6](#); [16:14](#); [16:17](#); [17:1](#); [17:5](#); [17:8](#); [17:13](#); [17:14](#); [17:16](#); [17:18](#); [17:25](#); [17:27](#); [18:4](#); [18:15](#); [18:21](#); [18:22](#); [18:23](#); [19:6](#); [19:7](#); [19:9](#); [19:11](#); [20:4](#); [20:6](#); [20:7](#); [20:10](#); [20:11](#); [20:13](#); [20:14](#); [20:15](#); [21:10](#); [22:19](#); [22:23](#); [22:25](#); [23:4](#); [23:6](#); [23:40](#); [24:2](#); [24:3](#); [25:13](#); [25:33](#); [25:34](#); [25:37](#); [26:24](#); [27:16](#); [27:22](#); [28:4](#); [28:9](#); [28:11](#); [29:14](#); [29:22](#); [30:7](#); [30:16](#); [30:18](#); [30:19](#); [30:20](#); [31:4](#); [31:7](#); [31:15](#); [31:18](#); [31:37](#); [31:38](#); [31:40](#); [32:2](#); [32:4](#); [32:11](#); [32:15](#); [32:24](#); [32:25](#); [32:34](#); [32:36](#); [32:43](#); [33:4](#); [33:16](#); [34:3](#); [34:15](#); [35:14](#); [36:30](#); [36:32](#); [37:4](#); [37:16](#); [37:17](#); [37:21](#); [38:2](#); [38:3](#); [38:17](#); [38:18](#); [38:19](#); [38:22](#); [38:23](#); [38:28](#); [39:17](#); [40:1](#); [40:7](#); [40:12](#); [40:15](#); [41:3](#); [41:16](#); [42:4](#); [42:18](#); [43:5](#); [43:11](#); [44:6](#); [44:7](#); [44:8](#); [44:9](#); [44:17](#); [44:26](#); [46:23](#); [46:24](#); [46:26](#); [48:1](#); [48:4](#); [48:7](#); [48:15](#); [48:17](#); [48:20](#); [48:21](#); [48:25](#); [48:33](#); [48:39](#); [48:41](#); [48:42](#); [48:46](#); [49:3](#); [49:5](#); [49:14](#); [49:15](#); [49:19](#); [49:20](#); [49:21](#); [49:29](#); [50:2](#); [50:5](#); [50:9](#); [50:15](#); [50:17](#); [50:20](#); [50:24](#); [50:30](#); [50:33](#); [50:37](#); [50:39](#); [50:41](#); [50:44](#); [50:45](#); [51:4](#); [51:5](#); [51:8](#); [51:9](#); [51:13](#); [51:17](#); [51:31](#); [51:32](#); [51:41](#); [51:42](#); [51:46](#); [51:56](#); [51:58](#); [52:5](#); [52:7](#); [52:8](#))

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: [Jeremiah 6:18](#); [6:19](#); [12:9](#); [15:10](#); [22:29](#); [31:7](#); [31:16](#); [31:17](#); [31:23](#); [47:5](#); [49:31](#); [49:32](#); [51:11](#); [51:13](#); [51:25](#))

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: [Jeremiah 1:3](#); [2:6](#); [2:25](#); [2:27](#); [2:34](#); [2:36](#); [3:23](#); [4:22](#); [4:30](#); [5:10](#); [5:13](#); [5:19](#); [5:22](#); [5:24](#); [5:30](#); [5:31](#); [6:1](#); [6:3](#); [6:4](#); [6:5](#); [6:16](#); [6:19](#); [6:22](#); [6:23](#); [6:29](#); [7:4](#); [7:18](#); [8:6](#); [8:7](#); [8:19](#); [9:18](#); [9:24](#); [9:26](#); [10:13](#); [10:23](#); [12:9](#); [Notes](#); [13:19](#); [13:20](#); [14:5](#); [14:8](#); [14:14](#); [14:18](#); [Notes](#); [15:1](#); [15:2](#); [15:4](#); [15:8](#); [15:9](#); [15:10](#); [15:15](#); [17:15](#); [18:18](#); [Notes](#); [22:2](#); [22:30](#); [23:6](#); [23:8](#); [23:21](#); [23:25](#); [25:6](#); [25:7](#); [26:1](#); [27:7](#); [29:5](#); [29:12](#); [29:28](#); [30:10](#); [31:15](#); [31:23](#); [33:11](#); [33:13](#); [Notes](#); [37:9](#); [37:19](#); [39:13](#); [39:14](#); [Notes](#); [41:8](#); [41:18](#); [42:22](#); [Notes](#); [43:13](#); [44:17](#); [44:23](#); [46:2](#); [46:9](#); [48:7](#); [48:8](#); [48:11](#); [48:33](#); [48:45](#); [48:46](#); [49:15](#); [49:16](#); [Notes](#); [50:11](#); [50:14](#); [50:20](#); [50:21](#); [50:27](#); [50:31](#); [50:41](#))

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:

[Order of Events](#)

[[rc://en/ta/man/translate/writing-intro]]

Example — The bolded phrases in the story below are all background information.

Peter and John went on a hunting trip because **their village was going to have a feast the next day. Peter was the best hunter in the village. He once killed three wild pigs in one day!** They walked for hours through low bushes until they heard a wild pig. The pig ran, but they managed to shoot the pig and kill it. Then they tied up its legs with some rope **they had brought with them** and carried it home on a pole. When they brought it to the village, Peter's cousin saw the pig and realized that it was his own pig. Peter had mistakenly killed his cousin's pig.

Background information often tells about something that had happened earlier or something that would happen much later. Examples of these are: "their village was going to have a feast the next day," "He once killed three wild pigs in one day," and "that they had brought with them."

Often background information uses "be" verbs like "was" and "were," rather than action verbs. Examples of these are "their village was going to have a feast the next day," and "Peter **was** the best hunter in the village."

Background information can also be marked with words that tell the reader that this information is not part of the event line of the story. In this story, some of these words are "because," "once," and "had."

A writer may use background information:

- to help their listeners be interested in the story
- to help their listeners understand something in the story
- to help the listeners understand why something is important in the story
- to tell the setting of a story
 - > * Setting includes:
 - > * where the story takes place
 - > * when the story takes place
 - > * who is present when the story begins
 - > * what is happening when the story begins

Reasons This Is a Translation Issue

- Languages have different ways of marking background information and storyline information.
- You (the translator) need to know the order of the events in the Bible, which information is background information, and which is storyline information.
- You will need to translate the story in a way that marks the background information in a way that your own readers will understand the order of events, which information is background information, and which is storyline information.

Examples From the Bible

Hagar gave birth to Abram's son, and Abram named his son, whom Hagar bore, Ishmael. Abram **was 86 years old** when Hagar bore Ishmael to Abram. (Genesis 16:15-16 ULT)

The first sentence tells about two events. Hagar gave birth and Abraham named his son. The second sentence is background information about how old Abram was when those things happened.

And Jesus himself **was beginning about 30 years old**. He **was the son** (as it was assumed) of Joseph, of Heli, (Luke 3:23 ULT)

The verses before this tell about when Jesus was baptized. This sentence introduces background information about Jesus' age and ancestors. The story resumes in chapter 4 where it tells about Jesus going to the wilderness.

Then **it happened on a Sabbath** that he **was going through the grain fields**, and his disciples **were picking and eating the heads of grain, rubbing them in their hands**. But some of the Pharisees said ... (Luke 6:1-2a ULT)

These verses give the setting of the story. The events took place in a grain field on the Sabbath day. Jesus, his disciples, and some Pharisees were there, and Jesus' disciples were picking heads of grain and eating them. The main action in the story starts with the phrase, "But some of the Pharisees said"

Translation Strategies

To keep translations clear and natural you will need to study how people tell stories in your language. Observe how your language marks background information. You may need to write down some stories in order to study this. Observe what kinds of verbs your language uses for background information and what kinds of words or other markers signal that something is background information. Do these same things when you translate, so that your translation is clear and natural and people can understand it easily.

- (1) Use your language's way of showing that certain information is background information.
- (2) Reorder the information so that earlier events are mentioned first. (This is not always possible when the background information is very long.)

Examples of Translation Strategies Applied

- (1) Use your language's way of showing that certain information is background information. The examples below explain how this was done in the ULT English translations.

And Jesus himself **was** beginning about 30 years old. He **was** the son (as it was assumed) of Joseph, of Heli. (Luke 3:23 ULT)

As here, English sometimes uses the word "and" to show that there is some kind of change in the story. The verb "was" shows that it is background information.

Therefore, also exhorting many other things, he preached the good news to the people. But Herod the tetrarch, having been rebuked by him concerning Herodias, the wife of his brother, and **concerning all the evil things that Herod had done**, added even this to them all: He locked John up in prison. (Luke 3:18-20 ULT)

The bolded phrase happened before John rebuked Herod. In English, the helping verb "had" in "had done" shows that Herod did those things before John rebuked him.

- (2) Reorder the information so that earlier events are mentioned first.

Hagar gave birth to Abram's son, and Abram named his son, whom Hagar bore, Ishmael.
Abram was 86 years old when Hagar bore Ishmael to Abram. (Genesis 16:16 ULT)

"When Abram was 86 years old, Hagar gave birth to his son, and Abram named his son Ishmael."

Therefore, also exhorting many other things, he preached the good news to the people. But Herod the tetrarch, having been rebuked by him concerning Herodias, the wife of his brother, and **concerning all the evil things that Herod had done,** added even this to them all: He locked John up in prison. (Luke 3:18-20 ULT)

The translation below reorders John's rebuke and Herod's actions.

"Now Herod the tetrarch married his brother's wife, Herodias, and **he did many other evil things,** so John rebuked him. But then Herod did another very evil thing. He had John locked up in prison."

Next we recommend you learn about:

[[rc://en/ta/man/translate/grammar-connect-words-phrases]]
 [[rc://en/ta/man/translate/writing-newevent]]

(Go back to: [Jeremiah 24:1](#); [32:17](#); [34:8](#); [34:9](#); [34:18](#); [34:19](#); [37:4](#); [38:7](#); [39:15](#); [41:9](#); [41:16](#); [49:28](#))

Biblical Distance

Description

The following terms are the most common measures for distance or length that were originally used in the Bible. Most of these are based on the sizes of the hand and forearm.

- The **handbreadth** was the width of the palm of a man’s hand.
- The **span** or handspace was the width of a man’s hand with the fingers spread out.
- The **cubit** was the length of a man’s forearm, from the elbow to the tip of the longest finger.
- The **“long” cubit** is used only in Ezekiel 40-48. It is the length of a normal cubit plus a span.
- The **stadium** (plural, **stadia**) referred to a certain footrace that was about 185 meters in length. Some older English versions translated this word as “furlong,” which referred to the average length of a plowed field.

The metric values in the table below are close but not exactly equal to the biblical measures. The biblical measures probably differed in exact length from time to time and place to place. The equivalents below are an attempt to give an average measurement.

Original Measure	Metric Measure
handbreadth	8 centimeters
span	23 centimeters
cubit	46 centimeters
“long” cubit	54 centimeters
stadia	185 meters

Translation Principles

The people in the Bible did not use modern measures such as meters, liters, and kilograms. Using the original measures can help readers know that the Bible really was written long ago in a time when people used those measures.

Using modern measures can help readers understand the text more easily.

Whatever measure you use, it would be good, if possible, to tell about the other kind of measure in the text or a footnote.

If you do not use the Biblical measures, try not to give the readers the idea that the measurements are exact. For example, if you translate one cubit as “.46 meters” or even as “46 centimeters,” readers might think that the measurement is exact. It would be better to say “half a meter,” “45 centimeters,” or “50 centimeters.”

Sometimes it can be helpful to use the word “about” to show that a measurement is not exact. For example, Luke 24:13 says that Emmaus was 60 stadia from Jerusalem. This can be translated as “about ten kilometers” from Jerusalem.

When God tells people how long something should be, and when people make things according to those lengths, do not use “about” in the translation. Otherwise it will give the impression that God did not care exactly how long something should be.

This page answers the question: *How can I translate the lengths and distances that are in the Bible?*

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

[[rc://en/ta/man/translate/translate-decimal]]
[[rc://en/ta/man/translate/translate-fraction]]

Translation Strategies

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

Translation Strategies Applied

The strategies are all applied to Exodus 25:10 below.

They are to make an ark of acacia wood. Its length must be two and a half cubits; its width will be one cubit and a half; and its height will be one cubit and a half. (Exodus 25:10 ULT)

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

"They are to make an ark of acacia wood. Its length must be **two and a half kubits**; its width will be **one kubit and a half**; and its height will be **one kubit and a half**."

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

"They are to make an ark of acacia wood. Its length must be **one meter**; its width will be **two thirds of a meter**; and its height will be **two thirds of a meter**."

- (3) Use measurements that are already used in your language. In order to do this you would need to know how your measurements relate to the metric system and figure out each measurement. For example, if you measure things using the standard meter length, you could translate it as below.

"They are to make an ark of acacia wood. Its length must be **one meter**; its width will be **two thirds of a meter**; and its height will be **two thirds of a meter**."

- (4) Use the measurements from the ULT and include measurements that your people know in the text or a note. The following shows both measurements in the text.

"They are to make an ark of acacia wood. Its length must be **two and a half cubits (one meter)**; its width will be **one cubit and a half (two thirds of a meter)**; and its height will be **one cubit and a half (two thirds of a meter)**."

- (5) Use measurements that your people know, and include the measurements from the ULT in the text or in a note. The following shows the ULT measurements in notes.

“They are to make an ark of acacia wood. Its length must be **one meter**; ¹ its width will be **two thirds of a meter**; ² and its height will be **two thirds of a meter**.”

The footnotes would look like:

“They are to make an ark of acacia wood. Its length must be **one meter**; ¹ its width will be **two thirds of a meter**; ² and its height will be **two thirds of a meter**.”

The footnotes would look like:

^[1] two and a half cubits
^[2] one cubit and a half

(Go back to: [Jeremiah 52:21](#); [52:22](#))

Biblical Money

Description

This page answers the question: *How can I translate the values of money in the Bible?*

In early Old Testament times, people weighed their metals, such as silver and gold, and would pay a certain weight of that metal in order to buy things. Later, people started to make coins that each contained a standard amount of a certain metal. The daric is one such coin. In New Testament times, people used silver and copper coins.

The two tables below show some of the most well-known units of money found in the Old Testament (OT) and New Testament (NT). The table for Old Testament units shows what kind of metal was used and how much it weighed. The table for New Testament units shows what kind of metal was used and how much it was worth in terms of a day's wage.

Unit in OT	Metal	Weight
daric	gold coin	8.4 grams
shekel	various metals	11 grams
talent	various metals	33 kilograms

Unit in NT	Metal	Day's Wage
denarius/denarii	silver coin	1 day
drachma	silver coin	1 day
mite	copper coin	1/64 day
shekel	silver coin	4 days
talent	silver	6,000 days

Translation Principle

Do not use modern money values since these change from year to year. Using them will cause the Bible translation to become outdated and inaccurate.

Translation Strategies

The value of most money in the Old Testament was based on its weight. So when translating these weights in the Old Testament, see Biblical Weight. The strategies below are for translating the value of money in the New Testament.

- (1) Use the Bible term and spell it in a way that is similar to the way it sounds. (See Copy or Borrow Words.)
- (2) Describe the value of the money in terms of what kind of metal it was made of and how many coins were used.
- (3) Describe the value of the money in terms of what people in Bible times could earn in one day of work.
- (4) Use the biblical term and give the equivalent amount in the text or a footnote.

(5) Use the biblical term and explain it in a footnote.

Translation Strategies Applied

The translations strategies are all applied to Luke 7:41 below.

█ The one owed 500 denarii, and the other, 50. (Luke 7:41b ULT)

Use the Bible term and spell it in a way that is similar to the way it sounds. (See Copy or Borrow Words.)

█ "The one owed **500 denali**, and the other, **50**."

Describe the value of the money in terms of what kind of metal it was made of and how many pieces or coins were used.

█ "The one owed **500 silver coins**, and the other, **50**."

(3) Describe the value of the money in terms of what people in Bible times could earn in one day of work.

█ "The one owed **500 days' wages**, and the other, **50**."

(4) Use the Bible term and give the equivalent amount in the text or a footnote.

█ "The one owed **500 denarii** 1, and the other owed **50 denarii**. 2"

The footnotes would look like:

█ [1] 500 days' wages [2] 50 days' wages

(5) Use the Bible term and explain it in a footnote.

█ "The one owed **500 denarii**,¹ and the other, **50**." (Luke 7:41 ULT)

█ ^[1] A denarius was the amount of silver that people could earn in one day of work.

Next we recommend you learn about:

[\[\[rc://en/ta/man/translate/translate-transliterate\]\]](#)
[Translate Unknowns](#)

(Go back to: [Jeremiah 32:9](#))

Direct and Indirect Quotations

Description

There are two kinds of quotations: direct quotations and indirect quotations.

A direct quotation occurs when someone reports what another person said from the viewpoint of that original speaker. People usually expect that this kind of quotation will represent the original speaker's exact words. In the example below, John would have said "I" when referring to himself, so the narrator, who is reporting John's words, uses the word "I" in the quotation to refer to John. To show that these are John's exact words, many languages put the words between quotation marks: "".

- John said, "I do not know at what time I will arrive."

An indirect quotation occurs when a speaker reports what someone else said, but in this case, the speaker is reporting it from his own point of view instead and not from the original person's point of view. This kind of quotation usually contains changes in pronouns, and it often includes changes in time, in word choices, and in length. In the example below, the narrator refers to John as "he" in the quotation and uses the word "would" to replace the future tense, indicated by "will."

- John said that he did not know at what time he would arrive.

Reason This Is a Translation Issue

In some languages, reported speech can be expressed by either direct or indirect quotations. In other languages, it is more natural to use one than the other. There may be a certain meaning implied by using one rather than the other. So for each quotation, translators need to decide whether it is best to translate it as a direct quotation or as an indirect quotation.

Examples From the Bible

The verses in the examples below contain both direct and indirect quotations. In the explanation below the verse, we have marked in bold the words that are quoted.

And he commanded him to tell no one, but, "Go, show yourself to the priest and offer a sacrifice for your cleansing, according to what Moses commanded, for a testimony to them."
(Luke 5:14 ULT)

- Indirect quote: He commanded him **to tell no one**,
- Direct quote: but told him, "**Go, show yourself to the priest ...**"

And being asked by the Pharisees when the kingdom of God was coming, he answered them and said, "The kingdom of God is not coming with careful observation. Neither will they say, 'Look, here it is!' or 'There it is!' For indeed, the kingdom of God is among you." (Luke 17:20-21 ULT)

- Indirect quote: Being asked by the Pharisees **when the kingdom of God was coming**,
- Direct quote: he answered them and said, "**The kingdom of God is not coming with careful observation. Neither will they say, 'Look, here it is!' or 'There it is!' For indeed, the kingdom of God is among you.**"
- Direct quotes: Neither will they say, '**Look, here it is!**' or, '**There it is!**'

This page answers the question: *What are direct and indirect quotations?*

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

[Pronouns](#)

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

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

Translation Strategies

If the kind of quote used in the source text would work well in your language, consider using it. If the kind of quote used in that context is not natural for your language, follow these strategies.

- (1) If a direct quote would not work well in your language, change it to an indirect quote.
- (2) If an indirect quote would not work well in your language, change it to a direct quote.

Examples of Translation Strategies Applied

- (1) If a direct quote would not work well in your language, change it to an indirect quote.

And he commanded him to tell no one, but, **“Go, show yourself to the priest and offer a sacrifice for your cleansing, according to what Moses commanded, for a testimony to them.”** (Luke 5:14 ULT)

He commanded him to tell no one, but **to go and show himself to the priest and offer a sacrifice for his cleansing according to what Moses commanded, for a testimony to them.**

- (2) If an indirect quote would not work well in your language, change it to a direct quote.

And he commanded him **to tell no one**, but, “Go, show yourself to the priest and offer a sacrifice for your cleansing, according to what Moses commanded, for a testimony to them.” (Luke 5:14 ULT)

He commanded him, **“Tell no one.** But go and show yourself to the priest and offer a sacrifice for your cleansing according to what Moses commanded, for a testimony to them.”

You may also want to watch the video at https://ufw.io/figs_quotations.

Next we recommend you learn about:

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

(Go back to: [Jeremiah 32:7](#); [49:4](#))

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: [Jeremiah 30:11](#); [46:28](#); [49:36](#))

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: [Jeremiah 1:10](#); [3:16](#); [4:6](#); [4:11](#); [5:15](#); [7:20](#); [7:24](#); [7:29](#); [7:34](#); [8:6](#); [9:12](#); [10:8](#); [14:3](#); [15:9](#); [15:10](#); [15:11](#); [15:13](#); [15:20](#); [16:19](#); [16:21](#); [17:3](#); [17:6](#); [17:23](#); [18:7](#); [18:9](#); [18:11](#); [20:8](#); [20:18](#); [21:5](#); [21:7](#); [22:9](#); [22:13](#); [22:15](#); [23:2](#); [23:3](#); [23:4](#); [23:8](#); [23:26](#); [24:9](#); [25:5](#); [25:14](#); [26:13](#); [26:14](#); [26:15](#); [27:5](#); [31:19](#); [32:17](#); [32:19](#); [32:21](#); [32:31](#); [32:37](#); [32:41](#); [33:5](#); [33:15](#); [42:5](#); [42:11](#); [42:18](#); [44:6](#); [46:6](#); [47:3](#); [48:3](#); [48:17](#); [50:4](#); [50:11](#); [50:12](#); [50:16](#); [50:20](#); [50:27](#); [50:29](#); [50:31](#); [50:39](#); [50:40](#))

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: [Jeremiah 2:32](#); [2:36](#); [3:22](#); [4:20](#); [6:11](#); [6:12](#); [6:21](#); [9:16](#); [9:20](#); [9:23](#); [12:5](#); [13:14](#); [13:23](#); [14:19](#); [17:19](#); [18:18](#); [18:21](#); [19:7](#); [19:13](#); [22:4](#); [22:18](#); [36:19](#); [40:15](#); [45:1](#); [46:9](#); [49:14](#))

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: [Jeremiah 13:22](#); [14:12](#); [15:15](#); [16:4](#); [29:22](#); [30:11](#); [34:20](#); [39:18](#); [47:5](#); [51:57](#))

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: [Jeremiah 3:19](#); [48:39](#))

Exclusive and Inclusive 'We'

Description

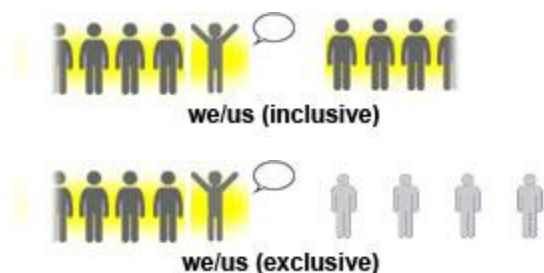
Some languages have more than one form of "we": an inclusive form that means "I and you" and an exclusive form that means "I and someone else but not you." The exclusive form excludes the person being spoken to. The inclusive form includes the person being spoken to and possibly others. This is also 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: [Jeremiah 9:18](#))

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: [Jeremiah 1:8; 1:19; 2:3; 2:11; 2:12; 2:14; 2:22; 2:29; 3:1; 3:10; 3:13; 3:16; 3:20; 4:2; 5:9; 5:11; 5:23; 5:29; 6:12; 7:11; 7:32; 8:3; 8:13; 8:17; 9:6; 9:9; 9:22; 9:24; 12:17; 13:11; 13:14; 15:6; 15:9; 16:5; 16:16; 18:6; 21:10; 22:16; 23:1; 23:4; 23:23; 23:28; 23:33; 25:31; 27:18; 27:22; 28:16; 29:9; 29:19; 29:23; 29:32; 30:3; 30:9; 30:10; 30:17; 30:21; 31:14; 31:16; 31:20; 31:27; 31:31; 31:33; 31:36; 31:37; 31:38; 32:2; 32:3; 32:5; 32:6; 32:8; 32:26; 32:30; 32:44; 33:1; 33:14; 33:19; 33:20; 33:23; 34:1; 34:5; 34:17; 35:1; 35:12; 35:13; 35:18; 36:1; 36:4; 36:5; 36:10; 36:26; 36:27; 36:32; 44:10; 46:10; 46:18; 46:23; 48:12; 48:15; 48:25; 48:35; 48:38; 48:43; 48:47; 49:2; 49:8; 49:13; 49:16; 49:19; 49:26; 49:30; 49:32; 50:4; 50:10; 50:30; 50:35; 50:44; 51:24; 51:25; 51:48; 51:52](#))

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: [Jeremiah 16:9](#); [22:23](#); [23:33](#); [23:37](#); [23:38](#); [23:39](#); [23:40](#); [27:12](#); [31:16](#); [31:17](#); [32:5](#); [32:36](#); [32:43](#); [36:19](#); [37:7](#); [38:20](#); [49:12](#))

Go and Come

Description

This page answers the question: *What do I do if the word "go" or "come" is confusing in a certain sentence?*

Different languages have different ways of determining whether to use the words "go" or "come" and whether to use the words "take" or "bring" when talking about motion. For example, when saying that they are approaching a person who has called them, English speakers say "I'm coming," while Spanish speakers say "I'm going." You will need to study the context in order to understand what is meant by the words "go" and "come" (and also "take" and "bring"), and then translate those words in a way that your readers will understand which direction people are moving in.

Reason This Is a Translation Issue

Different languages have different ways of talking about motion. The biblical languages or your source language may use the words "go" and "come" or "take" and "bring" differently than your language uses them. If these words are not translated in the way that is natural in your language, your readers may be confused about which direction people are moving.

Examples From the Bible

Yahweh said to Noah, "**Come**, you and all your household, into the ark." (Genesis 7:1 ULT)

In some languages, this would lead people to think that Yahweh was in the ark.

But you will be free from my oath if you **come** to my relatives and they will not give her to you.
Then you will be free from my oath. (Genesis 24:41 ULT)

Abraham was speaking to his servant. Abraham's relatives lived far away from where he and his servant were standing and he wanted his servant to **go** to them, not **come** toward Abraham.

When you have **come** to the land that Yahweh your God gives you, and when you take possession of it and begin to live in it ... (Deuteronomy 17:14a ULT)

Moses is speaking to the people in the wilderness. They had not yet gone into the land that God was giving them. In some languages, it would make more sense to say, "When you have **gone** into the land ..."

They **brought** him up to the temple in Jerusalem to present him to the Lord. (Luke 2:22b ULT)

In some languages, it might make more sense to say that they **took** or **carried** Jesus to the temple.

Then see, there was a man whose name was Jairus, and he was a leader of the synagogue. And falling at the feet of Jesus, he begged him to come to his house. (Luke 8:41 ULT)

The man was not at his house when he spoke to Jesus. He wanted Jesus to **go** with him to his house.

What did you go out into the desert to see? A reed shaken by the wind? (Luke 7:24b ULT)

In some languages, it might make more sense to ask what did you come out to see.

Translation Strategies

If the word used in the ULT would be natural and give the right meaning in your language, consider using it. If not, here are other strategies.

- (1) Use the word “go,” “come,” “take,” or “bring” that would be natural in your language.
- (2) Use another word that expresses the right meaning.

Examples of Translation Strategies Applied

- (1) Use the word “go,” “come,” “take,” or “bring” that would be natural in your language.

But you will be free from my oath if you **come** to my relatives and they will not give her to you. (Genesis 24:41 ULT)

But you will be free from my oath if you **go** to my relatives and they will not give her to you.

What did you go out into the desert to see? A reed shaken by the wind? (Luke 7:24b ULT)

What did you come out into the desert to see? A reed shaken by the wind?

- (2) Use another word that expresses the right meaning.

When you have **come** to the land that Yahweh your God gives you, and when you take possession of it and begin to live in it ... (Deuteronomy 17:14 ULT)

“When you have **arrived** in the land that Yahweh your God gives you, and when you take possession of it and begin to live in it ...”

Yahweh said to Noah, “**Come**, you and all your household, into the ark ...” (Genesis 7:1 ULT)

Yahweh said to Noah, “**Enter**, you and all your household, into the ark ...”

What did you go out into the desert to see? A reed shaken by the wind? (Luke 7:24b ULT)

What did you travel out into the desert to see? A reed shaken by the wind?

(Go back to: [Jeremiah 16:19](#))

Hebrew Months

Description

This page answers the question: *What are the Hebrew months?*

The Hebrew calendar used in the Bible has twelve months. Unlike the western calendar, its first month begins in the spring of the northern hemisphere. Sometimes a month is called by its name (Aviv, Ziv, Sivan), and sometimes it is called by its order in the Hebrew calendar year (first month, second month, third month).

Reasons This Is a Translation Issue

- Readers may be surprised to read of months that they have never heard of, and they may wonder how those months correspond to the months that they use.
- Readers may not realize that phrases such as “the first month” or “the second month” refer to the first or second month of the Hebrew calendar, not some other calendar.
- Readers may not know when the first month of the Hebrew calendar begins.
- The Bible may tell about something happening in a certain month, but readers will not be able to fully understand what is said about it if they do not know what season of the year that was.

List of Hebrew Months

This is a list of the Hebrew months with information about them that may be helpful in the translation.

Aviv — (This month was called **Nisan** after the Babylonian exile.) This is the first month of the Hebrew calendar. It marks when God brought the people of Israel out of Egypt. It is at the beginning of the spring season when the late rains come and people begin to harvest their crops. It is during the last part of March and the first part of April on western calendars. The Passover celebration started on Aviv 10; the Festival of Unleavened Bread was right after that, and the Festival of Harvest was a few weeks after that.

Ziv — This is the second month of the Hebrew calendar. This is during the harvest season. It is during the last part of April and the first part of May on Western calendars.

Sivan — This is the third month of the Hebrew calendar. It is at the end of the harvest season and the beginning of the dry season. It is during the last part of May and the first part of June on Western calendars. The Feast of Weeks is celebrated on Sivan 6.

Tammuz — This is the fourth month of the Hebrew calendar. It is during the dry season. It is during the last part of June and the first part of July on Western calendars.

Ab — This is the fifth month of the Hebrew calendar. It is during the dry season. It is during the last part of July and the first part of August on Western calendars.

Elul — This is the sixth month of the Hebrew calendar. It is at the end of the dry season and the beginning of the rainy season. It is during the last part of August and the first part of September on Western calendars.

Ethanim — This is the seventh month of the Hebrew calendar. This is during the early rain season which would soften the land for sowing. It is during the last part of September and the first part of October on Western calendars. The Feast of Ingathering and the Day of Atonement are celebrated in this month.

Bul — This is the eighth month of the Hebrew calendar. It is during the rainy season when people plough their fields and sow seed. It is during the last part of October and the first part of November on Western calendars.

Kislev — This is the ninth month of the Hebrew calendar. This is at the end of the sowing season and the beginning of the cold season. It is during the last part of November and the first part of December on Western calendars.

Tebeth — This is the tenth month of the Hebrew calendar. It is during the cold season when there may be rain and snow. It is during the last part of December and the first part of January on Western calendars.

Shebat — This is the eleventh month of the Hebrew calendar. This is the coldest month of the year, and it has heavy rainfall. It is during the last part of January and the first part of February on Western calendars.

Adar — This is the twelfth and last month of the Hebrew calendar. This is during the cold season. It is during the last part of February and the first part of March on western calendars. The feast called Purim is celebrated in Adar.

Examples From the Bible

Today you are going out, in **the month of Aviv**. (Exodus 13:4 ULT)

You must eat unleavened bread from evening of the fourteenth day **in the first month of the year**, until evening of the twenty-first day of the month. (Exodus 12:18 ULT)

Translation Strategies

You may need to make some information about the months explicit. (See [Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information](#).)

(1) Tell the number of the Hebrew month.

(2) Use the names for months that people know.

(3) State clearly what season the month occurred in.

(4) Refer to the time in terms of the season rather than in terms of the Hebrew name of the month. (If possible, use a footnote to show the Hebrew month and day.)

Examples of Translation Strategies Applied

The examples below use these two verses.

At that time, you will appear before me in **the month of Aviv**, which is fixed for this purpose. It was in this month that you came out from Egypt. (Exodus 23:15b ULT)

It will always be a statute for you that in **the seventh month, on the tenth day of the month**, you must humble yourselves and do no work. (Leviticus 16:29a ULT)

(1) Tell the number of the Hebrew month.

At that time, you will appear before me in **the first month of the year**, which is fixed for this purpose. It was in this month that you came out from Egypt.

(2) Use the months that people know.

At that time, you will appear before me in **the month of March**, which is fixed for this purpose. It was in this month that you came out from Egypt.

It will always be a statute for you that **on the day I choose in late September** you must humble yourselves and do no work.

(3) State clearly what season the month occurs in.

It will always be a statute for you that **in the autumn, on the tenth day of the seventh month**, you must humble yourselves and do no work.

(4) Refer to the time in terms of the season rather than in terms of the month.

It will always be a statute for you that in **the day I choose in early autumn**¹ you must humble yourselves and do no work.

The footnote would look like:

^[1] The Hebrew says, "the seventh month, on the tenth day of the month."

Next we recommend you learn about:

[Ordinal Numbers](#)

(Go back to: [Jeremiah 1:3](#); [28:1](#); [28:17](#); [36:9](#); [36:22](#); [39:1](#); [39:2](#); [41:1](#); [52:4](#); [52:6](#); [52:12](#); [52:31](#))

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: [Jeremiah 2:19](#); [7:13](#); [33:9](#))

How to Translate Names

Description

The Bible contains the names of many people, groups of people, and places. Some of these names may sound strange and be hard to say. Sometimes readers may not know what a name refers to, and sometimes they may need to understand what a name means. This page will help you see how you can translate these names and how you can help people understand what they need to know about them.

This page answers the question: *How can I translate names that are new to my culture?*

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

[Translate Unknowns](#)

Meaning of names

Most names in the Bible have meaning. Most of the time, names in the Bible are used simply to identify the people and places they refer to, but sometimes the meaning of a name is especially important.

For this **Melchizedek**, king of Salem, priest of God Most High, was the one who met Abraham returning from the slaughter of the kings and blessed him. (Hebrews 7:1 ULT)

Here the writer uses the name “Melchizedek” primarily to refer to a man who had that name, and the title “king of Salem” tells us that he ruled over a certain city.

His name first indeed means “king of righteousness,” and then also “king of Salem,” that is, “king of peace.” (Hebrews 7:2b ULT)

Here the writer explains the meanings of Melchizedek’s name and title because those things tell us more about the person. Other times, the writer does not explain the meaning of a name because he expects the reader to already know the meaning. If the meaning of the name is important to understand the passage, you can include the meaning in the text or in a footnote.

Reasons This Is a Translation Issue

- Readers may not know some of the names in the Bible. They may not know whether a name refers to a person or place or something else.
- Readers may need to understand the meaning of a name in order to understand the passage.
- Some names may have different sounds or combinations of sounds that are not used in your language or are unpleasant to say in your language. For strategies to address this problem, see Borrow Words.
- Some people and places in the Bible have two names. Readers may not realize that two names refer to the same person or place.

Examples From the Bible

Then you crossed over the **Jordan** and came to **Jericho**, and the men of Jericho, and the **Amorites** ... fought against you, but I gave them into your hand. (Joshua 24:11 ULT)

Readers might not know that “Jordan” is the name of a river, “Jericho” is the name of a city, and “Amorites” is the name of a group of people.

She said, “Do I really continue to see, even after he has seen me?” Therefore, the well was called **Beer Lahai Roi**. (Genesis 16:13b-14a ULT)

Readers may not understand the second sentence if they do not know that “Beer Lahai Roi” means “Well of the Living One who sees me.”

And she called his name **Moses** and she said, “For out of the water I drew him.” (Exodus 2:10b ULT)

Readers may not understand why she said this if they do not know that the name Moses sounds like the Hebrew words “pull out.”

Saul was in agreement with his execution. (Acts 8:1a ULT)

But when the apostles, Barnabas and **Paul**, heard of it, they tore their clothing. (Acts 14:14a ULT)

Readers may not know that the names Saul and Paul refer to the same person.

Translation Strategies

(1) If readers cannot easily understand from the context what kind of a thing a name refers to, you can add a word to clarify it.

(2) If readers need to understand the meaning of a name in order to understand what is said about it, copy the name and tell about its meaning either in the text or in a footnote.

(3) Or if readers need to understand the meaning of a name in order to understand what is said about it, and that name is used only once, translate the meaning of the name instead of copying the name.

(4) If a person or place has two different names, use one name most of the time and the other name only when the text tells about the person or place having more than one name or when it says something about why the person or place was given that name. Write a footnote when the source text uses the name that is used less frequently.

(5) Or if a person or place has two different names, then use whatever name is given in the source text, and add a footnote that gives the other name.

Examples of Translation Strategies Applied

(1) If readers cannot easily understand from the context what kind of a thing a name refers to, you can add a word to clarify it.

Then you crossed over the **Jordan** and came to **Jericho**, and the men of Jericho, and the **Amorites** ... fought against you, but I gave them into your hand. (Joshua 24:11 ULT)

You went over the **Jordan River** and came to the **city of Jericho**. The men of Jericho fought against you, along with **the tribe of the Amorites**.

At that hour, certain Pharisees approached, saying to him, “Leave and go away from here, because **Herod** wants to kill you.” (Luke 13:31 ULT)

At that hour, certain Pharisees approached, saying to him, “Go and leave here, because **King Herod** wants to kill you.”

(2) If readers need to understand the meaning of a name in order to understand what is said about it, copy the name and tell about its meaning either in the text or in a footnote.

And she called his name **Moses** and she said, "For out of the water I drew him." (Exodus 2:10b ULT)

She called his name **Moses (which sounds like 'drawn out')**, and she said, "For out of the water I drew him."

(3) Or if readers need to understand the meaning of a name in order to understand what is said about it, and that name is used only once, translate the meaning of the name instead of copying the name.

She said, "Do I really continue to see, even after he has seen me?" Therefore, the well was called **Beer Lahai Roi**. (Genesis 16:13b-14a ULT)

She said, "Do I really continue to see, even after he has seen me?"
Therefore, the well was called **Well of the Living One who sees me**.

(4) If a person or place has two different names, use one name most of the time and the other name only when the text tells about the person or place having more than one name or when it says something about why the person or place was given that name. Write a footnote when the source text uses the name that is used less frequently. For example, Paul is called "Saul" before Acts 13 and "Paul" after Acts 13. You could translate his name as "Paul" all of the time, except in Acts 13:9 where it talks about him having both names.

... a young man named **Saul**. (Acts 7:58b ULT)

... a young man named **Paul** ¹

The footnote would look like:

^[1] Most versions say "Saul" here, but most of the time in the Bible he is called "Paul."

Then later in the story, you could translate this way:

But **Saul**, who is also called **Paul**, was filled with the Holy Spirit; (Acts 13:9)

But **Saul**, who is also called **Paul**, was filled with the Holy Spirit;

(5) Or if a person or place has two names, use whatever name is given in the source text, and add a footnote that gives the other name. For example, you could write "Saul" where the source text has "Saul" and "Paul" where the source text has "Paul."

a young man named **Saul** (Acts 7:58 ULT)

a young man named **Saul**

The footnote would look like:

^[1] This is the same man who is called Paul beginning in Acts 13.

Then later in the story, you could translate this way:

But **Saul**, who is also called **Paul**, was filled with the Holy Spirit; (Acts 13:9)

But **Saul**, who is also called **Paul**, was filled with the Holy Spirit;

Then after the story has explained the name change, you could translate this way.

It came about in Iconium that **Paul** and Barnabas entered together into the synagogue (Acts 14:1 ULT)

It came about in Iconium that **Paul**¹ and Barnabas entered together into the synagogue

The footnote would look like:

^[1] This is the same man who was called Saul before Acts 13.

Next we recommend you learn about:

[[rc://en/ta/man/translate/translate-transliterate]]

(Go back to: [Introduction to Jeremiah](#); [Jeremiah 1:1](#); [1:2](#); [2:10](#); [2:16](#); [2:18](#); [3:2](#); [6:1](#); [7:31](#); [10:9](#); [11:21](#); [20:1](#); [20:3](#); [21:1](#); [22:11](#); [22:20](#); [25:3](#); [25:20](#); [25:23](#); [25:25](#); [26:18](#); [26:22](#); [26:24](#); [28:1](#); [29:3](#); [29:21](#); [29:24](#); [29:25](#); [29:26](#); [31:38](#); [31:39](#); [31:40](#); [32:7](#); [32:12](#); [34:7](#); [35:2](#); [35:3](#); [35:4](#); [35:6](#); [35:14](#); [36:10](#); [36:11](#); [36:12](#); [36:14](#); [36:26](#); [37:3](#); [37:13](#); [37:14](#); [38:1](#); [38:7](#); [39:3](#); [39:5](#); [39:9](#); [39:13](#); [39:14](#); [40:1](#); [40:8](#); [40:13](#); [40:14](#); [40:15](#); [41:1](#); [41:2](#); [41:10](#); [41:17](#); [42:1](#); [43:2](#); [43:6](#); [43:7](#); [43:13](#); [44:1](#); [44:30](#); [46:2](#); [46:9](#); [46:14](#); [46:18](#); [46:25](#); [47:4](#); [48:1](#); [48:2](#); [48:3](#); [48:5](#); [48:7](#); [48:13](#); [48:18](#); [48:19](#); [48:21](#); [48:24](#); [48:31](#); [48:32](#); [48:34](#); [48:36](#); [48:41](#); [48:45](#); [49:3](#); [49:7](#); [49:8](#); [49:13](#); [49:22](#); [49:23](#); [49:27](#); [49:28](#); [50:2](#); [50:21](#); [51:1](#); [51:27](#); [51:59](#); [52:1](#); [52:9](#); [52:12](#); [52:15](#); [52:26](#); [52:31](#))

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: [Jeremiah 1:6](#); [1:15](#); [3:6](#); [3:13](#); [Notes](#); [7:25](#); [Notes](#); [8:16](#); [8:18](#); [15:8](#); [23:10](#); [23:17](#); [31:12](#); [38:6](#); [39:9](#); [39:10](#); [40:15](#); [42:1](#); [42:8](#); [43:4](#); [44:27](#); [46:12](#); [51:9](#))

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: [Jeremiah 22:24](#); [23:22](#); [27:18](#); [31:36](#); [31:37](#); [33:20](#); [33:21](#); [33:25](#); [33:26](#); [51:53](#))

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: [Jeremiah 1:2](#); [1:3](#); [1:4](#); [1:11](#); [1:13](#); [2:1](#); [2:24](#); [2:26](#); [3:15](#); [4:1](#); [4:2](#); [4:7](#); [5:2](#); [5:12](#); [6:1](#); [6:7](#); [6:10](#); [6:11](#); [7:1](#); [7:11](#); [7:12](#); [7:13](#); [7:20](#); [7:26](#); [7:28](#); [8:14](#); [8:16](#); [9:4](#); [9:7](#); [9:13](#); [9:14](#); [9:15](#); [9:17](#); [9:19](#); [9:25](#); [10:16](#); [10:18](#); [10:22](#); [10:25](#); [11:1](#); [11:6](#); [11:8](#); [11:19](#); [11:23](#); [12:11](#); [12:16](#); [13:3](#); [13:8](#); [13:10](#); [13:20](#); [14:1](#); [14:2](#); [14:9](#); [14:10](#); [15:8](#); [15:9](#); [15:17](#); [16:1](#); [16:5](#); [16:9](#); [16:14](#); [16:18](#); [16:19](#); [17:11](#); [17:18](#); [18:1](#); [18:5](#); [18:10](#); [18:12](#); [18:21](#); [19:3](#); [19:7](#); [20:4](#); [21:1](#); [21:5](#); [21:10](#); [22:3](#); [22:17](#); [22:20](#); [23:5](#); [23:7](#); [23:9](#); [23:14](#); [23:22](#); [24:4](#); [24:5](#); [Notes](#); [25:1](#); [25:6](#); [25:7](#); [25:9](#); [25:14](#); [25:26](#); [25:31](#); [26:1](#); [26:14](#); [27:5](#); [28:12](#); [29:30](#); [30:1](#); [31:2](#); [31:19](#); [31:22](#); [32:1](#); [32:6](#); [32:26](#); [32:41](#); [33:1](#); [33:19](#); [33:23](#); [34:1](#); [34:8](#); [34:12](#); [34:13](#); [35:1](#); [35:12](#); [36:27](#); [37:4](#); [37:6](#); [38:7](#); [38:16](#); [39:15](#); [40:1](#); [42:4](#); [42:7](#); [42:19](#); [42:20](#); [43:8](#); [Notes](#); [44:1](#); [44:11](#); [44:12](#); [44:26](#); [44:29](#); [44:30](#); [46:1](#); [46:9](#); [46:17](#); [46:21](#); [46:26](#); [47:1](#); [47:6](#); [48:10](#); [48:28](#); [48:43](#); [49:34](#); [49:36](#); [50:1](#); [50:5](#); [50:9](#); [50:26](#); [50:32](#); [51:2](#); [51:13](#); [51:19](#); [51:50](#))

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: [Jeremiah 48:26](#))

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:

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

(Go back to: [Jeremiah 2:28](#); [2:33](#); [7:21](#); [8:9](#); [9:3](#); [13:23](#); [25:34](#); [31:4](#); [34:17](#); [44:25](#); [46:11](#))

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: [Jeremiah 6:13](#); [8:10](#); [9:1](#); [14:17](#); [16:6](#); [16:13](#); [16:19](#); [25:31](#); [25:33](#); [31:34](#); [31:37](#); [42:1](#); [42:6](#); [42:8](#); [44:12](#))

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: [Jeremiah 1:9](#); [1:10](#); [1:12](#); [1:14](#); [1:15](#); [1:17](#); [1:18](#); [Notes](#); [2:2](#); [2:3](#); [2:5](#); [2:6](#); [2:7](#); [2:8](#); [2:13](#); [2:14](#); [2:15](#); [2:18](#); [2:20](#); [2:21](#); [2:23](#); [2:24](#); [2:25](#); [2:27](#); [2:30](#); [2:31](#); [2:33](#); [3:1](#); [3:2](#); [3:6](#); [3:7](#); [3:9](#); [3:13](#); [3:14](#); [3:15](#); [3:16](#); [3:17](#); [3:18](#); [3:19](#); [3:21](#); [3:22](#); [3:25](#); [4:1](#); [4:3](#); [4:4](#); [4:6](#); [4:7](#); [4:8](#); [4:9](#); [4:11](#); [4:12](#); [4:14](#); [4:18](#); [4:28](#); [4:30](#); [4:31](#); [5:3](#); [5:5](#); [5:6](#); [5:7](#); [5:8](#); [5:10](#); [5:12](#); [5:13](#); [5:14](#); [5:17](#); [5:19](#); [5:22](#); [5:23](#); [5:24](#); [5:25](#); [5:26](#); [5:27](#); [5:28](#); [6:3](#); [6:4](#); [6:6](#); [6:9](#); [6:10](#); [6:11](#); [6:14](#); [6:15](#); [6:16](#); [6:17](#); [6:19](#); [6:21](#); [6:22](#); [6:24](#); [6:26](#); [6:27](#); [6:28](#); [6:29](#); [7:23](#); [7:24](#); [7:32](#); [8:2](#); [8:5](#); [8:11](#); [8:12](#); [8:14](#); [8:16](#); [8:19](#); [Notes](#); [9:1](#); [9:3](#); [9:6](#); [9:7](#); [9:8](#); [9:13](#); [9:25](#); [9:26](#); [10:11](#); [10:12](#); [10:13](#); [10:16](#); [10:18](#); [10:19](#); [10:20](#); [10:21](#); [10:22](#); [10:25](#); [11:4](#); [11:5](#); [11:15](#); [11:16](#); [11:17](#); [11:18](#); [11:19](#); [11:21](#); [12:2](#); [12:3](#); [12:7](#); [12:9](#); [12:10](#); [12:12](#); [12:14](#); [12:15](#); [12:16](#); [13:16](#); [13:17](#); [13:20](#); [13:26](#); [13:27](#); [14:10](#); [14:13](#); [14:14](#); [14:16](#); [15:2](#); [15:7](#); [15:9](#); [15:12](#); [15:14](#); [15:16](#); [15:17](#); [15:18](#); [15:20](#); [16:5](#); [16:12](#); [16:13](#); [16:16](#); [16:18](#); [16:19](#); [17:1](#); [17:4](#); [17:10](#); [17:12](#); [17:13](#); [17:16](#); [17:17](#); [17:18](#); [17:23](#); [18:7](#); [18:9](#); [18:10](#); [18:11](#); [18:13](#); [18:14](#); [18:15](#); [18:17](#); [18:18](#); [18:20](#); [18:22](#); [19:4](#); [19:13](#); [20:9](#); [20:10](#); [20:11](#); [20:17](#); [21:12](#); [21:14](#); [22:6](#); [22:7](#); [22:19](#); [22:22](#); [22:23](#); [22:25](#); [22:28](#); [23:1](#); [23:3](#); [23:5](#); [23:10](#); [23:11](#); [23:12](#); [23:13](#); [23:15](#); [23:17](#); [23:19](#); [23:33](#); [23:39](#); [24:6](#); [24:9](#); [25:5](#); [25:6](#); [25:14](#); [25:15](#); [25:16](#); [25:17](#); [25:19](#); [25:22](#); [25:24](#); [25:27](#); [25:29](#); [25:30](#); [25:32](#); [25:34](#); [25:36](#); [25:37](#); [25:38](#); [26:2](#); [26:3](#); [26:18](#); [27:8](#); [27:11](#); [28:2](#); [28:11](#); [28:14](#); [30:3](#); [30:8](#); [30:12](#); [30:13](#); [30:14](#); [30:16](#); [30:23](#); [31:9](#); [31:10](#); [31:12](#); [31:14](#); [31:21](#); [31:22](#); [31:24](#); [31:27](#); [31:28](#); [31:31](#); [31:32](#); [31:38](#); [31:40](#); [32:3](#); [32:18](#); [32:19](#); [32:22](#); [32:24](#); [32:30](#); [32:40](#); [32:41](#); [33:14](#); [33:15](#); [33:16](#); [34:17](#); [35:15](#); [36:3](#); [36:7](#); [38:16](#); [38:22](#); [42:10](#); [42:17](#); [42:18](#); [44:2](#); [44:5](#); [44:6](#); [44:7](#); [44:10](#); [44:11](#); [45:5](#); [46:6](#); [46:10](#); [46:11](#); [46:12](#); [46:20](#); [46:21](#); [46:23](#); [46:24](#); [Notes](#); [47:2](#); [47:4](#); [47:5](#); [47:6](#); [47:7](#); [48:9](#); [48:12](#); [48:15](#); [48:16](#); [48:18](#); [48:26](#); [48:32](#); [49:2](#); [49:3](#); [49:4](#); [49:10](#); [49:12](#); [49:16](#); [49:19](#); [49:20](#); [49:21](#); [49:23](#); [49:26](#); [49:32](#); [49:36](#); [49:37](#); [50:4](#); [50:6](#); [50:7](#); [50:12](#); [50:17](#); [50:19](#); [50:21](#); [50:23](#); [50:24](#); [50:26](#); [50:27](#); [50:29](#); [50:32](#); [50:34](#); [50:41](#); [50:43](#); [50:44](#); [50:45](#); [50:46](#); [51:2](#); [51:5](#); [51:6](#); [51:7](#); [51:9](#); [51:13](#); [51:16](#); [51:19](#); [51:20](#); [51:22](#); [51:25](#); [51:27](#); [51:30](#); [51:33](#); [51:34](#); [51:36](#); [51:42](#); [51:44](#); [51:47](#); [51:48](#); [51:49](#); [51:51](#); [51:52](#); [51:53](#); [51:55](#); [51:56](#); [51:57](#); [51:58](#); [52:2](#))

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: [Jeremiah 1:13; 1:15; 1:18; 2:4; 2:11; 2:14; 2:15; 2:26; 2:27; 2:35; 3:2; 3:3; 3:9; 3:12; 3:15; 3:16; 3:17; 3:18; 3:20; 3:23; 3:25; 4:1; 4:2; 4:6; 4:7; 4:9; 4:19; 4:29; 4:30; 5:3; 5:11; 5:12; 5:13; 5:16; 5:20; 5:21; 5:22; 5:27; 6:1; 6:3; 6:4; 6:8; 6:18; 6:19; 6:25; 7:6; 7:9; 7:10; 7:14; 7:23; 7:28; 7:30; 7:31; 7:34; 8:8; 9:8; 9:13; 9:14; 9:16; 9:17; 9:20; 9:26; 10:1; 10:2; 10:6; 10:9; 10:13; 10:16; 10:25; 11:4; 11:5; 11:7; 11:8; 11:10; 11:12; 11:17; 11:20; 11:22; 12:2; 12:3; 12:7; 12:10; 12:14; 13:9; 13:11; 13:13; 13:19; 13:20; 14:2; 14:7; 14:12; 14:13; 14:14; 14:15; 14:16; 14:18; 14:21; 15:2; 15:3; 15:5; 15:6; 15:9; 15:16; 15:21; 16:4; 16:7; 16:12; 16:19; 16:21; 17:5; 17:9; 17:10; 17:13; 17:25; 18:4; 18:6; 18:10; 18:12; 18:20; 18:21; 19:4; 19:5; 20:2; 20:4; 20:5; 20:8; 20:9; 20:12; 20:13; 21:4; 21:7; 21:9; 21:10; 21:11; 21:12; 22:3; 22:4; 22:6; 22:13; 22:17; 22:21; 22:24; 22:25; 22:30; 23:3; 23:5; 23:6; 23:8; 23:9; 23:16; 23:17; 23:20; 23:25; 23:27; 23:31; 23:34; 24:6; 24:10; 25:15; 25:16; 25:17; 25:19; 25:26; 25:27; 25:29; 25:30; 25:31; 26:6; 26:15; 26:16; 26:19; 26:20; 26:24; 27:6; 27:7; 27:8; 27:15; 28:11; 29:7; 29:12; 29:13; 29:16; 29:17; 29:21; 29:25; 30:7; 30:9; 30:10; 30:17; 30:18; 31:2; 31:3; 31:9; 31:11; 31:14; 31:15; 31:18; 31:23; 31:24; 31:27; 31:31; 31:33; 32:3; 32:4; 32:17; 32:18; 32:19; 32:20; 32:21; 32:22; 32:23; 32:24; 32:28; 32:30; 32:31; 32:34; 32:35; 32:36; 32:39; 32:43; 33:4; 33:9; 33:11; 33:14; 33:15; 33:16; 33:17; 33:21; 33:24; 34:1; 34:2; 34:3; 34:4; 34:14; 34:15; 34:16; 34:17; 34:20; 35:8; 36:3; 36:30; 37:17; 38:3; 38:4; 38:5; 38:16; 38:17; 38:18; 38:19; 38:23; 39:17; 39:18; 40:4; 40:5; 41:2; 41:5; 41:9; 41:18; 42:6; 42:11; 42:13; 42:14; 42:16; 42:21; 42:22; 43:3; 43:4; 43:10; 43:11; 43:12; 44:8; 44:12; 44:13; 44:16; 44:18; 44:23; 44:24; 44:26; 44:27; 44:28; 44:30; 46:2; 46:8; 46:9; 46:12; 46:13; 46:14; 46:16; 46:24; 46:25; 46:26; 46:27; 47:1; 47:5; 48:1; 48:2; 48:4; 48:8; 48:10; 48:13; 48:17; 48:20; 48:25; 48:26; 48:27; 48:29; 48:30; 48:39; 48:41; 48:45; 49:1; 49:2; 49:3; 49:8; 49:10; 49:12; 49:16; 49:19; 49:22; 49:23; 49:24; 49:27; 49:28; 49:31; 49:37; 49:38; 50:14; 50:15; 50:16; 50:17; 50:18; 50:19; 50:21; 50:22; 50:25; 50:34; 50:35; 50:36; 50:37; 50:42; 51:2; 51:5; 51:6; 51:7; 51:9; 51:19; 51:25; 51:27; 51:29; 51:33; 51:34; 51:41; 51:44; 51:46; 51:47; 51:48; 51:49; 51:50; 51:52; 51:53; 51:55; 51:56; 51:57; 51:58; 52:33\)](#)

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: [Jeremiah 6:13](#); [8:10](#); [12:1](#); [15:21](#); [29:32](#); [41:9](#); [46:6](#))

Numbers

Description

There are many numbers in the Bible. They can be written as words (“five”) or as numerals (“5”). Some numbers are very large, such as “two hundred” (200), “twenty-two thousand” (22,000), or “one hundred million” (100,000,000). Some languages do not have words for all of these numbers. Translators need to decide how to translate numbers and whether to write them as words or numerals.

This page answers the question: *How do I translate numbers?*

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

[Translate Unknowns](#)

Some numbers are exact and others are rounded.

■ Abram was **86** years old when Hagar bore Ishmael to Abram. (Genesis 16:16 ULT)

Eighty-six (86) is an exact number.

■ That day about **3,000** of the people died. (Exodus 32:28b ULT)

Here the number three thousand (3,000) is a round number. It may have been a little more than that or a little less than that. The word “about” shows that it is not an exact number.

Reason This Is a Translation Issue

Some languages do not have words for some of these numbers.

Translation Principles

- Exact numbers should be translated as closely and specifically as they can be.
- Rounded numbers can be translated more generally.

Examples From the Bible

■ When Jared had lived **162** years, he became the father of Enoch. After he became the father of Enoch, Jared lived **800** years. He became the father of more sons and daughters. Jared lived **962** years, and then he died. (Genesis 5:18-20 ULT)

The numbers 162, 800, and 962 are exact numbers and should be translated with something as close to those numbers as possible.

■ Our sister, may you be the mother of **thousands of ten thousands**. (Genesis 24:60b ULT)

This is a rounded number. It does not say exactly how many descendants she should have, but it was a huge number of them.

Translation Strategies

- (1) Write numbers using numerals.
- (2) Write numbers using your language’s words or the Gateway Language words for those numbers.
- (3) Write numbers using words, and put the numerals in parentheses after them.

- (4) Combine words for large numbers.
- (5) Use a very general expression for very large rounded numbers and write the numeral in parentheses afterward.

Examples of Translation Strategies Applied

We will use the following verse in our examples:

Now, see, at great effort I have prepared for Yahweh's house **100,000** talents of gold, **1,000,000** talents of silver, and bronze and iron in large quantities. (1 Chronicles 22:14a ULT)

- (1) Write numbers using numerals.

I have prepared for Yahweh's house **100,000** talents of gold, **1,000,000** talents of silver, and bronze and iron in large quantities.

- (2) Write numbers using your language's words or the Gateway Language words for those numbers.

I have prepared for Yahweh's house **one hundred thousand** talents of gold, **one million** talents of silver, and bronze and iron in large quantities.

- (3) Write numbers using words, and put the numerals in parenthesis after them.

I have prepared for Yahweh's house one **hundred thousand (100,000)** talents of gold, **one million (1,000,000)** talents of silver, and bronze and iron in large quantities.

- (4) Combine words for large numbers.

I have prepared for Yahweh's house **one hundred thousand** talents of gold, **a thousand thousand** talents of silver, and bronze and iron in large quantities.

- (5) Use a very general expression for very large rounded numbers and write the numeral in parentheses afterward.

I have prepared for Yahweh's house **a great amount of gold (100,000 talents), ten times that amount of silver (1,000,000 talents)**, and bronze and iron in large quantities.

Consistency

Be consistent in your translations. Decide how the numbers will be translated, using numbers or numerals. There are different ways of being consistent.

- Use words to represent numbers all of the time. (You might have very long words.)
- Use numerals to represent numbers all of the time.
- Use words to represent the numbers that your language has words for and use numerals for the numbers that your language does not have words for.
- Use words for low numbers and numerals for high numbers.
- Use words for numbers that require few words and numerals for numbers that require more than a few words.
- Use words to represent numbers, and write the numerals in parentheses after them.

Consistency in the ULT and UST

The *unfoldingWord® Literal Text* (ULT) and the *unfoldingWord® Simplified Text* (UST) use words for the numbers one through ten and use numerals for all numbers above ten.

When Adam had lived **130** years, he became the father of a son in his own likeness, after his image, and he called his name Seth. After Adam became the father of Seth, he lived **800** years. He became the father of more sons and daughters. Adam lived **930** years, and then he died.
(Genesis 5:3-5 ULT)

Next we recommend you learn about:

[Ordinal Numbers](#)

[[rc://en/ta/man/translate/translate-fraction]]

(Go back to: [Jeremiah 29:10](#); [32:9](#); [37:15](#); [38:10](#); [41:5](#); [52:28](#); [52:29](#); [52:30](#))

Order of Events

Description

In the Bible, events are not always told in the order in which they occurred. Sometimes the author wanted to discuss something that happened at an earlier time than the event that he just talked about. This can be confusing to the reader.

This page answers the question: *Why are some events not listed in the order they happened, and how do I translate them?*

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

[[rc://en/ta/man/translate/writing-intro]]

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

Reason This Is a Translation Issue

Readers might think that the events happened in the order that they are told. It is important to help them understand the correct order of events.

Examples From the Bible

He even added this to them all: he locked John up in prison. Now it came about, when all the people were baptized, Jesus also was baptized. (Luke 3:20-21 ULT)

This could sound like John baptized Jesus after John was locked up in prison, but John baptized Jesus before John was locked up in prison.

Just as Joshua had said to the people, the seven priests carrying seven trumpets of rams' horns before Yahweh went forward and blew the trumpets, and the ark of the covenant of Yahweh followed after them. But Joshua commanded the people, saying, "Do not shout nor let your voice be heard, nor let any word leave your mouth until the day I tell you to shout. Then you must shout." (Joshua 6:8,10 ULT)

This could sound like Joshua gave the order not to shout after the army had already started their march, but he had given that order before they started marching.

Who is worthy to open the scroll and break its seals? (Revelation 5:2b ULT)

This sounds like a person must first open the scroll and then break its seals, but the seals that lock the scroll must be broken before the scroll can be unrolled.

Translation Strategies

- (1) If your language uses phrases or time words to show that an event happened before one that was already mentioned, consider using one of them.
- (2) If your language uses verb tense or aspect to show that an event happened before one that was already mentioned, consider using that. (See the section on "Aspect" of Verbs.)
- (3) If your language prefers to tell events in the order that they occurred, consider reordering the events so they are in that order. This may require putting two or more verses together (like 5-6). (See Verse Bridges.)

Examples of Translation Strategies Applied

- (1) If your language uses phrases, time words or tenses to show that an event happened before the one just mentioned, consider using one of them.

20 he even added this to them all: he locked John up in prison. Now it came about, when all the people were baptized, Jesus also was baptized. (Luke 3:20-21 ULT)

20 But then Herod ... had John locked up in prison. 21 **Before John was put in prison**, while all the people were being baptized by John, Jesus also was baptized.

Who is worthy to open the scroll and break its seals? (Revelation 5:2b ULT)

Who is worthy to open the scroll **after** breaking its seals?

(2) If your language uses verb tense or aspect to show that an event happened before one that was already mentioned, consider using that.

Just as Joshua had said to the people, the seven priests carrying seven trumpets of rams' horns before Yahweh went forward and blew the trumpets, But Joshua commanded the people, saying, "Do not shout nor let your voice be heard, nor let any word leave your mouth until the day I tell you to shout. Then you must shout." (Joshua 6:8,10 ULT)

8 Just as Joshua had said to the people, the seven priests carried the seven trumpets of rams' horns before Yahweh, as they advanced, they gave a blast on the trumpets 10 But Joshua **had commanded** the people, saying, "Do not shout. No sound must leave your mouths until the day I tell you to shout. Only then must you shout."

(3) If your language prefers to tell events in the order that they occur, consider reordering the events. This may require putting two or more verses together (like 5-6).

8 Just as Joshua had said to the people, the seven priests carrying seven trumpets of rams' horns before Yahweh went forward and blew the trumpets, But Joshua commanded the people, saying, "Do not shout nor let your voice be heard, nor let any word leave your mouth until the day I tell you to shout. Then you must shout." (Joshua 6:8,10 ULT)

8,10 Joshua commanded the people, saying, "Do not shout. No sound must leave your mouths until the day I tell you to shout. Only then must you shout." Then just as Joshua had said to the people, the seven priests carried the seven trumpets of rams horns before Yahweh, as they advanced, they gave a blast on the trumpets...

Who is worthy to open the scroll and break its seals? (Revelation 5:2b ULT)

Who is worthy to break the seals and open the scroll?

You may also want to watch the video at https://ufw.io/figs_events.

Next we recommend you learn about:

[Background Information](#)

[\[\[rc://en/ta/man/translate/grammar-connect-words-phrases\]\]](#)

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

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

(Go back to: [Jeremiah 39:15](#))

Ordinal Numbers

Description

Ordinal numbers are used in the Bible mainly to tell the position of something in a list.

And God has indeed appointed some in the church, **first** apostles, **second** prophets, **third** teachers, then miracles. (1 Corinthians 12:28a ULT)

This page answers the question: *What are ordinal numbers and how can I translate them?*

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

[Numbers](#)

This is a list of workers that God gave to the church in their order.

Ordinal Numbers in English

Most ordinal numbers in English simply have “-th” added to the end.

Numeral	Number	Ordinal Number
4	four	fourth
10	ten	tenth
100	one hundred	one hundredth
1,000	one thousand	one thousandth

Some ordinal numbers in English do not follow that pattern.

Numeral	Number	Ordinal Number
1	one	first
2	two	second
3	three	third
5	five	fifth
12	twelve	twelfth

Reason This Is a Translation Issue

Some languages do not have special numbers for showing the order of items in a list. There are different ways to deal with this.

Examples From the Bible

The **first** lot went to Jehoiarib, the **second** to Jedaiah, the **third** to Harim, the **fourth** to Seorim ... the **twenty-third** to Delaiah, and the **twenty-fourth** to Maaziah. (1 Chronicles 24:7-18 ULT)

The people cast lots and one went to each of these people in the order given.

You must place in it four rows of precious stones. The **first** row must have a ruby, a topaz, and a garnet. The **second** row must have an emerald, a sapphire, and a diamond. The **third** row must have a jacinth, an agate, and an amethyst. The **fourth** row must have a beryl, and an onyx, and a jasper. They must be mounted in gold settings. (Exodus 28:17-20 ULT)

This describes four rows of stones. The first row is probably the top row, and the fourth row is probably the bottom row.

Translation Strategies

If your language has ordinal numbers and using them would give the right meaning, consider using them. If not, here are some strategies to consider:

- (1) Use “one” with the first item and “another” or “the next” with the rest.
- (2) Tell the total number of items and then list them or the things associated with them.

Examples of Translation Strategies Applied

- (1) Tell the total number of items, and use “one” with the first item and “another” or “the next” with the rest.

The first lot went to Jehoiarib, the second to Jedaiah, the third to Harim, the fourth to Seorim ... the twenty-third to Delaiah, and the twenty-fourth to Maaziah. (1 Chronicles 24:7-18 ULT)

There were **24** lots. **One lot** went to Jehoiarib, **another** to Jedaiah, **another** to Harim ... **another** to Delaiah, **and the last** went to Maaziah.

There were **24** lots. **One lot** went to Jehoiarib, **the next** to Jedaiah, **the next** to Harim ... **the next** to Delaiah, **and the last** went to Maaziah.

A river went out of Eden to water the garden. From there it divided and became **four** rivers. The name of **the first** is Pishon. It is the one which flows throughout the whole land of Havilah, where there is gold. The gold of that land is good. There is also bdellium and the onyx stone there. The name of **the second** river is Gihon. This one flows throughout the whole land of Cush. The name of **the third** river is Tigris, which flows east of Asshur. **The fourth** river is the Euphrates. (Genesis 2:10-14 ULT)

A river went out of Eden to water the garden. From there it divided and became **four** rivers. The name of **one** is Pishon. It is the one which flows throughout the whole land of Havilah, where there is gold. The gold of that land is good. There is also bdellium and the onyx stone there. The name of **the next** river is Gihon. This one flows throughout the whole land of Cush. The name of **the next** river is Tigris, which flows east of Asshur. The **last** river is the Euphrates.

- (2) Tell the total number of items and then list them or the things associated with them.

The **first** lot went to Jehoiarib, the **second** to Jedaiah, the **third** to Harim, the **fourth** to Seorim ... the **twenty-third** to Delaiah, and the **twenty-fourth** to Maaziah. (1 Chronicles 24:7-18 ULT)

They cast **24** lots. The lots went to Jerhoiarib, Jedaiah, Harim, Seorim ... Delaiah, and Maaziah.

Next we recommend you learn about:

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

(Go back to: [Jeremiah 1:2](#); [1:3](#); [25:1](#); [28:1](#); [28:17](#); [36:1](#); [36:9](#); [36:22](#); [39:1](#); [39:2](#); [41:1](#); [41:4](#); [45:1](#); [46:2](#); [51:59](#); [52:4](#); [52:5](#); [52:6](#); [52:12](#); [52:28](#); [52:29](#); [52:30](#); [52:31](#))

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: [Jeremiah 2:4](#); [2:7](#); [2:19](#); [3:25](#); [4:4](#); [4:5](#); [4:29](#); [5:1](#); [5:12](#); [5:15](#); [7:16](#); [7:27](#); [8:2](#); [8:19](#); [8:21](#); [9:1](#); [9:10](#); [9:17](#); [9:20](#); [9:22](#); [9:24](#); [10:23](#); [10:25](#); [12:7](#); [14:5](#); [14:8](#); [15:1](#); [15:6](#); [15:21](#); [16:7](#); [16:11](#); [16:19](#); [17:1](#); [17:18](#); [18:11](#); [18:22](#); [18:23](#); [19:15](#); [20:1](#); [20:5](#); [20:7](#); [21:7](#); [22:18](#); [24:6](#); [30:4](#); [31:1](#); [31:4](#); [31:11](#); [31:18](#); [31:33](#); [33:1](#); [33:10](#); [36:1](#); [42:10](#); [42:14](#); [42:18](#); [44:21](#); [46:1](#); [46:6](#); [46:10](#); [46:27](#); [47:2](#); [47:3](#); [48:1](#); [48:16](#); [48:25](#); [48:31](#); [48:45](#); [49:1](#); [49:7](#); [49:18](#); [49:33](#); [50:1](#); [50:2](#); [50:20](#); [50:45](#); [51:1](#); [51:27](#); [51:54](#))

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: [Jeremiah 2:19](#); [2:35](#); [4:10](#); [4:17](#); [4:18](#); [4:28](#); [5:7](#); [6:2](#); [6:6](#); [9:10](#); [9:21](#); [10:10](#); [10:15](#); [12:7](#); [12:8](#); [12:12](#); [14:7](#); [15:18](#); [17:8](#); [17:11](#); [18:13](#); [18:21](#); [23:20](#); [24:10](#); [25:32](#); [29:17](#); [31:4](#); [31:16](#); [32:31](#); [42:16](#); [44:29](#); [46:10](#); [46:14](#); [47:6](#); [47:7](#); [48:11](#); [48:12](#); [50:14](#); [50:15](#); [51:18](#); [51:44](#); [51:48](#))

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:

[\[\[rc://en/ta/man/translate/writing-symlanguage\]\]](https://en.ta.man/translate/writing-symlanguage)

(Go back to: [Jeremiah 5:1](#); [17:1](#); [20:1](#); [30:4](#); [31:1](#); [33:1](#); [36:1](#); [46:1](#); [48:1](#); [49:1](#); [50:1](#); [51:1](#))

Predictive Past

Description

The predictive past is a figure of speech that uses the past tense to refer to things that will happen in the future. This is sometimes done in prophecy to show that the event will certainly happen. It is also called the prophetic perfect.

Therefore my people have gone into captivity for lack of understanding;
their honored leaders go hungry, and their common people have nothing to drink. (Isaiah 5:13 ULT)

This page answers the question: *What is the predictive past?*

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

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

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

In the example above, the people of Israel had not yet gone into captivity, but God spoke of their going into captivity as if it had already happened because he had decided that they certainly would go into captivity.

Reason This Is a Translation Issue:

Readers who are not aware of the past tense being used in prophecy to refer to future events may find it confusing.

Examples From the Bible

Now Jericho was tightly closed because of the sons of Israel. No one went out and no one came in. Yahweh said to Joshua, "See, I have delivered Jericho, and its king, and its powerful soldiers into your hand." (Joshua 6:1-2 ULT)

For to us a child has been born, to us a son has been given;
and the rule will be on his shoulder. (Isaiah 9:6a ULT)

In the examples above, God spoke of things that would happen in the future as if they had already happened.

But even Enoch, the seventh from Adam, prophesied about them, saying, "Look! The Lord came with thousands and thousands of his holy ones." (Jude 1:14 ULT)

Enoch was speaking of something that would happen in the future, but he used the past tense when he said "the Lord came."

Translation Strategies

If the past tense would be natural and give the right meaning in your language, consider using it. If not, here are some other options.

- (1) Use the future tense to refer to future events.
- (2) If it refers to something in the immediate future, use a form that would show that.
- (3) Some languages may use the present tense to show that something will happen very soon.

Examples of Translation Strategies Applied

- (1) Use the future tense to refer to future events.

For to us a child **has been born**, to us a son **has been given**. (Isaiah 9:6a ULT)

For to us a child **will be born**, to us a son **will be given**.

(2) If it refers to something that would happen very soon, use a form that shows that.

Yahweh said to Joshua, "See, I have delivered Jericho, and its king, and its powerful soldiers into your hand." (Joshua 6:2 ULT)

Yahweh said to Joshua, "See, I **am about to deliver** over to you Jericho, its king, and its powerful soldiers."

(3) Some languages may use the present tense to show that something will happen very soon.

Yahweh said to Joshua, "See, I have delivered Jericho, and its king, and its powerful soldiers into your hand." (Joshua 6:2 ULT)

Yahweh said to Joshua, "See, I **am delivering** over to you Jericho, its king, and its powerful soldiers."

(Go back to: [Jeremiah 13:17](#); [13:18](#); [13:20](#); [51:30](#))

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: [Jeremiah 31:7](#); [31:10](#); [31:21](#); [50:11](#); [50:12](#))

Proverbs

Description

Proverbs are short sayings that give wise advice or teach something that is generally true about life. People enjoy proverbs because they give a lot of wisdom in few words. Proverbs in the Bible often use metaphor and parallelism. Proverbs should not be understood as absolute and unchangeable laws. Rather, proverbs offer general advice to a person about how to live his life.

This page answers the question: *What are proverbs, and how can I translate them?*

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

[Metaphor](#)

[Parallelism](#)

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

Hatred stirs up conflicts, but love covers over all offenses. (Proverbs 10:12 ULT)

Here is another example from the book of Proverbs.

Look at the ant, you lazy person, consider her ways, and be wise. It has no commander, officer, or ruler, yet it prepares its food in the summer, and during the harvest it stores up what it will eat. (Proverbs 6:6-8 ULT)

Reason This Is a Translation Issue

Each language has its own ways of saying proverbs. There are many proverbs in the Bible. They need to be translated in the way that people say proverbs in your language so that people recognize them as proverbs and understand what they teach.

Examples From the Bible

A good name is to be chosen over great riches,
and favor is better than silver and gold. (Proverbs 22:1 ULT)

This means that it is better to be a good person and to have a good reputation than it is to have a lot of money.

Like vinegar on the teeth and smoke in the eyes,
so is the sluggard to those who send him. (Proverbs 10:26 ULT)

This means that a lazy person is very annoying to those who send him to do something.

The way of Yahweh protects those who have integrity,
but it is destruction for the wicked. (Proverbs 10:29 ULT)

This means that Yahweh protects people who do what is right, but he destroys those who are wicked.

Translation Strategies

If translating a proverb literally would be natural and give the right meaning in your language, consider doing that. If not, here are some options:

- (1) Find out how people say proverbs in your language, and use one of those ways.
- (2) If certain objects in the proverb are not known to many people in your language group, consider replacing

them with objects that people know and that function in the same way in your language.

(3) Substitute a proverb in your language that has the same teaching as the proverb in the Bible.

(4) Give the same teaching but not in a form of a proverb.

Examples of Translation Strategies Applied

(1) Find out how people say proverbs in your language, and use one of those ways.

A good name is to be chosen over great riches,
and favor is better than silver and gold. (Proverbs 22:1 ULT)

Here are some ideas for ways that people might say a proverb in their language.

It is better to have a good name than to have great riches,
and to be favored by people than to have silver and gold.
Wise people choose a good name over great riches,
and favor over silver and gold.
Try to have a good reputation rather than great riches.
Will riches really help you?
I would rather have a good reputation.

(2) If certain objects in the proverb are not known to many people in your language group, consider replacing them with objects that people know and that function in the same way in your language.

Like **snow in summer** or rain in harvest,
so a fool does not deserve honor. (Proverbs 26:1 ULT)
It is not natural for **a cold wind to blow in the hot season** or for it to rain
in the harvest season;
And it is not natural to honor a foolish person.

(3) Substitute a proverb in your language that has the same teaching as the proverb in the Bible.

Do not boast about tomorrow,
for you do not know what a day may bring. (Proverbs 27:1a ULT)
Do not count your chickens before they hatch.

(4) Give the same teaching but not in a form of a proverb.

There is a generation that curses their father
and does not bless their mother.
There is a generation that is pure in their own eyes,

and yet they are not washed of their filth. (Proverbs 30:11-12 ULT)

People who do not respect their parents think that they are righteous,
and they do not turn away from their sin.

(Go back to: [Jeremiah 31:29](#); [31:30](#))

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: [Jeremiah 7:4](#); [7:19](#); [7:29](#); [15:19](#); [21:5](#); [44:2](#); [44:3](#); [48:30](#); [49:12](#))

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: [Jeremiah 2:5](#); [2:6](#); [2:8](#); [2:11](#); [2:14](#); [2:17](#); [2:18](#); [2:21](#); [2:23](#); [2:24](#); [2:28](#); [2:31](#); [2:32](#); [2:36](#); [3:1](#); [3:2](#); [3:5](#); [3:6](#); [4:14](#); [4:21](#); [4:30](#); [Notes](#); [5:3](#); [5:7](#); [5:9](#); [5:22](#); [5:29](#); [5:31](#); [6:10](#); [6:15](#); [6:20](#); [7:9](#); [7:10](#); [7:11](#); [7:17](#); [7:19](#); [8:4](#); [8:5](#); [8:6](#); [8:8](#); [8:9](#); [8:12](#); [8:14](#); [8:19](#); [8:22](#); [9:7](#); [9:9](#); [9:12](#); [10:7](#); [11:15](#); [12:5](#); [12:9](#); [13:20](#); [13:21](#); [13:23](#); [15:5](#); [15:11](#); [15:12](#); [15:18](#); [16:20](#); [17:9](#); [17:15](#); [18:6](#); [18:13](#); [18:14](#); [18:20](#); [20:18](#); [21:13](#); [22:15](#); [22:16](#); [22:28](#); [23:18](#); [23:23](#); [23:24](#); [23:26](#); [23:29](#); [25:29](#); [26:9](#); [26:19](#); [27:13](#); [27:17](#); [29:27](#); [30:6](#); [30:15](#); [31:20](#); [31:22](#); [32:3](#); [32:27](#); [33:24](#); [35:13](#); [36:29](#); [37:18](#); [37:19](#); [38:15](#); [40:14](#); [40:15](#); [44:7](#); [44:9](#); [44:19](#); [44:21](#); [45:5](#); [46:5](#); [46:7](#); [46:15](#); [47:5](#); [47:6](#); [47:7](#); [48:14](#); [48:27](#); [Notes](#); [49:1](#); [49:4](#); [49:7](#); [49:9](#); [49:12](#); [49:19](#); [49:25](#); [50:44](#))

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: [Jeremiah 3:1](#); [3:2](#); [3:6](#); [3:19](#); [3:20](#); [4:4](#); [4:13](#); [4:17](#); [4:31](#); [5:3](#); [5:14](#); [5:16](#); [5:26](#); [5:27](#); [6:7](#); [6:23](#); [6:24](#); [6:26](#); [6:27](#); [8:2](#); [8:6](#); [9:22](#); [10:5](#); [11:16](#); [13:24](#); [14:6](#); [14:8](#); [14:9](#); [15:18](#); [15:19](#); [15:20](#); [16:4](#); [Notes](#); [17:6](#); [17:8](#); [Notes](#); [18:6](#); [20:11](#); [22:6](#); [22:23](#); [23:9](#); [23:12](#); [23:14](#); [23:19](#); [23:29](#); [24:5](#); [25:33](#); [26:6](#); [29:17](#); [30:6](#); [31:10](#); [31:12](#); [31:18](#); [33:22](#); [43:12](#); [46:8](#); [46:18](#); [46:21](#); [46:22](#); [48:6](#); [48:11](#); [48:28](#); [48:36](#); [48:40](#); [48:41](#); [49:16](#); [49:19](#); [49:22](#); [49:23](#); [49:24](#); [50:6](#); [50:7](#); [50:8](#); [50:9](#); [50:11](#); [50:17](#); [50:23](#); [50:26](#); [50:37](#); [50:42](#); [50:43](#); [50:44](#); [51:14](#); [51:27](#); [51:33](#); [51:34](#); [51:40](#); [51:55](#); [51:64](#))

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: [Jeremiah 1:9](#); [2:37](#); [4:8](#); [6:26](#); [7:29](#); [13:18](#); [14:3](#); [14:4](#); [16:6](#); [18:17](#); [21:9](#); [22:9](#); [25:34](#); [31:19](#); [32:33](#); [36:24](#); [47:5](#); [48:27](#); [48:37](#); [48:39](#); [49:17](#))

Synecdoche

Description

Synecdoche is a figure of speech in which a speaker uses a part of something to refer to the whole thing, or uses the whole to refer to a part.

■ **My soul** magnifies the Lord. (Luke 1:46b ULT)

Mary was very happy about what the Lord was doing, so she said “my soul,” which means the inner, emotional part of herself, to refer to her whole self.

■ So **the Pharisees** said to him, “Look, why are they doing that which is not lawful?” (Mark 2:24a ULT)

The Pharisees who were standing there did not all say the same words at the same time. Instead, it is more likely that one man representing the group said those words.

Reasons This Is a Translation Issue

- Some readers may not recognize the synecdoche and thus misunderstand the words as a literal statement.
- Some readers may realize that they are not to understand the words literally, but they may not know what the meaning is.

Example From the Bible

■ Then I looked on all the deeds that **my hands** had accomplished. (Ecclesiastes 2:11a ULT)

“My hands” is a synecdoche for the whole person because clearly the arms and the rest of the body and the mind were also involved in the person’s accomplishments. The hands are chosen to represent the person because they are the parts of the body most directly involved in the work.

Translation Strategies

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

(1) State specifically what the synecdoche refers to.

Examples of Translation Strategies Applied

(1) State specifically what the synecdoche refers to.

■ **“My soul** magnifies the Lord.” (Luke 1:46b ULT)

■ **“I** magnify the Lord.”

So **the Pharisees** said to him ... (Mark 2:24a ULT)

■ **A representative of the Pharisees** said to him ...

Then I looked on all the deeds that **my hands** had accomplished. (Ecclesiastes 2:11a ULT)

This page answers the question: *What is a synecdoche, and how can I translate such a thing into my language?*

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

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

I looked on all the deeds that I had accomplished

Next we recommend you learn about:

[Metonymy](#)

[[rc://en/ta/man/translate/bita-part2]]

(Go back to: [Jeremiah 4:7](#); [4:15](#); [5:17](#); [6:22](#); [8:5](#); [8:18](#); [9:5](#); [9:12](#); [10:19](#); [10:20](#); [11:21](#); [13:16](#); [14:2](#); [14:10](#); [16:17](#); [17:1](#); [17:16](#); [18:22](#); [19:7](#); [20:4](#); [20:9](#); [20:18](#); [21:4](#); [22:3](#); [22:8](#); [22:17](#); [23:14](#); [25:6](#); [25:7](#); [25:14](#); [26:13](#); [26:19](#); [27:3](#); [29:3](#); [30:24](#); [32:4](#); [33:5](#); [37:2](#); [39:6](#); [41:3](#); [41:9](#); [41:10](#); [41:11](#); [41:12](#); [41:14](#); [41:15](#); [42:17](#); [44:8](#); [44:9](#); [44:17](#); [44:25](#); [44:26](#); [48:36](#); [48:44](#); [48:45](#); [49:36](#); [50:1](#); [50:41](#); [52:10](#))

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: [Jeremiah 1:11](#); [3:2](#); [6:29](#); [8:7](#); [31:4](#); [48:6](#))

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](#)

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

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: [Jeremiah 13:14](#); [42:17](#))



unfoldingWord® Translation Words

Version 28

adultery, adulterous, adulterer, adulteress

Definition:

The term “adultery” refers to a sin that occurs when a married person has sexual relations with someone who is not that person’s spouse. Both of them are guilty of adultery. The term “adulterous” describes this kind of behavior or any person who commits this sin.

- The term “adulterer” refers generally to any person who commits adultery.
- Sometimes the term “adulteress” is used to specify that it was a woman who committed adultery.
- Adultery breaks the promises that a husband and wife made to each other in their covenant of marriage.
- God commanded the Israelites to not commit adultery.

Translation Suggestions:

- If the target language does not have one word that means “adultery,” this term could be translated with a phrase such as “having sexual relations with someone else’s wife” or “being intimate with another person’s spouse.”
- Some languages may have an indirect way of talking about adultery, such as “sleeping with someone else’s spouse” or “being unfaithful to one’s wife.” (See: [euphemism](#))

(See also: [commit](#), [covenant](#), sexual immorality, sleep with, [faithful](#))

Bible References:

- Exodus 20:14
- Hosea 4:1-2
- Luke 16:18
- Matthew 5:28
- Matthew 12:39
- Revelation 2:22

Examples from the Bible stories:

- **13:6** “Do not commit **adultery**.”
- **28:2** Do not commit **adultery**.
- **34:7** “The religious leader prayed like this, ‘Thank you, God, that I am not a sinner like other men-such as robbers, unjust men, **adulterers**, or even like that tax collector.’”

Word Data:

- Strong’s: H5003, H5004, G34280, G34290, G34300, G34310, G34320

(Go back to: [Jeremiah 3 General Notes](#))

appoint, appointed

Definition:

The terms “appoint” and “appointed” refer to choosing someone to fulfill a specific task or role.

- To “be appointed” can also refer to being “chosen” to receive something, as in “appointed to eternal life.” That people were “appointed to eternal life” means they were chosen to receive eternal life.
- The phrase “appointed time” refers to God’s “chosen time” or “planned time” for something to happen.
- The word “appoint” may also mean to “command” or “assign” someone to do something.

Translation Suggestions:

- Depending on the context, ways to translate “appoint” could include “choose” or “assign” or “formally choose” or “designate.”
- The term “appointed” could be translated as “assigned” or “planned” or “specifically chose.”
- The phrase “be appointed” could also be translated as “be chosen.”

Bible References:

- 1 Samuel 8:11
- Acts 3:20
- Acts 6:2
- Acts 13:48
- Genesis 41:33-34
- Numbers 3:9-10

Word Data:

- Strong’s: H0561, H0977, H2163, H2296, H2706, H2708, H2710, H3198, H3245, H3259, H3677, H3983, H4150, H4151, H4152, H4483, H4487, H4662, H5324, H5344, H5414, H5567, H5975, H6310, H6485, H6565, H6635, H6680, H6923, H6942, H6966, H7760, H7896, G03220, G06060, G12990, G13030, G19350, G25250, G27490, G42870, G42960, G43840, G49290, G50210, G50870

(Go back to: [Jeremiah 1 General Notes](#))

believe, believer, belief, unbeliever, unbelief

Definition:

The terms “believe” and “believe in” are closely related, but have slightly different meanings:

1. believe

- To believe something is to accept or trust that it is true.
- To believe someone is to acknowledge that what that person has said is true.

2. believe in

- To “believe in” someone means to “trust in” that person. It means to trust that the person is who he says he is, that he always speaks the truth, and that he will do what he has promised to do.
- When a person truly believes in something, he will act in such a way that shows that belief.
- The phrase “have faith in” usually has the same meaning as “believe in.”
- To “believe in Jesus” means to believe that he is the Son of God, that he is God himself who also became human and who died as a sacrifice to pay for our sins. It means to trust him as Savior and live in a way that honors him.

3. believer

In the Bible, the term “believer” refers to someone who believes in and relies on Jesus Christ as Savior.

- The term “believer” literally means “person who believes.”
- The term “Christian” eventually came to be the main title for believers because it indicates that they believe in Christ and obey his teachings.

4. unbelief

The term “unbelief” refers to not believing something or someone.

- In the Bible, “unbelief” refers to not believing in or not trusting in Jesus as one’s Savior.
- A person who does not believe in Jesus is called an “unbeliever.”

Translation Suggestions:

- To “believe” could be translated as to “know to be true” or “know to be right.”
- To “believe in” could be translated as “trust completely” or “trust and obey” or “completely rely on and follow.”
- Some translations may prefer to say “believer in Jesus” or “believer in Christ.”
- This term could also be translated by a word or phrase that means “person who trusts in Jesus” or “someone who knows Jesus and lives for him.”
- Other ways to translate “believer” could be “follower of Jesus” or “person who knows and obeys Jesus.”
- The term “believer” is a general term for any believer in Christ, while “disciple” and “apostle” were used more specifically for people who knew Jesus while he was alive. It is best to translate these terms in different ways, in order to keep them distinct.
- Other ways to translate “unbelief” could include “lack of faith” or “not believing.”

- The term “unbeliever” could be translated as “person who does not believe in Jesus” or “someone who does not trust in Jesus as Savior.”

(See also: [believe](#), apostle, Christian, disciple, [faith](#), [trust](#))

Bible References:

- Genesis 15:6
- Genesis 45:26
- Job 9:16-18
- Habakkuk 1:5-7
- Mark 6:4-6
- Mark 1:14-15
- Luke 9:41
- John 1:12
- Acts 6:5
- Acts 9:42
- Acts 28:23-24
- Romans 3:3
- 1 Corinthians 6:1
- 1 Corinthians 9:5
- 2 Corinthians 6:15
- Hebrews 3:12
- 1 John 3:23

Examples from the Bible stories:

- **3:4** Noah warned the people about the coming flood and told them to turn to God, but they did not **believe** him.
- **4:8** Abram **believed** God’s promise. God declared that Abram was righteous because he **believed** God’s promise.
- **11:2** God provided a way to save the firstborn of anyone who **believed in** him.
- **11:6** But the Egyptians did not **believe** God or obey his commands.
- **37:5** Jesus replied, “I am the Resurrection and the Life. Whoever **believes in** me will live, even though he dies. Everyone who **believes in** me will never die. Do you **believe** this?”
- **43:1** After Jesus returned to heaven, the disciples stayed in Jerusalem as Jesus had commanded them to do. The **believers** there constantly gathered together to pray.
- **43:3** While the **believers** were all together, suddenly the house where they were was filled with a sound like a strong wind. Then something that looked like flames of fire appeared over the heads of all the **believers**.
- **43:13** Every day, more people became **believers**.
- **46:6** That day many people in Jerusalem started persecuting the followers of Jesus, so the **believers** fled to other places. But in spite of this, they preached about Jesus everywhere they went.
- **46:1** Saul was the young man who guarded the robes of the men who killed Stephen. He did not believe in Jesus, so he persecuted the **believers**.
- **46:9** Some **believers** who fled from the persecution in Jerusalem went far away to the city of Antioch and preached about Jesus.
- **46:9** It was at Antioch that **believers** in Jesus were first called “Christians.”
- **47:14** They also wrote many letters to encourage and teach the **believers** in the churches.

Word Data:

- Strong’s: H0539, H0540, G05430, G05440, G05690, G05700, G05710, G39820, G41000, G41020, G41030, G41350

(Go back to: [Jeremiah 29 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: [Jeremiah 24 General Notes](#))

chosen, choose, chosen people, Chosen One, elect

Definition:

The term “the elect” literally means “chosen ones” or “chosen people” and refers to those whom God has appointed or selected to be his people. “Chosen One” or “Chosen One of God” is a title that refers to Jesus, who is the chosen Messiah.

- The term “choose” means to select something or someone or to decide something. It is often used to refer to God appointing people to belong to him and to serve him.
- To be “chosen” means to be “selected” or “appointed” to be or do something.
- God chose people to be holy, to be set apart by him for the purpose of bearing good spiritual fruit. That is why they are called “the chosen (ones)” or “the elect.”
- The term “chosen one” is sometimes used in the Bible to refer to certain people such as Moses and King David whom God had appointed as leaders over his people. It is also used to refer to the nation of Israel as God’s chosen people.
- The phrase “the elect” is an older term that literally means “the chosen ones” or “the chosen people.” This phrase in the original language is plural when referring to believers in Christ.
- In older English Bible versions, the term “elect” is used in both the Old and New Testaments to translate the word for “chosen one(s).” More modern versions use “elect” only in the New Testament, to refer to people who have been saved by God through faith in Jesus. Elsewhere in the Bible text, they translate this word more literally as “chosen ones.”

Translation Suggestions:

- It is best to translate “elect” with a word or phrase that means “chosen ones” or “chosen people.” This could also be translated as “people whom God chose” or “the ones God appointed to be his people.”
- The phrase “who were chosen” could also be translated as “who were appointed” or “who were selected” or “whom God chose.”
- “I chose you” could be translated as “I appointed you” or “I selected you.”
- In reference to Jesus, “Chosen One” could also be translated as “God’s chosen One” or “God’s specially appointed Messiah” or “the One God appointed (to save people).”

(See also: [appoint](#), Christ)

Bible References:

- 2 John 1:1
- Colossians 3:12
- Ephesians 1:3-4
- Isaiah 65:22-23
- Luke 18:7
- Matthew 24:19-22
- Romans 8:33

Word Data:

- Strong’s: H0970, H0972, H0977, H1262, H1305, H4005, H6901, G01380, G01400, G15860, G15880, G15890, G19510, G37240, G44000, G44010, G47580, G48990, G55000

(Go back to: [Jeremiah 1 General Notes](#))

circumcise, circumcised, circumcision, uncircumcised, uncircumcision

Definition:

The term “circumcise” means to cut off the foreskin of a man or male child. A circumcision ceremony may be performed in connection with this.

- God commanded Abraham to circumcise every male among his family and servants as a sign of God’s covenant with them.
- God also commanded Abraham’s descendants to continue to do this for every baby boy born into their households.
- The phrase, “circumcision of the heart” refers figuratively to the “cutting away” or removal of sin from a person.
- In a spiritual sense, “the circumcised” refers to people whom God has purified from sin through the blood of Jesus and who are his people.
- The term “uncircumcised” refers to those who have not been circumcised physically. It can also refer figuratively to those who have not been circumcised spiritually, who do not have a relationship with God.

The terms “uncircumcised” and “uncircumcision” refer to a male who has not been physically circumcised. These terms are also used figuratively.

- Egypt was a nation that also required circumcision. So when God talks about Egypt being defeated by the “uncircumcised,” he is referring to people whom the Egyptians despised for not being circumcised.
- The Bible refers to people who have an “uncircumcised heart” or who are “uncircumcised in heart.” This a figurative way of saying that these people are not God’s people, and are stubbornly disobedient to him.
- If a word for circumcision is used or known in the language, “uncircumcised” could be translated as “not circumcised.”
- The expression “the uncircumcision” could be translated as “people who are not circumcised” or “people who do not belong to God,” depending on the context.
- Other ways to translate figurative senses of this term could include “not God’s people” or “rebellious like those who don’t belong to God” or “people who have no sign of belonging to God.”
- The expression “uncircumcised in heart” could be translated as “stubbornly rebellious” or “refusing to believe.” However, if possible it is best to keep the expression or a similar one since spiritual circumcision is an important concept.

Translation Suggestions:

- If the culture of the target language performs circumcisions on males, the word used to refer to this should be used for this term.
- Other ways to translate this term would be, “cut around” or “cut in a circle” or “cut off the foreskin.”
- In cultures where circumcision is not known, it may be necessary to explain it in a footnote or glossary.
- Make sure the term used to translate this does not refer to females. It may be necessary to translate this with a word or phrase that includes the meaning of “male.”

(See also: [How to Translate Unknowns](#))

(See also: Abraham, [covenant](#))

Bible References:

- Genesis 17:11
- Genesis 17:14
- Exodus 12:48

- Leviticus 26:41
- Joshua 5:3
- Judges 15:18
- 2 Samuel 1:20
- Jeremiah 9:26
- Ezekiel 32:25
- Acts 10:44-45
- Acts 11:3
- Acts 15:1
- Acts 11:3
- Romans 2:27
- Galatians 5:3
- Ephesians 2:11
- Philippians 3:3
- Colossians 2:11
- Colossians 2:13

Examples from the Bible stories:

- **5:3** "You must **circumcise** every male in your family."
- **5:5** That day Abraham **circumcised** all the males in his household.

Word Data:

- Strong's: H4135, H4139, H5243, H6188, H6189, H6190, G02030, G05640, G19860, G40590, G40610

(Go back to: [Jeremiah 9 General Notes](#))

covenant

Definition:

In the Bible, the term “covenant” refers to a formal, binding agreement between two parties that one or both parties must fulfill.

- This agreement can be between individuals, between groups of people, or between God and people.
- When people make a covenant with each other, they promise that they will do something, and they must do it.
- Examples of human covenants include marriage covenants, business agreements, and treaties between countries.
- Throughout the Bible, God made several different covenants with his people.
- In some of the covenants, God promised to fulfill his part without conditions. For example, when God established his covenant with mankind promising to never destroy the earth again with a worldwide flood, this promise had no conditions for people to fulfill.
- In other covenants, God promised to fulfill his part only if the people obeyed him and fulfilled their part of the covenant.

The term “new covenant” refers to the commitment or agreement God made with his people through the sacrifice of his Son, Jesus.

- God’s “new covenant” was explained in the part of the Bible called the “New Testament.”
- This new covenant is in contrast to the “old” or “former” covenant that God had made with the Israelites in Old Testament times.
- The new covenant is better than the old one because it is based on the sacrifice of Jesus, which completely atoned for people’s sins forever. The sacrifices made under the old covenant did not do this.
- God writes the new covenant on the hearts of those who become believers in Jesus. This causes them to want to obey God and to begin to live holy lives.
- The new covenant will be completely fulfilled in the end times when God establishes his reign on earth. Everything will once again be very good, as it was when God first created the world.

Translation Suggestions:

- Depending on the context, ways to translate this term could include, “binding agreement” or “formal commitment” or “pledge” or “contract.”
- Some languages may have different words for covenant depending on whether one party or both parties have made a promise they must keep. If the covenant is one-sided, it could be translated as “promise” or “pledge.”
- Make sure the translation of this term does not sound like people proposed the covenant. In all cases of covenants between God and people, it was God who initiated the covenant.
- The term “new covenant” could be translated as “new formal agreement” or “new pact” or “new contract.”
- The word “new” in these expressions has the meaning of “fresh” or “new kind of” or “another.”

(See also: [covenant](#), [promise](#))

Bible References:

- Genesis 9:12
- Genesis 17:7
- Genesis 31:44
- Exodus 34:10-11
- Joshua 24:24-26

- 2 Samuel 23:5
- 2 Kings 18:11-12
- Mark 14:24
- Luke 1:73
- Luke 22:20
- Acts 7:8
- 1 Corinthians 11:25-26
- 2 Corinthians 3:6
- Galatians 3:17-18
- Hebrews 12:24

Examples from the Bible stories:

- **4:9** Then God made a **covenant** with Abram. A **covenant** is an agreement between two parties.
- **5:4** "I will make Ishmael a great nation, too, but my **covenant** will be with Isaac."
- **6:4** After a long time, Abraham died and all of the promises that God had made to him in the **covenant** were passed on to Isaac.
- **7:10** "The **covenant** promises God had promised to Abraham and then to Isaac now passed on to Jacob."
- **13:2** God said to Moses and the people of Israel, "If you will obey my voice and keep my **covenant**, you will be my prized possession, a kingdom of priests, and a holy nation."
- **13:4** Then God gave them the **covenant** and said, "I am Yahweh, your God, who saved you from slavery in Egypt. Do not worship other gods."
- **15:13** Then Joshua reminded the people of their obligation to obey the **covenant** that God had made with the Israelites at Sinai.
- **21:5** Through the prophet Jeremiah, God promised that he would make a **New Covenant**, but not like the covenant God made with Israel at Sinai. In the **New Covenant**, God would write his law on the people's hearts, the people would know God personally, they would be his people, and God would forgive their sins. The Messiah would start the **New Covenant**.
- **21:14** Through the Messiah's death and resurrection, God would accomplish his plan to save sinners and start the **New Covenant**.
- **38:5** Then Jesus took a cup and said, "Drink this. It is my blood of the **New Covenant** that is poured out for the forgiveness of sins. Do this to remember me every time you drink it."
- **48:11** But God has now made a **New Covenant** that is available to everyone. Because of this **New Covenant**, anyone from any people group can become part of God's people by believing in Jesus.

Word Data:

- Strong's: H1285, H2319, H3772, G08020, G12420, G49340

(Go back to: [Introduction to Jeremiah](#); [Jeremiah 11 General Notes](#); [Notes](#); [Notes](#); [Notes](#))

covenant faithfulness, covenant loyalty, covenant love

Definition:

In biblical times, the term translated as “covenant faithfulness” was used to describe the kind of faithfulness, loyalty, kindness, and love that was both expected and demonstrated between people who were closely related to one another, either by marriage or by blood. This same term is used often in the Bible to describe the way God relates to his people, especially his commitment to fulfill the promises that he made to them.

- The way this term is translated can depend on how each of the individual terms “covenant” and “faithfulness” are translated.
- Other ways to translate this term might include: “faithful love;” “loyal, committed love;” or “loving dependability.”

(See also: [covenant](#), [faithful](#), [grace](#), Israel, [people of God](#), [promise](#))

Bible References:

- Ezra 3:11
- Numbers 14:18

Word Data:

- Strong’s: H2617

(Go back to: [Jeremiah 33 General Notes](#))

curse, cursed, cursing

Definition:

The term “curse” means to cause negative things to happen to the person or thing that is being cursed.

- A curse can be a statement that harm will happen to someone or something.
- To curse someone can also be an expression of desire that bad things will happen to them.
- It can also refer to the punishment or other negative things that someone causes to happen to someone.

Translation Suggestions:

- This term could be translated as “cause bad things to happen to” or “declare that something bad will happen to” or “swear to cause evil things to happen to.”
- In the context of God sending curses on his disobedient people, it could be translated as “punish by allowing bad things to happen.”
- The term “cursed” when used to describe people could be translated as “(this person) will experience much trouble.”
- The phrase “cursed be” could be translated as “May (this person) experience great difficulties.”
- The phrase, “Cursed is the ground” could be translated as “The soil will not be very fertile.”
- However, if the target language has the phrase “cursed be” and it has the same meaning, then it is good to keep the same phrase.

(See also: [bless](#))

Bible References:

- 1 Samuel 14:24-26
- 2 Peter 2:12-14
- Galatians 3:10
- Galatians 3:14
- Genesis 3:14
- Genesis 3:17
- James 3:10
- Numbers 22:6
- Psalms 109:28

Examples from the Bible stories:

- **2:9** God said to the snake, “You are **cursed!**”
- **2:11** “Now the ground is **cursed**, and you will need to work hard to grow food.”
- **4:4** “I will bless those who bless you and **curse** those who **curse** you.”
- **39:7** Then Peter vowed, saying, “May God **curse** me if I know this man!”
- **50:16** Because Adam and Eve disobeyed God and brought sin into this world, God **cursed** it and decided to destroy it.

Word Data:

- Strong’s: H0422, H0423, H0779, H1288, H2763, H2764, H3994, H5344, H6895, H7043, H7045, H7621, H8381, G03310, G03320, G06850, G19440, G25510, G26520, G26530, G26710, G26720, G60350

(Go back to: [Jeremiah 49 General Notes; Notes](#))

evil, wicked, unpleasant

Definition:

In the Bible, the term “evil” can refer either to the concept of moral wickedness or emotional unpleasantness. The context will usually make it clear which meaning is intended in the specific instance of the term.

- While “evil” may describe a person’s character, “wicked” may refer more to a person’s behavior. However, both terms are very similar in meaning.
- The term “wickedness” refers to the state of being that exists when people do wicked things.
- The results of evil are clearly shown in how people mistreat others by killing, stealing, slandering and being cruel and unkind.

Translation Suggestions:

- Depending on the context, the terms “evil” and “wicked” can be translated as “bad” or “sinful” or “immoral.”
- Other ways to translate these could include “not good” or “not righteous” or “not moral.”
- Make sure the words or phrases that are used to translate these terms fit the context that is natural in the target language.

(See also: disobey, [sin](#), good, righteous, demon)

Bible References:

- 1 Samuel 24:11
- 1 Timothy 6:10
- 3 John 1:10
- Genesis 2:17
- Genesis 6:5-6
- Job 1:1
- Job 8:20
- Judges 9:57
- Luke 6:22-23
- Matthew 7:11-12
- Proverbs 3:7
- Psalms 22:16-17

Examples from the Bible stories:

- **2:4** “God just knows that as soon as you eat it, you will be like God and will understand good and **evil** like he does.”
- **3:1** After a long time, many people were living in the world. They had become very **wicked** and violent.
- **3:2** But Noah found favor with God. He was a righteous man living among **wicked** people.
- **4:2** God saw that if they all kept working together to do **evil**, they could do many more sinful things.
- **8:12** “You tried to do **evil** when you sold me as a slave, but God used the **evil** for good!”
- **14:2** They (Canaanites) worshiped false gods and did many **evil** things.
- **17:1** But then he (Saul) became a **wicked** man who did not obey God, so God chose a different man who would one day be king in his place.
- **18:11** In the new kingdom of Israel, all the kings were **evil**.
- **29:8** The king was so angry that he threw the **wicked** servant into prison until he could pay back all of his debt.

- **45:2** They said, "We heard him (Stephen) speak **evil** things about Moses and God!"
- **50:17** He (Jesus) will wipe away every tear and there will be no more suffering, sadness, crying, **evil**, pain, or death.

Word Data:

- Strong's: H0205, H0605, H1100, H1681, H1942, H2154, H2162, H2254, H2617, H3399, H3415, H4209, H4849, H5753, H5766, H5767, H5999, H6001, H6090, H7451, H7455, H7489, H7561, H7562, H7563, H7564, G00920, G01130, G04590, G09320, G09870, G09880, G14260, G25490, G25510, G25540, G25550, G25560, G25570, G25590, G25600, G26350, G26360, G41510, G41890, G41900, G41910, G53370

(Go back to: [Jeremiah 5 General 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: [Jeremiah 5 General Notes](#); [Notes](#); [Notes](#); [Notes](#))

faithful, faithfulness, trustworthy

Definition:

To be “faithful” to God means to consistently live according to God’s teachings. It means to be loyal to him by obeying him. The state or condition of being faithful is “faithfulness.”

- A person who is faithful can be trusted to always keep his promises and to always fulfill his responsibilities to other people.
- A faithful person perseveres in doing a task, even when it is long and difficult.
- Faithfulness to God is the consistent practice of doing what God wants us to do.

Translation Suggestions:

- In many contexts, “faithful” can be translated as “loyal” or “dedicated” or “dependable.”
- In other contexts, “faithful” can be translated by a word or phrase that means “continuing to believe” or “persevering in believing and obeying God.”
- Ways that “faithfulness” could be translated could include “persevering in believing” or “loyalty” or “trustworthiness” or “believing and obeying God.”

(See also: [believe](#), [faith](#), [believe](#))

Bible References:

- Genesis 24:49
- Leviticus 26:40
- Numbers 12:7
- Joshua 2:14
- Judges 2:16-17
- 1 Samuel 2:9
- Psalm 12:1
- Proverbs 11:12-13
- Isaiah 1:26
- Jeremiah 9:7-9
- Hosea 5:7
- Luke 12:46
- Luke 16:10
- Colossians 1:7
- 1 Thessalonians 5:24
- 3 John 1:5

Examples from the Bible stories:

- **8:5** Even in prison, Joseph remained **faithful** to God, and God blessed him.
- **14:12** Even so, God was still **faithful** to His promises to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob.
- **15:13** The people promised to remain **faithful** to God and follow his laws.
- **17:9** David ruled with justice and **faithfulness** for many years, and God blessed him. However, toward the end of his life he sinned terribly against God.
- **35:12** “The older son said to his father, ‘All these years I have worked **faithfully** for you!’”
- **49:17** But God is **faithful** and says that if you confess your sins, he will forgive you.
- **50:4** “If you remain **faithful** to me to the end, then God will save you.”

Word Data:

- Strong's: H0529, H0530, H0539, H0540, H0571, H0898, H2181, H4603, H4604, H4820, G05690, G05710, G41030

(Go back to: [Jeremiah 26 General Notes](#); [Notes](#))

fear, afraid, frighten

Definition:

The terms “fear” refers to the unpleasant emotion a person feels when experiencing a potential threat to their safety or well-being. In the Bible, however, the term “fear” can also mean an attitude of worship, respect, awe, or obedience toward another person, usually someone powerful such as God or a king.

Translation Suggestions:

- Depending on the context, the term “fear” can be translated in various ways. Some possibilities include: “be afraid;” “deeply respect;” or “deep respect;” “revere;” or “reverence;” or perhaps “be in awe of.”
- The phrase “fear not” could also be translated as “do not be afraid” or “stop being afraid.”
- The sentence “The fear of God fell on all of them” might be translated in various ways. Some possibilities include: “Suddenly they all felt a deep awe and respect for God;” or “Immediately, they all felt very amazed and revered God deeply;” or “Right then, they all felt very afraid of God (because of his great power).”

(See also: awe, Yahweh, Lord, marvel, power)

Bible References:

- 1 John 4:18
- Acts 2:43
- Acts 19:15-17
- Genesis 50:21
- Isaiah 11:3-5
- Job 6:14
- Jonah 1:9
- Luke 12:5
- Matthew 10:28
- Proverbs 10:24-25

Word Data:

- Strong’s: H0367, H0926, H1204, H1481, H1672, H1674, H1763, H2119, H2296, H2727, H2729, H2730, H2731, H2844, H2849, H2865, H3016, H3025, H3068, H3372, H3373, H3374, H4032, H4034, H4035, H4116, H4172, H6206, H6342, H6343, H6345, H6427, H7264, H7267, H7297, H7374, H7461, H7493, H8175, G08700, G11670, G11680, G11690, G16300, G17190, G21240, G21250, G29620, G53980, G53990, G54000, G54010

(Go back to: [Jeremiah 4 General Notes](#))

forgive, forgiven, forgiveness, pardon, pardoned

Definition:

To forgive someone means to not hold a grudge against that person even though they did something hurtful. "Forgiveness" is the act of forgiving someone.

- Forgiving someone often means not punishing that person for something he has done wrong.
- This term can be used figuratively to mean "cancel," as in the expression "forgive a debt."
- When people confess their sins, God forgives them based on Jesus' sacrificial death on the cross.
- Jesus taught his disciples to forgive others as he has forgiven them.

The term "pardon" means to forgive and not punish someone for his sin.

- This word has the same meaning as "forgive" but may also include the meaning of a formal decision to not punish someone who is guilty.
- In a court of law, a judge can pardon a person found guilty of a crime.
- Even though we are guilty of sin, Jesus Christ pardoned us from being punished in hell, based on his sacrificial death on the cross.

Translation Suggestions:

- Depending on the context, "forgive" could be translated as "pardon" or "cancel" or "release" or "not hold against" (someone).
- The term "forgiveness" could be translated by a word or phrase that means "practice of not resenting" or "declaring (someone) as not guilty" or "the act of pardoning."
- If the language has a word for a formal decision to forgive, that word could be used to translate "pardon."

(See also: guilt)

Bible References:

- Genesis 50:17
- Numbers 14:17-19
- Deuteronomy 29:20-21
- Joshua 24:19-20
- 2 Kings 5:17-19
- Psalms 25:11
- Psalms 25:17-19
- Isaiah 55:6-7
- Isaiah 40:2
- Luke 5:21
- Acts 8:22
- Ephesians 4:31-32
- Colossians 3:12-14
- 1 John 2:12

Examples from the Bible stories:

- **7:10** But Esau had already **forgiven** Jacob, and they were happy to see each other again.
- **13:15** Then Moses climbed the mountain again and prayed that God would **forgive** the people. God listened to Moses and **forgave** them.
- **17:13** David repented of his sin and God **forgave** him.

- **21:5** In the New Covenant, God would write his law on the people's hearts, the people would know God personally, they would be his people, and God would **forgive** their sins.
- **29:1** One day Peter asked Jesus, "Master, how many times should I **forgive** my brother when he sins against me?"
- **29:8** I **forgave** your debt because you begged me.
- **38:5** Then Jesus took a cup and said, "Drink this. It is my blood of the New Covenant that is poured out for the **forgiveness** of sins."

Word Data:

- H5546, H5547, H3722, H5375, H5545, H5547, H7521, G85900, G86300, G54830

(Go back to: [Jeremiah 5 General Notes](#); [Notes](#))

fulfill, fulfilled, carried out

Definition:

The term “fulfill” means to complete or accomplish something that was expected.

- When a prophecy is fulfilled, it means that God causes to happen what was predicted in the prophecy.
- If a person fulfills a promise or a vow, it means that he does what he has promised to do.
- To fulfill a responsibility means to do the task that was assigned or required.

Translation Suggestions:

- Depending on the context, “fulfill” could be translated as “accomplish” or “complete” or “cause to happen” or “obey” or “perform.”
- The phrase “has been fulfilled” could also be translated as “has come true” or “has happened” or “has taken place.”
- Ways to translate “fulfill,” as in “fulfill your ministry,” could include “complete” or “perform” or “practice” or “serve other people as God has called you to do.”

(See also: [prophet](#), Christ, minister, call)

Bible References:

- 1 Kings 2:27
- Acts 3:17-18
- Leviticus 22:17-19
- Luke 4:21
- Matthew 1:22-23
- Matthew 5:17
- Psalms 116:12-15

Examples from the Bible stories:

- **24:4** John **fulfilled** what the prophets said, “See I send my messenger ahead of you, who will prepare your way.”
- **40:3** The soldiers gambled for Jesus’ clothing. When they did this, they **fulfilled** a prophecy that said, “They divided my garments among them, and gambled for my clothing.”
- **42:7** Jesus said, “I told you that everything written about me in God’s word must be **fulfilled**.”
- **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.’”
- **44:5** “Although you did not understand what you were doing, God used your actions to **fulfill** the prophecies that the Messiah would suffer and die.”

Word Data:

- Strong’s: H1214, H5487, G10960, G41380

(Go back to: [Jeremiah 50 General Notes](#); [Notes](#))

god, false god, goddess, idol, idolater, idolatrous, idolatry

Definition:

A false god is something that people worship instead of the one true God. The term “goddess” refers specifically to a female false god.

- These false gods or goddesses do not exist. Yahweh is the only God.
- People sometimes make objects into idols to worship as symbols of their false gods.
- In the Bible, God’s people frequently turned away from obeying him in order to worship false gods.
- Demons often deceive people into believing that the false gods and idols they worship have power.
- Baal, Dagon, and Molech were three of the many false gods that were worshiped by people in Bible times.
- Asherah and Artemis (Diana) were two of the goddesses that ancient peoples worshiped.

An idol is an object that people make so they can worship it. Something is described as “idolatrous” if it involves giving honor to something other than the one true God.

- People make idols to represent the false gods that they worship.
- These false gods do not exist; there is no God besides Yahweh.
- Sometimes demons work through an idol to make it seem like it has power, even though it does not.
- Idols are often made of valuable materials like gold, silver, bronze, or expensive wood.
- An “idolatrous kingdom” means a “kingdom of people who worship idols” or a “kingdom of people who worship earthly things.”
- The term “idolatrous figure” is another word for a “carved image” or an “idol.”

Translation Suggestions:

- There may already be a word for “god” or “false god” in the language or in a nearby language.
- The term “idol” could be used to refer to false gods.
- In English, a lower case “g” is used to refer to false gods, and upper case “G” is used to refer to the one true God. Other languages also do that.
- Another option would be to use a completely different word to refer to the false gods.
- Some languages may add a word to specify whether the false god is described as male or female.

(See also: God, Asherah, Baal, Molech, demon, image, kingdom, worship)

Bible References:

- Genesis 35:2
- Exodus 32:1
- Psalms 31:6
- Psalms 81:8-10
- Isaiah 44:20
- Acts 7:41
- Acts 7:43
- Acts 15:20
- Acts 19:27
- Romans 2:22
- Galatians 4:8-9
- Galatians 5:19-21
- Colossians 3:5
- 1 Thessalonians 1:9

Examples from the Bible stories:

- **10:2** Through these plagues, God showed Pharaoh that he is more powerful than Pharaoh and all of Egypt's **gods**.
- **13:4** Then God gave them the covenant and said, "I am Yahweh, your God, who saved you from slavery in Egypt. Do not worship other **gods**."
- **14:2** They (Canaanites) worshiped false **gods** and did many evil things.
- **16:1** The Israelites began to worship the Canaanite **gods** instead of Yahweh, the true God.
- **18:13** But most of Judah's kings were evil, corrupt, and they worshiped idols. Some of the kings even sacrificed their children to false **gods**.

Word Data:

- Strong's: H0205, H0367, H0410, H0426, H0430, H0457, H1322, H1544, H1892, H2553, H3649, H4656, H4906, H5236, H5566, H6089, H6090, H6091, H6456, H6459, H6673, H6736, H6754, H7723, H8163, H8251, H8267, H8441, H8655, G14930, G14940, G14950, G14960, G14970, G22990, G27120

(Go back to: [Introduction to Jeremiah](#); [Jeremiah 2 General Notes](#); [Notes](#); [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: [Jeremiah 38 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: [Jeremiah 12 General Notes](#))

hope, hoped

Definition:

Hope is strongly desiring something to happen. Hope can imply either certainty or uncertainty regarding a future event.

- In the Bible, the term “hope” also has the meaning of “trust,” as in “my hope is in the Lord.” It refers to a sure expectation of receiving what God has promised his people.
- Sometimes the ULT translates the term in the original language as “confidence.” This happens mostly in the New Testament in situations where people who believe in Jesus as their Savior have the assurance (or confidence or hope) of receiving what God has promised.
- To have “no hope” means to have no expectation of something good happening. It means that it is actually very certain that it will not happen.

Translation Suggestions:

- In some contexts, the term to “hope” could also be translated as to “wish” or to “desire” or to “expect.”
- The expression “nothing to hope for” could be translated as “nothing to trust in” or “no expectation of anything good”
- To “have no hope” could be translated as “have no expectation of anything good” or “have no security” or “be sure that nothing good will happen.”
- The expression “have set your hopes on” could also be translated as “have put your confidence in” or “have been trusting in.”
- The phrase “I find hope in your Word” could also be translated as “I am confident that your Word is true” or “Your Word helps me trust in you” or “When I obey your Word, I am certain to be blessed.”
- Phrases such as “hope in” God could also be translated as, “trust in God” or “know for sure that God will do what he has promised” or “be certain that God is faithful.”

(See also: [bless](#), confidence, good, obey, [trust](#), [word of God](#))

Bible References:

- 1 Chronicles 29:14-15
- 1 Thessalonians 2:19
- Acts 24:14-16
- Acts 26:6
- Acts 27:20
- Colossians 1:5
- Job 11:20

Word Data:

- Strong's: H0982, H0983, H0986, H2620, H2976, H3175, H3176, H3689, H4009, H4268, H4723, H7663, H7664, H8431, H8615, G00910, G05600, G16790, G16800, G20700

(Go back to: [Jeremiah 14 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: [Introduction to Jeremiah](#))

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: [Jeremiah 5 General Notes](#); [Notes](#); [Notes](#); [Notes](#); [Notes](#); [Notes](#))

law, law of Moses, law of Yahweh, law of God

Definition:

Most simply, the term “law” refers to a rule or instruction that should be followed. In the Bible, the term “law” is often used generally to refer to anything and everything God wants his people to obey and do. The specific term “law of Moses” refers to the commandments and instructions that God gave Moses for the Israelites to obey.

- Depending on the context, the “law” can refer to:
 - the Ten Commandments that God wrote on stone tablets for the Israelites
 - all the laws given to Moses
 - the first five books of the Old Testament
 - the entire Old Testament (also referred to as “scriptures” in the New Testament).
 - all of God’s instructions and will
- The phrase “the Law and the Prophets” is used in the New Testament to refer to the Hebrew scriptures (or “Old Testament”)

Translation Suggestions:

- These terms could be translated using the plural, “laws,” since they refer to many instructions.
- The term “law of Moses” could be translated as “the laws that God told Moses to give to the Israelites.”
- Depending on the context, “the law of Moses” could also be translated as “the law that God told to Moses” or “God’s laws that Moses wrote down” or “the laws that God told Moses to give to the Israelites.”
- Ways to translate “the law” or “law of God” or “God’s laws” could include “laws from God” or “God’s commands” or “laws that God gave” or “everything that God commands” or “all of God’s instructions.”
- The phrase “law of Yahweh” could also be translated as “Yahweh’s laws” or “laws that Yahweh said to obey” or “laws from Yahweh” or “things Yahweh commanded.”

(See also: instruct, Moses, Ten Commandments, lawful, Yahweh)

Bible References:

- Acts 15:6
- Daniel 9:13
- Exodus 28:42-43
- Ezra 7:25-26
- Galatians 2:15
- Luke 24:44
- Matthew 5:18
- Nehemiah 10:29
- Romans 3:20

Examples from the Bible stories:

- **13:7** God also gave many other **laws** and rules to follow. If the people obeyed these **laws**, God promised that he would bless and protect them. If they disobeyed them, God would punish them.
- **13:9** Anyone who disobeyed **God’s law** could bring an animal to the altar in front of the Tent of Meeting as a sacrifice to God.
- **15:13** Then Joshua reminded the people of their obligation to obey the covenant that God had made with the Israelites at Sinai. The people promised to remain faithful to God and follow **his laws**.
- **16:1** After Joshua died, the Israelites disobeyed God and did not drive out the rest of the Canaanites or obey **God’s laws**.

- **21:5** In the New Covenant, God would write **his law** on the people's hearts, the people would know God personally, they would be his people, and God would forgive their sins.
- **27:1** Jesus answered, "What is written in **God's law**?"
- **28:1** Jesus said to him, "Why do you call me 'good?' There is only one who is good, and that is God. But if you want to have eternal life, obey **God's laws**."

Word Data:

- Strong's: H0430, H1881, H1882, H2706, H2710, H3068, H4687, H4872, H4941, H8451, G23160, G35510, G35650

(Go back to: [Jeremiah 34 General Notes](#))

oppress, oppressed, oppression, oppressor, dominate

Definition:

The terms “oppress” and “oppression” refer to treating people harshly. An “oppressor” is a person who oppresses people.

- The term “oppression” especially refers to a situation where people of greater strength mistreat or enslave people who are under their power or rule.
- The term “oppressed” describes the people who are being harshly treated.
- Often enemy nations and their rulers were oppressors to the people of Israel.

Translation Suggestions:

- Depending on the context, “oppress” could be translated as “severely mistreat” or “cause to be heavily burdened” or “put under miserable bondage” or “rule harshly.”
- Ways to translate “oppression” could include “heavy suppression and bondage” or “burdensome control.”
- The phrase “the oppressed” could be translated as “oppressed people” or “people in terrible bondage” or “those who are treated harshly.”
- The term “oppressor” could be translated as “person who oppresses” or “nation who controls and rules harshly” or “persecutor.”

(See also: bind, enslave, persecute)

Bible References:

- 1 Samuel 10:17-19
- Deuteronomy 26:7
- Ecclesiastes 4:1
- Job 10:3
- Judges 2:18-19
- Nehemiah 5:14-15
- Psalms 119:134

Word Data:

- Strong's: H1790, H1792, H2541, H2555, H3238, H3905, H3906, H4642, H5065, H6031, H6125, H6184, H6206, H6216, H6217, H6231, H6233, H6234, H6693, H7429, H7533, H7701, G26160, G26690

(Go back to: [Jeremiah 22 General Notes](#))

people of God

Definition:

The concept of the “people of God” in the Bible refers to people with whom God has established a covenant relationship.

- In the Old Testament, the phrase “people of God” refers to the nation of Israel. The nation of Israel was chosen by God and set apart from the other nations of the world in order to serve and obey him.
- In the New Testament, the phrase “people of God” refers to the “Church,” meaning everyone who believes in Jesus. This includes both Jews and Gentiles. In the New Testament, sometimes this group of people is called the “sons of God” or “children of God.”
- When God uses the phrase “my people,” he is referring to people who have a covenant relationship with him. God’s people are chosen by him, and he wants them to live in a way that is pleasing to him.

Translation Suggestions:

- The term “people of God” could be translated as “God’s people” or “the people who worship God” or “people who serve God” or “people who belong to God.”
- When God says “my people” other ways to translate it could include “the people I have chosen” or “the people who worship me” or “the people who belong to me.”
- Similarly, “your people” could be translated as “the people who belong to you” or “the people you chose to belong to you.”
- Also “his people” could be translated as “the people who belong to him” or “the people God chose to belong to himself.”

(See also: Israel, people group)

Bible References:

- 1 Chronicles 11:2
- Acts 7:34
- Acts 7:51-53
- Acts 10:36-38
- Daniel 9:24-25
- Isaiah 2:5-6
- Jeremiah 6:20-22
- Joel 3:16-17
- Micah 6:3-5
- Revelation 13:7-8

Word Data:

- Strong’s: H0430, H5971, G23160, G29920

(Go back to: [Jeremiah 33 General Notes](#))

promise, promised

Definition:

When used as a verb, the term “promise” refers to the action of a person saying that he will do something in such way that he obligates himself to fulfill what he has said. When used as a noun, the term “promise” refers to the thing that a person obligates himself to do.

- The Bible records many promises that God has made for his people.
- Promises are an important part of formal agreements such as covenants.

Translation Suggestions:

- The term “promise” could be translated as “commitment” or “assurance” or “guarantee.”
- To “promise to do something” could be translated as “assure someone that you will do something” or “commit to doing something.”

(See also: [covenant](#), oath, vow)

Bible References:

- Galatians 3:15-16
- Genesis 25:31-34
- Hebrews 11:9
- James 1:12
- Numbers 30:2

Examples from the Bible stories:

- **3:15** God said, “I **promise** I will never again curse the ground because of the evil things people do, or destroy the world by causing a flood, even though people are sinful from the time they are children.”
- **3:16** God then made the first rainbow as a sign of his **promise**. Every time the rainbow appeared in the sky, God would remember what he **promised** and so would his people.
- **4:8** God spoke to Abram and **promised** again that he would have a son and as many descendants as the stars in the sky. Abram believed God’s **promise**.
- **5:4** “Your wife, Sarai, will have a son—he will be the son of **promise**.”
- **8:15** The covenant **promises** that God gave to Abraham were passed on to Isaac, then to Jacob, and then to Jacob’s twelve sons and their families.
- **17:14** Though David had been unfaithful to God, God was still faithful to his **promises**.
- **50:1** Jesus **promised** he would return at the end of the world. Though he has not yet come back, he will keep his **promise**.

Word Data:

- Strong’s: H0559, H0562, H1696, H8569, G18430, G18600, G18610, G18620, G36700, G42790

(Go back to: [Jeremiah 1 General Notes](#); [Notes](#); [Notes](#); [Notes](#); [Notes](#); [Notes](#); [Notes](#))

Promised Land

Facts:

The term “Promised Land” only occurs in the Bible stories, not the Bible text. It is an alternate way of referring to the land of Canaan which God had promised to give to Abraham and his descendants.

- When Abram was living in the city of Ur, God commanded him to go live in the land of Canaan. He and his descendants, the Israelites, lived there for many years.
- When a severe famine caused there to be no food in Canaan, the Israelites moved to Egypt.
- Four hundred years later, God rescued the Israelites from slavery in Egypt and brought them back to Canaan again, the land God had promised to give them.

Translation Suggestions:

- The term “Promised Land” can be translated as the “land that God said he would give to Abraham” or “land that God promised to Abraham” or “land God promised to his people” or “land of Canaan.”
- In the Bible text, this term occurs as some form of “the land God promised.”

(See also: Canaan, [promise](#))

Bible References:

- Deuteronomy 8:1-2
- Ezekiel 7:26-27

Examples from the Bible stories:

- **12:1** They (Israelites) were no longer slaves, and they were going to the **Promised Land!**
- **14:1** After God had told the Israelites the laws he wanted them to obey as part of his covenant with them, God began leading them from Mount Sinai toward the **Promised Land**, which was also called Canaan.
- **14:2** God had promised Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob that he would give the **Promised Land** to their descendants, but now there were many people groups living there.
- **14:14** Then God led the people to the edge of the **Promised Land** again.
- **15:2** The Israelites had to cross the Jordan River to enter into the **Promised Land**.
- **15:12** After this battle, God gave each tribe of Israel its own section of the **Promised Land**.
- **20:9** This period of time when God’s people were forced to leave the **Promised Land** is called the Exile.

Word Data:

- Strong’s: H0776, H3068, H3423, H5159, H5414, H7650

(Go back to: [Jeremiah 39 General Notes](#); [Notes](#); [Notes](#))

prophet, prophecy, prophesy, seer, prophetess

Definition:

A “prophet” is a man who speaks God’s messages to people. A woman who does this is called a “prophetess.”

- Often prophets warned people to turn away from their sins and obey God.
- A “prophecy” is the message that the prophet speaks. To “prophesy” means to speak God’s messages.
- Often the message of a prophecy was about something that would happen in the future.
- Many prophecies in the Old Testament have already been fulfilled.
- In the Bible the collection of books written by prophets are sometimes referred to as “the prophets.”
- For example the phrase, “the law and the prophets” is a way of referring to all the Hebrew scriptures, which are also known as the “Old Testament.”
- An older term for a prophet was “seer” or “someone who sees.”
- Sometimes the term “seer” refers to a false prophet or to someone who practices divination.

Translation Suggestions:

- The term “prophet” could be translated as “God’s spokesman” or “man who speaks for God” or “man who speaks God’s messages.”
- A “seer” could be translated as “person who sees visions” or “man who sees the future from God.”
- The term “prophetess” could be translated as “spokeswoman for God” or “woman who speaks for God” or “woman who speaks God’s messages.”
- Ways to translate “prophecy” could include, “message from God” or “prophet message.”
- The term “prophesy” could be translated as “speak words from God” or “tell God’s message.”
- The figurative expression, “law and the prophets” could also be translated as “the books of the law and of the prophets” or “everything written about God and his people, including God’s laws and what his prophets preached.” (See: [synecdoche](#))
- When referring to a prophet (or seer) of a false god, it may be necessary to translate this as “false prophet (seer)” or “prophet (seer) of a false god” or “prophet of Baal,” for example.

(See also: Baal, divination, [false god](#), false prophet, [fulfill](#), [law](#), vision)

Bible References:

- 1 Thessalonians 2:14-16
- Acts 3:25
- John 1:43-45
- Malachi 4:4-6
- Matthew 1:23
- Matthew 2:18
- Matthew 5:17
- Psalm 51:1

Examples from the Bible stories:

- **12:12** When the Israelites saw that the Egyptians were dead, they trusted in God and believed that Moses was a **prophet** of God.
- **17:13** God was very angry about what David had done, so he sent the **prophet** Nathan to tell David how evil his sin was.
- **19:1** Throughout the history of the Israelites, God sent them **prophets**. The **prophets** heard messages from God and then told the people God’s messages.

- **19:6** All the people of the entire kingdom of Israel, including the 450 **prophets** of Baal, came to Mount Carmel.
- **19:17** Most of the time, the people did not obey God. They often mistreated the **prophets** and sometimes even killed them.
- **21:9** The **prophet** Isaiah **prophesied** that the Messiah would be born from a virgin.
- **43:5** "This fulfills the **prophecy** made by the **prophet** Joel in which God said, 'In the last days, I will pour out my Spirit.'"
- **43:7** "This fulfills the **prophecy** which says, 'You will not let your Holy One rot in the grave.'"
- **48:12** Moses was a great **prophet** who proclaimed the word of God. But Jesus is the greatest **prophet** of all. He is the Word of God.

Word Data:

- Strong's: H2372, H2374, H4853, H5012, H5013, H5016, H5017, H5029, H5030, H5031, H5197, G24950, G43940, G43950, G43960, G43970, G43980, G55780

(Go back to: [Jeremiah 1 General Notes](#); [Notes](#); [Notes](#); [Notes](#); [Notes](#); [Notes](#); [Notes](#); [Notes](#); [Notes](#); [Notes](#); [Notes](#); [Notes](#); [Notes](#); [Notes](#); [Notes](#); [Notes](#); [Notes](#); [Notes](#); [Notes](#); [Notes](#))

remnant

Definition:

The term “remnant” literally refers to people or things that are “remaining” or “left over” from a larger amount or group.

- Often a “remnant” refers to people who survive a life-threatening situation or who remain faithful to God while undergoing persecution.
- Isaiah referred to a group of Jews as being a remnant who would survive attacks from outsiders and live to return to the Promised Land in Canaan.
- Paul talks about there being a “remnant” of people who were chosen by God to receive his grace.
- The term “remnant” also implies that there were other people who did not remain or were not left over.

Translation Suggestions:

- A phrase such as “the remnant of this people” could be translated as “the rest of these people” or “the people who are left.”
- The “whole remnant of people” could be translated by “all the rest of the people” or “the remaining people.”

Bible References:

- Acts 15:17
- Amos 9:12
- Ezekiel 6:8-10
- Genesis 45:7
- Isaiah 11:11
- Micah 4:6-8

Word Data:

- Strong’s: H3498, H3499, H5629, H6413, H7604, H7605, H7611, H8281, H8300, G26400, G30050, G30620

(Go back to: [Jeremiah 26 General Notes](#))

repent, repentance

Definition:

The terms “repent” and “repentance” refer to turning away from sin and turning back to God.

- To “repent” literally means to “change one’s mind.”
- In the Bible, “repent” usually means to turn away from a sinful, human way of thinking and acting, and to turn to God’s way of thinking and acting.
- When people truly repent of their sins, God forgives them and helps them start obeying him.

Translation Suggestions:

- The term “repent” can be translated with a word or phrase that means “turn back (to God)” or “turn away from sin and toward God” or “turn toward God, away from sin.”
- Often the term “repentance” can be translated using the verb “repent.” For example, “God has given repentance to Israel” could be translated as “God has enabled Israel to repent.”
- Other ways to translate “repentance” could include “turning away from sin” or “turning to God and away from sin.”

(See also: [forgive](#), [sin](#), turn)

Bible References:

- Acts 3:19-20
- Luke 3:3
- Luke 3:8
- Luke 5:32
- Luke 24:47
- Mark 1:14-15
- Matthew 3:3
- Matthew 3:11
- Matthew 4:17
- Romans 2:4

Examples from the Bible stories:

- **16:2** After many years of disobeying God and being oppressed by their enemies, the Israelites **repented** and asked God to rescue them.
- **17:13** David **repented** of his sin and God forgave him.
- **19:18** They (prophets) warned people that God would destroy them if they did not **repent**.
- **24:2** Many people came out to the wilderness to listen to John. He preached to them, saying, “**Repent**, for the kingdom of God is near!”
- **42:8** “It was also written in the scriptures that my disciples will proclaim that everyone should repent in order to **receive** forgiveness for their sins.”
- **44:5** “So now, **repent** and turn to God so that your sins will be washed away.”

Word Data:

- Strong’s: H5150, H5162, H5164, G02780, G33380, G33400, G33410

(Go back to: [Jeremiah 1 General Notes](#); [Notes](#); [Notes](#); [Notes](#); [Notes](#); [Notes](#); [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: [Jeremiah 16 General Notes](#); [Notes](#); [Notes](#); [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: [Jeremiah 2 General Notes](#); [Notes](#); [Notes](#); [Notes](#); [Notes](#); [Notes](#))

sign, proof, reminder

Definition:

The term “sign” usually refers an object, event, or action that communicates a special meaning.

- In the Bible, signs are sometimes given in connection to a promise or covenant that God has made:
 - The book of Genesis describes the rainbow God created in the sky as a sign (or reminder) to himself that he has promised he will never again destroy all life with a worldwide flood.
 - In the book of Genesis, God commanded the Israelites to circumcise their sons as a sign (or indicator) of the fact that he had made his covenant with them.
- Signs can reveal or point to something:
 - The book of Luke describes that an angel gave shepherds a sign that would help them know which baby in Bethlehem was the newborn Messiah.
 - Judas kissed Jesus as a sign to the religious leaders that Jesus was the one they should arrest.
- Signs can prove that something is true:
 - The book of Exodus describes the plagues that destroyed Egypt as signs that showed who Yahweh was and proved that he was greater than Pharaoh and the Egyptian gods.
 - The book of Acts describes the miracles performed by the prophets and apostles as signs that proved they were speaking God’s message.
 - The book of John describes the miracles that Jesus performed as signs that proved he was truly the Messiah.

Translation Suggestions:

- The frequent expression “signs and wonders” could be translated as “proofs and miracles” or “miraculous works that prove God’s power” or “amazing miracles that show how great God is.”
- Depending on its context, “sign” could also be translated as “signal” or “symbol” or “mark” or “evidence” or “proof” or “gesture.”
- To “make signs with the hands” could also be translated as “motion with the hands” or “gesture with the hands” or “make gestures.”
- In some languages, there may be one word for a “sign” that proves something and a different word for a “sign” that is a miracle.

(See also: miracle, apostle, Christ, [covenant](#), [circumcise](#))

Bible References:

- Acts 2:18-19
- Exodus 4:8-9
- Exodus 31:12-15
- Genesis 1:14
- Genesis 9:12
- John 2:18
- Luke 2:12
- Mark 8:12
- Psalms 89:5-6

Word Data:

- Strong's: H0226, H0852, H2368, H2858, H4150, H4159, H4864, H5251, H5824, H6161, H6725, H6734, H7560, G03640, G08800, G12130, G12290, G17180, G17300, G17320, G17700, G39020, G41020, G45910, G45920, G49530, G49730, G52800

(Go back to: [Jeremiah 21 General Notes](#))

sin, sinful, sinner, sinning

Definition:

The term “sin” refers to actions, thoughts, and words that are against God’s will and laws. Sin can also refer to not doing something that God wants us to do.

- Sin includes anything we do that does not obey or please God, even things that other people don’t know about.
- Thoughts and actions that disobey God’s will are called “sinful.”
- Because Adam sinned, all human beings are born with a “sinful nature,” a nature that controls them and causes them to sin.
- A “sinner” is someone who sins, so every human being is a sinner.
- Sometimes the word “sinners” was used by religious people like the Pharisees to refer to people who didn’t keep the law as well as the Pharisees thought they should.
- The term “sinner” was also used for people who were considered to be worse sinners than other people. For example, this label was given to tax collectors and prostitutes.

Translation Suggestions:

- The term “sin” could be translated with a word or phrase that means “disobedience to God” or “going against God’s will” or “evil behavior and thoughts” or “wrongdoing.”
- To “sin” could also be translated as to “disobey God” or to “do wrong.”
- Depending on the context “sinful” could be translated as “full of wrongdoing” or “wicked” or “immoral” or “evil” or “rebellious against God.”
- Depending on the context the term “sinner” could be translated with a word or phrase that means “person who sins” or “person who does wrong things” or “person who disobeys God” or “person who disobeys the law.”
- The term “sinners” could be translated by a word or phrase that means “very sinful people” or “people considered to be very sinful” or “immoral people.”
- Ways to translate “tax collectors and sinners” could include “people who collect money for the government, and other very sinful people” or “very sinful people, including (even) tax collectors.”
- Make sure the translation of this term can include sinful behavior and thoughts, even those that other people don’t see or know about.
- The term “sin” should be general, and different from the terms for “wickedness” and “evil.”

(See also: disobey, [evil](#), flesh, tax collector)

Bible References:

- 1 Chronicles 9:1-3
- 1 John 1:10
- 1 John 2:2
- 2 Samuel 7:12-14
- Acts 3:19
- Daniel 9:24
- Genesis 4:7
- Hebrews 12:2
- Isaiah 53:11
- Jeremiah 18:23
- Leviticus 4:14
- Luke 15:18
- Matthew 12:31

- Romans 6:23
- Romans 8:4

Examples from the Bible stories:

- **3:15** God said, "I promise I will never again curse the ground because of the evil things people do, or destroy the world by causing a flood, even though people are **sinful** from the time they are children."
- **13:12** God was very angry with them because of their **sin** and planned to destroy them.
- **20:1** The kingdoms of Israel and Judah both **sinned** against God. They broke the covenant that God made with them at Sinai.
- **21:13** The prophets also said that the Messiah would be perfect, having no **sin**. He would die to receive the punishment for other people's **sin**.
- **35:1** One day, Jesus was teaching many tax collectors and other **sinner**s who had gathered to hear him.
- **38:5** Then Jesus took a cup and said, "Drink this. It is my blood of the New Covenant that is poured out for the forgiveness of **sins**."
- **43:11** Peter answered them, "Every one of you should repent and be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ so that God will forgive your **sins**."
- **48:8** We all deserve to die for our **sins**!
- **49:17** Even though you are a Christian, you will still be tempted to **sin**. But God is faithful and says that if you confess your **sins**, he will forgive you. He will give you strength to fight against **sin**.

Word Data:

- Strong's: H0817, H0819, H2398, H2399, H2400, H2401, H2402, H2403, H2408, H2409, H5771, H6588, H7683, H7686, G02640, G02650, G02660, G02680, G03610, G37810, G39000, G42580

(Go back to: [Introduction to Jeremiah](#); [Jeremiah 15 General Notes](#); [Notes](#); [Notes](#); [Notes](#); [Notes](#))

temple, house, house of God

Facts:

The temple was a building surrounded by walled courtyards where the Israelites came to pray and to offer sacrifices to God. It was located on Mount Moriah in the city of Jerusalem.

- Often the term “temple” referred to the whole temple complex, including the courtyards that surrounded the main building. Sometimes it referred only to the building.
- The temple building had two rooms, the Holy Place and the Most Holy Place.
- God referred to the temple as his dwelling place.
- King Solomon built the Temple during his reign. It was supposed to be the permanent place of worship in Jerusalem.
- In the New Testament, the term “temple of the Holy Spirit” is used to refer to believers in Jesus as a group, because the Holy Spirit lives in them.

Translation Suggestions:

- Usually when the text says that people were “in the temple,” it is referring to the courtyards outside the building. This could be translated as “in the temple courtyards” or “in the temple complex.”
- Where it refers specifically to the building itself, some translations translate “temple” as “temple building,” to make it the reference clear.
- Ways to translate “temple” could include, “God’s holy house” or “sacred worship place.”
- Often in the Bible, the temple is referred to as “the house of Yahweh” or “the house of God.”

(See also: sacrifice, Solomon, Babylon, Holy Spirit, tabernacle, courtyard, Zion, house)

Bible References:

- Acts 3:2
- Acts 3:8
- Ezekiel 45:18-20
- Luke 19:46
- Nehemiah 10:28
- Psalm 79:1-3

Examples from the Bible stories:

- **17:6** David wanted to build a **temple** where all the Israelites could worship God and offer him sacrifices.
- **18:2** In Jerusalem, Solomon built the **Temple** for which his father David had planned and gathered materials. Instead of at the Tent of Meeting, people now worshiped God and offered sacrifices to him at the **Temple**. God came and was present in the **Temple**, and he lived there with his people.
- **20:7** They (Babylonians) captured the city of Jerusalem, destroyed the **Temple**, and took away all the treasures.
- **20:13** When the people arrived in Jerusalem, they rebuilt the **Temple** and the wall around the city of the city and the **Temple**.
- **25:4** Then Satan took Jesus to the highest point on the **Temple** and said, “If you are the Son of God, throw yourself down, for it is written, ‘God will command his angels to carry you so your foot does not hit a stone.’”
- **40:7** When he died, there was an earthquake and the large curtain that separated the people from the presence of God in the **Temple** was torn in two, from the top to the bottom.

Word Data:

- Strong's: H1004, H1964, H1965, G14930, G24110, G34850

(Go back to: [Jeremiah 7 General 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: [Jeremiah 17 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: [Jeremiah 17 General Notes](#))

word of God, word of Yahweh, word of the Lord, word of truth, scripture

Definition:

In the Bible, the term “word of God” refers to anything that God has communicated to people. This includes spoken and written messages. Jesus is also called “the Word of God.”

- The term “scriptures” means “writings.” It is only used in the New Testament and refers to the Hebrew scriptures, which is the Old Testament. These writings were God’s message that he had told people to write down so that many years in the future people could still read it.
- The related terms “word of Yahweh” and “word of the Lord” often refer to a specific message from God that was given to a prophet or other person in the Bible.
- Sometimes this term occurs as simply “the word” or “my word” or “your word” (when talking about God’s word).
- In the New Testament, Jesus is called “the Word” and “the Word of God.” These titles mean that Jesus fully reveals who God is, because he is God himself.

The term “word of truth” is another way of referring to “God’s word,” which is his message or teaching. It does not refer to just one word.

- God’s word of truth includes everything that God has taught people about himself, his creation, and his plan of salvation through Jesus.
- This term emphasizes the fact that what God has told us is true, faithful, and real.

Translation Suggestions:

- Depending on the context, other ways to translate this term could include “the message of Yahweh” or “God’s message” or “the teachings from God.”
- It may be more natural in some languages to make this term plural and say “God’s words” or “the words of Yahweh.”
- The expression “the word of Yahweh came” is often used to introduce something that God told his prophets or his people. This could be translated as “Yahweh spoke this message” or “Yahweh spoke these words.”
- The term “scripture” or “scriptures” could be translated as “the writings” or “the written message from God.” This term should be translated differently from the translation of the term “word.”
- When “word” occurs alone and it refers to God’s word, it could be translated as “the message” or “God’s word” or “the teachings.” Also consider the alternate translations suggested above.
- When the Bible refers to Jesus as “the Word,” this term could be translated as “the Message” or “the Truth.”
- “Word of truth” could be translated as “God’s true message” or “God’s word, which is true.”
- It is important for the translation of this term to include the meaning of being true.

(See also: [prophet](#), true, Yahweh)

Bible References:

- Genesis 15:1
- 1 Kings 13:1
- Jeremiah 36:1-3
- Luke 8:11
- John 5:39
- Acts 6:2
- Acts 12:24
- Romans 1:2

- 2 Corinthians 6:7
- Ephesians 1:13
- 2 Timothy 3:16
- James 1:18
- James 2:8-9

Examples from the Bible stories:

- **25:7** In **God's word** he commands his people, "Worship only the Lord your God and only serve him."
- **33:6** So Jesus explained, "The seed is the **word of God**."
- **42:3** Then Jesus explained to them what **God's word** says about the Messiah.
- **42:7** Jesus said, "I told you that everything written about me in **God's word** must be fulfilled." Then he opened their minds so they could understand **God's word**.
- **45:10** Philip also used other **scriptures** to tell him the good news of Jesus.
- **48:12** But Jesus is the greatest prophet of all. He is the **Word of God**.
- **49:18** God tells you to pray, to study his **word**, to worship him with other Christians, and to tell others what he has done for you.

Word Data:

- Strong's: H0561, H0565, H1697, H3068, G30560, G44870

(Go back to: [Jeremiah 37 General Notes](#))

work, works, deeds

Definition:

The term “work” refers generally either to the action of expending effort in order to accomplish something, or to the result of that action. The term “works” refers generally to actions as a whole (that is, things that have been done or that need to be done).

- In the Bible, these terms are commonly used both in reference to God and humans.
- When used in reference to God, the term “work” in the Bible often refers to God’s action of creating the universe or saving his people (either from enemies, from sin, or both).
- God’s works refer to all the things he does or has done, including creating the world, saving sinners, providing for the needs of all creation and keeping the entire universe in place.
- The works or deeds that a person does can be either good or evil.

Translation Suggestions:

- Other ways to translate “works” could be “deeds” or “actions” or “things that are done.”
- God’s “works” or “deeds” or the “work of his hands” could also be translated as “miracles” or “mighty acts” or “things that God does.”
- The expression “the work of God” could be translated as “the things that God is doing” or “the miracles God does” or “everything that God has accomplished.”
- The term “work” can just be the singular of “works” as in “every good work” or “every good deed.”
- When work is done for God or others, it can be translated as “service” or “ministry.”

(See also: fruit, Holy Spirit, miracle)

Bible References:

- 1 John 3:12
- Acts 2:8-11
- Daniel 4:37
- Exodus 34:10-11
- Galatians 2:15-16
- James 2:17
- Matthew 16:27-28
- Micah 2:7
- Romans 3:28
- Titus 3:4-5

Word Data:

- Strong’s: H4399, H4566, H4567, H4611, H4659, H5949, G20410

(Go back to: [Jeremiah 46 General Notes](#))

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